

As we have had so few opportunities of observing this bird in a state of nature, I cannot perhaps do better than give a free translation of some interesting passages respecting it in the 'Ornithologie de la Savoye,' by J. B. Bailly.

"The Red-headed Shrike is abundant in Switzerland and Savoy during the four most beautiful months of the year. Towards the 20th or 25th of April it is seen in pairs on the outskirts of the woods on our hills, and in other places furnished with underwood, in the woods of chestnut- and walnut-trees, in the poplars and willows which border the roads and fields, in the midst of fields planted with trees, and, lastly, in parks and orchards. It is in these situations that it lives and breeds during the time it remains in our climate. It resorts to the large trees on the borders and in the midst of marshy ground for the purpose of nidification, and towards the end of July betakes itself to the marshes in company with *Lanius minor*, and continues to associate with that species until they depart. Both sexes assist in constructing the nest, taking it in turns to bring and employ the materials—the male bringing them, and the female disposing of them, and *vice versâ*. The nest is attached by means of stringy plants to the branches of trees or underwood, and is outwardly composed of lichens, roots, mosses, and small twigs compactly bound together with fibrous filaments; the interior is composed of bits of very fine plants and morsels of wool. Towards the 15th of May the female deposits four or five eggs, of a light-greenish white, sprinkled with various-sized spots of greyish ash-colour, particularly at the larger end, where they form a zone. While sitting, the female is carefully attended by her mate, who brings her worms, small reptiles, and occasionally a beakful of insects. She sits with so much assiduity as to allow herself to be taken by the hand. Two days after the hatching, the parents may be seen feeding their young ones with worms, small slugs, smooth and hairy caterpillars. One of the parents keeps them warm under its wings until the other undertakes the same duty. Their constant goings and comings, as well as their want of suspicion, during this epoch, are often the cause of their progeny becoming the prey of birdsnesters, shepherds especially; these last, indeed, are in the habit of marking, during the nesting-season, all the trees and bushes where they may see these birds stop. After the young have left the nest, the male and the female still consort with their family until their migration, which commences about the 25th of August for the more advanced flocks, and from the 1st to the 15th of September for the others. Before this period, families not yet diunited are seen following one another in short flights over the hedges and trees which border the roads, streams, or fields—perching from time to time on the summits of the dead or more isolated branches, from which they utter their harsh and short cries. They wage war with beetles, caterpillars, frogs, small lizards, mice, and occasionally weakly birds. When these kinds of food are wanting, they have recourse to fruits, especially to those of the small cherry, plum, mulberry, and fig trees."

Having a number of specimens of this bird now before me from various countries wide apart, I cannot but notice that they differ considerably in size, and to some extent in their markings—those from Tangier being very much smaller than the examples from Smyrna, Trebizond, and Italy, having the band crossing the forehead much narrower, and the white of the lores more extensive. The depth of the buff colouring of the flanks differs greatly in all of them, probably in consequence of their having been more or less exposed to the influence of light. In freshly-moulted birds the buffy hue shows very conspicuously, but would seem to be evanescent.

In the male, the lores are creamy white; band across the forehead, line above and below the eye, and a broad mark posterior to it down the side of the neck black; behind the eye a narrow mark of white; crown of the head, nape, and back of the neck rich reddish chestnut; upper part of the back or mantle black, each feather slightly edged with rufous; scapularies white; lower part of the back grey; rump and upper tail-coverts white; wings brown, the coverts narrowly edged with pale brown; at the base of the primaries a patch of white; secondaries narrowly edged and more broadly tipped with white; under surface creamy white, washed with buff on the flanks; central tail-feathers black; the lateral feathers white at the base, crossed near the tip by a broad oblique mark of black, which occupies the inner web only of the outer feather, the exterior web of that feather and the tips of all the lateral ones being white; irides hazel; bill, legs, and feet black.

"When the young quit the nest," says M. Bailly, "about the end of August, they may be recognized by the dusky red of the upper parts, with the exception of the head, which is adorned with a mixture of white and grey, and the rump, which is marked with brown; the under surface dirty white, with crescents of grey. After their first moult, the upper part of the head, the neck, and the scapularies are varied with white, red, brown, and black; the back is brown; the rump greyish white, transversely rayed with a blackish colour; the white of the wing is shaded with russet; and the primaries are brown, tipped with white or reddish."

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