PART SECOND

UPLAND GAME BIRDS AND WATER FOWL OF THE UNITED STATES.

BY A. POPE, JR.

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THE GREEN-WINGED TEAL

Querquedula caeolinensis (Gmelin) Stephens.

In the presence of the opposite plate it would be superfluous to dilate upon the varied and brilliant tints of the plumage of this handsome little duck, and useless to repeat a technical description of the characteristics of the bird’s form and plumage. Let that be reserved for the systematic works.

The Green-winged Teal is one of the best known of all our fresh-water ducks, since it is commonly met with over the whole of North America in spring and fall, during its passage between its winter home in Mexico and the West Indies, and its breeding grounds north of Lake Superior. It reaches the Middle States early in the Spring, about the time of the breaking up of the ice, and passes on hurriedly, being filled with a desire to begin the duties of incubation.

The nest of this teal has rarely been found within the United States except about the Great Lakes, but it is not uncommonly met with in the British Provinces, Canada, and thence northward to the Arctic Ocean. Its nest is built early in June, and is placed on the ground in a thick tuft of grass, usually among the reeds and rank growth lining the bank of some stream or pond. It is constructed of, first, a thick layer of soft pieces of grass and weeds, on which is placed a thin covering of the down and feathers from the breast of the bird.

The eggs are about eight in number, and somewhat less than two inches in length. Their color is dull greenish-white.

Its arrival in August or early September marks the beginning of the autumnal duck-shooting, and it quickly becomes numerous on all the little ponds and reedy streams, as well as in the bayous that overflow the low shores of the large lakes and rivers of the Western States. In such situations the gunner finds these ducks in small flocks which keep together, so that frequently three or four may be killed at a single discharge. Their food consists of the seeds of aquatic plants, water-insects and their larvae, small mollusks, the tadpoles of frogs, and other, varying with the season. The flesh is therefore well flavored, and ranks high on the epicure’s list. Teals are not as shy as most of the wild ducks, and Mr. Samuels tells us that he has often seen them, not only swimming fearlessly in the farmer’s duck-pond, but even mingling with farm-yard fowls and taking their share of the corn.

In the water this little bird is graceful in motion, though moving about with great activity. “Its flight is rapid, and accompanied with a whistling murmur different from that of most of our other ducks.” By the end of October all have gone southward.

This Green-winged Teal was supposed by the early ornithologists to be identical with the European duck of the same name, which occurs as an occasional straggler to this country, and is the Querquedula crecca of Linnaeus. We have also in this country two other teal-ducks—the Blue-winged (Querquedula discors), and the Cinnamon or Red-breasted Teal (Querquedula cyanoptera). The former is found everywhere eastward of the Rocky Mountains, and northward to Alaska, breeding at a more southern latitude than the Greenwing, while the red-breasted species is confined to the Pacific slope. Their habits differ very little from those of our subject, and no better picture of teal-life generally is to be found than that reminiscence of a November day in Arizona—where all three species meet—which Dr. Elliott Coues records in his “Birds of the Northwest.”

“It is a pleasant sight to see the birds before us—perhaps within a few paces if we have very carefully crawled through the rushes to the verge—fancying themselves perfectly secure. Some may be quietly paddling in and out of the sedge on the other side, daintily picking up the floating seeds that were shaken down when the wind rustled through, stretching up to gather those still hanging, or to pick off little creatures from the seared stalks. Perhaps a flock is floating idly in midstream, some asleep, with the head resting close on the back, and the bill buried in the plumage. Some others swim vigorously along, with breasts deeply immersed, tasting the water as they go, straining it through their bills to net minute insects, and gabbling to each other their sense of perfect enjoyment. But let them appear never so careless they are quick to catch the sound of coming danger and take alarm; they are alert in an instant; the next incautious movement or snapping of a twig startles them; a chorus of quacks, a splashing of feet, a whirling of wings, and the whole company is off.”
THE AMERICAN SNIPE.

GALLINAGO WILSOXI (Temminck) Bonaparte.

"Have you heard a Snipe yet?" is the sportsman's greeting— during all those March days when the first warm breath of spring is felt from the south. But it is only after the subterranean ice in the meadows has been entirely dissipated, that the Snipe comes. "When the buds of the willow trees display their yellowish verdure," write Frank Forester, "and the chirping croak of the frogs rises from every swampy pond, we may feel confident that he is to be found on the meadows; but not until the shad is abundant at the mouths of our rivers, is the Snipe plentiful on the inland morasses." They come in little wisp, or one at a time, first to the salt marshes and mouths of the seacoast brooks, then, very likely borne upon the wing's of an easterly rain-storm, they ascend the rivers, and for a few days people the upland bogs with a squeaking host, where long and tussocky grass affords protection against the weather and refuge in time of alarm. But they are exceedingly restless and capricious at this season, frequently abandoning the meadows altogether for the skirts of the nearest woodlands, willow, alder, or briar brakes, or wherever else there may be springy ground sheltered from the wind. Forester declares this practice to be utterly at variance with that of the British Snipe.

"It is during this season of mating in spring that the actions of the male birds are so remarkable and interesting. Rising in the air to a great height, they dart and twist about with wonderful agility, dropping plumb down from time to time in the midst of these eccentric gyrations, and producing, as they descend, a thrumming noise, possibly caused by forming the wing into a sort of dEolian harp." At this moment of dropping is uttered their jar-ring, bleating love-note, which is very different from their ordinary shrill "scalp;" and after descending from these aerial performances, they invariably settle upon some elevated object, a tree-stump or fence-rail,—and cackle like laying pullets, instead of alighting in the grass, and thereafter drop into the rushes. Walking through the bogs where the water has scarcely gone from the ooze, you will see the rich vegetable loam pitted with little holes. These show where feeding Snipes have thrust in their sensitive bills, not to suck nutriment from the mud, as used to be thought, but to probe for the worms, leeches, and other small insects upon which these birds subsist. Very few Snipes breed within our borders, the majority not pausing until they reach the seclusion of the vast marshes in British America, and some penetrating even to Alaska. The nest is a mere depression in the grass or moss of a boggy meadow, and the three or four eggs are pattern in outline, and about one and one-half inches in length. The ground-color is grayish-brown, with many heavy, splashed markings of deep brown, most crowded at the larger end, and over them struggling lines of pure black. The down of the fledglings is marked with white, gray, and tints of brown.

It's when the Snipes come pouring into our meadows with the earliest frosts, that the best sport of shooting them begins. Their flesh now that they are fat and lazy, is sweet, juicy, and tender, and not to be compared with the dry and sinewy meat of the busy spring birds. The sportsman now goes to the marshes to meet them, choosing as the best time those soft, moist, silver mornings, which so often follow slight frosty nights, when the weather is covered with the thinnest film of haze, through which the sunbeams are poured down warm but mellow. But even in bad weather the birds are there, although when it is storming one must be well acquainted with all their habits to fill his game-bag. The first maxim of Snipe-shooting, approved from Forester down, is to approach down the wind. This is because the Snipe, when flushed, rising about breast high, hangs on the air a little before he gathers wing, and then darts away up wind if possible, if not, across wind, tack and tack, with extreme rapidity and with a zig-zag flight which renders him a puzzling object to the beginner. Snipe-shooting is snap-shooting. Some gunners prefer to go perfectly alone, but these are very good walkers; others take dogs, setters or pointers, since the Snipe lies well before a "point;" while others want only retrievers to save them labor in finding their dead and wounded birds. When flushed, the birds do not fly far, but are difficult to "mark down." The hard frosts of November, and the first snow, drive them to the rice-fields of Georgia or beyond.

This "Common" Snipe, is also widely known as "English" Snipe, from its resemblance to the European bird. But the two species are entirely distinct. The American Snipe ranges over the whole continent, including the West Indies.
THE WOODCOCK.

The Woodcock is a nocturnal bird, not generally venturing abroad in the daytime beyond the seclusion of the shrubbery in whose gloom he finds security; but at night, between sunset and dark, you catch the soft beating of his wings overhead, and look up only to get a glimpse of his shadowy form as he flies from cope to cope.

It is at this time of the gloaming that, in the Spring, you hear his remarkable love-nots, — sounds which are accompanied by such behavior as you would hardly look for in a bird of the Woodcock's form and size. If you cautiously penetrate to his retreat at twilight, and listen, the bird will soon reveal himself by a lively peep, frequently uttered, from the ground. This is his "good evening," to his mate, and while repeating it he may be seen strutting about with fantastic jerks of the tail and a frequent bobbing of the head. Suddenly he spring upward and with a wide circular sweep, uttering at the same time a rapid whistling note, he rises in a spiral course to a great height in the air. At the summit of his ascent he hovers about with irregular motions, chirping in a crazed, ecstatic way a medley of broken notes like imperfect warbling. This continues for ten or fifteen seconds; then it ceases, and he returns to the ground, uttering a squawking peep as he alights.

