rather short, narrow, acute; primary quills curved, tapering, the second longest, the first slightly shorter, the rest rapidly graduated; secondaries short, incurved, broad, rounded. Tail very short, rounded, of twelve narrow feathers.

Bill black. Iris dark brown. Feet dusky, tinged with red. The general colour of the plumage is greyish-black on the upper parts, those of the head tinged with brown. The sides of the head and neck, its fore part, the breast, abdomen, edges of the wings and the tips of the secondaries, white; the sides shaded with greyish-black; a line of the same behind the eye.

Length to end of tail $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to end of claws $21\frac{1}{2}$; extent of wings 30; wing from flexure 8; tail $2\frac{1}{2}$; bill along the ridge $1\frac{2}{12}$, along the edge of lower mandible 2; tarsus $1\frac{4}{12}$; middle toe $1\frac{8}{12}$, its claw $\frac{5}{12}$. Weight $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.

THE FOOLISH GUILLEMOT.—MURRE.

+URIA TROILE, *Linn.*

PLATE CCCCLXXIII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This bird is seldom found farther south than the entrance of the Bay of New York, where, however, it appears only during severe winters, for being one of the most hardy inhabitants of the northern regions, its constitution is such as to enable it to bear without injury the rigours of their wintry climates. About the bays near Boston the Guillemots are seen every year in greater or less numbers, and from thence to the eastward they become gradually more abundant. A very old gunner whom I employed while at Boston, during the winter of 1832-3, assured me, that when he was a young man, this species bred on many of the rocky islands about the mouth of the bay there; but that for about twenty years back none remained after the first days of April, when they departed for the north in company with the Thick-billed Guillemot, the Common Auk, the Puffin, and the Eider and King Ducks, all of which visit these bays in hard weather. In the Bay of Fundy, the Foolish Guillemot is very numerous, and is known by the name of *Murre*, which it retains among all the egggers and fishermen of Newfoundland and Labrador, where it breeds in myriads. To those countries, then, I

must lead you, good reader, as there we can with ease study the habits of these birds.

Stay on the deck of the Ripley by my side this clear and cold morning. See how swiftly scuds our gallant bark, as she cuts her way through the foaming billows, now inclining to the right and again to the left. Far in the east, dark banks of low clouds indicate foul weather to the wary mariner, who watches the approach of a northern storm with anxiety. Suddenly the wind changes; but for this he has prepared; the topsails are snugged to their yards, and the rest are securely reefed. A thick fog obscures all around us. The waters suddenly checked in their former course, furiously war against those which now strike them in front. The uproar increases, the bark is tossed on every side; now a sweeping wave rushes against the bows, the vessel quivers, while down along her deck violently pour the waters, rolling from side to side, seeking for a place by which they may escape. At this moment all about you are in dismay save the Guillemots. The sea is covered with these intrepid navigators of the deep. Over each tumultuous billow they swim unconcerned on the very spray at the bow of the vessel, and plunging as if with pleasure, up they come next moment at the rudder. Others fly around in large circles, while thousands contend with the breeze, moving directly against it in long lines, towards regions unknown to all, save themselves and some other species of sea birds.

The Guillemots pair during their migrations;—many of them at least do so. While on my way toward Labrador, they were constantly within sight, gambolling over the surface of the water, the males courting the females, and the latter receiving the caresses of their mates. These would at times rise erect in the sea, swell their throats, and emit a hoarse puffing guttural note, to which the females at once responded, with numerous noddings to their beaux. Then the pair would rise, take a round in the air, re-alight, and seal the conjugal compact; after which they flew or swam together for the season, and so closely, that among multitudes on the wing or on the waves, one might easily distinguish a mated pair.

Not far from Great Macatina Harbour lie the Murre Rocks, consisting of several low islands, destitute of vegetation, and not rising high from the waters. There thousands of Guillemots annually assemble in the beginning of May, to deposit each its single egg, and raise its young. As you approach these islands, the air becomes darkened with the multitudes of birds that fly about; every square foot of the ground seems to be occupied by a Guillemot planted erect as it were on the granite rock, but carefully warming its cherished egg. All look toward the south, and if you are fronting them, the snowy white of their bodies produces a very remarkable effect, for the birds at some distance look as if they were destitute of head, so much does that

part assimilate with the dark hue of the rocks on which they stand. On the other hand, if you approach them in the rear, the isle appears as if covered with a black pall.

