

CALAMANTHUS CAMPESTRIS.

Field Reed-Lark.

Praticola campestris, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part VIII. p. 171.

THE *Calamanthus campestris* is a native of Southern and Western Australia, where it inhabits open plains and scrubby lands, particularly such as are interspersed with tufts of coarse grasses. It has never yet been discovered within the colony of New South Wales. Like its near ally of Van Diemen's Land it is a rather shy and recluse species, running mouse-like over the ground among the herbage with its tail perfectly erect, and is not easily forced to fly, or even to quit the bush in which it has secreted itself.

Its song is an agreeable and pretty warble, which is poured forth while the bird is perched upon the topmost twig of a small bush.

This species also emits so very powerful an odour, that my dog frequently pointed at it from a very considerable distance.

The food, as ascertained by dissection, was small coleopterous insects, with which its minute stomach was crammed.

The nest, which is placed on the ground, is a globular structure, composed of grasses and feathers. The eggs are three or four in number, of a light chestnut-colour, thickly blotched with deep chestnut-brown, particularly at the larger end.

Forehead rufous, passing into the reddish brown of the crown and upper surface, with a stripe of blackish brown down the centre of each feather; wings sandy brown; internal webs of the primaries dark brown; two centre tail-feathers reddish brown, the remainder reddish brown at the base, crossed towards the extremity with a broad band of brownish black and broadly tipped with white; over the eye a line of white; ear-coverts mingled rufous and white; throat white, gradually passing into the buff of the under surface; all the feathers of the under surface with a stripe of brownish black down their centre; bill blackish brown, lighter at the base of the under mandible; irides rufous brown; feet blackish brown.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size.