By October 1st the game is fat and strong, the care of the young has ceased, each bird is independent of its fellows, even the accidentally late broods are fully grown. — To shoot them is an honest contest between bird and man.

And then, ye gods of woods-craft! Sylvans and Fauns! and thou, friend of the hunter, Pan! what sport shall we have in brown October, when the pure air braces the nerves and fans the brow, the full Moon gleams white over the woods, and the pure air creeps through the trees and leaves? Shall our sportsmen's aim be the keen and sagacious nose, when the pure air is propitious, the gun is in the muzzle of the gun, to drop again within twenty yards, as on a vigorous and whistling pinion, with sharp pipping alarm-notes, swift as a rifle-bullet, soaring away through the tree-tops, or darting, decisive with abrupt zigzags, among the thick-set saplings?
The Wild Ducks which frequent this place may be observed to catch insects on the water in the daytime, but they do not in general rise on land in quest of food, though once or twice, in moist and heavy weather, I have seen them waddle through the pasture, but I marked the fact down as one of rare occurrence. When undisturbed, they are seen to pass much of the time asleep on the ground. At intervals they will take to the water; and while some float on, with the head reclined on the shoulder, others will sport and dive into the deep, and there scrape and pick their feathers, though not with oil from the gland on the comb, as is generally supposed. At the close of day they become exceedingly vociferous, the voice of the female being much louder and more vociferous, the voice of the male, a circumstance too notorious in the human species. After this uproar of tongues has continued for a certain time, they rise on rapid wing in detached flocks, and, to a bird, they go away for the night. At early dawn they return in companies, consisting of fifteen or twenty birds, and stay here to pass the day in peace and quiet. The nest ordinarily is placed on the ground close by the side of a solitary pond or in a marsh, where a mass of dead rank grass, matted down by the winter's snow, will support it. It has hardly enough framework to hold together, if you attempt to lift it, but it looks like a very firm structure, since it is completely covered with slate-colored feathers and down, such as clothes the breast of the mother-bird, in which the down is two large, olive-green, polished eggs are well ensconced, and thus will remain warm in their chilly situation for some time after the sitting bird has left them for food or in alarm, while the fluffings, when they appear, can nestle down among the feathers, or beneath blankets, when the parent is absent. But sometimes, instead of resting upon the ground, the nest is placed upon an old stump in a bunch of heather, jutting from the ledge of a cliff, or on a ledge of rocks, or the top of a ruined wall, but always near the water. The Mallard, however, breeds rarely in the United States, except among the extensive wild rice-fields along the Great Lakes, preferring to go farther northward.

The nest is most desirable for the table. The young are very fat and would require a volume. It is easy to understand the circumstances of the scene of the opposite plate. The mists of an October morning have vanished into a clear sky, and his breakfast of juicy stems and ripened seeds over, the Mallard has quitted the concealment of the reeds and sailed out upon the smooth surface of the pond, taking his morning exercise. Behind him comes his plainly attired wife, rejoicing so much in the admiration her mate's fine coat is causing that she altogether forgets her own lack of gay feathers. Though seemingly taking unconcerned enjoyment, this pair are always vigilant, attending closely to every unusual sound or movement among the reeds, ready to speed away upon their strong wings. The mists of an October morning have vanished into a clear sky, and, his breakfast of juicy stems and ripened seeds over, the Mallard has quitted the concealment of the reeds and sailed out upon the smooth surface of the pond, taking his morning exercise. Behind him comes his plainly attired wife, rejoicing so much in the admiration her mate's fine coat is causing that she altogether forgets her own lack of gay feathers. Though seemingly taking unconcerned enjoyment, this pair are always vigilant, attending closely to every unusual sound or movement among the reeds, ready to speed away upon their strong wings.

Although combining somewhat the characteristics of both sea and land ducks, and able to procure their sustenance if need be, along the seashore, the Mallards choose fresh water and inland resorts. Rocking in autumn to the broad woody ponds and marshes of the Western States, and following down the watercourses to the flooded rice-fields and bayous of the South, where they congregate in great numbers in winter, affording fine shooting, and frequent than that of the male, a circumstance too notorious in the human species. After this uproar of tongues has continued for a certain time, they rise on rapid wing in detached flocks, and, to a bird, they go away for the night. At early dawn they return in companies, consisting of fifteen or twenty birds, and stay here to pass the day in peace and quiet. The nest ordinarily is placed on the ground close by the side of a solitary pond or in a marsh, where a mass of dead rank grass, matted down by the winter's snow, will support it. It has hardly enough framework to hold together, if you attempt to lift it, but it looks like a very firm structure, since it is completely covered with slate-colored feathers and down, such as clothes the breast of the mother-bird, in which the down is two large, olive-green, polished eggs are well ensconced, and thus will remain warm in their chilly situation for some time after the sitting bird has left them for food or in alarm, while the fluffings, when they appear, can nestle down among the feathers, or beneath blankets, when the parent is absent. But sometimes, instead of resting upon the ground, the nest is placed upon an old stump in a bunch of heather, jutting from the ledge of a cliff, or on a ledge of rocks, or the top of a ruined wall, but always near the water. The Mallard, however, breeds rarely in the United States, except among the extensive wild rice-fields along the Great Lakes, preferring to go farther northward.

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THE AMERICAN QUAIL.

DROZ (Linn.).

The Quail is the emblem of jollity. His blithesome whistle resounds from the edge of the woodlot in the cool June mornings, expressing all the glad impulse of spring. He whistles with all his strength, and keeps at it, but his piping is not meant for you. It is the song which he cheers the vigil of the wife who sits on the eggs down in the ferns. You may search long for the nest, and then go away without its discovery, but if your fortune is better you learn how admirably this home is concealed among the herbage by the tall grasses which naturally arch over it, or are entwined into a dome and tunnel-like porch through which the bird passes to and from its cluster of white, sharp-pointed eggs.

If you happen upon several of these nests, you will be surprised at the varying numbers of eggs which they contain — from eight to twenty-eight. By and by you will learn that the Quail is polygamous; that often two or three wives answer his morning greeting with faint chirpings, and sit side by side at their incubation, or successively relieve each other's labor. Meanwhile the male remains near, bringing them a seed now and then, but mainly talking to them in low tones, or repeating for a half-hour together bis "ah ah, bob-white!" But he is always vigilant, and makes haste to warn his household of impending disturbance.

About the middle of June the little Quails appear, and at once run about. The mother cares for them for a few days and then turns them over to the father, while she prepares for a second brood. They follow him about, finding food as he directs and learning to take care of themselves. Should danger appear, it is amusing to see how instinctively they squat where they are, or dart under a sheltering leaf and keep quiet until they hear the parent's assurance of security. If the enemy be man the father throws himself on the ground simulating lameness and exerting every device to attract pursuit, hoping thus to lead the intruder away from his home or the tender brood, trusting in his quick-wings finally to save himself.

The chicks have become fully grown and strong by the time the September frosts come; and now the whole family, or perhaps two or three neighbors too, range about, not ranging widely, for the Quail is not fond of long flights, but restless trotting from one field to another in a merry seeking of food and pleasure.

Among and underneath the fallen leaves are berries and broken nuts; in this cover they find a bunch of grasses whose panicles still hold their store of tiny seeds; there a weed with an unbroken capsule which they must stand on tip-toe to crush with their stout beaks; the next field is buckwheat stubble; beyond it corn; on the other side of the lane barley. So these gleaners travel about, the farm, skirting the edges that they may easily protect if need be to the shelter of the woods or hedges, yet so overflowing with careless glue that again and again you hear their happy call and listen to catch the answers of other bevyes. Sometimes the Quails will come out upon the wayside, — a plump cock watching you with keen black eyes from the top of the wall as you approach along the country road; or, in the coldest weather, they will even make friends with cattle and domesticated fowl to share the housewife's bounty until the snowdrifts disappear.

The American Quail is known in the Southern States as the "Partridge" — a name which is confusing and inappropriate. The species is found over the whole of the Eastern United States south of Massachusetts. In California there are several other species, distinguished by wearing smart plumes on the top of the head. Their dress otherwise is more gay than Bob White's; but who would exchange for them the dear little creature whose happy voice salutes us in short quaint phrase from every rural field!
THE BLACK DUCK.