Now land, and witness the consternation of the settlers! Each affrighted leaves its egg, hastily runs a few steps, and launches into the air in silence. Thrice around you they rapidly pass, to discover the object of your unwelcome visit. If you begin to gather their eggs, or, still worse, to break them, in order that they may lay others which you can pick up fresh, the Guillemots all alight at some distance, on the bosom of the deep, and anxiously await your departure. Eggs, green and white, and almost of every colour, are lying thick over the whole rock; the ordure of the birds mingled with feathers, with the refuse of half-hatched eggs partially sucked by rapacious Gulls, and with putrid or dried carcasses of Guillemots, produces an intolerable stench; and no sooner are all your baskets filled with eggs, than you are glad to abandon the isle to its proper owners.

On one occasion, whilst at anchor at Great Macatina, one of our boats was sent for eggs. The sailors had eight miles to pull before reaching the Murre Islands, and yet ere many hours had elapsed, the boat was again alongside, loaded to a few inches of the gunwale, with 2500 eggs! Many of them, however, being addle, were thrown overboard. The order given to the tars had been to bring only a few dozens; but, as they said, they had forgotten!

The eggs are unaccountably large for the size of the bird, their average length being three inches and three-eighths, and their greatest breadth two inches. They are pyriform or elongated, with a slight compression towards the smaller end, which again rather swells and is rounded at the extremity. They afford excellent food, being highly nutritive and palatable, whether boiled, roasted, poached, or in omelets. The shell is rough to the touch, although not granulated. Some are of a lively verdigris colour, others of different tints, but all curiously splashed, as it were, with streaks or blotches of dark umber and brown. My opinion, however, is, that, when first dropped, they are always pure white, for on opening a good number of these birds, I found several containing an egg ready for being laid, and of a pure white colour. The shell is so firm that it does not easily break, and I have seen a quantity of these eggs very carelessly removed from a basket into a boat without being damaged. They are collected in astonishing quantities by "the eggers," and sent to distant markets, where they are sold at from one to three cents each.

Although the Guillemots are continually harassed, their eggs being carried off as soon as they are deposited, and as long as the birds can produce them, yet they return to the same islands year after year, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of their enemies, multiply their numbers.

The Foolish Guillemot, as I have said, lays only a single egg, which is the case with the Thick-billed Guillemot also. The Razor-billed Auk lays two, and the Black Guillemot usually three. I have assured myself of these facts, not merely by observing the birds sitting on their eggs, but also by noticing the following circumstances. The Foolish Guillemot, which lays only one, plucks the feathers from its abdomen, which is thus left quite bare over a roundish space just large enough to cover its single egg. The Thick-billed Guillemot does the same. The Auk, on the contrary, forms two bare spots, separated by a ridge of feathers. The Black Guillemot, to cover her three eggs, and to warm them all at once, plucks a space bare quite across her belly. These observations were made on numerous birds of all the species mentioned. In all of them, the males incubate as well as the females, although the latter are more assiduous. When the Guillemots are disturbed, they fly off in silence. The Auks, on the contrary, emit a hoarse croaking note, which they repeat several times, as they fly away from danger. The Foolish Guillemot seldom if ever attempts to bite, whereas the Razor-billed Auk bites most severely, and clings to a person's hand until choked. The plumage of all the birds of this family is extremely compact, closely downed at the root, and difficult to be plucked. The fishermen and eggers often use their skins with the feathers on as "comforters" round their wrists. The flesh is dark, tough, and not very palatable; yet many of these birds are eaten by the fishermen and sailors.

The young, which burst the egg about the beginning of July, are covered with down of a brownish-black colour. When eight or ten days old they are still downy, but have acquired considerable activity. As they grow up, they become excessively fat, and seem to be more at ease on the water than on the land. About the middle of August they follow their parents to the open sea, the latter being then seldom able to fly, having dropped their quills; and by the middle of September scarcely any of these birds are to be found on or near the islands on which they breed, although great numbers spend the winter in those latitudes.

There is no perceptible difference between the sexes as to colour, but the males are larger than the females. The white line that encircles the eye and extends toward the hind head is common to both sexes, but occurs only in old birds. Thousands of these Guillemots however breed without having yet acquired it, there merely being indications of it to be seen on parting the feathers on the place, where there is a natural division.

