

Genus PHALAROPUS, *Briss.*

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* straight, depressed at its base ; both *mandibles* furrowed as far as the point, the tip of the upper one obtuse, and bending over the under, which is pointed. *Nostrils* basal, lateral, oval, encircled by a membrane. *Feet* moderate, slender. *Tarsi* compressed. *Toes*, three before and one behind, those in front united as far as the first joint by a membrane which is continued to their extremities in indented festoons ; the hind toe having only the rudiments of a membrane. *Wings* lengthened ; the first *quill-feather* longest.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE.

Phalaropus hyperboreus, *Lath.*

Le Phalarope hyperboré.

THE TWO species of Phalaropes which are recognised as natives of Europe, have in their different stages of plumage received various synonyms ; and the present species, from its more lengthened and attenuated bill, has been separated by M. Cuvier, and advanced to rank as a genus, which he has designated *Lobipes*. With the views of this great naturalist we do not in the present instance concur ; being unwilling that birds agreeing so closely as these in habits, manners, and food, should be separated : though it must at the same time be confessed that as the modification the bird here figured exhibits in the structure of the beak, points out a degree of affinity to the genus *Totanus*, so on the contrary the other species evinces an approach to the *Tringas*, *T. hypoleucos* for example ; a bird which although it does not swim, except from necessity, is certainly endowed with that power beyond its congeners. Retaining, however, the two European species under one and the same genus, we may proceed to observe, that the Red-necked Phalarope is the least of the two, and that the elegance of its form, together with the grace and ease of its actions on the water, cannot but excite the admiration of every lover of Nature. It more particularly inhabits the northern portion of the globe, being found both in Europe and America, frequenting the shores of the sea and large sheets of water whether fresh or salt, but more especially the latter. In the British dominions,—Scotland, and its northern and western Isles, are the most frequent places of resort, where it also breeds ; the specimens from which our figures were taken having been collected among the Shetland Islands, in their mature and breeding plumage during the season of 1832, by Mr. Dunn of Hull, who informs us that they were by no means uncommon, and that their familiar and unsuspecting habits rendered them easy of acquisition. Their nests, which have been found among the lochs of Sanda, as described by Mr. Salmon, were placed in small tufts of grass growing close to the edge of the water ; the eggs four, one inch two lines in length, and ten lines and a half in breadth, olive-brown spotted and specked with brownish black. M. Temminck states that in Germany and Holland this bird is of rare occurrence.

As we might expect from the lengthened form of the wings, the power of flight which the Red-necked Phalarope possesses is very considerable ; nor is it less endowed with facilities for swimming, not only upon the smooth surface of lakes and ponds, where it is sometimes seen, but also upon the rougher billows of the ocean far from shore, where it finds itself quite secure. On land it does not display that lightness and activity which characterize the *Tringa* in general ; in its lobed feet, however, it possesses an advantage over that tribe in being able to walk on the soft and oozy mud which covers the sides of creeks and estuaries, among which it finds its principal food, consisting of insects, worms, and minute mollusca.

The changes of plumage which this bird undergoes are but little understood ; we know, however, that the young differ materially from the adult birds, having a lighter colouring of plumage, wanting the red on the sides of the neck, and all their feathers being margined with greyish white. M. Temminck, as well as other naturalists, has fallen into an error respecting the sexual differences which characterize the Phalaropes, the Sandpipers and Plovers, the Ruff excepted,—viz. in considering the largest and richest-coloured birds to be males, whereas the contrary is in reality the case. This law appears to prevail with most of those birds that produce but one brood of young during the summer, and the females are further remarkable for laying very large eggs in proportion to the size of the bird.

We take our description from adult specimens now before us. The whole of the head, the back of the neck, the breast and flank, are of a dark ash colour ; throat, belly and vent, white ; between the breast and throat intervenes a broad patch of beautiful chestnut-red ; the remainder of the upper plumage of a brownish black, the feathers having a rufous margin ; secondaries tipped with white, which forms a band across the wings ; bill black ; irides brown ; feet olive-brown. Length about six inches.

We have figured both sexes in their summer plumage ; the female will be readily distinguished by her more brilliant colour and larger size.