

ROSS'S GULL (*Rhodostethia rosia*, Macgill.)

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By Professor E. E. PRINCE, Ottawa.

My brief account of the scientific results of Dr. Nansen's Polar Expedition, which appeared in THE OTTAWA NATURALIST last November, has brought me many kind and interesting communications none more so than a letter from Dr. Otto J. Klotz who generously loaned to me a volume of the Report of the International Polar Expedition sent out by the United States Government in 1881. In this volume Dr. Klotz pointed out to me, occur two fine coloured plates of Ross's Gull, or the Roseate Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*, Macgill.) and my statement on p. 143, vol. 14 of this publication demands correction. I ventured to say that in the conjoint report of Dr. Nansen and Dr. Collett, on birds observed in the polar regions, there is given for the first time a fully detailed description of Ross's Gull with exquisitely tinted illustrative plates and I am indebted to Dr. Klotz for calling my attention to the real facts, and for enabling me to correct my statement. In matters of this kind rigid accuracy is above all things necessary and it is only just to the United States observer, Mr. John Murdoch to state that on pp. 123-4-5 of his report on the birds noticed during the International Polar Expedition, 1881-2-3 he gives a description of this rare species, and accompanies it by two tinted plates. Mr. Murdoch states that a large series of specimens was secured, and they appeared not sporadically and in scattered numbers, but in abundance on certain dates. Thus from September 28th to October 22nd, 1881, small flocks were seen moving north-east, their total numbers being so considerable that the observer speaks of them as exceedingly abundant. Next year about the end of September these gulls again appeared plentifully; but, curiously enough, they were all young birds as far as could be ascertained. Mr. Murdoch pertinently remarks that it is difficult to say what becomes of the thousands coming west, and proceeding along the Alaskan coast taking a north-easterly course. Of course the point of observation (Point Barrow) was nearly nine degrees of latitude south of Nansen's, which as I pointed out was in the Hirtenland waters, and its nesting grounds as Nansen sur-