The flight of the Foolish Guillemot is rapid and greatly protracted, being performed by quick and unintermitted beatings. They move through the air either singly or in bands, in the latter case seldom keeping any very regular order. Sometimes they seem to skim along the surface for miles,

while at other times they fly at the height of thirty or forty yards. They are expert divers, using their wings like fins, and under water looking like winged fishes. They frequently plunge at the flash of the gun, and disappear for a considerable time. Before rising, they are obliged to run as it were on the water, fluttering for many yards before they get fairly on wing.

Those which I kept alive for weeks on board the Ripley, walked about and ran with ease, with the whole length of their tarsus touching the deck. They took leaps on chests and other objects to raise themselves, but could not fly without being elevated two or three feet, although when they are on the rocks, and can take a run of eight or ten yards, they easily rise on wing.

The islands on which the Guillemots breed on the coast of Labrador, are flattish at top, and it is there, on the bare rock, that they deposit their eggs. I saw none standing on the shelvings of high rocks, although many breed in such places in some parts of Europe. Their food consists of small fish, shrimps, and other marine animals; and they swallow some gravel also.

URIA TROILE, Bonap. Syn., p. 424.

URIA TROILE, *Foolish Guillemot*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 477.

FOOLISH GUILLEMOT, or MURRE, Nutt. Man., vol. ii. p. 526.

FOOLISH GUILLEMOT, *Uria Troile*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iii. p. 142.

Male, $17\frac{1}{2}$, 30.

More or less abundant during winter on the coast of Massachusetts and Maine, rarely as far south as New York. Breeds in vast multitudes on the Rocky Islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland, and Labrador. Occasionally found in Hudson's Bay.

Adult Male, in summer.

Bill of moderate length, rather stout, tapering, compressed, acute. Upper mandible with the dorsal line slightly curved, the ridge narrow, broader at the base, the sides sloping, the edges short and inflected, the tip a little decurved with a slight notch. Nasal groove broad, feathered; nostrils at its lower edge, sub-basal, lateral, longitudinal, linear, pervious. Lower mandible with the angle medial, narrow, the dorsal line sloping upwards, and straight, the back very narrow, the sides nearly flat, the edges sharp and inflected.

Head oblong, depressed, narrowed before. Eyes rather small. Neck short and thick. Body stout, rather depressed. Wings rather small. Feet short, placed far behind; the greater part of the tibia concealed, its lower portion bare; tarsus short, stout, compressed, anteriorly sharp, and covered with a double row of scutella, the sides with angular scales; toes of moderate length, the first wanting, the third nearly longest, the fourth longer than the

second; all covered above with numerous scutella, webbed, the lateral ones with small margins; claws small, slightly arched, compressed, rather acute, the middle one larger, with a dilated inner edge.

Plumage dense, very soft, blended; on the head very short. Wings rather short, narrow, acute; primary quills curved, tapering, the first longest, the second little shorter, the rest rapidly graduated; secondaries short, incurved, broad, rounded. Tail very short, rounded, of twelve narrow feathers.

Bill black; inside of mouth gamboge-yellow. Iris dark brown. Feet black. The general colour of the plumage is greyish-black on the upper parts; the sides of the head and upper part of the neck black, tinged with brown. A white bar across the wing, formed by the tips of the secondary quills, and a line of the same encircling the eye, and extending behind it. The lower parts white.

Length to end of tail $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to end of claws $19\frac{1}{4}$, to end of wings $17\frac{1}{2}$; extent of wings 30 inches; wing from flexure $7\frac{1}{2}$; tail 2; tarsus $1\frac{3}{12}$; middle toe $1\frac{7}{12}$, its claw $\frac{5}{12}$. Weight 2 lbs.

Adult Female.

The female is similar to the male, and, when mature, has the white line around and behind the eye.

THE BLACK GUILLEMOT.

†URIA GRYLLE, *Linn.*

PLATE CCCCLXXIV.—ADULT IN SUMMER, ADULT IN WINTER, AND YOUNG.

It was a frightful thing to see my good Captain, HENRY EMERY, swinging on a long rope upon the face of a rocky and crumbling eminence, at a height of several hundred feet from the water, in search of the eggs of the Black Guillemot, with four or five sailors holding the rope above, and walking along the edge of the precipice. I stood watching the motions of the adventurous sailor. When the friction of the rope by which he was suspended loosened a block, which with awful crash came tumbling down from above him, he, with a promptness and dexterity that appeared to me

W. E. H.

Fork-tailed Guillemot - Murre.

1. Male. 2. Female

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon, F.R.S. &c.

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