

toe  $1\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$ , its claw  $\frac{4}{12}$ ; fourth toe  $1\frac{2\frac{3}{4}}{12}$ , its claw  $2\frac{3}{4}$  twelfths; wing from flexure  $9\frac{3}{4}$ ; tail  $3\frac{11}{12}$ .

The heart and liver are very large, as in the other species, the right lobe of the latter passes under and beyond the stomach, and is 3 inches in length, the left lobe 1 inch 9 twelfths. The mouth is in all respects as in the preceding species, as is the tongue, which is 1 inch long. The œsophagus is 7 inches long, at the upper part 8 twelfths in width, afterwards uniformly 5 twelfths; the proventriculus large, 8 twelfths in width. The stomach is of moderate size, roundish,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, 1 inch 5 twelfths in breadth; its muscles of moderate thickness; the epithelium thick, horny, with two broad longitudinal plates on each side. Its contents are small crabs. Intestine 30 inches long, its width in the duodenal portion 4 twelfths, and nearly the same throughout, but at the distance of 10 inches from the end enlarging to 6 twelfths. Cœca  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the extremity, 1 inch 9 twelfths long,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  twelfths in width, with the tip slender as in the other species.

Trachea  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches long,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  twelfths broad at the top, 2 twelfths at the lower part, very little flattened; the rings firm, 122, with 2 dimidiate rings. Bronchi moderately wide, of about 18 half rings. Lateral muscles of moderate strength; the sterno-tracheales come off at the distance of 5 twelfths from the extremity; there is a very slender slip of muscle on each side going to the first bronchial ring.

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## ESQUIMAUX CURLEW.

+NUMENIUS BOREALIS, *Lath.*

PLATE CCCLVII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

I regret that I am unable to present a complete history of the Esquimaux Curlew. It is true I might somewhat enlarge my account of its habits, were I to borrow from others, but as I have resolved to confine myself to the results of my own observation, unless in certain cases, in which I always take care to give my authorities, I hope you will be pleased with the little which I have to offer.

Previous to my voyage to Labrador, I had seen only a single bird of this



species, which was kindly given me by my learned friend WILLIAM OAKES, Esq. of Ipswich, Massachusetts, who had procured it in his immediate neighbourhood, where, as I have since ascertained, the Esquimaux Curlew spends a few days in early autumn, while on its way southward. During their short stay in that State, they are met with on the high sandy hills near the seashore, where they feed on the grasshoppers and on several kinds of berries. On this food they become fat, so as to afford excellent eating, in consequence of which they have probably acquired the name of "Dough-bird," which they bear in that district, but which is also applied to several other birds. How this species manages to cross the whole extent of the United States without being seen after leaving Massachusetts, is to me very wonderful. On one occasion only have I ever had a glimpse of it. I was in company with my learned and generous friend JOHN BACHMAN of Charleston, on one of the islands on the coast of South Carolina, whither we had gone with the view of watching the Long-billed Curlews (*Numenius longirostris*). It was at the dawn of a fine day, when a dense flock of the northern Curlews passed to the southward, near enough to enable us to ascertain the species, but so swiftly, that in a few minutes they were quite out of sight.

On the 29th of July, 1833, during a thick fog, the Esquimaux Curlews made their first appearance in Labrador, near the harbour of Bras d'Or. They evidently came from the north, and arrived in such dense flocks as to remind me of the Passenger Pigeons. The weather was extremely cold as well as foggy. For more than a week we had been looking for them, as was every fisherman in the harbour, these birds being considered there, as indeed they are, great delicacies. The birds at length came, flock after flock, passed close round our vessel, and directed their course toward the sterile mountainous tracts in the neighbourhood; and as soon as the sun's rays had dispersed the fogs that hung over the land, our whole party went off in search of them.

