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SECOND SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
HISTORY
OF
BRITISH BIRDS:

BEING ALSO A
FIRST SUPPLEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

BY WILLIAM YARRELL, V.P.L.S. F.Z.S.



ILLUSTRATED WITH 18 WOOD-ENGRAVINGS.

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PREFACE TO THE SUPPLEMENT.



THE publication of the third edition of the History of our British Birds supplies the opportunity of including the record of seventeen species new to the British Catalogue; fifteen of which are figured and described in this Supplement, and notice of the occurrence of two others is also added.

STRIX ASIO, *Linn.* The American Mottled Owl. This bird was shot by Joseph Owen, who resides at Kirkstall. It was killed in the breeding-season of 1852, in Hawksworth cover, the property of Lord Cardigan, half a mile above Kirkstall Abbey, on the banks of the river Aire, about four miles west of Leeds. A pair of these Owls were seen by Mr. Owen, and having shot one, he went to their haunt, night after night, to obtain the other, but without success. I was favoured with a notice of the occurrence of this bird by Richard Hobson, Esq., M.D., of Leeds; and a detailed account, with a figure of the species, appeared in the Naturalist for August, 1855.

This Owl was preserved by Mr. Mathew Smith, of

Leeds, and recognised by Mr. Denny and Mr. Graham, Naturalists, residing at Leeds. The bird inhabits the Oregon and the Columbia River districts, and is met with abundantly in the British provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Labrador.

TRINGA PUSILLA, *Linn.* Wilson and Audubon. This little Sandpiper was recorded in the *Zoologist* as having occurred at Penzance. E. H. Rodd, Esq. very kindly sent me a letter on the subject, promising me a sight of the specimen. During the last week of last month, May, 1856, Mr. W. S. Vingoe, of Penzance, who shot the bird in autumn on the shore there, being in London, brought me the specimen to look at. It was well preserved, and bore on the feathers of its back and wing-coverts the reddish colour and buff margins peculiar to the *Tringa minuta* of Leisler in its summer and autumn plumage, which species it resembles, but is smaller in size. The *tarsi* are longer than those of the *Tringa Temminckii* of Leisler, but shorter than those of *Tringa minuta*.

This diminutive Sandpiper, called Little Peep, and Peep, in America, from the sound of its single note, was found by Audubon in Labrador in the breeding-season; on the shores of New Jersey and New York; on the banks of the Ohio; in South Carolina in spring and autumn, and in Florida in winter. It is the *Tringa pusilla* of the 13th edition of the *SYSTEMA NATURÆ*, p. 252, sp. 20, *Habitat in DOMINGO*, and is the only very small Sandpiper there recorded. If I am not in error, this species is also noticed in Catesby's Carolina.

Mons. Vieillot called the Peep of America *T. minu-*

tilla, apparently desiring to point out by this specific name that it was a smaller bird than *T. minuta*.

STRIX FUNEREA. The Hawk Owl. An instance of the occurrence of this species, of which only one example had been previously noticed as belonging to our British Catalogue, was recorded in the Zoologist for 1851, p. 3029, by E. T. Higgins, Esq., of Birkenhead.

It is worthy of notice that of the more recent additions to our British Birds, half of them are found in North America; the greater portion of them being species that resort to high northern latitudes in their breeding-season, and have been obtained here, about, or soon after, the time of their autumnal migration to the southward.

The route pursued by birds from North America to this country is an interesting problem, of difficult solution. Would that the problem might be solved by the following calculations of the comparative numbers of the species found in the different localities of the two countries.

The list of the Birds of America, as made out by Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte in his comparative Catalogue of the Birds of Europe and North America, includes of our

British species	24	per cent.
The birds of the Fur countries and the Arctic regions, by Sir John Richardson, include on the same plan	33	„ „
The south coast of Greenland	74	„ „
Iceland	94	„ „
The Faroe Islands	96	„ „
The west coast of Norway	92	„ „

The Birds of Scandinavia	88 per cent.
On an intermediate meridian line, including Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the Bay of Fundi, the proportion of British species is	55 „ „
Philadelphia, as shown by Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte in his comparative Catalogue of the Birds of Philadelphia and Rome, has	32 „ „
Bermuda, 500 miles east of Carolina	58 „ „

Of the proportions of the two great divisions of these Land and Water Birds, four-fifths belong to the Waders and Swimmers, GRALLATORES and NATATORES. Of the Land Birds the proportion is only one-fifth, and these, almost confined to the Raptores. Sir John Richardson and Mr. Swainson have remarked that nearly one-third of the American Falconidæ belong also to Europe. The late Mr. Audubon told me that on one of his voyages between this country and America, and when 300 miles from the west coast of Ireland, he saw a Peregrine Falcon pass over the vessel in rapid and vigorous flight; the direction pursued being a line to the Azores.

The Owls, though some of them only are migratory, from the lightness of their bodies and the large expanse of their wings, appear to fly without much labour. The nephew of Dr. Jenner, when on board a vessel going in a direct course for Newfoundland, and more than 100 leagues from any land, saw a Brown Owl gliding over the ocean with as much apparent ease as when seeking for a mouse over its own native fields.

The late William Thompson of Belfast, in his *Natural History of Ireland*, records, vol. i. p. 102, from the log-book kept on board the *John and Robert* of 500 tons, Captain M'Kechnie, from Quebec to the port of Belfast, that from thirty to forty Snowy Owls on the 16th of November, 1838, were seen when the vessel was 250 miles from the straits of Belleisle. Several followed the ship; from fifty to sixty were seen on the 18th, some alighting on the rigging and yards; three were caught and taken to Belfast alive. The last of those seen at sea was on the 20th November, the vessel then near 700 miles from Belleisle, and sailing along in latitude 54° , or nearly so. The ship arrived at Belfast early in December, but had been driven out of her course in the commencement of the voyage by contrary winds.

Mr. Swainson has remarked that "it is among the insectivorous or soft-billed birds that the principal ornithological features of any extensive region will be traced."

That the obtaining an equalization of temperature has its influence in migration, as well as a search for food, may, I think, be inferred from the circumstance that the summer visitors to this country, coming as they do from the south, leave the winter temperature of North Africa, averaging 55° , for England, where the summer heat averages 63° , only eight degrees higher than that of the countries they leave, rather than remain where the summer temperature reaches an average of 79° , making a difference of 24° ; and thus also our winter visitors, coming as they do from the North, find our winter temperature of 40° to be within seven or eight degrees of the temperature

of the country they came from ; and we observe that the more severe our winter is, the further south these our winter visitors go.

It is known that a marked difference exists in the average temperature of places in similar parallels of latitude on the western coasts of the Old World and the eastern coasts of the New World, as a glance at the undulations of the isothermal lines will exhibit. Thus the isothermal line at Boston gives the same temperature as that of London, though Boston appears to be ten degrees further south ; and Iceland appears to be as warm as the south point of Greenland, though situated five degrees further north.

The undulations of the isothermal lines, and the higher comparative temperature of the western shores of Europe, may exercise some influence in the route of water birds crossing the northern portion of the Atlantic ; while the large patches of floating sea-weed, sometimes occupying half an acre or more, and teeming with aquatic animal life in its various stages, as observed by those who cross the more southern part of the Atlantic, afford both rest and food to many. Thus birds of great and enduring powers of flight, able moreover to obtain both food and rest on the surface of the sea, may reasonably be expected to have a wide geographical range ; and of these powers the long-winged web-footed species are good examples.

It is sometimes difficult to make a just estimate of the powers of flight. The Rev. Robert Holdsworth wrote me word that a Water Rail alighted on the yard of a

man-of-war, about 500 miles to the westward of Cape Clear, and at the same distance from any known land. An officer of the ship caught it, and took care of it, and carried it with him to Lisbon, feeding it with bits of raw meat. In a day or two it became perfectly tame, and would eat out of his hand.

By the kindness of two officers of the Royal 42nd Highlanders, stationed at Bermuda, I received the skin of a Landrail, shot there. This bird is not found in the New World, and could only have reached Bermuda under the influence of a strong north-east wind, and thus saved its life, for a time, by making that island.

The number of our British Birds is	.	.	354
			<hr/>
Of which those resident all the year are	.	.	140
Summer visitors	.	.	63
Winter visitors	.	.	48
Occasional visitors	.	.	103
			<hr/>
			354
			<hr/>

I have been led to these remarks, crude and imperfect as they are, by the communications of two kind friends, Sir John Richardson and Alfred Newton, Esq., on the same subject, and I give here, by permission, that of Sir John Richardson in his own words.

“With respect to Sir John Ross’s pigeons, as far as I can recollect, he despatched a young pair on the 6th or 7th of October, 1850, from Assistance Bay, a little to the west of Wellington Sound, and on the 13th of October, a pigeon made its appearance at the dovecot in

Ayrshire, from whence Sir John had the two pairs of pigeons which he took out. The distance direct between the two places is about 2000 miles. The dovecot was under repair at this time, and the pigeons belonging to it had been removed; but the servants of the house were struck with the appearance and motions of this stranger. After a short stay it went to the pigeon-house of a neighbouring proprietor where it was caught, and sent back to the lady who originally owned it. She at once recognised it as one of those which she had given to Sir John Ross, but to put the matter to the test, it was carried into the pigeon-house, when out of many niches it directly went to the one in which it had been hatched. No doubt remained in the mind of the lady of the identity of the bird."

By what extraordinary power did this interesting bird find its way, and by what route did it come?

Ryder Street, St. James's,

June, 1856.

SECOND SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
HISTORY OF BRITISH BIRDS.

INSESSORES.
DENTIROSTRES.

SYLVIADÆ.



THE THRUSH-LIKE WARBLER.

Salicaria turdoïdes.

Salicaria turdoïdes,
Sylvia ,,

Great Sedge Warbler, GOULD, Birds of Europe.
Bec-fin rousserolle, TEMM. Man. d'Ornith. vol. i.
p. 181 ; vol. iii. p. 109.

<i>Turdus arundinaceus</i> , <i>Grive rousserolle</i> ,	VIEILLOT, Faun. Franc. p. 160.
<i>Calamoherpe turdoïdes</i> , <i>Rousserolle turdoïdes</i> ,	DEGLAND, Orn. Eur. t. i. p. 570.
” ”	Bon. Cons. Av. Eur. p. 149.

WE are indebted to Mr. John Hancock of Newcastle-on-Tyne, for the knowledge of this interesting addition to our catalogue of British Song Birds, in a communication made to the Annals and Magazine of Natural History for 1847, part ii. page 135, as follows :—

“ A male specimen of this fine Warbler was shot, three or four miles west of Newcastle, near the village of Swallow, by Mr. Thomas Robson of that place, on the 28th of last May. The attention of this gentleman, who is perfectly familiar with the song of all our summer visitors, was arrested by a note which he had not before heard: and after some search he succeeded in getting a sight of the bird. It was concealed in the thickest part of a garden hedge close to an extensive mill-dam, which is bordered with willows, reeds, and other aquatic plants. It would scarcely leave its retreat, and when it did so never flew far, and always kept close to the herbage. Its habits resembled those of the Reed Warbler, being continually in motion, occasionally hanging with the body downwards, or clinging to the branches and stretching forwards to take its prey.

“ Its song was powerful, and resembled that of the Black Ouzel, but was occasionally interrupted with the harsh croaking note common to many of the Warblers, and at intervals it uttered a single shrill cry.

“ The specimen was very fat, and when opened, the stomach contained small beetles and flies.

“ From the nature of the locality, and from the time of year when captured, there can be little doubt that this

bird was breeding in the neighbourhood, and I have some reason for believing that the nidification of this species has occurred in another part of England. I have had in my possession for nearly two years an egg taken by a friend of mine in Northamptonshire, which agrees in every respect with Thienemann's figure and description of the egg of *Sylvia turdoïdes*; and now, since the capture of the bird in Britain, it is impossible to doubt that this egg belongs to that species. It would therefore appear probable that this delightful songster, the largest of the European Warblers, may be a regular summer visitant to our island. Notwithstanding its large size, it might easily pass unnoticed, skulking as it does in the low herbage, and seldom exposing itself to view. Its song, too, by most would be taken for that of the Black Ouzel; and even now it might have escaped detection had not the accurate ear and experienced eye of Mr. Robson been engaged in the pursuit."—July, 1847.

Since the capture of the specimen thus referred to, several others have been obtained. Mr. Newman has recorded in the *Zoologist*, page 3476, an example obtained at Dartford in May, 1852. The Rev. F. O. Morris has noticed one killed by the side of a pond near Sittingbourne on the 4th of May, 1853. I have had in my hand for examination two specimens of this bird in the flesh, and but recently dead, one of them killed between Tunbridge and Sevenoaks, the other at Erith; the opportunity of seeing both of which was supplied me by Mr. Green, a well-known dealer in birds and eggs; and Mr. Butterfield, the bird-preserved of Seymour Place, has lent me a nest of this bird which was taken near Dorking. This nest in its form and materials exactly resembles the nest of the Reed Warbler, figured and serving as a vignette to the account of that bird, and which is re-

peated in this Supplement, premising only that it is as much larger and stronger as the greater size of this Thrush-like Warbler would require.

The eggs are four or five in number, measuring seven-eighths of an inch in length by rather more than five-eighths in breadth; pale greenish white, spotted and speckled with ash grey and reddish brown. They are correctly figured in the third edition of Mr. Hewitson's work on the Eggs of British Birds, Plate 32, figures 3 and 4; and by Thienemann, Plate 21, fig. 5.

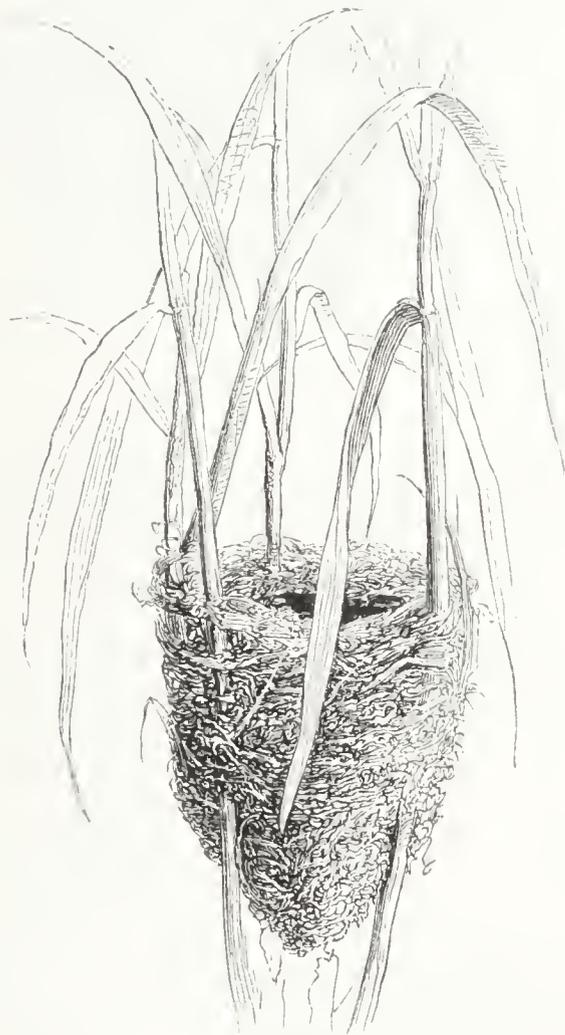
The whole length of an adult male was eight inches; wing from the anterior bend to the end of the longest quill-feather, four inches; the upper mandible dark brown, under mandible lighter brown at the point, the base yellow; irides brown; a pale yellow brown line over the eye; top of the head, neck and back, wings and upper tail-coverts uniform light brown; primaries, secondaries, and tail-feathers darker brown, with lighter brown edges; the tail graduated, the central pair of feathers nearly half an inch longer than each outside tail-feather. Chin, neck in front, and the breast, white; under surface of the wings, sides of the body, abdomen, and under tail-coverts, delicate fawn colour; legs light brown; toes and claws darker brown. Of the wings, the first quill-feather very small; the second and third nearly equal in length, and the longest in the wing: under surface of tail-feathers greyish brown, the shafts white.

