

PUFFINUS ANGLORUM.

Manx Shearwater.

- Procellaria Anglorum*, Raii Syn., p. 134.
Puffinus Anglorum, Briss. Orn., tom. vi. p. 131.
Procellaria puffinus, Brünn. Orn. Bor., p. 20.
Nectris Anglorum, Kuhl, Mon. Proc. Beit. Zool., p. 146.
Puffinus arcticus, Fab. Prod. Isl. Orn., p. 56.
Cymotomus Anglorum, Macgill. Man. of Brit. Orn., vol. ii. p. 13.
Nectris puffinus, Keys. & Blas. Wirb. Eur., p. 94.
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THERE are but few situations in the British Islands which are of a rocky nature and facing the sea, nor any little inlets around our coasts, that are not visited by the Shearwater; and in many of them it breeds: the Isles of Scilly on the south, the Farn Islands on the east, Lundy and the Isle of Man on the west, the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Hebrides and St. Kilda in the North Atlantic are only a few of the localities frequented. It is also found in Iceland, in the Faroe Islands, Spitzbergen, on the coast of Norway, in the Baltic Seas, in Heligoland, on the coasts of France and Spain, and throughout the whole of the Mediterranean, in Madeira, the Azores, and on many parts of the eastern shores of North America. During some periods of its existence it lives far out at sea, at others within soundings. At the period of incubation it makes a cradle for its young in the deserted rabbit-holes on the low islands and shores in which those creatures abound, the lee sides of great stones near the beach, the crevices in upright basaltic rocks, and all similar situations. Its powers of flight are considerable, and, being very restless, it spends much of its time in flying to and fro in a direct line over the surface of the water.

The late D. W. Mitchell's account of the bird as seen by him on the coast of Cornwall is given with all the freshness of his wonted style, and with the faithfulness and geniality of a true lover of nature. This account I shall repeat here, believing that it will not be the less interesting because it has previously appeared in my late friend Yarrell's 'History of British Birds.'

"To the westward of St. Agnes, in the Scilly group, lies a barren island called Annet. Its northern slope is abrupt and craggy; it gradually slopes towards the south, and narrows into a sort of peninsula, where the sandy soil is rich enough to produce a dense growth of short ferns. Here is the stronghold of the Shearwater. Sit down on a rock which commands the little territory, and you will see nothing but the Terns, who have a station on the higher and central part of the island, and are making a flight of inquiry. Yes, you will see a hundred or two of Oystercatchers, who do not like your landing so near their nests, and make short journeys, hither and thither, whistling all the while like birds possessed. You will see two or three pairs of Turnstones and a few Ring-Dotterels, perhaps a Curlew. You may wait all a sunny day in June, but not a Shearwater will you see on land or water. There are plenty near you all the time, however, as you may ascertain by the odour which issues from the first burrow you look into among the ferns. As soon as the sun is down, you will see a little party of five or six flitting silently across the sound, or steering out to sea. The latest fishers from the colony of Terns are coming home from the sandy shallows, five or six miles away, with their throats and beaks crammed with Lance-fish, when the Shearwaters begin to wake. You will not see them come out of their holes: you first catch sight of them skimming round the corner of a rock close to the water. Perhaps they will have a great gathering, such as I observed one evening in 'Smith's Sound.' There was a congregation of at least three hundred in the middle of the tideway, washing, dipping, preening feathers, and stretching wings, evidently just awake, and making ready for a night's diversion. As I wanted a few specimens more than I had dug out of the burrows, I ran my boat well up to them, and, when they rose, got as many as I wished, besides a few unfortunate cripples who were only winged, and proved by their agility in swimming and diving, a good deal too much for my boatmen. I think a good dog would have no chance with them; they allowed me to come quite close. They sit low in the water, and make no noise when disturbed, though in their holes they are eloquent enough, the Scillonian synonyms of *Crew* and *Cocka thodon* being derived from the guttural melodies they pour forth when the spade approaches the end in which the egg is deposited. I once caught a pair in a burrow who were crooning a duet of this kind before we commenced operations. I presume they were in the honeymoon, as there was no egg. They produce but one egg, which, when fresh-laid, is of the most dazzling whiteness, and of a peculiarly beautiful texture. It measures two inches and five lines in length, by one inch and nine lines in breadth, is very large for the size of the bird, and is frequently deposited on the fine sandy soil without any preparation, though generally there is a slight accumulation of fern-leaves and old stems. When you kill a Shearwater