

Subfam. *RHYNCHOPINÆ*.

The "Skimmers," by which name this subfamily of Terns is usually known, require but little characterization, as they are remarkable above all other sea-birds for their long scissor-like bill, in which the under mandible greatly exceeds the maxilla in length.

RHYNCHOPS.

Rynchops, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 228 (1766).

Rhynchops, Saunders, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xxv. p. 152 (1896).

The characters of the genus are those of the subfamily.

Five species are known, of which three are American, one African, and the other Indian. They occur on the coasts, but likewise ascend the great streams of the tropical countries in which they live to an immense distance, and lay their eggs on the sand-banks.

1. *Rhynchops nigra*.

The Cut Water, Catesby, Nat. Hist. Carol. i. p. 90, t. 90 (1731) ¹.

Rhynchops nigra, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 228 ²; Scl. P. Z. S. 1864, p. 179 ³; Salv. Ibis, 1865, p. 193 ⁴; 1866, p. 200 ⁵; 1889, p. 379 ⁶; Dresser, Ibis, 1866, p. 45 ⁷; Dugès, La Nat. i. p. 142 ⁸; Lawr. Mem. Bost. Soc. N. H. ii. p. 318 ⁹; Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus. no. 4, p. 52 ¹⁰; Sumichr. La Nat. v. p. 234 ¹¹; Boucard, P. Z. S. 1883, p. 462 ¹²; Nutting, Pr. U. S. Nat. Mus. vi. p. 409 ¹³; Baird, Brewer, & Ridgway, Water-Birds N. Amer. ii. p. 192 ¹⁴; Herrera, La Nat. (2) i. pp. 188 ¹⁵, 329 ¹⁶; A. O. U. Check-l. N. Amer. Birds, 2nd ed. p. 27 ¹⁷; Saunders, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. xxv. p. 153 ¹⁸; Oates, Cat. Eggs Brit. Mus. i. p. 200, t. 15. fig. 8 ¹⁹.

Ptil. hiem. Supra brunnescenti-nigra, alis nigricantioribus, primariis intimis intus ad apicem albis, secundariis intus et ad apicem late albis; dorsi imi lateribus et supracaudalibus extimis fere albis; rectricibus albis, plus minusve medialiter brunneis; pileo brunneo, postice vix nigricante; regione postoculari quoque nigricanti-brunnea; fronte et facie laterali, cum torque collari lato et corpore subtus toto, pure albis; tectricibus alarum minimis albis; subalaribus et axillaribus albis, margine alarum brunneo; remigibus intus cinerascanti-brunneis: rostro corallino, ad apicem nigro; pedibus corallinis; iride brunnea. Long. tota circa 15.0, alæ 13.2, caudæ 4.2, rostro 2.8, tarsi 1.2. (Descr. feminae adultæ ex Acapam. Mus. nostr.)

Juv. ptilosi hiemali similis, sed collo postico brunneo albido striolato.

Ptil. æstiv. Supra nigerrima, torque albo collari nullo; fronte, facie laterali et corpore subtus toto pure albis: rostro rubro, medialiter flavicante, ad apicem nigro; pedibus aurantiaco-rubris; iride brunnea. Long. tota circa 16.0, alæ 13.6. (Descr. maris adulti ex Corpus Christi. Mus. nostr.)

Hab. NORTH AMERICA, eastern coast to New Jersey, and casually to the Bay of Fundy ^{17 18}.—MEXICO, Matamoros Lagoon (*Dresser* ⁷, *Berlandier* ¹⁴), Tampico (*Berlandier* ¹⁴, *Richardson* ¹⁸), Valley of Mexico (*Herrera* ^{15 16}), city of Mexico (*White* ³), Guanajuato (*Dugès* ⁸), San Blas (*Grayson* ⁹), Zacatula River (*Xantus* ⁹), coasts of the Gulf of Tehuantepec ¹¹, San Mateo ¹⁰ (*Sumichrast*), northern coasts of Yucatan ¹², Rio Lagartos ¹⁸, Progreso ¹⁸, Cozumel I. ^{6 18} (*Gaumer*);