

Genus BUBO.

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* short, strong, curved and compressed at the point. *Nostrils* pierced in the cere, large, oval, or rounded. *Head* furnished with tufts of feathers. *Wings* rather short, concave, third and fourth quill-feathers generally the longest. *Legs* and *toes* covered with feathers, outer toe reversible; *claws* long, curved and sharp.

GREAT-HORNED OR EAGLE OWL.

Bubo maximus, *Sibbald*.

Le Hibou Grand-duc.

AMONG the species of this singular race belonging to Europe, the Great-horned or Eagle Owl holds the first place in point of size and in majesty of appearance; nor is it inferior, or if so, but slightly, to any known species from other parts of the world. It forms a typical example of the genus *Bubo*, a group distinguished by a tuft of elongated feathers above each eye, usually denominated ears, though, as may be seen, these plumes have no connexion whatever with the true organs of hearing.

The present division, as well as one or two others, the species of which possess bright yellow-coloured irides, appears to enjoy the power of vision to a greater extent either in dull daylight or by the bright light of the moon; and even during sunshine they are by no means so confused and distressed as their allies contained in the restricted genus *Strix*, possessing eyes, the pupils of which, capable of prodigious enlargement, adapt them more exclusively to the dusk of evening or the sombre darkness of night. The true habitat of this noble species is the more northern portions of Europe: M. Temminck states, that it is so extensively spread as to occur at the Cape of Good Hope. We have ourselves seen it in collections from China; and Dr. Latham adds, that it is found at Kamschatka as well as in the northernmost parts of America. Granting, however, that it is diffused thus extensively, still its true habitat appears to be among the large forests of the wild and desolate regions of Norway, and the parallel latitudes of Sweden and Russia. It is less common in Germany and Switzerland, and of rare occurrence in France and England; still, from the frequent captures of it that have been made in the British Islands, it may be classed among our birds, especially as it seems to be deterred from settling among us more by the want of secluded and unmolested retreats than by an uncongeniality of climate. The Great-horned Owl may likewise be considered as one of the most powerful of its race, boldly preying upon the largest game. Perched upon some branch, and obscured by the shadows of evening, it marks its ill-fated quarry,—the fawn reposing among the fern,—the hare nibbling the grass,—the grouse couching among the heath;—silently and rapidly down it pounces, strikes its talons into its victim, and commences the work of destruction. Less noble game, such as moles, rats, and lizards, may be also ranked among its articles of food.

This fine bird chooses the clefts of rocks, or the hollows of decayed trees of antique growth, for the purpose of nidification, laying three eggs of a rounded shape and white colour.

The female is larger than her mate, and her colours are more bright.

The upper surface of the body is a mingled blending of brown and yellow, with zigzag lines and bars; below the ground colour is yellow, with black longitudinal dashes on the chest, and fine transverse irregular bars over the whole of the rest of the plumage; irides bright fiery orange; beak and nails black. Length nearly two feet.

We are indebted to the Hon. Daniel Finch for an example of this fine Owl for illustration in this Work. Our figure is about three fourths of the natural size.