

PANDION HALIAËTUS.

Osprey.

- Falco haliaëtus*, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 22.
—— *piscator*, Briss. Orn., tom. i. p. 361.
—— *arundinaceus*, Gmel. ed. Linn. Syst. Nat., vol. i. p. 263.
Pandion haliaëtus, Cuv. Règn. Anim., edit. 1817, tom. i. p. 316.
—— *fluviatilis*, Savig. Deser. de l'Égypte, Hist. Nat., tom. i. p. 96.
—— *ichthyaëtus*, Kaup, Classif. der Säug. und Vög., p. 122.
—— *alticeps*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., tom. i. p. 33.
—— *planiceps*, Brehm, ib., tab. 2. fig. 3.
—— *indicus*, Hodgk. Journ. Asiat. Soc. Beng., 1837, p. 366.
Aquila haliaëtus, Meyer, Taschenb. Deutsch. Vög., tom. i. p. 23.
—— *balbuzardus*, Dum. Dict. des Sci. Nat., tom. i. p. 351.
Accipiter haliaëtus, Pall. Zoog. Rosso-Asiat., tom. i. p. 355.
Balbusardus haliaëtus, Flem. Hist. of Brit. Anim., p. 51.
Triorches fluviatilis, Leach, Syst. Cat. of Indig. Mamm. and Birds in Brit. Mus., p. 10.

NOTWITHSTANDING the persecution to which this interesting bird has been subjected, especially of late years, a persecution so unrelenting that it has almost amounted to its extirpation from the British Islands, the Osprey still forms a part of their avifauna, especially of that portion of them denominated Scotland, and will ever remain associated with the fine lochs and deserted castles of that country. At the head of that queen of Scottish lochs, Assynt, there still stands the crumbling castle of Ardvreck; but no longer does the Osprey come to it in spring, rear its young on its turrets, and again depart in the autumn; no longer does the Fish-hawk circle over that fine sheet of water; no longer can the tourist have the pleasure of seeing the Fishing Eagle hovering over a trout, or witness its unerring stoop; no longer need he direct his glass towards the highest tower of the fine old castle, for the eyry of the Osprey is no longer there, the last pair having been ruthlessly killed about 1860; so says Mr. Sutherland, the landlord of the Tourist's Inn. The same remarks apply with equal force to many, if not to all the other Lochs, the neighbourhood of which was formerly the Osprey's summer home. Lochs Lomond, Maree, Awe, and Loch Fyne, with its ruined castle of Dunderaw, have lost their summer visitant, and their waters are no longer disturbed by the plunge of the Leaden Eagle, as it is sometimes termed. How much do I regret to write in this strain respecting one of the finest of our indigenous birds! but change in the destiny of birds as well as of man appears to be one of nature's laws. My readers may here naturally ask, Well, then, what other countries does the bird inhabit? This is a question not easily answered; for naturalists are divided in opinion as to whether there is one, two, or three species of this particular form, individuals of which are so universally distributed over the globe that there are few countries wherein they are not found. From Europe to the Cape of Good Hope, from India to the southern limit of Australia, and in most of the temperate portions of America north of the line, Ospreys, either identical with or nearly allied to our own, are as plentiful as they used to be in Scotland. In the absence of castles and ruined buildings, they take up their abode on rocky promontories, the giant branches of old trees bordering the bays and larger inlets of the seas, and in rocky islands in the centres of lakes and lagoons. There, as with us, they construct a large nest in the midst of a platform of sticks and herbage, deposit two beautifully blotched eggs, hatch and bring up their young, just as they would do here.

It must be understood that the forcible expressions I have employed respecting the destruction of the Osprey have special reference to the bird in its former breeding-haunts in Scotland during the months of summer; for the Osprey is still frequently seen during autumn in many parts of Britain, and on most of our larger rivers and sheets of water from north to south; but these are probably birds of the year which have been bred in Norway or some part of the Continent, and driven out of their proper track during their southern migration. Such birds are easily recognizable by having the feathers of the upper surface more lanceolate in form than in the adult, and margined all round with white.

The Duke of Argyll, in a note to me dated June 13, 1863, says:—

“I was much interested by seeing a fine Osprey the other day, hawking over the Dee, near Balmoral. I had never seen this bird alive before, so rare has it now become in Scotland. His hovering, Kestrel-like, over the pools of the river was very peculiar; but the movement or, rather, the cessation of movement was