Genus PELECANUS.

Gen. Char. *Beak* longer than the head, long, straight, broad, much depressed; the upper mandible channelled, the tip bent down and unguiculated; the lower bifurcate, furnished with a flaccid dilatable sac. *Face* and *throat* naked. *Nostrils* basal, placed in a longitudinal cleft. *Legs* strong, short; the tibiæ naked at the base; the middle claw with its inner edge entire.

PELICAN.

Pelecanus Onocrotalus, *Linn.*

Le Pélican blanc.

Those of our readers who are desirous of seeing this noble bird in a state of nature need only pay a visit to the southern and eastern portions of Europe to gratify their laudable curiosity. Although the tropical climates of Africa and India constitute its natural habitat, nevertheless the eastern rivers of Europe, such as the Danube and Volga, the extensive lakes of Hungary and Russia, and the shores of the Mediterranean, are places in which it dwells in abundance. It is a species strictly confined to the Old World, over a great portion of which it is plentifully distributed. M. Temminck, who quotes the *Pelecanus Philippensis* as synonymous with this bird, states that individuals sent him from Egypt and South Africa do not differ from those taken in Europe.

The *Pelecanus Onocrotalus* is a very large species, measuring nearly five feet in length, and from tip to tip of the wings, when spread, about twelve or thirteen feet, and is remarkable both for longevity and for the long period requisite for the completion of its plumage. The first year's dress is wholly brown; the feathers of the back and breast being broad and rounded. The assumption of the lanceolate feathers, and the rosy tints that pervade the plumage of the adults are only acquired as the bird advances in age; and, judging from individuals which we have opportunities of noticing in a state of partial confinement, it would appear that a lapse of five or six years is required before it may be considered fully mature.

The food of the Pelican is fish of all kinds, in the capture of which it displays considerable activity and cunning; and, although its robust body and immense bill would seem to contradict the assertion, its motions are so quick that even young fry and eels can scarcely escape its vigilance. The same power that renders it so light and buoyant on the water denies it the means of diving, consequently it is only the small and shallow inlets of rivers that are resorted to when in search of its food. Occasionally, however, it will rise to a considerable height in the air, from whence, on perceiving a fish, it descends with astonishing swiftness and unerring aim, the rapidity of its descent forcing it beneath the surface, on which its extreme lightness causes it to reappear instantaneously.

The female constructs a nest on the ground, of coarse reedy grass, generally about a foot and a half in diameter, and lined with soft grass, laying two or more eggs, which are white, and like those of the Swan, During the period of incubation it is extremely assiduous in procuring food for its young, carrying it to them in the capacious pouch or gullet which forms so conspicuous a feature in this bird, and which is "one of the most remarkable appendages that is found in the structure of any animal. Though it contracts nearly into the hollow of the jaws, and the sides to which it is attached are not (in a quiescent state) above an inch asunder, it may be extended to an amazing capacity; and when the bird has fished with success, its size is almost incredible: it will contain a man's head with the greatest ease. In fishing, the Pelican fills this bag, and does not immediately swallow his prey; but, when this is full, he returns to the shore to devour at leisure the fruits of his industry." (Shaw's General Zoology, vol. xiii. Part I. p. 111.)

The Pelican bears confinement remarkably well, particularly if space sufficient be allowed for it to plume and wash itself. Fish either dead or alive are voraciously devoured; and fish in plenty obtained, it appears content and satisfied.

Although it possesses the power of perching on trees, yet it gives the preference to rocky shores, which appear to form the best and most natural situation when in a state of repose. On level ground its walk is awkward and inelegant, and when on wing its flight is heavy and apparently effected with great labour.

Along the top of the upper mandible runs a line of crimson, the remainder being reddish at the base and yellowish at the tip; the under mandible pale red; the pouch reddish yellow; the naked spaces around the eyes are flesh colour; the occiput is slightly crested; the whole of the plumage is white, tinged more or less with salmon colour, with the exception of the crest and a few pendulous feathers attached to the lower part of the neck, which are pale yellow, and the primaries and spurious wings, which are black; legs flesh colour; claws grey; irides hazel. The salmon-coloured tint which pervades the whole of the plumage is considerably heightened during the breeding-season.

We have figured an adult male about one third of the natural size.