

SOME RARE WILD DUCKS WINTERING AT BOSTON,  
MASSACHUSETTS, 1909-1910.<sup>1</sup>

BY HORACE W. WRIGHT.

*Plates XIX and XX.*

UNDER the beneficent protective game-laws of the State, by which lakes and ponds within city parks and state reservations are made safe and secure for resident and migrant birds from all shooting and interference, it has come to pass that a little company of wild ducks rarely seen hereabouts is wintering within the city limits. About four miles out from State Street in the West Roxbury district lies a pond, covering an area of sixty-five acres, known as Jamaica Pond. It is beautifully set in what is now Olmsted Park. On the easterly side of this pond rises a rather steep bank with growth of pine, giving the name "Pine Bank" to the former private estate. Here is now the administration quarters of the city Park Commissioners. On all sides, except the Jamaica Plain side which is to the southeast, the land rises gradually, notably on the northerly and westerly sides, where are extensive private estates beyond the limit of the park. Along the westerly shores, which are now the park lands, was the home of Francis Parkman with its rose garden. The pond, therefore, has by nature a protected setting in the midst of a beautiful environment. It is deep in the middle; the depth has been estimated to be fifty-five feet. But on the westerly side and in a cove reaching northward the waters are comparatively shallow. It is the largest natural piece of fresh water within the limits of the city. And it was the first source of water supply for Boston; the conduit composed of pitch-pine logs bored out like pump-logs was completed in 1795. But long since it ceased to be a part of Boston's water-system. Into the pond on the northwesterly side flows a brook. When winter comes and covers all the ponds with ice, the formation of which Jamaica Pond resists successfully for a time,

---

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Nuttall Ornithological Club, Cambridge, Mass., February 21, 1910, with some slight subsequent additions and emendations.



along this northwesterly shore where the brook enters and a breeze seems always to come down from the northwest moving the waters, an area continues open even after the remainder of the pond is frozen,—an area successively diminishing night by night of severe frost. So the water-fowl which come to the pond are able to remain late, sometimes into early January.

Next northward from Jamaica Pond, following the parkway, lies Ward's Pond set in a small basin and covering somewhat less than three acres. Here occasionally a wild bird alights and remains for a time. Next, proceeding northward still, are three pools fed by active springs which prevent the freezing of the waters. The largest pool is known as Willow Pond. Small as this is, occasionally it receives a wild duck or two in midwinter, when the weather is severe and closes up the other ponds. Next lies Leverett Pond, which in earlier years was a swamp, but was converted by the Park Commission into a pond of twelve acres. Without much width it stretches out well in length and lies between hilly ridges. On the easterly side is Parker Hill in Boston; on the westerly side, the High Street district and its elevated lands in Brookline. Leverett Pond receives Muddy River, which forms the boundary between Boston and Brookline and flows through the Back Bay Fens into the Charles River Basin. The entrance of the river into Leverett Pond, although it is a very insignificant stream, serves to keep an area of open water toward its northerly end and except in very cold weather even across to the opposite shore. In the severest cold waves of the winter the open water is not entirely lost, although it may be diminished to an area not more than fifty or sixty feet across. Here a flock of park Mallards has wintered as usual. Throughout the year a small flock lives on this pond and breeds. At Jamaica Pond a much larger flock breeds, and some of these Mallards, when the keeper gathers in his flock in early winter for life in houses and pens, escape and secure a more natural life at Leverett Pond. So the flock on this pond is increased by an accession from Jamaica Pond. It has numbered about sixty ducks the present winter. Two European swans have lived throughout the winter with them. Bridle paths and park roads border these ponds, in some places closely, in other places somewhat more



remotely. There are walks along the shores throughout their extent. Thus, being attractive spots in the park-system, many persons move daily afoot, on horseback, or in carriage or automobile, and the situation is not isolated, but on the contrary is in very close touch with the town centre of Brookline and in the pathway of pleasure travel.

On these open waters of Leverett Pond five species of wild ducks have wintered; namely, Baldpate (*Mareca americana*), three drakes and one duck; Redhead (*Marila americana*), a duck; Canvas-back (*Marila vallisineria*), a drake; Lesser Scaup (*Marila affinis*), a drake; and Ring-necked (*Marila collaris*), a drake.

