

## RED-THROATED DIVER.

*Colymbus septentrionalis, Linn.*

Le Plongeon à gorge rouge.

THE Red-throated Diver, although possessing all the characteristics of the genus, differs very considerably both in colour and disposition of its markings from the other two species, viz. the Northern, and Black-throated, which form its European congeners. Of these it is the least in size, but by far the most abundant, being found in considerable numbers along the European coasts, and is especially plentiful in the arctic regions of both the European and American quarters of the globe. Although far from being uncommon on the sea-shores, it appears to evince great partiality for fresh and inland waters, taking to the sea when these are frozen ; hence in winter it is common along the coasts of England and Holland, beyond the latitudes of which it rarely passes southwards.

Like the others of its genus, it is a bold and vigorous diver, a mode of progression to which its lengthened neck and body are admirably adapted. Its principal food consists of small fish, crabs and other crustacea, to which, when it visits fresh waters, are added frogs, newts, and aquatic plants. Its flight, when it is mounted into the higher regions of the atmosphere, is rapid, and it has the capability of sustaining it for a long time.

We are able from experience to assure the reader, that the British Islands, particularly Scotland, the Orkneys and Hebrides, are to be reckoned among its annual breeding-places ; nor have we any reason to doubt that the northern shores of Europe in general afford it an asylum also for a similar purpose. It constructs a slight nest of grasses and vegetable fibres, among the herbage of morasses, and at the edges of such large lakes as invite it by their seclusion and quietude. Its eggs, two in number, are of a dark red brown blotched over with spots of black. The young, immediately after exclusion from the shell, are very active, follow their parents to the water, and instantly commence their search for food. Their growth is rapid, so that they soon acquire their full size, though not the adult colouring of the plumage till after the first autumn.

The young bird has hitherto been described in works on Ornithology as the *Colymbus stellatus*, the Speckled Diver, &c. ; the white throat which characterizes the birds of the year, together with the speckled plumage of the upper parts, having doubtless led to the mistake. The throat and fore part of the neck in the adult bird are covered with short, thick-set, velvety feathers of a dark grey, having in the centre a broad longitudinal band of rich chestnut,—at least during the summer, for we are as yet in doubt whether this character be lost as winter advances ; certain it is, that the adult birds taken in autumn have both the grey and chestnut of the throat less distinct and intermingled with patches of white. When the bird has become fully adult, the white specks which more or less distinguish the upper plumage of the young birds, according to their age, disappear, leaving the back of a uniform greenish brown. The upper part of the head and back of the neck are marked with longitudinal, wavy, narrow lines of white edged with black ; breast and under parts white ; flanks dashed with ash-coloured blotches ; beak black ; irides orange ; tarsi on their external aspect, and toes, of a deep olive black, having their internal sides and webs of a livid white.

We have figured an adult and a young bird of the year two thirds of their natural size.