

LIMOSA RUFA.

Bar-tailed Godwit.

- Scolopax Lapponica*, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 62.
Limosa rufa, Temm. Man. d'Orn., 1815, p. 432.
Fedoa rufa, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. p. 77.
Scolopax leucophæa, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. ii. p. 719.
Limicola Lapponica, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. iii. p. 250.
Totanus leucophæus, Bechst. Naturg. Deutschl., tom. iv. p. 237.
—— *gregarius*, Bechst. ibid. p. 258.
Limosa ferruginea, Pall. Zoogr. Ross.-Asiat., tom. ii. p. 180.
—— *Meyeri*, Leisl. Nacht. zu Bechst. Naturg. Deutschl., tom. ii. p. 172.
—— *Noveboracensis*, Leach, Syst. Cat. of Indig. Mamm. and Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 32.
Fedoa Meyeri, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. p. 75.
—— *pectoralis*, Steph. ibid. p. 79.
Actitis limosa, Ill. Prod. Mamm. et Av., p. 262.
Limosa lapponica, G. R. Gray, Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 570, *Limosa*, sp. 3.
-

THE above long list of synonyms will show how much attention this well-known species has received from ornithologists; I trust, however, that it will not be encumbered with an additional name, and that the appropriate one of *rufa* will in future be retained as the specific appellation of the bird; *Lapponica* is certainly inappropriate, whatever may be its claims to priority; for the bird is not confined to Lapland, but is perhaps more generally dispersed than any other species of the genus.

If we take a glance at the northern regions of the Old World, as displayed on a map or an artificial globe, we see a few degrees to the eastward of the North Cape, between 70° and 75° N. lat., the island of Nova Zembla, standing out boldly in the Icy Sea; looking further east, we find the mainland of Siberia extending to a still higher latitude. These, and other parts of Siberia, with the interminable marshes and moorlands which skirt the rivers of that great country running into the Icy Ocean, from the sea of Kara, in the west, to Behring's Straits, in the east, northern Lapland and Finmark, are, probably, the great nurseries of the Bar-tailed Godwit; and it is to those countries that the individuals which winter in Europe, China, and Japan most likely retire for the purpose of reproduction; I speak of Europe and China conjointly, because I think that the migratory movements of the birds may take place simultaneously in both those parts of the globe, and I may almost venture to assert that the individuals which return to Europe in the autumn have been breeding in Lapland, Finmark, and Nova Zembla. Some of these western Godwits winter with us in the British Islands, others on the estuaries of the rivers and sea-shores of the Continent; others, again, cross the Mediterranean, and distribute themselves in all favourable situations throughout Africa. The same influence, I have no doubt, affects the Chinese and Japanese examples which have bred in eastern Siberia; for they do not all stop in that country, but, like the western birds, impulsively seek a warmer climate, some individuals, I believe, extending their range, through the Philippine and all the intervening islands, to the continent of Australia, and even to Tasmania, on the shores of which island, in all suitable localities, I found numerous examples in their grey attire, but none in the red or breeding-dress. In asserting that it visits Australia I may be accused of discrepancy, since in my folio work on the birds of that country, and in my Handbook on the same subject, I treated the southern and northern Bar-tailed Godwits as distinct species; but I now believe them to be identical, and that the greater and less amount of spotting on the rump is a character not to be wholly depended upon. If this latter view be correct, how widely does this bird range! and how distant does it wander from its breeding-place! Young birds generally wander further from their birth-place than adults; and hence it probably is that we never see an Australian example in the red dress, which may not be acquired until the bird is on its return to the place in which it was bred.

Over Britain the dispersion of the Bar-tailed Godwit is very general; and wherever a tidal estuary or a low flat beach occurs, there it is sure to be found during the months of autumn. In the spring great accessions to those which have wintered with us take place, particularly on our eastern coasts, the additions mainly consisting of birds *en route* from more southern countries. They are now in their finest dress, having exchanged the grey plumage of winter for the rich chestnut livery of the approaching nuptial season; when thus attired in all the freshness of the spring moult, the bird, for a Sandpiper, is truly beautiful. May is the month in which they pass over Suffolk, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire, resting there for