All of these birds first appeared in Jamaica Pond. There is scarcely any basis for doubt that they are the same birds which successively came there in the autumn and early winter and remained to the complete freezing up of the pond. This took place on December 30. The small area which had remained open and grown somewhat smaller night by night was then closing up. Thus the ducks were given notice that they must quickly leave, and the operations of the park employees on that day precipitated their departure; for it was a matter of mercy and necessity that the park ducks should be gathered in. This was done by the use of a stretched seine or netting held around the flock by several men, by means of which they were slowly drawn into a pen in which they could be conveyed to winter quarters. The wild ducks naturally took wing and dispersed. But it proved that they did not go far and were not long lost to view. The four Baldpates passed at once to Chestnut Hill reservoir, which is a part of the city's water supply and also within the city limits, where the water pumped in and rising forcibly to the surface serves to keep a considerable area open in the coldest weather. This reservoir is about two miles distant across country from Jamaica Pond. The Baldpates remained here but a brief time, however, for all four were seen on Leverett Pond on January 5. The Redhead and the Canvas-back were not located for two or three days, but they could not have gone far, for they both came back and were seen on their return on Leverett Pond. No Lesser Scaup drake had been seen on Jamaica Pond later than December 24; two had remained there up to that day. January 3 a Lesser Scaup drake



was with these other ducks on Leverett Pond. If he were one of the two Jamaica Pond drakes, his absence had been longer than was that of the ducks of the other species, but it would seem probable that he was one of the two and had rejoined his former companions. The Ring-necked drake was absent from Jamaica Pond after December 27. On January 5, he appeared on Leverett Pond, having joined the others, perhaps on the preceding day. So constantly have these wild ducks been visited by myself and many local observers that little has occurred in connection with them which has not gone on record. When they left Jamaica Pond and I found only the Baldpates on Chestnut Hill reservoir, I concluded that the others had gone for good, and I did not for several days pass through Olmsted Park where Leverett Pond is situated. But I have learned from several observers who did pass through that they came to this pond successively between January 2 and 5, all being present on the last date. None were present, I am credibly informed, on January 1 or December 31. It is not improbable that in the brief absence of these ducks between their life on Jamaica Pond and their life on Leverett Pond, except in the case of the Baldpates, they were on the waters of the Back Bay Fens near the Somerset Hotel, where another park flock of Mallards lives. I have no definite records, however, to show that such was the case. When, however, on February 19 they disappeared again for two days, these waters through to the Charles River Basin were carefully searched by several observers, and they reported that the ducks were not there, neither on Chestnut Hill Reservoir nor on Fresh Pond in Cambridge, where were open waters. Where, therefore, they went in these and subsequent brief absences has not been ascertained.

In answer to queries whether any of these ducks spoken of as wild might be park ducks which had escaped, it may be said that the only such source from which any one of them could have come is Franklin Park, where is kept on a small pond during the summer and housed during the winter a collection of ducks consisting of several species. But there are no Baldpates in this collection, neither Canvas-backs, Lesser Scaups, or Ring-necked Ducks. In 1906, so I am informed by the assistant superintendent, a pair of American Widgeon, or Baldpates, was purchased and placed on

