

closed ; but they nevertheless kept continually calling, without in the least degree changing their attitudes or moving the bill from its state of repose. Occasionally two or three would call at the same moment, the rule seeming to be that a continuous note was essential. It was amusing to see the vibration of the body of the bird when, supported on one leg, the call was uttered with the bill 'engulfed' in the plumage of the back. A Ruff in the same aviary seemed also quite contented, and displayed the well-known pugnacity of the species by striking with its bill any of the Godwits that came within reach. On one of the warm days he took possession for a time of a large shallow pan of water, and would not suffer a Godwit to partake of, or to cool its feet in, the liquid."

The Black-tailed Godwit is distributed over the whole of Europe, wherever situations suitable to its habits occur. In England it is most frequently seen in spring and autumn, during its passage to, and return from, its breeding-grounds in high northern latitudes. Mr. Rodd states that it has been killed at the Land's-end, but that it is uncommon in Cornwall; Macgillivray says it is never very abundant in Scotland; and Thompson that it frequents the coast of Ireland in autumn and winter in very limited numbers. Fabricius mentions that he had only seen a single specimen in Greenland; and Reinhardt that, after his time, but one more example had been said to have been obtained there. Mr. Alfred Newton states that, according to Faber, it arrives in Iceland during the last week in April, and adds:—"I do not know that any naturalist has found its eggs in Iceland, but I have little doubt it breeds there. It seems to be rare (if it occurs at all) in the north. I obtained a fine pair in the flesh at Reykjavik, towards the end of June." Wheelwright says it is a summer visitant to Lapland; Loche states that it is a bird of passage in Algeria; Swinhoe informs us that it is "said to be found on lakes and inland marshes in China, whence it is brought to the Tientsin and Shanghai markets in winter." It is probably from Manchuria that these birds come. Temminck and Schlegel note it from Japan. According to Mr. Jerdon it is "found throughout India during the cold weather, generally in large flocks at the edge of water."

Mr. Hewitson states that the "eggs, which are four in number, differ considerably in size and colouring, some being of a uniform light olive-brown, and almost spotless, while others have the surface sprinkled with small but distinctly marked spots. Mr. Hoy informed me, in 1836, that on the Continent the nest is composed of dry grass and other vegetables, and is concealed amongst the herbage of the low swamps and meadows, and that the birds when disturbed are clamorous, flying round the intruder, and vociferating the cry of *grutto*, *grutto*, whence they have received their name among the people of Holland."

The food of the Black-tailed Godwit consists of insects and their larvæ, worms and other soft-bodied animals. Great difference exists in the size of the sexes, the female being nearly a third larger than the male, and frequently more richly coloured during the months of spring.

A male killed in April 1867 had the head and neck pale rufous, conspicuously striped with dark brown on the head; back and scapularies rufous, crossed by broad irregular bands of black, the last of which, assumed on some of the feathers, the shape of a large blotch; basal portion of the feathers brownish grey; tips of the scapularies white; wing-coverts dark-greyish brown, with paler margins, approaching to white; greater coverts and wings dark brown, with white shafts, the tips of the coverts and the base of the primaries pure white, forming a conspicuous mark when the wing was spread; most of the lengthened tertiaries grey, a few of them dark brown, deeply toothed with tawny, and tipped with grey; lower part of the back grey, each feather narrowly fringed with white; rump and upper tail-coverts pure white; tail-feathers white at the base, black for the remainder of their length, except at the tip, where they were fringed with greyish white, the amount of the black slightly decreasing as the feathers receded from the centre; breast rufous, barred with black and white, which latter gradually increased until the under surface became white, with a few bars of dark brown on the flanks and under tail-coverts; bill yellow at the base, dark brown at the tip; legs dark olive-green.

In the winter the head and neck are greyish olive-brown, and the back dark olive-brown. As the spring advances, a change of feathers takes place, the brownish olive colouring of the back giving place to cross markings of red and black, and by May the transformation is complete.

The weight of the female is 13 oz., of the male 10 oz.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the size of life—the male in change from its olive-brown dress to the rufous one of summer, and the female in her usual brown dress.