Anas orscura (Gmelin).

This well-known inland species is also called the Dusky Duck. It is confined to the eastern half of the United States, and is resident throughout the year south of Massachusetts, breeding from Texas to Hudson's Bay. The lakes of Maine and Canada however, form its favorite summer home. The nest is built about May 1st, among the reeds on the margin of a secluded pond, or in the thick of the marshy sources of some remote stream, being placed upon the hillside, formed by a tangle of grass, the roots of a thicket, or the mouldering stump. It is composed of pieces of grass and weeds, which, considering the bird's awkward tools, are very neatly and compactly arranged, the shallow cavity being lined with down and feathers plucked from the parent's breast. The eight or ten yellowish-drab eggs are unmistakable from those of the Mallard.

While the female is sitting the male is said to hide away and undergo a molt.

When the young are hatched they are at once led to the nearest sheet of water, often at a considerable distance, and introduced to their aquatic life. As the ducklings grow other families join them, and thus, by the time the southward journey is to be begun, hocks of fifteen or twenty are ready to move in company. But, unless the weather be very cold, they do not wholly disappear south of Massachusetts, and return north at the earliest opening of spring.

"Although the Dusky Duck is often seen on salt water bays or inlets," writes Audubon, "it resembles the Mallard in its habits, being fond of swampy marshes, rice fields, and the shady margins of our rivers, during the whole of its stay. They are equally voracious, and may sometimes be seen with their crops so protruded as to destroy the natural elegance of their form. When on the water they obtain their food by immersing their head and neck in the water, and, like the Mallard, sift the produce of muddy pools. Like that species, also, they will descend in a spiral manner from on high, to alight under an oak or beech, from which they have discovered the mast to be abundant.

"The flight of this duck is powerful and rapid, and is sustained as that of the Mallard. While travelling by day, they may be distinguished from that species by the whiteness of their lower wing-coverts, which form a strong contrast to the deep tints of the rest of the plumage. Their progress through the air, when at full speed, must, I think, be at a rate of more than a mile in a minute, or about seventy miles an hour. When about to alight they descend with double rapidity, causing a strong rushing sound by the weight of their compact bodies and the rapid movements of their pointed wings. When alarmed by a shot or otherwise, they rise off their feet by a powerful single spring, fly directly upward for eight or ten yards, and then proceed in a straight line."

In the autumn no duck is considered so hard to approach as this. They are wonderful beyond belief, and the larger the flock the greater the number of sentinels. It is therefore all but impossible to get near them sitting on the water, and the sportsman must trust to shooting them as they fly. To effect this he goes at daybreak of some misty October morning to the "blind," or bower of dense branches previously constructed on the edge of some piece of water frequented by them, and conceals himself, "armed with one or two heavy double-barreled guns, and provided with three or four tame ducks. " One of these ducks he anchors or moors out in the water, half a gunshot from the bower. The duck, soon becoming lonesome, begins to call, when, if there are any wild ducks in the neighborhood, they answer the call in an almost exactly similar note, and soon fly to meet the caller. The sportsman, watching the approaching flock, holds one of the other tame ducks ready to throw; and, as soon as the wild ones approach near enough to see the others, he throws the anchored duck the one held in his hand, which is secured from flying off, by a strong line fastened to its legs. The bird moored in the water, seeing her mate flying toward her, immediately redoubles her cries, when the Dusky Ducks, after flying back and forth, alight beside her. As soon as they alight they gather together in a flock away from the decoy; and it is then that the sportsman opens his first shot. The excitement attending this shooting is better appreciated when known."
Naturally at home in the dense forest these birds are not so dependent upon its solace, but that they will remain and thrive in the less frequented parts of a long-cultivated region, if not ruthlessly persecuted by the gun. Grouse shooting therefore is still to be had in every Northern State to a greater or less extent, but the almost stupid confidence of the frontier bird is succeeded by a great wariness learned among the dangers of civilization.

Ruffed Grouse are not met with in packs, but in pairs or single families. Their food consists of such berries, seeds and fruits, as they are able to pick up in the woods they frequent, and often they will wander a long distance from the shelter of the trees,—especially in winter, when they are sometimes nearly famished,—in order to obtain such delicacies as buckwheat, corn, beans, or the seeds of the apples left to decay in the orchards.

In April is heard that "sonorous, crepitating sound," resembling the low rumbling of distant thunder, which is called the "drumming" of the Grouse. For this purpose a resonant log is chosen, upon which, morning after morning, the bird stands, not erect, but resting upon the back of its tail, its tail being widely spread, its ruffle expanded, its head drawn back; feathers pressed close to its body. "The wings are then raised and stiffened, and drumming commences by a slow, hard stroke with both wings, downward and forward; but they are stopped before they touch the body. The rapidity of this motion is increased after the first few beats, when the wings move so fast that only a semicircular haze over the bird is visible, this rapid vibration causing the rolling noise with which the sound terminates." Far and wide this hoarse challenge resounds through the forest and summons other Grouse: if a female, for love-making; if a male, for jealous combat.

In May in New York State the pairing is concluded and the eggs are laid by the middle of June at the latest. For incubation the most retired situations are chosen, such as the foot of an old stump, or the ground in the shadow of small bushes. Sometimes the hen seems to choose the most exposed site possible, as one less likely to be suspected by vandals and other marauders. The nest is inartistic and the dozen eggs are bright clay color, sparingly spotted with brown. The chicks leave the cradle almost immediately upon being hatched, and go about with the parents in those slow and stately walks usual to the species. Thoreau often came upon such broods in the woods about Walden. "The young suddenly dispense on your approach," he writes, "at a signal from the mother, as if a whirlwind had swept them away; and they so exactly resemble the dried leaves and twigs that many a traveller has placed his foot in the midst of a brood, and heard the whir of the old bird as she flew off, and her anxious calls and mewing, or seen her thrall her wings to attract his attention without suspecting their neighborhood. The parent will sometimes roll and spin round before you in such a dishabille that you cannot, for a few moments, detect what kind of creature it is. The young squat still and flat, often running their heads under a leaf, and mind only their mother’s directions given from a distance, nor will your approach make them run again and betray themselves. You may even tread on them, or have your eyes on them for a minute, without discovering them. The remarkably adult yet innocent expression of their open and serene eyes is very memorable."

For love-making the wing-feathers of the young grow rapidly, the annual season of April begins, the autumnal season of plenty arrives, and old and young able to escape the enemies that surround them, practice less and less the arts of concealment, wandering widely in search of food, while the males, full of vigor and exhilaration, again mount the rostrum and in the deep drone of beating wings loudly advertise their prowess. Now is it that the sportsman seeks this game, cautiously treading with his dog the haunts where he has been wont to find them or discovered the nests in midsummer. His mind and eye are ever on the gait now, yet is any one perfectly unsurprised when the Grouse bursts up like an explosion and speeds away like a rocket? Shooting these October fellows is glorious sport, and in many districts, even well to the northward, may be pursued the winter through, for the Grouse is only partially or not at all migratory, but abides with us all winter, "like a russet link extended over from autumn to spring, preserving unbroken the chain of summers."

**THE RUFFED GROUSE.**

**Bonasa umbellus (L.) Stephens.**

This noble bird — the favorite of all sportsmen — has received a variety of local appellations. In New England, it is the "Partridge;" in the Middle and Western States, the "Pheasant." The name Ruffed Grouse only is correct, since the bird is neither a pheasant nor a partridge; and the first portion is in allusion to the "ruff" of broad, silky, shining feathers which overlie the bare spaces on the neck. Ordinarily this ruffle lies smoothly, but in moments of excitement it bristles erect, showing the beautiful jet of the feathers.

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THE BLUE-BILL, OR SCAUP DUCK.

Fuligula marila (Linn.) Stephens.

The Blue-bill is one of the best known to gunners of all sea ducks, although by no means so abundant as some other species. It goes by a variety of names: on the northern coast being called "Blue-bill" or "Broad-bill"; in New Jersey, "Broad-bill"; on the Chesapeake and southward, "Blackhead," "Kut Duck" and "Shuffler." The books follow the English name "Scaup Duck," which Willoughby says is derived from the bird's habit of eating "a certain small kind of shell-fish called scaup."

The Blue-bill ranges over the whole of North America in its migrations. Breeding in the far north, and retreating southward as far as the freezing of the inlets forces it, moving northward again as the spring opens.

