

White-faced Tree-duck (*Dendrocygna viduata*, Linn)..

THE BIRDS OF KENYA AND UGANDA.

PART IX. VOL. I.

DUCKS AND GEESE. (*Illustrated.*)

By

V. G. L. VAN SOMEREN, M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U., etc.

ANATIDAE.

GENUS *Dendrocygna*.

DENDROCYGNA VIDUATA (Linn.). WHITE - FACED TREE
DUCK. WHITE-FACED WHISTLING DUCK.

Ref.: Linnaeus, *Syst. Nat.*, 12th Ed., p. 205, 1766.

Type locality: Cartagena, Venezuela.

DISTRIBUTION:

On most of the shallower waters from the coast of Kenya to north and western Uganda.

DESCRIPTION, MALE, ADULT:

Anterior two-thirds of head, throat, and a patch in front of the neck, white; hind part of head and neck black, which colour passes forward and tends to separate the white of the neck from that of the throat, very often extending right across. Lower part of hind neck and front neck and chest rich chestnut, the former shading off into the olive-brown of the mantle, while at the sides of the chest it merges into fulvous, barred with black. Lower breast, belly, under tail-coverts, tail, upper tail-coverts, rump, primaries and secondaries of wing, and thighs black. Sides of body white to buffy, barred with black. Mantle feathers olive-brown with fulvous and ochreous margins, tinged with chestnut in the middle of the mantle. Scapulars rather more tinged with olive.

Lesser wing-coverts chestnut shading to black at the bend of the wing and to olive-grey on the secondary coverts. Bill black, with a patch of blue above the " nail " and round the nostrils; legs and feet lead-grey; eyes brown to hazel. Wings 210-235 mm.

FEMALE, ADULT:

Similar to the male.

IMMATURE :

Somewhat like adults but the top of the head tinged with brown; hind part of head and neck brownish-black; throat and face not pure white but tinged with greyish; breast with a wash of chestnut, while the lower breast and belly are ashy-brown slightly barred; flanks buffy with ochreous wash and barred.

HABITS :

This is quite one of the most distinctive of the ducks found in Kenya and Uganda. Not only is its colour very striking, but its call is unmistakable; furthermore, when the bird visits certain suitable localities it does so in large numbers. Although known to have a very wide distribution, one cannot always count on finding the species in a given locality; there is undoubted local migration, not only for purposes of breeding, but for food also. The White-faced duck can be called a common species, but it has a marked preference for certain types of water. Deep open sheets are avoided; it prefers shallow swampy pans, lakes with wide swampy margins, and is not infrequently met with on the inundated banks of rivers when in flood. It is no uncommon thing to find quite a few examples in temporary shallow pans when the rains are on, such areas as one not infrequently finds migratory snipe to visit. We have records of this bird from the swamps at the coast, the Tana and Juba rivers, Lake Jipe, Magadi, Natron, Naivasha, occasionally Lake Nakuru, Olbolossat, Elmenteita, Solai, Marsabit, and Koroli, the swamps of South Kavirondo and Central Kavirondo, temporary rain pans in the Uasin Gishu, Lake Kioga, Wamala, and in Toro.

As already indicated, one cannot reckon on seeing the bird on any one of these places; it moves about very considerably, and indeed travels with the rains, frequenting those inundated areas where food is to be obtained. A common species, yet little is on record regarding its nesting habits. It is said to nest in dense reed beds, constructing a shallow nest of reeds and rootlets which it lines with down. As many as seven eggs are laid, creamy-pink to buff, smooth but not glossy. In the coastal belt, breeding birds have been shot in July to August. Jackson records young in September. I have specimens in complete wing moult in December.

One usually comes upon these birds in flocks of half a dozen to perhaps a hundred. They spend the day time in sleep or preening themselves, but in the late evening and dusk they become active, and it is at this time they feed, and carry on until dawn. They flight from their resting grounds to the shallows where they feed. Not infrequently one may hear their clear whistling call of three notes " sip-sip-sieu " or " sit-sit-siew," far into the night, and indeed, one has actually heard them fighting over Nairobi township. They feed on mollusca, crustacea, aquatic weeds, and grass seeds. Their flight is not as strong

or as swift as that of most ducks, and they are rather loath to leave a particular spot even though shot at. If flushed, they will circle round and very soon alight, and in this way several birds may be obtained out of a flock. At noon when the birds are resting they can be approached with little difficulty. Though excellent swimmers, they prefer to wade and feed in the shallows, their long legs being especially adapted for this environment.

The White-faced Duck is said not to perch on trees and the name Tree Duck is a misnomer when applied to this species. It is a fact, however, that specimens which I have had in captivity in a large enclosure with numerous tree-stumps and strong flat boughs, were very fond of roosting on the trees. Further, I have observed them sitting on half submerged boughs on the Tana River.

As a sporting bird the Whistling duck ranks fairly low, its flight being rather weak, and because of its habit of circling round before going off. The long legs and long slender neck, besides the striking colour, make this bird unmistakable even on the wing.

These birds take kindly to captivity and make interesting pets; their conspicuous plumage and sibilant whistling adds colour and sound to any wild-fowl enclosure. The males become rather pugnacious and frequently cause damage to duck larger than themselves. Their method of fighting is interesting; they drop the forepart of the body, half open the wings, and depress the head on the back, then suddenly they extend their necks and strike, the "nail" of the bill being sharply drawn back and inflicting an unpleasant injury. Throughout the encounter the crown feathers are raised, and a continuous whistling is maintained.