Referring to M. Temminck and other continental authorities, it is stated that this bird, coming about the middle of April, is abundant in the marshes of Holland, frequenting those banks, near water, which are overgrown with reeds and rushes. It visits Belgium and the low flat lands of France, even as near us as Calais. It is found in Germany, Dalmatia, and Tripoli. According to

M. Savi, it leaves Tuscany in October, and is found in Sicily. Specimens have been received from Bengal and Borneo. M. Temminck notices that skins sent him from Japan exactly resemble those obtained in Holland.

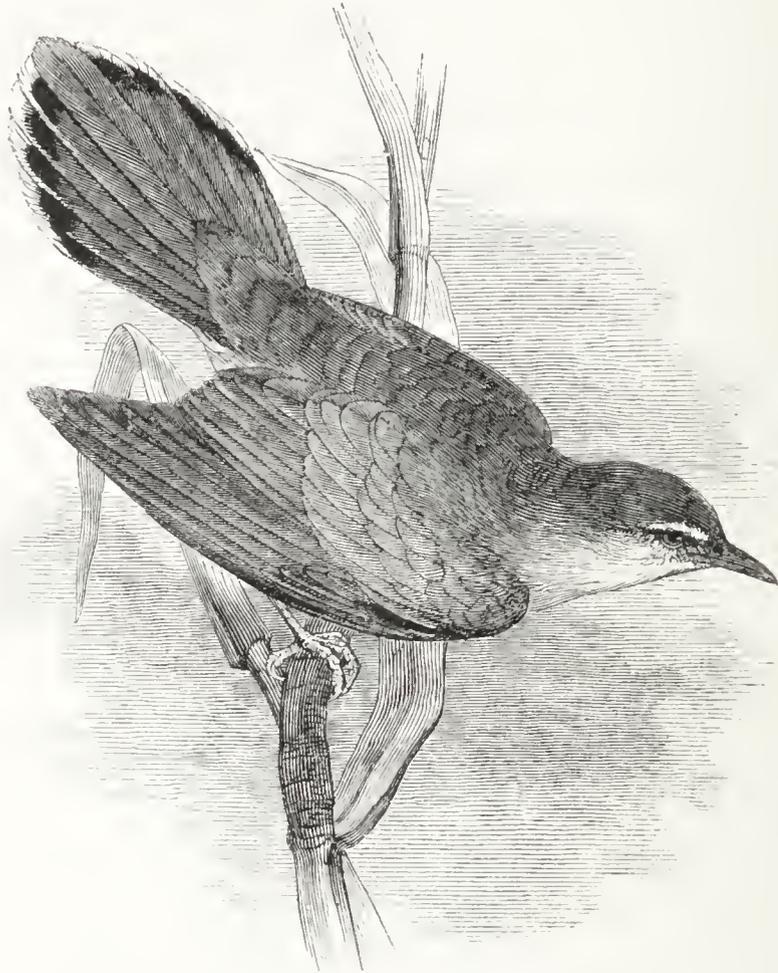
The very loud notes of this bird sometimes betray himself and his nest; his song, however, is said not to be heard when his nesting propensities are terminated.

Both the nest and the egg are figured by Dr. H. R. Schinz in his work on the eggs and nests of the more remarkable birds of Switzerland and Germany, published at Zurich in 1819, Plate 25.



INSESSORES.
DENTIROSTRES.

SYLVIADÆ.



THE RUFIOUS SEDGE WARBLER.

Salicaria galactotes.

<i>Salicaria galactotes,</i>	<i>Rufous Sedge Warbler,</i>	GOULD, Birds of Europe.
<i>Sylvia</i>	„ <i>Bec-fin rubigineux,</i>	TEMM. Man. d'Ornith. vol. i. p. 182.
<i>Salicaria</i>	„	SCHLEGEL, Kr. 116.
„	„	TEMM. and LAUG. Pl. Col. pl. 251, f. 1.

FOR the knowledge of the occurrence of this handsome Bird in Sussex, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Wm. Borrer, Junr., to whom I am under further obliga-

tions for many interesting reports on the Birds of that county, and who supplied the following notice of the capture of this species, new to Britain, to the pages of the *Zoologist* in the autumn of 1854, page 4511 :—

“As G. Swaysland, a bird-preserved of Cranbourne Street, West Street, Brighton, was driving on the South Downs, about six miles from Brighton, near a part of the Downs known as Plumpton Bosthill, he noticed a bird which he at first took for a cream-coloured variety of the Nightingale. Having no gun with him, he proceeded about four miles to obtain one, and returning to the spot, found the bird about twenty yards from where he first observed it. It was very wary, flying always to the further side of some furze-bushes, and settling on the side furthest from him, mounting into the air some fifteen yards. Swaysland describes its flight as resembling that of the young of the Red-backed Shrike. He at last got a shot at about forty yards, and killed it: this was on the 16th of September last. The bird, on dissection, proved to be a male, and would shortly have moulted, one or two young feathers of the primaries having made their appearance on each wing; these are darker than the old ones. The feathers also, on the back and tail, especially the central ones of the latter, are much worn. I borrowed the bird and sent it to Mr. Yarrell, who returned it with various references, stating also that he was not aware of its having previously occurred in Britain.”

Although the beauty of this species might have been expected to attract and invite attention, its habits appear to be but little known. According to M. Temminck, it was first obtained at Gibraltar by M. Natterer, a distinguished traveller and naturalist, attached to the Imperial Museum of Vienna, who succeeded in securing other examples at Algeiras. This species is not included by M.

Vieillot in the Faune Française, nor by Savi in his Birds of Tuscany, but it is found in various provinces of Spain, and particularly in the valleys of Andalusia, nesting among the shrubs of oleander. Of two examples of this bird, kindly lent me by Mr. Gould for my use in this Supplement, one is ticketed as having been taken in Savoy; the label on the other, a very fine adult male, from which the figure and description here inserted, were derived, is marked as shot in Tripoli. M. Degland, in his European Ornithology, vol. i. p. 567, says it inhabits Greece and Egypt. M. Malherbe, after having examined skins from Algeria, and others from the vicinity of Caucasus, considers them to belong to this same species.

Its food is said to be grasshoppers and other insects generally. It is considered a good songster. Though very lively, it is shy in its habits, and whenever it perches on a branch, it moves its tail up and down, like a true *Motacilla*. Its short wings, long and graduated tail-feathers, and the character of its eggs, three of which are figured by Thienemann, Plate 21, fig. 4, of a pale greenish white ground colour, spotted and speckled over with two shades of darker greenish brown, very similar in colour to the eggs of our Great Sedge Warbler, and our Reed Warbler, assist in deciding the place of this species. The name, *galactotes*, originally given to it by M. Temminck, its first describer, is intended to refer to the light creamy colour of the ear-coverts, and the parts above and below the eye.

The beak is slightly curved, measuring from point to gape, five-eighths of an inch in length; upper mandible brown above, lateral edges and under mandible pale yellowish brown; irides reddish brown; over and under the eye, and passing backward over the ear-coverts, creamy white; from the gape to the eye, a dark streak; upper

surface of the head, neck, shoulders, wing-coverts, and back, fawn colour; wing primaries and secondaries, brocoli brown; outer edges reddish buff; upper tail-coverts, and the two long central tail-feathers, uniform reddish buff; the outer five tail-feathers on each side reddish buff over two-thirds of their diminishing length; then a broad band of black extending over both webs of the feather; the remainder of the length pure white; each extreme outside feather with the most elongated portion of white; chin, throat, and all the under surface of the body, and under tail-coverts, dull white; under surface of the wings, the sides and flanks, delicate fawn colour; under surface of the tail-feathers marked like the upper surface, but the colours not so bright; legs, toes, and claws, pale wood brown. The plumage, in colour, resembles that of our well-known Bearded Tit.

The whole length of the specimen is seven inches; from the bend of the wing to the end of the longest quill-feather, three and a half inches; the first wing-feather short; the second and sixth feathers about equal in length; the third, fourth, and fifth feathers equal in length, and the longest in the wing.

INSESSORES.
DENTIROSTRES.

SYLVIADÆ.



THE ORPHEUS WARBLER.

Curruca orphea.

<i>Curruca orphea,</i>	<i>Orpheus Warbler,</i>	GOULD, Birds of Europe.
<i>Sylvia</i> ,,	<i>Bec-fin Orphée,</i>	TEMM. Man. d'Ornith. vol. i. p. 198.
,, ,,	<i>Orpheus Warbler,</i>	HEWITSON, Eggs of Brit. Birds.
,, <i>grisea,</i>	<i>Fauvette grise,</i>	VIEILLOT, Faun. Franç. p. 209.
,, <i>Orphea,</i>	<i>Bigia grossa,</i>	SAVI, Ornit. Tusc. vol. i. p. 250.

THE occurrence of this species in Yorkshire was communicated to the Zoologist in 1849, page 2588, by Sir William Milner of Nunappleton, who retains the specimen in his extensive collection. "The bird was a female, and was observed in company with its mate for a considerable time before it was shot. The other bird had a black head, and the description I received left no doubt on my mind that it was a male bird of *Sylvia orphea*.

"The bird obtained, of which I send you a description,

was shot in a small plantation near the town of Wetherby, on the 6th of July, 1848, and had the appearance of having been engaged in incubation, from the state of the plumage. Mr. Graham, a bird-preserved of York, hearing that a very uncommon bird had been shot, went over to Wetherby, and fortunately obtained the specimen for my collection."

M. Vieillot, in his work on the Birds of France, says this species is not found in the environs of Paris, but inhabits in summer the forests and dry districts of Lorraine and Provence. According to M. Temminck it visits Switzerland, and Dr. Schinz, in his work already quoted, gives a coloured representation of the bird, its nest and eggs, at Plate 9. The nest in this instance is placed among blocks of stone on the ground, but bushes and other situations are frequently chosen: in form and structure the nest is large and saucer-shaped; the foundation is of small twigs bearing a few narrow leaves; upon this are some strong bents of grass, interwoven outside and inside with many long horse-hairs. The eggs are four or five in number, white, somewhat tinged with pale green, with small spots and specks of reddish yellow and light brown. The egg of this species is also figured by Mr. Hewitson, Pl. 35, fig. 3, and by Thienemann, Pl. 21, fig. 4. The bird has a loud, sonorous, and agreeable song, as the name given to it by M. Temminck would seem to imply. It is said to feed on small insects and berries.

Savi mentions that this warbler is found in several parts of Italy, but is there only as a summer visitor, and in its habits resembles the Whitethroat. Mr. Gould mentions having received this species more than once in collections from India.

The male bird has the bill shining black; under mandible lighter in colour at the point, the base yellowish

brown; irides brown; all the top of the head, around the eyes and including the ear-coverts, nearly black; neck, back, scapulars, and upper tail-coverts, ash-grey; wing and tail-feathers clove-brown, with lighter-coloured edges; the shafts darker shining brown; outer tail-feather on each side brown over the inner half of the broad web, the remainder white, the dark shaft very conspicuous. All the under surface of neck and body white, tinged on the sides with grey; flanks, and underwing and tail-coverts buffy white; under surface of tail-feathers ash-grey; legs and toes dark brown; claws very short. The whole length of the bird is six inches and three-eighths; bill, from the point to the gape, five-eighths; wing, from the anterior bend to the end of the longest quill-feather, three inches; the first feather very short; the second and fifth nearly equal in length, but shorter than the third, fourth, and fifth feathers, which are also nearly uniform in length, and the longest in the wing.

Sir William Milner describes the female in his possession as having "the beak black, and very strong; the whole upper part of the plumage dark ash-coloured brown; the outer feather of the tail white; the second on each side edged with dirty white; the rest of a brownish black; chin dirty white; throat and belly brownish white; under surface of the wings and vent light brown; legs very strong, toes and claws black. The whole length six inches three lines."

The young birds of the year resemble the female, and M. Temminck thinks it probable that old males in autumn lose the decided black on the head, since none are then observed so marked in colour; or, that the male birds seen at that time are all young birds of the year, the old birds quitting the breeding-ground sooner than their own young, as is the case with most of our migratory warblers.

INSESSORES.
DENTIROSTRES.

SYLVIADÆ.



THE MELODIOUS WILLOW WARBLER.

Sylvia hippolais.

<i>Sylvia hippolais,</i>	<i>Melodious Willow Wren,</i>	GOULD, Birds of Europe.
„ „	<i>Bec-fin à poitrine jaune,</i>	TEMM. Man. d'Ornith. vol. i. p. 222.
„ „	<i>Melodious Willow Warbler,</i>	HEWIT. Eggs of Brit. Birds, pl. 36, f. 5.
„ <i>polyglotta,</i>	<i>Fauvette lusciniolle,</i>	VIEILL. Faun. Franç. p. 212.
„ <i>hippolais,</i>	<i>Beccafico canapino,</i>	SAVI, Ornit. Tusc. vol. i. p. 287.

ON the occurrence of this new addition to the British Fauna, I was favoured by Dr. Plomley of Maidstone, honorary secretary of the Kent Natural History Society, with the following communication, dated July 6, 1848:—

“Those interested in Natural History, more particularly in Ornithology, will be pleased to hear of the capture, for

the first time in the British Isles, of the Melodious Willow Wren, *Sylvia hippolais* of Temminck, which was killed at Eythorne, near Dover, on the 15th of June last. It is a beautiful specimen, and in the most perfect plumage, and the person who shot it was attracted by its extraordinary loud and melodious song; it is a species which has never been found in England, and Mr. Gould states, in his Birds of Europe, that it is somewhat singular that this species, so familiar to every naturalist on the Continent, and which inhabits the gardens and hedgerows of those portions of the coasts of France and Holland that are immediately opposite to our own, should not, like the rest of its immediate congeners, more diminutive in size, and consequently less capable of performing extensive flights, have occasionally strayed across the Channel and enlivened our glens and groves with its rich and charming song, which is far superior to that of either of the three other species of the group, and only equalled by those of the Blackcap and Nightingale."

This pleasing songster, called *polyglotta* (many tongues) by M. Vieillot, from the great variety which distinguishes the voice of this bird, appears to be numerous as a species, and is distributed generally over the European continent, from Sweden to the shores of the Mediterranean, particularly in Holland, France, Germany, and from thence southward to Italy. Unlike the three well-known species of this pretty group, which visit this country every summer, and which have acquired with us the general name of Willow Warblers or Willow Wrens from their prevailing green colour, all three of which construct dome-covered nests, like that of the true Wood Warbler, and which they almost invariably place upon, or very near, the ground,—the Melodious Willow Warbler builds its nest at a considerable elevation, sometimes near the top in tall

bushes, or young trees. Dr. Schinz, who has included, in his work already referred to, a coloured figure of the nest, represents it as supported on two slender horizontal branches, and placed but a short distance from a small upright stem, not more than half an inch in diameter, the coloured bark of which is similar to that of our cherry-tree. This nest is open at the top, cup-shaped, the bottom and sides made up of long grass bents and long hairs interlaid and wound round together, the inside lined with fine roots, hairs and bits of wool. The egg pale pinkish white, speckled with dark or purplish red. The eggs of this bird also differ a little in their ground colour from those of our other Willow Warblers. They are most correctly represented in Mr. Hewitson's work, and they are also figured by Thienemann, Pl. 19, fig. 4.