It is met with along our whole Atlantic coast in winter associating with the Canvas-backs (Fuligula vaillantii), and also upon the inland lakes, rivers, and marshes; but Wilson thought those remaining upon salt water became much fatter than the others. It is also one of the most abundant species of British ducks, but all leave Great Britain in summer for Iceland.

"It arrives among us," said Giraud, referring to the shores of Long Island, "from the 10th to the 20th of October, associates in large flocks, and on its first appearance is easily decoyed, but after having been frequently shot at becomes more shy. In stormy weather it takes shelter in the coves, and is frequently decoyed within gun-shot from the shore by having a dog trained for the purpose of swimming between it and the shore, as also by quickly moving a red handkerchief every few seconds, keeping your person concealed. This maneuver either charms or irritates it; I am inclined to think the latter, from the impetuous manner in which it approaches. The scene is truly ludicrous. I have tried this method with other species without success. It remains with us in the winter until the severity of the weather compels it to leave for a better supply of food. When passing over frozen bays I have killed it at air-openings. When wounded, it avoids pursuit by diving, and is famous for skulking under the banks.

"It is no particular advantage to have a large flock come up to the decoys, for the instant you rise to fire, they scatter in all directions, so that it is difficult to get two in range; when a flock swims up to you, as it occasionally happens, of course greater havoc is made. It passes the night on the flats in large flocks, seldom or never roosting on the marshes or meadows, and is very quick in discovering the best feeding grounds. In passing through the narrow leads (as the gunners term the narrow creeks and channels that form those beautiful islands in our wide bays), its favorite feeding grounds, it is easily killed without decoys. It returns as early in the spring, and remains until the mild weather tries its winter flight. When in good condition, its flesh by many is esteemed. In flying it seldom makes any other noise than that produced by the action of its wings, but in calm weather, when swimming leisurely about, it gives utterance to a quick rushing or rolling sound. Its migratory flight is high and rapid."

The summer home of the Scaup Duck is far to the northward of the United States on the coast, but in the interior it is not uncommon to find it building its nest and rearing its young on the Great Lakes and in the marshes of Wisconsin and Minnesota. The nest is described as consisting of weeds and grass placed upon the ground, and resembles that of the Mallard which breeds in the same region. In Alaska, Mr. W. H. Dall says it is abundant in summer. He procured its eggs at the mouth of the Yukon early in June. The nest he describes as "very rude, —a mere excavation with a few sticks about it."

There is another species of sea-duck which visits our coasts in winter, but is more common in the interior, and is also called "Blue-bill," "Black-head," etc., generally with the word "Little" prefixed, and therefore is often confounded with the Fuligula marila of our plate. It is the Fuligula affinis. Giraud mentions that on the coast of Long Island it is called "Greek Broad-bill" by the gunners because it frequents the small streams instead of the open bays.

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This species seems to be more generally distributed throughout the interior of the United States than the other, and in all probability most of the "Scaps" from such regions are of this kind. Like their congeners, they usually retire to remote Arctic latitudes to raise their young. Dr. Elliott Coues says that most of the many Scaps that he found breeding on the upper Missouri were of this kind.

This species resembles the former not only in plumage, but in general habits, feeding on "small fry, crayfishes, and a mixture of such grasses as here and there grow along the beds of our rivers," in use Audubon's language.
That the Pinnated Grouse once ranged over a large portion of the Eastern United States where now it is almost never seen, is well known. Early records show that it inhabited large parts of New England, New York, and New Jersey in great abundance at the time of the discovery of America, but unlike the Ruffed Grouse, it was unable to hold its own against civilization, and has wholly disappeared from its former resorts, except that a few are said to have been preserved on the islands off the southern coast of Massachusetts, and some perhaps yet remain in secluded valleys of the Alleghenies east of Central Ohio, whence they extend to the dry plains and northwestern to the Upper Missouri. Throughout this region it is universally known as the Prairie Chicken, and is rightly considered the finest game bird of the Mississippi Valley.

The season for pairing is in March, and the breeding time is continued through April and May. During this early mating season the males resort to certain localities, called by each other's booming voices, and fierce battles take place before their respective partners are chosen. This “trotting” is mainly heard at daybreak, and is a peculiar sound,—a sort of sonorous ventriloquism audible at a vast distance. The apparatus by which the bird is enabled to emit tones so far-reaching and resonant are two extraordinary bags of bright yellow skin, which when at rest hang in loose pendulous folds on each side of the neck. But in breeding time these bags are inflated with air to their utmost capacity, causing the two little pinnae of narrow feathers which overlie them to stand almost straight out, and seeming like a pair of large oranges suspended to the neck. Meanwhile the bird is strutting about in intense excitement and emulation.

The place chosen for the nest is on the ground, generally amid the protection of dense brush; and there ten or a dozen eggs are laid, which closely resemble those of the guinea-hen. When hatched the brood seems to be cared for by the mother alone, who behaves very much like a domestic hen as she leads the lively chicks about the prairie, or through the dry wooded uplands. Their food consists of the fruit of the creeping partridge-berry vine, covering the sand with its enduring verdure, whortle and various other berries, fruits of the heath family, acorns, the seeds of various weeds, pine and beech nuts, and all insects not too agile to get away, or too "mimetic" to escape notice. During the recent destructive visitation of countless hordes of grasshoppers upon Kansas and Nebraska, the Prairie Chickens grew wonderfully fat by subsisting almost wholly upon the pests. In winter they feed largely on buds. The aversion of this Grouse to water is well known; it is not to be found in marshy places, and is never seen to drink. But do not hastily conclude that it is able to do without water; all that is needful it is able to find in the drops of dew which hang from the glistening grasses before the sun has dried them or course down the dripping plants after a shower, and you will be unable to induce it to drink in any other way than by sprinkling the bars, if you ever keep the bird in a cage. Sometimes the Prairie Hens enter cultivated fields,—plowed field for the worms, meadows for clover, grain fields for succulent kernels,—but not often nowadays for they are learning to be shy of men, whose ceaseless pursuit has restricted them year by year to narrower and narrower districts, and who soon will exterminate them unless stringent measures are enforced with the sanctions of law for their protection.

September is the proper month in which to shoot Pinnated Grouse, and to any one who has tramped the rolling expanse of an Iowa prairie on some brown-leaved autumn day, shooting right and left as Dan and Bess pointed out the birds, nothing which I could write on this short page would seem an adequate tribute to the enjoyment. Though straight and even like that of the Ruffed Grouse, the flight of the Prairie Chicken is less rapid, and it soon ceases beating its wings to find swift over the two or three hundred yards that usually limit its flight. "On open prairies—ground the highest and speediest rangers are of course, the best dogs over which to shoot the Grouse, as is the case with the Scottish red game, provided always that the animal has good nose enough to stand them at a long distance and is staunch enough to allow the sportsman to come up from a distance, without moving on, or flushing his birds."

Having much of that spicy quality of wild meat which is beloved of epicures, the flesh of this Grouse is in great favor. Forty years ago, after they had become scarce in the East, very large prices—eight and ten dollars a pair—used often to be paid for them in New York. But now that railway communication with the West is so rapid, these birds have become very cheap in our markets, and are largely exported to England every winter.
The American Pochard, familiarly and widely known as the Red-head, whose portrait stands before the reader's eye, is a variety only of the Old World Pochard or Dun-bird. It is met with in its spring and fall migrations over the whole of North America, but more particularly in the Eastern States, and is common, though not always abundant, in most suitable localities.

As the cold weather advances, the northern parts of its range are more or less deserted by these ducks, and they assemble in large flocks on more southern waters. Chesapeake Bay in midwinter is, therefore, well populated by them, in company with many other species of water fowl. "Of all wild fowl," says an English writer, "a flock of Dun-birds is the most agreeable to the sportsman's eye. They are the most stupid of the diver race. I have seen them, after having been driven from their feeding-ground, return in the face of the shoot, who had only lain down without any covering or concealment whatever: they have been diving again within thirty yards, and of course given him a capital shot. I never wish for assistance in maneuvering any other kind of water fowl, but these may be banded like sheep; and, if feeding on one side of a bay, you have only to conceal yourself at the other, and send your man round to where they are diving. They will most likely come straight towards you, and, beginning to feed, will probably every five or ten minutes draw all together with their heads up. Now is your time to fire, if you have the good fortune to be within shot: but should you prefer two birds in the hand to waiting for their knitting together, you may have a capital right and left when they come up from diving. I, however, should be loath to lose the opportunity of the sitting shot."

