

CYGNUS MINOR.

Bewick's Swan.

- Cygnus olor* β . *minor*, Pall. Zoog. Rosso-Asiat., tom. ii. p. 214. no. 316.
—— *islandicus*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 832, tab. 41. fig. 1.
—— *minor*, Keys. & Blas. Wirbelth. Eur., p. 82.
—— *musicus minor*, Schleg. Rev. Crit. des Ois. d'Eur., p. 112.
—— *melanorhinus*, Naum. Vög. Deutsch., 1842, tom. xi. p. 497, tab. 297.
—— *musicus*. Faber, Prodr., p. 81.
—— *musicus* β , *minor*, Blas. List of Birds of Eur., Eng. edit. p. 204.
—— *Bewickii*, Yarr. Linn. Trans., vol. xvi. p. 445.
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ORNITHOLOGISTS are now very generally agreed that the little Swan to which the late Mr. Yarrell assigned the name of *Cygnus Bewickii*, but which had been previously discriminated as new to the British Fauna by Mr. R. R. Wingate, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, had for many years before been known to continental naturalists, and had received from them various specific appellations, the earliest appearing to be that of *Cygnus minor*, from Pallas, a term to which modern writers give the preference. I have therefore no hesitation in figuring the bird under the name of *C. minor*, but gladly retain for it the English appellation of Bewick's Swan; for surely there is no one of our departed naturalists who more highly deserves the perpetuation of his name,—not that my testimony to his merits is of any importance, since his own unsurpassed natural-history delineations will hand down his fame to all future times. Mr. Swinhoe states that he has seen the bird exposed for sale in the Shanghai markets, in China, just as it is in those of London and Norwich; and it was also observed by Von Middendorff and Von Schrenck in the countries visited by those celebrated naturalists—the Amoor, Siberia, &c.

The occurrences of Bewick's Swan in Great Britain are far too numerous to be enumerated in the present work, the character of which is to generalize rather than to go into minute detail; but I may mention that examples have been killed in Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, Durham, Somersetshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Derbyshire, and Lancashire, full particulars of which will be found in the 'Zoologist' and other similar publications. With respect to Cornwall Mr. Rodd remarks:—"This species was so long confounded with *C. ferus* as a small variety, that I have ventured to record it as Cornish; the distinctive characters of the two birds are beautifully illustrated in a series of anatomical engravings in Yarrell's third volume of his 'British Birds.'"

"In external appearance," remark Messrs. Jardine and Selby, "Bewick's Swan bears a very close resemblance to the Common Hooper, and upon a cursory view may be easily mistaken for a small variety of that bird, which, indeed, appears to have been the case. The detection of several specimens which have remained for many years in the collections of individuals as common Wild Swans shows that it is not a new comer, but may, with the Hooper, have visited this country for an indefinite period, though not in such numbers as the latter is known to do. The character which distinguishes Bewick's Swan from the Hooper consists in the great inferiority of size, the former being about a third less than the usual run of the latter:—the average length of *C. Bewickii* being three feet ten inches, the width six feet; the length of the Hooper being five feet, the width eight feet and upwards."

What has been said respecting the Whooper (*Cygnus ferus*) is in a general sense equally descriptive of the habits and manners of its smaller congener. They both, with but few exceptions, inhabit the same countries, are influenced by the same migratory impulses, arising from precisely the same causes, and their actions and economy are very similar. They are both denizens of the arctic portion of the Old World; but, contrary to what has been asserted, the *C. minor* does not appear to occur in Iceland, short of which it is probably found in all the arctic portions of Europe, Eastern Russia, and Siberia, whence it migrates southward when the severity of cold renders those countries untenable. In England we receive its visits much after the manner of those of the Whooper, but apparently in smaller numbers. In Ireland, where Thompson says it "is probably a regular winter visitant, it occurs more frequently" than with us. According to Macgillivray it visits Scotland annually at the same season, and appears to be more numerous or more easily obtained during severe or long-continued snow-storms. Mr. Stevenson concurs in Mr. Gurney's opinion that the *C. minor* is more marine in its habits than the *C. ferus*, never proceeding so far inland as its closely allied congener.

The last-named gentleman having kindly granted me permission to make extracts from the third volume