I was not long in discovering that their stay on this coast was occasioned solely by the density of the mists and the heavy gales that already gave intimation of the approaching close of the summer; for whenever the weather cleared up a little, thousands of them set off and steered in a straight course across the broad Gulf of St. Lawrence. On the contrary, when the wind was high, and the fogs thick, they flew swiftly and low over the rocky surface of the country, as if bewildered. Wherever there was a spot that seemed likely to afford a supply of food, there the Curlews abounded, and were easily approached. By the 12th of August, however, they had all left the country.

In Labrador they feed on what the fishermen call the Curlew-berry, a small black fruit growing on a creeping shrub, not more than an inch or two



in height, and so abundant, that patches of several acres covered the rocks here and there. When the birds were in search of these feeding-grounds, they flew in close masses, sometimes high, at other times low, but always with remarkable speed, and performing beautiful evolutions in the air. The appearance of man did not seem to intimidate them, for they would alight so near us, or pass over our heads at so short a distance, that we easily shot them. While on wing, they emitted an oft repeated soft whistling note, but the moment they alighted they became silent. They ran swiftly along, all in the same direction, picking up the berries in their way, and when pursued, would immediately squat in the manner of a Snipe or Partridge, sometimes even laying their neck and head quite flat on the ground, until you came within a short distance, when, at the single whistle of any one of the flock, they would all immediately scream and fly off, rambling about for awhile, and not unfrequently re-alighting on the same spot. Now and then, however, their excursion would last a long time, they would rise high in the air, make towards the sea, and, as if aware of the unfavourable state of the weather for pursuing their southward course, would return.

They continued to arrive at Bras d'Or for several days, in flocks which seemed to me to increase in number. I saw no Hawks in their rear, and I was the more astonished at this, that at that period Pigeon Hawks and other species were pretty abundant.

They rose from the ground by a single quick spring, in the manner of a Snipe, when they would cut backward, forward, and all around, in a very curious manner, and would now and then pause in the air, like a Hawk, remaining stationary for a few moments with their head meeting the wind, when immediately afterwards they would all suddenly alight. In calm and fair weather, they were more shy than at other times. While on their passage across the Gulf, they flew high in close bodies, and with their usual speed, by no means in regular lines, nor in any order, but much in the manner of the Migratory Pigeon, now and then presenting a broad front, and again coming together so as to form a close body.

Those which we procured were extremely fat and juicy, especially the young birds, of which we ate a good many. Mr. JONES, an old settler of Bras d'Or, and his son, shoot a great number every season, which they salt for winter food. They informed us that these birds pass over the same tract about the middle of May, on their way northward, and that they never found them breeding in their neighbourhood. Little difference could be observed at that season between the males and females, or between the old and young birds.

NUMENIUS BOREALIS, Bonap. Syn., p. 314.

NUMENIUS BOREALIS, *Esquimaux Curlew*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 378.



ESQUIMAUX CURLEW, *Numenius borealis*, Nutt. Man., vol. ii. p. 101.

ESQUIMAUX CURLEW, *Numenius borealis*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iii. p. 69; vol. v. p. 590.

Male,  $14\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $27\frac{3}{8}$ .

Passes in spring from Texas along the coast eastward to the Fur Countries, returning in autumn. Abundant at times in the Middle Atlantic Districts. Rarely seen in the interior. Breeds in the northern barren grounds.

Adult Male.

Bill much longer than the head, very slender, sub-cylindrical, compressed, slightly arched. Upper mandible with the dorsal line slightly arched, the sides, excepting at the base, nearly perpendicular, and marked with a narrow groove extending more than two-thirds of its length, edges rather obtuse. Nostrils basal, lateral, longitudinal, elliptical. Lower mandible with the dorsal line arched, the angle extremely narrow and extended to near the end, the sides convex, the edges rather obtuse, the tips obtuse, that of the upper mandible longer.

Head rather small, oblong, compressed. Neck rather long, slender. Body slender. Feet of moderate length, slender. Toes small; first very small, second and fourth about equal, third considerably longer. Claws small, compressed, blunt, that of middle toe much longer, curved outwards, with a sharp dilated inner edge.