In Europe these ducks are eagerly sought by butchers for sale in the markets; and a curious method used to be employed in taking them, as follows: A decoy for Dun-birds is called a light-post, and has neat facings to tall, stout poles, twenty feet or thirty feet long. At the bottom of each pole is a box or tub filled with heavy stones sufficient to elevate the poles and nets the instant an iron pin is withdrawn, which retains the nets in position upon the reeds, small willow boughs or furs: with inside the tubs are small pens made of reeds, about three feet high, for the reception of the birds that strike against the net and fall down; and with the form and shortness of wing in the Peacock, that they cannot ascend again from their little enclosures if they would; besides, the numbers which are thus knuckled into these pens preclude all chance of escape from them by the wing. A decoyman will sometimes allow the hounds of Dun-birds to be so great that the whole surface of the pond shall be covered with them previous to his attempting to take one. . . . When all is ready, the Dun-birds are raised from the pens, and, as all wildfowl rise against the wind, the poles in that quarter are unpinned, and fly up with the nets as the finest. In the likeness of the Dun-birds begins to leave the surface of the water, so as to meet them in their first ascent and are thus beaten down by hundreds.

The Red-head flies northward in March, separating from all other ducks and seeking breeding-places among the lonely marshes of Arctic America. Its nests and eggs are not remarkable.
The Spruce Partridge or Canada Grouse is chiefly a boreal bird, reaching but a little way over our border. It is common in the coniferous woods of Canada and Northern New England, and in Minnesota, wherever there are forests. On the Upper Missouri and among the dense forests of British Columbia a variety of this grouse, known as *Franklins*, takes the place of the Eastern type from which it differs only in wanting the orange-brown tail-band, and in having the upper tail-coverts, which are plain in *Tetrao canadensis*, conspicuously spotted with white.

It is only in the most oped-the-way districts that the beautiful Spruce Partridge is found. It seems to have littleacity in preserving its safety, and is so easily killed, when once it has been found, that little sport is afforded. The ordinary -- and, in those backwoods, perhaps the only practicable -- method used is to score the woods with a dog, and thus frighten the birds into trees, to which the gunner is directed by the barking of the whippet, and where he can shoot his timid victims one by one, with little difficulty. The Western variety is even so stupid that you may walk near, and, reaching up with a slender pole, put a noose around its neck, and so bring it ignominiously to your feet. No wonder the mountain men call it “Fool-bird.

The summer haunt of our subject is Maine, among the backwoods woods, which are as difficult to traverse as the most tangled swamps of Labrador. The ground is covered with wind moss, over which the grouse can lightly walk, but into which the gunner sinks deep at every step, while struggling through the trunks of dead trees, branches of greenwood, and low bushes. “Proud, gal¬rant, and insidious to the females in early spring, as soon as incubation has commenced the males repair to another forest and do not return to the females until late in the autumn, when the young are hatched. In this retreat the males are very wary and shy.” The nest is made on the ground under the shelter of some low ever¬green, and consists of a bed of twigs, dry leaves, and moss, on which the female deposits from a dozen to twenty eggs, of a dark fawn color irregularly spotted with different tints of brown. Incubation begins about the first of June. Nearly three weeks’ sitting is requisite to hatch them, and the brown fluffy little chicks follow the mother as soon as they are born. Only one brood is raised each season.

“Often, when one is fishing from a canoe in some of the narrow brooks in Maine or in Canada,” says Mr. Whitehead, “a brood of these birds will be seen threading their way among the bushes, or, if the weather is hot, coming to the water to drink. So great is their remittance from man that they scarcely notice the passing boat. At times like these they make use of a little piping call that is most gentle and familiar, by which the old bird calls the young ones of the flock to her whenever she finds any attractive food in the rotten wood or among the fallen moss. Again they may be seen among the upper branches of the tallest spruce, picking the winter buds, and at their great elevation looking as small as snow¬birds. When pursued they take quickly to the trees, and seem to feel secure in their elevation, and are thus easily shot. In the coldest weather, when the caribou hunter is making his camp in the evening forest, where the deep snow creaks under his snow shoes, and the thermometer sinks to thirty degrees below zero in the still air, some of these graceful birds will come running over the snow, familiar in the desolation, and contented and secure in their winter home, proving how apt for their position in life God’s creatures are everywhere made. Once, returning to our log hut after an absence of several days on an exploring tour, we peered through the opening that was left for the window, and saw a brood of these glossy birds pecking about the floor and foraging on the remains of our feast. They crept into the empty flour-barrel, and pried into the tin meat-cans, and one old cock flitted upon the table and perched on the edge of a tin pan, His weight upset the dish, which clattered upon the floor, when the gay foragers, scared by the din, whisked out of the open door like a swarm of golden bees, taking refuge in the neighboring hemlocks. They were not disturbed by us, for such gentle spirits bring good luck to the hunter’s camp.”

According to Audubon, these grouse perceive the approach of rain or snow with marvelous precision, and seek their roosting places at an unusually early hour on the evening before. This indication of impending storm is rarely or never a false forecast.

The Spruce Partridges feed in summer upon young twigs, blossoms, and various berries, particularly those of the Solomon’s Seal, with which they gorge themselves in the early autumn. It is at this time that they are in best condition for the table; for in winter, when the birds are forced to subsist upon the leaves of the spruce, larch, or hackmatack, and other sour and resinous food, their flesh becomes bitter and tough.

(Plate XI)

**THE CANADA GROUSE.**

*Tetrao canadensis,* Linnaeus.
For this most gaily plumaged of all our ducks is found abundantly over the greater part of the continent, but especially in the United States, where, far more commonly than any other species, it breeds from the Gulf to the St. Lawrence. Its home life differs so widely from the usual rule among ducks as to become the most interesting part of its history.

These ducks never build their nest upon the ground or on the branches of a tree. They choose instead the hollow, broken portion of some big limb, the hole of one of the large wood-peckers or the deserted retreat of a squirrel, and it is surprising to see in and out of what small apertures they will squeeze their bodies, which seem altogether too large when seen upon the wing. The place chosen is not often far removed from the water, the guarded sycamores towering above Kentucky candlebreaks, and the tall blasted pines that stand among the absolute Maine swamps, being favorite dwelling-places. Nevertheless the Wood Ducks do not hesitate to put their nests close to man's habitations, or otherwise occasionally to depart from their usual customs. Audubon once found the home of a pair in a fissure of rock. They are much attached to their homestead, returning to it year after year, and are known in many localities as "Summer Ducks." The nest is composed of dead sticks, grass, weeds, and a quantity of feathers—not only that plucked from the breast of the parent, but also down of other species of birds. Often this nest is plainly visible, but this fact generally affords little satisfaction to the ornithologist, for the careful builder has chosen a site which is inaccessible to ordinary climbers. About a dozen eggs are laid (the number varying according to the age of the bird, it is asserted), which are nearly elliptical, smooth, and of a delicate buff-green tint, unspotted.

"No sooner has the female completed her set of eggs than she is abandoned by her mate, who now joins others, which form themselves into considerable flocks, and thus remain apart till the young are able to fly. When old and young of both sexes come together, and so remain until the commencement of the next breeding season."

The way in which the fledglings are transferred from the nest to the water is very curious. Audubon said that if the mouth of the nest-hole was immediately over the water the young spread their little wings and feet and jumped down into their favorite element, but that if their birthplace was some distance from it, the mother carried her babies, one by one, in her bill, with great tenderness (as Wilson had previously recorded), or sometimes allowed them to tumble out upon the soft leaves at the foot of the tree, and then led them toddling to the bank. Recently Dr. C. C. Abbott has furnished more particular information, based on the most cautious and patient watching, at Trenton, N. J. The nest in this instance was fully fifty feet above the water, in a tangled mass of twigs and grapevines, on a huge buttonwood that grew from the water's edge and towered seventy-five feet above the creek, everywhere surrounded by woods. By climbing another tree Dr. Abbott could obtain a good view of the spot, and see the young in the nest. Two whole hours he watched without much result, but on the third his persistence was rewarded, for as he raised his position he saw that some of the young had disappeared, and felt sure the others would soon follow. In the course of half an hour the old duck appeared, and after a moment's rest squatted closely down on the nest, when a duckling quickly climbed upon her back and nestled closely between her shoulders. The old bird then walked slowly to the very edge of an overhanging limb, and, with a slow flapping motion of outspread wings, let herself down, rather than flew, to the water. The moment she touched the surface of the stream she dove, and left the duckling swimming on the water, and to all appearances perfectly at home.

