

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD.

Buteo Lagopus, Flem.

La Buse pattué.

THE Rough-legged Buzzard enjoys a much more extensive range of habitat than the preceding species (*Buteo vulgaris*), which is strictly confined to the Old World, while the bird here represented is dispersed over nearly the whole of the Arctic Circle. A beautiful figure of this bird will be found in the 'Fauna Boreali-Americana' of Messrs. Swainson and Richardson, which upon examination will prove, beyond a doubt, its identity with the specimens killed in Europe. Its residence in the northernmost parts of America does not appear to be permanent, for Dr. Richardson informs us that it retires southwards in October to winter upon the banks of the Delaware and Schuylkill, returning again to the north early in spring. "A pair of these birds," says this gentleman, "were seen at their nest, built of sticks, in a lofty tree, standing on a low, moist, alluvial point of land almost encircled by a bend of the Saskatchewan. They sailed round the spot in a wide circle, occasionally settling on the top of the tree, but were too wary to allow us to come within gunshot."

The Rough-legged Buzzard is abundant over the whole of the North of Europe, but is more thinly dispersed over its temperate and warmer parts. It is not a permanent resident in any of the British Isles, but visits them periodically, being in some seasons tolerably abundant, while in others it is scarce. During its stay it commits great depredation in the rabbit warrens, in the neighbourhood of which it may generally be found; it also preys upon rats, hamsters, moles, lizards, frogs, and, according to Mr. Selby, wild ducks and other birds. "In the winter of 1815," says this gentleman, "Northumberland was visited by some of these birds, and several opportunities were afforded me of inspecting both living and dead specimens. Those which came under examination closely resembled each other as to colour and markings, though some individuals were darker along the belly than others; and the quantity of white upon the upper half of the tail was not always of equal breadth. Two of these birds, from having attached themselves to a neighbouring marsh, passed under my frequent observation. Their flight was smooth but slow, and not unlike that of the Common Buzzard, and they seldom continued for any length of time on the wing. They preyed upon wild ducks and other birds, which they pounced upon the ground; and it would appear that mice and frogs must have constituted a great part of their food, as the remains of both were found in the stomachs of those that were killed."

The plumed tarsi of this species at once distinguish it from its near ally the Common Buzzard, to which it assimilates in its general contour, as well as in many of its actions, and its general economy.

The nest, according to M. Temminck, is built in lofty trees; the eggs, which are four in number, being white spotted with reddish brown.

Like the common species this bird undergoes a variety of changes between youth and maturity. The sexes are alike in plumage.

Adults have the head, neck, and throat yellowish white, with narrow streaks of brown; back and wing-coverts brown, with paler edges; lower part of the inner webs of the quills white; upper tail-coverts and base of the tail white, the remainder being brown crossed with bands of the same colour, but of a darker tint; breast yellowish white with large spots of brown; under surface brown; thighs yellowish white, with brown arrow-shaped spots; tarsi clothed with feathers of a yellowish white, with a few small brown specks; bill bluish black, darkest at the tip; cere and irides bright yellow; toes reddish yellow; claws black.

The Plate represents an adult male about two thirds of the natural size.