



LESSER GREY SHRIKE.

*Lanius minor* (Linn.)

*Collurio* — (Vig.)

*Drawn from Life & on Stone by J. & E. Gould.*

*Printed by J. Ballman del.*



## LESSER GREY SHRIKE.

*Lanius minor*, Linn.

*Collurio minor*, Vig.

La Pie-Grieche à Poitrine rose.

THE Lesser Grey Shrike, or Rose-breasted Shrike of Temminck, though belonging to that division of the family to which Mr. Vigors has given the generic title of *Collurio*, (and which is distinguished from the restricted genus *Lanius* by the graduated tail and short rounded wing,) must nevertheless be regarded as forming a link between these two genera; inasmuch as the tail is rather rounded than decidedly graduated, and the wings are more lengthened than in any other species of the genus to which it is now assigned.

Of the European Shrikes, the present is certainly one of the most distinguished for the beauty and delicacy of its colouring: in size, it is inferior to the *Lanius Excubitor* of Linnæus, but possesses a more strong and robust bill than is found in that bird,—to which, however, in manners, and in the general character of its plumage, it closely approximates.

The *Lanius minor* is strictly Continental; no instance, so far as we are aware, being on record of its ever having visited our Island. From M. Temminck, to whose acquaintance with the birds of Europe the scientific world is so much indebted, we learn that its range on the Continent is very extensive, inhabiting, with the exception of Holland (in which it is rarely seen), Turkey, the Archipelago, Italy and Spain, breeding also in some parts of France and Germany, and visiting the northern portions of Europe as far as Russia. Thickets, trees, bushes, and hedge-rows are its favourite resort, among which it constructs its nest: the eggs, six in number, are oblong and of a dull green, having a zone of small spots round the centre, of an olive-grey.

Its food, like that of the other species of the genus, consists principally of insects, such as moths, and coleoptera, to which young or feeble birds are occasionally added.

The beak and legs are black; a black band passes over the forehead, eyes and ears; the top of the head, back and rump of a fine ash; throat white; breast and sides of a delicate rose-colour; wings black, with a white bar across the quill-feathers; the middle tail-feathers black, the two outer feathers quite white, the two next partially white, the succeeding feathers on each side less and less so.

The female differs as little from the male as those of the allied species *Excubitor*, and is only to be distinguished by the more obscure rose-colour of the breast, and the black of the plumage having a tinge of brown.

The young of the year of both sexes after the autumn moult are destitute of the black band on the forehead, which remains grey during the winter, and the plumage of the superior surface is more or less broken with grey, the under parts being obscure; but after the moult of spring, both sexes gain the band over the forehead and ears, the rose-colour of the breast becoming at the same time more lively. Total length eight inches.

Our figure represents an adult male of the natural size.



Gould, John. 1837. "Lesser Grey Shrike. *Collurio minor*, Vig. La Pie-Grieche à Poitrine rose. [Pl. 68]." *The Birds of Europe* 2, <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.317239>.

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