

long, its greatest diameter 8 twelfths, its glandules oblong and about a twelfth in length. The stomach, *c, d, e, f*, is a very powerful gizzard of an irregular roundish form, 1 inch 5 twelfths long, 1 inch $3\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in breadth; its lateral muscles very large and distinct, the right, *d*, 4 twelfths thick, the left, *e*, 3 twelfths, the tendons large; the epithelium thick, longitudinally rugous, and of a reddish colour. The intestine, *g, h, i*, is 2 feet 2 inches long, its diameter about 2 twelfths; the cœca 2 inches 2 twelfths long, their diameter at the base half a twelfth, toward the end 2 twelfths; the rectum 3 twelfths in diameter, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.

In the stomach were several shrimps. The lobes of the liver very unequal, the right being $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length, the other $1\frac{4}{12}$. No gall-bladder.

The trachea is wide, flattened, membranous, 4 twelfths broad at the upper part, gradually diminishing to 2 twelfths, its rings, which are very slender, about 100. The lateral muscles exceedingly thin, but becoming more distinct towards the lower part; the sterno-tracheal slender. Bronchi of moderate length, of about 20 half-rings.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER.

+*CHARADRIUS MARMORATUS*, *Wagler*.

PLATE CCCXVI.—ADULT IN SUMMER, WINTER, AND SPRING.

The Golden Plover spends the autumn, winter, and part of the spring, in various portions of the United States, appearing in considerable numbers both along the coast and in the interior, and not unfrequently on our highest grounds. A much greater number, however, proceed in severe winters beyond the limits of our Southern States, and the partial migrations of this species are much influenced by the state of the weather. They are more abundant along the sea shores of the Middle and Eastern Districts from the middle of April to the beginning of May, whereas in autumn they range over the interior, and more especially the western prairies. In the early part of May they congregate in immense flocks, and commence their journey toward more northern regions, where they are said to breed.

This bird moves on the ground with sprightliness. When observed, it

often runs with considerable rapidity to some distance, suddenly stops short, nods once or twice, vibrating its body at the same time, and if it should imagine itself unnoticed, it often lies down and remains crouched until the danger is over. At the time of their departure from the north, and while on the sands or mud-bars on the sea-shore, they often raise their wings as if to air them for a few moments. While searching for food, they move in a direct manner, often look sideways toward the ground, and pick up the object of their search by a peculiar bending movement of the body. They are frequently observed to pat the moist earth with their feet, to force worms from their burrows. In autumn they betake themselves to the higher grounds, where berries as well as insects are to be met with, and where they find abundance of grasshoppers.

When travelling to a considerable distance, the Golden Plover flies at the height of from thirty to sixty feet, in a regular manner, with considerable velocity, the flock, when large, forming an extended front, and moving with regular flappings, an individual now and then uttering a mellow note. Before alighting they often perform various evolutions, now descending and flying swiftly over the ground, then curving upwards or sidewise, closing and extending their ranks, until the sportsman is often tired of watching them, and, after all, the flock, just when he expects it to alight, may suddenly shoot off and fly to a distance. When they alight within shooting distance, the moment their feet touch the ground is the critical one, for they are generally in a compact body, and almost immediately afterwards they disperse. I have often observed them while flying from one place to another, suddenly check their course for a moment or two, as if to look at the objects below, in the manner of Curlews.

While at New Orleans, on the 16th of March, 1821, I was invited by some French gunners to accompany them to the neighbourhood of Lake St. John, to witness the passage of thousands of these birds, which were coming from the north-east, and continuing their course. At the first appearance of the birds early in the morning, the gunners had assembled in parties of from twenty to fifty at different places, where they knew from experience that the Plovers would pass. There stationed, at nearly equal distances from each other, they were sitting on the ground. When a flock approached, every individual whistled in imitation of the Plover's call-note, on which the birds descended, wheeled, and passing within forty of fifty yards, ran the gauntlet as it were. Every gun went off in succession, and with such effect that I several times saw a flock of a hundred or more reduced to a miserable remnant of five or six individuals. The game was brought up after each volley by the dogs, while their masters were charging their pieces anew. This sport was continued all day, and at sunset, when I left

one of these lines of gunners, they seemed as intent on killing more as they were when I arrived. A man near the place where I was seated had killed sixty-three dozens. I calculated the number in the field at two hundred, and supposing each to have shot twenty dozen, forty-eight thousand Golden Plovers would have fallen that day.

On inquiring if these passages were of frequent occurrence, I was told that six years before, such another had occurred immediately after two or three days of very warm weather, when they came up with a breeze from the north-east. Only some of the birds were fat, the greater number of those which I examined being very lean; scarcely any had food in their stomach, and the eggs in the ovaries of the females were undeveloped. The next morning the markets were amply supplied with Plovers at a very low price.

