

EGGS.—By *Howard Saunders, F.L.S., F.Z.S.**Chionis minor, Hartl.*

(Lesser Sheathbill.)

The general character of 19 eggs is a dirty white ground, splashed and blotched with brown. At the first glance there is a startling superficial resemblance in coloration, and sometimes in shape, to a very common dark form of the egg of the Razorbill (*Alca torda*); other specimens are in shape and markings like boldly blotched examples of eggs of the *Ædicnemus* group of Plovers. On shining them to the light, the eggs show a green membranous lining. Unfortunately the egg of the other species *Chionis alba* (Gm.), of the Falkland Islands, is not known, for Capt. Abbott, who wrote an account of the birds of the Falklands (*Ibis* 18), did not obtain it, and the statements made to him by the sealers as to its egg being white, must be received with doubt. The first eggs were obtained on 23rd Dec., and in stating that none were found by Mr. Eaton until 10th January, the American Naturalist, Dr. Kidder, must have been labouring under an error. The complement of eggs seems to be one or two, and rarely three.

The average dimensions of the egg are 2·2 in. × 1·5 in.

Querquedula eatoni, Sharpe.

Thirty eggs of this species present remarkable variation, the general hue being of a pale green or greenish buff. Laying appears to commence early in December. The average dimensions are 2 in. × 1·4 in.

Larus dominicanus, Licht.

Thirty eggs of this bird present the usual characters of the eggs of the larger species of Gulls, being of various shades of olive-green, ranging to stone-colour, and occasionally brown, spotted and blotched with darker shades of brown and streaks of black. Eggs of this species in my collection from the Crozettes, and from the Falkland Islands present precisely similar characters. The first egg was obtained on 14th October; the complement is three, as is usual with Gulls. Average dimensions, 2·85 in. × 1·9 in.

Stercorarius antarcticus, Lesson.

In five eggs of this species, three taken about the middle of November are of a pale olive-green indistinctly blotched with brown, and two others, obtained on 8th December, apparently from the same nest, as that is the usual complement, are

x 2

of a brownish buff ground with rather bolder markings. Although slightly larger than the eggs of *Stercorarius catarractes*, the representative species of the Northern Hemisphere, there is no noticeable difference in character. Length 3 in., breadth 2·1 in.

Sterna virgata, *Cab.*

Eight eggs of this species are of an olive colour blotched with black, the marks tending to form a zone. They do not differ much from eggs of typical *Sterna*, but there is a tendency to greenish, and an absence of the white in the ground colour, which approximates them to eggs of *S. antarctica* of New Zealand, the near ally of this species, the eggs of which, so far as I may venture to judge from only two specimens, average somewhat less.

It appears to lay but one egg, on the terraces on the sea-side hills, commencing towards the end of November. The dimensions are 1·75 in. \times 1·2 in.

Pelecanoides urinatrix, *Gm.*

Ten eggs are all pure white, except where peat-stained, nearly equal at each end, or but very slightly pointed. Dimensions, 1·5 in. \times 1·1 in.

Majaqueus æquinoctialis, *Linn.*

Twelve eggs of a pure white colour (except where the granulations of the shell are filled up with the yellowish dirt from the burrows where they are deposited) have a more repulsively musky smell than any other eggs of the group. Length 3·2 in., breadth 2·1 in.

Æstrelata brevirostris, *Less.*

Two eggs of this species, badly cracked owing to their fragile texture, are of a pure dull white, nearly ovoidal in shape, and measure 2·15 in. \times 1·7 in.

Æstrelata lessoni, *Garnst.*

Eleven eggs of this species, of the characteristic dead white colour, have somewhat less of the musky smell than those of most of the burrowing Petrels. Length 2·75 in., breadth 1·85 in. Slightly pointed at smaller end.

Procellaria oceanica, *Kuhl.*

Nine eggs average 1·3 in. \times ·9 in., and are of a dull white colour, with minute purple-red spots which generally form a zone, usually, although not invariably, at the larger end; they are however at times distributed sparingly over the whole surface. There is not much difference between the shape of either end.

Prion desolatus.

Six eggs of the same character and texture as the preceding species, and distinguished by their greater length in proportion to breadth, the average of the former being 1·8 in.; nearly as much as in *Halobæna cærulea*, whilst the breadth is only 1·3 in.

Halobæna cærulea, Gm.

There are ten specimens in the collection, of the rough granulated texture, blunt ends torn, and dead-white colour, characteristic of the eggs of this family. There is no sign of a zone of rust-coloured markings, but there is the usual musky smell about the shell. They vary in dimensions a good deal, and as from the delicate nature of the shell, several specimens are total wrecks, it is not easy to take an exact average, but I am inclined to think that one of the above eggs belongs to the former species. 1·9 in. in length, and 1·5 in. in breadth, is tolerably close. The single egg is laid as early as 23rd October, onwards.

Diomedea fuliginosa, Gm.

There are two examples of this egg; white, spotted towards the larger end, so as to form a zone, with minute reddish marks. The egg is long in proportion to its breadth, being 4 in. \times 2·65 in.

Phalacrocorax verrucosus, Cab.

The six eggs are of the usual pale greenish blue, with the chalky incrustations characteristic of those of the Cormorant family. Average length 2·3 in., breadth 1·45 in.

Aptenodytes longirostris, Scop.

(Eggs noticed in MS., but none appear to be in collection.)

Pygoscelis tæniata, Peale.

A solitary egg of this species is of a pale blue thickly coated with calcareous matter. It measures 2·5 in. \times 2 in.

Eudyptes saltator.

Two eggs ascribed to this species differ considerably in size, the larger measuring 2·7 in. \times 2 in.; the other 2·4 in. \times 1·65 in. The colour is very pale blue with a white calcareous coating irregularly disposed over the surface. In shape they are somewhat pointed at one end.
