

## Genus CALIDRIS.

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* mediocral, rounded, rather slender, flexible, above sulcated, its tip depressed, smooth and dilated. *Nostrils* linear, placed in a long groove. *Feet* four-toed; the toes margined and cleft; the hinder toe with its tip alone resting on the ground.

## KNOT.

*Calidris canutus*, *Briss. et Cuv.*

Le Bécasseau canute.

ALTHOUGH the Knot does not make the British Islands a place of permanent residence in which to incubate and rear its young, yet it is abundant on its passage both during its equinoctial and polar migration. While on the latter journey, it visits our island in the month of May, at which time many individuals have almost entirely gained the full plumage of summer, so much so, as to lead us to suppose that they would remain on our shores to breed; a supposition which is strengthened by actual dissection; still, however, we have no undoubted facts upon which to assert that such a circumstance has occurred. Leaving our shores after a short sojourn, they pass northwards to their arctic breeding-places: this duty accomplished, they commence their migration southward, visiting our island again in their passage, when many remain the whole of the winter, during which they live congregated in flocks on the borders of the sea, but giving the preference to marshy and fenny countries in their native latitudes for the purpose of incubation. While they make this island their asylum, numbers are annually taken, either in nets or by the gun, for the purposes of the table. In the London markets they may be generally met with in the spring, and during the whole of the winter.

The Knot is not only common in the arctic regions of the Old World, but is equally so in the northern portions of America, extending throughout the whole of the circle; its southern migrations seldom exceeding the latitudes of the Mediterranean,

We know of no birds in which the great difference between the stages of plumage in winter and summer has led to so much confusion and the creation of so many synonyms: an examination of individuals in every stage of plumage, from the greyish white of winter to the fine brownish red of summer, has clearly satisfied us that they are specifically the same. Independently of the great dissimilarity of colour which the adult Knot exhibits at these opposite seasons of the year, the young possess a colouring distinct from either, the ground of which nearly resembles the plumage of winter, but every feather on the upper surface is edged at its tip with two crescents, the outer one white and the inner one black, producing a most beautifully barred appearance: under surface buff colour. Concerning the nidification of the Knot we have been able to collect no information whatever.

The two sexes are alike in colouring, or, if there be any difference, the female is the finest in colour and the largest in size.

In summer, the whole of the upper surface is of a reddish brown, the top of the head and back of the neck being marked with small longitudinal streaks of black, while each feather on the back and wings has a central dash of the same colour branching out into irregular bars on the wings; quill-feathers and tail blackish brown; the whole of the under surface is of a brick red; bill green at the base, black at the tip; legs greenish olive; irides dark brown.

In winter the whole of the upper surface is of a fine ash grey; the quills and tail brownish black; the breast and whole of the under surface white, flanks and sides of the chest being variegated with longitudinal and arrow-shaped marks of brown.

The Plate represents an adult bird in the summer and winter states of plumage of the natural size.