

TOTANUS FUSCUS.

Spotted Redshank.

- Scolopax fusca*, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 243.
 ——— *totanus*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 665.
 ——— *curonica*, Gmel. ibid., tom. i. p. 669.
 ——— *cantabrigiensis*, Gmel. ibid., tom. i. p. 668.
Totanus fuscus, Leisl. Nacht. zu Bechst. Naturg. Deutschl., tom. i. p. 47.
 ——— *natans*, Bechst. Naturg. Deutschl. tom. iv. p. 227.
 ——— *maculatus*, Bechst. ibid., tom. iv. p. 203.
 ——— *ater*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 634.
 ——— *Raii*, Leach, Syst. Cat. of Indig. Mamm. & Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 31 ?
Tringa atra, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 738.
 ——— *longipes*, Meisn. & Schinz, Vög. der Schweiz, p. 216.
Erythroscelus fuscus, Kaup, Natürl. Syst., p. 54.

EXTENSIVE as is our avifauna, and numerous as are the species of which it is composed, it is in a great measure made up of migrants which merely pay us passing visits as they proceed to and return from their summer and winter homes, and accidental visitors driven out of their course. Among these the present bird must be enumerated. It belongs to the *Totani*, perhaps the most elegant of the Sandpipers; for whether running by the waterside, or winging their way over the marsh, their actions are preeminently graceful; their plumage is generally in perfect trim; and even those which frequent the dirtiest of water-courses keep their white parts clean and unsullied. The Spotted Sandpiper may be regarded as the chief of these interesting birds; for it is of large size and beautifully proportioned. It is a bird which is subject to an unusual number of changes; and even when fully adult, its dress during summer is remarkably different from that of winter. In its young state its entire under surface is covered with obscure crescentic light-brown markings, the sides of the neck are decorated with numerous short brown striæ, each feather of the upper surface is margined at the tip with a necklace-like series of coalescing greyish-white spots, and the legs and feet are coral-red; while the adult, in summer, has the head, neck, breast, and under surface sooty black, with the exception, in some individuals, of a crescent of white at the tip of each of the flank-feathers, and the legs are reddish black. In winter the upper surface is nearly uniform olive-brown, and the under surface all but pure white. Both sexes are alike in plumage at all seasons; and thus the female is as black as the male in summer, and as white as that sex in winter. It is in the young state that it is most frequently seen in the British Islands; but many instances are on record of adults having been killed in the winter dress, and of some few in the full dress of summer, at which season the white of the neck and under surface has given place to sooty black, as shown in the front figure of the accompanying plate. Such transformations as these are naturally very puzzling to the ordinary observer; and it was only after much patient research that they became thoroughly known to the scientific ornithologist. Those collectors who are in the habit of inspecting the London markets may frequently alight upon a fine example of this bird, which has been turned out of a basket sent up from Yarmouth, Ipswich, or some part of Lincolnshire; and the gunners of the Norfolk broads, the Suffolk estuaries, the Orwell, the lower Thames, and the Medway often meet solitary individuals in the months of August and September, when the bird is on its passage southwards. In spring it is again seen in the same situations, and by the same class of men, but less frequently; and that it comes to our island later in the season is certain; for Mr. Harting, in his 'Birds of Middlesex,' states that a fine specimen in full breeding-plumage was killed at Kingsbury reservoir, in June 1841, and is now, he believes, in the "Boys' Museum" at Eton College; that the bird also visits the interior of England in winter, is proved by the record in the same volume of a specimen in the plumage of that season, which had been shot on the Brent in 1849. But I find no recorded instance of its breeding either in this country or in Scotland; both Macgillivray and St. John are silent on the subject; and we must go further north if we wish to personally study this part of the bird's economy. If, on the other hand, we can be content with a vivid description of it, it is ready to our hand from the pen of the late Mr. John Wolley, who devoted his whole life to the advancement of ornithological science, and who with this view almost hybernated among the snows of Lapland to witness in spring the arrival there of so many of our rare birds; and I shall without hesitation avail myself of Mr. Hewitson's permission to extract the entire passage from his valuable 'Coloured Illustrations of the Eggs of British Birds.'

"It is with much pleasure," says Mr. Hewitson, "that I am enabled not only to give figures of the eggs of this species, hitherto unknown, but also to add the following most interesting particulars kindly sent me by Mr.