The food of this species consists chiefly of various caterpillars, and small insects.

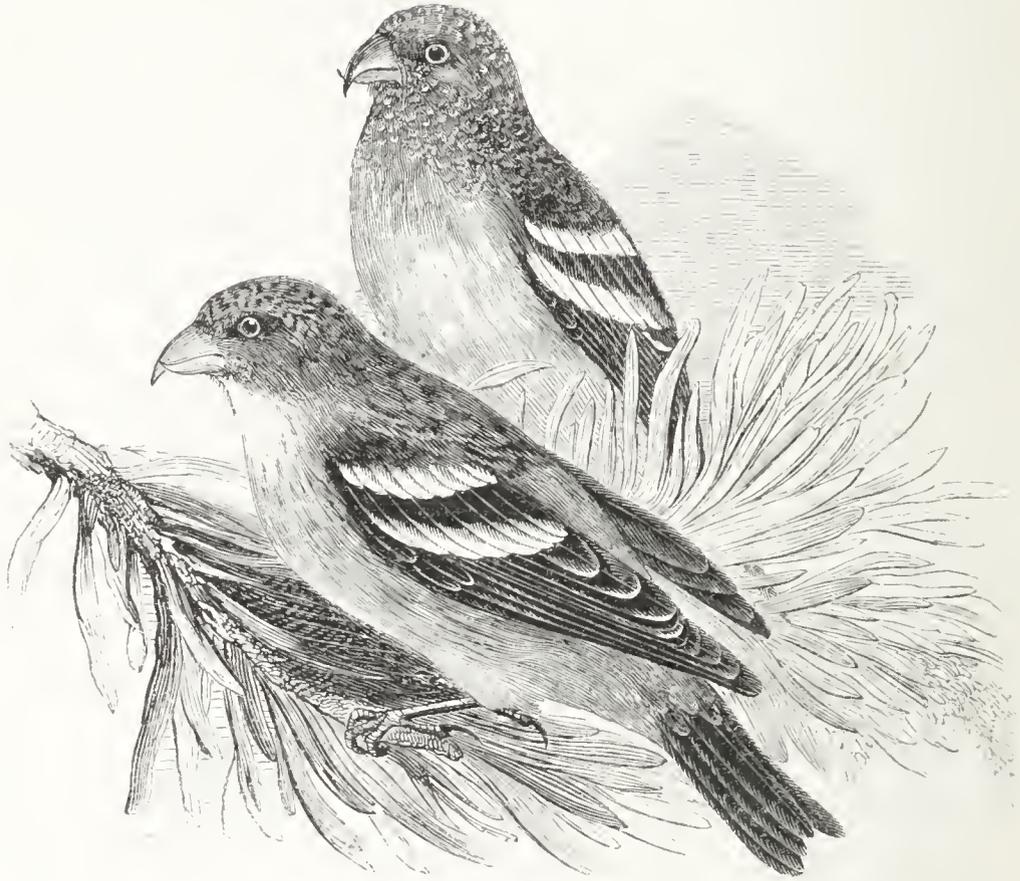
The bill is brown above, the under mandible paler, its base yellowish white; from the gape to the eye a small streak of yellow; irides brown; top of the head, neck, and all the back to the ends of the upper tail-coverts green, tinged with ash-brown; upper wing-coverts, wing, and tail-feathers, darker ash-brown, with rather broad lighter-coloured external edges; chin, neck, and all the under surface of the body sulphur yellow; legs and toes slate colour.

The whole length of the bird is five inches and one quarter; the wing, from the anterior bend, two inches and three quarters.

It may be mentioned that this species is the true *hippolais* of continental authors, and that the *hippolais* of most British writers is the *rufa* of the Continent.

INSESSORES.
CONIROSTRES.

FRINGILLIDÆ.



THE EUROPEAN WHITE-WINGED
CROSSBILL.

Loxia bifasciata (NILSSON).

<i>Loxia falcirostra,</i>	<i>White-winged Crossbill,</i>	PENN. Brit. Zool. vol. i. p. 428.
„	„	FLEM. Brit. An. p. 76.
„	<i>leucoptera,</i>	JENYNS, Brit. Vert. p. 143.
„	„	TEMM. Sup. Man. d'Or- nith. pt. iii. p. 243.
„	<i>Bec-croisé leucopterc,</i>	NILS. Skand. Faun. Illum. pl. 20.
„	<i>bifasciata,</i>	SELYS-LONG. Faune Belge, p. 76.
„	„	THOMP. Birds of Ire- land, vol. i. p. 283.
„	<i>European White-winged Crossbill,</i>	

<i>Loxia bifasciata</i> , <i>Bec-croisé à double bande</i> ,	DEGLAND, Orn. Eur. t. i. p. 180.
” ”	BON. et SCHL. Mon. Lox. p. 7, pl. 8.

IN a Fauna of Belgium, published in 1842, the author, M. Edm. de Selys-Longchamps, a distinguished Naturalist, made known, at page 77, the specific distinctions of two species of White-winged Crossbills, which, up to that time, had, by several Ornithologists, been considered identical: the rarity of both species in Europe, and the consequent difficulty of comparing them together, may readily be granted as a sufficient excuse.

M. de Selys-Longchamps' distinctions may be thus paraphrased:—

The American White-winged Crossbill.	The European White-winged Crossbill.
<i>Loxia leucoptera</i> (GMELIN).	<i>Loxia bifasciata</i> (NILSSON).
„ <i>fulcirostra</i> (LATHAM).	
In size smaller than a Sparrow.	In size larger than a Sparrow.
Beak small, very much compressed, the points slender and elongated.	Beak almost as large as that of the Common Crossbill; less compressed than the same part in the American bird, the points less crossed over, and less elongated.
The tail greatly forked.	The tail less forked.
The males I have seen have the plumage of a brilliant crimson, the tail black; the feathers with little or no bordering.	The males I have seen have the plumage dull brick red, the tail-feathers more obviously bordered with yellow.
Inhabits the United States of America, and about Hudson's Bay.	Has been observed accidentally in winter in Belgium, England, Sweden, and Bavaria.

Such are the distinctions pointed out in the Fauna, to which I may add, that the claw of the hind toe in the American bird is both longer and stouter than that of the European species.

The White-winged Crossbill was described by Dr. Latham, in the third volume of his General Synopsis, page

108, but without bestowing upon it, at that time, any systematic name. It was afterwards called *L. falcistrostra*. The specimens were received from North America, and the bird had been named by Gmelin *L. leucoptera*; these terms, therefore, apply to the American White-winged Crossbill, which having been taken in England, will be included in this History of British Birds, next after the present species, the European White-winged Crossbill, *L. bifasciata* of Nilsson.

This species has occurred in considerable numbers in some parts of Europe, and is believed by a German Naturalist to be found also in Asia. It was not included by M. Temminck in the second edition of his Manual of the Birds of Europe, published in 1820, but has been admitted in the supplement to the Land Birds of that work (1835), page 243, as the *L. leucoptera* of Gmelin; but the description accords with the *bifasciata* of Nilsson. M. Temminck states that several have been captured in the north of Germany, and that it has been killed at Nuremberg. It is included by M. Brehm in his work on the Birds of Germany, under the term *Crucirostra bifasciata*; and it has also been noticed by M. Constantin Gloger, in the Isis, 1828, as *Crucirostra tænioptera*, who says, that, besides single specimens which have been occasionally met with in Sweden and various parts of Germany, it occurred in considerable numbers in Silesia and Thuringia in the autumn of 1826. M. Gloger, in his remarks on the appearance of this species, states his reasons for believing that its migration took place from Asia. I may here add, that a single skin in the collection of Mr. Gould, received from the Himalaya, a male bird, belongs to the *L. bifasciata* of Nilsson, and agrees with various examples taken in this country, to be hereafter noticed.

The localities in which this species has appeared in

Europe have been thus primarily noticed to show the probability of its occurrence in Great Britain; and, accordingly, it appears that a female was shot within two miles of Belfast in January, 1802. Of this, a notice was sent to the Linnean Society, and it is recorded in the Transactions, vol. vii. page 309. Mr. Wm. Thompson, of Belfast, in his History of the Birds of Ireland, vol. i. page 283, mentions that Mr. Templeton's coloured drawing of this bird "proves the Irish specimen to have been the *L. bifasciata* of M. de Selys." Pennant also mentions, in his British Zoology, that he had been told of a second, killed in Scotland. H. E. Strickland, Esq., of Cracombe House, Evesham, mentions, in a letter with which he favoured me, that he possesses a specimen of the White-winged Crossbill, killed near Worcester, in 1836; and Mr. Hoy informs me that some time ago Mr. Seaman, of Ipswich, who is well acquainted with birds, being out with his gun, looking for specimens, saw five or six small birds on a tree, which from their peculiar manners attracted his attention; he fired, and killed one, which proved to be a White-winged Crossbill; but the more fortunate survivors did not allow him an opportunity of repeating the experiment.

Since the publication of the former editions of this work, several records of the occurrence of White-winged Crossbills have appeared in the Zoologist. One example is mentioned by Mr. Jerdon as having been taken in Roxburghshire in the month of March, 1845. Mr. J. Cooper, of Birmingham, had one alive, which was caught in that district. E. H. Rodd, Esq., of Penzance, has recorded one that was killed at Lariggan, in Cornwall; and the Rev. C. A. Bury has mentioned, on the authority of Mr. Butler, that a pair of these birds had been taken in the Isle of Wight. It has been killed also in Surrey and in

Suffolk. One example came to my knowledge that had been killed near Derby, where it was seen in company with Fieldfares.

That these various examples are all so many European White-winged Crossbills I am unable to state, the distinctions between the two species not being generally known; but I can express with confidence my opinion upon five birds now before me. I am in possession of two that were shot near Carlisle, and lent to me for my use in this work by Captain G. J. Johnson, of Walton House. Mr. Henry Doubleday has also favoured me with the loan of three others: one shot by himself in his own garden at Epping, a young bird; a second killed at Thetford; and the third in the vicinity of Carlisle, where a small flock of six or seven made their appearance, several of which were obtained.

But little of the habits of this particular species appears to be known. Professor Nilsson, in his *Scandinavian Fauna*, says, writing from Lund, "Not more than two specimens of this pretty little Crossbill have been taken with us; but it appears that they are not unfrequently seen in central Sweden among the Crossbills which arrive in the months of October and November. Its manners are like those of the other Crossbills, but it has a different call-note, and a different song."

In the youngest bird I have seen, the upper mandible is dark brown; the under mandible pale brown, short, and but little crossed over beyond the upper; head, neck, back, and wing-coverts, greyish green; the points of both sets of wing-coverts tipped with white, but the colour is not so bright, and the space occupied by it is of smaller extent than in older birds; the rump greenish yellow; wing-primaries greyish black; tertials tipped with dull white; tail-feathers greyish black, with narrow margins of yellow-

ish white; tail slightly forked; under surface of the neck greyish white, streaked with darker grey; belly uniformly grey, the vent lighter in colour; under tail-coverts greyish black in the middle, surrounded with dull white; under surface of tail-feathers grey; legs and toes dark brown; claws shining black; hind claw not longer than the hind toe.

An adult male has the top of the head, the neck above, the upper part of the back, and the rump, mottled with brick-red, orange, and greyish brown; primaries and tail-feathers almost black; the wing-coverts and tertials with the usual white marks; under surface of the body reddish orange; the feathers about the vent, the under tail-coverts, and the under surface of the tail-feathers, as in the younger bird.

An older male has both the mandibles very short; the top of the head and the rump bright brick-red; the back a mixture of bluish grey and dull brick-red; chin, neck, and breast, uniform pale red; wing and tail-feathers decidedly black, with bright white tips and yellowish white edgings.

Females resemble young males, but soon lose the striated markings on the under surface of the body, attaining the yellow on the rump.

The whole length of this species is six inches and one-quarter; the wing from the bend, three inches and three-quarters; the second quill-feather rather the longest in the wing; the claw of the hind toe not longer than the toe itself, and in some instances not quite so long.

INSESSORES.
CONIROSTRES.

FRINGILLIDÆ.



THE AMERICAN WHITE-WINGED
CROSSBILL.

Loxia leucoptera (GMELIN).

<i>Loxia leucoptera,</i>	<i>American White-winged</i>	<i>Crossbill,</i>	GOULD, Birds of Europe.
”	”	”	EYTON, Rarer Brit. Birds, p. 21.
<i>Curvirostra</i>	”	”	WILSON, Amer. Orn. pl. 15.
<i>Loxia</i>	”	”	BON. Contin. of Wilson.
”	”	”	NUTTALL, Ornith. U. S. vol. i. p. 540.
”	”	”	AUD. Birds of Amer. vol. iii. p. 190.
”	”	”	RICH. Faun. Bor. Am. p. 263.
”	”	”	BON. et SCHLEG. Mon. Lox. p. 8, pl. 9.

IT is not improbable that an American White-winged Crossbill might be among the number of White-winged Crossbills that have been already taken in this country. The male specimen in Mr. Gould's fine representations of the Birds of Europe, was coloured, there is no doubt, from a North-American example. The figure in Mr. Eyton's book on the Rarer British Birds, page 21, was drawn from an American specimen in my own collection, which I bought at the sale of the contents of the Museum of the late Joshua Brookes, Esq., but the label on the case bears no reference to any geographical locality.

There is, however, one undoubted instance of the occurrence of the American White-winged Crossbill in England. In September, 1845, Mr. Edward B. Fitton exhibited at an evening meeting of the Zoological Society a fine specimen of this bird, *Loxia leucoptera* (Gmelin), which he had picked up dead upon the shore at Exmouth, on the 17th of that month. It appeared to have been injured on the back of the head, and to have crept into a crevice of one of the loose fragments of rock on the shore, where it was found by Mr. Fitton, partly covered with wet sand.

The wind at the time was south-west, and had been blowing hard from north-west to west and south-west for some days. This bird, while in the flesh, I examined with Mr. Fitton: on dissection it proved to be an adult male, I believe in its second year. The stomach was empty. When, some time afterwards, Mr. Edward Fitton went to reside permanently at the Canterbury Settlement, in New Zealand, he very kindly sent me the bird, as a remembrance, and the representation preceding this subject was drawn from his specimen.

I may here mention that the White-winged Crossbills of both countries have now been taken in England, and even in the autumnal season of the same year, at which time

both species may be simultaneously moving southward. The European species was obtained near Derby, in August, 1845.

This Crossbill appears to be more numerous in North America than in any other part; and to the observations of Ornithologists in that country I must refer for the particulars of the habits of this bird, which are not to be observed here.

“ This species,” says Prince Charles Bonaparte, in the second volume of his Ornithology of North America, in continuation of Wilson, page 88, “ inhabits during summer the remotest regions of North America, and it is, therefore, extraordinary that it should not have been found in the analogous climates of the Old Continent. Its range is widely extended, as we can trace it from Labrador, westward to Fort de la Fourche, in latitude 56° , the borders of Peace River, and Montagu Island on the north-west coast, where it was found by Dixon. Round Hudson’s Bay it is common, and well known, probably extending far to the north-west, as Mackensie appears to allude to it when speaking of the only land bird found in the desolate regions he was exploring, which enlivened with its agreeable notes the deep and silent forests of those frozen tracts. It is common on the borders of Lake Ontario, and descends in autumn and winter into Canada, and the Northern and Middle States. Its migrations, however, are very irregular. They are seldom observed elsewhere than in pine swamps and forests, feeding almost exclusively on the seeds of these trees, together with a few berries. All the specimens I obtained had their crops filled to excess entirely with the small seeds of *Pinus inops*. They kept in flocks of from twenty to fifty, when alarmed suddenly taking wing all at once, and, after a little manœuvring in the air, generally alighting again nearly on the same pines whence they had set out,

or adorning the naked branches of some distant, high, and insulated tree. In the countries where they pass the summer, they build their nest on the limb of a pine, towards the centre; it is composed of grasses and earth, and lined internally with feathers. The female lays five eggs, which are white, spotted with yellowish. The young leave the nest in June, and are soon able to join the parent birds in their autumnal migration. In the northern countries, where these birds are very numerous, when a deep snow has covered the ground, they appear to lose all sense of danger, and by spreading some favourite food, may be knocked down with sticks, or even caught by hand while busily engaged in feeding. Their manners are also in other respects very similar to those of the Common Crossbill."

