

PHALACROCORAX GRACULUS.

Crested Cormorant, or Shag.

Pelecanus graculus, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 217.

——— *cristatus*, Fab. Faun. Grœnl., p. 90.

Carbo cristatus, Temm. Man. d'Orn., 2nd edit., tom. ii. p. 900, tom. iv. p. 565.

Haliæus graculus, Licht. Verz. der Doubl. des zool. Mus. zu Berlin, p. 86.

Phalacrocorax graculus, Leach, Syst. Cat. of Indig. Mamm. and Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 34.

Hydrocorax graculus, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. viii. p. 87.

Carbo graculus, Meyer, Taschenb. deutsch. Vög., tom. ii. p. 578.

Phalacrocorax cristatus, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xiii. p. 83.

Pelecanus leucogaster, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., 2nd edit., tom. viii. p. 90.

Carbo brachyurus, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 822.

Graculus Linnæi, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 667, *Graculus*, sp. 6.

It is not solely amongst the feathered denizens of the calm and beautiful tropical forests that nature has scattered her gifts of ornamentation with unsparing hand; but in an impartial spirit has she also profusely adorned such groups as the Grebes, the Auks, the Penguins, and the Cormorants—birds inhabiting the watery wastes and surge-washed rocks of either hemisphere. What would this world be without ornament and variety? Would it not be tame and wearisome? Would even the two Cormorants which inhabit this island be half so interesting were their distinctive characteristics less conspicuous? Some species of this genus have an extensive tuft of feathers springing from the forehead, of which the bird here figured may be cited as an example; others, again, have numerous white striæ down the sides of the neck and chest, as seen in our well-known common Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*); while some of the foreign kinds have lengthened floating hair-like plumes springing from various parts of the body, as in the New-Zealand *P. punctatus*. I have long been of opinion that such ornaments are not given only for the purpose of attraction between the sexes, but that their presence is due, and consecutive, to certain physiological conditions connected with the pairing-season—inasmuch as it is during that period that such adornments are present in their finest colours, and often (as, indeed, in the present instance) not confined to one sex.

It is time, however, to turn to the bird here represented, and to state in what part of the British Islands it resides: I say resides; for it is really a resident, scarcely ever removing from the district or rock upon which it has taken up its abode, either in winter or summer. At one time (even so recently as when I was collecting specimens for the due illustration of my 'Birds of Europe') the bird was common at the Needles, in the Isle of Wight; but in that most southern and charming part of our south coast it does not now exist; or if it does, it is but sparingly; nor is it more plentiful along our southern and south-western coasts. On the other hand, it is as numerous as it has ever been in the northern parts of Scotland, in the Hebrides, and in Ireland, as will be seen by the accounts furnished by those excellent observers and elegant writers, Macgillivray and Thompson, the former of whom says:—

“The Crested Cormorant, which is generally distributed along our coasts and very abundant in many parts of Scotland, especially the western and northern islands, is a constant inhabitant, frequenting the caves and fissures of the rocky headlands and unfrequented islands. It reposes at night in these caverns or on shelves of the rocks, often in great numbers, being of a social disposition, but keeping apart from other birds. Its roosting-places are always rendered conspicuous by the great quantity of white dung with which they are crusted. It is pleasant to see them emerge from their abodes on some wild coast before sunrise, and silently wing their way in files towards their fishing-grounds. They fly with uninterrupted beats of their wings, keeping at an inconsiderable height, and scarcely ever crossing an isthmus however narrow. On arriving at some sandy bay or shallow strait, they alight in succession, coming heavily upon the water, shake themselves, and commence their search by immersing their heads. On perceiving an object, the Shag darts forward in a curve, rising out of the water, and then plunging headlong. Its agility in this element is astonishing; and it often remains submerged from one or two minutes. Its food consists of small fishes, such as the young of the coal-fish (*Gadus carbonarius*), which are extremely abundant on all our northern coasts, and among which it commits great havoc; the time of fishing is chiefly at the ebb. It is not nearly so shy as the Cormorant; and I have seen it pursuing its prey almost in the immediate neighbourhood of many persons who were fishing with small nets for the fry above mentioned; but even in such cases it keeps deep in the water, and is easily frightened away. It resorts in great numbers to the maritime