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"all things that had wings. Suddenly, however, "the wren, who had secreted himself under the "feathers of the eagle's crest, popped from his "hiding-place, flew a few inches upwards, and "chirped out as loudly as he could, 'Birds, look "up, and behold your king.'" In other parts of Ireland it seems the wren and robin find special favour. Mr. Watters, of the Dublin University Zoological Society, asserts in his "Birds of Ireland" that the most heartless youngster who indulges in "practical ornithology" with the eggs and young of other birds, regards the redbreast as too sacred to be molested. "Wild and untutored," he writes, "ask him his reasons for allowing it to remain in safety, and in many parts of Ireland you are simply answered :—

"The robin and the wren
Are God's two holy men"—

apparently a local variant of the Lancashire folk-rhyme :

"Cock Robin and Jenny Wren
Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

In view of the fine Corsican spirit in which the wren is annually done to death in the South of Ireland vendetta, it is needless to say that the rustic rhyme quoted by the Dublin ornithologist has no place in the bird-lore of these parts. Nor does the pretty fiction of the robins forming a coverlet of leaves for the dead Babes in the Wood, so generally potent for their protection elsewhere, invest them with any peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the average Cork youth.

BIRDS OF COUNTY CORK.

Including all species known to have occurred in the county in a wild state, whether residents, summer or winter migrants, or occasional visitants.

By R. J. Ussher, J.P.

(*Specially for this Journal.*)

The writer of these Notes, being resident outside the county, is well aware that they must be imperfect as a record of the Birds of Co. Cork, but he trusts that anyone whose local information enables him to do so will modify his statements or remedy his omissions by pointing them out in this Journal.

ORDER XV.—GAVIÆ.

Birds of the Gull Type.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna macrura*). Summer visitor to our coasts; sometimes in considerable numbers. It breeds, when not persecuted, on small islands, as on those in Bantry Bay, in company with the Common Tern. A colony of Terns is a most lovely sight, the graceful birds, with delicate grey and white colouring and black crowns, poising themselves, and performing marvellous evolutions with their slender wings and long forked tails. This species has shorter legs than the Common Tern, and both bill and legs are of a much more intense coral red.

Common Tern (*Sterna fluviatilis*). Summer visitor; common at times on our coasts, especially in "the bait season." It breeds, as above-stated, with the Arctic Tern, on small, uninhabited islands in the west of the county. Terns lay their eggs in little depressions in the grass or shingle, sometimes loosely lined with a little dried grass. The bill of the Common Tern is of a paler red than that of the Arctic, and has a black tip.

Little Tern (*Sterna minuta*). Summer visitor. The only record I can find of this species in Co. Cork is in *Thompson*, who was informed by Mr. Wm. Crawford that "small flocks of six or eight birds accasionally appear in Cork harbour." It breeds on so many parts of the coast of Ireland, among shingle and gravel on the beach, that it should be looked for in such situations in the Co. Cork in June and July. Its much smaller size distinguishes it from other Terns, being only nine inches in length.

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna cantiaca*). Dr. Harvey states, in a note, that considerable numbers were seen at Monkstown for a week in October, 1852. The only breeding-place of this fine species now known in Ireland is near Ballina, in Co. Mayo. It is much the largest of our Terns. Its beak and feet are black, unlike the Common and Arctic Terns.

Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra*). Rare visitor, chiefly in autumn, but has once occurred so late as the week before Christmas, according to Thompson. Mr. F. R. Rohu preserved a Black Tern shot by Sir Augustus Warren about May, 1883, and another shot March, 1884. The specimen in Queen's College Museum was obtained in July, 1850, and is in immature plumage, in which state most Irish specimens have been obtained. It is then mottled brown on the head and mantle, white beneath; but the adult plumage is lead-grey and slate-grey, with no white.

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*). Rare and accidental visitor from the Arctic regions. A specimen in Queen's College Museum was shot in Bantry Bay by the late Captain Newburgh, on the 31st January, 1852.

Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*). Resident; breeding in colonies on the precipitous parts of the lofty Bull and Cow Rocks off Dursey Head. It is essentially a bird of the open sea, and may well be called the precipice-loving Kittiwake. The nests may be seen stuck in rows along the narrow ledges of the most tremendous cliffs. It is seldom but occasionally seen in winter. It is a small Gull, its length being fifteen and a half inches, and it has no hind toe.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus glaucus*). Rare and uncertain winter visitor from the northern seas. Thompson records three—one obtained autumn, 1833, at Youghal; another shot July, 1834, also near Youghal, and one seen in 1847 in Cork harbour by Dr. Harvey. In Queen's College Museum is one shot in Bantry Bay by the late Captain Newburgh on December, 1852. This is one of our largest Gulls. Length up to thirty-two inches. The plumage of the adult is white, except the mantle, which is pearl-grey; but the immature bird is mottled with ash-brown on a

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creamy ground. Neither this nor the next species have black tips to their wings.

