INTRODUCTION.

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almost as widely distributed as the Cormorants. In species, however, they are far less numerous, only six or seven being known; and should the Australian bird be ultimately proved to be identical with our own, then the number will be still less.

Genus Sula.

I must refer my readers to the body of the work for full information respecting this predaceous bird, for it would be out of place to enter into particulars here in what can only be regarded as a mere list of the species inhabiting Britain. I may mention, however, that its specific name is derived from one of its breeding-places, to which may be added Lundy Island, Ailsa Craig, St. Kilda, Suliskerry in Orkney, &c.

Family LARIDÆ.

Mr. Harting, in his 'Handbook of British Birds,' has included the Gulls and Terns in the same family, with which view I acquiesce, for it would be difficult to draw the line between the termination of the one and the commencement of the other. Whether we regard the Gulls, Terns, and Skuas separately or collectively, they may be described as coast-wanderers over the entire globe, but more abundant in the northern than in the southern hemisphere. Their principal food is fish, crustaceans, and other marine animals, but some of them readily eat worms, insects, and garbage. In their plumage they are perhaps the most cleanly of all birds, always maintaining their pure and delicate tints unsullied. There are over one hundred species inhabiting various parts of the globe.

Subfamily LARINÆ.

Genus Larus.

The members of this genus comprise all the large Gulls—birds which, as scavengers alone, play an important part in keeping a wholesome atmosphere. They also prey upon fish, crustaceans, small mammals, and weakly birds.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.

A resident species, breeding round our coasts.