DENDROCYGNA FULVA (Gmel.). FULVOUS TREE DUCK, or
WHISTLING TEAL.

Ref. : Gmelin, *Syst. Nat.* 1, pt. 2, p. 530.

Type locality : Mexico.

DISTRIBUTION :

Suitable localities from the Kenya coast to Uganda.

DESCRIPTION. MALE AND FEMALE, ADULT :

Top of head rufescent-chestnut shading to fulvous on the sides of the head; a black streak extending from the hind crown down the centre of the hind neck; throat and chin paler fulvous to almost white; about the middle of the neck an indication of a pale fulvous ring streaked with sepia. Upper breast and belly fulvous, more rufescent on the former, and paling to creamy-buff under the tail, the thighs and upper tail-coverts, side of body cinnamon, with the long flank feathers with wide

creamy longitudinal line outlined above and below with sepia. Feathers of mantle and back dark brown-black with chestnut tips paling at margins; wings brown-black with chestnut lesser coverts; rump and tail black. Bill, lead-grey; legs and feet, blue-grey; eyes, ochre-brown.

IMMATURE:

Somewhat like the adults, but the back is browner and the cinnamon flanks less rich and streaking not so obvious; breast tinged with greyish. The young in down appear undescribed, and the periods of moults unrecorded.

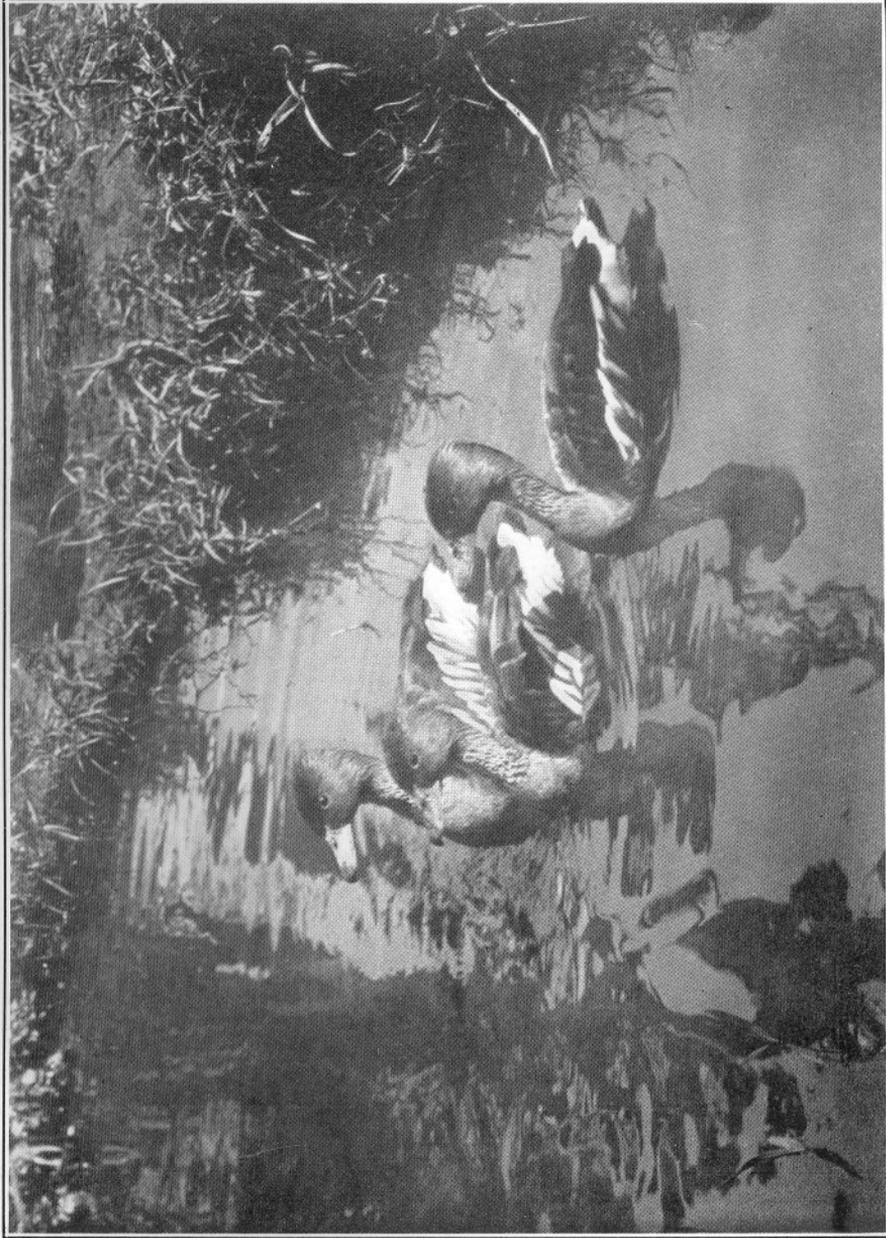
HABITS:

