

## RED-FOOTED FALCON.

*Falco rufipes*, *Bechstein*.

Le Faucon à pieds rouges.

THIS small but true Falcon is one of the most elegant of the European species, and has lately become an object of still greater interest to the British ornithologist, from the circumstance of five or six examples having been recently taken in this country.

In the fourth volume of Loudon's Magazine of Natural History, page 116, Mr. Yarrell has recorded, that in the month of May 1830, three specimens of this Falcon were observed together at Horning in Norfolk.—Fortunately all three birds were obtained, and proved to be an adult female and two young males, in different states of plumage. A fourth specimen, a female, has been shot in Holkham Park.

A notice has since been read at the Linnean Society from Mr. Foljambe, of the capture of a male in Yorkshire; and a female lived nearly two years in the Gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park. From some of these examples, and from others in the collections of private friends, to which we have constant access, we have had ample opportunities of examining the many very interesting changes of plumage which occur in both sexes during their progress from youth to maturity.

The upper figure in our Plate represents an adult female. M. Temminck in his *Manuel*, page 33, describes this bird as having the upper part of the head marked with dark longitudinal streaks. Our specimen, from which the figure in the Plate was coloured, has the head of one uniform tint, without streak, but with a dark circle round the eye; and the female killed in Norfolk, of which we have seen a drawing, resembles our own bird exactly. Both these examples are considered to be adult. The immature female has the head streaked with dusky lines, which it retains through the second year; but it appears certain, from specimens before us, that these markings are lost at an advanced age. The feathers of the back and wing-coverts are then blueish-black, edged with lighter blue. The plumage of the other parts of the adult female is sufficiently portrayed in our figure. The young female has the top of the head brown, with dusky streaks; throat and ear-coverts white; eyes encircled with black: it has also a small black moustache extending from the eye downwards; the sides of the neck, breast, and all the under parts yellowish-white, with brown longitudinal streaks on the breast and abdomen; upper parts brown, the feathers edged with reddish-brown; tail with numerous alternate bars of brown and reddish-white, the tips white. Young male birds appear first in plumage similar to that of the female, changing at their moult to a light blueish-grey, and subsequently assuming the dark lead-colour so conspicuous on the head, back, and wings of the adult male bird represented by our lower figure. The thighs, vent and under tail-coverts are deep ferruginous; cere, orbits and feet orange-red; claws yellow-brown, darker at the tips. The fine adult male specimen from which our figure was coloured is in Mr. Yarrell's collection. The general uniformity in the colour of the males, contrasted with the pleasing variety of the females, is one of the most striking characteristics of this species, which is common over the greater part of the North of Europe; but of its habits or nidification little is recorded. Meyer, who has examined the stomachs of these birds, found in them only the remains of large coleoptera.

Our bird is the Orange-legged Hobby and Ingrian Falcon of Dr. Latham, so named from its inhabiting the province of Ingria in Russia, where it is called *Kobez*; it is also the *Falco vespertinus* of Gmelin. The adult male appears to have been unknown to Buffon as a distinct species, and is figured in the *Planches enluminées* of that Naturalist, No. 431, under the name of "a singular variety of the Hobby."