

LARUS GLAUCUS, *Brünn.*

Glaucous Gull.

Larus glaucus, Brünn. Orn. Bor., p. 44.

— *glacialis*, Benicken.

— *giganteus*, Benicken.

— *consul*, Boie, Wiedem. Zool. Mag., tom. i. p. 757.

Leucus glaucus, Kaup, Natürl. Syst., p. 86.

THE fine bird figured on the accompanying Plate is an inhabitant of the northern regions generally. In Greenland, Arctic America, and Siberia this silvery white Gull finds a natural home; in such countries it breeds and rears its young, feeding them on such animal substances as may come to hand. Like its European prototype the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*), it is, to all intents, a scavenger, feeding on any garbage thrown up by the sea, to which weakly birds are often added. Like many other Arctic birds the Glaucous Gull wanders to more southern countries during the severity of winter, the young birds of the year proceeding further south and in greater numbers than the adults; hence it is that we more frequently see the former in their immature plumage in the British seas than the adults in their full livery. Although somewhat irregular in its visits, it certainly does appear in our latitudes every year, even in the adult garb; it therefore cannot be considered rare, while in its youthful dress it may be regarded as among those that are common. To instance the occurrences and to particularize where the Glaucous Gull has been procured on our coasts would be superfluous. Collectors wishing to procure examples may gratify their desire by visiting the great London markets during the autumnal months. A hundred to one, however, of the specimens then found there are but in the youthful or speckled plumage. If fully adult examples be desired, they must be sought for in the north of Scotland, the Orkneys, and Hebrides, where the bird in its most silvery garb may be seen battling with the gale, or buoyantly sailing in from the black storm-clouds of those inhospitable regions. Many of our northern brethren have given spirited descriptions of this sprite of the ocean, describing its disposition, its mode of flight, its wild voice, daring habits, &c.; and Yarrell, Selby, and other English authors have made extracts from their writings to enrich their respective works; and I shall run the risk of being considered a pirate in following in their wake; but I shall at the same time acknowledge whence my information is obtained.

The late Mr. Selby, in his history of this Gull, has embodied remarks from several other persons; and I shall commence by extracting a passage from this very accurate observer, and follow it by a more lengthy one by Mr. Robert Gray, a living author of great acumen, as shown by his recently published work the 'Birds of the West of Scotland,' in which the Glaucous Gull, for which he evidently wishes the trivial name of "Burgomaster" to be retained, is noticed very fully.

"This large and powerful species," says Selby, "was first noticed as a winter visitant in Shetland in 1809 by Laurence Edmonston, Esq., who afterwards published an interesting account of its habits and distinguishing characters in the fourth volume of the memoirs of the Wernerian Society, to which paper, from its length, I beg to refer my readers. Subsequent observation has proved it to be not uncommon in that remote district, both in the immature and perfect state, during the winter; but it regularly migrates on the advance of spring to higher northern latitudes for the purpose of reproduction. It occasionally extends its equatorial flight as far to the southward as the Northumbrian coast, where several have at different times come under my inspection in a recent state. These, with the exception of one in the adult winter plumage (now in my collection), have all been young birds, some, from their spotted and brown appearance, the young of the year, others, where the markings had become fainter, and the ground of a purer white, such as had undergone one or perhaps two autumnal moultings. The Glaucous Gull is pronounced by Temminck to be the largest of the tribe; but my own measurements of several individuals, with the testimony of Captain Sabine and other writers who have described the species, show that its average dimensions in length and extent of wing are inferior to those of the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*). Its form is perhaps thicker and more compact; and its weight may sometimes exceed that of the other, though I possess a specimen of the latter bird which weighed two ounces more than any of the Glaucous Gulls that have come under my observation. By Dr. Richardson it is described as a common species during the summer, in Greenland, Baffin's Bay, and the Polar seas, where it breeds upon the precipitous rocks which line those coasts. Its eggs are stated to be of a pale purplish grey, with scattered spots of umber-brown and subdued