WHISTLING SWAN, OR HOOPER.

Cygnus ferus, *Ray.*

La Cygne à bec jaune ou sauvage.

We refer to the present species of wild swan by the name of Whistling Swan, or Hooper, in order to distinguish it from two other species of wild swans which have recently been added to this genus, one of which, an occasional visitor to England, Ireland, and other parts of Europe, we have figured in this work. The term Hooper has the advantage of referring to a peculiar character of the voice in the present bird, which is as yet considered to be specific: its usual call-note resembles the sound of the word *hoop*, loudly and harshly uttered several times in succession.

The Hooper has usually been considered an inhabitant of North America, but anatomical examination of the two species of wild swans most numerous there proves that they are both distinct from the Hooper; and it will probably be found that this last-named species is exclusively confined to the northern parts of Europe and Asia.

The Hooper is only a winter visitor in England or in the southern countries of the European continent, and the number seen there during that season of the year generally bears some proportion to the degree of severity in the weather. During long-continued frosts large flocks are not uncommon, and our markets afford numerous examples; but in mild winters few are obtained or even seen. The summer residence of the Hooper is within the Arctic circle, in Iceland, Scandinavia, and the most northern countries of Europe. Formerly a few pairs were known to rear their young among the islands of Shetland and Orkney, and even in Sutherlandshire. In a half-domesticated state, with pinioned wings, the Hooper breeds about the lakes and islands in the parks of some English noblemen, but it does not, in such situations, associate much with the Domestic Swan, which is the more usual monarch of ornamental waters.

The food of the Hooper are aquatic plants and insects, feeding in shallow water: it makes a large nest on the ground, collecting leaves, rushes, or flags, and lays six or seven whitish eggs, which are tinged with a yellowish green; the length of the egg four inches, the breadth two inches and three quarters. The parent bird sits six weeks: the young are at first of a uniform dark grey, acquiring a white plumage by slow degrees about the time of completing their second autumn moult, previous to which the dark anterior part of the beak is not decidedly black; the base of the beak and the cere are more of a fleshy tint than yellow, and the legs are also lighter in colour than those of the old birds.

The adult female only differs from the male in being smaller, and the neck is more slender.

In the adult male the plumage is perfectly white, if we except an occasional tinge of buff-colour on the top of the head; the beak black, the base and cere yellowish orange, this colour extending forwards along the edges of the upper mandible as far as the line of the most anterior part of the nostrils, and posteriorly surrounding the eyes; irides brown; the legs and feet black; the whole length of the bird about five feet; the breadth with extended wings nearly eight feet.

The papers of Dr. Latham and Mr. Yarrell in the Transactions of the Linnean Society of London, on the organs of voice in birds, contain descriptions and figures of internal peculiarities by which the species of Swans most likely to be confounded may be readily distinguished.

The Plate represents an adult about one third of the natural size.