"This was repeated until the tender brood were all safely away, and as quick to scent danger and flee therefrom as was their wary mother."

"Surprise a new family of Wood Ducks at this season, and you will see a very pretty exhibition of maternal instinct. The mother, after covering the retreat of the little ones, will assume the desperate struggles of a wing-broken fowl in its efforts to escape, while the young remain perfectly motionless and voiceless, having, at a signal from their mother, dove under the shadow of leaves and rushes, or hid in the herbage. You may even pick up the little web-footed balls of down before they will size. Leave the group alone and soon will be heard the faint peeping of the gathering brood as it is led into hiding among the tall grass."

"The food of this beautiful duck consists of acorns, seeds of the wild oats and other aquatic plants, and insects. The flesh is highly esteemed, tasting like that of the Teal. Wood Ducks have been successfully domesticated, and are highly ornamental to the fancier's yard."
THE VALLEY QUAIL.

*LOPHORTYX CALIFORNICA* (Shaw) Bp.

This is the common Quail of the Pacific Coast, to which it is closely restricted all the way from the Columbia River to Cape St. Lucas. Its name is apt one, since it is rarely found at heights exceeding three or four thousand feet, beyond which it is replaced by the Mountain Quail (*Oreortyx pictus*). It inhabits the prairies and the grain fields of the cultivated districts, and frequents the thickets which border the streams, usually in coverts of from a dozen to a hundred individuals except during the breeding season, when it is found only in pairs. Like the Eastern Quail, the male bird is very fond of sitting on some stump or log projecting above the grass and weeds which conceal his mate and nest or brood, and especially in the early morning, uttering his peculiar cry,—whistle it can hardly be called." This cry is coarse and unmusical, and may be represented by the syllables *kuk-kuk-kuk-kuk-tu* with the accent on the last.

In August the Quails unite into hordes which sometimes accumulate into large flocks. In one of his sketches Mr. Wm. M. Tilston describes such a flock which he met with in San Gabriel Valley, Los Angeles County, Southern California, one Christmas Day. "We were on the road, and the Quails were following the dry sandy bed of what had once been a stream. There they were, at least a thousand of them, hiding in and out between the low-growing prickly pear or *tuna* bushes; their feathery crests quivering as they ran and the burnished brown of their backs glancing in the bright sunlight."

Determining to have some sport out of the flock, Mr. Tilston and his companion organized a campaign. The birds showed no disposition to fly, but ran along at just about the same speed as their own, so they turned out of the road, and actually drove the Quails steadily before them toward desirable ground in a patch of long yellow grass. Soon his companion sighted with his gun to act as rear guard until by rapid playing much confussion and cracking of twigs Mr. Tilston turned the flank of the flock and forced them into the grass with a great whirr of countless pinions. There was no fear but that the birds would stay there, and the horses were leisurely unharnessed for the mid-day halt. But the sequel is in the writer's own phrase:—

"The grass was almost knee high, but in scattered patches, between which grew the everlasting *tuna*, at the roots of all of them a burrow was invariably to be found. 'Look out!' I cried, to Rose, catching the scent of the nearest bird, came to a point. 'Walk him up, Fred, and try your first California Quail.' Don't shoot too quick; there are no swamps here for the birds to make for, and besides, there are plenty of them. Fred took a step in front of Rose and up jumped the birds. Fred fired too soon, as I knew he would, and missed clean. 'No matter, old fellow, they all did at first. When I came here I thought I could kill Quails as easy as I could roll off a log, but I found I had almost a new business to learn. I think if anything this bird is swifter than ours in his flight, but he goes as straight as an arrow, and you must hold straight. Try it again.' This time Fred was more successful. Taking it more coolly, he covered his bird carefully and cut it down cleanly. There was no fear but that the birds would stay there, and the horses were leisurely unharnessed for the mid-day halt. But the sequel is in the writer's own phrase:—

"Why, say, dear fellow, I thought you said your dog was broken!"

"So she is, Fred, for this shooting. . . . You see all these rabbit and squirrel holes about, scarcely a yard of ground clear of them? Well, late in the season these Quails will carry off more shot than any bird of their size in the world. You have seen how they can run, and a wounded bird is a lost bird unless you can catch him before he can get to a hole, into which he will invariably run if he can. Well, after a while, when I found I was losing too many birds, I got in the habit of sending Rose for a bird the moment it was down, and the consequence is that I rarely lose one."

This habit of hiding away to die is one of their vexatious ways; another is, that often they will not lie well to the dog, and when flushed are likely immediately to resort to the branches of some tree and skulk among the foliage. "As they grow older and strong of wing, they fly further, separate more readily, and more rarely take to trees; and sometimes, before they are fully grown, they are found to have already become wary and difficult of approach. As one draws near where a covey is feeding a quick, sharp cry from the bird who first notices the approach alarms the whole, and is quickly repeated by the rest, as they start to run, betraying their course by the rustling of dried leaves."

Their flesh is of equal excellence with that of Bob-White.
THE BUFFLE-HEADED DUCK.

This winter resident of our ocean coasts and inland waters is well known to gunners, but like most of its companion wild-fowl, it goes under different names in different districts and has as often elsewhere the commonness known least of all. "Buffale-headed" appears to be of French derivation in allusion to the puffed out appearance of the bird's head, over the whole top and back of which the feathers are lengthened and seen like the shaggy mane and neck of a buffalo. The New England name of "Dipper" and the Long Island one, "Spirit Duck," must refer to its wary behavior and quickness in diving; "Butter-ball" and "Buffle-head," New Jersey court names, give us a hint of the little duck's rotundity and fatness. It is not, however, considered of much account for the table notwithstanding a sturdy defence of its edible qualities made in the sporting journals a few months ago by some enthusiastic hunters. Its food is mainly shell-fish and animal substances. The eastern market-hunter seldom shoots at them, even when they come into his decoys, holding them in a sort of contempt, and considering them as rather insignificant game, though they hold easily in marked.
Bartram's Tattler, the Grass Plover, or Upland Plover, as it is variously known by sportsmen, is a bird of wide dispersion in the Western Hemisphere, except on the Pacific coast. In summer it reaches northward to Alaska, and southward winter drives it to the West Indies, Central and South America. Everywhere in the Eastern States it is considered by sportsmen "a prime game bird, wild and difficult to secure, but best hunted from a carriage, and capital for the table."

Although possessed of all the characteristics of a wader, and really belonging to the family of Sandpipers, this "Plover"—which is not a Plover—habitually keeps away from the water, and is most often found on high, dry lands, where one would least think of looking for such a bird. It is natural, therefore, that it should be one of the most abundant birds on our western plains, where it goes by the name of "Prairie Pigeon." In Texas it occurs in flocks "of thousands." In Kansas, during the month of May, it migrates in great numbers, being scattered over the prairies everywhere, and becoming, so tame, that Dr. Coues says he has seen it just escape being caught with the crack of a coach-whip. It is natural, therefore, that it should be one of the most abundant birds on our Western plains. The male is distinguished from the female by the presence of a white mandible. The nesting habits are described as strange—mournful, especially as it gives the following picture of its behavior:

"As soon as mated the pairs keep close company, rambling through the grass, above which their slender necks continually sway in graceful motion. In addition to their ordinary clear, soft whistle, they have, at this season a loud, prolonged cry, "sounding more like the whistling of the wind than a bird's voice," which is described as strangely mournful, especially as it follows upon the crash of the gale. This is heard the evening of midsummer. When the campfire has burned low and the clouds are scudding across the darkened sky before the fatal blast.

The nest of the Upland Plover is hard to find, since there is nothing to guide the eye to it. It is always placed on the ground in an open spot, but generally near pools or sloughs, or by the edge of the woods. The nest is flimsy—merely a few straws to keep the four blotched and spotted perlmut eggs from falling away; and the female is so close a sitter that she will suffer herself to be almost stepped on before leaving it. Dr. Elliott Coues tells what manner of an outraged community ensued when once he happened on a brood rambling with their mother over the prairie."

"She sounded the alarm, to scatter her brood, but not before I had secured one of them in my hand. I never saw a braver defense attempt that was made by this strong-hearted though powerless bird, who, after exhausting her artifices to draw me in pursuit of herself by tumbling about as it desperately wounded, and lying panting with outstretched wings on the grass, gave up hope of saving her young in this way, and then almost attacked me, dashing close up and retreating again to renew her useless onslaught. She was evidently incited to unusual courage by the sight of the little one struggling in my hand. At this stormy scene the young birds are white below, finely mottled with black, white, and rich brown above; the foot and under mandible are light-colored; the upper mandible is blackish."
Case of the Wood Duck, How are the fledglings got down to the water? I do not know that any explanation has been given other than the observations of a Lap clergyman, recorded several years ago, who saw the parent bird conveying its young, to the number of five or more, but one at a time, from the nest to the water, each being held under the bill supported by the neck of the mother.

