

## ANSER SEGETUM.

### Bean-Goose.

*Anas segetum*, Gmel. edit. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 512.

*Anser segetum*, Meyer, Taschenb. Deutschl. Vög., tom. ii. p. 554.

— *arvensis*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 839.

— *paludosus*, Strickland.

THE Bean-Goose may be readily distinguished from its close ally the pink-footed species by its more lengthened bill and yellow legs; and both these birds differ again considerably in these respects from the Grey Lag; and that all three are specifically distinct there can be no doubt. The Grey Lag, as it will have been seen, is a true resident, being found in one or other part of the British Islands at all seasons of the year, which the others are not. The Bean-Goose comes to us in autumn, and after passing the winter here retires to other countries to breed, among which may be enumerated Sweden, Norway, and Lapland. Further south and east it has been found in Russia; I have a specimen which was certainly killed in Western India; and Mr. Swinhoe states that the bird visits China in swarms during the cold weather, particularly the marshes and the mouths of rivers in the neighbourhood of Amoy. So far as is yet known, it does not visit America.

Mr. Stevenson, in his 'Birds of Norfolk,' regards the Bean-Goose as a much rarer bird than the Pink-footed, and considers that the latter has been generally confounded with the former, which I think is very possible. He remarks, "The following are the only examples of the Bean-Goose that have come under my notice during the last ten years, in marked contrast to the numbers of Pink-footed geese recorded in my notes during the same period:—one, January 10th, 1861, during a sharp frost; one, November 29th, 1862, after an early fall of snow; two, January 15th, 1864, during sharp weather; and one on January 31st, 1867, a rather mild season. All these birds were sent to our Norwich market; but I was unable to ascertain from what part of the county. From the latter date until the commencement of 1871, I had not met with this species either at our birdstuffers' or poulterers'; but on the 11th of January, during the intense frost which prevailed at that time, Mr. H. Upcher succeeded in killing one out of a flock of three that he found feeding within shot of a frozen ditch at Blakeney; and on the 11th of February Mr. Hamond sent me a fine adult male, which had been shot at Castleacre on the 9th by Mr. Beverley Leeds."

Those who may wish to make themselves acquainted with this Goose in a sporting point of view, will do well to consult the writings of the late Mr. Charles St. John for many interesting details which are there given, but which their length does not permit to be transcribed here, especially as, though excellent in themselves, the following more recent and perhaps fuller account has been published by Mr. R. Gray, in his 'Birds of the West of Scotland':—

"In the Outer Hebrides the Bean-Goose is a common winter visitant, remaining on the outlying rocks and islets, especially in the neighbourhood of Harris, as late as the beginning of June. Its nest has never to my knowledge been discovered in any part of the Long Island, although it is stated by Macgillivray that it frequents the Hebrides in summer. There can be no doubt that his observations on this bird apply to the preceding species. According to Mr. Selby, the Bean-Goose had been found breeding in several of the Sutherlandshire lakes; but recent observers have failed to corroborate his records. There may have been a mistake in the species here also, a circumstance hardly to be wondered at when it is borne in mind that the Gray Lag was then supposed to be a comparatively rare bird, whereas it now turns out to be the only native species inhabiting the north and north-western districts of Scotland.

"Mr. Elwes informs me that the Bean-Goose is not uncommon in some parts of Islay, but that it does not arrive there till January or February. The flocks are not large, and the birds are very wary. These are probably from some of the outer islands, where they have exhausted their feeding-grounds. The movements of Geese, indeed, are greatly influenced by this consideration. Throughout the winter months very large flocks of this species frequent Montrose Basin at ebb tide, and the adjoining fields when the vast stretch of mud and sand is covered. I have seen many hundreds there, and have recognized them readily from a passing train at Dubton Junction. On one occasion the birds, although feeding within thirty yards of the railway embankment, merely ran together with raised heads and stood on the alert until the train had gone past, after which they lowered their heads and resumed feeding.

"The Bean-Goose is also common in Haddingtonshire, where it frequents wheat-fields, doing considerable damage sometimes to the sprouting grain. Large and noisy companies resort at nightfall to the open