This species has a wide distribution, but is given to wandering. As with the White-faced duck, we find these birds in very large numbers on certain waters if the time is favourable; that is, when large areas of low land are flooded and food is abundant. It is partial to shallow water and thus avoids the deeper lakes, but if there are flats and floating islands on the larger sheets of water, one may see the birds there occasionally. The actual localities from which I have records of this bird correspond with those of the previous species. During the floods of 1918 this bird was much in evidence at Lakes Magadi, Naivasha, Nakuru, and Olbolossat, and equally plentiful on the swampy ground behind Kisumu on the Kano plains. During the day they rest and engage in their toilet, and at such times several birds may be seen together, half to a couple of dozen, or even more. Archer records them in "thousands" on Lake Wamala in Uganda. They feed during the night, and at sunset or just before, they begin to move from their resting grounds. When in flight they keep up an incessant whistling, not so loud as the White-face, but somewhat similar. The flight is weak, and has nothing of the quality associated with the duck family as a whole. As a sporting bird the Fulvous duck does not rank high. They have the habit of circling round or even alighting near one of their species that has been shot, and it is no uncommon thing to bag a dozen or more in one small patch of water, if one is aware of their habits. They feed on crustacea, small mollusca, aquatic weeds, and seeds.

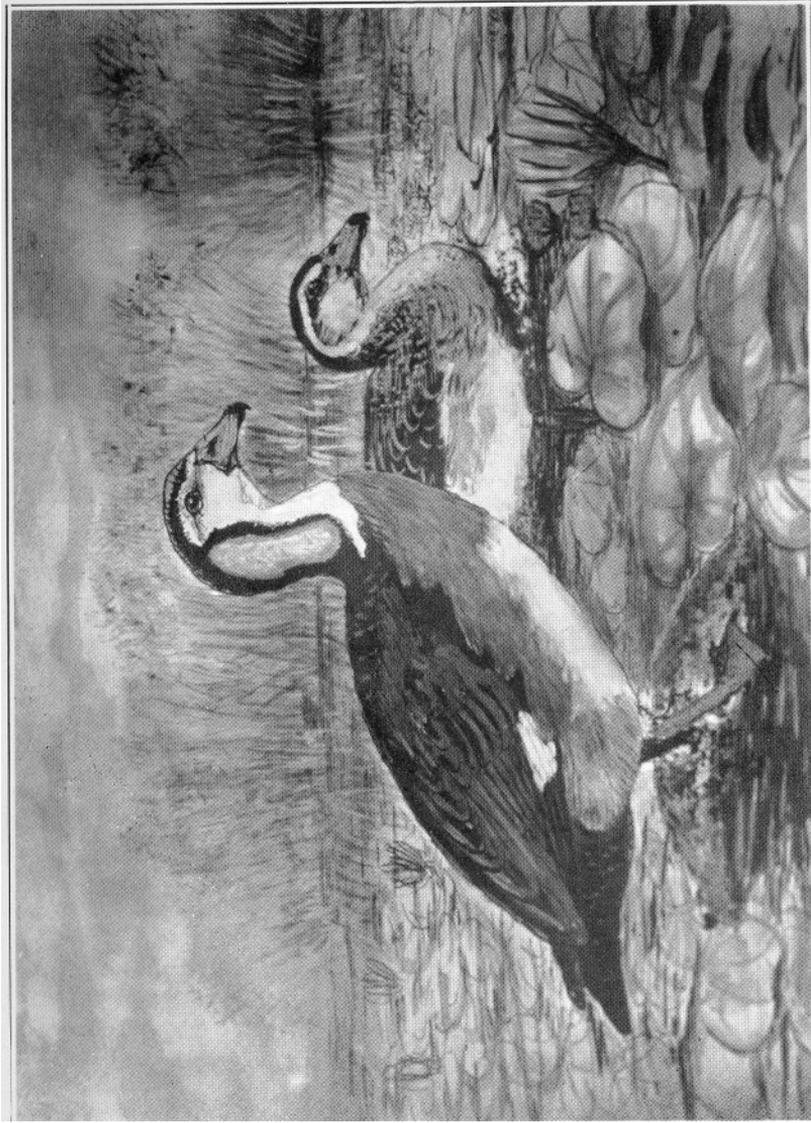
The nesting season appears to vary with the locality. In the coastal belt they breed in August and September. On Lake Magadi they had nests in April and breeding birds were shot in Uganda in May and June. The nest is a shallow depression lined with a few bits of grasses and reeds and a little down, but the margins are built up with herbage to form a nest in which the edge is above the sitting bird. The usual situation is in dense reed-beds. In the Magadi area the nest was in long grass at the edge of water. At Naivasha, the nests have been in thick grass growing below young acacia trees. Six to ten eggs form the clutch, but Jackson recorded one of 13. The eggs are ivory-white, smooth but not glossy, 50 x 42 mm.



Fulvous Tree-duck (*Dendrocygna fulva*, Gmel.).



Fulvous Tree-duck.



Pigmy Goose (*Nattapus auritus*, Bodd.).

GEESE.

The geese of these territories belong to four genera: *Nettapus*, *Sarkidiornis*, *Alopochen*, and *Plectropterus*. Each is represented by a single species.

NETTAPUS AURITUS (Bodd.). DWARF or PIGMY GOOSE.

Ref.: Boddart, *Tabl. Pl. Enlum.*, 1783.

Type locality: Madagascar.

