

ORIGMA RUBRICATA.

Rock-Warbler.

Sylvia rubricata, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. li.—Bonn. et Vieill. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 461.

Ruddy Warbler, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 249.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. x. p. 697.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. vii. p. 138.

Motacilla solitaria, Lewin, Birds of New Holl., pl. 16.

Solitary Flycatcher, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. vi. p. 220.

Saxicola solitaria, Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 236.

Origma solitaria, G. R. Gray, List of Gen. of Birds, 2nd Edit., p. 30.

PERHAPS no one of the smaller birds of New South Wales has attracted a greater share of the attention of ornithologists than the present; a desire indeed of gaining a more complete knowledge of its habits and manners has been generally expressed. Aware of this fact, I made myself as much acquainted therewith as circumstances would admit; and found that they are very peculiar, and different from those of most other birds. Its usual places of resort are the neighbourhood of water-courses and stony, rocky gullies; so exclusively in fact is it confined to such situations, that it never visits the forests, nor have I ever seen it perching on the branches of the trees; indeed it would seem to have an aversion to so doing, as it does not even resort to them as a resting-place for its nest, but suspends it to the ceilings of caverns and the under surface of overhanging rocks in a manner that is most surprising; the nest, which is of an oblong, globular form, and composed of moss and other similar substances, is suspended by a narrow neck, and presents one of the most singular instances of bird architecture that has yet come under my notice. The breeding season extends over the months of September, October and November, when it is not unusual to find three or four nests suspended to the ceiling of a small dark cavern. I did not succeed in procuring its eggs.

Its food consists of insects of various kinds.

Its note is a low, squeaking sound, which it utters while hopping about the rocks with its tail raised above the level of the body, after the manner of some of the *Acanthizæ*.

The true habitat of this species is New South Wales, which, so far as I am aware, is its exclusive place of abode; I have never seen it from any of the other colonies: over that part of the country it is very generally distributed wherever situations occur suitable to its habits; the rocky beds of the gullies, both near the coast and among the mountains of the interior, being equally frequented by it, but never in any great numbers. It will be seen that it was one of the birds which excited the notice and interest of Mr. Caley, who, in his "Notes," says, "*Cataract Bird*; an inhabitant of rocky ground. While at the waterfall of Carrung-gurring, about thirty miles to the southward of Prospect Hill, I saw several of them. I have also seen them in the North Rocks, about a couple of miles from Paramatta, and always upon the rocks. I never observed them in trees or bushes."

The sexes are precisely similar in their plumage, which may be thus described:—

All the upper surface and wings dull brown; tail brownish black; throat grey; under surface dark rusty red; forehead slightly washed with ferruginous red; irides dark reddish brown; bill and feet brownish black, the former rather lighter than the latter.

The figures are of the natural size.