

ACTOCHELIDON CANTIACA.

Sandwich Tern.

- Sterna cantiaca*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 606.
—— *Boysii*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 806.
—— *nævia*, Bew. Brit. Birds, 1804, vol. ii. p. 207.
—— *stuberica*, Bechst. Naturg. Deutschl., tom. iv. p. 679.
—— *canescens*, Meyer, Taschenb. deutsch. Vög., tom. ii. p. 458.
—— *africana*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 605.
—— *striata*, Gmel. *ibid.*, p. 609.
—— *nebulosa*, Sparrm. Mus. Carls., tab. 63.
Columba columbina, Schrank, Faun. Boica, p. 252.
Actochelidon cantiaca, Kaup, Natürl. Syst., p. 31.
Thalasseus canescens, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 776.
—— *candicans*, Brehm, *ibid.*, p. 777, tab. 38, fig. 4.
—— *cantiacus*, Bonap. Geog. and Comp. List of Birds of Eur. and N. Amer., p. 61.

THIS very fine species of Tern is a summer resident with us, as it also is in Ireland and Scotland, but is less abundant there than it is in England. In Holland, France, Spain, and the countries adjoining the shores of the Mediterranean generally, it is equally plentiful in the season of summer and autumn. In India and China it does not occur; but it is present in Africa from north to south. Bonaparte, in his 'Geographical and Comparative List of the Birds of Europe and North America,' assigns it a place in the fauna of the latter continent; but it is not now included in the enumeration of American birds by more recent writers. It is clear, then, that Western and Southern Europe, and Africa generally, comprise the extent of its range. From the country last mentioned I have seen numerous specimens, most of which proved to be in the plumage of winter, at which season the forehead and crown are pure white, instead of the black which is characteristic of the nuptial and summer dress.

On most of the sandy parts of our sea-shores, from the coast of Kent to the Fern Islands, the Sandwich Tern either did or does now breed, in some places sparingly, in others in large assemblages; it is alike numerous on our western shores, particularly the coast of Lancashire. Mr. A. G. More, in his paper "On the Distribution of Birds in Great Britain during the Nesting-season," published in 'The Ibis' for 1865, gives the following as some of the breeding-places of this species in our islands:—"Cornwall (*Mr. E. H. Rodd*); at the mouth of the Thames (*Mr. F. Bond*); in Lancashire (*Rev. H. B. Tristram*); on the Fern Islands and the Isle of Coquet, off Northumberland, and on the coast of Cumberland. Mr. Robert Gray writes that a small colony has lately established itself on an island in Loch Lomond; and Sir W. Jardine tells us that it breeds on the Isle of May and off North Berwick. Further north the birds have been seen in summer on the Firths of Tongue and Erribol; but the nest was not discovered." In the second edition of Mr. Rodd's 'List of British Birds' he says:—"Cornish: a few pairs observed in the summer months on some of the islands of Scilly, where they annually breed; found sparingly on the Land's-end coast." In Ireland, according to Thompson, it "is of occasional occurrence on the coast during summer and autumn, both in immature and adult plumage. More recent information has led to the belief that it may breed on the Dublin coast; but, from the limited number of birds seen at any period, but few, I presume, have ever bred on the island."

"The Sandwich Tern," says Yarrell, "was first observed and obtained in this country at Sandwich, in 1784, by Mr. Boys, who sent specimens to Dr. Latham, by whom the particulars respecting it were published in the sixth volume of his 'General Synopsis,' p. 356. Attention being thus drawn to this species, it has since been ascertained to be a regular summer visitor, appearing in spring and departing in autumn, after having reared the yearly brood."

Mr. Selby, who had the best opportunities of observing this species from one of its principal places of resort being contiguous to his estate in Northumberland, says:—"It annually resorts to the Fern Islands, as well as the Isle of Coquet, a few miles to the southward. Here a station is selected apart from the other species, generally on a higher site; and the nests are so close to each other as to render it difficult to cross the ground without breaking the eggs or injuring the unfledged young. Upon this coast it is called *par excellence* 'the Tern,' all the other species passing under the general name of 'Sea-Swallows.' Its habits strongly resemble those of its congeners; and it subsists upon similar kinds of fish, the sand-launce