GENUS IV.—TOTANUS, *Bechst.* TATLER.

Bill much longer than the head, very slender, sub-cylindrical, straight, flexible, compressed at the base, the point rather depressed and obtuse; upper mandible with the dorsal line straight, the ridge convex, as are the sides, the edges thick, the tip slightly deflected; lower mandible with the angle very long and narrow, the dorsal line straight, the sides convex, with a slight groove in their basal half, the edges grooved longitudinally, as are those of the upper, the tip narrow. Nostrils basal, linear. Head of moderate size, oblong; neck rather long and slender; body slender. Feet very long and slender; tibia bare for half its length; tarsus compressed, scutellate before and behind; hind toe very small, anterior of moderate length, connected by webs at the base, all scutellate above. Claws small, slightly arched, rather obtuse. Plumage soft and blended; wings long, narrow, pointed; first quill longest, inner secondaries long; tail short, of twelve rounded feathers.

 SPOTTED SANDPIPER, OR TATLER.
†TOTANUS MACULARIUS, *Wils.*

PLATE CCCXLII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

In the course of my last journey in search of information respecting the birds which at one season or other are found within the limits of the United States, I observed so vast a number of them in Texas, that I almost concluded that more than two-thirds of our species occur there. Among them I observed the beautiful bird now before you.

The Spotted Sandpiper has a wonderfully extensive range, for I have met with it not only in most parts of the United States, but also on the shores of Labrador, where, on the 17th of June, 1833, I found it breeding. On the

29th of July, the young were fully fledged, and scampering over the rocks about us, amid the putrid and drying cod-fish. In that country it breeds later by three months than in Texas; for on the head waters of Buffalo Bayou, about sixty miles from the margin of the Mexican Gulf, I saw broods already well grown on the 5th of May, 1837. On the same day of the same month in 1832, a similar occurrence happened on an island near Indian Key, on the south-east coast of Florida. In Newfoundland, on the other hand, the young were just fully fledged on the 11th of August, 1833. It appears strange that none were observed by Dr. RICHARDSON on the shores of Hudson's Bay, or in the interior of that country. They are quite abundant along the margins of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and their tributaries, where they remain until driven off by the cold, and return about the beginning of April, at which period the Purple Martin also makes its appearance. In our Middle Districts, they arrive a fortnight later. On the Island of Jestico, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, about twenty pairs had nests and eggs on the 11th of June; and the air was filled with the pleasing sound of their voices while we remained there. The nests were placed among the tall slender grass that covered the southern part of the island. They were more bulky and more neatly constructed than any that I have examined southward of the Gulf of St. Lawrence; and yet they were not to be compared with those found in Labrador, where, in every instance, they were concealed under ledges of rocks extending for several feet over them, so that I probably should not have observed them, had not the birds flown off as I was passing. These nests were made of dry moss, raised to the height of from six to nine inches, and well finished within with slender grasses and feathers of the Eider Duck. As usual, however, the eggs were always four, when the bird was sitting. They measure an inch and a quarter in length, by an inch at their thickest part, so that they have a shortish and bulky appearance, though they run almost to a point. They are smooth, and handsomely marked with blotches of deep brown and others of a lighter tint, on a greyish-yellow ground, the spots being larger and closer towards the rounded end. Both sexes incubate, and remain with their brood until the time of their departure.

My learned friend THOMAS NUTTALL has described the manners of this species as observed in the neighbourhood of Boston, with so much truth and accuracy, that I cannot do better than present you with his account of it, the more especially, that in so doing, I have an opportunity of expressing the high opinion I entertain of his talents and varied accomplishments. "The Peet Weet is one of the most familiar and common of all the New England marsh-birds, arriving along our river shores and low meadows about the beginning of May, from their mild or tropical winter quarters in Mexico. As soon as it arrives on the coast, small roving flocks are seen, at various

times of the day, coursing rapidly along the borders of our tide-water streams, flying swiftly and rather low, in circular sweeps along the meanders of the rock or river, and occasionally crossing from side to side, in rather a sportive and cheerful mien, than as the needy foragers they appear at the close of the autumn. While flying out in these wide circuits, agitated by superior feelings to those of hunger and necessity, we hear the shores re-echo the shrill and rapid whistle of 'weet, 'weet, 'weet, 'weet, and usually closing the note with something like a warble, as they approach their companions on the strand. The cry then varies to 'peet, 'weet, 'weet, 'weet, beginning high and gradually declining into a somewhat plaintive tone. As the season advances, our little lively marine wanderers often trace the streams some distance into the interior, resting usually in fresh meadows among the grass, sometimes even near the house, and I have seen their eggs laid in a strawberry-bed; and the young and old, pleased with their allowed protection, familiarly fed, and probed the margin of the adjoining duck-pond, for their usual fare of worms and insects. They have the very frequent habit of balancing or wagging the tail, in which even the young join as soon as they are fledged. From the middle to the close of May, the pairs, seceding from their companions, seek out a place for their nest, which is always in a dry open field of grass or grain, sometimes in the seclusion and shade of a field of maize, but most commonly in a dry pasture, contiguous to the sea-shore; and in some of the solitary and small sea islands, several pairs sometimes nestle near to each other, in the immediate vicinity of the noisy nurseries of the quailing Terns. On being flushed from her eggs, the female goes off without uttering any complaint; but when surprised with her young, she practises all the arts of dissimulation common to many other birds, fluttering in the path, as if badly wounded, and generally proceeds in this way so far as to deceive a dog, and cause it to overlook the brood, for whose protection these instinctive arts are practised; nor are the young without their artful instinct, for on hearing the reiterated cries of their parents, they scatter about, and squatting still in the withered grass, almost exactly their colour, it is with careful search very difficult to discover them, so that in nine times out of ten, they would be overlooked, and only be endangered by the tread, which they would endure sooner than betray their cautious retreat.

