

until sunset, when they start off in search of food, returning to their mates or young in the morning, and feeding them then.

“The Fork-tailed Petrel emits its notes night and day, and at not very long intervals. They resemble the syllables *pewr-wit, pewr-wit*. Its flight differs from that of the other two species” (the common and Wilson’s Storm-Petrels), “being performed in broader wheelings and firmer flappings. It is more shy; and when it wheels off, after having approached the stern of a ship, its wanderings are much more extended before it returns. I have never seen it fly close around a vessel, as the others are in the habit of doing, especially at the approach of night; nor do I think that it ever alights on the rigging of ships, but spends the hours of darkness either on the water or on low rocks or islands. It also less frequently alights on the water, or pats with its feet, probably on account of the shortness of its legs, although it frequently allows them to hang down. In this it resembles the *Thalassidroma pelagica*; and Wilson’s Petrel has a similar habit during calm weather. I have seen all the three species immerse their heads into the water to seize their food, and sometimes keep it longer under than I had expected.

“About the 1st of June the species collect in numbers, and return to their breeding-places. They now fly in front of the high rocks, passing and repassing a thousand times in a day, enter their dark and narrow mansions or stand in the passage and emit their cries, and occasionally alight on some broad shelf, and walk as if about to fall down, but with considerable ease, and at times with rapidity. Now and then the mated birds approach each other, and, I believe, disgorge some food into each other’s mouths. They collect grasses and pebbles, of which they form a flat nest, on which a single white egg is deposited, which measures an inch and a quarter in length by seven-eighths in breadth, is nearly equally rounded at both ends, and looks very large for the size of the bird. When you pass close to the rocks in which the birds are, you easily hear their shrill querulous notes; but the report of a gun silences them at once, and induces those on the ledges to betake themselves to their holes.

“The Fork-tailed Petrel, like the other species, feeds chiefly on floating mollusca, small fishes, crustacea, which they pick up among the floating seaweeds, and greasy substances which they occasionally find around fishing-boats or ships out at sea. When seized in the hand, it ejects an oily fluid through the tubular nostrils, and sometimes disgorges a quantity of food. I could not prevail on any of those I caught to take food of any kind.”

In the late Dr. Henry Bryant’s “Remarks on some of the Birds that breed in the Gulf of St. Lawrence,” published in the eighth volume of the ‘Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History,’ it is stated that “these birds were frequently seen, but do not breed in numbers or in many places on the north shore. I found them at but two places, on Gull Island, at Romaine, and on a small island between Mecattina and Bras D’Or. As the opposite side of Newfoundland is lower, and the islands less rocky, it probably breeds there. On the Atlantic shore it is found breeding everywhere that a suitable island exists, from Mount Desert, in Maine, to the Straits of Belle Isle. At Romaine the eggs were just being laid on the 26th of June.”

The sexes differ so little, either in size or colouring, that by dissection alone can they be discriminated.

The forked tail and short tarsi are the characters by which Leach’s Storm-Petrel may be distinguished from the common species: these deviations in structure doubtless have an influence over its actions and economy; but how far they modify them can only become known when we have acquired a more intimate acquaintance with the bird and its habits in all their phases.

The Plate represents a male and a female, of the size of life.