## SEDGE WARBLER.

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Salicaria Phragmitis, Selby. Le Bec-fin Phragmite.

The Sedge Warbler may be distinguished from its near ally the Salicaria arundinacea by the conspicuous stripe which passes over the eye, by its smaller size, and by the less uniform style of colouring which pervades the back and upper surface.

The habits and manners of the two species are so strictly similar as regards the situations they inhabit, and every other particular, that the inexperienced naturalist would be in doubt as to which of them was before him. The bird here figured is by far the most numerous and widely distributed: arriving in the British Islands early in spring, it retires to marshes, banks of rivers, ponds, and lakes, where the luxuriant foliage abounding in such situations affords it a retreat at once secure and in direct unison with its habits. It soon commences the task of nidification by constructing a nest of coarse grasses, intermingled with moss on the outer side, while a lining of finer grasses completes the inner: the eggs are five or six in number, of a pale grey blotched all over with pale brown. The situation of the nest varies considerably, being often placed among the reeds which border the water, while at other times it is situated on the overhanging branches of the willow; and it not unfrequently happens that wet ditches, concealed by thick brambles, afford the Sedge Warbler a secure asylum, in which case the nest is placed in the centre of the thick herbage. In its disposition this bird is restless and noisy: its song is a confused strain, which is poured forth both night and day. It displays great powers of mimickry; among its notes may be distinguished those of the lark, the nightingale, sparrow, and linnet, jumbled together in a hurried babble: its varied song is uttered with greater vehemence when disturbed or irritated. Being somewhat secluded in its habits, it is not so frequently seen as heard. During its residence with us it seldom flies further than from bush to bush, or from one reed-bed to another; yet the power of extended flight has not been withheld from this little warbler, for as soon as its insect food diminishes, and the herbage which has afforded it shelter during the summer undergoes the least decay, the sedge bird is directed by the impulse of nature to seek its subsistence in countries of a warmer latitude, where it may still find an abundant supply.

The Sedge Warbler is found throughout the British Islands, as well as in nearly every portion of the Continent, being especially abundant in France, Germany, and Holland.

The sexes offer no differences in the plumage, and the young assume the adult colouring from the nest.

The top of the head is deep brown; above the eye is situated a distinct yellowish white stripe; back and wings olive brown, the centres of the feathers being darker; rump and upper tail-coverts yellowish brown; throat white; whole of the under surface yellowish white, becoming stronger on the flanks; primaries and tail-feathers brown; bill and legs brown.

The Plate represents a male, of the natural size.