

The Short-tailed FIELD-MOUSE *.

THE short-tailed field-mouse is still more common and more generally diffused than the long-tailed kind. The latter never appears in high grounds; but the former is found every where, in the woods, the fields, the meadows, and even in the gardens. It is remarkable for the thickness of its head, and the shortness of its tail, which exceeds not an inch in length. It digs holes in the earth, where it amasses grain, filberts, and acorns: But it appears to prefer corn to every other food. In the month of July, when the grain is ripe, the short-tailed field-mice assemble from all quarters, and often do great da-

* This animal has a large head, a blunt nose, short ears hid in the fur, prominent eyes, and a short tail: The colour of the head and upper part of the body is ferruginous, mixed with black, and the belly is of a deep ash-colour. The length of the body, from tail to nose, 6 inches, and that of the tail, which is thinly covered with hair, and terminated by a small tuft, one inch and a half; Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.* p. 305.

Mus agrestis minor; Gifford. *Quad.* p. 733. Icon. *Quad.* p. 116.

Mus agrestis capite grandi, Brachyuros; Ray, *Synops. Quad.* p. 218.

Mus terrestris, cauda mediocri subpilosa, palmis subtetradactylis, plantis pentadactylis, auriculis vellere brevioribus; Linn. *Syst.* p. 82.

Mus agrestis capite grandi; Klein. *Quad.* p. 57.

Mus cauda brevi, pennis e nigricante et sordide luteo mixtis in dorso, et saturate cinereis in ventre, vestitus.—*Mus campestris minor*; Brisson. *Regn. Anim.* p. 176.

Campagrech, Mulot à courte queue, petit rat des champs; Buffon.

mage by cutting the stalks of the corn, in order to come at the ears. They follow the reapers, and eat up all the fallen or neglected grain. When the gleanings are devoured, they flock to the new-sown fields, and prematurely destroy the crop of the ensuing year. In winter, most of them retire into the woods, where they feed upon filberts, acorns, and the seeds of trees. In particular years, they appear in numbers so immense, that they would destroy every thing, if they continued long: But they always kill and eat one another during a scarcity of provisions. They, besides, become the prey of the long-tailed field-mouse, the fox, the wild cat, and the weasels.

In its internal structure, this animal resembles the water-rat more than any other; but differs from him externally by several essential characters: 1. By the size; the short-tailed field-mouse is not above three inches long; but the water-rat is seven inches: 2. By the dimensions of the head and body, those of the former being proportionally thicker than those of the latter: 3. By the length of the tail, which, in this field-mouse, exceeds not a third of the length of the animal's body; but the length of the tail of the water-rat is near two thirds of its body: Lastly, By its manners and dispositions: It feeds not upon fishes, nor goes into water, but nourishes itself with acorns, grain, and tuberous roots, such as those of the dandelion, &c. Their holes resemble those
of

Plate LXXXVI.



SHORT TAILD FIELD MOUSE.

of the long-tailed field-mouse, and are often divided into two apartments; but they are neither so spacious nor so deep. Several of them frequently live together. When the females are about to bring forth, they make beds of herbs for their young. They produce in spring and summer, and the litter generally consists of five or six, and sometimes of seven or eight.