DISTRIBUTION:

Coast belt of Kenya and Lake Jipe, then a break until Lake Victoria, and Lake Rudolf; also crater lakes Toro.

DESCRIPTION, MALE, ADULT:

Greater part of head and a streak passing down the neck obliquely and often meeting behind, white. Crown from in line with the eyes and down the nape, dark glossy green; a large patch over the ears and extending down towards the back of the neck, light pea-green outlined with a band of black. Lower neck, breast and upper mantle, sides of body and flanks, rufescent brown; rest of mantle, rump and upper tail-coverts dark glossy green. Tail and flight feathers black; a few of the secondaries and the tips of the greater coverts, white. Under surface of body from lower breast to belly white. Under tail-coverts and round the vent glossy black. Legs and feet black; bill bright orange yellow with black "nail." Eye brown. Wings, 150-160 mm.

FEMALE, ADULT:

Crown dark brown; cheeks and side of neck whitish streaked with blackish-brown; throat and fore-neck whitish. Lower neck and mantle dark brown barred rufescent; scapulars and greater part of back brown-black with green sheen; wings as in the male, but the coverts more brownish, less green. Under surface as in the male though the tail is less black and the rufescent-cinnamon of the flanks paler. Bill olive; legs and feet black; eyes brown.

IMMATURE:

Very similar to the female, but the back with less green, and the head and neck more speckled. Juvenile in down not recorded.

HABITS:

As already mentioned under distribution, this little Goose occurs on only certain of the waters of Kenya and Uganda. The reason is difficult to explain. It is not that the waters of the Rift Valley are not suitable, for what would appear ideal conditions are there. It certainly

likes to rest in deep water, and very seldom has one observed it on land, and then only on half-submerged floating islets of sudd. Nevertheless, one frequently sees it on shallow rain pans which are full of water-lilies and other vegetation particularly the curious water-lettuce (*pistia*). Jackson found the bird common on the temporary rain pans on the coast near Lamu in August and September. From personal experience, I should say that Lake Victoria is the stronghold of this goose so far as Eastern Africa is concerned; and this is all the more interesting in that few ducks appear to frequent this lake, preferring the smaller sheets of water. The Pigmy Goose is not found in the open water of Lake Victoria, but in the secluded quiet bays where vegetation has a chance to grow undisturbed by the high winds that sweep the water.

Here among the water-lilies, the geese feed and rest and are extremely tame. They feed largely on the vegetable matter which grows round the stems of *pistia*, and one may observe the birds nibbling at the plants which they first pull out of the water.

One has only observed these birds on shore, on the quiet coves on Buvuma Island.

The breeding season on the coastal belt is between May and June, and if for any reason a second brood is reared they may be found in July or August. On Lake Victoria, we have seen the nests in January, and again in July and August. The nest is usually made in a hole in some large tree, but Jackson records a nest in a cliff also. Six eggs usually form a clutch, oval in shape and of a creamy colour.

As a sporting bird the Pigmy Goose is quite good; its flight is rapid and strong, but in localities where it has not been disturbed it will often return after the first shot and one or more may be bagged without changing position. A wounded bird is difficult to recover. They have the same habit as the Stiff-tailed diving Duck—they submerge and only keep their bill above water, and are thus difficult to locate. In captivity this little Goose is most attractive, is easy to keep, and is very ornamental.

SARKIDIORNIS MELANOTUS (Penn.). KNOB-BILLED or COMB GOOSE.

Ref. Pennant, *Ind. Zool.*, p. 12, 1769.

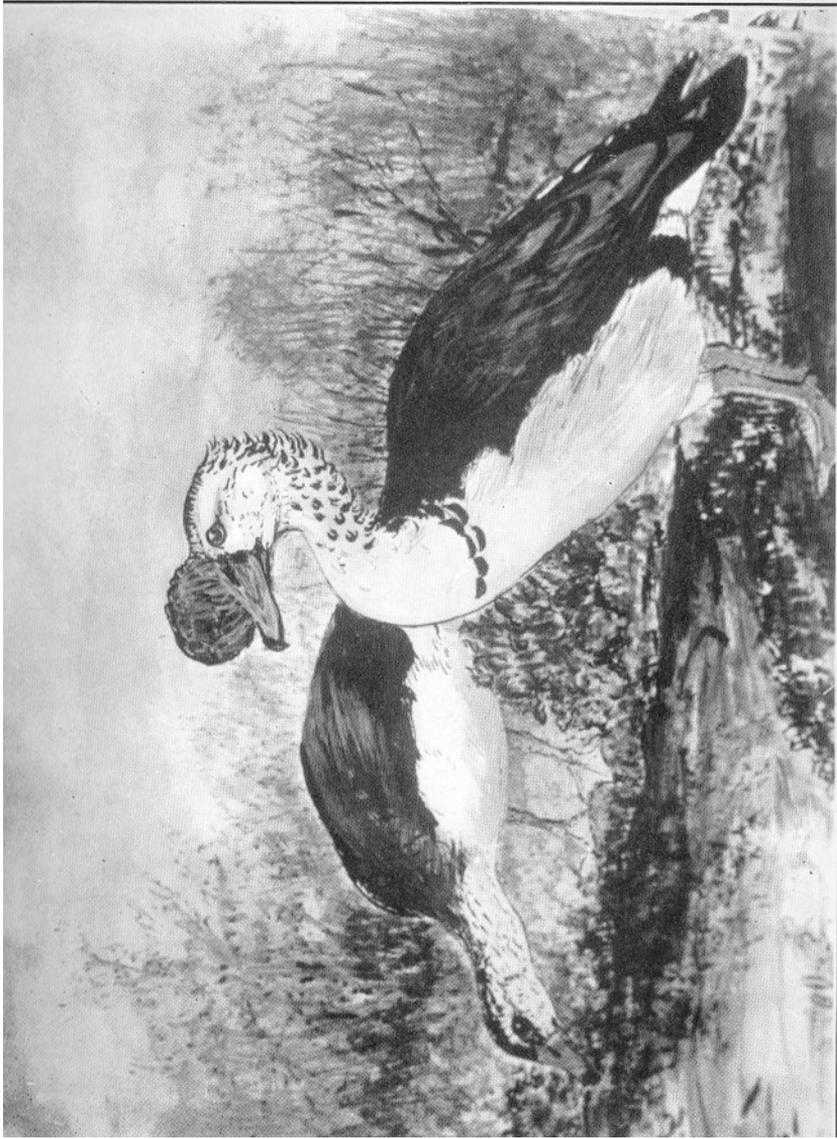
Type locality: Ceylon.

