

The PINE-WEASEL, or  
YELLOW-BREASTED  
MARTIN\*.

THIS animal is a native of northern regions, where the species is so numerous, that the quantity of their furs annually consumed is perfectly astonishing. There are very few of them in the temperate climates, and they exist not in very warm countries. Some of them are found in the forests of Burgundy, and likewise in those of Fountainebleau; but, in general, they are as rare in France as the martin is frequent. There are none of these animals in Britain; because they have no extensive forests in that country. They fly equally inhabited countries and uncovered fields. They dwell in the woods, and conceal not themselves among

\* Weasel with a yellow breast and throat; the hair is of a dark chestnut colour, and of far superior fineness to the former; in other respects agreeing with it; Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.* p. 216.

In Latin, *Martes*, *Martia*, *Marturus*; in Italian, *Martia*, *Martora*, *Martore*, *Martorella*, *Martina*; in Spanish, *Marta*; in German, *Field-murder*, *Wild-Murder*; in Swedish, *Mard*; in French, *La Martre*.

*Martes sylvestris*, *mardis* altera species nobilior; Ggular, *Icon. Animal. Quad.* p. 99.

*Martes*; Ray, *Synops. Animal. Quad.* p. 200.

*Musella martes*; Klein. *Hist. Nat. Quad.* p. 64.

the rocks, but traverse the forest and climb the trees. They live by hunting, and destroy prodigious quantities of birds, by eating their eggs. They seize squirrels, field-mice, &c. They also eat honey like the martin and polecat. They never appear in the open fields, in the meadows, or in the vineyards. They approach not the dwellings of men; and they differ still farther from the martin in their manner of making their escape from the hunters. When the martin is pursued by a dog, he instantly runs to his hay-loft or his hole. The pine-weasel, on the contrary, runs a long time before the dogs, then climbs the trunk of a tree, and, from this station, he views them as they pass. The track which he leaves in the snow appears to be that of a large animal, because he always leaps, and both feet make but one impression. He is somewhat larger than the martin, and yet his head is shorter. His legs are longer, and consequently he runs more easily. His neck is yellow; but that of the martin is white. His hair is finer, more bushy, and less subject to fall off. The female prepares not a bed for her young; and yet lodges them most commodiously. The squirrels build nests in the tops of trees, with equal art as the birds. When the pine-weasel is about to bring forth, he climbs to the squirrel's nest, banishes the possessor, enlarges the entry to it, and there deposits her young. She likewise uses the old nests of ducks or buzzards, and holes of ancient trees,

trees, from which she dislodges the wood-peckers and other birds. She brings forth in the spring, and her litter consists of two or three only. Though her young come into the world blind, they soon acquire a considerable growth. She brings to them eggs and birds; and afterwards leads them out to hunt along with herself. The birds are so well acquainted with their enemies, that, when they perceive the pine-weasel, they utter the same mournful cry to advertise his approach, as when they see a fox. What shows that the birds are animated with hatred, rather than fear, is, that they follow at a distance, and utter this peculiar cry against all carnivorous animals, as the wolf, the fox, the pine-weasel, the wild cat, &c. but never against the stag, the roe, the hare, &c.

The pine-weasels are very frequent in the northern parts of America, Europe, and Asia. Many of them are brought from Canada, and they extend as far as Hudson's bay\*; and, in Asia, as far north as the kingdom of Tonquin† and the empire of China‡. They ought not to be confounded with the sable, an animal whose fur is much more precious. The sable is black; but the pine-weasel is brown and yellow. The most valuable part of the skin of the latter is the brown, which extends along the whole back to the extremity of the tail.

\* Lade's Voyages, vol. ii. p. 227. † Tavernier, tom. iv. p. 182. Hist. Gen. des Voyages, tom. vii. p. 117. ‡ Hist. Gen. des Voyages, tom. vi. p. 562.