

KENTISH PLOVER.

Charadrius Cantianus, Lath.

Le Pluvier à collier interrompu.

IN its habits and manners, as well as in localities, this interesting little Plover is closely allied to the Ring Dottrel, *Charadrius hiaticula*; and we have every reason to suppose that it is often mistaken by casual observers for that bird, as when seen in a state of nature, unless approached very nearly, they are scarcely distinguishable: still no Ornithologist could mistake it upon actual examination; its smaller size, black legs, and the rufous mark behind the head which characterizes the male, affording a marked ground of distinction. As the Kentish Plover is a species still in great request by most collectors of our native birds, we have the pleasure of stating, that if sought for in the localities hereafter mentioned it will assuredly be met with, our own experience enabling us to assert that it annually breeds in many parts of this Island. We have received it in considerable abundance from Great Yarmouth in Norfolk, which, as far as we have been able to ascertain, forms its northern boundary in this country. It is also found along the flat and shingly beaches of Kent and Sussex; and we may particularize Selsey beach, the immediate neighbourhood of Hastings, and Shellness near Sandwich, as places where, if sought for in the months of May, June and July, it is sure to be met with. During the last season several pairs were shot near Sandwich by the Rev. George Clayton, of Much Hadham, near Bishops Stortford, Herts. The opposite coasts of France and Holland, where a similar character of shore prevails, are also among the places to which it pays annual visits.

As we have before mentioned, the actions of the Kentish Plover are strictly similar to those of the Ring Dottrel, in whose company it is often found, the instinct of both species leading them to prefer the sea-shore, its inlets and creeks, seldom venturing from these localities to visit the fresh waters. Like the rest of its genus, it is quick and active in its motions, running with great celerity, with its head depressed below the level of its back, over the loose shingles and muddy flats of the shore, and occasionally taking short and circular flights, returning almost to the same spot, uttering while on the wing a brief and mournful note, repeated at short intervals.

Its food consists of small marine insects and worms, which it searches for among the loose stones, sand, and oozy mud; to which it also adds the smaller kinds of slender-shelled bivalves.

It lays its eggs, which are five in number and of a yellow olive marked with irregular spots and blotches of dark brown, in depressions on the naked sand, or among the shells and shingles of the beach.

M. Temminck informs us that the moult of this bird is single, taking place in autumn, as he has often had opportunities of observing.

In the adult male the colours of the plumage are as follows. Forehead, eyelids, a band on the back of the neck, and all the under parts, of pure white; the space between the eye and the beak, a band on the forehead, and a large spot on each side of the breast, of a deep black; behind the eye, a large dark grey mark; the head and back of the neck, of a light reddish brown; the upper parts, of a brownish ash colour; the quill-feathers slightly edged with white; the two lateral tail-feathers white, the third whitish, and the others brown; beak, irides and feet, black.

The female wants the black band on the forehead, its place being occupied by a little transverse bar; the sides of the breast, the space between the eye and the beak, and the region behind the eyes, are ashy brown; and the back of the head and neck is tinged with grey.

The young of the year differ from the adult females chiefly in having the feathers of the upper part of a light ashy brown, each feather being edged with a lighter tint of the same colour; and the lateral markings of the breast being indicated by light brown.

We have figured a male and female, in their adult plumage, of the natural size.