

off seaward in a northerly direction. When feeding, which they do at the ebb of the tide, or moving from one place to another, they keep up a continual hoarse cackling, or, as it is termed, *honking* noise, which can be heard at a great distance, and has not unaptly been compared, when so heard, to the cry of a pack of hounds. They are at all times extremely watchful, and can only be approached within gunshot by the person of the shooter being concealed. This is effected, in the northern parts of the kingdom, by means of a flat-bottomed boat, so built as to draw very little water, and whose gunwale barely rises above the surface, armed with a large fowling-piece that traverses the half-deck upon a swivel. In this boat the fowler lies flat, and directs its motion by a paddle or small oar, till he comes within range of the flock, when he fires either as they float upon the water or just as they rise. Great havoc is sometimes made in this way, not only amongst the Brent Geese but amongst Widgeon and other kinds of wild-fowl, as we learn from Colonel Hawker's amusing treatise, to which I refer my readers, and where they will find every direction necessary for this particular kind of sporting. Upon Holy Island sandy flats, where the above method was introduced about 1829, by a man from the Norfolk coast, I am credibly informed that about twenty-two Brent Geese were killed and secured at one discharge during the season of 1831. Previously to this mode of shooting being adopted, all the Brent Geese and different species of Ducks upon our northern coast were killed by moonlight, by fowlers placing themselves in various parts of the lake and patiently waiting for the approach of the wild fowl as they flew about in quest of feeding-places. Their polar or summer migration is directed to very high latitudes, where they breed and rear their young in quiet security. The nest is formed of vegetable materials, in the swamps of those desolate regions; and they lay ten or twelve white eggs. . . . When captured alive, this Goose may soon be rendered very tame (as I have found from experience), and, being a bird of handsome figure and light carriage, is a considerable acquisition on large pieces of water. No steady attempts, however, appear to have been yet made to increase the breed in a domestic state, though, as an article of food, it is superior to most of the *Anatidæ*, and equally valuable in the quality of its feathers and down. When tame, it eats readily all kinds of grain, as well as grass and other vegetable diet."

Mr. Thompson, who states that it is abundant in Ireland, occurring on both sides of the island, wherever there is plenty of its favourite *Zostera marina*, gives a very long account of its habits, as observed in Belfast Bay (*vide* 'Natural History of Ireland,' vol. iii. p. 54). He says, "they generally arrive there by the first week of September, and sometimes remain until May. Strictly marine, they fly to the deep water in the afternoon, and remain there during the night, and at sunrise return to their feeding-grounds, generally proceeding in small flocks, and alighting altogether about the same place. They are very wary, and avoid in their flight any objects with which they are not familiar. They swim quickly, do not often dive, and usually remain but a short time under water."

It would seem that the food of this bird varies according to circumstances: thus on the coast of Northumberland it appears to feed on *Ulea latissima*, in Ireland and Scotland on *Zostera marina*, in Hudson's Bay on *Ulea lactuca*; and in America, according to Wilson, it also partakes of "small shell-fish."

Two eggs, from Parry's second Expedition, presented to Professor Jameson by Mr. Fisher, are thus described by Macgillivray:—"One is two inches and a half in length by an inch and five and a half eighths; the other, two inches and five eighths by an inch and six and a half eighths. They are of a nearly elliptical form, the broadest part being almost central, and one end a little larger than the other; the colour of one asparagus-green or pale greyish green, of the other paler and approaching to apple-green." Mr. Hewitson, on the other hand, says, "the eggs of this species differ from those of the other Geese in being slightly tinted with a faint brownish colouring, whilst they are all, when quite fresh, either pure white or slightly tinted with cream-colour."

Some slight variation occurs in the colouring of different individuals; but this, I think, is due to age, and I believe that both sexes are alike in outward appearance at the same period of their existence.

I cannot close this memoir of the Brent Goose without recording my obligations to the Earl of Enniskillen for his kindness in sending me a fine pair of these birds from Ireland, for the furtherance of this work, and that I might have an opportunity of testing the quality of their flesh as a viand, which I found juicy and excellent. The average weight of the two birds was three pounds and a quarter.

The Figures are about three-fourths of the natural size.