SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

Muscicapa grisola, Linn.

Le Gobe-mouche gris.

This species, like its congener the Pied Flycatcher, is one of the summer visitants that enliven our woods and gardens during this most pleasant season of the year. It is one of the latest of the spring birds, scarcely if ever arriving before the middle of May; but soon after this period it may be found throughout the whole of England and a portion of Scotland, wherever there exists a locality suitable to its economy: after remaining here during the summer, it migrates to more southern and congenial climates during September and October.

In its universal distribution the Spotted Flycatcher differs very considerably from the Pied Flycatcher, which is very local in its habitat; it is also less confined to large woods and plantations, and appears to give a preference to gardens, shrubberies, and orchards. It does not evince the least fear or timidity, but frequently constructs its nest and rears its young over the door of the cottager, or upon the branches of fruit-trees nailed against the walls, sometimes in the decayed holes of trees, and frequently upon the ends of the beams or rafters in the gardener's tool-house and other outbuildings.

The nest is constructed of moss and small twigs, lined with hair and feathers: the eggs are four or five in number, of a greyish white spotted with pale reddish brown. When the young quit the nest, they follow their parents to some neighbouring wood, garden, or plantation, where they are very diligently attended and fed.

The Spotted Flycatcher appears to enjoy a wide range over the continent of Europe, being very generally dispersed from the border of the Arctic Circle to its most southern boundary; and we have also frequently observed it among collections from India.

It is a most active little bird, and is incessantly engaged in capturing the smaller winged insects which pass within the range of its chosen territory. Its favourite perch is generally a decayed branch, from which it sallies forth and "returns after each of these aërial attacks."

Its note is weak and monotonous, being little more than a feeble chirp.

The sexes are precisely alike in the colour and markings of their plumage. The young for a short period after they first begin to fly have the feathers tipped with a spot of yellowish white, giving them a mottled appearance.

The whole of the upper surface is brown, the crown of the head being spotted with a darker brown; throat and belly white; sides of the neck, breast, and flanks streaked with brown; bill and legs dark brown.

We have figured an adult male of the natural size.