BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS.

+DIOMEDEA NIGRIPES, *Aud.*

(NOT FIGURED.)

For a specimen of this Albatross, I am indebted to Mr. TOWNSEND, who procured it on the 25th December, 1834, on the Pacific Ocean, in lat. 30°, 44', N. long. 146°. It is clearly distinct from the other two described in this work, namely the Dusky and the Yellow-nosed; but I have received no information respecting its habits. Not finding any of the meagre notices or descriptions to which I can refer to agree with this bird, I have taken the liberty of giving it a name, being well assured that, should it prove to have been described, some person will kindly correct my mistake.

BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS, *Diomedea nigripes*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. v. p. 327.

Length, 36; wings, 21; bill, 5; tail, 3.

Pacific Ocean, off California.

Male.

Bill longer than the head, nearly straight, stout, compressed. Upper mandible with its dorsal outline straight and declinate until near the middle, when it becomes a little concave, and along the unguis curves in the third of a circle, the ridge convex, very broad and convex at the base, with its basal margin curved in the third of a circle, the ridge separated in its whole length by a groove, margined below by a prominent line, from the sides, which are prominently convex, the edges sharp, the unguis decurved, strong, acute, with the sides a little convex. Nostrils sub-basal, prominent, tubular, having a horny sheath. Lower mandible with the angle narrow, reaching to the tip, and having at its extremity a slender horny interposed process; the outline of the crura gently ascending, slightly convex, toward the end a little concave, at the tip deflected, the sides ascending and considerably convex, but at the base concave, the edges sharp and inflexed, the tip compressed, its upper edges decurved.

Head rather large, ovate, anteriorly compressed; neck of moderate length; body full. Feet rather short, stoutish; tibia bare for an inch and tentwelfths, reticulated all round with very small convex scales; tarsus rather slender, covered all round with small roundish convex scales; toes three,

long, slender, for half their length covered above with transverse series of flat scales, in the rest of their extent scutellate; the second ten-twelfths of an inch shorter than the middle, which is scarcely longer than the outer. Claws rather small, slender, slightly arched, rather compressed, somewhat obtuse.

Plumage full, soft and blended. Wings very long and very narrow, the humerus and cubitus being extremely elongated; the first primary longest, the rest rapidly diminishing; secondaries extremely short. Tail of twelve rounded feathers, extremely short, rounded, the lateral feathers one inch shorter than the middle.

Bill dusky, the greater part of the lower mandible, and the middle of the upper, tinged with yellowish-brown. Feet and claws black. The fore part of the head, cheeks and throat light dusky-grey, the capistral feathers nearly white, as is a small patch at the posterior angle of the eye; the upper part of the head, the hind neck, and all the upper parts, including the wings and tail, are of a sooty-brown tinged with grey, as are the lower surface of the wings and the axillaries. The lower parts are of a dull grey tint, deeper on the fore parts and sides of the neck.

Length to end of tail 36 inches; bill along the ridge 5, along the edge of lower mandible 5; wing from flexure 21; tail 3; bare part of tibia $1\frac{10}{12}$; tarsus $3\frac{10}{12}$; inner toe $1\frac{10}{12}$, its claw $\frac{6}{12}$; middle toe $4\frac{5}{12}$, its claw $\frac{8}{12}$; outer toe $4\frac{7}{12}$, its claw $\frac{6}{12}$.

The three Albatrosses described in this volume may very easily be distinguished by the form of the bill, independently of all other characters. Thus:

Diomedea nigripes has the bill much thicker, or less compressed than the other two species; its ridge very broad and convex at the base, its basal outline being semicircular and two inches in extent, so that its sides behind overlap and obliterate the sutural space behind the nostrils.

Diomedea chlororhyncos has the bill much compressed, its ridge convex in its whole length, but with its basal outline, although semicircular, only half an inch in extent, so that between its margins and those of the sides of the bill there is behind the eye a space nearly a quarter of an inch in breadth.

Diomedea fusca has the bill as much compressed as that of *D. chlororhyncos*; but its ridge, in place of being convex, is carinate, and instead of having its base semicircular, as in the other two species, has it running up on the forehead into a very acute angle.

Many other differences might be pointed out, but these will suffice to distinguish the species. It may be remarked, that such descriptions are absolutely necessary to render the species of this genus intelligible; for at present it seems impossible to form any correct idea from the notices given in books; and if descriptions are not sufficient to enable one to refer an object to its species, of what use can they be?

Audubon, John James. 1844. "Black-Footed Albatross, *Diomedea nigripes*, Aud." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 7, 198–199. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319567>.

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