

settle in such numbers, and so close together, that eighty-five have been shot at one discharge of a musket. They spring from the marshes with a loud twirling whistle, generally rising high and making several circuitous manœuvres in the air before they descend. They frequent the sand-bars and mud-flats at low water in search of food; and being less suspicious of a boat than of a person on shore are easily approached by this medium and shot down in great numbers. They usually keep by themselves, being very numerous, are in excellent order for the table in September, and on the approach of winter retire to the south. I have frequently amused myself with the various actions of these birds. They fly very rapidly, sometimes wheeling, coursing, and doubling along the surface of the marshes, then shooting high in air, there separating and forming in various bodies, uttering a kind of quivering whistle. Among many which I opened in May were several females that had very little rufous below their back, were also much lighter, and less marbled with ferruginous. The eggs contained in their ovaries were some of them as large as garden-peas."

The above passage is extracted from Sir William Jardine's edition of Wilson's 'American Ornithology,' vol. ii. p. 337, where will be found the following note by the learned Editor:—

"This bird will stand in the rank of a subgenus. It was first indicated by Leach in the 'Catalogue to the British Museum,' under the title of *Macrorhamphus griseus*. It is one of those beautifully connecting forms which it is impossible to place without giving a situation to themselves, and intimately connects the Snipes with *Totanus* and *Limosa*. The bill is truly that of *Scolopax*, while the plumage and changes ally it to the other genera; from these blending characters it has been termed *Limosa scolopacea* by Say, who gave the characters of the form without applying the name."

Audubon, in his 'Ornithological Biography' (vol. iv. p. 287), says:—"The flight of this bird is rapid, strong, and remarkably well sustained. When rising in large numbers, which they usually do simultaneously, they crowd together, are apt to launch upwards in the air for a while, and, after performing several evolutions in contrary directions, glide towards the ground, and wend their way close to it until, finding a suitable place, they alight in a very compact body, and stand for a moment. Sometimes, as if alarmed, they recommence their meandering flight, and after a while return to the same spot, alighting in the same manner. Then is the time when the gunner may carry havoc amongst them; but in two or three minutes they separate and search for food, when you must either put them up to have a good shot, or wait the arrival of another flock at the same place, which often happens; for these birds seldom suffer any of their species to pass without sending them a note of invitation. It is not at all uncommon to shoot twenty or thirty of them at once. I have been present when 127 were killed by discharging three barrels, and have heard of many dozens having been procured at a shot. When wounded and brought to the water, they try in vain to dive, and on reaching the nearest part of the shore they usually run a few steps and squat among the grass, when it becomes difficult to find them. Those which have escaped unhurt often remain looking after their dead companions, sometimes waiting until shot at a second time. When they are fat, they afford good eating; but their flesh is at no time so savoury as that of the common American Snipe."

In Swainson and Richardson's 'Fauna Boreali-Americana,' p. 398, it is stated:—"This bird is well known in the fen-countries, and has an extensive breeding-range from the borders of Lake Superior to the Arctic Sea. In the breeding-season, the whole under-plumage is buff-coloured, approaching to ferruginous, in which state it has not hitherto been described. Individuals killed on the Saskatchewan plains had their crops filled with leeches and fragments of coleoptera. The *Scolopax noveboracensis* forms a link between the Snipes and Godwits, having the bill of the former and the feet of the latter."

The principal figure in the accompanying Plate represents this bird in full summer dress, the reduced figure one in a state of change.