Sir John Richardson states that this bird "inhabits the dense white spruce forests of the North-American fur countries, feeding principally on the seeds of cones. It ranges through the whole breadth of the continent, and probably up to the sixty-eighth parallel, where the woods terminate, though it was not observed by us higher than the sixty-second. It is mostly seen on the upper branches of the trees, and when wounded, clings so fast, that it will remain suspended after death. In September it collects in small flocks, which fly from tree to tree, making a chattering noise; and in the depth of winter it retires from the coast to the thick woods of the interior."

Mr. Audubon, in his fourth volume of American Ornithological Biography, says, "I found this species quite common on the islands near the entrance of the Bay of Fundy, which I visited early in May, 1833. They were then journeying northwards, although many pass the whole year in the northern parts of the State of Maine, and the British provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; where, however, they seem to have been overlooked, or

confounded with our Common American Crossbill. Those which I met with on the islands before-mentioned were observed on their margins, some having alighted on the bare rocks; and all those which were alarmed immediately took to wing, rose to a moderate height, and flew directly eastward. On my passage across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Labrador, in the same month, about half-a-dozen White-winged Crossbills, and as many Mealy Redpoles, one day alighted on the top yards of our vessel; but before we could bring our guns from below they all left us, and flew ahead, as if intent on pointing out to us the place to which we were bound. Within the limits of the United States I have obtained some during winter along the hilly shores of the Schuylkil River in Pennsylvania; also in New Jersey, and in one instance in Maryland, a few miles from Baltimore, beyond which, southward, I have never met with this species, nor have I heard of any having been seen there. Its song is at times mellow and agreeable, and in captivity it becomes gentle and familiar."

Young birds have the beak of dark horn colour; towards the point the upper mandible is so compressed that the edges are almost united; the lower mandible rather lighter in colour; the feathers at the base of the beak, near the nostrils, greyish white; irides dark brown; head, neck, and back, dull greenish grey, mottled with a darker tint, which pervades the centre of each feather; the rump tinged with greenish yellow; the under surface of the body is of a lighter grey, longitudinally streaked with dusky brown; the shoulders mottled with two shades of dull greyish brown; both sets of wing-coverts dull black, with white tips, forming two conspicuous bars across the wings; all the quill-feathers nearly black; the primaries and secondaries with very narrow lighter-coloured edges; the tertials edged and tipped with white; the tail forked, the feathers

dull black, with very narrow light-coloured edges; under tail-coverts in the centre almost black, with greyish white sides and ends; legs and toes brownish black, the claws shining black.

The male in the plumage of his second year has the head, neck, part of the back, rump, and under surface of the body, crimson red; the base of each feather dark grey; the quill and tail feathers darker than in the younger bird,—almost uniform black; both sets of wing-coverts tipped with white; the tertials also being tipped with white; a dark mottled band passes across the back.

A male, older than the preceding bird, had passed apparently from the crimson state to orange yellow on the head, the upper part of the back, and under surface of the body; the rump lemon yellow; wings and tail-feathers as in the crimson-coloured male.

The female is at first like the young bird, but afterwards loses the striated appearance on the under surface of the body, and attains a lemon-yellow colour on the rump, and over a portion of the breast.

The whole length of the adult bird is five inches and three-quarters; from the carpal joint to the end of the wing, three inches and a half; the first three primaries very nearly of equal length; and the longest in the wing; the fourth feather shorter than the third, but much longer than the fifth.

The hind claw stout, and longer than the hind toe.

INSESSORES.
FISSIROSTRES.

HALCYONIDÆ.



THE BELTED KINGFISHER.

Alcedo alcyon.

<i>Alcedo alcyon,</i>	<i>The Belted Kingfisher,</i>	THOMPSON,	Birds of Ireland,	vol. i.	p. 373.
”	”	”	”	WILS. Amer. Orn. Jardine’s Edit.	vol. i. p. 348.
”	”	”	”	SWAINS. and RICH. F. Bor. Amer.	vol. ii. p. 339.
”	”	”	”	NUTT. Man. vol. i. p. 594, and	vol. ii. p. 609.
”	”	”	”	AUD. Birds of Amer. vol. iv. p. 205.	

Two individuals of this species have been met with in Ireland about the same period, and were noticed in a com-

munication made to the Annals of Natural History by Wm. Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, the author of the History of the Birds of Ireland as quoted above. One of these birds was shot by F. A. Smith, Esq., at Annsbrook, county of Meath, on the 26th of October, 1845; the second was also shot not long after by the keeper of Mr. Latouche, of Luggela, county of Wicklow. Both specimens were fortunately preserved: one is in the collection of Mr. Warren, of Dublin; the other was purchased for the museum of Trinity College, Dublin.

“This Kingfisher, said to be the only species inhabiting North America, is migratory there, and, like other birds which have visited Ireland and Great Britain from that continent, has appeared about the period of migration. As an American bird, it has been fully treated of by Wilson, Richardson, Nuttall, and Audubon. Sir John Richardson states that in summer it frequents all the large rivers in the fur countries up to the 67th degree of latitude. It retires to winter in the Southern States and the West India Islands. Audubon remarks that it is extremely hardy, and those individuals which migrate northward to breed, seldom return towards the Southern States, where they pass the winter, until absolutely forced to do so by the great severity of the weather. This is, I believe,” adds Mr. Thompson, “the first notice of the species being met with on the eastern side of the Atlantic.”

“This wild and grotesque-looking feathered angler,” says Nuttall, “is a well-known inhabitant of the borders of fresh waters from Hudson’s Bay to the Tropics. His delight is to dwell amidst the most sequestered scenes of uncultivated nature, by the borders of running rivulets, the roar of the waterfall, or amidst the mountain streamlets which abound with the small fish and insects constituting his accustomed fare. Mill-dams, and the shelving

and friable banks of watercourses, suited for the sylvan retreat of his mate and brood, have also peculiar and necessary attractions for our retiring Kingfisher. By the broken, bushy, or rocky banks of his solitary and aquatic retreat, he may often be seen perched on some dead and projecting branch, scrutinising the waters below for his expected prey; if unsuccessful, he quickly courses the meanders of the streams or borders of ponds, just above their surface, and occasionally hovers for an instant, with rapidly-moving wings, over the spot where he perceives his gliding quarry; in an instant descending with a quick spiral sweep, he seizes a fish from the timid fry, with which he rises to his post, and swallows it in an instant. When startled from the perch, on which he spends many vacant hours digesting his prey, he utters a loud, harsh, grating cry, not unlike the noise of the watery tumult amidst which he usually resides.

“The nest, a work of much labour, is burrowed in some dry and sandy, or more tenacious bank of earth, situated beyond the reach of inundation. At this task, both male and female join with bill and claws until they have horizontally perforated the bank to the depth of five or six feet. With necessary precaution, the entrance is only left sufficient for the access of a single bird. The extremity, however, is rounded like an oven, so as to allow the individuals and their brood sufficient room. This important labour is indeed prospective, as the same hole is employed both as nest and roost for many succeeding years. Here, on a few twigs, grass, and feathers, about six white eggs are deposited. Incubation, in which both parents engage, continues for sixteen days; and they exhibit great solicitude for the safety of their brood. They are very tenacious of their cell.”

Audubon states, “On one occasion, when I attempted

to secure one of these birds, long after night had closed, I tried in vain. The first time, I fitted a small net bag to the entrance, and returned home. Next morning the bird had scratched a passage under the net, and thus escaped. The following evening I saw it enter the hole, and having procured a stick that filled the entrance for upwards of a foot, I felt certain of obtaining it; but before I reached the place the next day, it had worked its way out. After this I abandoned my attempt, although the bird continued to repose in the same hole. I have met with this species from within the Texas to the shores of Labrador; I have also seen it on the higher and sandy Keys of the Floridas, where, however, I am not sure that it breeds. I have seen this bird fishing in salt water in a great number of instances, and have made a note of seeing this bird plunge into the sea after small fry at Powles Hook, in the bay opposite to the city of New York." It is said to abound on the borders of all the ponds and rivers in Massachusetts, and Mr. Townsend found this species on the Missouri, the Rocky Mountains, and the Columbia River.

The eggs measure one inch and a quarter in length, by one inch in breadth, and are thus of a roundish form. Mr. Audubon, in his *Birds of America*, has given three coloured figures of this species, characteristic of its plumage and habits.

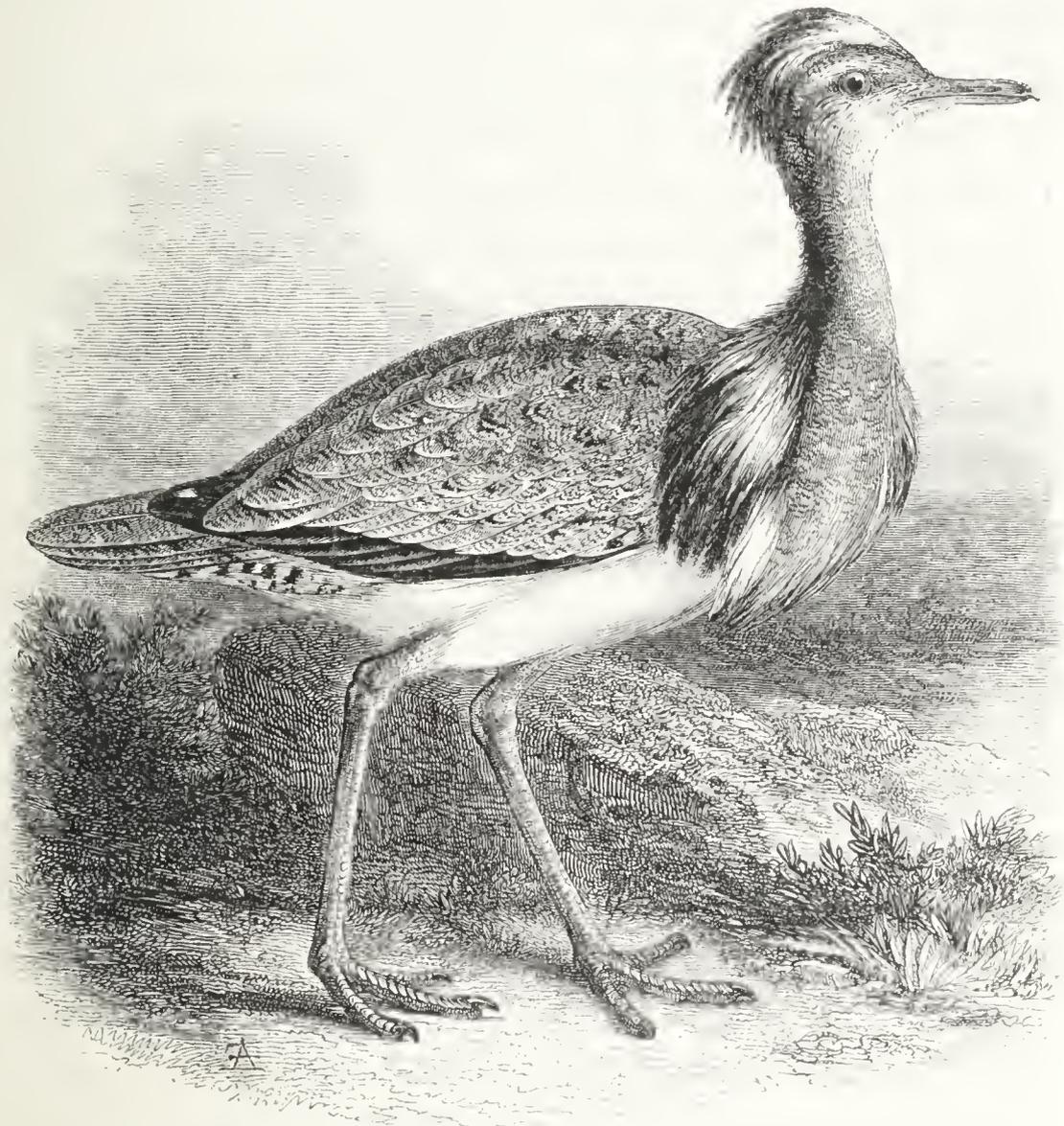
The whole length of this bird is very nearly fifteen inches. From the point of the bill to the feathers on the forehead, two inches; the bill quadrangular in form, but higher than broad, straight and pointed, culmen grooved on each side, in colour a shining bluish black, under mandible lighter at the base, the commissure straight; irides hazel; the feathers of the head and cheeks dark blue, with a white spot just before, and another under the

eye ; central feathers on the crown of the head and on the occiput elongated, forming a crest ; a narrow streak of dark blue descends from the angle of the gape upon the broad white band covering the chin and upper part of the side of the neck ; lower part of the neck, all the back and wing-coverts bluish grey, the latter varied with small spots of white ; the primaries black, spotted and tipped with white ; secondaries and tertials black, the outer edge of each bluish grey, with white specks and white tips ; upper tail-coverts bluish grey, slightly varied with lighter-coloured specks ; tail-feathers bluish black, both webs barred transversely and tipped with white, the central feathers with lighter-coloured edges on the outer side ; round the lower part of the neck in front and over that part above the wing, a band of chestnut brown, varied with bluish grey, below this a band of pure white, below this again a band of pale chestnut, the sides, under the wings, and extending to the flanks, similar in colour ; under surface of the wings, the belly, vent, and under tail-coverts, white ; under surface of the tail-feathers dry slate grey, barred with white ; legs and toes short, in colour orange brown, the claws black. The wing from the bend six and a half inches in length, the first and fourth feathers three-eighths of an inch shorter than the second and third, which are the longest in the wing.

The description and representation here given are taken from a female. In the males the band across the neck is black, the blue and white parts of the body more pure in colour.

RASORES.

STRUTHIONIDÆ.



MACQUEEN'S BUSTARD.

Otis Macqueeni.

Otis Macqueeni, Macqueen's Bustard, HARDW. and GRAY, Ill. Ind. Zool.
vol. ii. pl. 17.

”	”	”	”	GOULD, Birds of Asia, pt. iii.
<i>Houbara</i>	”	”	”	Brit. Mus. Coll. pt. iii. p. 57.
”	”	”	”	BLYTH, Cat. Birds in Mus. Asiat. Soc. Calcutta, p. 258.

THE interest which attaches to this bird is greatly enhanced by its being now added to the list of European

species, and to the Fauna of our own island; a fine specimen, in the Museum of the Philosophical Society at York, having been shot by Mr. G. Hansley in a stubble-field on Kinton Cliff, Kinton Lindsey, Lincolnshire, on the 7th of October, 1847, and another example killed on the 13th of December, 1845, on the plain between Woluwe St. Etienne and Dieghem, a league from Brussels. The latter specimen, a fine adult male, is now in the Museum at Brussels. The Vicomte Du Bus, who furnished Mr. Gould with this information, added also, that he ate part of the body, and that it equalled in every respect the character given by Latham and others of the flesh of the Houbara, which they say is of the highest flavour.

