

## COLYMBUS ARCTICUS, Linn.

### Black-throated Diver.

*Colymbus arcticus*, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 221.

*Mergus gutture nigro*, Briss. Orn., tom. vi. p. 115.

—— *arcticus*, Klein, Av., p. 142, no. 2.

—— *macrorhynchos*, Brehm, Handb. der Naturg. aller Vög. Deutschl., p. 974.

—— *Balthicus*, Hornsch., Brehm, ibid., p. 975?

—— *megarhynchos*, Brehm (Bonap.).

*Cephus arcticus*, Pall. Zoog. Ross.-Asiat., tom. ii. p. 341.

*Eudytes arcticus*, Ill. Prod. Syst. Mamm. et Av., p. 282.

THE Black-throated Diver is smaller than the previously described species, *Colymbus glacialis*; still it is not less beautiful in its plumage, and is more interesting as one of the water-birds which breed in this country. Unlike its larger relative, which never breeds in our lochs and bays, a few pairs of this species annually resort to the inland waters of the northern parts of Scotland for this purpose; yet I fear it will inevitably be lost to us as a nidifier, if the great landed proprietors do not speedily afford it protection and allow its progeny to depart in peace to the waters of the great deep, on which it dwells in the season of winter. How much will it be to be regretted if such noblemen as the Duke of Sutherland and others, to whose vast domains the bird still resorts to breed, do not exercise their authority to prevent its extirpation, which must, ere long, be the result of the persecution to which it is at present subjected! With what inconsistency those people are acting who establish societies for the introduction and acclimatization of birds from different countries, and yet totally neglect the many fine species worthy of preservation at home! I beg that what I have here said may have some influence, and that my remark may be received in the spirit in which it is made.

Until very lately, the Black-throated Diver annually bred on the borders, and on the islands of Loch Awe, Loch Assynt, Loch Shin, Loch Craggie, and many others; and in some of them it still spends the summer months, or endeavours so to do. In Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebrides or Western Islands it is more or less abundant, but is not known to breed there. The seas surrounding England and Scotland, from Mount's Bay in Cornwall to Cape Wrath in Sutherlandshire, and those which wash the shores of the sister kingdom of Ireland are never without examples of the Black-throated Diver, either in its full summer dress or the grey garb of winter; it is in the latter state, however, that it is mostly seen, and in which numerous specimens are from time to time sent to the London markets. Mr. Bond, I may mention, informs me that young birds are occasionally taken on the reservoir at Kingsbury, near London, and even on the Serpentine in Hyde Park; and Mr. Stevens, of Norwich, writes that most of the specimens killed in Norfolk are shot on the streams and fenny waters very far inland, as at Colney and Faversham, more than twenty miles from the sea. It does not occur in Iceland, and has not been met with in Greenland. In Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia the bird is still very abundant, and breeds on all the interior waters of those countries, as it used formerly to do on our own. It is to these nurseries that we must look for the preservation of the bird.

The same difference occurs in the summer and winter plumages of this species that are seen in the Great Northern Diver; but individuals are frequently found carrying their fine barred plumage at the period when the greater number are clothed with grey. In this latter state (the true winter livery) the bird is known by the name of the Lesser Imber. I have many notes of the occurrence of examples in the mature dress at what one might call the opposite season—a circumstance which strengthens the opinion I have advanced in my description of the former species, that such birds are probably only two or three years old, and have assumed their finery or breeding-plumage for the first time and at an earlier period than those who have reproduced their kind. I am indebted to Mr. Swaysland, of Brighton, for a photograph of a splendid example in this dress, which was killed on the 11th of December, 1862, at the Duke of Norfolk's, in Sussex, and which is now in his Grace's collection at Arundel Castle.

About thirty years ago, Sir William Jardine and Mr. Selby made a journey into Sutherland- and Ross-shires for the purpose of observing the birds which frequent those counties; and I think it only fair to give their remarks on this species.

"Its equatorial or winter migration in Europe extends as far as Switzerland, where it is sometimes seen upon the larger lakes. It breeds upon the brink of the water, and, like the Northern Diver, lays but two eggs. It dives with the same ease and as perseveringly as the other species, and can remain long submerged,