

Genus **ARENARIA**, *Bechst.*

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* as long as the head, straight, slender, semi-flexible, compressed at the base, with the tip dilated and smooth. *Nostrils* lateral, basal, narrow, longitudinally cleft in the nasal furrow, which extends to the dertrum or nail of the bill. *Wings* of mean length, acuminate, with the first quill-feather the longest. *Legs* of mean length, naked above the tarsal joint. *Feet* three-toed, all the toes directed forwards, with a very small connecting membrane at their base.

**SANDERLING.**

*Arenaria Calidris*, *Meyer.*

Le Sanderling variable.

THE Sanderling is one of the few birds whose distribution may be considered as almost universal, a circumstance probably to be accounted for by the great powers of flight and the extreme high northern latitudes to which it is known to retire for the purpose of breeding, from whence it would appear to radiate not only over the sea-shores of the Old World, but also over those of the New, extending its migration during winter to within the tropics. It is very plentiful in Brazil, whence we have received specimens which do not present the slightest difference either from those of our own island or from those of Africa and Asia.

From the dreary regions of a northern clime they commence an early return to more temperate latitudes, and it not unfrequently happens that the Sanderling may be observed on our shores as early as the month of August, "at which time," says Mr. Selby, "I have killed several individuals upon the Northumbrian strand. These have generally been the young of the year, and are probably stragglers from flocks of the earliest broods which were destined to reach more southern latitudes, as the great body that resorts to our shores and those of the opposite continent, seldom arrives before the middle of September."

The actions of the Sanderling while on the ground are characterized by the greatest activity, and bear a striking resemblance to those of many of the smaller *Charadriadæ*, among which, particularly the Ring Dottrel, it is often associated.

Its food consists of insects of various kinds, but more particularly the smaller *Coleoptera*, in the capture of which it displays the greatest agility. Its flight is rapid and vigorous; hence it is enabled to perform considerable migrations in a comparatively short space of time.

There is no member of the family to which the Sanderling belongs that exhibits a greater change of plumage than takes place in this species; in fact, were we not acquainted with the peculiar law relative to the members of this group, and had two examples of this bird been presented to us for the first time, one in the plumage of summer and the other in that of winter, we should undoubtedly have pronounced them to have been distinct species.

The nest and eggs are at present unknown.

In winter the forehead, sides of the neck, and all the under surface are pure white; crown, nape of the neck, back and scapulars ash grey, with the shafts blackish brown; secondaries brown, with white tips which form a bar across the wings; outer webs of the greater quills deep brown, and their shafts white; middle tail-feathers brown margined with white; outer ones greyish white; bill and legs black.

In summer the crown and the forehead are black, each feather margined with pale reddish brown and white; throat, neck, and breast mingled reddish brown, ash grey, and brownish black; back and scapulars reddish brown irregularly blotched and spotted with black; greater coverts blackish brown margined and tipped with white, forming a bar across the wings.

The young before the first moult have the forehead, a streak over the eye, cheeks, and throat white; at the lower part of the neck a band of yellowish white passing into ash grey; all the under surface white; crown of the head black margined and spotted with pale buff; nape pale grey with streaks of a darker tint; back and scapulars black margined and spotted with white; tertials brown margined with greyish white; legs blackish grey.

We have figured two birds, one in the summer, the other in the winter plumage, of the natural size.