

ACTITURUS BARTRAMIUS.

Bartram's Sandpiper.

- Tringa Bartramia*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. vii. p. 63, pl. 59. fig. 2.
Totanus Bartramius, Bonap. Syn. Birds of Unit. States, p. 262.—Gould, Birds of Europe, vol. iv. pl. 313.—Swains
 and Rich. Faun. Bor.-Am., pt. ii. p. 391.
 — *Bartramia*, Temm. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 650, and tom. iv. p. 415.
Tringa longicauda, Bechst. Vög., Nacht. p. 453.
Actitis Bartramia, Naum. Naturg. Deuts., pl. 196.
Actiturus Bartramius, Bonap. Sagg. Distr. Met. An. Vert.—Gould, Handb. Birds of Aust. vol. ii. p. 242.
Bartramia laticauda, Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 553.
Euliga Bartramia, Nutt. Man., vol. ii. p. 169.
Totanus variegatus, Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. p. 107, pl. cccxxxix.
 — *campestris et melanopygius*, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., 2^e édit. tom. vi. pp. 400, 401.
Tringoides Bartramius, G. R. Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 574.

THAT the Directors of the Museum of Sydney are imbued with feelings of liberality and courtesy, I have had abundant proofs; for whenever Zoological science could be advanced through their instrumentality, they have ever readily responded to the requests proffered by myself and other naturalists of their fatherland; and it is to them that I am indebted for the opportunity of figuring the present species in this supplementary volume to the 'Birds of Australia,' from the only example that has yet been taken in that country, and which they kindly transmitted to me some years since on loan for that purpose. The note accompanying it stated that it had been killed by an old sportsman, while snipe-shooting near the reservoir between the town of Sydney and Botany Bay in 1848, and that on dissection it proved to be a male and had the stomach filled with aquatic insects. The accompanying figure having been taken, the specimen referred to was returned to the Museum in 1861; and there it doubtless still exists, affording undeniable evidence of the wandering disposition of a bird whose natural home is the New World, where it ranges over the temperate portions of the United States, Mexico, Guatemala, and some of the West-Indian Islands; it is also occasionally found in Europe, and even in England. That it should extend its range to the antipodes is most remarkable.

It will be seen, by the list of synonyms, that this bird has been removed from the true *Tringæ* and *Totani*, with which it was originally associated, and that various generic appellations have been applied to it: of these *Bartramia* appears to have the priority; but this term not being generally adopted, I have preferred that of *Actiturus*, proposed by Bonaparte.

The best accounts of this species are contained in the works of Wilson and Audubon, the latter of whom states that it is the most truly terrestrial of all its tribe with which he was acquainted; for although not unfrequently met with in the vicinity of shallow pools, the muddy margins of the shores of the sea, and fresh-water lakes and streams, it never ventures to wade into them. The dry upland plains of Opellousas and Attacapas in Louisiana are amply tenanted with these birds in early spring and in autumn. They arrive there in the beginning of March from the vast prairies of Texas and Mexico, where they spend the winter, and return about the first of August. They are equally abundant on all the western prairies on both sides of the Missouri, where, however, they arrive about a month later than in Louisiana, whence they disperse over the United States, reaching the middle districts early in May, and the State of Maine by the middle of that month, at about which period they are also seen in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. That some proceed as far north as the plains adjoining the Saskatchewan River is certain; for Dr. Richardson there met with examples in the month of May. In the neighbourhood of New Orleans, where the bird is known by the name of "Papabote," it usually arrives in great bands in spring, and is met with on the open plains and large grassy savannas, and usually remains about a fortnight. On their return southward in the beginning of August, when they tarry in Louisiana until the 1st of October, they are fat and juicy. In spring, when they are poor and thin, they are usually much less shy than in autumn, at which period they are exceedingly wary and difficult of approach. Like all experienced travellers, Bartram's Sandpiper appears to accommodate itself to circumstances as regards food; for in Louisiana it feeds on Cantharides and other Coleopterous insects; in Massachusetts on grasshoppers, on which it soon grows very fat; in the Carolinas on crickets and other insects, as well as the seeds of the crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*); and in the barrens of Kentucky it often picks the strawberries. Those which feed on Cantharides require to be very carefully cleaned, otherwise persons who eat them are liable to suffer severely; but when their flesh is imbued with the flavour of ripe strawberries, it is truly delicious.

The Australian specimen is much lighter in its general colouring than those killed in Europe and America, but is not in my opinion sufficiently different to warrant its being regarded as a distinct species.

The accurate representation of the bird on the opposite Plate, of the natural size, renders a detailed description of its colouring unnecessary.