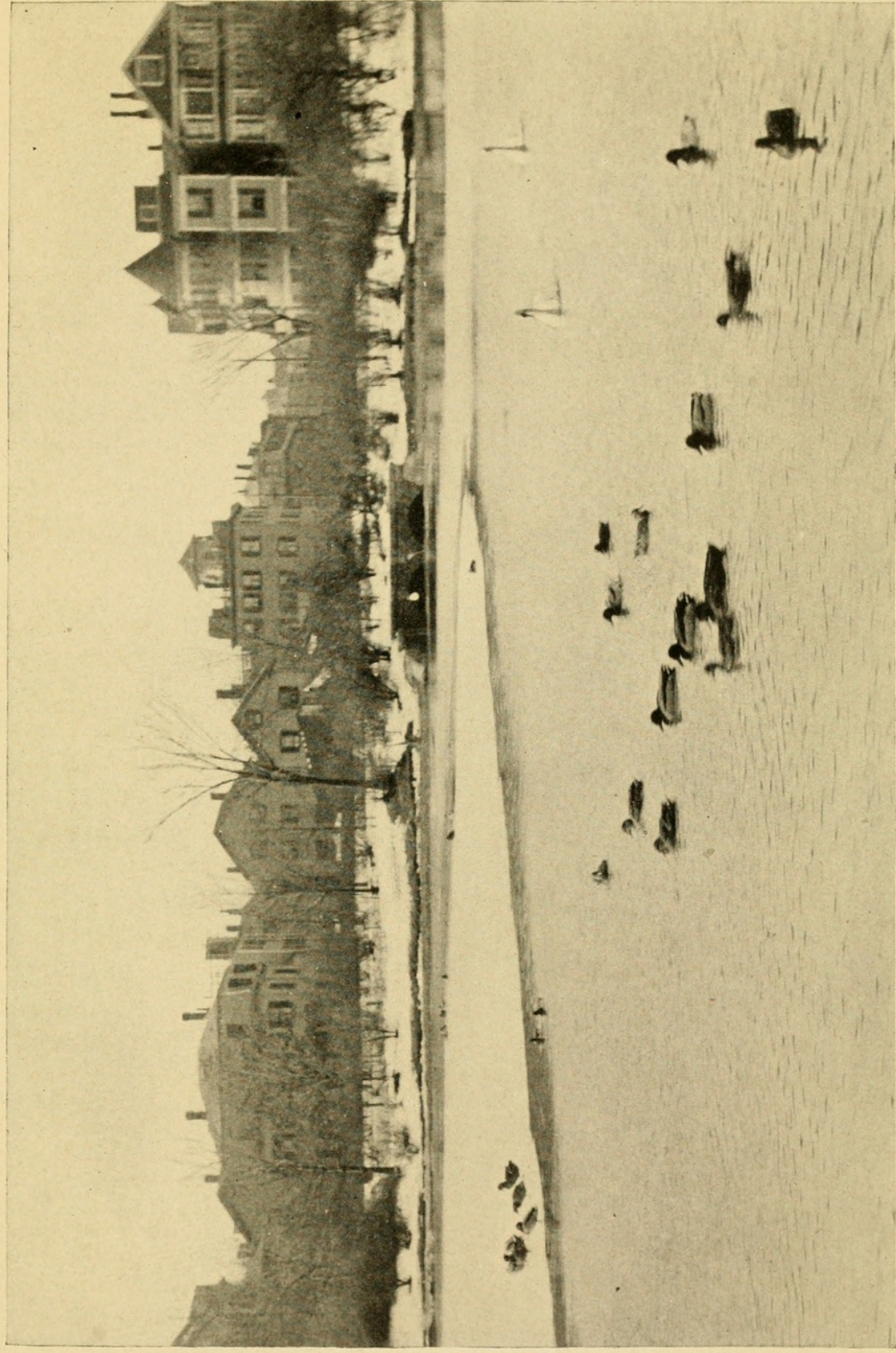


the pond in the park. They disappeared, he says, some time ago, meaning, as I understand from others, two years or more ago, and he knows of no other Widgeon there at any time. No Canvasbacks have recently been members of the collection. I never saw within it any Scaups or Ring-necked Ducks. Redheads, both drakes and ducks, it contains. But the Redhead duck of Jamaica and Leverett Ponds is distinctly larger and finer than these Redheads which have lived and bred in captivity. Since all the evidence goes to show that the ducks of the other four species are wild ducks, which have deliberately chosen the waters of these two ponds for their winter home, it seems quite fair to assume that the fifth species, the Redhead, is also a wild duck. I have, moreover, consulted the park department, represented by those who care for the ducks, as to whether they missed a Redhead duck from their flock at the time of the appearance of this one on Jamaica Pond, December 27, and have learned that they did not. The testimony is that in the gathering in at Franklin Park they lost only a Wood Duck drake. The behavior of all these ducks also confirms the idea that they are wild ducks, since in every case they were much more shy upon their arrival and gradually grew more trustful through association with the park Mallards, these being often fed by the children. So the fact that these ducks have come to receive of such offerings at Leverett Pond must not be taken as invalidating the necessary assumption of their wildness by nature. In other seasons other wild ducks of various species have behaved similarly on these ponds and have become very tame and unsuspicious of harm, when in association with the domesticated Mallards.