Iceland Gull (*Larus leneopterus*). A still rarer winter visitor, which breeds no nearer than Greenland. In January and February, 1849, Mr. Robert Warren and his brother observed several about the harbour, one of which, an immature bird in the second year's plumage, they shot, and gave to Dr. Harvey. It is now in the Queen's College Museum. It weighed two pounds. The length of this bird is but twenty-two inches. Its wings when closed reach considerably beyond the tail, which is not the case in the Glaucous Gull. The mantle is pale grey, the rest of the plumage white.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). This fine bird is resident, breeding on our coast in greater numbers than any other species of Gull. It places its nest on ledges and among tussocks of vegetation in the sea-cliffs. It is our commonest marine species of Gull, seldom coming inland, though it may be seen in tidal estuaries. Its length is twenty-two to twenty-four inches. Mantle, French grey; primary wing feathers, more or less black; rest of plumage white. Bill and eyes yellow; legs and feet flesh-colour.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*). Resident, but not so numerous as the Herring Gull. Its breeding colonies, too, are smaller and fewer, and the nests usually side by side those of the Herring Gull, as on High Island near Castletownsend. Thompson states that in 1849 eight or ten pairs bred on the largest of the Sovereign Islands, Kinsale, but none between Cork and Kinsale. It would be interesting to note the facts as to these localities now.

This handsome bird is white, except the mantle, which is sooty-grey or black, and with yellow bill, eyes, and feet, and a red patch on the lower mandible, it is a conspicuous object. It frequents harbours for the sake of the offal.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*). From the commencement of the winter storms this species visits us in flocks, spreading over the country, and often feeding in the fields in company with flocks of the Black-headed Gull, from which it may be distinguished by its larger size, the colour of its mantle, which is of a deeper blue than that of the Herring Gull, Kittiwake, or Black-headed Gulls. The wing, too, is broad and blunt, and has a large black tip, which is tipped again with white. It is smaller than the Herring Gull. It leaves the south generally before the breeding season, but may then be found nesting on islets in lakes near the coasts of Connaught and Donegal. A breeding place of this species in Co. Cork would be an important discovery; for this being a northern breeding bird, the most southern breeding place recorded as yet is an island off the west of Kerry.

Greater Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*). Resident, in small numbers, usually breeding alone on the top of some isolated rock, as it does on the south coast of the county; but Mr. Newburgh, in *The Field* of 10th June, 1893, records an unusually large colony of about twenty-five pairs which he found breeding on the Cow Rock off Dursey Head. I have, however, seen a still larger colony on the Bills of Achill. This is a large, powerful, and fierce bird, not scrupling to attack other birds when sick or wounded, and to devour them. As well as the Herring Gull, it is a terrible depredator of other sea-birds' eggs. It attains thirty inches in length, as compared with twenty-three the length of the Lesser Black-backed Gull, but it is twice the weight of the latter. The mantle, too, is blacker, but the legs and feet are flesh colour, not yellow.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). I have no certain information that this bird breeds in the county, but it may do so in some of the bogs, as it breeds extensively on Irish bogs, and on islets in lakes; scarcely ever on the coast. From March throughout the summer the adults are recognizable by the brown colour of the head, which looks black at a distance, but this becomes white in winter. The bird, however, may be known at all seasons by its red legs and feet, pointed wings, with the primary quill-feathers, which constitute the anterior portion, showing white very conspicuously in flight. Black-headed Gulls come down in July and August from their inland breeding-haunts in great numbers to our coasts and estuaries, where they swarm throughout the autumn, and in winter overspread the fields and follow the plough. This is our smallest resident Gull except the Kittiwake.

Pomatorhine Skua (*Stercorarius pomatorhinus*). The Skuas are a sub-family of the Gulls, usually distinguishable by their dark brown colour. They do not fish for themselves, but hunt other gulls until they disgorge their prey, when the pirate bird catches it in its fall. They may frequently be seen thus employed in the bait season, when fish and gulls are plenty.

The present species is not a common visitor, but is simply inserted in his Cork *Fauna* by Dr. Harvey, and Thompson notes one taken near Youghal, 12th October, 1834. It is larger than the following species, and when adult the two central tail feathers project four inches, and are twisted vertically.

Richardson's Skua (*Stercorarius crepidatus*). The most frequent in occurrence of the Skuas, usually seen in autumn. Dr. Harvey received one from Mr. H. Townsend, obtained in September, 1873, now in Queen's College Museum. Mr. Newburgh states that it is met with in autumn in the west of the county, and sometimes seen in summer. Upper parts umber-brown, cheeks and neck yellowish, throat and breast sometimes white, sometimes dark. The two central tail feathers long and straight in the adult.

(*To be continued.*)

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