blunt. Plumage close, soft, blended, on the back and wings rather compact. Wings very long, pointed; first and second quills longest; secondaries broad, the inner more elongated. Tail of moderate length, generally even, rarely rounded or emarginate, of twelve feathers. In those which have the head white in summer, it is streaked with dusky in winter; and those which are hooded in summer, have the head white and slightly streaked in winter.

THE FORKED-TAILED GULL.

+ LARUS SABINI, *Sabine*.

PLATE CCCCXLI.—MALE.

On my return from Labrador, I had the pleasure of seeing this interesting little Gull flying over the harbour of Halifax in Nova Scotia. It was in company with our Common American Gull. Although I have not observed it on our eastern shores or farther south on the coast, it is not improbable that it rambles there in winter along with other species which, like itself, breed far north. Its flight in some measure resembles that of the Common Tern, although it is more decided, and, consequently, more like that of the smaller species of its own genus. In the course of a voyage from Pictou in Nova Scotia to Hull in England, lately performed by my friend Mr. THOMAS MACCULLOCH, he saw great numbers of this species when more than a hundred miles off Newfoundland. They flew around the ship in company with an almost equal number of Ross' Gull.

Dr. RICHARDSON gives the following account of the Forked-tailed Gull, in the *Fauna Boreali-Americana*. "This interesting species of Gull was discovered by Captain EDWARD SABINE. It was first seen on the 25th of July at its breeding station on some low rocky islands lying off the west coast of Greenland, associated in considerable numbers with the Arctic Tern, the nests of both birds being intermingled. It is analogous to the Tern not only in its forked tail, and in its choice of a breeding place, but also in the boldness which it displays in the protection of its young. The parent birds flew with impetuosity towards persons approaching their nests, and when one was killed, its mate, though frequently fired at, continued on the wing close to the spot. They were observed to get their food on the sea-beach,

standing near the water's edge, and picking up the marine insects which were cast on shore. A solitary individual was seen in Prince Regent's Inlet, on Sir EDWARD PARRY's first voyage, and many specimens were procured in the course of the second voyage on Melville Peninsula. Captain SABINE also killed a pair at Spitzbergen, so that it is a pretty general summer visiter to the Arctic Seas, and is entitled to be enumerated amongst the European as well as the American birds. It arrives in the high northern latitudes in June, and retires to the southward in August. Specimens procured in June and July corresponded exactly with the one described below. When newly killed, they all had a delicate pink blush on their under plumage. The eggs, two in number, are deposited on the bare ground, and are hatched in the last week of July. They are an inch and a half in length, and have an olive colour with many brown blotches."

At the approach of autumn, it frequently happens that several species of Gulls associate together, and at times congregate in great numbers on the outer margins of sand-bars and in the large estuaries. There they keep up a constant cackling, run about, dress their plumage, and await the rising of the waters. If disturbed at such times, they shew greater shyness than perhaps at any other. One of the oldest birds sounds an alarm, and all simultaneously take to wing, disperse, and gradually rise to a great elevation, flying in wide circles, and moving seaward. I have thought it remarkable that these birds seldom shun the fishermen, while towards any one bearing the semblance of a gunner they act with extreme caution. Although loquacious when congregated, they are, when separated, quite silent, especially when on wing. In squally and rainy weather they skim low over the water or the land, always against the wind. They are very tenacious of life, and often, when wounded, revive after you had considered them incapable of breathing. The instant they are caught they are wont to mute and eject the contents of their stomach, as well as when suddenly compelled to take to wing, or when pursued by predaceous birds. In particular states of the weather they appear at a distance much larger than they really are, and, on such occasions, they also seem much nearer, so that the gunner is greatly deceived, and may shoot at them when too far off.

LARUS SABINI, *Fork-tailed Gull*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 428.

FORK-TAILED GULL, Nutt. Man., vol. ii. p. 295.

FORKED-TAILED GULL, *Larus Sabini*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iii. p. 561.

Male, 13, 33.

Accidental as far south in winter as New York. Rather common along the coast of Nova Scotia. Breeds in Newfoundland, and along the coasts of the Arctic Seas. Seen on the banks of Newfoundland in great numbers.

Adult Male.

Bill rather shorter than the head, nearly straight, rather slender, compressed. Upper mandible with its dorsal line straight to the middle, then curved and declinate, the ridge convex, the sides slightly convex, the edges sharp and inflected, the tip rather obtuse. Nasal groove rather long and narrow; nostrils in its fore part, longitudinal, sub-medial, linear, pervious. Lower mandible with a slight prominence at the end of the angle, which is long and narrow, the dorsal line then straight or slightly concave, the ridge convex, the sides nearly flat.

Head of moderate size. Neck short. Body rather slender. Wings very long. Feet of moderate length, rather strong; tibia bare below for a short space, covered behind with narrow scutella; tarsus compressed, anteriorly covered with numerous scutella and three inferior series of transverse scales, laterally with rounded scales, posteriorly with oblique scutella. Toes slender, scutellate above; first extremely small, second much shorter than fourth, third longest, anterior toes connected by reticulated webs, the outer and inner slightly marginate; claws small, compressed, obtuse, that of middle toe with an expanded inner edge.

Plumage close, soft, blended. Wings very long and pointed; primaries tapering and rounded, first longest, second almost equal, the rest rapidly graduated; secondaries obliquely pointed, the rounded extremity extending beyond the tip of the shaft, which is exterior to it, the inner feathers more elongated. Tail of moderate length, forked, of twelve feathers.