"At a later period the shores and marshes resound with the quick, clear, and oft-repeated note of peet weet, peet weet, followed up by a plaintive call on the young, of peet, peet, peet? peet? If this is not answered by the scattered brood, a reiterated 'weet, 'weet, 'weet, 'wait, 'wait, is heard, the voice dropping on the final syllables. The whole marsh and the shores at times echo to this loud, lively, and solicitous call of the affectionate parents

for their brood. The cry, of course, is most frequent toward evening, when the little family, separated by the necessity of scattering themselves over the ground in quest of food, are again desirous of reassembling to roost. The young, as soon as hatched, run about the grass, and utter from the first a weak plaintive peep, at length more frequent and audible; and an imitation of the whistle of peet weet, is almost sure to meet with an answer from the sympathizing broods, which now throng our marshes. When the note appears to be answered, the parents hurry, and repeat their call with great quickness. Young and old, previous to their departure, frequent the seashores, like most of the species, but never associate with other kinds, nor become gregarious, living always in families till the time of their departure, which usually occurs about the middle of October."

My esteemed friend THOMAS MACCULLOCH of Pictou, Nova Scotia, having transmitted to me a curious account of the attachment of one of these birds to her eggs, I here insert it with pleasure. "Being on an excursion to the Hardwood Heights, which rise to the west of Pictou, my attention was attracted by the warble of a little bird, which appeared to me entirely new, and which proceeded from a small thicket a short way off. Whilst crossing an intervening meadow, I accidentally raised a Spotted Sandpiper from its nest, and having marked the spot I hastened forwards; but the shyness of the object of my pursuit rendered all my efforts unavailing, and returning to the nest which I had just left, I expected to find it still unoccupied; but the Sandpiper had again resumed her place, and left it with great reluctance, on my near approach. The nest contained four eggs, which I determined to remove on my return at night, and for the purpose of preventing the bird sitting again upon them, I placed a number of stones in a slanting position over the nest, and so close that it was impossible for the bird to get into it. On my return in the evening, however, I observed the little creature rise from beside the stones apparently in greater trepidation than ever, and more anxious to draw me away by the exhibition of all those little arts which they practise for this purpose. On examining the spot I was very much surprised to find that the poor thing had not only hollowed out a new nest, but had actually succeeded in abstracting two eggs from the other nest. How the bird had contrived to remove the eggs I cannot conceive, as the stones remained unaltered. This attachment to its nest and eggs appeared to me more singular as the bird had just commenced incubation, the eggs exhibiting very little appearance of the young."

In addition to the observations of THOMAS NUTTALL, I must inform you that this species is often observed to alight on the branches of trees hanging over water-courses, on which they walk deliberately, and with their usual delicate elegance of gait, and balancing of both body and tail. They are

also wont to alight more frequently on the rails and stakes of fences, or on walls. I have seen them on the tops of hay-stacks, where they seemed to be engaged in pursuing insects. On several occasions I have found their nests in orchards of both peach and apple trees, at a considerable distance from water, the use of which, indeed, they do not appear to require much during the progress of incubation, or the first weeks after hatching their young, when I have seen them rambling in search of food over large open fields of sweet potatoes and other vegetables, in the neighbourhood of some of our cities.

While these birds are flying, in the love-season, the points of their wings are considerably bent down, and they propel themselves by strong and decided beats, supporting themselves afterwards by slow tremulous motions of their pinions, to the distance of some yards, when they repeat the strong beats, and thus continue until they realight, uttering all the while their well-known notes, so accurately described by my friend NUTTALL.

In the autumnal months, along the shores of La Belle Riviere, I have often with much delight watched the movements of these birds, when I have been surprised to see the pertinacity with which, after the first frosts, they would pursue their migration down the stream, for on attempting to make them fly the other way, they would rise, sometimes to the height of twenty yards, and flying over head or along the river, proceed downwards, although at any other time they would exhibit no such propensity. They run along the shores, and through shallow water, with great nimbleness; and while courting, the male struts before the female, with depressed wings, spreading out his tail and trailing it along the ground, in the manner of the Migratory and Rufous Thrushes.

The young become very fat in autumn, and afford delicious eating, for as they feed much on worms, aquatic insects, and small mollusca, their flesh seldom has a fishy taste. The male and female are alike, and almost equal in size. The young differ from the old until the approach of winter, when, with the exception of their being rather smaller, no difference can be perceived.