More detailed accounts of the arrival and stay of these five species of ducks will now be given, and, incidentally, such previous recent records of other ducks of these species on these and neighboring waters as I myself made or have obtained from local observers.

BALDPATE.—Two Baldpate drakes and one duck were first observed on Jamaica Pond on October 19. Members of the Norfolk Bird Club of Brookline report that they arrived on the 17th. These three Baldpates were constantly seen by myself and others from these dates up to November 29, when an additional drake arrived. The four then remained to the time of the closing





CANVAS-BACK, BALDPATE, AND (NEAR THE ICE) THE LESSER SCAUP AND RING-NECK.

From a photograph by Mr. Frank W. Jones.







of the pond with ice, December 27 being the last day that they were seen together on this pond. On December 28 and 30, two drakes still remained on the pond, but one drake and the duck had gone to Chestnut Hill Reservoir. December 31, all four were on the reservoir and continued there, as far as we know, to January 5. On that day, Miss Bertha Langmaid informs me, all four were seen by her on Leverett Pond. Here they have remained, with the exception that on January 17 there was a scattering of all these wild ducks for some reason and one Baldpate was seen by me on the reservoir, the duck on Leverett Pond, and, I am informed, two drakes were seen on the small Willow Pond next southward in the park. These birds are finely plumaged, the drakes showing their characteristic colorings very beautifully. The duck is somewhat smaller than they, and she is more nimble when bread is thrown to the combined flock, although all the four Baldpates readily swim near shore, showing little fear, while they manifest a degree of wariness.

The previous season, 1908-9, a Baldpate drake wintered on Jamaica and Leverett ponds. He was first observed on Jamaica Pond, December 15, and remained there up to nearly the end of January, when after a few days' stay at the reservoir he came to Leverett Pond. Here he continued up to April 5, being last seen by Mr. James L. Peters. He was joined by a Pintail drake (*Dafla acuta*) on February 22, which continued on the pond for a month and was last seen on March 21. This Pintail drake was joined by a female on March 12, which stayed beyond the departure of the drake and was last seen on March 28.

REDHEAD.—I had observed no Redhead on Jamaica Pond the present season until December 27. On that day a female was seen swimming about closely with the Canvas-back drake. It was plainly identified as a Redhead, as it was afterward on Leverett Pond by several fellow members of the Nuttall Club. It was again seen by me on the following day. But in the disturbance, attending the gathering in of the park flock for housing on December 30, this Redhead was lost sight of in my visit on that day and was not traced for the two intervening days to January 2, when she was seen on Leverett Pond by local observers. So far as known, she has daily continued there with two or three exceptions when



