

STERNA.

Sterna, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 227 (1766) ; Saunders, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xxv. p. 40 (1896).

In the genus *Sterna*, which contains the true Terns, the tail is at least half the length of the wing, and shows generally more than this proportion ; the outer tail-feathers, which are the longest, are pointed. The tarsus is short, never exceeding the middle toe and claw in length. The bill is compressed and slender.

The genus is cosmopolitan in its range, and includes more than thirty species. Mr. Howard Saunders unites, under the generic name *Sterna*, all the Little Terns (*Sternula*) and the Sooty Terns (*Onychoprion*). The eggs vary in number from one to three, and some of them are very similar to those of Limicolæ.

1. *Sterna forsteri*.

Sterna forsteri, Nutt. Man. Orn. ii. p. 274, footnote ¹ ; Coues, Ibis, 1864, p. 390 ² ; Salv. Ibis, 1866, p. 199 ³ ; Scl. & Salv. P. Z. S. 1871, p. 569 ⁴ ; Lawr. Mem. Bost. Soc. N. H. ii. p. 318 ⁵ ; Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus. no. 4, p. 51 ⁶ ; Sumichr. La Nat. v. p. 234 ⁷ ; Baird, Brewer, & Ridgway, Water-Birds N. Amer. ii. p. 292 ⁸ ; A. O. U. Check-l. N. Amer. Birds, 2nd ed. p. 24 ⁹ ; Saunders, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xxv. p. 46 ¹⁰ ; Oates, Cat. Eggs Brit. Mus. i. p. 180, t. 13. fig. 4 ¹¹.

Ptil. hiem. Supra margaritacea, pileo toto et collo postico albis ; uropygio quoque albo ; cauda margaritacea, rectricibus extimis albis, intus sordide cineraceis ; alis dorso concoloribus, secundariis albo terminatis ; primariis apicem versus nigris, intus albis, rhachidibus albis ; loris, facie laterali et corpore subtus toto albis ; regione anteoculari et fascia lata postoculari nigris ; supercilio postico nigro maculato : rostro nigro, apice albicante ; pedibus saturate aurantiacis ; iride brunnea. Long. tota circa 13·0, alæ 9·4, caudæ 5·3, rectrice extima 5·5, culm. 1·6, tarsi 0·9. (Descr. maris adulti ex Corpus Christi, Texas. Mus. nostr.)

Ptil. æstiv. Supra margaritacea ; pileo et nucha, haud cristata, et facie laterali dimidiata nigris, macula suboculari nigra ; loris et facie laterali cum regione parotica et corpore subtus toto pure albis : rostro aurantiaco, apicem versus nigro, apice ipso flavo ; pedibus aurantiaco-rubris. Long. tota circa 13·0, alæ 9·4, rectrice extima 6·8. (Descr. feminae adultæ ex Corpus Christi, Texas. Mus. nostr.)

Juv. adultis similis, sed brunneo adumbrata, plumis singulis apicem versus pallide brunnescentibus.

Hab. NORTH AMERICA generally, breeding from Manitoba southward to Virginia, Illinois, Texas, and California ⁹.—WESTERN MEXICO ¹⁰, Mazatlan (*Grayson* ^{5 8}), San Mateo, Ventosa Bay, Tehuantepec (*Sumichrast* ^{6 7 10}) ; GUATEMALA, Lake of Dueñas (*O. S.* ^{2 3 4 10}).—SOUTH AMERICA, off the coast of Pernambuco ¹⁰.

S. forsteri is distinguished from the other Terns of medium size, which have the forehead black like the crown, by the colour of the long outer tail-feathers, in which the outer web is white and the inner one is "darkish grey," as Mr. Howard Saunders expresses it.

This species is found in the interior, as well as on the coasts, of North America, frequenting grassy marshes ⁸. In winter it visits Mexico and Guatemala, and was found abundantly by Grayson along the shores and esteros of Mazatlan, from October to April ⁵.