DISTRIBUTION:

Kenya and Uganda, on most of the lakes and rivers.

DESCRIPTION. MALE, ADULT:

Centre of crown and middle feathers on back of neck, blue-black, the latter feathers up-curved; rest of head and neck white, widely flecked with purple black, and often with yellow in robust individuals. Base of neck and the whole of the underside, white, shading to ashy



Knob-billed or Comb Goose (*Sarhidiornis melanotus*, Penn.).

grey on the sides of the body and thighs; a patch of Naples yellow on either side of the base of tail; under tail-coverts white. At the base of the hind neck, where it joins the mantle a row of black-tipped feathers which extend downward towards the upper breast forming an incomplete band; mantle and scapulars dark blue-green with strong purple sheen; lesser coverts metallic-green shading to bronzy green on the secondary coverts; secondaries with a marked bronzy sheen on the outer webs; primaries black. Back and rump greyish, becoming black with green gloss on the upper tail-coverts. Tail black with green gloss; legs and feet black; bill black with a large laterally flattened fleshy "knob" on the ridge of the mandible. This "knob" or "comb" varies in size, but is largest at the breeding season. Eyes hazel or brown. Wings 349-395 mm.

FEMALE, ADULT:

Much smaller than the male though somewhat similarly coloured, but the degree of glossy sheen not so marked, and the head and neck black speckling smaller and more numerous. The bill does not have a knob. The flanks are less decided ashy-grey, and there is no yellowish patch at the sides of the under tail region. Bill legs and feet grey-black; eyes brown.

IMMATURE:

Immature birds are like the female but often have the feathers of the upper breast narrowly tipped with black; the metallic reflections on the mantle and back are not strongly marked.

JUVENILE:

I have no description of the young in down, nor does there appear to be a published record.

HABITS:

As with many of the duck and geese, this species is given to local movement and is a true migrant also. The range of localities from which it has been taken or observed is very wide.

We have taken it on the flooded banks of the Tana River, at Lake Jipe, on temporary swamps near Samburu, Lake Magadi, observed it on rain-pans in the Southern Masai reserve; it is plentiful on Lakes Naivasha, Elmenteita, Nakuru, and Solai, and present on most of the lakes in Uganda, but only sparingly on Lake Victoria. The only locality where these birds seem to remain all the year round in any numbers is on Lake Naivasha. They are usually seen in small companies of half a dozen or so, but during an influx as many as a hundred may be observed together. Though no records of nesting have been made in Kenya, I feel convinced that they do breed on Lake Naivasha, as one often observes the birds in pairs.

The Knob-bill is a rather sluggish bird and spends most of the day time resting on some mud bank or floating islet; its very conspicuous plumage makes it an easy object to pick out, and one may approach quite close in a boat or canoe. They are good swimmers but only take to the water after being disturbed. They feed very largely on herbage at the edges of the shallows, and may occasionally be seen in patches of swamp grass away from the water's edge. They do most of their feeding in the evening and early dawn. They also eat the seeds of the water-lilies.

As already mentioned, little is known of their nesting habits. There are records of nests taken in South Africa; these have always been on the ground amongst reeds, but in Ceylon and India, where the species also occurs, it is said to nest in hollows in trees, either a hole in the trunk or branch or in the angle between a widely forked upright trunk. The nest is described as an untidy structure of twigs and grass and a little lining. The eggs are yellowish-white, six to eight in a clutch.

Observations on the nesting of this species are badly needed and readers are requested to send in any notes they make to the Editor of this journal.

AIPOCHEN AEGYPTIACUS (Linn.). EGYPTIAN GOOSE.

Ref.: Linnaeus, *Syst. Nat.*, 12 Ed., 1766.