Mr. Lloyd, in his *Scandinavian Adventures*, published in 1854, after having referred to the well known Great Bustard and the Little Bustard says, that a third species of Bustard is included in the Danish Fauna—namely, the *Trave-Trapp*, or Trotting Bustard (*Otis houbara*, Linn.), in one instance shot in Schleswig. It is conjectured that the Bustard from Western India is the more likely bird to have been killed in Denmark than the Bustard of Arabia and North Africa.

Captain Hutton states that Macqueen's Bustard is common, and remains all the year, on the stony plains of Afghanistan, where it is sometimes seen in small packs of five or six together. It flies heavily, and for short distances, soon alighting and running. Mr. Blyth says, that according to a writer in the *Bengal Sporting Magazine*, it frequents dry sandy plains where there is a little grass, and is also found in grain and wheat fields. Its flesh, which is exceedingly tender, is so covered with fat that the skins are with difficulty dried and preserved. Captain Boys, during the many years he had collected in the upper provinces, never obtained more than one speci-

men, which was procured in Hansi in December; but in Scinde it is tolerably numerous.

The specimen killed in Lincolnshire had its craw filled with caterpillars of the Common Yellow Underwing Moth, small shelled snails, beetles, &c.

Forehead, sides of the head, upper part of the back of the neck, buff, pencilled with black; crest feathers white at the base, and black for the remainder of their length; nape and base of the neck, whitish; on the sides of the neck, a series of plumes gradually increasing in length, the upper two-thirds of which are black; of the remainder some are white, others black, and some both black and white; upper surface isabella-brown, or sandy buff, minutely pencilled with black, the pencillings increasing in breadth and intensity here and there so as to form irregular bars across the feathers, these darker markings becoming larger and more conspicuous as they proceed posteriorly; rump without these darker pencillings; upper tail-coverts and tail similarly marked and crossed by bands of grey, which increase in size towards the tip; the tail is moreover washed with rufous, and terminated with buffy white; wing-coverts buffy white, pencilled with black; first five primaries white at the base, and black for the remainder of their length; the other primaries and the secondaries black, with a transverse mark of white at the tip; throat white; neck and breast light grey; under surface of the wing and abdomen white; lower part of the flanks and under tail-coverts white, pencilled and barred with blackish brown; irides yellow; bill blackish horny, except at the base, which is yellowish; legs greenish yellow.

The figure here given represents the male bird in his breeding plumage. The figure and description taken, by permission, from Mr. Gould's Birds of Asia.

GRALLATORES.

SCOLOPACIDÆ.



ESQUIMAUX CURLEW.

Numenius borealis.

				<i>Esquimaux Curlew</i> , PENN. Arct. Zool. vol. ii. p. 163? Edit. 1792.
<i>Numenius borealis</i> ,		„	„	RICH. & SWAINS. Faun. Bor. Amer. p. 318, pl. 65.
<i>Scolopax</i>	„	„	„	WILSON, Amer. Ornith. Jar- dine's Edit. vol. ii. p. 313, pl. 56, fig. 1.
<i>Numenius</i>	„	<i>Small</i>	„	„
	„	„	„	NUTTALL, Man. Ornith, vol. ii. p. 101.
	„	„	„	AUDUB. Birds of Amer. vol. vi. p. 45, pl. 357.

A COMMUNICATION to the Linnean Society of London in November, 1855, announced the occurrence of this Curlew in Scotland, and, as far as I have been able to learn, its first recorded appearance in Britain. This bird was killed on the 6th of September, 1855, in the parish of

Durriss, Kincardineshire, a few miles from Aberdeen, by W. R. Cussack Smith, Esq., at the time occupying Durriss House. The bird was sent to be preserved by Mr. Mitchell, Aberdeen, and was examined a few days after by J. Longmuir, Esq., Jun., who ascertained it to be the Esquimaux Curlew (*Numenius borealis*). Unluckily it was not measured when in the flesh, and the sex was not observed; but it appeared to be a female, in almost complete winter livery.

Some questions sent to its fortunate possessor were most courteously answered in a letter, from which the following passages were extracted:—"I shot the bird on the 6th of September. I was standing on a cairn of stones, which is at the top of a hill on the muir, belonging to Durriss, called Car-monearn, one of the Grampian range, some twelve hundred feet above sea-level, and was looking at that view, when my gamekeeper told me that there was a Golden Plover close to me, on the south-east side of the cairn. I looked, and saw a bird walking slowly about, just as a Plover would do; and as soon as I could get my gun, I went up to the bird and shot it. Its flight was very similar to that of a Sea-gull. The bird was quite alone. I did not hear it utter any note; and I think if it had done so, I must have heard it. It seemed very much disinclined to rise from the ground, and allowed me to get within twenty yards of it."

From Sir John Richardson, in the *Fauna Boreali-Americana*, called also the *Northern Zoology*, we learn that this Curlew frequents the barren lands within the Arctic circle in summer, where it feeds on grubs, fresh-water insects, and the fruit of *Empetrum nigrum*, the crow-berry. Its eggs, three or four in number, have a pyriform shape, and a siskin green colour, clouded with a few large irregular spots of bright umber-brown. The Copper

Indians believe that this bird, and some others, betray the approach of strangers to the Esquimaux; and it is very probable that that persecuted people, always in dread of the treacherous attacks of their enemies, and accustomed to observe the few animals that visit their country with great attention, will be on the alert when they perceive a bird flying anxiously backwards and forwards over a particular spot. On the 13th of June, Sir John Richardson observes, I discovered one of these Curlews hatching on three eggs on the shore of Point Lake. When I approached the nest, she ran a short distance, crouching close to the ground, and then stopped to observe the fate of the object of her cares.

Mr. Audubon says, "This species passes in spring from Texas along the coast eastward to the fur-countries, returning in autumn. On the 29th of July, 1833, during a thick fog, the Esquimaux Curlews made their first appearance in Labrador, near the harbour of Bras d'Or. They evidently came from the north, and arrived in dense flocks. The weather was extremely cold, as well as foggy. For more than a week we had been looking for them, as was every fisherman in the harbour, these birds being considered there, as indeed they are, great delicacies. The birds at length came, flock after flock passed close round our vessel, and directed their course toward the sterile mountainous tracts in the neighbourhood; and as soon as the sun's rays had dispersed the fogs that hung over the land, our whole party went off in search of them.

"While on wing, they emitted an oft-repeated soft whistling note; but the moment they alighted, they became silent. They ran swiftly along, all in the same direction, picking up what the fishermen called the Curlew-berry in their way; and when pursued, would immediately squat in the manner of a Snipe or Partridge, sometimes even

laying their neck and head quite flat on the ground, until you came within a short distance, when, at the single whistle of any one of the flock, they would all immediately scream and fly off, ranging about for a while, and, not unfrequently, re-alighting on the same spot. By the 12th of August, however, they had all left the country."

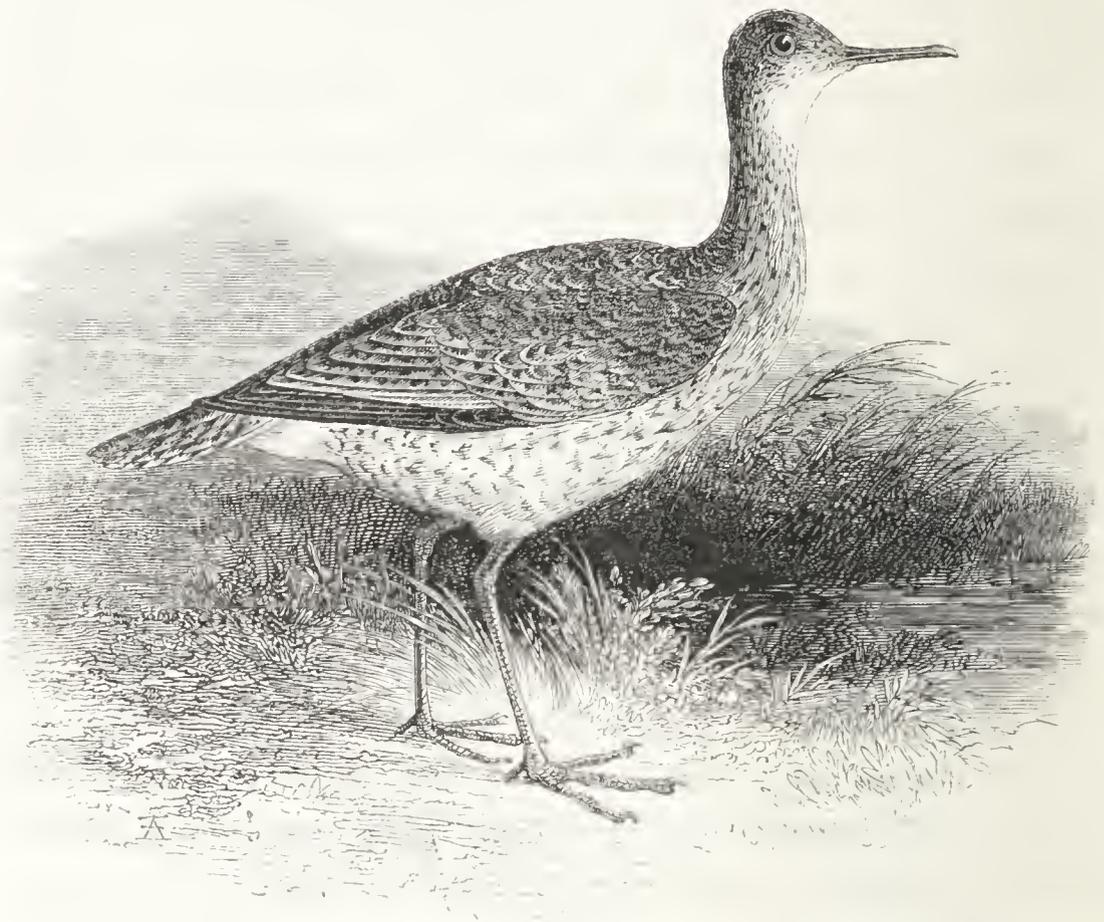
The bird killed in Scotland is, with other details, thus described in the *Naturalist* for the month of December last (1855):—The bill is brownish black, the basal portion of the lower mandible flesh-coloured; irides dark brown; sides of the head yellowish brown, with brown streaks; upper part of the head brownish black, edged with reddish brown, neck considerably lighter, edged with dull white; upper parts blackish brown, with light edges; primary quills dusky brown, the shafts of the first four white, the others becoming darker, passing into pale brown; secondaries lighter; rump dark brown, with light edges; upper tail-coverts barred with dark and light shades; tail, of twelve feathers, ash grey, with dark brown bars, edged and tipped with brownish white; throat, and a streak over the eye, nearly white; foreneck light brown, with small longitudinal liver brown markings; under wing-coverts chestnut, with irregular brown markings; breast and abdomen yellowish grey, tinged with brown; tarsi and feet dark green.

The whole length is about fourteen inches; the bill two inches three lines; wing, from anterior bend, eight inches nine lines; tarsus one inch ten lines; middle toe almost one inch.

The representation here given is taken, on a reduced scale, from Mr. Swainson's figure.

GRALLATORES.

SCOLOPACIDÆ.



BARTRAM'S SANDPIPER.

Totanus Bartramii.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <i>Totanus Bartramia</i> , | <i>Bartram's Sandpiper</i> , | GOULD, Birds of Europe. |
| „ | „ | <i>Chevalier à longue queue</i> , TEMM. Man. d'Ornith. pt. ii. |
| | | p. 650; pt. iv. p. 415. |
| „ | <i>Bartramus</i> , | <i>Bartram's Tatler</i> , |
| | | RICH. and SWAINS. Faun. |
| | | Bor. Amer. p. 391. |
| <i>Tringa Bartramia</i> , | „ | <i>Sandpiper</i> , |
| | | WILSON, Amer. Ornith. Jar- |
| | | dine's Edit. vol. ii. p. 353, |
| | | pl. 59. |
| <i>Totanus Bartramii</i> , | „ | <i>Tatler</i> , |
| | | NUTTALL, Man. d'Ornith. |
| | | vol. ii. p. 168. |
| <i>Tringa Bartramia</i> , | <i>Bartramian Sandpiper</i> , | AUDUB. Birds of Amer. |
| | | vol. v. p. 248, pl. 66. |

THE interesting capture of this bird in Cambridgeshire, made known to the editor of the Illustrated London News by the Rev. Frederick Tearle, of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, appeared, with a representation of the bird, on the 20th of January, 1855, as follows:—

“ Will you allow me, through the medium of your Journal, to make known the occurrence, for the first time in this country, of Bartram's Sandpiper, *Totanus Bartramius*? It was shot on the 12th of December, 1854, about three o'clock in the afternoon, in a ploughed field between Cambridge and Newmarket. Some farm labourers, who were engaged in thrashing near the spot, observed a strange bird flying round in large circles over the adjoining field, and uttering a whistling cry at short intervals. It frequently alighted, and ran along the ground like a Corn-crake. One of the men thought he could catch it with his hat, and gave chase; but the bird, as soon as he came near, rose, and flew around, whistling as before. On seeing that it did not fly away, the son of a gamekeeper, who lived close by, went into his father's cottage for a gun, and came out and shot it. He sent it to me a few days afterwards, calling it a Whistling Plover.

“ Through the assistance of Mr. Alfred Newton of Magdalene College, I was persuaded that it could be no other than Bartram's Sandpiper, described by Wilson in his 'Birds of America,' and, on referring to the figure in Mr. Gould's 'Birds of Europe,' this opinion was abundantly confirmed. It is an extremely graceful bird, and has been remarkably well preserved by Mr. Savill, of Cambridge.”

The Rev. F. Tearle very kindly made known to me, by letter, the occurrence of this rare bird, and did me the favour to show me the specimen, when preserved, at one of his visits to London.

Some remarks by Mr. Gould furnish interesting additional evidence. "This is only the second instance that has come under my notice of its occurrence in England, and the species must now be included in our Fauna. The other British specimen was killed in Warwickshire a year or two ago, and is now in the collection of Lord Willoughby de Broke, at Compton Verney, near Stratford-on-Avon. Continental writers have long noticed Bartram's Sandpiper as an occasional visitor to Europe; but the only instances of its having been found in England are those now mentioned. I have lately received, from the Directors of the Museum at Sydney, in New South Wales, a specimen of this bird, which had been killed near Botany Bay. This is the first, and at present the only known, instance of its capture in Australia. The species is evidently a great wanderer, its true habitat being the northern portions of America, from Canada throughout the United States, to Mexico; in all which countries it is very common."

Wilson, who is considered to be the discoverer and first describer of this species, which he dedicated by name to his venerable friend Bartram, near whose botanic gardens, on the banks of the River Schuylkill, he first found it, says of it, "Unlike most of their tribe, these birds appeared to prefer running about among the grass, feeding on beetles and other winged insects. Never having met with them on the sea-shore, I am persuaded that their principal residence is in the interior, in meadows and such like places. They run with great rapidity, sometimes spreading their tail and dropping their wings, as birds do who wish to decoy you from their nest; when they alight they remain fixed, stand very erect, and give two or three sharp whistling notes as they mount to fly. They are remarkably plump birds, weighing upwards of three

quarters of a pound; their flesh is superior, in point of delicacy, tenderness, and flavour, to any other of the tribe with which I am acquainted."

Sir John Richardson says, "this bird was only seen by us on the plains of the Saskatchewan, in May, 1827. It feeds on coleopterous insects."

Audubon did not observe this species in Newfoundland or Labrador, but records it as found as far south as Mexico; in the western prairies on either side of the Missouri; in different parts of Pennsylvania, and as far eastward as the confines of Maine. It appeared to be partial to frequenting newly-ploughed lands, and its food, varied with the district, consisted of grasshoppers, beetles, seeds, and wild strawberries. Nests were found in hollows scooped out in the earth, sometimes lined with loosely-arranged grasses, and the eggs are described as measuring one inch and six-eighths in length by one inch and a quarter in breadth, of a dull greyish yellow ground colour, with numerous spots of light purple and reddish brown.

