

sand-eels and young herrings, which they pick from the water, first hovering with extended and elevated wings, then descending, spreading their tail and letting down their feet, with which I have often seen them pat the water, as if they were running on land. They never plunge so as to be immersed, but merely seize on what comes close to the surface. They also feed upon stranded fishes of large size, asteriæ, mollusca, shrimps, and other small crustacea. Sometimes also they pick up grain in the fields; and in a state of domestication may be partly fed on bread. They are easily tamed, but, unless in a garden or where they are not liable to be teased, are seldom found to live long in this condition."

What has been said of the habits and economy of the bird in this country is equally descriptive of them when seen on the European continent, whether it be on the warm shores of the Mediterranean, the cold ones of the Baltic, or the rugged coasts of Norway. I believe Richardson was in error when he stated, in the 'Fauna Boreali-Americana,' that it breeds in Arctic America; for it does not appear that the bird has ever been found so far to the westward. Mr. Alfred Newton would even have considered Brünnich's statement, that it is found in Iceland, problematical, had he not procured in 1858 the skin of an immature bird, which had been shot near Reykjavick the preceding winter. Mr. Baring-Gould saw the bird near the Iceland coast on his voyage thither from the Færoes; but it is certainly not a usual inhabitant of the last-named islands.

In summer the head, neck, under surface, rump, and tail are white; with streaks of brownish grey on the upper part of the head, the hinder portion, the sides, and the lower part of the neck; back and wings light greyish blue; on the external five primaries a band of greyish black, broadest on the outer one, and diminishing until on the fifth it is reduced to a narrow band near the tip; the first primary is white for nearly three inches from the end, with a spot of black at the tip of the inner web; the second has a white space of an inch and a half in extent, then a black band, and the tip white; the third has a white spot near the end; the shafts of the primaries of the same colour as the webs, the outer ones black for nearly their entire length; bill greyish green; the tip ochre-yellow, and its basal margins and the mouth orange; irides brown; edges of the eyelids dull red.

In winter the plumage is pure white, with the exception of the back and upper surface of the wings, which are delicate grey. In spring a slight change takes place; the head becomes spotted with brown, and the entire under-surface frequently suffused with a rosy hue, which adds greatly to the beauty of the bird's appearance. Considerable variety occurs in the colouring of the legs; in some individuals they are yellow, in others green and greyish green: there appears to be no general law for the regulation of the tints of the soft parts of this species—a circumstance unusual among Gulls, the colouring of whose feet is generally constant.

"The variation of colour in the legs and toes of different individuals of *Larus canus*," says Mr. Harting, "is very remarkable. Not only do the old birds differ in this respect from the young, which is the case with many birds, but the former also differ *inter se* in summer and winter. An old bird killed in June had the tarsi and toes bright yellow, while another adult bird shot in February had the same parts greyish green. Two old birds procured in October exhibited the yellow colour only around the tarsal joint, the rest of the leg and foot being pale greenish-grey. An immature bird of this species, which I shot on the Thames, at Barking, on the 11th of October, had the legs and toes dull flesh-colour."

The young, when first fledged, have the upper surface greyish brown, variegated with brownish white; the primaries are blackish brown, with paler tips; the secondaries light grey at the base, brown towards the end; tail white for two-thirds of its length, the remainder brownish black, tips narrowly edged with white; tail-coverts white, with a spot of brown towards the end of each; forehead white; before the eyes a semicircular band of black; cheeks streaked with brown; neck and breast marked with roundish or transverse small spots of light brownish grey; lower tail-coverts with a brown spot near the end; bill black, except at the base, where it is livid flesh-colour; irides dusky; eyelids brown; feet yellowish flesh-colour.

After the first moult, which is completed in November, the head and hinder part of the neck are streaked with brownish grey, the back is greyish blue, with a mixture of brown, a large portion of the inner primaries has become grey, the secondary coverts are dull bluish grey, the rump and upper tail-coverts are nearly white, the spots being very small, the bill is not so dark, the feet are yellower.

In the second winter the brown markings are much less apparent, the dark band on the tail is much reduced in breadth, the bill is yellowish, the feet are livid yellowish green.

In the summer of the third year the full plumage of maturity is attained.

For the above description of the change from the youthful age to that of the adult we are indebted to the researches and observations of Macgillivray, from which they are condensed.

The principal figure in the Plate is of the natural size.