

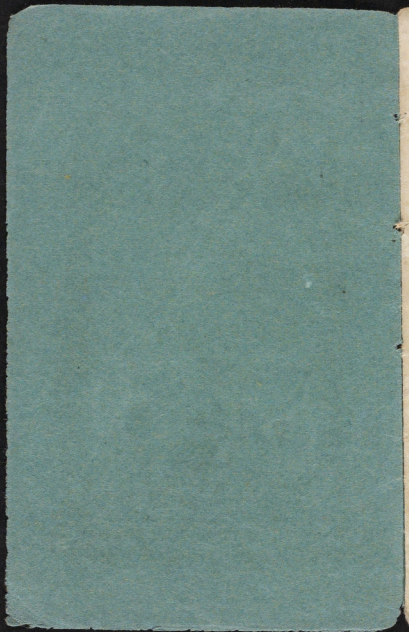
A
HISTORY
OF
BIRDS.



RUFUS MERRILL CONCORD NH

EASTMAN

AND SON



A
HISTORY
OF
BIRDS.



CONCORD, N. H.
RUFUS MERRILL AND CO.
1843

Delia New Sherman Kendall

The Alphabet.

A B C D E F G

H I J K L M N

O P Q R S T U

V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g

h i j k l m n

o p q r s t u

v w x y z

BIRDS.



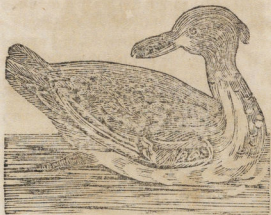
Eagle.



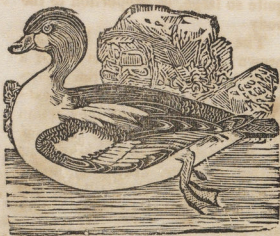
Here is an eagle. He is like a hawk, but is a great deal larger and stronger. He is so powerful that he can kill a lamb, and carry it off into the air. I have read in a book, too, that an eagle in Scotland once came down, and took up a little child in its claws, and car-

ried it off through the air to a mountain. On the mountain the eagle had a nest, with three young ones in it. The eagle gave the child to its young ones; but they did not eat it. The father of the child saw the eagle carry his son away; he ran as fast as he could to the mountain, and climbed up the steep rocks to the eagle's nest. There he found his little boy, quite safe, with the young eagles. He took him out of the nest, and carried him home to his mother, who was very glad to see him, after his dangerous journey.



Gooseander.

This is a large water bird, that looks very much like a goose. It frequents the northern shores of Scotland. It weighs only two pounds. The head and neck are black, glossed with green; the rest of the neck and the belly white; the upper part of the back is black, and the breast is reddish, mixed with black and white.



Widgeon.

This bird weighs about twenty-two ounces; it has a black nail at the end of the upper mandible of the bill, the upper part of which is of a lead color; the structure of the head and mouth very much resembles the common wild duck, only the head does not seem to be

quite so large, in proportion to the body

The feathers on the back are brown; the legs and feet are of a dark lead color, and the claws black. The young of both sexes are gray, and this hue they retain till February, when the plumage of the male begins to assume its variegated tints. He is said to retain his bright colors till the end of July, and then to become dark and gray.

Widgeons are common in Cambridgeshire, England, the Isle of Ely, &c. where the male is called the *Widgeon*, and the female the *Whewer*. They feed upon wild periwinkles, grass, weeds, &c. which grow at the bottom of rivers and lakes. Their flesh has a very delicious taste, not inferior to teal or wild ducks.

S

Heron.



This bird is remarkably light in proportion to its bulk, scarcely weighing three pounds and a half, yet expanding a breadth of wing which is five feet from tip to tip. Its bill is very long; its claws are bony and sharp, and the middlemost toothed like a saw. Yet, thus armed as it appears for war, it is

indolent and cowardly, and flies even at the approach of a sparrowhawk. When driven to extremity, however, it shakes off its timidity, and displays both courage and skill

This bird commits great devastation in fresh water, and there is scarcely a fish, however large, that he will not strike at and wound, though unable to carry it away. He chiefly subsists, however, upon the small fry, that are driven by their more powerful fellows to take refuge in shallow waters. His method is to wade as far as he can go into the water, and there patiently wait the approach of his prey; which, when it comes within sight, he darts upon with an inevitable aim. In this manner he is found to destroy more in a week, than an otter in three months.

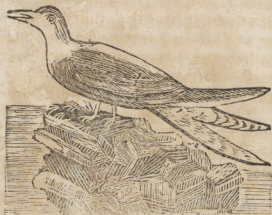
Bittern.

