## LOXIA LEUCOPTERA, Gmel.

American White-winged Crossbill.

Loxia leucoptera, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 844.

— falcirostra, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 371.

Curvirostra leucoptera, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. iv. p. 48, pl. xxxi. fig. 3, young male.

The Gulf-stream has doubtless much to do with the appearance of many American birds on our shores; for when a straggler is once within its influence, it is borne along not unwillingly, since it finds within a distance of every five square miles large masses of floating sea-weeds and other substances upon which it may rest, and where it may procure an abundance of Mollusks, small Crustaceans, &c., upon which to subsist.

In the present instance I have departed from my plan of not figuring those American species which, having been accidentally drawn across the Atlantic, have found shelter in our island. The Belted Kingfisher (Ceryle alcyon), American Cuckoo (Coccyzus americanus), and Red-winged Starling (Agelaius phæniceus) have no more connexion with our fauna than the Australian Cereopsis Goose; even in America these birds more properly belong to the south than the north; and those examples which have arrived here have doubtless been driven to sea during their migration, or by some accidental cause which cannot be ascertained. The American White-winged Crossbill has, however, in my opinion, certain claims to be figured in the 'Birds of Great Britain.' It is a species which, in the New World, goes further north than any other insessorial bird, except the Wheatear, Redpolls, Pine Grosbeak, Snow and Lapland Buntings—certainly as far as any species of Pine is known to exist,—and it is consequently more likely now and then to extend its visits to that portion of the Old World which lies within the Arctic Circle than either of the comparatively southern species above referred to; moreover it has undoubtedly been found in our island—a fact I have verified by an examination of the specimen mentioned by Mr. Yarrell as having been taken in Devonshire; and it has usually been confounded with the species called Loxia bifasciata, the differences between the two being only known to professed ornithologists. For all these reasons, a representation of it cannot fail to be of service.

The occurrence of the specimen above alluded to, which is now in the possession of Mr. Van Voorst, is thus recorded in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1845, p. 91:—"September 23. Edward Fitton, Esq., exhibited to the meeting a fine male specimen of the White-winged Crossbill (Loxia leucoptera), in red plumage, which he had picked up dead upon the shore at Exmouth on the 17th inst. It appeared to have been injured on the back of the head, and to have crept into a crevice of one of the loose fragments of rock on the shore, where it was found by Mr. Fitton, partly covered with wet sand. The wind at the time was south-west, and had been blowing hard from north-west to west and south-west for some days." Mr. Yarrell states that both himself and Mr. Fitton examined the bird while in the flesh, and that on dissection it proved to be a male, probably in the second year of its existence. The stomach was empty.

In its native country—northern and arctic America—no species is more widely dispersed; for it is to be seen in great numbers from Nova Scotia to Labrador, from the Red River to Davis's Straits, and in the pine-forests thence to the Pacific it is everywhere to be found.

Sir John Richardson informs us that it "inhabits the dense white-spruce forests of the North-American fur countries, feeding principally on the seeds of the cones. It ranges through the whole breadth of the continent, and probably up to the sixty-eighth parallel, where the woods terminate, though it was not observed higher than the sixty-second. It is mostly seen on the upper branches of the trees, and, when wounded, clings so fast that it will remain suspended after death. In September it collects in small flocks, which fly from tree to tree, making a chattering noise; and in the depth of winter it retires from the coast to the thick woods of the interior."

Audubon "found this species common on the islands near the entrance of the Bay of Fundy early in May 1833. They were then journeying northwards; but many pass the whole year in the northern parts of the State of Maine, and the British provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia: those seen on the islands above-mentioned were observed on their margins, some having alighted on the bare rocks; and all those which were alarmed immediately took to wing, rose to a moderate height, and flew directly eastward. On my passage across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Labrador in the same month, about half-a-dozen White-winged Crossbills and as many Mealy Redpolls one day alighted on the top yards of our vessel, but before we could bring our guns from below they all left us. Within the limits of the United States I have obtained examples during winter along the hilly shores of the Schuylkil River in Pennsylvania; also in New Jersey; and in one instance in Maryland, a few miles from Baltimore, beyond which, southward, I have never met with this