Plumage soft and blended, on the fore part of the head very short. Wings rather long, very acute, narrow, the first quill longest, the second a little shorter, the rest regularly and rapidly graduated; secondaries short, incurved, rounded, excepting some of the inner, which are greatly elongated and tapering. Tail short, nearly even, of twelve rounded feathers.

Bill brownish-black, the lower mandible flesh-coloured at the base. Iris dark brown. Feet greyish-blue, claws black. The upper part of the head is brownish-black, streaked with pale yellowish-brown, and having an indistinct central line of the latter. The back is also brownish-black, marked with numerous spots of light brownish-yellow, there being several along the margin of each feather. Wing-coverts and secondaries of a lighter brown, similarly spotted; alula, primary coverts and quills unspotted, the shafts of most of the latter pale brown, but of the outer white. Tail pale greyish-brown, with light deep brown bars, and tipped with brownish-white. Sides of the head, and the neck all round, pale yellowish-brown, striped with dark brown; breast and sides of the same tint, with longitudinal and transverse dark markings. Lower wing-coverts and lower tail-coverts similarly barred; axillar feathers regularly banded, and of a deeper tint. Abdomen without markings. Throat and a line over the eye nearly white.

Length to end of tail  $14\frac{1}{2}$ , to end of wings  $14\frac{7}{8}$ , to end of claws  $16\frac{3}{4}$ ; wing



from flexure  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , tail  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ; extent of wings  $27\frac{3}{8}$ ; bill along the back  $2\frac{1}{4}$ , along the edge  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ; tarsus  $1\frac{8}{12}$ , middle toe  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , its claw  $\frac{3}{12}$ . Weight  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.

Adult Female.

The female resembles the male, and is scarcely inferior in size.

The mouth is similar to that of the preceding species. Tongue 1 inch long. Œsophagus  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches long,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide at the upper part, 5 twelfths in the rest of its extent; the proventriculus 6 twelfths in breadth. Stomach roundish,  $1\frac{1}{3}$  inches long, 1 inch  $2\frac{1}{2}$  twelfths broad; the lateral muscles moderate; the epithelium thick, reddish-brown, as in the other species, but with numerous longitudinal rugæ. Contents of stomach, remains of insects, seeds, and small pieces of quartz. Intestine 28 inches long; its width in the duodenal portion  $3\frac{1}{2}$  twelfths, so continuing until 7 inches from the extremity, when it enlarges to 5 twelfths. Cæca 3 inches from the end,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches in length, of the uniform width of 1 twelfth, and slightly pointed. Trachea 4 inches  $8\frac{1}{2}$  twelfths long, its width from 3 twelfths to 2 twelfths, considerably flattened; the rings 115, firm, with 2 additional dimidiate rings. Bronchial half rings about 18, extremely feeble. Muscles as in the last species.

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FAMILY XXXVII.—TANTALINÆ. IBISES.

Bill very long, arcuate, rather stout at the base, obtuse. Nostrils basal, linear or oblong. Head bare in front, rather large or of moderate size; neck long and slender; body ovate. Legs long and rather stout; tibia bare to a large extent; tarsus reticulate, sometimes scaly in front; toes four, articulated on the same level, the anterior webbed at the base, the first more slender. Claws arched, compressed, rather obtuse. Wings long and very broad, with the second quill longest. Tail short, of twelve feathers. Tongue triangular, extremely short, flat, and thin. Œsophagus wide; stomach large, muscular, broadly elliptical, with the epithelium dense, longitudinally rugous; intestines generally of moderate length and width, cæca very small; cloaca globular. Trachea without inferior laryngeal muscles.





*Querquedula Cinnamon*  
1. Male 2. Female



Audubon, John James. 1843. "Esquimaux Curlew, *Numenius borealis*, Lath. [Pl. 357]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 6, 45–49. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319471>.

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