LEIMONITES TEMMINCKII.

Forrester & McCulloch del. et lith.

Walter. Imp.

LEIMONITES TEMMINCKII.

Temminck's Stint.

Tringa Temminckii, Leisl. Nacht. zu Bechst. Naturg. Deutschl., tom. i. p. 95.

— *pusilla*, Lath. Ind. Orn., tom. ii. p. 737.

Pelidna Temminckii, Boie, Isis, 1826, p. 979.

Leimonites Temminckii, Kaup, Natürl. Syst., p. 37.

Actodromus Temmincki, Bonap. Tabl. des Echass. Compt. Rend. de l'Acad. des Sci. tom. xliii. sp. 219.

My especial thanks are due to Mr. Alfred Newton, Mr. Wolley, and Mr. H. E. Dresser for the information they have afforded me respecting the bird here represented. Like the Little Stint (*Actodromas minuta*), it visits the British Islands either singly or in small companies at various periods of the year. To say that it is a regular migrant would be incorrect; for whole seasons may pass without its being seen, while at others it appears in considerable numbers.

It will be noticed that Temminck's and the Little Stints have been figured under two different generic appellations; and their separation is, I think, a very proper one, inasmuch as they not only differ in form but in the situations they each affect,—the former being mostly found on the banks of inland rivers, the sides of large reservoirs, and ponds; while the latter is a more maritime bird, like the Sanderling and Purple Sandpiper. The *Leimonites Temminckii* is somewhat smaller than the *Actodromas minuta*, and more elegant in all its proportions; the predominant colour of its upper surface is olive, while that of its ally is chestnut-red.

The summer home of the present bird is far better known than that of the Little Stint, the late Mr. Wolley, Mr. Newton, and Mr. Dresser having each found its nest in Norway and Lapland; the high fell-meadows of which countries are probably the northern limit of its breeding-localities. With the exception of America, Temminck's Stint may be said to inhabit in summer all the countries bordering the Arctic circle, whence it proceeds, as autumn and winter approach, to the warmer parts of Europe, Africa, Asia Minor, India, and China. In all those countries, as in our own, it is never very plentiful, but occurs sufficiently often to be termed common in each of them.

Numerous instances of the occurrence of this bird in England are on record, specimens having been obtained in Cornwall (where Mr. Rodd says it is occasionally found in the salt marshes near the sea) and here and there along the eastern coast as far north as Yorkshire; occasionally it is met with as near to London as Kingsbury Reservoir, where F. Bond, Esq., has obtained old birds in spring and both old and young in autumn. In Scotland, according to Macgillivray, it has not occurred; but it must be found there. And Thompson says that it has only once been obtained in Ireland, where a single example was seen and shot at a freshwater pool close to the town of Tralee, during a severe frost, in January 1848; but, as in Scotland, it must visit the country more often than is supposed. During its spring and vernal migrations, it is seen in Germany, Holland, France, and Switzerland; and we learn from M. Bailly that it "visits Savoy every year, about the end of September or the first half of October, sometimes not until November or December, and never in very great numbers. Its early or late appearance in the spring seems to depend upon the nature of the season. It generally arrives in flocks, often united with *Tringa variabilis* and *T. minuta*, and immediately resorts to the borders of rivers, lakes, ponds, and marshes, where it mingles with other allied species, and while running along the sand utters sharp cries. It rarely remains long, and often departs on the day of its arrival; if it should appear at night, it is certain to be gone the next morning. It passes the winter in the temperate and warmer countries of Europe, which it leaves at the approach of spring, to breed, it is said, in the north."

Loche says it is a bird of passage in Algeria; Mr. E. C. Taylor that it is occasionally killed in Upper Egypt, but is by no means numerous there; the Rev. H. B. Tristram found it extremely common in Northern Africa in winter; Dr. Adams plentiful about Alexandria and the Delta, but did not see it above Cairo; Mr. C. A. Wright has shot it in Malta, both in the summer and winter plumage; Mr. Jerdon remarks that it is not so numerous in India as the Little Stint; but, on the other hand, Captain Irby mentions that it is very common in flocks, during the cold season, in Oudh and Kumaon; Mr. Swinhoe, who met with it between Takoo and Pekin, in North China, says it remains in Foochow all the winter, on the banks of inland pools or fallow paddy-fields, solitary or in small parties, and often in company with *Ægialites philippinus*; in Amoy it is found in small parties, scattered over wet paddy-fields in the cold season, and in Formosa is a common winter visitant to the inland waters and marshes; Captain Blakiston mentions that two were shot in August in Northern Japan.