This species is twelve inches long: the bill one inch and a half, slightly bent downwards at the point, upper mandible nearly black, under mandible yellow; irides dusky; the forehead, over the eye, neck, and breast, pale ferruginous, marked with small streaks of black, which on the lower part of the breast assume the form of arrow-heads; chin, orbit of the eye, belly, and vent, white; hind head and neck ferruginous, minutely streaked with black; back and scapulars black, the former edged with ferruginous, the latter with white, the tertials black, edged with white; primaries black, the shaft of the outer quill whitish, the inner vane pectinated with white; secondaries pale brown, spotted on the outer vanes with black and tipped with white; greater coverts dusky, edged with

pale ferruginous and spotted with black; lesser coverts pale ferruginous, each feather broadly edged with white, within which is a concentric semicircle of black; rump and tail-coverts deep brownish black, slightly bordered with white; tail tapering, of a pale brown orange colour, beautifully spotted with black, the middle feathers centred with dusky; legs yellow, tinged with green; under surface of the wings elegantly barred with black and white. The figure and description here given are taken, by permission, from Mr. Gould's *Birds of Europe*.

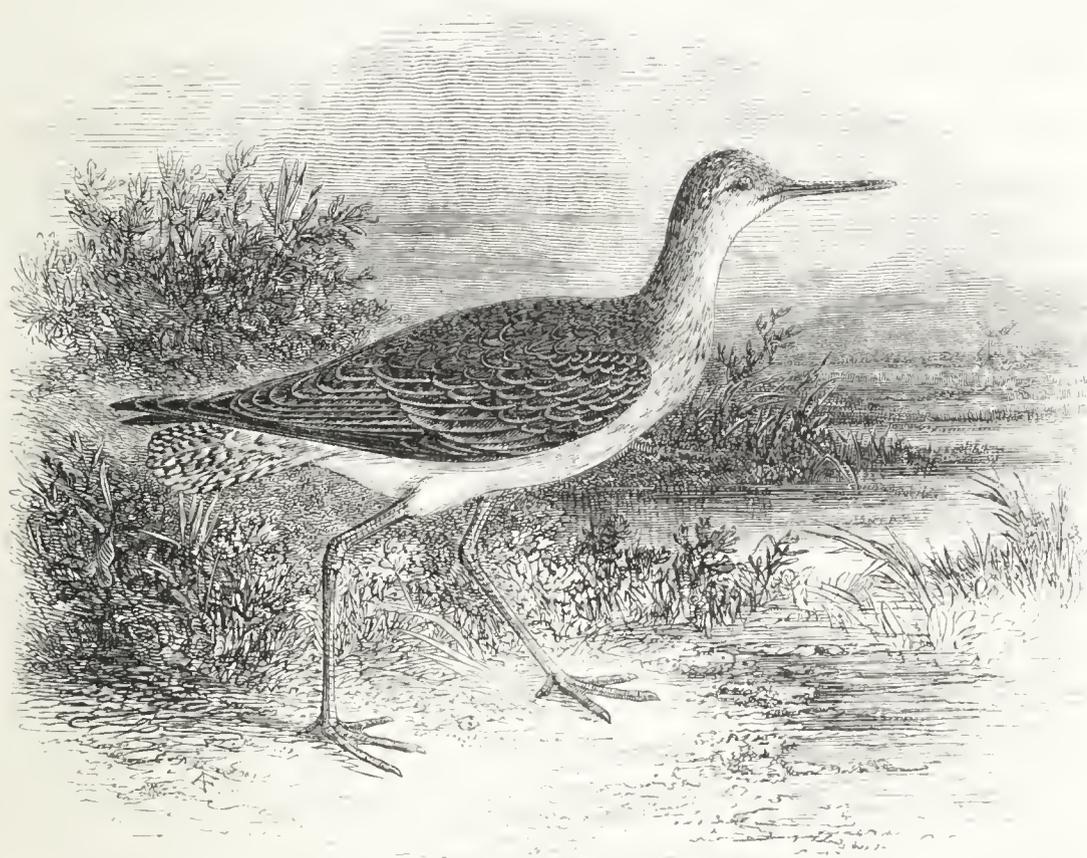
The wing, from its anterior bend to the end of the longest quill-feather, measures six inches seven lines; the tarsus two inches; naked part above one inch; middle toe one inch. Females rather larger.

According to M. Temminck, part iv. page 415, M. Nauman, in his *Birds of Germany*, tab. 196, has represented this species in three different states of plumage.

It has been taken both in Holland and in Germany. Mr. Gould has himself, as noticed, received this species from Australia.

GRALLATORES.

SCOLOPACIDÆ.



YELLOW-SHANKED SANDPIPER.

Totanus flavipes.

	<i>Yellow-shanks,</i>		PENN. Arct. Zool. vol. ii. p. 172, Edit. 1792.
<i>Totanus flavipes,</i>	„	<i>Tatler,</i>	RICH. and SWAINS. Faun. Bor. Amer. p. 390.
<i>Scolopax</i>	„	<i>Snipe,</i>	WILSON, Birds of Amer. vol. vii. p. 55; Jardine's Edit. vol. ii. p. 346.
<i>Totanus</i>	„	<i>Tatler,</i>	NUTTALL, Man. vol. ii. p. 152.
„	„	„	AUD. Birds of Amer. vol. v. p. 313, pl. 344.

THIS American Sandpiper, new to this country, and of which I can find no notice in the recently-published histories or catalogues of the Birds of Europe, was killed at

Misson, about two and a half miles north-east of Bawtry, on the borders of Lincolnshire, by one of a small party of men, residing at Misson, who get their living by shooting wild fowl, during the season, which they send to Doncaster for sale. This bird passed into the hands of Mr. Hugh Reid, of Doncaster, who, considering it to be a Wood Sandpiper, and a rare species, caused it to be carefully preserved by his own assistant; sold it afterwards to Sir William Milner, Bart., by whom it was brought to London in the spring of 1855, and appropriated to my use in this work. The figure and description here given were taken from this specimen, and I acknowledge with pleasure the obligation I owe to Sir Wm. Milner, Bart., for the interesting privilege thus granted.

“Of this species,” Wilson observes, “I have but little to say. It inhabits our sea coasts and salt marshes during summer; frequents the flats at low water, and seems particularly fond of walking among the mud, where it doubtless finds its favourite food in abundance. Having never met with its nest, nor with any person acquainted with its particular place or manner of breeding, I must reserve these matters for further observation. It is a plentiful species, and great numbers are brought to market in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, particularly in autumn. Though these birds do not often penetrate far inland, yet, on the 5th of September, I shot several dozens of them in the meadows of Schuylkill, below Philadelphia. There had been a violent north-east storm a day or two previous, and a large flock of these, accompanied by several species of Sandpipers, appeared at once among the meadows.”

As a bird for the table, the Yellow-shanks, when fat, is in considerable repute. Its chief residence is in the vicinity of the sea, where there are extensive mud-flats.

It has a sharp whistle of three or four notes, when about to take wing, and when flying. These birds may be shot down with great facility, if the sportsman, after the first discharge, will only lie close, and permit the wounded birds to flutter about without picking them up; the flock will generally make a circuit, and alight repeatedly, until the greater part of them may be shot down.

Audubon mentions that the Yellow-shanks is much more abundant in the interior, or to the westward of the Alleghany Mountains, than along the Atlantic coast, although it is also met with on the whole extent of the latter from Florida to Maine. In the Carolinas and the Floridas they are pretty numerous, in the former betaking themselves to the rice-fields, and in the latter to the wet savannahs. They frequent estuaries and the muddy edges of salt marshes; sometimes on the margins of clear inland streams, and, indeed, I could hardly be able to mention a district in which the species is not to be seen from the beginning of September until May, when the greater number retire northward, although some remain and breed even in our Middle States; as Nuttall says, "They are seen in the neighbourhood of Boston in the middle of June. I found a few on the coast of Labrador, but did not succeed in discovering their nests, which was the more surprising, as these birds breed in considerable numbers about Pictou." The nests are described as placed among the grass on the edges of the rivers and large ponds of the interior.

In very dry weather, I have observed this species on the uplands searching for grasshoppers and insects. On the shore their food consists of diminutive fishes, shrimps, worms, and aquatic insects.

Sir John Richardson says, "This is a very common

bird in the fur-countries, and is seen either solitary or in pairs on the banks of every river, lake, and marsh, up to the northern extremity of the continent. It is very impatient of any intrusion on its haunts, and often betrays the approach of the sportsman to the less vigilant of the feathered tribes, by flying round his head, its legs hanging down, and its wings drooping, and uttering its incessant though plaintive cries. Previous to its retreating southwards on the approach of winter, it collects in small flocks, and halts for a time on the shores of Hudson's Bay."

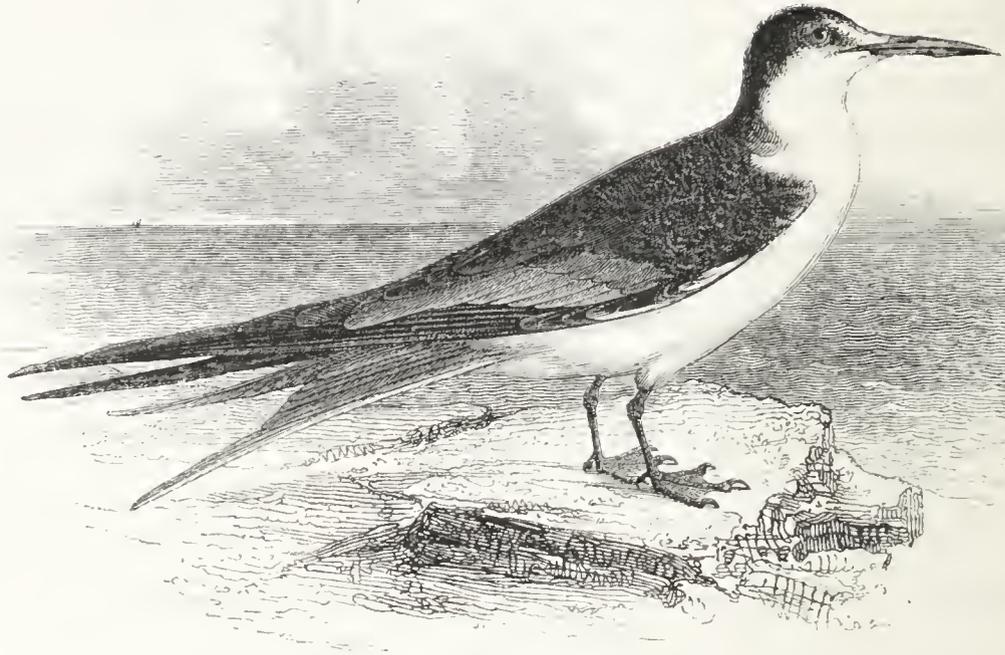
Pennant mentions that this species is found about New York in autumn. Mr. Bullock is said to have had one example in his museum, and, after some search, I found one skin in the collection of a London dealer.

The whole length of the bird is nine inches and three quarters; the bill, from the point to the commencement of the feathers on the forehead, one inch and five-eighths; wing, from the anterior bend to the end of the longest quill-feather, six inches, the first quill-feather the longest in the wing; the naked part of the leg one inch and a half, thence to the junction of the toes two inches and a quarter; length of the middle toe one inch and a quarter. The bill black, upper mandible rounded in form towards the point, the point itself projecting slightly beyond the end of the lower mandible; irides dark brown; top of the head, back of the neck, and upper part of the back, ash grey, slightly varied with occasional darker-coloured streaks; wing-primaries black, the shaft of the first quill-feather white, the others with shafts of light brown; secondaries and wing-coverts greyish black, the margins varied with white; the plumage of the lower part of the back almost black; the upper tail-coverts white, each of the few feathers between these surfaces

have two semicircular bands of dark grey on a ground of white; tail-feathers white, with numerous ash-coloured bands, broadest on those of the centre, with about twelve narrower bands on each outside tail-feather, middle tail-feathers rather the longest of the series; wings reaching half an inch beyond the end of the tail; chin and upper part of the throat white; neck in front and diverging to each side of the breast white, streaked with ash grey longitudinally; front of the breast, the belly, flanks, and under tail-coverts, pure white; all the bare parts of the legs and toes yellow; axillary plume pure white.

NATA TORES.

LARIDÆ.



THE SOOTY TERN.

Sterna fuliginosa.

<i>Sterna fuliginosa,</i>	<i>Sooty Tern,</i>	JARDINE'S Wilson, vol. iii. p. 182.
” ”	” ”	NUTTALL, Man. vol. ii. p. 284.
” ”	” ”	AUD. Birds of Amer. vol. vii. p. 93, pl. 432.
<i>Onychoprion fuliginosus,</i>	” ”	GOULD, Birds of Australia, vol. vii. pl. 32.

By the kindness of H. W. Desvœux, Esq., of Drake-low Hall, I was allowed the pleasure of exhibiting at a meeting of the Linnean Society in February, 1853, a well-preserved specimen of the Sooty Tern, *Sterna fuliginosa* of authors. This bird was shot in October, 1852, at Tutbury, near Burton-on-Trent, and was purchased by Mr. Desvœux for his collection. I was permitted the further use of this bird, and the figure and description here given were taken from this example, the only one known to have been killed in Britain. I have since learned, by a communication from Alfred Newton, Esq.,

of Elveden Hall, Thetford, that this species has occurred once in Germany. Dr. Naumann, in the fourth page of the preface to the twelfth, and last volume, of his *Birds of Germany*, mentions one killed at Proedel, near Magdeburgh.

This is the only other specimen taken in Europe, as far as I can ascertain.

The Sooty Tern, a bird of great powers of flight, is also known to have a very wide geographical range, as we learn by the various localities to be hereafter quoted. Wilson mentions having seen this species when passing along the northern shores of Cuba, and the coasts of Florida and Georgia. Dr. Nuttall also names Georgia and Florida. This bird visits Bermuda in autumn and winter. Wilson, quoting Captain Cook's voyage, vol. i. p. 275, says this bird has been met with 100 leagues from shore, and often settles on the rigging of ships. Pennant says it swarms in the Isle of Ascension: it was found at Christmas Island. Dampier speaks of it as a bird of New Holland, and it is said to be common on the islands of the South Seas.

Mr. Gould includes it in his great work on the *Birds of Australia*, and some notice of its habits there from the pen of one of his collectors, Mr. Gilbert, who was unfortunately killed in a skirmish with a party of the natives, appears in the history of the Noddy Tern, which in the third volume immediately precedes this account of the Sooty Tern: both these species frequently breeding in the same localities.

Mr. Audubon, in his *Birds of America*, says, "On landing at Bird Key, one of the Tortugas, I felt for a moment as if the birds would raise me from the ground, so thick were they all round, and so quick the motion of their wings. Their cries were indeed deafening, yet not

more than half of them took to wing on our arrival. We ran across the naked beach, and as we entered the thick cover before us, and spread in different directions, we might at every step have caught a sitting bird, or one scrambling through the bushes to escape from us. Some of the sailors, who had more than once been there before, had provided themselves with sticks, with which they knocked down the birds as they flew thick around and over them. In less than half an hour, more than a hundred Terns lay dead in a heap, and a number of baskets were filled to the brim with eggs. We then returned on board, and declined disturbing the rest any more that night. We found the eggs delicious, in whatever way cooked, and during our stay at Tortugas, we never passed a day without providing ourselves with a good quantity of them. This first descent upon these poor birds was made on the 9th of May, 1832."

