

WHITE-WINGED TERN.

Sterna leucoptera, Linn.

Viralva leucoptera, Leach.

L'Hirondelle-de-mer leucoptère.

THE White-winged Tern would appear to represent in the southern districts of Europe the Common Black Tern of the more northern latitudes, frequenting, like that bird, inland lakes and marshes, as well as the low flat borders of the sea. We are informed that it inhabits all the bays and gulfs along the shores of the Mediterranean, and that it is very common in the neighbourhood of Gibraltar: it visits also, according to M. Temminck, the lakes and marshes of Italy, such as Lucarno, Lugano, Como, &c., but never extends its journey to Holland or the parallel latitudes.

In habits, manners, size, and structure, it strictly resembles the Black Tern; the pure whiteness of its tail, and the greyish white of its wing, will, however, serve at once to distinguish it from that species.

Its food consists of insects, particularly dragon flies, moths, and other winged and aquatic insects, worms, and occasionally small fishes.

Of its nidification and the number and colour of its eggs, little is at present correctly ascertained; but we have every reason to believe that they bear a close resemblance to those of the Black Tern.

The sexes do not differ in the colour of their plumage, but the young of the year have less white on the wings, and the rest of the plumage is of a lighter and browner hue; in fact, it undergoes a change very similar to that of the Black Tern.

The whole of the head, neck, back and belly, and the two outer quill-feathers black; the remainder of the wings greyish white; the rump, tail, vent, and under tail-coverts white; beak brownish red; tarsi brownish red.

The Plate represents an adult of the natural size.