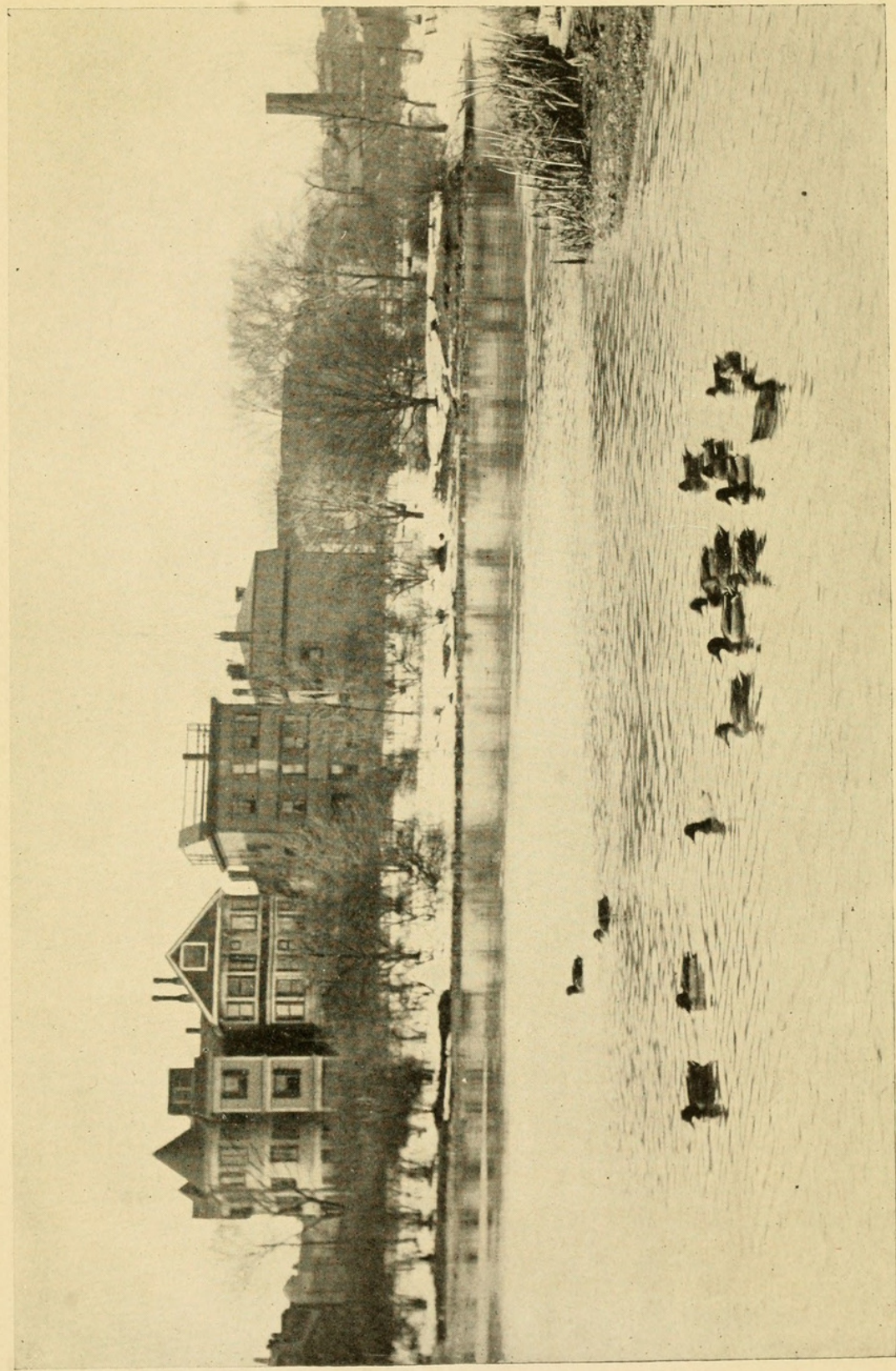
for a day or two days she has been absent somewhere with her companions. This Redhead duck is intermediate in size between the Ring-necked drake and the Canvas-back drake being perceptibly larger than the former and somewhat smaller than the latter. The bill is dark slate with a black tip, and no obscure band is apparent. Dr. Charles W. Townsend has called our attention to the fact that this Redhead as well as the Canvas-back dive with wings close to the side, as do the Scaups.

Mrs. Edmund Bridge informs me that she saw a female Redhead on the pond on November 30. This bird did not remain. Two other records on Jamaica Pond will be of interest in this connection. On December 23, 1905, in company with Mr. Gordon B. Wellman, a Redhead drake was seen. He was with Black Ducks and Mallards and came in close to the shore with them, while we were at some distance. By careful approach we had a very near view of this handsome drake before he swam farther out. It was a day when a light rain was falling and the same day on which a Canvas-back drake was found on Fresh Pond in Cambridge. Another earlier record is that of a Redhead duck seen on November 17, 1906.

There are two Fresh Pond records in recent years, given in Mr. William Brewster's 'Birds of the Cambridge Region,' namely: On October 21, 1902, Mr. Richard S. Eustis observed a flock of five Redheads, two males and three in the plumage of the female. Mr. Brewster saw two males, presumably the same birds, he thought, on November 14 and 30 and December 1. In 1903 a Redhead drake was seen by Mr. Walter Deane on December 6, and on the 11th, 17th, and 21st of the month either the same or a similar bird was observed by Mr. Harold Bowditch. On the waters of Chestnut Hill Reservoir Mr. Richard M. Marble and Mr. Barron Brainerd saw a flock of six Redheads, four drakes and two ducks, on March 21, 1909.

