## ASTUR PALUMBARIUS.

## Goshawk.

Falco gentilis, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 20.

— palumbarius, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 23.

— gallinarius, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 266.

— albescens, Bodd. Tab. Pl. Enl., p. 25.

Astur palumbarius, Bechst. Taschenb. Vög. Deutschl., tom. ii. p. 268.

— gallinarum, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., tom. i. p. 83.

Accipiter astur, Pall. Zoogr. Rosso-Asiat., tom. i. p. 367, tab. 11.

— palumbarius, Jenyns, Man. Brit. Vert. Anim., p. 85.

Buteo palumbarius, Flem. Hist. Brit. Anim., p. 54.

Dædalion palumbarius, Savig. Obs. sur le Syst. des Ois. d'Egypte, p. 94.

The many instances on record of the breeding and capture of this truly noble species of Hawk in the midland and eastern counties of England and in Scotland, preclude its being regarded as one of our rarer birds; at the same time how difficult would it be to say with certainty when and where it may be seen with us in a state of nature? A pair or more, if fortunate enough to escape the vigilance of the keeper, may this year establish themselves in a suitable locality, breed, and rear their young; the next, a similar attempt would be rendered futile by their destruction; and a somewhat lengthened period may elapse before others arrive from the great nurseries of France, Germany, and Scandinavia.

According to Mr. Rodd, the Goshawk has not been killed in Cornwall; and the late Mr. Thompson informs us that it "cannot be included in the Irish fauna with certainty;" yet it would seem, from the writings of some old authors, to have been formerly common in the northern part of that country. In Scotland it formerly bred regularly in the forest of Darnaway, and in that of Glenmore, near Grantown, on the Spey; and it may still do so. In 'The Ibis' for 1865, Mr. A. G. More says:—"Mr. Tottenham Lee states, in Dr. Morris's 'Naturalist' for 1853, that a pair once took possession of a Raven's nest in Roxburghshire, and that he had heard of another nest in the same county. Mr. Robert Gray, of Glasgow, who knew Mr. Lee, tells me that he was perfectly familiar with birds of prey, and was not likely to make a mistake as to the species.

"Macgillivray appears to have met with the Goshawk occasionally among the Grampians; and Montagu quotes Colonel Thornton as having obtained a young one from near the Spey, and as having seen some eyries in the forest of Glenmore and Rothiemurchus. Mr. W. Dunbar also writes that, when he was a boy, it 'used to breed regularly in the woods of Castle Grant, and in Abernethy and Dulnane forests.'"

Other instances of its occurrence in Britain have been mentioned by writers on our native birds, many of which are probably authentic. The Rev. F. O. Morris records one in Yorkshire, two in Suffolk, one in Norfolk, four in Northumberland, and one in Surrey. Dr. Moore states that it has been occasionally found on Dartmoor, in Devonshire; and Mr. Stevenson informs us, in his 'Birds of Norfolk,' that it appears occasionally in that county both in spring and autumn, but at uncertain intervals, and that it has of late years become more scarce than formerly; and he subjoins a list of some seven individuals that had been killed therein.

I have myself had the pleasure of handling in the flesh two of the finest specimens of this bird I have ever seen: one of these was killed on the 24th of January, 1859, at Somerleyton, in Suffolk, by a keeper of Sir S. Morton Peto, Bart.; the other, which was submitted to my inspection by Mr. B. Leadbeater on the 29th of March, 1864, had been shot at Normanby Park, Brigg, Lincolnshire, on the 24th of that month. The Suffolk bird was killed while I was on a visit to Sir Morton Peto, and was placed in my hands immediately after it was shot. It was a female of the previous year, just commencing to change its feathers, weighed two pounds fourteen ounces, and, although an immature example, the lengthened lanceolate markings of the breast greatly pleased me. It had been seen in the neighbourhood for some time previously; and the keeper had more than once shot at and slightly wounded it; notwithstanding, it did not become shy, but evinced a degree of intrepidity very unusual among birds of prey, almost daily leaving the woods and flying skulkingly up the lanes to the farm steadings, just overtopping the buildings, and pouncing down upon a hen or poult as opportunity served—the great scurry, consternation, and cackling of the mother hens bringing the housewife to the door just in time to see one of her feathered charges taken over the wall: once too often, however, was the foray made; for the keeper was in waiting and shot the culprit. This fine bird has been carefully preserved, and, I believe, is still at Somerleyton Hall, now the property of Sir Francis Crossley, Bart.

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