ENNEOCTONUS RUFUS.

Woodchat.

Lanius rufus, Briss. Orn., tom. ii. p. 147.
——*rutilus*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 70.
—— *Pomeranus*, Sparr. Mus. Carls., fasc. i. tab. 1.
——*Collurio*, var. *γ. rufus*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 301.
—— *ruficeps*, Bechst. Orn. Taschenb., vol. i. p. 101.
—— *castaneus*, Risso.
—— *ruficapillus*, Baill. Orn. de la Savoye, tom. ii. p. 32.
Enneoctonus rufus, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. . p. 362, *Enneoctonus*, sp. 2.
———— *pomeranus*, Cab. Mus. Hein., Theil i. p. 73.

Why the Woodchat should not be as common in England as in the opposite countries of France and Belgium, I cannot conjecture; yet it is not: neither does it, I believe, visit Denmark, Sweden, or Norway. We may consequently infer that it is a much more southern species than its near ally, the Red-backed Shrike; indeed, we know that it is particularly common in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Asia Minor; but its range over Africa appears to be less extensive than was formerly supposed. If it be necessary to state what claim the Woodchat has to a place in the fauna of Great Britain, I may mention that Mr. Rodd, in his List of Birds observed in Cornwall, states that "an adult bird was caught in a boat, near Scilly; and that, in the autumn of 1849, several examples of the young of the year were captured on the Scilly Isles, apparently driven there by a strong east wind which intercepted their migratory movements southwards:" this, adds Mr. Rodd, "may be regarded as an important fact, as offering good grounds for believing that they were bred in the British Isles." The late Mr. Hoy mentions an instance of one being killed near Canterbury, and another in the neighbourhood of Swaftham in Norfolk; while a male and a female, forming part of the late Rev. Francis Henson's collection, were said to have been killed in Suffolk. Mr. Joseph Clarke, a gentleman well versed in our native birds, informed Mr. Yarrell that Mr. Adams, of Gorlestone, in Norfolk, has in his collection a Woodchat shot by himself; later still, Mr. Frederick Bond, of Kingsbury, but yesterday (July 30, 1862) sent me the following note:—"The Woodchat has, to my knowledge, been several times found in the Isle of Wight. In the summer of 1856 a pair made a nest there, but unfortunately it was taken before the eggs were laid. In the September of the same year a fine young bird was shot by Mr. H. Rogers; it is now in my possession. In the following year the old birds returned, and the same gentleman sent me the nest and five eggs; he has since observed another nest and eggs, which are now in the collection of my friend, the Rev. Mr. Braikenridge. I must mention that I requested Mr. Rogers not to shoot the old birds."

The visits of the Woodchat to England are few and far between; and neither in Scotland nor in Ireland has it yet made its appearance; at least, no instance of its capture has been recorded. Its trivial name would indicate that the bird differs somewhat in its economy from the Red-backed Shrike; and we find that such is the case; for, in his papers published in the 'Magazine of Natural History,' the late Mr. Hoy says, "It differs from *Lanius Collurio* in the choice of situation for its nest, placing it invariably on trees, and preferring the oak. The nest is fixed in the fork of a projecting branch, and is composed, on the outside, of sticks and wool, mixed with white moss from the bodies of the trees, and lined with fine grass and wool. The eggs are four or five in number, rather smaller than those of the Red-backed Shrike, and varying much in their markings—the ground-colour being pale blue in some, in others a dirty white, surrounded near the larger end with a zone of rust-coloured spots; in some, again, the markings and spots are of a paler colour, and more dispersed over the egg. It is not a wild bird, often building close to houses and public roads. It is abundant in some parts of the Netherlands, and arrives and departs about the same time as *Lanius Collurio*."

Lord Lilford states that it is "very abundant in all the Ionian Islands, arriving about the end of April, and breeding in the olive-groves." (Ibis, vol. ii. p. 135.)

A fine nest of this bird, brought by myself from Malta, was a thick-walled, cup-shaped structure, composed of the stems and flowering heads of some creeping and odoriferous plants, and lined with a few extremely fine roots.

The eggs are stone-white, with large blotches of olive and grey, those of the latter colour appearing as if beneath the surface of the shell; the spots, too, are not so much disposed in the form of a zone as in *E. Collurio*. I have two eggs in which the ground-colour is buffy, instead of stone-white; and it is very probable that they were of a delicate salmon hue before they were blown, like those of *E. Collurio*.