

ORD. III. GENUS IX. SWAN.

BILL, arched above, flat beneath, finishing with a nail at the end forming a small hook, and edged with teeth.

NOSTRILS, oval, and situate under the arch of the bill, at a distance from the head.

TONGUE, broad, flat, indented at the edges, and fleshy.

TOES, three before, united by a broad web; hind toe small.

SPECIES I. WHISTLING SWAN.

Pl. 237.

Anas Cygnus ferus. *Lin. Syst.* I. p. 194.

Le Cygne sauvage. *Brif. Orn.* VI. p. 292.

The whistling swan, or hooper, as it is sometimes called from the noise it makes, weighs about sixteen pounds, is five feet in length, and seven in breadth. The neck is three feet long, and very slender. The end of the beak is black; the upper part of it, and the naked space between it and the eye, are of a pale orange colour, bounded above by a narrow fillet of black feathers: the eye-lids are yellow: eyes, grey brown: the whole of the plumage glossy white: legs black. This bird is singular in having a flexible joint about the middle of the upper mandible.

This species visits the northern parts of Scotland in winter, and, if the cold be very severe, sometimes proceeds to the southern parts of England. In 1788, I had the pleasure of seeing thirty of these graceful majestic birds alight in the water in the front of my house near Feversham, in Kent. Their continuance was but short, as the loud and shrill cry they made attracted at least fifty men to pursue them, who scarcely gave them time to wet their beaks. By this faculty of uttering a loud cry it is strikingly distinguished from the tame, or mute swan, which is capable of nothing more than a hiss, or a slight cackle. This is supposed to be owing to the difference in their windpipes; that of the whistling swan being reflected back again, like the tube of a trumpet, after it has entered the chest a little way, and dividing into two branches, to join the lungs, after it has entered the chest a second time. The food of this species consists principally of herbs, which its toothed bill is well adapted for cutting. It breeds chiefly in the more northern parts of Europe, though a few make their nests on the islets in the fresh-water lakes of some of the Orkney Isles. For the egg see Pl. LI.