

Genus **SURNIA**, *Dum.*

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* short, arched. *Disc* of the *head* small and incomplete. *Ears* small, oval. *Egrets* none. *Legs* very plumose. *Tail* elongated wedge-shaped.

**GREAT CINEREOUS OWL.**

*Strix Lapponica*, *Retz.*

*Strix cinerea*, *Gm.*

*Surnia cinerea*.

THOSE who would wish to visit the haunts of this noble species of Owl, one of the very finest of its race, must leave the abodes of civilization and penetrate into the dreary regions of the arctic circle, where nature wears her rudest and wildest dress, for it is an inhabitant of that portion of both continents; and although solitary individuals now and then make their appearance in Lapland, Norway, and Russia, yet it would appear that the northern parts of America are its true habitat, as in that truly scientific work the "Fauna Boreali-Americana," by Messrs. Swainson and Richardson, the latter gentleman informs us that "It is by no means a rare bird in the fur-countries, being an inhabitant of all the woody districts lying between lake Superior and latitudes 67° or 68°, and between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific. It is common on the borders of the Great Bear Lake; and there and in the higher parallels of latitude it must pursue its prey, during the summer months, by daylight. It keeps, however, within the woods, and does not frequent the barren grounds like the Snowy Owl, nor is it so often met with in broad daylight as the Hawk Owl, but hunts principally when the sun is low; indeed it is only at such times, when the recesses of the woods are deeply shadowed, that the American hare and the murine animals, on which the Cinereous Owl chiefly preys, come forth to feed."

Through the great intercourse which the Hudson's Bay Company has with the polar countries of America, this bird is more common, perhaps, in the cabinets of London than in those of any part of the Continent; we are not, however, aware that there is in London any other European specimen than the one from which our figure is taken, and which was kindly entrusted to our care for that purpose by our obliging friend the Baron de Feldegg of Frankfort.

To the countries above mentioned as the habitat of this species, we may add the extensive region reaching across the north of Siberia from Russia to Kamtchatka, which we may regard as the nursery from whence those individuals have strayed which have been killed in various parts of Europe. Of these instances M. Temminck mentions a specimen in the cabinet of Vienna and one in his own collection, both of which are females, and a male in the Museum of Paris, which was placed there by M. Paikul, a Swede; the latter, he states, measures twenty inches, and the one in his own collection two feet eight inches, being an admeasurement larger than that of the female of *Bubo maximus*.

Of its nidification we have no further information than that communicated by Dr. Richardson in the work above quoted; in which he informs us that he discovered a nest "on the top of a lofty balsam poplar, built of sticks, and lined with feathers. It contained three young, which were covered with a whitish down."

The sexes differ in size considerably, but in their markings are so similar that the description of one will serve for both.

The face is grey barred with concentric circles of brown; the whole of the upper surface, wings, and tail are grey, marked with bars and zigzag interlineations of blackish brown; the under parts are lighter than the upper, with longitudinal dashes and obscure bars of brown, especially on the thighs and flanks; beak yellow at the tip; tarsi feathered to the claws, and of the same colour as the under surface; claws black; irides bright yellow.

The Plate represents an adult male about three fourths of the natural size.