

ACTITURUS BARTRAMIUS.

Bartram's Sandpiper.

- Tringa Bartramia*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. vii. p. 63, pl. 59. fig. 2.
—— *longicauda*, Bechst. Vög., Nacht., p. 453.
Totanus Bartramius, Bonap. Cat. Birds of United States, p. 262.
Actiturus Bartramius, Bonap. Geog. and Comp. List of Birds of Eur. and N. Amer., p. 51.
Bartramia laticauda, Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 553.
Tringoides Bartramius, Gray & Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 574, *Tringoides*, sp. 4.
Actitis Bartramia, Naum. Naturg. Deutschl., pl. 196.
Euliga Bartramia, Nutt. Man. Orn. of Unit. States and Canada, vol. ii. p. 169.
Totanus variegatus, Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. p. 197, pl. cccxxxix.

WERE I to enumerate as correct all the statements recorded of the occurrence of Bartram's Sandpiper in England, I should be sadly deceiving my readers; for in most instances the birds so called have been male Ruffs in the plumage of the first autumn, just as Reeves of the same age have been mistaken for Pectoral Sandpipers; but it has undoubtedly occurred here in at least three instances; and there are two specimens in the Museum at Leyden labelled by the late celebrated Temminck as having been killed, one in Holland, the other in Germany; I have also received a single one from Australia, as recorded in the supplementary volume of my work on the birds of that country. These instances tend to prove that the bird is a great wanderer, its native home being America, over the northern portion of which it is widely dispersed, and where it breeds in abundance, migrating at the autumn season as far south as Mexico and Guatemala. It is by no means a true Sandpiper; for it evinces little partiality for the sea-shores or the margins of rivers, but betakes itself to the grassy meadows and uplands of the interior of the country. The peculiar form of its head and the large size of its eyes suggest to the ornithologist that it is somewhat related to the Stone-Plover or Thick-knee (*Edicnemus crepitans*), to whose habits its own also offer a considerable resemblance; moreover the sexes are alike in colouring.

The first example taken in England was recorded in the 'Zoologist' for 1851, by the late Hugh Reid, of Doncaster, without the assignment of any name; but Mr. A. G. More and Mr. J. H. Gurney subsequently determined it to be a veritable *Actiturus Bartramius*. It was killed near Warwick, and was sent to Mr. Reid for preservation on the 31st of October by R. Barnard, Esq., but is now, I believe, in the collection of Lord Willoughby de Broke, at Compton Verney, near Stratford-on-Avon. The second specimen was recorded by the Rev. Frederick Tearle, of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in the 'Illustrated London News,' with an accompanying representation of the bird, on the 20th of January, 1855, and formed the subject of the article "Bartram's Sandpiper," in the second supplement to Yarrell's 'British Birds.' Mr. J. H. Gurney, Jun., informs me that this bird is now in his father's collection, and has called my attention to the following account of its capture, from the pen of the Rev. F. Tearle, in the fifth volume of the 'Naturalist':—

"The specimen was first seen by some labourers engaged in threshing, near a farm-yard about ten miles from Cambridge. Its peculiar and plaintive whistling cry first attracted their attention; and on watching it, they observed that it frequently alighted and ran along the ground in an apparently weak and exhausted state. For this reason one of the men fancied he could catch it with his hat, and began to chase it across the field. But as soon as he approached tolerably near, the bird rose and flew round in large circles above him, uttering at intervals its wailing note. He soon relinquished the pursuit; but a gamekeeper's boy, who lived in a cottage close by, took out his father's gun, and shot it. It allowed him to approach several times within gunshot before it rose. Standing erect, it seemed to watch and wait for him, then ran a short distance and stood as before, after the manner of a bird that wishes to decoy an intruder from its nest. It eventually rose, and was brought down. I am unable to state its sex."

The third and last killed in England was seen hanging up in a gamedealer's at Falmouth, Nov. 13th, 1865, by Mr. G. F. Matthew, and afterwards by Dr. Bullmore, who bought, and recorded it in the 'Zoologist' for 1866, where he says:—"From inquiries instituted by me I find this bird was flushed by a farmer's son near Mullion, from a piece of pasture-turnips where he had just previously risen some six or eight Snipes. It rose singly, uttering a short shrill scream, flew over the hedge, and dropped into a ditch by the side of a contiguous road. On the approach of its pursuer it again rose, and alighted in the middle of a hayfield, where it was shot while busily occupied in running about on the ground."