This Tern, when seeking its food, not unfrequently hovers close to the water to pick up floating objects. "I have observed it," says Mr. Audubon, "follow in the wake of a porpoise, while the latter was pursuing its prey, and at the instant when by a sudden dash it frightens and drives toward the surface the fry around it, the Tern as suddenly passes over the spot, and picks up a small fish or two."

"The Sooty Tern never forms a nest of any sort, but deposits its three eggs in a slight cavity which it scoops in the sand under the trees. Several individuals, which had not commenced laying their eggs, I saw scratch the sand with their feet, in the manner of the common fowl, while searching for food. In the course of this operation they frequently seated themselves in the shallow basin to try how it fitted their form, or find out what was still wanted to ensure their comfort. The eggs measure two

inches in length, by one inch and a half in breadth, have a smooth shell, the ground colour a pale cream, sparingly marked with various tints of lightish umber, and lighter marks of purple. Now and then a male bird would come and settle close by the nest, immediately disgorging a small fish within the reach of the female. After some reciprocal nods of their heads, which were doubtless intended as marks of affection, the caterer would fly off. However numerous, not the least semblance of a quarrel did I observe between any two of these interesting creatures; indeed, they all appeared like happy members of a single family. These birds assemble here in May, and leave for the south by the end of August."

The beak is black, the upper mandible slightly curved downwards, the length from the point to the commencement of the white feathers at the base one inch and a half; to the angle of the gape two inches; the forehead white, ending in a concave curve with a point over each eye; a black streak from the base of the bill to the eye; top and sides of the head, occiput, nape, and all the upper surface of the body and wings brownish sooty black, of which the primary quills are the darkest, and the ends of the secondary wing-feathers the lightest in colour on their external edges. The tail deeply forked, each outside tail-feather white on the outer web at the base and at the tip, light brown in the middle, but the whole outer web becomes perfectly white in the adult bird; chin, cheeks, sides and front of the neck, breast, belly, under surface of the wings, under parts of the body, under tail-coverts, and base of the tail-feathers pure, spotless white; under surface of the lengthened portion of the tail-feathers ash grey; legs, toes, and interdigital membranes, black. The whole length of the bird is fourteen inches and a half: wing, from flexure, eleven

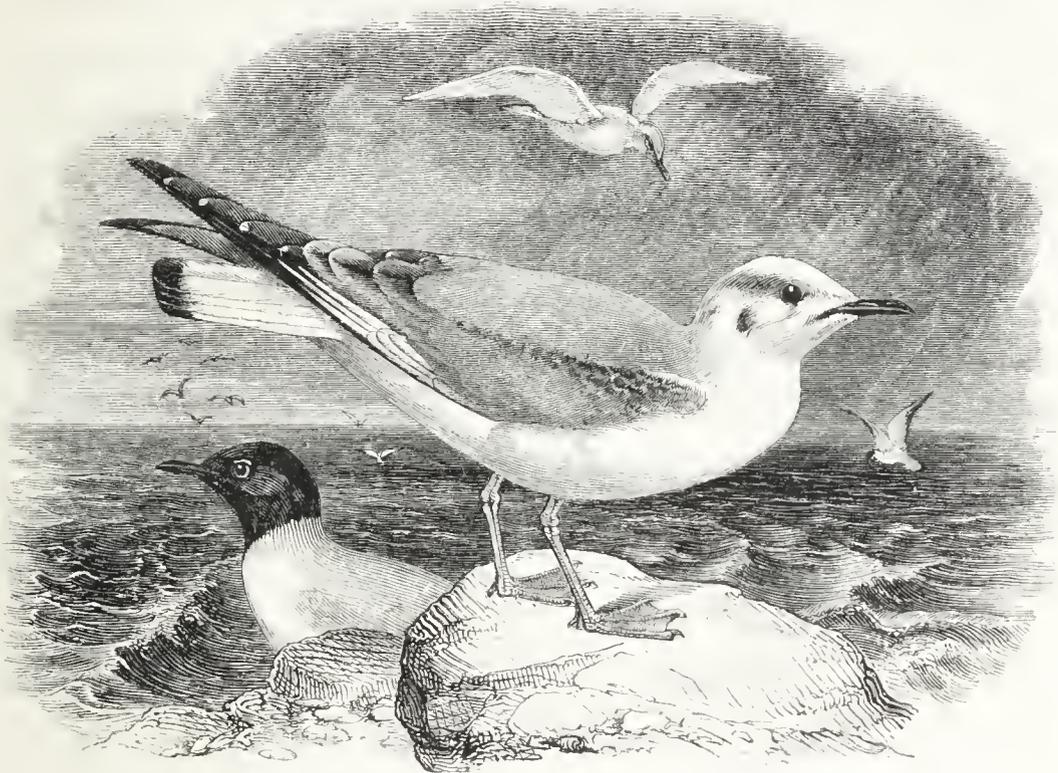
inches, and extending one inch beyond the end of the tail, but in the adult bird the outside tail-feathers on each side extend for two inches beyond the ends of the closed wings, giving a length of seventeen inches to the fully-adult bird; the leg and middle toe equal in length, each measuring one inch.

In the fully-adult bird also the colours are more pure and decided.



NATA TORES.

LARIDÆ.



BONAPARTIAN GULL.

Larus Bonapartii.

- Larus Bonapartii*, *Bonapartian Gull*, THOMPSON, Birds of Ireland, vol. iii.
p. 317.
- „ „ „ „ RICH. and SWAINS. Faun. Bor. Amer.
Birds, p. 425, pl. 72.
- „ „ *Bonaparte's* „ AUD. Birds of Amer. vol. vii. p. 131,
pl. 442.
- Xema* „ „ „ BONAP. Cons. Syst. Ornith. p. 201.

THIS species was first distinctly characterised in the Fauna Boreali-Americana by Richardson and Swainson in 1831. It is there stated that this handsome small Gull is common in all parts of the fur-countries, where it associates with the Terns, and is distinguished by its peculiar shrill and plaintive cry. It has since been received from Greenland.

Mr. Thompson, in his Birds of Ireland, mentions that a specimen of this beautiful little Gull, the first of the species known to have visited Europe, was killed at the

tidal portion of the river Lagan, between Ormeau Bridge and the Botanic Garden, about a mile above the lowest bridge at the town of Belfast, on the 1st of February, 1848. It was flying singly. The person who shot the bird, attracted by its pretty appearance merely, left it to be preserved with a taxidermist, who, on receipt of any birds either rare or unknown to him, was in the habit of taking them to Mr. Thompson for his inspection. The bird was therefore examined previous to its being skinned, and exact measurements were made; another example was shot in Ireland, on the coast, near the Skerries. A specimen was obtained on Loch Lomond in 1851; another on one of the lakes of England; and one or more besides those here enumerated, have been procured since the publication of the first occurrence of the species.

For further particulars of the habits and habitats of this new visitor, I refer to Mr. Audubon's History of the Birds of America, in which we are told "that no sooner do the Shad and Old-wives enter the bays and rivers of our middle districts, than this Gull begins to show itself on the coast, following these fishes as if dependent upon them for support, and after the 1st of April, thousands of Bonapartian Gulls are seen gambolling over the waters of Chesapeake Bay, and proceeding eastward, keeping pace with the shoals of the fishes.

"During my stay at Eastport in Maine, in May, 1833, these Gulls were to be seen in vast numbers in the harbour of Passamaquody at high water, and in equal quantities at low water on all the sand and mud-bars in the neighbourhood. They were extremely gentle, scarcely heeded us, and flew around our boats so close that any number might have been procured. My son John shot seventeen of them at a single discharge of his double-barrelled gun, but all of them proved to be young birds

of the preceding year. Their stomachs were filled with coleopterous insects, which they caught on the wing, or picked up from the water. On the 24th of August, 1831, when at Eastport with my family, I shot ten of these Gulls. The adult birds had already lost their dark hood, and the young were in fine plumage. In the stomachs of all were shrimps, very small fishes, and fat substances. The old birds were still in pairs. None were observed on any part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or on the coast of Labrador or Newfoundland. In winter this species is common in the harbour of Charleston, but none are seen at that season near the mouths of the Mississippi."

The flight of this Gull is light, elevated, and rapid, resembling in buoyancy that of some of our Terns more than that of most of our Gulls, which move their wings more sedately. Their notes are different from those of all our other species, being shriller and more frequent.

An adult male killed at Great Slave Lake at the end of May, 1826, is thus described by Sir John Richardson:—"Neck, tail-coverts, tail, whole under plumage and interior of the wings pure white; hood greyish-black, extending half an inch over the nape, and as much lower on the throat; mantle pearl grey, this colour extending to the tips of the tertiaries, secondaries, and two posterior primaries; the anterior border of the wing white; the outer web of the first primary, and the ends of the first six are deep black, most of them slightly tipped with white; the inner web of the first primary, with the outer webs of the three following ones, with their shafts, are pure white; bill shining black; inside of the mouth and the legs bright carmine red; irides dark brown."

The female is a little smaller than the male.

The measurements vary somewhat, depending on the sex and age of the specimen; the whole length is from

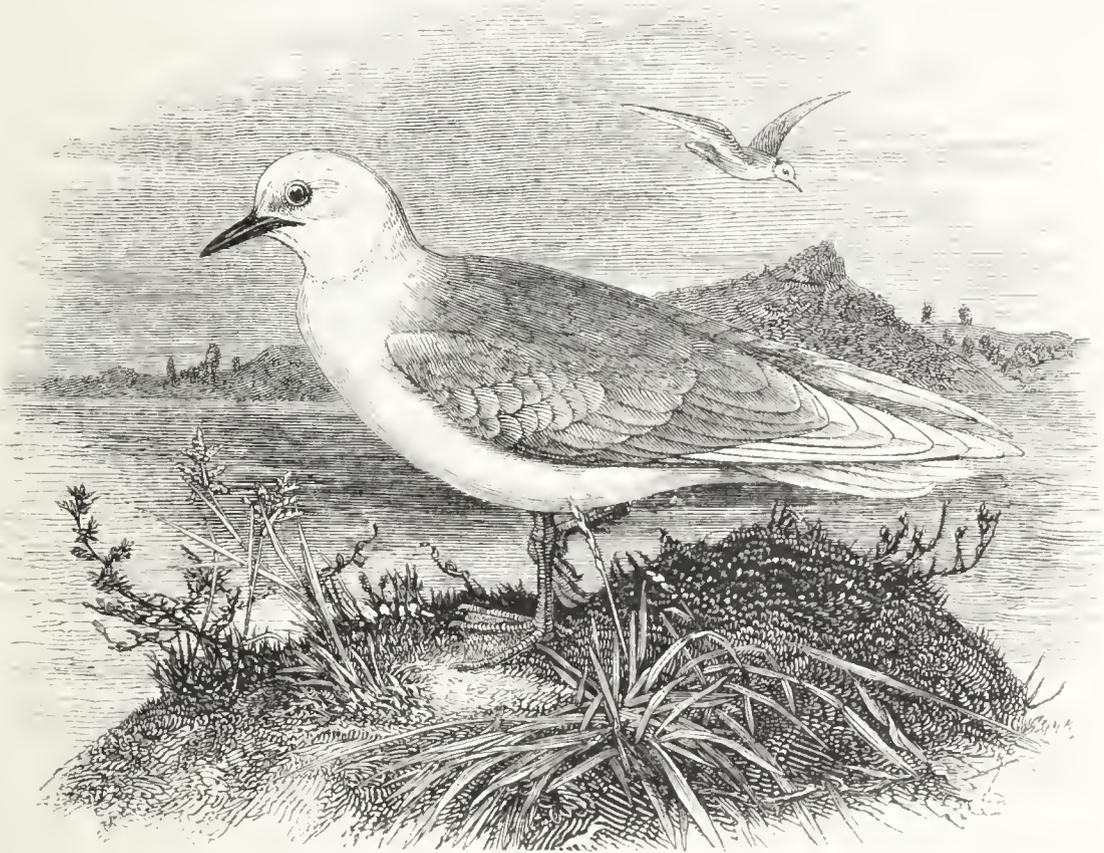
fourteen inches to fifteen inches and a half; wing, from the bend to the end of the longest quill-feather, ten inches.

A young bird in its first plumage, killed at the end of August, has the crown of the head, back of the neck, scapulars, and interscapulars greyish-brown, with paler tips; middle of the wing and tertiaries blackish-brown, the tips lighter; bastard wing and primary coverts blotched with the same; throat and upper part of the breast faintly tinged with buff; the rest of the plumage nearly as in the bird of one year; bill brownish, pale at the base beneath; legs clay-coloured.

The figures here given are intended to represent in the lower bird the anterior half of an adult bird in the breeding plumage; the entire figure placed on the rock is a young bird in the plumage of its first winter. The egg has not been figured or described, as far as I know.

NATA TORES.

LARIDÆ.



THE CUNEATE-TAILED GULL.

Larus Rossii.

<i>Larus Rossii,</i>	<i>Cuneate-tailed Gull,</i>	RICH. and SWAINS. Faun. Bor. Amer. Birds, vol. ii. p. 427.
<i>Rhodostethia Rossi,</i>	<i>Ross's Rosy Gull,</i>	MACGILL. Man. Brit. Birds, vol. ii. p. 252.
<i>Larus Rossii,</i>	„ „ „	WILSON'S Illust. Zool. vol. i. pl. 8.
„ <i>Roseus,</i>	„ „ „	JARD. and SELBY, Ornith. Illust. vol. i. pl. 14.
<i>Rhodostethia Rossi,</i>	„ „ „	GRAY and MITCH. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. pl. 180.

FROM the Fauna Boreali-Americana, as quoted, we learn that two specimens of this Gull were killed on the coast of Melville Peninsula, on Sir Edward Parry's second voyage, one of which is preserved in the Museum of the University of Edinburgh, and the other was presented to

Joseph Sabine, Esq. No other examples are known to exist in collections; but Commander Ross, in his Zoological Appendix to Sir Edward Parry's narrative of his most adventurous boat-voyage towards the Pole, relates that several were seen during the journey over the ice north of Spitzbergen, and that Lieutenant Forster also found the species in Waygait Straits, which is probably one of its breeding-places. It is to Commander James Clark Ross, who killed the first specimen which was obtained, that the species is dedicated, as a tribute for his unwearied exertions in the promotion of natural history on the late Arctic voyages, in all of which he bore a part. Of the peculiar habits or winter retreat of this species nothing is known.

For the knowledge of the occurrence of this very rare Gull in Yorkshire, and its consequent title to be included in a History of British Birds, we are indebted to Mr. Charlesworth, who, in a paper published in the first part of the first volume of the Proceedings of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, page 33, gave all that was known of this interesting species.

The capture is authenticated in the following memorandum supplied by Sir Wm. Milner, of Nun Appleton:—
“Ross's Gull was killed by Horner, Lord Howden's head-keeper, in February, 1847, in a ploughed field, near the hamlet of Milford cum Kirby, in the parish of Kirby. Its flight resembled, according to Horner's account, the flight of any other Gull, and it did not seem at all shy.”

Mr. William Macgillivray includes this bird in his Manual of British Ornithology, vol. ii. p. 254, published in 1842, with the remark that “this species has once occurred in Ireland.”

I remember some years ago to have seen a notice in print that this bird had been once taken in Ireland; but,

from the countries visited or known to the writer of that notice, and from the circumstance that this species had only been seen in high northern latitudes, I came to the conclusion that the printer had made a mistake of *one* letter, and that for *Ireland* we ought to read *Iceland*. Add to this, that the Birds of Ireland had been carefully worked out by Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, one of the best authorities for Irish Birds, and this species is not included by him in his Fauna of Ireland. I may also add that Ross's Gull has no place in Mr. Watter's useful Manual of the Birds of Ireland, published in Dublin, in 1853.

