

EARED GREBE.

Podiceps auritus, Lath.

Le Grêbe oreillard.

LIKE the rest of the family, whose locomotive powers are ill adapted for land, the Eared Grebe inhabits the water as its native element ; not only obtaining its food there, but also carrying on the whole process of incubation, constructing a floating nest, composed of water-plants rudely matted together, which falls and rises with the influx and reflux of the waves. In size, the *Podiceps auritus* is somewhat less than the Sclavonian Grebe, or *P. cornutus*, from which it may readily be distinguished by the absence of the chestnut-coloured neck and rufous stripe which passes from the base of the bill through the eye to the occiput.

The present species may be considered as one of the rarest of the genus in this country ; but we are led to suppose, from the seasons in which it is taken, that it sometimes resorts to our inland waters for the purpose of breeding. The female lays about four eggs, of a dirty white colour. The young differ very considerably from the adult ; the characteristics of which we have faithfully portrayed in the annexed Plate, where it will be seen that the prevailing colour of the immature bird is a uniform grey on the upper surface, with a silvery appearance spreading over the whole of the under parts.

Reasoning from analogy, we may suppose that the *Podiceps auritus* undergoes the same variations at different seasons of the year which we know to take place in the other species of the genus ; gaining its darker colour and ornamented ear-feathers only as the breeding season advances. When this period is past, and during the winter, we believe the adult to bear a close resemblance in plumage to the young of the year which have not yet undergone any change. The male and female offer but little difference.

M. Temminck informs us that it is extremely rare both in the marshes and on the coasts of Holland, its native locality appearing to be more especially confined to the rivers and fresh waters of the North of Europe.

Its food consists of small fishes, crustaceous animals, the larvae of water insects, &c.

The bill is black ; the irides bright red ; the ear-feathers long and silky, radiating from the eye to the occiput, and of a light glossy chestnut ; the head ornamented with a short full crest, which, with the throat, neck, and upper surface, is of a uniform blackish brown. The quill-feathers dark brown, secondaries white ; sides of the rump dark chestnut brown. The whole of the under surface a pure silvery white ; legs greenish-black.

Weight thirteen ounces ; length twelve inches and a half.