

the cause of their doing so or the means of disposing of such indigestible materials. As already mentioned, I found nothing whatever capable of sustaining life, although the stomachs were in each case greatly distended, the contents being closely matted together, and at least half an inch in diameter. I have never known the Horned Grebe to nest in Norfolk."

Audubon having had more opportunities of observing this bird in a state of nature than any English naturalist, I cannot do better than close my account of it with the following extract from his interesting 'Ornithological Biography'—

"The Horned Grebe is abundant, during autumn and winter, on the large rivers or inlets of the Southern States, but rare along the coasts of the middle or eastern districts. It is particularly fond of those streams of which the borders are overgrown by rank sedges and other plants, and are subject to the influx of the tide. In such places they enjoy greater security while searching for their food than in ponds, to which, however, they for the most part retire at the approach of the pairing-season, which commences early in February. At that time one might be apt to think that these birds could scarcely fly, as they are then rarely seen on the wing; but when they are pursued, and there happens to be a breeze, they rise from the water with considerable ease, and fly to a distance of several hundred yards. In December and January I have never procured any having the least remains of their summer head-dress; but by the 10th of March, when they are on their journey towards the north, the long feathers of the head are apparent. These tufts seem to attain their full development in the course of a fortnight or three weeks, the old birds becoming plumed sooner than the young, some of which leave the country in their winter dress.

"Although the greater number of these birds go far northward to breed, some remain within the limits of the United States during the whole year, rearing their young on the borders of ponds, particularly in the northern parts of the State of Ohio, in the vicinity of Lake Erie. Two nests which I found were placed about four yards from the water's edge, on the top of broken-down tussocks of rank weeds. The materials of which they were composed were of the same nature, and were rudely interwoven to a height of upwards of seven inches. They were rather more than a foot in diameter at the base, the cavity only four inches across, shallow, but more neatly finished with finer plants, of which a quantity lay on the borders, and was probably used by the bird to cover the eggs when about to leave them. There were five eggs in one nest and seven in the other; they measured one inch and three-quarters in length, by one inch and two and a half eighths; their shell was smooth and of a uniform yellowish cream-colour, without spots or marks of any kind. The nests were not fastened to the weeds around them; nor do I conceive it probable that they could be floated, as various writers assert they are at times."

"The food of the Horned Grebe, while on salt water, is composed of shrimps, small fishes, and minute mollusca; while on fresh water they procure insects, leeches, small frogs, tadpoles, and aquatic lizards; they also pick up the seeds of grasses, of which I found in the stomach of one individual as many as would fill the shell of one of its eggs. Their flight is performed by regular short flappings executed with great quickness."

When fully adult, both sexes are adorned with the beautiful tippet and ear-tufts; but as soon as the breeding-season is over they are again thrown off, and their livery is then very similar to that of the Dabchick (*Podiceps minor*). Two instances of this bird coming to an untimely end under unusual circumstances, have been made known to me. During one of my visits to the Leyden Museum, Professor Schlegel showed me some fine examples out of several which had dived into a fishing-net in one of the rivers of Holland and, being unable to extricate themselves, were drowned; and when in Canada, I saw many old males at the shop of Mr. Booth, at the Niagara falls, who told me that these birds often approach too near the upper part of the fall, and are carried over into the abyss below, meeting of course instant death, and are afterwards picked up from the surface of the whirling eddy by the men on board the small steamer which daringly traverses the turbulent caldron.

The Plate represents a male and a female in their summer plumage, with a nest and eggs, of the natural size. The accompaniments are a Bearded Tit (*Calamophilus biarmicus*), which is frequently found associated with this Grebe in the Old World, and the flowering bulrush (*Scirpus lacustris*, Linn.).