Bill black at the base for more than half its length, the rest pure yellow. Edges of eyelids vermilion, as is the inside of the mouth. Feet black. Head and upper part of neck all round blackish-grey, that colour terminated below by a ring of pure black encircling the neck. Lower neck all round, the whole lower surface, the upper tail-coverts and the tail, pure white. The back and wings are bluish-grey, excepting a large terminal portion of the secondaries, and the tips of the primaries, which are white, the primaries themselves being black, with their shafts brownish-black. The first quill of the specimen figured had no white on the tip, but some individuals differ in this respect.

Length to end of tail 13 inches, to end of wings $14\frac{3}{4}$; extent of wings 33; wing from flexure $10\frac{3}{4}$; tail 5; bill along the ridge 1, along the edges $1\frac{1}{4}$; tarsus $1\frac{5}{12}$; middle toe 1, its claw $\frac{2}{12}$. Weight 7 oz.

The Female is rather less than the male, but in other respects similar.

ROSS' GULL.

†*LARUS ROSSII, Richardson.*

(NOT FIGURED.)

Not having met with this beautiful little Gull, I am obliged to refer to Dr. RICHARDSON's description of it in the *Fauna Boreali-Americana*.

"Cuneate-tailed Gull, with a pearl-grey mantle. Wings longer than the cuneiform tail. The outer web of the first tail-feather blackish; a slender black bill, tarsi an inch long, and, as well as the feet, vermilion red.

"Two specimens of this Gull were killed on the coast of Melville Peninsula, on Sir EDWARD PARRY's second voyage, one of which is preserved in the Museum of the University of Edinburgh, and the other was presented to JOSEPH SABINE, Esq. No other examples are known to exist in collections; but Commander Ross, in his Zoological Appendix to Sir EDWARD PARRY's narrative of his most adventurous boat-voyage towards the Pole, relates that several were seen during the journey over the ice north of Spitzbergen, and that Lieutenant FORSTER also found the species in Waygait Straits, which is probably one of its breeding places. It is to Commander Ross, who killed the first specimen which was obtained, that the species is dedicated, as a tribute for his unwearied exertions in the promotion of natural history on the late Arctic voyages, in all of which he bore a part. Of the peculiar habits or winter retreat of this species nothing is known.

"Description of a specimen killed, June 1823, at Alagnak, Melville Peninsula, lat. $69\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ N.

"Colour.—Scapulars, inter-scapulars, and both surfaces of the wings clear pearl-grey; outer web of the first quill blackish-brown to its tip, which is grey; tips of the scapulars and lesser quills whitish. Some small feathers near the eye, and a collar round the middle of the neck pitch black; rest of the plumage white. The neck above and the whole under plumage deeply tinged with peach-blossom red in recent specimens. Bill black; its rictus and the edges of the eyelids reddish-orange. Legs and feet vermilion-red; nails blackish.

"Form.—Bill slender, weak, with a scarcely perceptible salient angle beneath; the upper mandible slightly arched and compressed towards the point; the commissure slightly curved at the tip. Wings an inch longer

than the decidedly cuneiform tail, of which the central feathers are an inch longer than the lateral. Tarsi rather stout; the thumb very distinct, armed with a nail as large as that of the outer toe.

"The other specimen killed by Mr. SHERER a few days later, differs only in the first primary coverts having the same dark colour with the outer web of the first primary itself.

"Length to end of tail 14 inches; tail $5\frac{1}{2}$; wing $10\frac{1}{2}$; bill along the ridge $\frac{3}{4}$; rictus $1\frac{1}{4}$; from nostril to tip of bill $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; tarsus $1\frac{1}{12}$; middle toe $\frac{10\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, its nail $\frac{3}{12}$."

LARUS ROSSII, *Cuneate-tailed Gull*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 427.

ROSS' GULL, *Larus Rossii*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. v. p. 324.

Adult, 14; wing $10\frac{1}{2}$.

Arctic Seas.

BONAPARTE'S GULL.

+LARUS BONAPARTII, *Richardson*.

PLATE CCCCXLII.—MALE, FEMALE, AND YOUNG.

My first acquaintance with this species took place whilst I was at Cincinnati, in the beginning of August 1819. I was crossing the Ohio, along with Mr. ROBERT BEST, then curator of the Cincinnati Museum, for the purpose of visiting the Cliff Swallows which had taken up their abode on the walls of the garrison on the Kentucky side, when we observed two Gulls sweeping gracefully over the tranquil waters. Now they would alight side by side, as if intent on holding a close conversation; then they would rise on wing and range about, looking downwards with sidelong glances, searching for small fishes, or perhaps eyeing the bits of garbage that floated on the surface. We watched them for nearly half an hour, and having learned something of their manners, shot one, which happened to be a female. On her dropping, her mate almost immediately alighted beside her, and was shot. There, side by side, as in life, so in death, floated the lovely birds. One, having a dark bluish nearly black head, was found to be the male; the

Fork-tailed Gull

Male

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

Lith. Printed & Col. by J. T. Bowen, Philad.º

Audubon, John James. 1844. "The Fork-Tailed Gull, *Larus sabini*, Sabine. [Pl. 441]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 7, 127–131. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319553>.

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