

## SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER.

*Totanus semipalmatus*, *Temm.*

Le Chevalier semi-palmé.

THE celebrated Wilson having beautifully portrayed the history of this species, we have taken the liberty of extracting rather largely from his valuable work, before which, however, we would state that it is on the authority of the continental naturalists that we have been induced to give a figure of it in the present work. M. Temminck informs us that it is accidentally found in the North of Europe, but like ourselves, quotes from Wilson an account of its food, manners, &c. We have also been favoured with an European-killed specimen presented to us by Professor Lichtenstein of Berlin; no doubt therefore can exist as to the propriety of admitting it into the Fauna of this portion of the globe, although America must be considered as its true habitat.

“This,” says Wilson, “is one of the most noisy and noted birds that inhabit our salt marshes in summer. Its common name is the Willet, by which appellation it is universally known along the shores of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, in all of which places it breeds in great numbers. It arrives from the south on the shores of the middle states about the 20th of April or beginning of May; and from that time to the last of July its loud and shrill reiterations of *pill-will-willet*, *pill-will-willet*, resound almost incessantly along the marshes, and may be distinctly heard at the distance of more than half a mile. Their nests are built on the ground, among the grass of the salt marshes, and are composed of wet rushes and coarse grass, forming a slight hollow or cavity in a tussock. This nest is gradually increased during the period of laying and sitting to the height of five or six inches. The eggs are usually four in number, very thick at the great end, tapering to a narrow point at the other, and of a dark dingy olive, largely blotched with blackish brown, particularly at the great end. The eggs, in every instance that has come under my observation, are placed during incubation in an almost upright position, with the large end uppermost; and this appears to be the constant practice of several other species of birds that breed in these marshes. During the laying season, the Crows are seen roaming over the marshes in search of eggs, and wherever they come spread consternation and alarm among the Willets, who in united numbers attack and pursue them with loud clamours.”

The Willet subsists chiefly on small shell-fish, marine worms, and aquatic insects, in search of which it regularly resorts to the muddy shores and flats at low water.

This species differs considerably in its summer and winter plumage, the latter being of a pale dun colour with darker shafts, and the former as follows:

Upper surface dark olive brown, each feather streaked down the centre and crossed with irregular lines of black, and numerous blotched with dull yellowish white; wing-coverts greyish olive; basal half of the primaries white, the remainder black; secondaries white; rump dark brown; upper tail-coverts white, barred with olive; tail pale olive crossed with bars of dark brown; chin white; breast and flanks cream colour transversely mottled with olive; belly and vent white, the latter barred with olive; tip of the bill black; the base and the legs and feet pale lead colour.

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