CHARADRIUS MARMORATUS, Wagler, Syst. Avium.

GOLDEN PLOVER, *Charadrius pluvialis*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. vii. p. 71. Winter.

CHARADRIUS PLUVIALIS, Bonap. Syn. p. 297.

CHARADRIUS PLUVIALIS, *Golden Plover*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 623.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER, *Charadrius marmoratus*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. v. p. 575.

Adult, $10\frac{1}{2}$, $22\frac{3}{8}$.

Migrates southward in autumn and winter in vast flocks, from the northern regions, resting by the way, both in the interior and along the coast. Breeds on the Northern Barren Grounds, and islands of the Arctic Sea.

Adult Male in spring.

Bill shorter than the head, straight, subcylindrical. Upper mandible with the dorsal line straight and slightly sloping for two-thirds of its length, then bulging a little and curving to the tip, which is rather acute, the sides flat and sloping at the base, convex towards the end, where the edges are sharp and inclinate. Nasal groove extended along two-thirds of the mandible, filled with a bare membrane; nostrils basal, linear, in the lower part of the membrane, open and pervious. Lower mandible with the angle long, narrow, but rounded, the sides at the base sloping outwards and flat, the dorsal line ascending and slightly convex, the edges sharp and involute towards the narrow tip.

Head of moderate size, oblong, rather compressed, the forehead rounded. Eyes large. Neck rather short. Body ovate, rather full. Wings long. Feet rather long, slender; tibia bare for a considerable space; tarsus rather compressed, covered all round with reticulated hexagonal scales; toes slender; the hind toe wanting; third or middle toe longest, fourth considerably longer than the second, all scutellate above and marginate, the outer connected with the middle toe by a membrane as far as the second joint; claws

small, compressed, slightly arched, slender but obtuse at the end, the inner edge of the middle claw dilated.

Plumage soft, blended, slightly glossed, the feathers rounded. Wings long and pointed; primary quills tapering, the first longest, the second a little shorter, the rest rapidly graduated; outer secondaries short, broad, obliquely rounded, inner tapering and elongated. Tail rather short, rounded, of twelve rounded feathers.

Bill black. Iris brown. Feet bluish-grey. The upper part of the head, the fore part of the back, and the scapulars are beautifully variegated with brownish-black and bright yellow, the latter in spots along the edges of the feathers. The hind part of the back greyish-brown, variegated with yellow of a duller tint; the tail brown, barred with white. The wings are hair-brown, the smaller coverts spotted with yellowish-white, the primary coverts and secondaries tipped with white. The inner secondaries like the scapulars. Part of the forehead, the loreal space, a band over the eye, and the throat, are greyish-white; the sides of the neck and body variegated with brown, dull white and yellowish. The breast and a broad band down the fore-neck are brownish-black, the latter margined on each side with white. Axillar feathers, and lower tail-coverts, white.

Length to end of tail $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to end of wings $10\frac{1}{4}$, to end of claws $11\frac{1}{2}$; extent of wings $22\frac{3}{8}$; wing from flexure 7; tail $3\frac{2}{12}$; bill along the back $\frac{11}{12}$, along the edge of lower mandible $1\frac{2}{12}$; bare part of tibia $\frac{8}{12}$; tarsus $1\frac{7}{12}$, middle toe $1\frac{1}{12}$, its claw $\frac{4}{12}$. Weight $5\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Adult in winter.

The black on the lower parts is peculiar to the breeding season; and after the autumnal moult, they become of a light greyish colour, spotted and streaked with deep grey. In other respects the plumage is similar to that described above.

Length to end of tail $10\frac{3}{4}$, to end of claws $11\frac{7}{8}$; extent of wings $22\frac{5}{8}$. Weight $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Light coloured variety.

Bill and feet greyish-blue. Iris deep brown. Upper part of head and back mottled with black and pale yellow; wing-coverts greyish, with white and dusky spots, as are the sides of the head and the throat; a broad band of white over the eye; fore part of neck pale grey, fading into pale cream-colour and white; the breast and fore-neck with large spots of black.

This individual was killed in the breeding season.



American Golden Plover.

1. Summer Plumage. 2. Winter. 3. Variety in March.

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon. F.B.S. F.L.S.

Printed & Col^d by J. T. Bowen. Phila.



Audubon, John James. 1842. "American Golden Plover, *Charadrius marmoratus*, Wagler. [Pl. 316]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 5, 203–206.

<https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319429>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/124982>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319429>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/319429>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.