

MOUSTACHE TERN.

Sterna leucopareia, Natt.

Viralva leucopareia, Steph.

L'Hirondelle-de-mer moustac.

For the knowledge of this species we are indebted to M. J. Natterer of Vienna, who discovered it in the marshes of Hungary. It has also been seen by M. Temminck in Capo d'Istria on the coast of Dalmatia.

The Moustache Tern, like its black- and white-winged brethren, appears to prefer inland and extensive marshes rather than the ocean. Like the last-mentioned species it is almost confined to the eastern portions of the Continent. In Europe it is perhaps one of the rarest of its tribe, and although its habits are but little known, we may reasonably conclude from its peculiar form that its general economy is strictly similar to the other Viralves, or Marsh Terns.

Its food consists of the winged insects inhabiting the marshes, to which are added worms, snails, &c.

The sexes offer no perceptible difference in their plumage. The young, says M. Temminck, have the top of the head of a reddish colour variegated with brown; the occiput, the region behind the eyes, and the orifice of the ears of a blackish ash; the back, scapularies, secondaries, and quills brown in the middle, bordered and terminated with yellowish brown; the tail-feathers blackish ash with the exception of the outer ones, which are tipped with white; beak brown, reddish at the base; feet flesh colour.

According to M. Temminck's description the adults are subject to considerable seasonal changes; for he informs us that in winter the top of the head, the occiput, and all the under parts are pure white; a black spot is situated behind the eye; the back, rump, tail, and wings are of a clouded ash grey; the beak and feet deep lake red; the irides black; and that in spring the whole crown of the head is deep black, and the under surface clouded with blackish ash, becoming lighter towards the throat, and leaving the sides of the face and ear-coverts pure white, whence it has received the appellation of moustache.

The Plate represents a male of the natural size in its full spring dress.