

making very great progress during its submarine flight, as we experienced when in chase of this bird in a light and handy boat upon Loch Awe. Our utmost exertion could never bring us within range; and we were often foiled by its returning on its former track and reappearing in a direction contrary to that in which it seemed to have dived; its progress, we should think, could not have been much under the rate of eight miles an hour. It lives upon fish, aquatic insects, and such other food as it procures under water. Its skin is highly prized by the Esquimaux and Indians for its warmth and beauty, and numbers of them are dressed and made into garments.

“When in Sutherlandshire, we found this species upon most of the lochs of the interior. The first we noticed was at the foot of Loch Shin, where we were so fortunate as to find the nest, or rather the two eggs, upon the bare ground of a small islet removed about ten or twelve feet from the water’s edge. The female was in the act of incubation, sitting horizontally, and not in an upright position, upon the eggs. In plumage she precisely resembled the male, and when fired at immediately swam or rather dived off to him at a short distance. Our pursuit after them was, however, ineffectual, though persevered in for a long time, as it was impossible to calculate where they were likely to rise after diving. Submersion frequently continued for nearly two minutes at a time, and they generally reappeared at a quarter of a mile’s distance from the spot where they had gone down. In no instance have I ever seen them attempt to escape by taking wing. I may mention that a visible track from the water to the eggs was made by the female, whose progress upon land is effected by shuffling along upon her belly, propelled by her legs behind. On the day following (Saturday, the 31st of May), Mr. J. Wilson was fortunate enough to find two newly hatched young ones in a small creek at Loch Craggie, about two miles and a half from Lairg. After handling and examining them, during which the old birds approached very near to him, he left them in the same spot, knowing that we were anxious to obtain the old birds. Accordingly on the Monday morning we had the boat conveyed to the loch, and on our arrival soon descried the two old birds attended by their young, and apparently moving to a different part of the loch. Contrary to their usual habit at other times, they did not attempt to dive upon our approach, but kept swimming around their young, which, from their tender age, were unable to make much way in the water; and we got sufficiently near to shoot both of them through the neck and head, the only parts accessible to shot, as they swim with the whole body nearly submerged. The female could only be distinguished from the male by a slight inferiority of size, and both were in the finest adult or summer plumage. We afterwards saw several pairs upon various lochs, and upon Loch Kay, a pair, attended by two young ones nearly half grown. When swimming, they are in the constant habit of dipping the bill in the water, with a graceful motion of the head and neck.”

The eggs, according to Mr. Yarrell, measure two inches and three-quarters in length by one inch and ten lines in breadth, and are of a dark olive-brown, thinly spotted with dark umber-brown.

During a visit to Norway in the early part of the month of July 1856, I saw several Black-throated Divers sporting about in the Bay of Drontheim, and I could not help admiring the pretty markings of their necks, and their quiet demeanour as they circled round each other on the then glassy surface of the water. These birds, which were within a quarter of a mile of the town, appeared happy and contented, no molestation being offered them. The Norwegians have an idea that the bird is a most excellent weather-prophet. The Swedes dress its skin, which, like those of all the other members of the genus, is exceedingly tough, and use it for gun-cases, facings for winter caps, &c. Richard Dann, Esq., informed Mr. Yarrell that “this beautiful Diver is widely and numerously dispersed over the whole of Scandinavia during the summer months, but is most abundant in the northern parts. It breeds in the interior of the country, on small islands in the most secluded and retired lakes. In Lapland and the Dofre Fiell mountains it is found as high as the birch-tree grows. It makes its first appearance in the spring, with the breaking-up of the ice on the lakes. Within twelve hours of open water being seen, this bird never fails to show itself. The eggs, two in number, have a rank fishy taste, but are much sought after by the Laps. After the young are hatched, both male and female are very assiduous in bringing them food, and at that period are much on the wing, and may be seen flying at a vast height, with fish in their beaks, from one lake to another; on arriving over the lake where they intend to alight, they descend very suddenly in an oblique direction. The cries of the Diver are very peculiar during the breeding-season, and may be heard at a great distance. The bird is very quick-sighted, and very difficult of approach; it takes wing with great reluctance, but dives incessantly, taking care to come up far out of shot.”

The Plate represents the bird in its nuptial dress, about one-fifth less than its natural size, and reduced figures, in the same state, in the distance.