CIRCUS CINERACEUS.

Ash-coloured Harrier.

Falco cineraceus, Mont. Orn. Dict.

—— cinerarius, Mont. ibid. Supp.

—— cinerareus, Mont. Trans. of Linn. Soc., vol. ix. p. 188.

— cinerascens, Barb. Rev. Zool. 1838, p. 121.

—— hyemalis, Penn. Brit. Zool., edit. 1812, vol. i. p. 243.

Circus cinerarius, Leach, Syst. Cat. of Indig. Mamm. & Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 9.

—— cinerascens, Steph. Cont. Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. part ii. p. 41.

—— cineraceus, Naum. Vög. Deutschl., tom. i. p. 402, tab. 40.

— Montagui, Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. xxxi. p. 411.

—— cinereus, Kaup, Ueb. Falk. Mus. Senck., p. 258.

Buteo cineraceus, Flem. Hist. Brit. Anim., p. 55.

Strigiceps cineraceus, Bonap. Comp. List of Birds of Eur. and N. Amer., p. 3.

Circus (Glaucopteryx) cineraceus, Kaup, Classif. der Säug. und Vög., p. 113.

Glaucopteryx cinerascens, Kaup, Mon. Falc. in Jard. Orn. Cont., 1850, p. 58.

On a superficial view this species might be mistaken for the Hen Harrier, but a comparison of the two birds would soon prove to the most sceptical that it is really distinct; Dr. Kaup has gone so far as to make it the type of a different genus, to which he has given the name of Glaucopteryx. It is a smaller and consequently a lighter bird than the Hen Harrier; and its longer wings are crossed by a blackish bar; the markings of its tail are different in form and richer in colour, as are also the flanks and thighs; the bird is, moreover, subject to so many changes of plumage between youth and maturity that two specimens can rarely be found alike; the young males in particular are extremely variable, some being marked very like the female, while others are of a nearly uniform rufous brown, and others almost black. As to numbers, the two birds are pretty much on a par; and their distribution over England is very similar. Like the Hen Harrier, the present species was more common in former times; and it is now, I believe, more numerous than its ally—a circumstance which may be attributable to its greater powers of flight, and probably to its disposition to wander hither from other countries, to fill up, as it were, the void caused in its numbers by the destructive hand of the keeper. It is therefore occasionally to be met with in all parts of England, from the western county of Cornwall to as far north as Northumberland. In June 1867 Col. Napier Sturt submitted to me a fine female killed on Poole Heath, in Dorsetshire. Thompson remarks that "it is not known as an Irish species; nor has it a place among Scottish birds, according to Macgillivray and Jardine."

The examples of the Ash-coloured Harrier most frequently met with are in the plumage of immaturity; but individuals in the perfect grey dress are sometimes seen. In speaking of its general distribution over England, I of course mean in such districts as are suited to its habits and economy; for it would be as useless to seek it among our woodlands as to look for a Kite over the fens. Like the Hen Harrier, it loves the open country, whether it be the high fell or the low marsh, where it may readily procure the snakes, frogs, newts, and insects which constitute its favourite diet,—not that it refuses to prey upon moles, rats, and the young of rodents of a larger kind, the hare and the rabbit, to which may be added the youthful game-birds of all kinds, its propensity for killing which induces the keeper to include it in his list of vermin and to resort to every artifice for its destruction.

In other parts of the world apart from England the Ash-coloured Harrier is, I believe, both more numerous and more widely spread than the Hen Harrier. It is abundant in Holland and Holstein, and in all the fluviatile portions of the Continent from France to Bulgaria and the Crimea; and it is very generally distributed over North Africa, Asia Minor, and India, where, Mr. Jerdon informs us, he has found it in abundant in every part of the country.

dance in every part of the country.

As might be supposed, the flight of this species is very similar to that of the Hen Harrier; but Mr. Selby

Speaking of Circus cineraceus as seen in Norfolk, Mr. Stevenson says "it is certainly less rare than is generally supposed, and has been known to breed with us in several instances of late years; previously to the entire drainage of the south-western fens, this Harrier was not only the most plentiful in that locality, but was the last to quit altogether those once favourite haunts." For many details respecting the nesting of this species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county, I must refer my readers to the first volume of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county of Mr. Stevenson's species and the specimens taken in the county of Mr. Stevenson's specimens t

'Birds of Norfolk,' p. 40.

Mr. Alfred Newton states, in his 'Ootheca Wolleyana,' that Vipers, of Upware, in Cambridgeshire, told

THE RESIDENCE OF THE PARTY OF T