CANVAS-BACK.—I first saw the Canvas-back drake on Jamaica Pond on December 14. Mr. J. L. Peters had seen the bird on the 12th. It was constantly seen by me and many interested observers on this pond up to the closing day, December 30. Four days later Miss Bertha Langmaid saw it on Leverett Pond, and there it has remained, constantly visited and admired, with the exception





CANVAS-BACK AND TWO BALDPATES.  
From a photograph by Mr. Frank W. Jones.







of one day, January 17, when this little company got scattered but quickly came together again, and an occasion in late February, when it was absent for two days with its companions, but again returned. This drake is regarded as a very fine type of the species. The red iris is easily discerned when the bird is near, and the heavy black bill extending almost straight out from the line of the crown is very apparent even at a distance. He and his other wild companions succeeded in getting some of the bread which during a visit of observation Mr. Francis H. Allen and I threw to them, although the park Mallards were rather too quick for these wild birds to secure much in this manner of feeding and were more ready to come near than they. But these ducks afforded us very close views; the range sometimes was not more than twenty-five or thirty feet. A month later these ducks had become still less timid and allowed Mr. E. E. Caduc and myself to stand as near as fifteen feet of them, while they actively fed on the bread thrown to them and were successful in getting all they desired.

Four other records of Canvas-backs in this vicinity in recent years may be mentioned. A drake in full adult plumage was seen by me on Fresh Pond, December 23, 1905, and remained there to January 8, seventeen days, when the pond closed up with ice. He was in company with a flock of Black Ducks, and it seems as if his stay depended solely upon the pond continuing open in some part, in which case he might have been disposed to remain throughout the winter. It is on record in Mr. Brewster's 'Birds of the Cambridge Region' that Mr. Harold Bowditch and Mr. Richard S. Eustis saw a female Canvas-back on Fresh Pond on November 18, 1903. This bird was seen by me on the 20th and by Mr. Brewster and Mr. Walter Deane on the 30th. The third record is that of a drake seen by me on Chestnut Hill Reservoir on March 9, 10, and 12, 1908. The fourth record was also on the reservoir where on March 21, 1909, Mr. R. M. Marble and Mr. Barron Brainerd saw a drake, which was not present on the following day.

LESSER SCAUP DUCK.—One young male Lesser Scaup was first seen by me on Jamaica Pond on November 12. Two Lesser Scaup drakes had been seen on the pond on September 25 by members of the Norfolk Bird Club, and on October 31 a male and a female



which remained for a time. While the young drake showed the black head and breast of a drake, he had a white face in the region around the base of the bill. He was joined by a female on November 25, and the two were seen together up to December 16, when two adult drakes and another female arrived, making a little company of five Lesser Scaups. Five days later, December 21, the young drake disappeared and was not seen again. The two adult drakes remained to December 24, after which they were not seen on Jamaica Pond. The two females staid to December 28, and were not seen after that day. The re-appearance of one drake on Leverett Pond, January 3, which remained constantly up to February 19, suggests that he is probably one of the drakes which had been on Jamaica Pond with the same companions he now has. The purple gloss of the head has been apparent in strong sunlight, making it certain that the bird is a Lesser Scaup and not an American Scaup; in size also he would be counted a Lesser. This drake is rather the shyest of the little company on Leverett Pond and refused to come for any of the bread offered and taken by his companions. He departed on February 19 or 20, attended by his companions. These came back two or three days later without him, and he was not again seen.

One or more Lesser Scaup ducks usually visit Jamaica Pond in the fall. In 1906, a female, first seen on November 2, was observed from time to time up to December 2. In 1908, a flock of eight birds was recorded on November 26. Two had been seen on November 4 by members of the Norfolk Bird Club. Some of these continued on the pond up to January 15, 1909. One spring record is that of a female seen on April 6, 1909. Dr. Harold Bowditch informs me that in 1900 and 1901 he saw on Jamaica Pond a considerable flock of Lesser Scaups. On December 15 and 16 in the former year it numbered from twenty-five to thirty birds; on December 1 of the latter year, fifty birds.

