

ACCENTOR RUBIDUS, *Sieb., Temm. et Schleg.*

Ruddy Accentor.

- Accentor rubidus*, Sieb., Temm. et Schleg. Faun. Jap., tab. xxxii.—Whitely, Ibis, 1867, p. 198.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 305, *Accentor*, sp. 7.
——— *modularis rubidus*, Sieb., Temm. et Schleg. Faun. Jap., p. 69.
——— (*Tharrhaleus*) *rubidus*, Gray, Hand-list of Birds, part i. p. 231.
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THE islands of Japan stand at the eastern extremity of Asia, as the British Islands do at the western; for Asia and Europe may be regarded as a continuous mass of land, stretching across the temperate region of the Old World; but why the avifaunas of those opposite regions should closely assimilate, is a problem which naturalists have not been able to solve. In some instances the British and Japanese species are identical, such as the Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*) and the Tree-creeper (*Certhia familiaris*); while the Hedge Accentor (*Accentor modularis*) and the Robin (*Erythacus rubecula*), and many others, are represented by closely allied but distinct species. At the same time, there are many birds, and very fine ones, too, which are peculiar to Japan.

The bird here figured is closely allied to the Common Hedge Accentor (*Accentor modularis*) of Britain, and, judging from its structure and coloration and from what we know of the situations to which it resorts, takes the place in northern Japan of our well-known species; indeed, at a first glance, the two birds might be considered identical; but on comparing the examples shot at Hakodadi, by Mr. Henry Whitely, with British-killed specimens, certain marked differences are observable, which induces the ornithologist to regard them as distinct, the redder hue of the upper surface of the Japanese bird, its shorter tail, and the deep grey of its breast being the main points by which it is distinguished from its British ally. While speaking of these differences I must remark that, upon comparing the figure of the bird published in the 'Fauna Japonica,' I find it to differ somewhat from the one here given; and if the drawing in that work is correct, there must be two species in Japan, in which case the bird I have represented will require a distinctive specific appellation. I hesitate, however, to propose one at present, thinking it probable that the figure in the 'Fauna Japonica' may have been taken from an imperfect specimen, there being no indication of longitudinal striae on the flanks, while in the specimens in my collection, procured by Mr. Whitely, they are as conspicuous as in our own *Accentor modularis*. I must not omit to mention that Schlegel has remarked on the absence of the striae from his bird, respecting which he says:—

"Japan is inhabited by an Accentor which resembles the ordinary species *A. modularis* so closely that it would seem to be merely a local race of the European bird. The only differences I have been able to detect between them are that the Japanese bird has a shorter tail and certain modifications in its colouring: namely, the brown of the back and wings has a purple tint, and the head and neck, which are of a dusky reddish-brown, approaching a deep grey, are destitute of spots; all the under surface, too, is of a nearly uniform tint, and does not present the longitudinal streaks which ornament the flanks of the European species. In every other respect they are alike."

Mr. Henry Whitely, in his 'Notes on the Birds collected by him in Northern Japan,' says:—

"Two specimens only of this rare bird were obtained by me at Hakodadi,—the first on the 28th of October, 1865, from a native birdcatcher, of whom I had endeavoured to purchase it some time before when it was alive; but the price asked, two boos (4s.), was too much. The man told me it was the first he had ever obtained. The second, a male, was shot on the 14th of November, in the same year, on a bramble-bush, near the pine-wood at the foot of Hakodadi Head. In its habits it is evidently very shy and retiring, and it was only by patiently watching the bramble-bush that I was at last able to get a clear shot at it."

The general tint of the entire plumage of the upper surface rusty red, with a dark brown centre to each feather; the tips of the wing-coverts and some of the innermost secondaries somewhat paler; the head, also, is somewhat lighter than the back; wings and tail dark brown, margined with rusty; chin, throat, breast, and upper part of the abdomen dark reddish grey; posterior part of the flanks rusty, with an obscure streak of dark brown down the centre of each feather; vent and under tail-coverts pale rusty; bill brownish black; irides light hazel; legs, toes, and claws pale brown.

The figures are of the natural size.