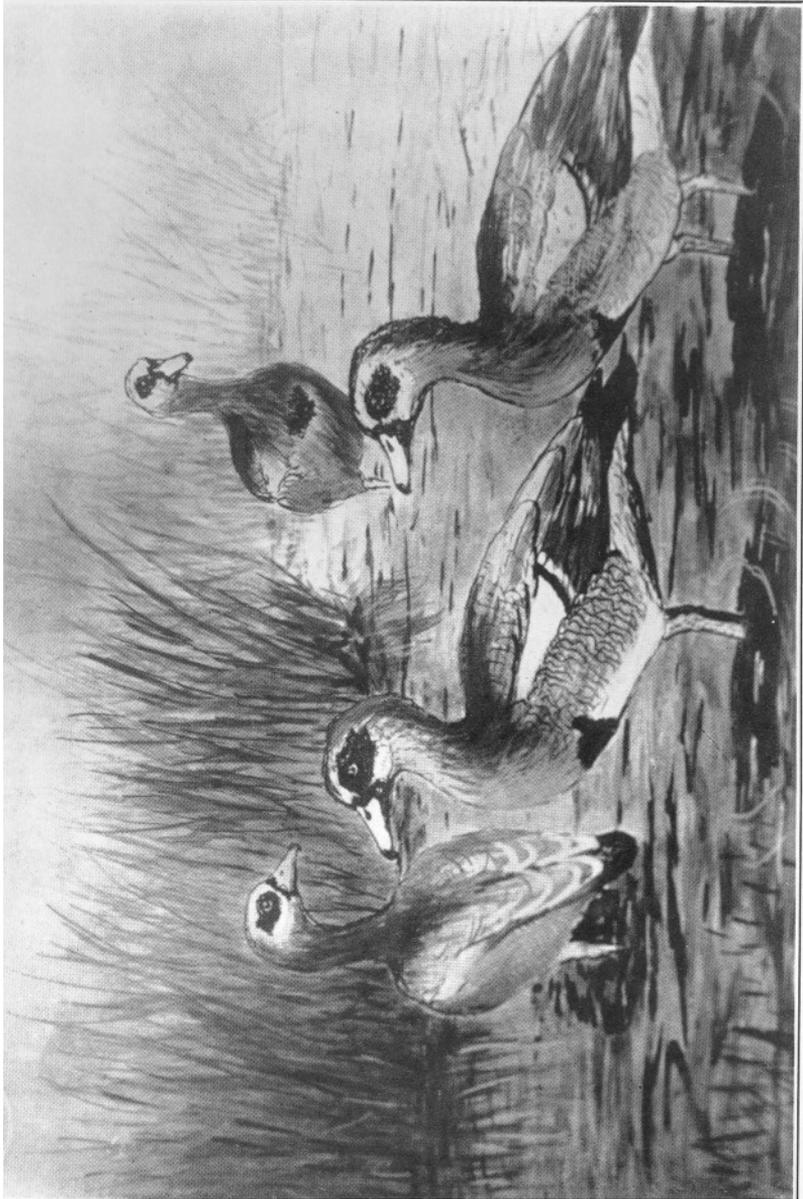
Type locality: Egypt.

DISTRIBUTION:

Widely distributed through Kenya and Uganda.

DESCRIPTION. MALE, ADULT:

Top of crown, sides of head, chin and throat white; a line at the base of the bill, a large patch round the eye and a collar round the neck where the feathers are elongated, ashy-brown with a rusty tinge. Upper breast and lower neck towards the mantle olive-greyish tinged with rusty and very finely vermiculated; lower breast and under side white, the former with a large chestnut patch; sides of body and thighs greyish with a rusty tinge, and blackish vermiculations. Vent and under tail-coverts rusty-buff. Mantle, dark ashy-brown finely vermiculated. Scapulars brown with rusty tinge and fine vermiculations; wing-coverts white, the greater coverts with a distinct sub-terminal black bar. Innermost secondaries chestnut, the remainder oily-green merging to purplish distally; primaries black with greenish tinge on outer web. Back, rump, and upper tail-coverts black, the first with fine buff vermiculations; tail black; eyes yellow; bill pinkish mottled, darker at the base, nail dark brown; legs and feet pink. Many old males have a well-developed spur at the "elbow" of the wing. Wings 390-410 mm.



Egyptian Geese (*Alopochen aegyptiaca*, Linn.).



Egyptian Goose on nest.

Photo: van Someren.



Nest of Egyptian Goose in cliff.

Photo: van Someren.

FEMALE, ADULT :

Very similar to the male, but the chestnut breast patch not so marked or large, and the rusty tinge to the inner secondaries not so rufescent. Size smaller.

IMMATURE :

Fore part of head, chin and throat white; crown, an area round the eye, hind neck olive-grey tinged with rufous; upper breast and hind neck buffy-grey vermiculated, the latter with rusty wash. Lower breast, belly and vent to under tail-coverts white, the last with creamy tinge; sides of body ashy-grey vermiculated rather coarsely. Mantle and scapulars ashy-grey strongly washed with rusty. Greater part of wing-coverts white but shading to grey proximal to the sub-terminal black bar of the greater coverts which are all white-tipped; rest of wing as in the female.

JUVENILE :

Somewhat like the young of the European Sheldrake. Most of the down dirty whitish, with a dark patch on the crown; a streak down the hind-neck, four blotches on the back, two on each wing, and one on either side of the flanks. Bill greyish-pink; legs and feet greyish-flesh; eyes grey-brown.

HABITS :

The Egyptian Goose is certainly the commonest of any within our boundaries. They are to be found on all the lakes and many of the larger rivers and swamps, both temporary and permanent.

