

## THE OSPREY.



THE osprey is widely spread, being dispersed over Europe and a great part of Asia, as well as North America, but is everywhere a bird of passage. Being strictly piscivorous, it is only in the vicinity of lakes and rivers, and along the coast, that it is ordinarily met with. In Eng-

gorge or egress of the river Awe. On the continent this bird annually visits the larger rivers and lakes of Russia, Germany, and the middle districts of Europe, whence it passes southwards on the approach of winter. In its habits it appears to be partially gregarious, several pairs associating together, and in harmony pursuing their occupation. In America, the fish-hawk, according to



HEAD OF OSPREY.

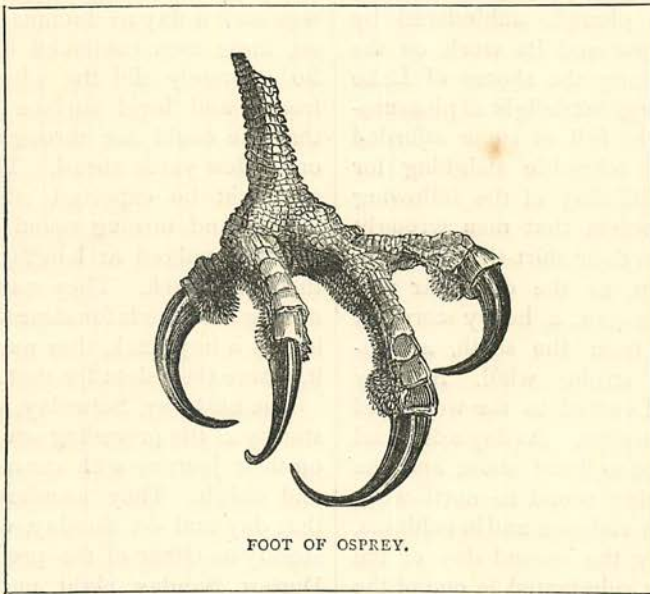
land, according to Montagu, this bird is more abundant in Devonshire than in any other district. In Ireland it occasionally visits the lakes of Killarney. In Scotland it appears to be more common. Mr. Selby observed several on Loch Lomond, where they are said to breed, and upon Loch Awe, where an eyrie is annually established upon the ruins of a castle near the southern extremity of the lake, and another in a similar situation nearly opposite to the

Wilson, arrives on the coasts of New York and New Jersey about the 21st of March, and retires to the south about the 22nd of September. "On the arrival of these birds in the northern parts of the United States of America in March, they sometimes find the bays and ponds frozen, and experience a difficulty in procuring fish for many days; yet there is no instance on record of their attacking birds or inferior land-animals with intent to feed on them, though their

great strength of flight, as well as of feet and claws, would seem to render this no difficult matter. To the white-headed eagle the arrival of these fish-hawks brings promise of gain; we have shown the tyrannical conduct of the former; sometimes, however, a number of the fish-hawks make common cause against their oppressors, and succeed in driving them from the scene of action. The first appearance of the fish-hawk in spring is welcomed by the fishermen as the happy signal of the approach of those vast shoals of herring, shad, etc., that regularly arrive on the coast, and

first appearance ideas of plenty and all the gaiety of business; they see it active and industrious like themselves; inoffensive to the productions of their farms building with confidence, and without the least disposition to concealment, in the middle of their fields and along their fences, and returning year after year regularly to its former abode."

The osprey breeds in May; and both parents are devoted to their young, defending them from any assailant with indomitable resolution, and using both beak and talons with terrible effect. The young are generally three in number.



FOOT OF OSPREY.

enter the river in prodigious multitudes. Two of a trade, it is said, seldom agree: the adage, however, will not hold good in the present case, for such is the respect paid to the fish-hawk, not only by this class of men, but generally by the whole neighbourhood where it resides, that a person who should attempt to shoot one of them would stand a fair chance of being insulted. This prepossession in favour of the fish-hawk is honourable to their feelings. They associate with its

The eggs are yellowish-white, irregularly spotted with yellowish-brown.

The whole structure of this bird is most beautifully and admirably adapted to its habits. The outer toe is flexible, and can be turned either way, so as to enable it to clutch what it seizes firmly; the claws are strong, curved, and sharp, and it has a peculiar roughness in the soles of its feet, by which it is secured from dropping its slippery prey.