



YELLOW HEADED WAGTAIL.

Motacilla citreola: (Pall.)

Drawn from life and on Stone by T. & E. Gould.

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YELLOW-HEADED WAGTAIL.

Motacilla citreola, *Pall.*

La Bergeronette citrine.

A PAIR of this very rare and beautiful species of Wagtail has been very obligingly lent to us for this Work by Lieut. Col. W. H. Sykes, whose rich collection of birds from the Dukhun has at all times been open to our inspection, and has afforded us opportunities of ascertaining the fact, that many of our rare European birds, which more exclusively belong to the eastern portions of that continent, are in reality natives of the western countries of Asia, whence, it would appear, they occasionally migrate to the adjoining districts of Europe, so as to form a connecting link uniting the productions of Europe to those of Asia; and this appears to be the case with the bird before us, whose rare and uncertain visits, according to M. Temminck, to Oriental Russia and the Crimea have afforded little opportunity of ascertaining either its habits or the circumstances connected with its nidification; but we may reasonably expect, from its close affinity in appearance to our well-known Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*, Ray.), its habits and manners, as well as its mode of nidification, that it is somewhat similar. In the Proceedings of the Committee of Science and Correspondence of the Zoological Society of London, Lieut. Col. Sykes briefly mentions, that this bird has the habits, manners, aspect and size of *Budytes melanocephala*, and, like it, is solitary and only found in the vicinity of rivers; but Colonel Sykes did not see the two species together. Larvæ of water insects and greenish mud were found in the stomach. Colonel Sykes expresses his belief, that this species together with the *Budytes melanocephala* and *Budytes Beema*, all possessing the long hind claw, do not habitually perch, but like other birds with a similar claw, as in the genera *Anthus*, *Alauda*, *Mirafra*, and *Fringilla crucigera*, Temm., nocturnate on the ground. We regret that neither our own observations, nor the numerous works to which we have access, will enable us to add much to this short notice; we may state, however, that we coincide with the views of M. Temminck in considering that Hungary and the Archipelago may also be occasionally visited by it.

In size the *Motacilla citreola* is somewhat inferior both to *M. flava* and *neglecta*, from both of which it may readily be distinguished, in its spring plumage, by the fine citron yellow which covers the top of the head, the cheeks, and the whole of the under surface. A crescent-shaped band of black crosses the occiput, and dark ash colour slightly tinged with grey pervades the upper plumage; the middle and the greater coverts of the wings are edged with white; the tail-feathers black, with the exception of the two outer ones on each side, which are white.

The males and females in winter, says M. Temminck, have not the black occipital band, that part being then yellow like the rest of the head.

Our Plate represents a male and female, proved to be such by dissection, in their summer plumage; the lower bird in the Plate being the male.



Gould, John. 1837. "Yellow-headed Wagtail. *Motacilla citreola*, Pall. La Bergeronnette citrine. [Pl. 144]." *The Birds of Europe* 2, <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.317320>.

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