

GLAUCOUS GULL.

Larus glaucus, Brunn.

La Goëland Burgermeister.

THIS noble species fully equals in size, if it do not exceed, the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*, Linn.), but from which it may at all times be distinguished by the extremely delicate grey colouring of its mantle and upper surface. Although frequently occurring on our coast, the individuals taken are in the proportion of about twenty young birds to one adult, immature birds having a more decided propensity to wander far from their native habitat than the old ones.

As its pale and almost white colouring would seem to indicate, the Glaucous Gull is a native of the high polar regions, where it frequents shores bound up by ice and snow, crags of ice, and floating icebergs. The British Islands lying, as it were, directly in its way during its wanderings southward, is one reason why this Gull is more abundant with us than it is on most of the other coasts of Europe; but, as we have stated above, these visitants are principally young birds.

In its habits and manners it perfectly agrees with the rest of the larger Gulls; if anything, its flight is more buoyant and easy, which may be occasioned by its denser plumage.

It breeds on precipitous rocks, and its eggs are stated to be of a pale purplish grey with spots of umber brown.

It is a bird of voracious appetite, preying not only upon fish but upon every kind of carrion; nor are small sea birds free from its attacks, and there is some reason to suppose that the Little Auk frequently falls a prey to its craving appetite. Although the rocky shores of Norway and Sweden as well as those of Holland and France are visited by this Gull, they do not come within the number of its breeding-places.

The adult bird in summer has the whole of the plumage pure silky white, with the exception of the mantle and wing-coverts, which are delicate grey; bill pale yellow, with the angular projection of the lower mandible blood red; legs and feet flesh colour. In winter the head and sides of the neck are streaked with pale brown, which disappears on the approach of spring.

The young birds have the whole of the plumage of a dirty greyish white, spotted and barred all over with greyish brown; the shafts of the primaries white; the bill reddish yellow at the base and black at the tip; and the feet pale flesh colour.

Our Plate represents an adult male in the summer plumage and a young bird about two thirds of the natural size.