

TRINGA CANUTUS, Linn.

Knot.

- Tringa canutus*, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 65.
—— *ferruginea*, Meyer, Taschenb. deutsch. Vög., tom. ii. p. 395.
—— *calidris*, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 253.
—— *cinerea*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 673.
—— *grisea et navia*, Gmel. ibid., p. 681.
—— *islandica*, Gmel. ibid., p. 682.
—— *australis*, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 737.
Canutus islandicus, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 654.
—— *cinereus*, Brehm, ibid., p. 655, tab. 34. fig. 2.

THE Knot is more numerous in Britain during the spring and autumn months than at any other season of the year. At the former period it is proceeding northward to breed in some unknown country, and in the latter it is retracing its steps in a southerly direction; our islands must therefore be regarded as a mere halting-station during its great vernal and autumnal movements: but this statement must not be taken literally, inasmuch as in the intervening seasons stray individuals and even small flocks are sometimes seen. I have received specimens of the Knot from nearly every coast of Africa; and it is probably that part of the globe from which our numerous spring visitors arrive, and to which they again proceed in autumn. Judging from a letter kindly transmitted to me by Lord Lilford, Spain, from south to north, would seem to be another of its halting-places; for he says:—"I found this species in enormous numbers (I believe I might, without exaggeration, say in millions) on the great alluvial flats of the Guadalquivir, not far from San Lucar de Barrameda, in the first fortnight of May 1872. There were also great numbers of many other species of marsh-birds; but this was by far the most numerous at that time. Almost all of the many specimens we obtained were in full summer plumage. Their numbers daily diminished as the marshes became drier with the advance of the season. I have kept a great many of this species alive in my aviary, some of which regularly acquired the red plumage in summer; but it seemed to me never so brilliant as in the wild birds. They often perched on the cross-perches in the aviary, and fed readily on chopped meat, bread, soaked grain, worms, &c., in summer catching gnats and flies for themselves."

"The Knot," says Yarrell, "visits Iceland, and goes to much higher northern latitudes every summer, as reference to the natural-history details of our various Arctic expeditions will prove. Captain Sabine, in his memoir on the birds of Greenland, says:—"The Knot was killed at Hare Island in June." On Sir Edward Parry's first voyage, these birds were found breeding in great abundance on the North Georgian Islands; and on the second voyage a young male of the year was killed in the Duke of York's Bay on the 17th of August. Dr. Richardson adds:—"Knots were observed breeding on Melville Peninsula by Captain Lyon, who tells us that they lay four eggs on a tuft of withered grass, without being at the pains of forming any nest." In the 'Fauna Boreali-Americana,' Dr. Richardson says the Knot breeds in Hudson's Bay and down to the fifty-fifth parallel; the eggs are described as being of a light yellowish brown, marked at the larger end with grey and reddish spots, forming more or less a sort of zone, and but little spotted towards the point." This bird, in all its various states of plumage, appears to be well known to the ornithologists of the United States.

The Knot is evidently less common on the west coast of Scotland and the Outer Hebrides than on the east; for Mr. Robert Gray says:—"Judging from my own observations, I should be inclined to regard this bird as a somewhat uncommon species in the western counties of Scotland. I have met with occasional specimens from Sutherlandshire to the Mull of Galloway, but have never seen such flocks on our shores as are to be seen on those of the eastern counties. It has occurred in Islay, as I have been informed by Mr. Elwes, but not, so far as I am aware, on any of the other islands, except in a single instance, namely that of a specimen in full summer plumage which was shot on the 30th of July 1870, by Captain MacRea, in the strand of Vallay, in the North Uist, and shown to me by that gentleman three days afterwards, when I visited the island. This specimen is now in the collection of Captain Orde. In September 1868, when on a visit to the Mull of Galloway lighthouse, I saw a fine specimen taken on the lanterns, against which it fell stunned; but Mr. McDonald, one of the keepers there, informed me that he had never observed one before."

Speaking of the birds of Ireland, Thompson says "the flight of the Knot is very swift and strong. On the 1st of February 1845, I noticed a large flock of from a thousand to twelve hundred, sweeping over the