

DIOMEDEA FULIGINOSA, Gmel.

Sooty Albatros.

Diomedea fuliginosa, Gmel. Edit. of Linn. Syst. Nat., vol. i. p. 568.—Temm. Pl. Col. 469.—Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 791.—List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., part iii. p. 166.

——— *palpebrata*, Forst. Drawings, No. 102.

——— *antarctica*, Banks's Drawings, No. 26.

——— *fusca*, Aud. Birds of Amer., vol. iv. pl. cccvii.—Ib. Orn. Bio., vol. v. p. 116.—Ib. Syn. Birds of N. Amer., p. 335.

Black Albatros, Linn. Trans., vol. xii. p. 489.

Sooty Albatros, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. v. p. 309.—Forst. Voy., vol. i. p. 91.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. x. p. 54.

THE *Diomedea fuliginosa* is one of the commonest species of the genus, and is universally distributed over all the temperate latitudes to the southward of the equator. On referring to my notes I find that it first came under my notice on the 23rd of July 1838, in lat. $31^{\circ} 10'$ S., long. 34° W., when three examples were seen flying round the ship, which they continued to do until we doubled the Cape and entered the South Indian Ocean, on the 14th of August. It was never very numerous; some days passed over without more than a single individual having made its appearance, and the greatest number that I saw at any one time was six or eight; it was constantly seen between the island of St. Paul's and New South Wales, as well as at the entrance of Bass's Straits, between Van Diemen's Land and Cape Howe. On my voyage homeward it was noticed on the 6th of May in lat. 40° S., long. 154° W.; in the Pacific near Cape Horn on the 20th of May in lat. 50° S., long. 90° W., and more abundantly in the Atlantic on the 12th of June in lat. 41° S., long. $34\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ W.

In its actions and mode of flight this bird differs very considerably from all the other species of Albatros, its aerial evolutions being far more easy, its flight much higher and its stoops more rapid; it is, moreover, the only species that passes directly over the ship, which it frequently does in blowing weather, often poising itself for several seconds over the mast-head, as if inquisitively viewing the scene below; it is at this moment it offers so inviting a mark for the gunner, that it often forfeits its life, and if shot when a little to windward of the vessel, it is almost certain to fall on board. The cuneated form of the tail, which is peculiar to this species, together with its slight and small legs and more delicate structure, clearly indicate that it is the most aerial species of the genus.

Latham states that it breeds on "the island of Tristan d'Acunha, is gregarious, many of them building their nests close to each other; in the area of half an acre were reckoned upwards of a hundred. The nest is of mud, raised five or six inches, and slightly depressed at the top; when the young birds are more than half-grown, they are covered with a whitish down; they stand on their respective hillocks like statues, till approached close, when they make a strange clattering with their beaks, and if touched, squirt a deluge of fetid oily fluid from the nostrils."

The whole of the plumage deep sooty grey, darkest on the face, wings and tail; shafts of the primaries and tail-feathers white; eyes very dark greyish brown, surrounded, except anteriorly, by a beautiful mark of white; bill jet-black, with a longitudinal line of white along the under mandible, this white portion not being horny like the rest of the bill, but composed of fleshy cartilage, which becomes nearly black soon after death; feet white, slightly tinged with fleshy purple.

The figure represents a male about two-thirds of the natural size.