Sir John Richardson's description of a specimen killed in June, 1823, is as follows:—

“ *Colour*.—Scapulars, inter-scapulars, and both surfaces of the wings clear pearl grey; outer web of the first quill blackish-brown to its tip, which is grey; tips of the scapulars and lesser quills whitish. Some small feathers near the eye, and a collar round the middle of the neck, pitch black; rest of the plumage white; the neck above, and the whole under plumage, deeply tinged with peach-blossom red in recent specimens; bill black, its rictus and the edges of the eyelids reddish-orange; legs and feet vermilion red; nails blackish.

“ *Form*.—Bill slender, weak, with a scarcely perceptible salient angle beneath; the upper mandible slightly arched and compressed towards the point; the commissure slightly curved at the tip; wings an inch longer than the decided cuneiform tail, of which the central feathers are an inch longer than the lateral; tarsi rather stout; the thumb very distinct, armed with a nail as large as that of the outer toe.”

The other specimen, killed by Mr. Sherer a few days later, differs only in the first primary coverts having the

same dark colour with the outer web of the first primary itself.

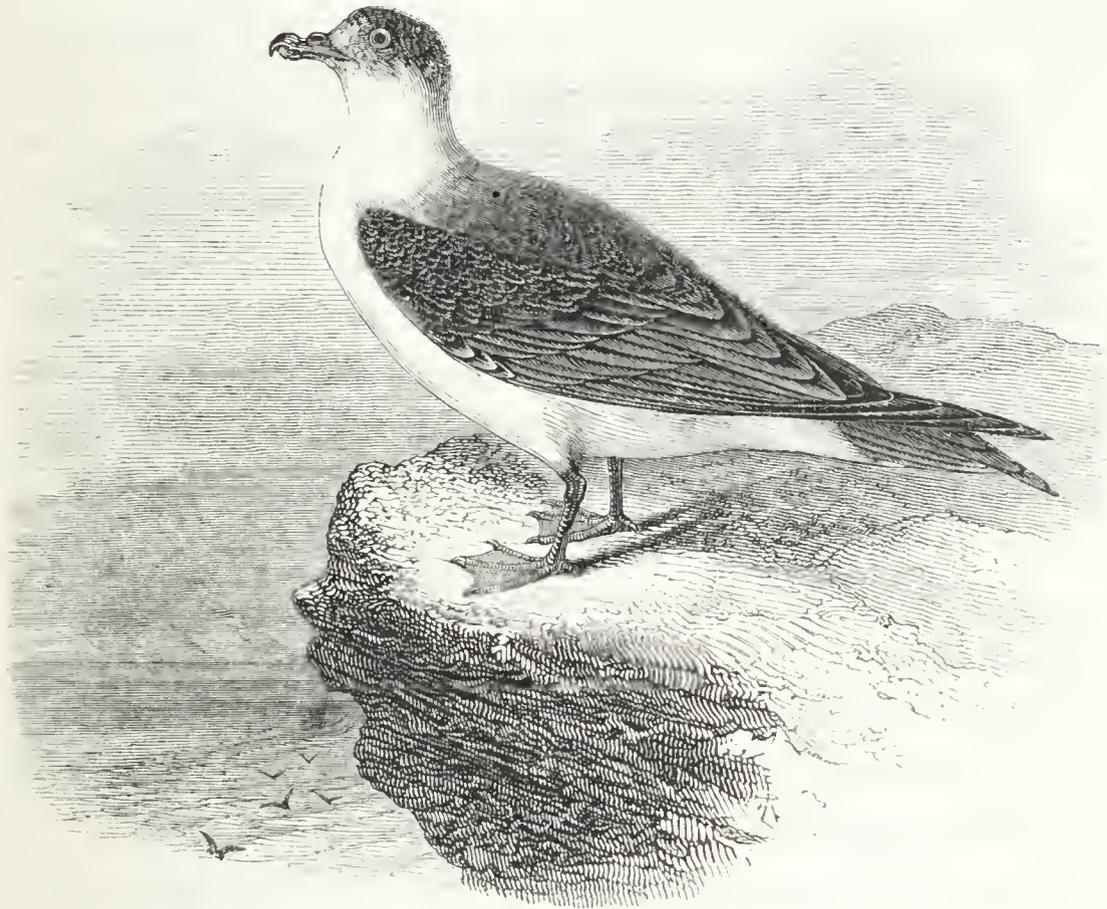
Mr. Charlesworth remarks that the fate of the specimen of *Larus Rossii*, given to Mr. Sabine, is not known, and that none of our public Museums have since been able to obtain examples. I have, however, ascertained by inquiry that the justly-celebrated Derby collection of Birds, now in Liverpool, contains one example of Ross's Gull.

The Yorkshire specimen, killed in February, had the bill black; eyes with a narrow line of dark feathers around them; head, whole of the neck and breast delicate rose colour, mixed or clouded with French grey; wings and back French grey; outer web of the first primary, only, dark grey; the shafts bluish-grey; upper tail-coverts, tail-feathers, and all the under surface of the body, delicate rose colour; under surface of the wings French grey; the shafts of the primaries white; central pair of tail-feathers the longest; the remainder graduated, forming a wedge-shaped tail; legs, toes, and interdigital membranes vermilion; the claws black.

The whole length of the bird is about fourteen inches; wing, from the anterior bend to the end of the first primary, which is the longest, ten inches and a half; bill, from the point to the feathers on the top, three-fourths of an inch; length of the tarsus one inch and a quarter.

NATA TORES.

LARIDÆ.



THE CAPPED PETREL.

Procellaria hæsitata.

<i>Procellaria hæsitata,</i>	FORST. Icon. ined. fig. 92.
„ „ <i>White-headed Petrel,</i>	KUHL. Temm. 1820.
„ <i>hæsitata, Pétrel hasite,</i>	TEMM. et LAUG. Planches Color. No. 416.
„ <i>hæsitata,</i>	FORST. Descr. Anim. by Lichet. (1844), p. 208.

THE PETREL represented above was observed by a boy on a heath at Southacre, near Swaffham in Norfolk, flapping for some time from one furze-bush to another; at length it got into one of the bushes, and was then secured by him: exhausted as it was, it had strength enough remaining to bite violently the hand of its captor,

who thereupon killed it. Mr. Newcome, of Hockwold Hall, near Brandon, fortunately happened at the time to be hawking in the neighbourhood of Swaffham, and his falconer, John Madden, observing the boy with the dead bird, procured it from him, and brought it to his master, by whom it was skinned and mounted, and in whose possession it now is. This took place in the spring of 1850.

Mr. Newcome very kindly allowed the specimen to be sent up to London, and with the assistance of Mr. Alfred Newton, after some search, a figure of the bird was found in Forster's unpublished drawings of birds, in the British Museum, the name of *hæsitata* being written on the drawing; Mr. George Gray, the ornithologist in the establishment, very readily pioneering in the pursuit.

A detailed account of this bird, with two illustrations by Mr. Alfred Newton, will be found in the *Zoologist* for 1852, p. 3691.

But very few examples of this species of Petrel are to be found in collections. One obtained in the Indian Ocean is in the Museum at Leyden. One has been taken in the Australian seas. One taken in the South Seas was bought at the sale of Mr. Bullock's Museum. One presented to the Zoological Society by John Hearne, Esq., which was brought from Hayti, is now in the British Museum. Mr. Gould mentions having seen specimens in France, stated to have been brought from the West Indies, and remembers having seen others of this same species in abundance off the Western Isles.

The following is the description, by Mr. Alfred Newton, of the bird whose capture in Norfolk entitles it to a place in this volume:—"The whole of the beak is black; from the crown of the head to the nape of the neck the feathers are white at the base, broadly tipped with dark brown, so

as to present, except at the edges of the patch, which is nearly circular, a uniform surface of the latter colour; in front and below the eye are a few greyish-black feathers extending over the ear-coverts; the orbits are surrounded with a ring of sepia-brown feathers. The forehead, face, neck, breast, belly, sides, and under tail-coverts are nearly pure white, but there are also a few dark feathers on the flanks. The back and shoulders are covered with brownish-grey and blackish-brown feathers, the former appearing to have been but lately assumed, but many of the latter are sedgy and worn at the edges: all these feathers are white at the base, but that colour does not show on the surface. The rump and upper tail-coverts are white, the feathers of the latter elongated. The tail is rounded, and consists of twelve feathers, the outer pair white, edged and broadly tipped with blackish-brown, the next four pair are similarly coloured, but only slightly edged, the tips of each pair being darker as they approach the middle; the shafts of the quills in all these are white; the middle pair of quills are brownish-black nearly all their length, their basal being white, and have their shafts corresponding in colour to their webs. The wing-coverts are blackish-brown, bordered with a lighter shade of that colour, the borders of the middle and lower coverts being so broad as to appear like two light-coloured bars across the wing; the quill-feathers are blackish-brown, with shafts of the same, the first quill-feather being the longest; the under surface of the wings, as far as can be seen, is white. The naked parts of the tibiæ, the tarsi, and the basal halves of the toes and interdigital membranes appear to have been dusky yellow, the rest of the feet and claws are black. The specimen was a female, and when newly killed the irides were hazel brown."

From the name of "White-headed Petrel" given to

this species by Kuhl, it is probable that the coronal cap becomes restricted in size and lighter in colour as the bird advances in age.

The whole length is sixteen inches: from the carpal joint to the end of the longest wing-feather rather more than twelve inches. The length of the naked portion of the tibiæ is rather more than half an inch; of the tarsus rather less than an inch and a half; length of the middle toe, without the claw, about one inch and three-quarters.

suffered itself to be handled without exhibiting alarm; and though apparently strong and vigorous, manifested quite an Oriental resignation to its fate."

The *Puffinus obscurus*, or Dusky Petrel, is included by the late William Macgillivray in his Manual of British Ornithology (part ii. Water Birds, p. 263), with the following remark:—"This species belongs to the southern and tropical regions of the globe, although individuals have sometimes been found far north." Reference is also made to his History of British Birds, vol. v., but no page is given. The fifth volume of this latter work was not published until ten years after the publication of the Manual, and does not contain any notice of this bird.

The Dusky Petrel of Latham (Syn.) and Pennant (Arct. Zool.), since they give it a length of thirteen inches, is not the *Puffinus obscurus* of more modern authors; and is probably the Manks Petrel (*Puffinus Anglorum*) of Ray: but Latham, in his Synopsis (vol. vi. p. 417), refers to a Petrel without a name, measuring less by two inches in length, in the Leverian Museum, said to have come from King George's Sound; and mentions also that it inhabits Christmas Island. The *Puffinus obscurus* measures eleven inches in its whole length, and six and three-quarters from the bend of the wing to the end of the longest quill-feather. Six specimens examined gave the same results.

M. Temminck says, it is never found in the north.

Professor Savi includes this species in his Ornitologia Toscana (vol. iii. p. 40), from an example obtained in Piedmont; and it has a place also in the Faune Française (p. 405), from specimens killed in Brittany and Picardy.

It is therefore included in the Birds of Europe by M. Temminck, Mr. Gould, M. Degland, and Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte; the author of the first work observing that "it is rare in the Mediterranean, but common on the

coast of Africa to the Cape of Good Hope." And it may be mentioned, in proof of the first part of this statement, that the name of this bird does not appear in the catalogues of the birds of Sicily, Malta, Tunis, Algeria, or Tangiers.

Messrs. Webb and Berthelot include the *Puffinus obscurus* in their work on the Natural History of the Canary Islands; and Edward Vernon Harcourt, Esq., to whom I am indebted for a specimen of the bird and its egg, has particularly referred to this species in his published Sketch of Madeira (pp. 122 and 165). Eight or nine species of the birds of this family breed on, or frequent, the Dezertas, a group of small islands about eighteen miles east from Madeira. "The Dusky Petrel is a very tame bird, and will live upon almost anything; my bird would climb up my trowsers by its beak and claws to obtain small portions of food; it runs along the ground on its belly, and uses its curious-shaped bill in climbing up the rocks. Those I had in my possession alive, were some of them caught with fish-hooks baited with meat, by the Portuguese, and some taken by the hand in the day-time from underneath stones, where they hide from the light." The egg, and they lay but one, measures one inch and seven-eighths in length, by one inch and three-eighths in breadth, rather smaller at one end than at the other, and pure white.

Audubon, in his Birds of America (vol. vii. p. 216), and in his Ornithological Biography (vol. iii. p. 620), gives an interesting account of the habits of this Petrel on the water:—"They skim very low over the sea in search of the floating bunches of marine plants, usually called the gulf weed, so abundant here as sometimes to occupy a space of half an acre or more. On approaching a mass of weeds, they raise their wings obliquely, drop

their legs and feet, run as it were on the water, and at length alight on the sea, where they swim with as much ease as Ducks, and dive freely, at times passing several feet under the surface in pursuit of fishes, which are seized with great agility. I heard no sound or note from any of them, although many came within twenty yards of the ship, and alighted there. Whenever an individual settled in a spot, many others flew up directly and joined it." He found it abundant in the month of June, in the Gulf of Mexico and off the coast eastward to Georgia, some of them wandering from Cape Florida as far north as Sandy Hook and Long Island. Audubon's friend, Thomas Nuttall, in his Manual of the Ornithology of the United States and of Canada, among other localities already quoted, mentions the north-west coast of America. It is also found at Bermuda.

Captain Cook met with this species at Christmas Island, only two degrees north of the equator, and about 158° W. longitude. This island was so named by Cook, who landed there on Christmas-day, in 1777.

Having carefully examined specimens of this bird from Australia, others from Madeira, and these with the recently-acquired example from Valentia Harbour, I am induced to consider them but as one species; and that the *Puffinus obscurus* of Mr. Gould's Birds of Europe, and the *Puffinus assimilis* of his Birds of Australia, are, accordingly, identical. Several examples of equally extensive geographical range are well known. Of the *Puffinus assimilis* Mr. Gould observes:—"All the specimens of this species that I have seen were procured on Norfolk Island, where it is said to breed; consequently the seas washing the eastern shores of Australia may be considered its native habitat: it is evidently the representative of the *Puffinus obscurus* of Europe, which it so much resembles,

and to which it is so nearly allied, that *assimilis* appeared to me to be the most appropriate specific appellation I could apply to it. On my homeward voyage I saw numerous examples flying off the north-eastern end of New Zealand, and this, I regret to say, is all the information I have to communicate respecting it." Two specimens of this bird are in the collection at the British Museum, presented by the late Sir Thomas Mitchell from Eastern Australia, and the occurrence of this species at King George's Sound, on the south-west coast, has been already noticed.

Birds of great and enduring powers of flight; able, moreover, to take their rest, and obtain their food on the surface of the sea, may reasonably be expected to have a wide geographical range; and of these powers the birds belonging to the families of the Terns, Gulls, and Petrels are good examples.

The whole length of the bird, as previously mentioned, is eleven inches; bill to the feathers on the forehead one inch; the nail curved and shining black, the other parts bluish-black; the top and sides of the head, including the eyes, the neck above, the back, upper tail-coverts, upper surface of the tail-feathers, and the same parts of all the wing-feathers ink black; chin, sides of the head below the eyes, throat, neck, breast, belly, under wing and tail-coverts white; on the sides of the neck, at the junction of the dark and light colour, the feathers are barred slightly; axillary plumes white; under surfaces of the primaries blackish-grey; darkest near the shaft of each feather, becoming lighter in colour over the outer part of each broad inner web; under surface of tail-feathers uniform lead grey; legs, with the tarsal bones very much compressed, blackish-grey, toes the same, the interdigital membranes reddish-brown; irides brown.

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