

“ Found breeding in prodigious numbers on Raine’s Islet and Bramble Key in May and June, associated with Noddies (*Anoüs stolidus*). The Sooty Tern deposits its solitary egg in a slight excavation in the sand without lining of any kind. The egg varies considerably in its markings. After the party employed in building the beacon on Raine’s Islet had been on shore about ten days, and the Terns had had their nests robbed repeatedly, the birds collected into two or three large flocks and laid their eggs in company, shifting their quarters repeatedly on finding themselves continually molested; for new-laid eggs were much in request among people who had for some time been living upon ship’s fare. By sitting down and keeping quiet I have seen the poor birds dropping their eggs within two yards of where I sat, apparently glad to get rid of their burthen at all hazards. During the month of June 1844 about 1500 dozen of eggs were procured by the party upon the Island. About the 20th of June nearly one half of the young birds (hatched twenty-five or thirty days previously) were able to fly, and many were quite strong upon the wing. Great numbers of young birds unable to fly were killed for the pot;—in one mess of twenty-two men the average number consumed daily in June was fifty, and supposing the convicts (twenty in number) to have consumed as many, 3000 young birds must have been killed in one month; yet I could observe no sensible diminution of the number of young, a circumstance which will give the reader some idea of the vast numbers of birds of this species congregated on a mere vegetated sand-bank like Raine’s Islet.”—*J. M’Gillivray*.

572. *Onychoprion Panaya* Vol. VII. Pl. 33.

Genus *ANOÜS*, *Leach*.

Unlike other Terns which frequent the sea-shores and rivers, the Noddies inhabit the wide ocean, far remote from land, and which, like the Petrels, they seldom quit, except at the breeding season, when they congregate in vast multitudes on small islands suited to the purpose. Great nurseries of this kind are to be found in every ocean; in the North Atlantic, one of the Tortugas, called Noddy Key, is a favourite resort, and the Bahama Islands are another; in the South Pacific and Indian Oceans, beside other situations, the Houtmann’s Abrolhos, off the western coast of Australia, are resorted to in such immense numbers that Mr. Gilbert was perfectly astonished at the multitudes with which he found himself surrounded, upon landing on those remote and little-explored islands.

573. *Anoüs stolidus* Vol. VII. Pl. 34.

“The large Noddy,” says Mr. M’Gillivray, “is abundantly distributed over Torres’ Straits, but I never met with it to the southward of Raine’s Islet, on which, as at Bramble Key, it was found breeding in prodigious numbers. Unlike its constant associate, the Sooty Tern, it constructs a shallow nest of small twigs arranged in a slovenly manner, over which are strewed about a handful of fragments of coral from the beach, shells, and occasionally portions of tortoise-shell and bones of turtle. The nest is sometimes placed upon the ground, but more usually upon tufts of grass and other herbage, at about a foot from the ground.”

574. *Anoüs melanops*, *Gould* Vol. VII. Pl. 35.

575. *Anoüs leucocapillus*, *Gould* Vol. VII. Pl. 36.

576. *Anoüs cinereus*, *Gould* Vol. VII. Pl. 37.

Family PROCELLARIDÆ, *Bonap*.

There is perhaps no group of birds respecting which so much confusion exists and the extent of whose range over the ocean is so little known, as that forming the present family.

Having, as I have before stated, paid much attention to these birds during my voyages to and from Australia and in its neighbourhood, my researches were rewarded by my obtaining a knowledge of at least forty different species, nearly all of which are peculiar to the seas of the southern hemisphere. The powers of flight with which these birds are endowed are perfectly astonishing: they appear to be constantly performing migrations round the globe from west to east; and Australia lying in their tract, all the species may be found near its shores at one or other season of the year.