

STERNA MELANAUCHEN, *Temm.*

Black-naped Tern.

Sterna melanauchen, Temm. Pl. Col., 427.—Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 622.—Ib. Man. d'Orn., tom. ii. p. 382.

ALTHOUGH this species has been figured by M. Temminck in his valuable “Planches Coloriées,” it becomes necessary to include a drawing of it in the present work, in consequence of its being a frequent visitor to the northern shores of Australia. M. Lesson states that it is found in the Celebes and on most of the Moluccas; there is therefore but little doubt that its range extends over the whole of the Indian Archipelago. It is about the size of the Common Tern (*Sterna Hirundo*) of Europe, and is one of the most beautiful species of the genus yet discovered; from all the other members of which it is at once distinguished by the snowy whiteness of its crown, and by the deep gorget-shaped black mark at the occiput.

So far as I have been able to ascertain, there appears to be no outward difference in the sexes; I have never seen examples in any other than the adult plumage here represented; but, judging from analogy, we may reasonably infer that this species undergoes changes similar to those of the other members of the family, and consequently that at some seasons of the year the black mark at the occiput is far less brilliant than at others.

I am indebted to the kindness of the Earl of Derby for the loan of the beautiful specimen from which my figure was taken, and which was killed in Torres' Straits, by Mr. McGillivray.

Crown of the head, neck and under surface white, with a faint tinge of rose-colour on the breast; lores and a gorget-shaped mark commencing immediately behind the eye and spreading over the nape black; upper surface, wings and tail delicate silvery grey, with white shafts; outer web of the external primary black; bill black; feet brownish black.

The figures are of the natural size.