This bird is not so large as the heron, with a weaker bill, not above four inches long. Its color is of a palish yellow, spotted with black. Its windpipe is fitted to produce a dismally hollow booming, for which

this bird is very remarkable. It resembles the interrupted bellowing of a bull, but is hollower and louder, and is heard at a mile's distance, as if issuing from some formidable being that resided at the bottom of the waters.

The flesh of the bittern is considered a great luxury. When wounded by the sportsman, it often makes a severe resistance. It does not retire, but waits the onset, and gives such vigorous pushes with its bill, as to wound the leg through the boot. Sometimes it turns on its back, and fights with both its bill and its claws. When surprised by a dog, it is said always to throw itself into this posture and defend itself so vigorously as to compel its assailant to retire. The eyes of its antagonist are the object at which it chiefly strikes.

Tern.



This bird is found on the sea-shores of Europe, Asia, and America. It builds no nest, but lays generally three eggs, upon the surface of the drift dry grass, on the beach or salt marsh. These are covered by the female only during the night, or in wet, raw, and stormy weather. They are of a yellowish dun color, sprinkled with

dark brown. The young are generally produced at intervals of a day or so from each other, and are regularly fed for several weeks, before their wings are sufficiently grown to enable them to fly.

The tern measures above fourteen inches in length, thirty in extent, and weighs more than four ounces.

This bird is sometimes called the Sea-Swallow. Its flight, however, is not in the sweeping, shooting style of the land swallows; but the motions of its long wings are slower, and more in the manner of the gull. It has great power of wing, and strength in the muscles of the neck, which enable it to make sudden and violent plunges on its prey from a considerable height.



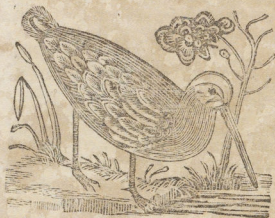
Curlew.

The curlew is a well-known bird, which in winter frequents sea-coasts and marshes, feeding chiefly on frogs and marine insects. In summer they retire to the mountainous and unfrequented parts to breed. They differ much in size, some weighing thirty-seven ounces, and some not twenty-two; the length of the largest is twenty-five inches. Its bill is long, black, and much

curved. The upper parts of the plumage are of a pale brown; the lower parts are white, marked with dark oblong spots. The female is somewhat larger than the male, which is commonly called the Jack Curlew.

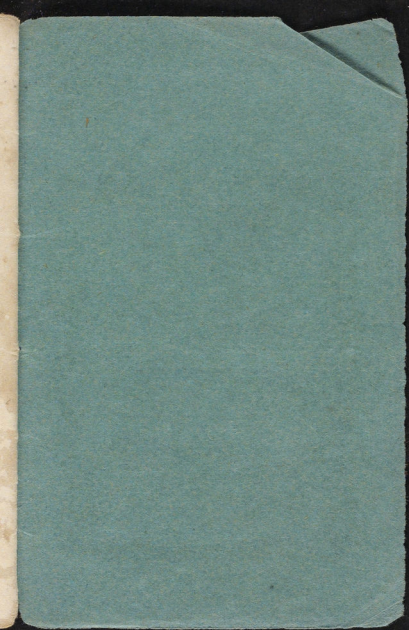
Birds of this class reside in watery places, and their constitution seems peculiarly calculated for the cold; for they evidently choose the most rigid climates, and migrate to this country when other birds remove from hence. As birds of this species run swiftly, and feed upon the ground, so they are all found to nestle there; their nests are made without the slightest art, and the eggs laid in some little hollows; they never lay more than four in number, and they are generally hatched in fourteen days.

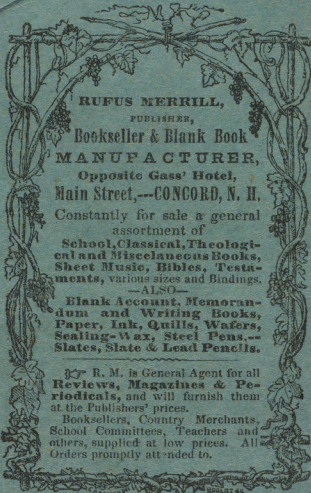
Woodcock.



This bird is about as large as a pigeon, with a bill three inches long. It flaps its wings with some noise when it rises, and its flight is pretty rapid: its descent is so sudden that it seems to fall like a stone. It principally feeds on worms and insects, which it draws out of the mud with its long bill, and its flesh is universally admired.

A beautiful bird





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