LUSCINIOPSIS LUSCINIOIDES.

Savi's Warbler

Sylvia luscinioides, Savi, Orn. Tosc., tom. i. p. 270.
Salicaria luscinioides, Keys. & Blas. Wirbelt. Eur., p. 53.
Calamodyta lusciniodes, G. R. Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 172, *Calamodyta*, sp. 18.
Pseudo-luscinia Savii, Bonap. Geog. and Comp. List of Birds of Eur. and N. Am., p. 12.

But a few years ago the great fens of Cambridge and Huntingdon shires formed an asylum in which this rare British bird doubtless took up its summer quarters as regularly as the Sedge- and Reed-Warblers now do over wider areas in our island; but the drainage of those districts has rendered them so unsuited to the habits of the bird that the time is probably not far distant when it will no longer resort to them. It is for the like reason that the Ruff, formerly so abundant in those parts of the country and in Lincolnshire, no longer breeds there, and that the sight of a Bittern therein has become a rarity, fields of waving corn being as uncongenial to them as they are to the beautiful Copper Butterfly (*Chrysophanus dispar*) formerly so numerous in those counties. With these prefatory remarks, I shall here transcribe the account given of this species in Mr. Stevenson's 'Birds of Norfolk,' as it is by far the most perfect that has yet been published.

"At least six well-authenticated specimens of this rare British Warbler are now ascertained to have been procured in Norfolk, of which the first, though long overlooked, was for many years the only one known to science. It was obtained by the late Rev. James Brown, at Limpenhoe, in the early part of the present century, during the month of May; and the following interesting account of it was kindly sent me by Mr. Brown, in 1856, on his hearing that I had received one from Surlingham Broad. He says, 'Its singular note had been observed at Limpenhoe by Sir Wm. Hooker, myself, and another ornithological friend, whilst investigating the natural history of that district, but for a considerable time not a sight of the bird could be obtained. We called it the *reel* bird, on account of the resemblance of its monotonous note to the continuous whirr of the reel, at that time used by the hand spinners of wool. At length it was discovered uttering its singular song (if so it may be called) from the top of an alder bush that grew in the midst of a large patch of sedge, into which it fell like a stone as soon as it was approached. After, however, much patience and caution, it again reascended the alder and was shot. It is a very shy bird, and in its habits seems to resemble the Grasshopper Warbler, creeping among the sedge in search probably of insects and mollusks. It was submitted to the inspection of the celebrated ornithologist, Temminck, whilst he was in London at the sale of Mr. Bullock's museum. He was puzzled, and requested permission to take it with him to the continent, to compare it with specimens in his own splendid collection. He returned it with his opinion that it was a variety of the Reed-Wren; and as such it is noticed in their 'Catalogue' by Messrs. Sheppard and Whitear. Another specimen, procured for me at Strumpshaw by a marshman of the name of Waters, I presented to my friend, Edward Lombe, Esq., in whose splendid collection of British birds it probably may be found, under Temminck's nomenclature, as the Reed-Wren, or as *Sylvia luscinioides*.'

"In the summer of 1843, two examples of this bird were shot at South Walsham, one of which was presented by Mr. J. H. Gurney to the Norwich museum, the other to the late Mr. T. C. Heysham of Carlisle, who was anxious to possess a British specimen of this rare warbler; but on the sale of that gentleman's collection, in 1859, this bird was also procured for the museum by Mr. Gurney, and, together with its companion from South Walsham and the Limpenhoe specimen, forms a highly interesting group. That the above-named specimens are by no means all that have been heard or even killed in that district, I have very recently ascertained from a communication kindly made to me by the Rev. H. T. Frere, of Burston, who possesses an example from that locality, and says, 'Others have been heard there since. Specimens were sent from thence by the late Mr. W. K. Jary, years ago, before the species was recognized by Savi; and no particular notice was taken of them beyond a formal acknowledgment by the British Museum authorities. It is known as the Red Craking Reed-wren by the marshmen.' Presuming that Mr. Frere's bird was procured about the same time as the museum pair, the next occurrence of this species, after an interval of thirteen years, is the specimen now in my collection from Surlingham, which was shot on the 7th of June, 1856. The marshman's account of the actions of this Warbler agrees very nearly with the remarks of Mr. Brown; but as everything relating to a species so little known is worthy of record, I give it as taken down at the time in my note-book. Being engaged on the broad all night, he first heard the bird 'noising' about nine o'clock in the evening, on the 6th of June, and observed it from his boat running up and down the dead reed-stems, from the tops of which it kept calling at intervals until two in the morning. He then returned home, but at six o'clock he again found it in the same clump of reeds, though more restless and calling incessantly. Soon after this the wind began to stir the reeds, and it then dropped down and remained silent among the thick sedges. Up to this time he had imagined it to be a Grasshopper Warbler, although the note seemed unusually loud and clear; and like them it kept moving its head from side to side whilst singing. On the following evening, at eight o'clock, the bird was still in the same place calling as before; and as one or two of the Grasshopper Warblers were singing at the same time, he distinguished at once a difference in their notes. As soon as he had shot the bird, he saw that it was different to any he had handled before, and, observing that it remained so long in one spot, made every search for a nest, but could find no trace of one. About ten years ago, he assures me, there were several couples of birds on the broad with similar notes, and he then found a nest with eggs, which, from his descripion, might be either