

Genus CORACIAS.

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* moderate, compressed, higher than broad, straight, cutting; *upper mandible* curved towards the point. *Nostrils* basal, lateral, linear, pierced diagonally, partly closed by a membrane furnished with feathers. *Feet, tarsus* shorter than the middle toe, three toes before and one behind, entirely divided. *Wings* long, first primary a little shorter than the second which is the longest.

ROLLER.

Coracias garrulus, Linn.

Le Rollier vulgaire.

THE Roller is one of the most beautiful of birds, and although the extraordinary brilliancy of its plumage, varying in an assemblage of the finest shades of blue and green, as well as its great rarity, might render its claim to a place in our Fauna doubtful in the minds of some of our readers to whom the species is but little known, so many instances of its occurrence in this country will be found recorded by various authors, that it is our pleasant duty to consider it British as well as European.

This handsome bird is said to be common in the oak forests of Germany, and also in many of those of Denmark and Sweden. It is less plentiful in France, and according to M. Temminck is never seen in Holland. Its capture in this country has generally happened along the extended line of our eastern coast, from Norfolk northwards. Frequenting large woods generally, it builds in the holes of decayed trees, and lays from four to seven eggs of a smooth and shining white, in form a short oval almost round, very like those of our King-fisher, but much larger.

The whole length of this bird is about twelve inches; the bill is black towards the point, becoming brown at the base, with a few bristles; irides of two circles, yellow and brown; head, neck, breast and belly various shades of verditer blue, changing to pale green; shoulders azure blue; back reddish brown; rump purple; wing primaries dark blueish black, edged lighter; tail-feathers pale greenish blue, the outer ones tipped with black, those in the middle are also much darker in colour; legs reddish brown. In old males the outer tail-feathers are somewhat elongated. Adult females differ but little from the males, but young birds do not attain their brilliant colours till the second year.

Their food consists of worms, snails and insects generally, and in their habits these birds are remarkably noisy and restless.

Our figure is of the natural size, and was taken from a fine adult male.