The lakes of the Rift Valley are the most frequented, especially Naivasha, Nakuru, and Elmenteita. Practically every sandpit, mud-flat or half submerged floating islet has its quota of geese. The numbers recorded by Jackson as observed in the years 1889-94 are not by any means maintained at the present day.

Small flocks or even single pairs are most frequently seen. They spend the day time in sleep and resting in some quiet spot and then commence their evening flight about five thirty. They resort to the open patches of grass-land and here they feed on the herbage and grasses especially the latter when they are in seed. They are most systematic in their stripping of the seed-heads; a bunch of geese will walk six or eight abreast, each stripping practically every head in front of them as they progress. Now that the shores of Lake Naivasha have been settled and many gardens have lawns toward the water, it is no uncommon sight to see a pair or more of these geese grazing on the grass at evening or early dawn. So regular are they in the times that they resort to these grazing grounds that one can almost set one's watch by their arrival.

The call of the Egyptian goose is characteristic and can be likened to a cross between a quack and the honking of a Pink-foot,

somewhat like "honk-haah-haah-haah." They also make a hissing sound when angry. The breeding season is prolonged; I have records of their nests from January to July, August, October to December. The nesting site is variable, and the following have come under my personal observation: in an old disused vulture's nest; Cormorant's and Darter's nests, hollow in a tree, in crevices of rocks on rocky islets, on an open sandy spit among grass, in a reed bed, on a river bank, in an old disused boat-house, and in a hole in a cliff face. These birds construct a nest of grasses and reeds and there is nearly always a very thick lining of down from the female. Six to ten eggs are usually laid, cream-coloured and nearly oval. Incubation takes a month, and both birds take part in incubation, though the female does the greater amount.

It is no uncommon sight to witness after one of the main nesting seasons, several young up to as many as twenty, escorted on the water by a couple of three-quarter grown geese. Very often one comes across them quite a distance from the shore; doubtless they are safer here than resting on the shore, for most of the young are unable to fly. The moults of these geese have not been studied in detail, and herein lies a field for original observation.

As a sporting bird the Egyptian Goose stands fairly high; once he is on the wing and going strong, his speed is good. During the close season these birds get quite tame, but soon lose their tranquility after a few days of shooting; they are then very alert and go off at the slightest sign of danger.

As captive birds these geese are excellent; they are hardy and easy to cater for and breed regularly, but they require plenty of water. They are, however, rather pugnacious especially during the nesting season. They are excellent "watch-dogs."

They are very good tree-perchers and one may often see these birds perched on trees overhanging river banks or even sitting on the flat-topped acacias.

PLECTROPTERUS GAMBENSIS GAMBENSIS (Linn.). SPUR-WINGED GOOSE.

Ref.: Linnaeus, *Syst. Nat.*, 12th ed., 1766.

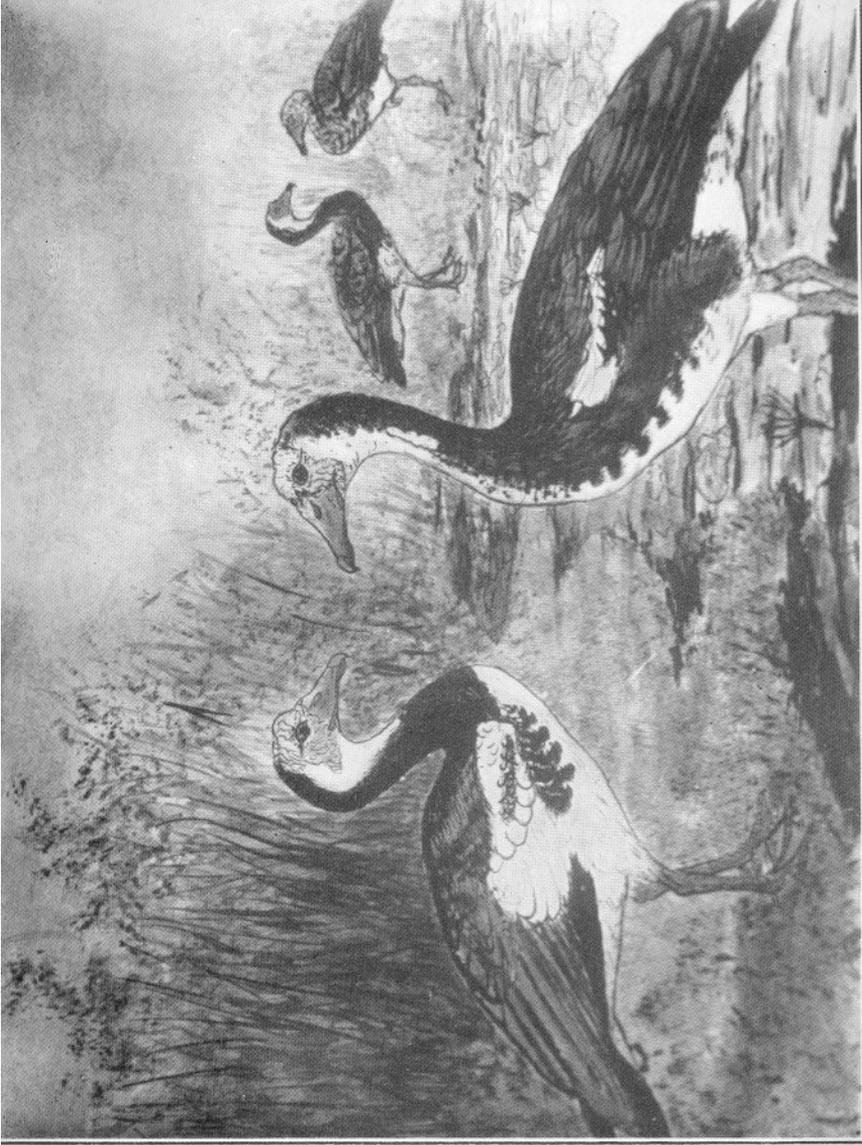
Type locality: Gambia.