This species occurs also in Europe, and a few individuals have been shot in England.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER, *Tringa macularia*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. vii. p. 60.

TOTANUS MACULARIUS, Bonap. Syn., p. 325.

SPOTTED TATLER OR PEET-WEET, Nutt. Man., vol. ii. p. 162.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER, *Totanus macularius*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 81.

Male, 8, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$.

Breeds from Texas along the shores to Maine, the islands of the Gulf of

St. Lawrence, and Labrador. Inland all over the country. Very common. Resident in the Southern States. Columbia river.

Adult Male.

Bill a little longer than the head, very slender, sub-cylindrical, straight, flexible, compressed, the point rather obtuse. Upper mandible with the dorsal line straight, the ridge convex, broader at the base, slightly depressed towards the end, the sides sloping, towards the end convex, the edges sharp, the tip slightly deflected. Nasal groove extending over three-fourths of the length of the bill; nostrils basal, linear, pervious. Lower mandible with the angle very long and extremely narrow, the dorsal line straight, the sides grooved at the base, convex towards the end.

Head small, oblong. Eyes rather large. Neck of moderate length. Body rather slender. Feet rather long and slender; tibia bare nearly half its length, scutellate before and behind; tarsus also scutellate before and behind; hind toe very small and elevated; fore toes rather long, very slender, connected by basal webs, of which the outer is much larger; second toe considerably shorter than fourth; all flat beneath, and marginate. Claws small, slightly arched, much compressed, rather sharp, that of the middle toe much larger, with the inner edge considerably dilated.

Plumage very soft, blended, on the fore part of the head very short. Wings long, narrow, pointed; primaries rather narrow and tapering, first longest, the rest rapidly graduated; secondaries short, broad, incurved, obliquely rounded, the inner elongated and tapering. Tail of moderate length, much rounded, of twelve rounded feathers.

Bill greenish-olive above, yellow beneath, the point of both mandibles black. Eye hazel. Feet pale yellowish flesh-colour, claws black. All the upper parts shining deep brownish-olive, the head longitudinally streaked, the back transversely barred with black. A line from the bill to the eye and beyond it white, another beneath it dusky. All the lower parts white, marked with numerous brownish-black spots, smaller on the throat, largest and roundish on the breast and sides. Axillary feathers pure white, lower wing-coverts white, mottled with dusky. Quills brownish-black, glossed with green, the elongated inner secondaries like the back; the primaries slightly tipped with white, the secondaries, excepting the inner, more distinctly so, the white forming on them a conspicuous band. Four middle tail-feathers like the back, with a band of black at the end, the tip white; the next pair on each side similar, with the white tip larger; the next barred with dusky on the outer web; the lateral feather with the outer web white, similarly barred.

Length to end of tail 8 inches, to end of wings $7\frac{1}{2}$, to end of claws $8\frac{1}{2}$;

extent of wings $13\frac{3}{4}$; wing from flexure $4\frac{7}{8}$; tail 2; bill along the ridge 1; tarsus $\frac{10\frac{1}{2}}{1\frac{1}{2}}$; hind toe and claw $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{1\frac{1}{2}}$; middle toe and claw $1\frac{1}{2}$.

Female.

There is hardly any difference between the sexes.

The young in winter have the bill black at the end, dusky olive above, yellowish beneath; the feet yellowish flesh-colour. The lower parts are brownish-white, without spots; the upper of the same brownish-olive as in the adult, but the head and hind neck destitute of streaks, and the rest with narrower and more numerous dusky bars.

The tongue is 10 twelfths long, slender, tapering to a point, grooved above, sagittate and papillate at the base. The roof of the mouth with a single row of papillæ, posteriorly divided into two series. Œsophagus 3 inches and 8 twelfths long, its diameter 2 twelfths, and nearly uniform. Proventriculus $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long, $3\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in diameter. Stomach elliptical, $8\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths long, $6\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in breadth; its lateral muscles strong, the tendinous spaces oblong; the cuticular lining with large longitudinal rugæ, and of a deep red colour. The contents of the stomach in this individual were remains of marine insects, and quartz sand. Intestine 10 inches long, its diameter varying from $1\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths to 1 twelfth; it enlarges near the rectum to 2 twelfths. Rectum 1 inch and 1 twelfth; cœca 1 inch and 1 twelfth, their diameter $\frac{3}{4}$ of a twelfth.

The trachea is 2 inches and 8 twelfths long, its diameter from 2 twelfths to 1 twelfth; its rings 105, feeble and unossified. The lateral muscles extremely feeble; sterno-tracheals moderate; a single pair of inferior laryngeal muscles.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER, OR TATLER.

+ *TOTANUS SOLITARIUS*, *Wils.*

PLATE CCCXLIII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

The only nest of this bird that I ever met with was placed in an elevated part of the woods near Bayou Sara, on the margin of a small pond scarcely ten yards broad, overgrown with low bushes, and cumbered with fallen branches of trees. It was formed of grass and withered leaves, arranged

Spotted Sandpiper

1. Male, 2. Female.

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon, F.R.S. F.L.S.

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