

## RUFOUS SWALLOW.

*Hirundo rufula*, *Temm.*

L'Hirondelle rousseline.

ALTHOUGH Africa, particularly the southern and western portions of that continent, constitutes the native habitat of this beautiful species of Swallow, the contiguous portions of Europe are not without its occasional presence, and notwithstanding it is now considered a portion of the Fauna of this quarter of the globe, still we do not believe it occurs at regular periods, as is the case with the *Hirundo rustica*, but that it occasionally strays across the Mediterranean from the northern coasts of Africa, where it is also a rare species.

In Le Vaillant's 'Oiseaux d'Afrique' will be found an interesting account of this species, from which we learn that it is so familiar that it readily enters the houses of the inhabitants, particularly those in the interior, frequently building its nest in the sleeping-room of the family; that the nest differs from those of the other species of the genus, being a hollow ball, the entrance to which is constructed in the form of a long tube, through which the female passes into the interior, which is lined with any loose and soft materials the bird may find at hand. The eggs, which are from four to six in number, are white sprinkled with small brown spots.

Like the other members of the genus, its food consists of insects and their larvæ.

The top of the head, occiput, back, and wing-coverts are black with steel blue reflexions; the remainder of the wings and tail brownish black, with a faint indication of steel blue colour; back of the neck, rump, and upper tail-coverts deep rufous; sides of the face and throat pale rufous, which colour gradually becomes deeper and richer on the under-surface, flanks, and under tail-coverts; beak, irides, and feet black.

The female resembles the male, except that the crown of the head is rust red instead of black, and the tail-feathers are not so long.

We have figured an adult male of the natural size.