In Norway the parent is sometimes put up boxes with a suitable entrance, and thus secure the eggs of the Whistler, which eagerly takes advantage of the accommodation.

The vigorous "whistle" of its swift wings strikes the sportsman's ear in those November days when the first chilly winds bring from their far northern rendezvous, the great army of wild birds that populate our more temperate waters during the winter. Although not so abundant as some other ducks, the Whistler is well known to all our gunners, and goes under a variety of names, such as Golden-Eye, Whistler-Wing, Great-Head, and Gannet, the applicability of which is plain. It is rather more common, perhaps, in the interior than along the coast, and the birds that shot on fresh water is certainly better, owing to their food being largely the seeds of aquatic plants, wild rice, etc., while those living at tidewater subsist upon fish, marine plants, and insects, small shell-fish, etc. In Europe, where this bird is also a common winter resident, it is charged with destroying large quantities of salmon eggs. Judging from a comparison of the accounts of gunners, the Whistler is also more easily secured in the interior. Its extraordinary shyness and vigilance on the coast causes it to suspect decoys and similar devices which are generally effective with other ducks, and its lofty flight keeps it out of range. In stormy weather, however, Giraud mentions that it takes refuge with companions in coves and is then more readily killed.

Speaking of its behavior in England, Colquhoun insists on the great caution and shyness and vigilance required in shooting it from the shore of the pond or stream where it is feeding. "If, without seeing an enemy, he is at all alarmed while diving near the shore, he will probably swim out to a considerable distance, re-entering all the time, and making a noise something like a single note of the hardy gull. You may perhaps expect his return, and wait for him; but although he may remain about the same place, though making reconnoitering movements, its lofty flight keeps it out of range. In stormy weather, however, Giraud mentions that it takes refuge with companions in coves and is then more readily killed.

Building in such elevated places, the question arises, as in the case of the Wood Duck, How are the fledglings got down to the water? I do not know that any explanation has been given other than the observations of a Lap clergyman, recorded several years ago, who saw the parent bird conveying its young, to the number of five or more, but one at a time, from the nest to the water, each being held under the bill supported by the neck of the mother.

In Norway the parent is sometimes put up boxes with a suitable entrance, and thus secure the eggs of the Whistler, which eagerly takes advantage of the accommodation.

The vigorous "whistle" of its swift wings strikes the sportsman's ear in those November days when the first chilly winds bring from their far northern rendezvous, the great army of wild birds that populate our more temperate waters during the winter. Although not so abundant as some other ducks, the Whistler is well known to all our gunners, and goes under a variety of names, such as Golden-Eye, Whistler-Wing, Great-Head, and Gannet, the applicability of which is plain. It is rather more common, perhaps, in the interior than along the coast, and the birds that shot on fresh water is certainly better, owing to their food being largely the seeds of aquatic plants, wild rice, etc., while those living at tidewater subsist upon fish, marine plants, and insects, small shell-fish, etc. In Europe, where this bird is also a common winter resident, it is charged with destroying large quantities of salmon eggs. Judging from a comparison of the accounts of gunners, the Whistler is also more easily secured in the interior. Its extraordinary shyness and vigilance on the coast causes it to suspect decoys and similar devices which are generally effective with other ducks, and its lofty flight keeps it out of range. In stormy weather, however, Giraud mentions that it takes refuge with companions in coves and is then more readily killed.

Speaking of its behavior in England, Colquhoun insists on the great caution and shyness and vigilance required in shooting it from the shore of the pond or stream where it is feeding. "If, without seeing an enemy, he is at all alarmed while diving near the shore, he will probably swim out to a considerable distance, re-entering all the time, and making a noise something like a single note of the hardy gull. You may perhaps expect his return, and wait for him; but although he may remain about the same place, though making reconnoitering movements, its lofty flight keeps it out of range. In stormy weather, however, Giraud mentions that it takes refuge with companions in coves and is then more readily killed.
THE MOUNTAIN QUAIL.

 Oreortyx pictus Bird.

This superbly apparelled mountaineer of the West, whose chosen home is the Sierras of the Northern Pacific coast, is the rarest and wildest of game-birds even in those distant solitudes. Its striking and elegant colors and its noble plume attract the instant attention of the fortunate beholder, but its wary nature leads it so quickly to seek safety in concealment or flight that very little is known of its habits.

It appears to be distributed, says Dr. Cooper, the prominent naturalist of the Pacific Slope, throughout all the higher ranges of California and Oregon, to, or perhaps somewhat northward of, the Columbia River. South of San Francisco these Quails are unknown near the coast, but in the Sierras they have been seen as far south as Fort Tejon and Cajon Pass. Eastward of the Sierras, their range extends through the foothills as far as Carson City, and the Comstock Mountains, near Pyramid Lake, Nevada. The settlers in that region assert that before the advent of white men this Quail was not known in Nevada, but that it followed the wagon-roads eastward from the Sierras. Ornithologists do not credit this statement, however, and the Indians, who highly prize the pretty plume as an ornament, explicitly deny it, and say this bird has always inhabited the outlying eastern spurs of the great range.

Very properly called "Plumed Partridge" in some books, the common name of Mountain Quail, by which it is recognized among the sportsmen of California, is singularly applicable to it from the Valley Quail of the lowlands; for this species chooses as its summer home the most elevated districts, rarely being found in summer below 7,000 feet, and wandering northward until the whole little company is reunited; while it facilitates the escape of the birds. It is put up with difficulty, preferring to trust to its legs for safety, and, when finally flushed, though there may be a cover of fifteen or twenty, rises singly and can be shot only one at a time. Then they scatter in all directions and call each other together by a whistle very much like that of a man calling his dog. The best time to shoot them is in the early morning when they come out into the roads and openings to feed. They live on seeds, berries, and insects and are very good for the table. As with the other species more are taken in traps than with the gun. The Indians, especially, snare hundreds and use the plumes for purposes of adornment in various ways. Dr. Coues tells us that he once saw a squaw with a hundred or more crests strung on a single piece of rope-yarn for a necklace. The larger hawks and wolves also prey on them. Their flight and general habits resemble those of the Valley Quail.

Early in the summer they make their nest on the ground, where they deposit and hatch a dozen or so richly cream-colored eggs. When calling together a brood which has been disturbed, and has scattered with faint piping notes of fright much like young chickens, the mother utters a low chuck. Their note of alarm is a faint chirp, their summons to each other expressive of great solicitude until the whole little company is reunited; while the "song" of the male is a pleasant crowing, like koo-koo-ko-oo'.

No wonder, with their handsome coats and gentle ways that they are bought at a high price by the miners, whose camps in the gulches easily need a little that is ornamental, and whose rough and battling lives crave something that is tender in contrast, if it is only a pet bird in a cage.
THE WIDGEON.

Mareca Americana (Guy.) Saybrook.

As its name indicates, this species is the American analogue of the common Widgeon of Europe. The two species seem to meet at the Arctic Circle, and occasionally individuals of each accompany their neighbours home. Thus several cases are recorded of the European bird (Mareca penelope) being shot both along our coast and in the interior, and vice versa.

The geographical range of our species takes in the whole of North America southward along the highlands of Mexico to Guatemala. Although most numerous within the borders of the United States during winter, yet many remain throughout the summer and breed, their nests having been found in the Middle States, about the Great Lakes in Utah, and in Oregon. Audubon notices their breeding in Texas, and Dr. Elliot Coues says that in Northern Dakota and Montana, at several points which he visited along the banks of streams and ponds, the resort of many pairs of various ducks during the breeding season and of innumerable flocks during the migrations, the localities resembled the duckyard of a farm, in the quantities of moulded feathers and amount of excrement scattered everywhere. He was surprised to find young Widgeons, still unable to fly, even as late as the middle of September, at a time when all the other ducks observed were well on the wing.

Through all the sterile and marshy regions of the far countries it breeds in great numbers. The nest is composed of rushes, grass, and sedge-stalks, lined with masses of down which nearly conceal the dozen buff-tinted eggs.

