AËDON GALACTODES.

Rufous Sedge-Warbler.

Turdus arundinaceus, var. β, Lath. Ind. Orn., tom. i. p. 335.
Sylvia galactotes, Temm. Man. d'Orn., tom. i. p. 182.
—— *rubiginosa*, Temm., ib. vol. iii. p. 129.
Turdus rubiginosus, Meyer, Orn. Taschenb., tom. iii. p. 66.
Aëdon galactodes, Boie, Isis, 1826, p. 972.
—— *rubiginosus*, Degl. Orn. Eur., tom. i. p. 567.
Erythropygia galactotes, Bonap. Geog. & Comp. List of Birds of Eur. and N. Amer., p. 13.
Agrobates galactotes, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 241.
Salicaria galactodes, Keys. et Blas. Wirbelth. Eur., p. lv.

This very attractive species has at least been killed twice in England, and is therefore entitled to a place in our avifauna. The southern and eastern portions of Europe, North Africa, Asia Minor, and Persia are its natural home, in some of which countries it is as common and as well known to their bird's-nesting boys as the Nightingale and the Reed-Wren are to those of our own country. Its general colouring, like that of *Cursorius* and some other eastern birds, is very similar to the sandy districts in which it dwells; just as the Ptarmigan in winter assimilates to the snow with which it is surrounded; but the *Aëdon galactodes* can at pleasure render itself conspicuous by spreading out and exhibiting the contrasted markings of its tail, which it often does, perhaps to a greater extent than any other species of the Sylvidæ. The markings of birds, often hidden when not in action, are of great interest to the ornithologist; since observation has shown him that such adornments are not given without a purpose, and that their owner has the power of exhibiting them to the greatest advantage, whether it be the train of the stately Peacock, the decorated tails of the Polypectron and the Turkey, or the fan-shaped tail of the present bird. It is said by those who have seen the present bird alive, that a more attractive little creature can scarcely be found—its actions, as might be inferred from its form, being sprightly and graceful as it flits from hillock to hillock with its tail at one moment erect, and at the next spread out to its fullest extent.

A record of the first specimen known to have been killed in our island will be found in the 'Zoologist' for 1854, p. 4511, where Mr. William Borrer, Jun., says:—"As G. Swaysland, a bird-stuffer, of Brighton, was driving near a part of the South Downs, about six miles from that town, known as Plumpton Bosthill, on the 16th of September, he noticed a bird which he supposed to be a cream-coloured variety of the Nightingale. Having no gun, he proceeded about four miles to obtain one, and returning to the spot found the bird about twenty yards from where he first observed it. It was very wary, flying always to the further side of some furze-bushes, mounting into the air some fifteen yards, and settling on the side furthest from him. Swaysland describes its flight as resembling that of the young of the Red-backed Shrike. He at last got a shot, at about forty yards, and killed it. On dissection it proved to be a male, and would shortly have moulted, one or two young primaries having made their appearance; they were darker-coloured than the old ones. The feathers also on the back and tail, especially the central ones of the latter, are much worn." Mr. Borrer borrowed the bird and sent it to Mr. Yarrell; and it is from this specimen that the figure in the second Supplement of the 'British Birds' was taken. It is now in the possession of Fuller Maitland, Esq.

The occurrence of the second English example is thus recorded by Mr. G. R. Gray in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History,' vol. iv. 3rd ser., 1859, p. 399:—

"A second specimen of the Rufous Sedge Warbler (*Aëdon galactotes*) was killed near Start Point, South Devonshire, on the 25th of September last. It was shot by William D. Llewelyn, Esq., by whom it has been presented to the British Museum. That gentleman observed that its flight much resembled that of a Lark, and that it was exceedingly thin. Its visit was probably occasioned by the strong southerly wind which had prevailed for several days."

According to Temminck, it was first obtained at Gibraltar, by M. Natterer, a distinguished traveller and naturalist attached to the Imperial Museum of Vienna, who subsequently secured other examples at Algesiras. Latham (who, in his 'General History of Birds,' calls it Gibraltar Warbler, from the place of its first detection) says it arrives there "the last week in April, is a familiar bird, void of fear, perching on the tops of shrubs, hedges, and walls in the manner of the Redstart."

Mr. O. Salvin, in his "Five Months Birds'-nesting in the Eastern Atlas" ('The Ibis,' 1859), says:—