

HORNED GREBE.

Podiceps cornutus, Lath.

Le Grêbe cornu, ou Esclavon.

THIS beautiful Grebe is one of the rarest of those that occasionally visit the British Islands, particularly when it is adorned with the richly coloured plumes which characterize it in the adult state, a stage in which we have illustrated both sexes. We would however observe, that this fine plumage is only confined to the birds during the breeding season; at other seasons the plumage is less diversified, the frill and horns being alike absent, and the chestnut colouring of the neck being exchanged for greyish white; in this stage as well as that of the young it has been termed the *Podiceps obscurus*, *Podiceps caspicus*, &c. It is in the latter state that it is most frequently seen on our shores, and in which it so closely resembles the young of *Podiceps cristatus* as to require minute attention in order to distinguish them. To this difference we have alluded in the description of *Podiceps auritus*.

Of all the Grebes, the present has the widest range of habitat, extending itself throughout the whole of the arctic circle, seldom venturing further south than the British Isles in Europe, and the middle of the United States in the American continent. Like all other species of its genus, it seems to prefer inland lakes adjacent to the sea, and the mouths of large rivers; but still it is often found along low flat shores of the sea.

In its nidification it agrees strictly with its congeners, constructing a nest of such water-plants as abound on the spot in the lake where it resides; the nest being always on the surface of the water, attached to the strong reeds which rise from the bottom and secure it in its position. The eggs are four in number, of a dull white, exhibiting stains from the weeds upon which they repose.

The plumage of summer may be thus characterized. The top of the head, back of the neck, and upper surface black, with a slight tinge of green; a stripe of light chestnut which takes its origin from the base of the beak, and passes through the eye, is spread over two tufts of silky feathers, which rise like horns on each side of the occiput; the feathers of the cheeks are lengthened and spread out into a beautiful frill of a rich greenish black; the fore part of the neck and edges of the flanks of a rich chestnut; the under surface silvery white; tarsi and feet dull olive, with the exception of the anterior and posterior edges of the former, which are yellow; beak black, tipped with yellow; irides crimson.

The female strictly resembles the male, except that her size is rather less, the plumes less brilliant, and the ornament of the head less developed.

The Plate represents a male and female of the natural size.