DISTRIBUTION:

Kenya and Uganda.

DESCRIPTION. MALE, ADULT:

Somewhat variable. The fore-part of the face from forehead to just behind the eyes bare of feathers, the bare patch extending beyond the gape in many old male specimens. Beyond the bare area, chin and throat and fore part of upper neck, pure white; back portion of



Spur-winged Geese (*Plectropterus gambensis*, Linn.).

crown, nape and the greater part of the neck black, rather browner on the back of the neck; this black extends on to the upper breast on its sides and may be continuous with the black on the sides of the body. Mantle, back, scapulars and most of the wing coverts black, some of the lesser coverts pure white surrounding the "elbow" and at this joint a well-developed spur. All the black feathers with a strong greenish metallic reflection, shading to purplish at the margins of each feather. secondaries similarly coloured; primaries black. Under side of body from breast to under tail-coverts pure white. Some specimens have some black feathers below the sides of the tail. Bill pinkish with a bluish tinge at the base, nail black; legs and feet pinkish; eyes yellow. Wings 448-500 mm.

FEMALE:

Similar to the male, but with less bare area on the face and generally smaller.

IMMATURE:

Head feathered for the most part, and the white areas restricted and speckled with blackish; dark parts of hind head and neck, dark brown. Mantle brownish-black. Rest of upper side as in the female but greenish reflections not so marked. Sides of body and flanks mottled with black. Bill, brownish-pink; legs and feet dirty flesh-brown. Eyes brown.

JUVENILE:

The downy plumage has not been recorded.

HABITS:

This is the largest of the geese in Kenya and Uganda, and its distribution covers an area from the coast to north-west Uganda. It, however, occurs only in certain localities throughout the year such as Lakes Naivasha, Nakuru, Elmenteita, portions of Lake Victoria, and on Lake Jipe, in other places it is but a temporary visitor. It turns up in most unexpected places such as dams and temporary rain-pans and swampy areas during the rainy season. I have seen a pair on the swamp near the Nairobi Rifle Range and occasionally on the swamp at Limuru.

They do not always keep near water; thus one has seen them on the open grassy plains in the Masai Reserve when the grass is short and green, but as a rule they frequent water. They are certainly most plentiful on the lakes of the Rift Valley so far as Kenya is concerned, and their favourite localities in Uganda are Lakes Wamala, Kioga, and George.

The Spur-wing Goose is a nocturnal feeder, coming out on to the open grassy patches by the lake side, or even frequenting the cultiva-

tions near the water. They are grazers and do quite a lot of damage to fields of lucerne and maize. Not only is damage done by eating the crop, but their great weight tramples the young plants.

The situations in which one sees these birds are usually the quiet back waters where there are shelves of floating vegetation or islets and on half-submerged spits of land. Here they stand or rest and preen themselves. It is only occasionally that one comes on these birds in any large numbers: they are usually in pairs or small companies of half a dozen or so. They are rather shy and soon take alarm unless one drifts down on them very slowly and quietly; any movement in the boat puts them on the alert at once. On certain of the low-lying water-logged banks on Lake Naivasha one may detect these birds by seeing a dark head and neck above the tops of the rushes; nothing more is visible, but approach near and they get up with a swish of wings that reminds one of the fighting geese on the mud-flats at home.

Their principal food is young luscious grass and grass seed, but they also devour the young flowers and the seeds of the water-lilies. On the shores of Lake Victoria, they are accused by the natives of raiding potato and ground-nut shambas.

The nesting season is not very well known; much more detailed observation is required. I have found the nests in August and September on Lakes Naivasha and Nakuru and young, not able to fly, in January. The nest is a large structure of reeds and roots and other debris, about six inches deep, in a dense reed patch. Six to eight eggs have been seen in clutches, ivory-white or creamy in colour, and smooth.

These birds are expert tree perchers. I have not infrequently observed them perched on dead trees by the lake side, but those I have had in captivity always roosted on the topmost branch of an old tree in their enclosure.

Quite good sport of a type can be had when these birds are fighting of an evening to one of their favoured grazing grounds, and they take a deal of lead; however, when obtained they are really not worth eating, the flesh is coarse and very tough.

As ornamental waterfowl they have their uses; birds in full plumage and robust constitution add greatly to any assemblage of water birds.

[END OF VOL I.]

Separates of this and the preceding articles can be obtained at the cost of Shs. 5/- each.

The series includes the Guinea-fowl, Francolin, Spur-fowl, Quail, Pigeons, Doves, Duck, Geese of Kenya and Uganda.