For the following note respecting this species I am indebted to H. E. Dresser, Esq.:—

“I found Temminck's Stint breeding sparingly amongst the network of islands surrounding the harbour of Uleåborg, and shot several in full breeding-plumage on the 26th of May. They were then still in flocks; and I endeavoured unsuccessfully to find some specimens of *Actodromas minuta* amongst them. I spent the 12th of June on the islands outside of Uleåborg, looking for nests, and found one of this bird on Akkio Island. Both I and the lad who accompanied me saw the old birds as soon as we landed, and at once commenced a regular search for the nest, but did not succeed in finding it until we had carefully gone over the whole of the ground. It was situated near the middle of the island, some twenty or more yards from the shore, and, being placed where the grass was thick, it was not seen until almost trodden upon. It was a mere hollow in the earth, such as might be made by working the large end of a hen's egg in soft soil, with small hay-straws neatly arranged round the inside, and contained four eggs all placed with the pointed end towards the centre. Both birds were very fearless and did not go far from the nest; but every now and then flew up in the air and descended again in circles, fluttering like a skylark, uttering at the same time a peculiar churring sound, which they also emitted while sitting on any elevated place. A favourite perch of one of them was a pole which had been set up for a pilot's mark, but had been broken off about eight feet from the ground; on this the bird would sit for a quarter of an hour at a time, churring all the while, and would allow me to approach within a few feet of it.”

The late Mr. Wolley, writing to Mr. Hewitson, says:—“I have found this species breeding in several localities north of the Bothnian Gulf; but it is scarce, and, as far as I have seen, confined to a few favourite spots. Grassy banks and pastures by the water-side are the kind of places where it takes up its breeding-quarters, and it seems to delight to be near houses. Nothing can be more interesting or pretty than this little bird in the early part of summer; it is so tame that one could often catch it in a net at the end of a stick. At one time it is hovering with its wings raised over its back or floating about, and it reminds one of some insect rather than of any other bird; at another time it may be seen standing on the top of a stone or stake, or the gable end of a cottage; and whether hovering or standing on its perch, it utters a constant trilling note, of which I can best give an idea by saying it brought to my recollection that of the Grasshopper-warbler, though the resemblance is perhaps slight. When its eggs are very near, it sometimes runs about one's feet; and, though it cannot but be anxious, it seems as busy as ever picking gnats and other insects off the grass; one nest I found was a short stone's throw from a cottage where children were playing about in all directions; another was only a pace or two from a spring from which women drew water every day, and passers-by often stopped to drink. The nest is very simple—a few short bits of hay in a little saucer-shaped hollow amongst thin grass or sedge, generally not far from the water's edge, but sometimes in the middle of a meadow. In 1854 the eggs were laid about Midsummer-day.”—*Hewitson's Coloured Illustrations of the Eggs of British Birds*, 3rd edit. vol. ii. p. 362.

The eggs, which are four in number, vary considerably in colour,—one of the two figured by Mr. Hewitson being of a pale or creamy stone-colour, with numerous spots of pinkish or pale purple and reddish brown; the ground-colour of the other is light buff, more numerous blotched and spotted, particularly at the larger end, with purplish and reddish brown, while that I have given is still richer in colour and more deeply spotted.

For my figures of the young I am indebted to Mr. Newton, who informs me that the drawing kindly lent by him was taken with great care from a young bird hatched from the egg by carrying it in a small box inside his shirt for some thirty-six hours.

In summer the feathers of the upper surface are dull olive with dark brown centres and a wash of rufous on the margins of those of the back and axillaries; line from the forehead to the eye greyish-white; primaries dark brown, the shaft of the outer feather white, of the remainder light brown; edge of the secondaries white, forming a line across the wing when spread; tail light brown; chin greyish white; throat and breast greyish brown, with a line of dark brown down the centre of each feather; abdomen and under tail-coverts white; bill olive-black; irides dark brown; legs and feet olive.

In winter the plumage of the upper surface is of a nearly uniform dull olive, the dark marks on the chest are absent, and the sides of the chest washed with dull olive like the back.

The Plate represents two adults, several young birds, and an egg, all of the natural size.

Gould, John. 1873. "Temminck's Stint, *Leimonites temminckii* [Pl. 73]." *The birds of Great Britain* 4, -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.324028>.

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