

exceedingly abundant in India, frequenting marshes, tanks, and rivers, usually preying on aquatic food, not unfrequently hunting over fields, beds of reeds, and marshy ground, where it captures grasshoppers, caterpillars, and other insects. In some parts of the country it roosts on thick beds of reeds, congregating in vast numbers for some time after sunset, till nearly dark; indeed it may be seen in scattered flocks flying in an excited and hurried manner over the surface of the water. This little Tern breeds in large churrs on the Ganges, and probably on most other large rivers. Mr. Brooks sent me eggs procured near Mirzapore."

Mr. Swinhoe, writing of the bird under the same appellation, says:—

"This species is not uncommon on the marshy lands of S. W. Formosa. I have not yet noted it in China, though doubtless it must occur there. A fine male brought to me on the 28th of August had the bill deep-brownish lake-red; the legs and toes Indian or madder-red, and black claws. Its stomach contained several large larvæ of a water-beetle (*Dytiscus*, sp.), and a few small fish."

Temminck informs us that it is found in Borneo; and so it may be; but I have now good reasons for altering the opinion I expressed in my 'Handbook to the Birds of Australia,' that the bird I so frequently met with on the interior waters of that continent was the *H. leucopareia*, an opinion which induced me to suppress my own name of *fluvialis* for the older one given by Natterer: since then I have received several examples from the interior of Queensland in their summer dress, which certainly differ from those killed in Hungary at the same period of the year. The Australian bird is smaller than the European, is of a lighter colour, and has a more silvery hue above, while the black of the under surface is not nearly so dark. Judging from the state of plumage of one of the Australian specimens above mentioned, it would seem that these Whiskered Terns undergo a greater seasonal change than I had previously supposed; for it is not the forehead alone that is becoming white, but the dark smoky grey and black portions of the under surface are changing to white.

The *Hydrochelidon leucopareia* was first described as new to science in the second edition of Temminck's 'Manuel d'Ornithologie,' published in 1820, from specimens discovered by Natterer in the southern part of Hungary. Subsequently other examples were found in the marshes of Capo d'Istria and on the coast of Dalmatia; and in May 1819 M. Jules de la Motte killed three out of a flock of eight, which remained for two or three days on the coast of Picardy, feeding upon the insects frequenting aquatic plants. Degland has since ascertained that it breeds annually in the south of France. The late Mr. Yarrell was the first to give it a place in the British fauna. "At the end of August 1836," says he, "a party of two or three persons went out in a boat to amuse themselves with shooting sea-birds, and this Tern among others was part of the produce of their guns." The next example was recorded by Thompson in the 20th vol. of the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' as having been shot in September 1839 "on the River Liffey, between Ringsend and the Pigeon-House Fort, Dublin, by John Hill, Esq., and as being deposited in the Collection of T. W. Warren, Esq., of Dublin."

From a communication to the 'Zoologist' by Messrs. J. H. Gurney and W. R. Fisher, we learn that "an example of the Whiskered Tern was shot on the 17th of June, 1847, whilst flying over Hickling broad, in Norfolk. It proved to be an adult female, and contained ova in an advanced stage, the largest being apparently almost ready to receive the shell. In the stomach were found the remains of about twenty of the larvæ of the broad-bodied dragonfly."—*Zool.* 1847, p. 1820.

Mr. Rodd states, in his 'List of British Birds,' that an immature specimen was obtained at Scilly in September 1851.

On the 11th of May, 1865, Mr. Gatecombe writes:—"I think it will interest you to hear that a specimen of that, to us, exceedingly rare Tern, *Sterna leucopareia*, has been obtained off the coast of Devon. It is a fine bird in full summer plumage, and was accidentally detected by me in the hands of a young bird-stuffer, who had just finished setting it up, but had not the slightest idea of its name or rarity. He told me that it was picked up on the water by some fishermen and brought in alive, but that it soon died."

In summer the forehead, crown, and nape are deep black; on each side, from the base of the upper mandible below the eye to the ear-coverts, a stripe of white; neck, breast, back, wing-coverts, upper tail-coverts, and tail dark grey; first primary leaden grey, except the shaft and the margin of the basal part of the inner web, which are white, the remaining primaries and the secondaries grey, of a lighter hue on the outer than on the inner webs; all with white shafts; chin and throat greyish white; abdomen, flanks, and thighs leaden grey; under wing and tail-coverts white; bill red, darker towards the point; irides brownish black; feet and webs coral-red; nails black.

The Plate represents an adult in summer plumage and a young bird in the first autumn plumage, of the size of life.