## LOXIA BIFASCIATA.

White-winged Crossbill.

Loxia bifasciata, Nilss. Skand. Faun. Illum., pl. 20.

Crucirostra bifasciata, Brehm, Handb. Naturg. Vög. Deutsch., p. 244.

—— tænioptera, Glog. Isis, 1828.

If we were as well acquainted with the habits and economy of this pretty species of Crossbill as we are with those of the Loxia pityopsittacus and L. curvirostra, we should probably find that it gives preference to some particular group of trees, most likely to one or other species of Abies. The Common Larch (A. larix) is a native of Central Europe, Russia, and Siberia, in all of which countries the bird is also found. Temminck and De Sélys-Longchamps have each contented themselves with a mere description of the species; and I am compelled reluctantly to add, that in the present paper I am unable to give any details as to the bird's history. It is, in fact, a species of which we know little more than that it visits, at irregular intervals, the countries of Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and France, and as irregularly crosses the Channel to our own island, and occasionally proceeds still further west to Ireland, where it was killed near Belfast in 1802. In England, one was shot out of a small flock near Ipswich; Mr. Doubleday is said to have procured one in his own garden, at Epping; it has also been taken in Cornwall, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Surrey, Suffolk, Norfolk, the Isle of Wight, Cumberland, and in Scotland. In all probability, the proper home of the Whitewinged Crossbill is the scattered pine- and larch-forests of Eastern Russia and Siberia, and thence it occasionally makes a western movement to Germany, Holland, and this country, and a southern one to Thibet and the great Himalaya range of monntains, whence I have received one, if not two specimens. It is doubtless the species described by Schrenck, in his 'Birds of the Amoor,' under the name of L. leucoptera. Both Continental and British ornithologists considered the present bird to be identical with the American L. leucoptera until the Baron de Sélys-Longchamps, with his wonted acumen, pointed out, in his 'Faune Belge,' the peculiar features which distinguish it from that species; these may be thus stated:—the American bird is smaller than a Sparrow, has the beak small, very much compressed, and the points slender and elongated, the tail greatly forked; the males clothed in brilliant crimson, and the tail black with little or no bordering: the European White-winged Crossbill, on the other hand, is larger than a Sparrow, has the beak almost as large as that of the Common Crossbill, less compressed than in the American bird, the points less crossed and not so elongated, the tail less forked; the males clothed in dull brick-red, and the tail-feathers bordered with yellow. Mr. Yarrell has also pointed out that the claw of the hind toe of the American bird is both longer and stouter than that of the European species.

Nearly all that has at present been recorded respecting the Loxia bifasciata is comprised in the following passages in Professor Nilsson's 'Scandinavian Fauna' and Schrenck's 'Birds of the Amoor.' Nilsson records nearly a dozen instances of its occurrence in Sweden, sometimes in considerable numbers, so that from twelve to twenty have been killed out of the same flock, which occasionally comprises among its members examples of the Parrot and the common species.

Brandt and Middendorff state that "it is a constant inhabitant of Northern Siberia, that it is one of the commonest birds on the Jenissei, and that it proceeds further north than any other species. North of the Amoor, Middendorff found it on the Stanowoi Mountains in October; young birds at Udskoi-Ostrog in June, and among the larch- and fir-woods of the Lower Amoor about the middle of February."

"The only example of the White-winged Crossbill in Norfolk, that I am at present aware of," says Mr. Stevenson, "is the one referred to in the following note, by Mr. C. B. Hunter, to the 'Zoologist' in 1846:— 'Four or five of these birds were observed on some fir trees near Thetford, in Norfolk, on the 10th of May last (1846), one of which was shot, and came into the possession of Mr. Robert Reynolds, bird-fancier, of Thetford. About a week before this, Mr. Reynolds purchased a specimen of a bird-stuffer at Bury St. Edmunds, which had but just been set up, and was obtained in that neighbourhood.' Mr. Yarrell states, in the Supplement to his third edition, that five specimens of White-winged Crossbill, examined by himself (all killed in England), belonged undoubtedly to the European species; and of these, one, now in the possession of Mr. Doubleday, was killed at Thetford, and this I believe to be the bird above referred to by Mr. Hunter. The Suffolk one from Bury, mentioned by the same gentleman, is now in the collection of Mr. J. H. Gurney, and has all the characteristics of the European type. Another White-winged Crossbill is also recorded to have been shot in Suffolk, some years since, from a flock of five or six, by Mr. Seaman, of Ipswich."

Those seen in Cumberland were in a small flock of six or seven in number, of which several were shot.

The male has the whole of the head, upper, and under surface mottled grey and bright brick-red, the