

Genus NAUCLERUS, *Vig.*

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* small, weak, considerably hooked, with a small and nearly obsolete festoon in the middle. *Orbits* and sides of the head thinly provided with feathers. *Wings* very long; the first and second quill-feathers internally emarginate towards the tip. *Tail* very long, and deeply forked. *Tarsi* very short, not longer than the hind toe and claw; plumed half way in front, the remaining portions covered with angulated scales. *Toes* short; the two lateral almost equal, the hinder nearly equal to the inner. *Claws* grooved beneath.

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE.

Nauclerus furcatus, *Vigors*.

La Milan de la Caroline.

Two examples of this elegant bird having been taken in this country, the first in Argyleshire, the second in Yorkshire, we have considered that it is entitled to be included among the Birds of Europe, and have accordingly given it a place here. We also agree with Mr. Vigors and Mr. Swainson that this bird requires to be separated generically from those of the genus *Elanus* of Savigny.

For a correct knowledge of the habits and manners of this handsome bird we are indebted to the ornithologists of the United States of America, in different parts of which at particular seasons of the year it appears to be very abundant. In the history of this species by Wilson and Mr. Audubon, many interesting details will be found, and as one or the other of these works are in the hands of every lover of nature and ornithology, we shall avail ourselves of the less perfectly known History of the Birds of the United States and Canada by Mr. Nuttall, who says, "This beautiful Kite breeds and passes the summer in the warmer parts of the United States, and is also probably resident in all tropical and temperate America, migrating into the southern as well as the northern hemisphere. In the former, according to Vieillot, it is found in Peru, and as far as Buenos Ayres; and though it is extremely rare to meet with this species as far as the latitude of 40 degrees in the Atlantic States, yet, tempted by the abundance of the fruitful valley of the Mississippi, individuals have been seen along that river as far as the Falls of St. Anthony, in the 44th degree of north latitude."

"They appear in the United States about the close of April or beginning of May, and are very numerous in the Mississippi territory, twenty or thirty being sometimes visible at the same time, often collecting locusts and other large insects, which they are said to feed on from their claws while flying; at other times also seizing upon the nests of locusts and wasps, and, like the Honey Buzzard, devouring both the insects and their larvæ. Snakes and lizards are their common food in all parts of America. In the month of October they begin to retire to the south, at which season Mr. Bartram observed them in great numbers assembled in Florida, soaring steadily at great elevations for several days in succession, and slowly passing towards their winter quarters along the Gulf of Mexico."

The flight of this bird is described as being smooth and graceful in the extreme, and it remains on wing nearly the whole of the day, roosting at night in high trees. The nest is usually placed among the top branches of the tallest oak or pine, and is formed of sticks, intermixed with moss and grass, lined with a few feathers. The eggs are from four to six in number, of a greenish white, with a few irregular blotches of dark brown at the large end. The young birds are at first covered with white down.

In the adult bird the beak is bluish black, the cere of a lighter blue, the irides dark; the whole of the head, neck, breast, and under surface of the wings, sides of the body, thighs and under tail-coverts pure white; the back, wings, primaries, secondaries, upper tail-coverts and tail-feathers black, with a purple metallic lustre, the tertials black on the outer webs, but patched with pure white on the inner; tail very deeply forked; legs and toes greenish blue; claws faded orange brown.

We have figured the bird of the natural size.