The best account ever written, perhaps, of the Widgeon's habits, is by Wilson, who says:—

"This is a handsomely marked and sprightly species, very common in winter along our whole coast from Florida to Rhode Island, but most abundant in Carolina, where it frequents the rice plantations. In Maryland great flocks take short flights from one rice plantation to another, and are much complained of by the planters. The Widgeon is the constant attendant of the celebrated Canvas-back Duck, so abundant in various parts of the Chesapeake Bay, by the aid of whose labor he has ingenuity enough to contrive to make a good subsistence. The Widgeon is extremely fond of the tender roots of that particular species of aquatic plant on which the Canvas-back feeds, and for which that duck is in the constant habit of diving. The Widgeon, who never dives, watches the moment of the Canvas-back's rising, and, before he has his eyes well opened, snatches the delicious morsel from his mouth and makes off. On this account the Canvasbacks and the Widgeons, or, as they are called round the bay, Bald-pates, live in a state of perpetual contention; the only chance the latter have is to retreat, and make their approaches at convenient opportunities.

"They are said to be in great plenty at St. Domingo and Cayenne, where they are called Vingon or Gingepn. Are said sometimes to perch on trees, feed in company, and have a sentinel on the watch, like some other birds. They feed little during the day, but in the evenings come out from their hiding-places, and are then easily traced by their peculiar whistle, or whirral. This soft note, or whistle, is frequently imitated with success to entice them within gunshot.

"In regard to the last point, it is worth remarking that gunners consider the Widgeon, at least in the Chesapeake Bay, the shiest and most difficult of all the wild ducks. Its flesh has a high reputation for edible qualities, and brings a good price in market.

"The European Widgeon is said to be attached to the sea-shore, rarely going inland except in severe weather; yet Gilbert White, whose home at Selborne was twenty miles from the coast, draws one of his most delightful pictures of the flocks of Widgeons which he constantly witnessed on Wolmer Pond, "where they preen and solace and rest themselves till towards sunset, when they issue forth in little parties (for in their natural state they are never together), and sometimes to perch on trees, feed in company, and have a sentinel on the watch, like some other birds. They feed little during the day, but in the evenings come out from their hiding-places, and are then easily traced by their peculiar whistle, or whirral." This soft note, or whistle, is frequently imitated with success to entice them within gunshot.

"Along the sea-shore they are described as congregating in immense flocks where muskets are numerous on the beach. During the day they rest and.pome themselves on the higher shelves, or dune buoys, on the waves, and only renew their activity with the approach of twilight. At this time they become clamorous, and, rising in dense flocks from the day's resort, proceed to the feeding-grounds. "At the beginning of winter they are fat and delicate, much sought after by the sea sportsmen, and are killed in numbers by persons lying in watch in the track of the known flight, or what, in some parts, is called picking. The most profitable night for this sport is about half moon; the birds then fly low, and their approach is easily known by the whistling of their wings, and their own shrill cry, whence their coast name of 'Hew.'"
which appear to be their general winter rendezvous. To and in the neighborhood of the Chesapeake Bay, particularly the Susquehanna, the Patapsco, Potomac, and James Rivers, continues its flight southward to the numerous rivers belonging to each of these byways, or to make it their regular residence during the winter, while, in waters unprovided with this nutritive plant, they are altogether unknown.

On the first arrival of these birds in the Susquehanna, near Havre-de-Grace, they are generally lean, but such is the abundance of their favorite food, that, towards the beginning of November, they are in pretty good order. They are excellent divers, and swim with great speed and agility. They sometimes assemble in such multitudes as to cover several acres of the river, and, when they rise suddenly, produce a noise resembling thunder. They float about these shoals, diving, and tearing up the grass by the roots, which is the only part they eat. They are extremely shy, and can rarely be approached, unless by stratagem. When wounded in the wing, they dive to such prodigious distances, and with such rapidity, continuing it so perseveringly, and with such cunning and active vigor, as almost always to render the pursuit hopeless. From the great demand for these ducks, and the high price they uniformly bring in market, various modes are practiced to get within gunshot of them. When the winter sets in severely, and the river is frozen, the Canvas-backs remain in its confluence with the bay; occasionally frequenting niches in the ice, which are sometimes made for the purpose, immediately over their favorite grass, to entice them within gunshot of the hut or bush, which is usually fixed at a proper distance, and where the gunner lies concealed, ready to take advantage of their distress.

The difficulty experienced by some persons in discriminating the species of ducks may be remedied by the following: When the winter sets in severely, and the river is frozen, the Canvas-backs remain in its confluence with the bay; occasionally frequenting niches in the ice, which are sometimes made for the purpose, immediately over their favorite grass, to entice them within gunshot of the hut or bush, which is usually fixed at a proper distance, and where the gunner lies concealed, ready to take advantage of their distress.

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THE BRANT.

Branta bernicla Linnaeus.

On the southern shore of Long Island several species of large sea-ducks, especially those shot in the spring, are confused under the generic name of "Brant." But there is only one true Brant Goose, — that shown in the opposite plate. This goose has a distribution in the northern hemisphere in summer over the most of Arctic Europe and America; but so distant and inaccessible is its home, that almost nothing is known by ornithologists of its domestic life, architecture or eggs, which remain hidden from us in the remotest marshes of the Polar coasts during all the warm months of the year.

Each winter, however, these birds return to us, along the coasts of both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and by way of the great Mississippi system of water-courses. Dr. Coues mentions that he met with vast numbers on the sand-bars and mud-banks of the Upper Missouri in October, and numerous other citations might be made to show that the old idea that this goose belongs to the coast, alone, is erroneous; on the contrary it must be credited with an extensive range in the interior of the United States. The Pacific Coast Brant, however, differs somewhat from the eastern bird, and is known as the Black Brant (Br. bernica var. nigricans).

Brant Geese occur in flocks by themselves, unmixed with other species, and are shy of any attention paid them, so that the gunner must sedulously take advantage of their peculiarities and cautiously conceal himself if he expects to get his reward. By doing this skillfully large numbers are shot and taken to the city markets every winter.

Its chosen haunt is the shallow water of quiet bays where the eel-grass grows thickly. Upon this it feeds almost exclusively, varying it only with other aquatic plants, since its diet is altogether vegetable. It never dives for its food, but works hard at low tide to pull up large quantities of the weed, and at high water may be seen "floating with the current, feeding sumptuously on the fruits of its labor."

Unless disturbed by the approach of a boat or the near report of a gun, this goose is inattentive, and seems to require an effort to mount upon the wing. In flight it moves sluggishly, and returns to the place it left in a short time unless attracted by the sight of a distant flock. They do not assume upon the wing the distinct V shape so characteristic of the Canada Geese, fly in small, close flocks, without any apparent leader. For shooting them live decoys are used to good advantage. But although the live birds may be kept successfully for this purpose in pens it is not possible really to domesticate them. Their wandering habits seem to be too strongly bred in their wild brains to be relinquished, for the tame though less precarious life of the barnyard. In this, as in many other respects, they differ widely from the Canada Geese. Their restless untamed manners, their aversion of the tussocks of grass in the bays which would afford the gunner ready concealment, their love of the sand-bars, their shaggy disposition when they are feeding in any bay or inlet, and their flight are habits all their own. Their voice is also readily distinguishable from that of the Canada Geese, so that it may even be detected at night, being a far less sonorous, though not altogether unmusical sound.

With the lovers of waterfowl the Brant is highly esteemed. Even the adult birds are tender and juicy, and free from a fishy flavor, but at times from the nature of its food, its flesh acquires a sedgy taste. It is considered superior for the table late in the spring. The epicure well knows the merits of the "May Brant."

Their influx in the autumn is more or less widespread and irregular, but under the influence of anxiety to get to their northern breeding-grounds, the spring migration appears to be conducted in a more rapid and direct manner. March and April are the months in which they may be found on the New England coast passing northward. Cape Cod seems to be their last stopping place.

Here, if strong northeasterly gales are blowing, they sometimes accumulate in vast numbers, but as soon as the wind changes to the southwest they are up and away, laying their course along the coast, the general curve of which they follow with little deviation, and at a great altitude, until they pass up the Bay of Fundy and cut across to Northumberland Strait and the shores of Prince Edward's Island, where they find good feeding grounds. Between Cape Cod and that point they are said never to bait in their flight or rarely; and there they stay until they are fully repleted for their long and tedious flight across the tundra of Labrador, over the blue waves of Hudson's Bay, beyond the forests and plains of Arctic America, to the farthest shores around the very Pole itself. Not that all the Brant penetrate thus far, — for a few breed as far south as Labrador every year, — but all aim to do so, and it is only the weakest that fall behind.
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