RING-NECKED DUCK.—Two female Ring-necked Ducks were first observed on Jamaica Pond on October 30. Members of the Norfolk Bird Club had seen these birds on the 26th. They remained in association with the other ducks, were frequently seen, and as often confirmed to be Ring-necks, and not Redheads, by comparison in size with the other ducks. On November 25,



a very beautifully plumaged drake had joined them. The drake and the two females remained to December 20. The following days none of the three were present. The two females did not appear again. But the drake was present once more, just for the day, on December 27, and was not seen again on this pond. On January 5, however, he re-appeared, for we can scarcely suppose that it was a different bird, and was seen on that day on Leverett Pond by Miss Langmaid. He has continued there with the exception that on January 17 he was absent for the day when others of the little company were also absent and again absent with his companions on February 20 and 21. In clear sunshine the purple tinting of the head is apparent, and the rather obscure chestnut ring about the neck has several times been seen, when the neck has been outstretched. A conspicuous feature of his plumage as he sits on the water, even at some distance, is a white band on the side of the breast in front of the wing when closed, having the appearance of a bar, but continuous with the white under the wing when the wing is spread. With closed wing as the bird sits on the water the upper portion of this white bar lies between the black of the breast and the black of the wing; the lower portion between the black of the breast and the finely barred side. The band across the bill, which is blue with a black tip, is pure white, and not bluish gray, and constitutes also a conspicuous feature of the bird. The bill at its base, moreover, in its junction with the face is clearly outlined with white. This outlining is quite discernible at some distance. Thus all the characteristic markings of the species are in strong effect. But the small white patch of the chin had not been seen upon any visit until on a day in late February he raised and drew back the head sufficiently to make it twice appear. This patch, therefore, is not a distinctive mark for identification except the bird be in the hand. The crown feathers are usually somewhat raised, producing the effect of a slight crest, and the sides of the head appear puffed out in the same manner. The Lesser Scaup's head did not have this appearance. He appears of the same size as the Lesser Scaup drake. They are often in juxtaposition, affording good opportunities for comparison of plumage as well as size. This is the first record in recent years at least, so far as I am aware, of a full-plumaged drake



in this vicinity. This Ring-neck also dives with wings close to the side.

In 1907, a single duck was seen on the pond on October 21, was joined by four others on the 26th, and by three more two days later, all female or immature birds. These, after many very satisfactory views of them, I regarded as Ring-necks. Dr. C. W. Townsend judged them to be rather of the size of Redheads and so regarded them. Some of these remained to November 12. On the 13th none were present. I viewed them at times on the shore at near range, and they seemed to be in body scarcely larger than the Coot (*Fulica americana*), which were near them. It was the same when the two species were swimming together. These ducks also showed an obscure band across the bill above the tip. The female Redhead present with us this winter shows no band, even obscure, across the bill. It seems of interest to mention the occurrence of these ducks here, whether they were Ring-necks or Redheads. The occurrence of so many was rare in either case.

Mr. William Brewster records in his 'Birds of the Cambridge Region' the presence of two female Ring-necked Ducks on Fresh Pond in the afternoon of November 30, 1903.

In connection with the account of the entire winter stay of these representatives of five species of wild ducks, it may be of interest to present the full record of the fall and early winter season of 1909 at Jamaica Pond, as this will indicate how much the pond is availed of for a time by wild waterfowl in their southward flight, and will show what companions, transient or more permanent, these wild ducks had while they remained upon Jamaica Pond. Leverett Pond and the other waters in this section of parkway will be incidentally referred to by name as receiving migrant waterfowl, and mention will also be made of other recent records upon these waters and the waters of Chestnut Hill Reservoir, likewise in Boston, and of Fresh Pond in Cambridge. I am indebted to a number of local observers for many of the records.

*Podilymbus podiceps*. PIED-BILLED GREBE.—One was recorded from November 4 to December 18. This grebe was first seen on October 31 by members of the Norfolk Bird Club. One or two have also visited the pond in each of the three preceding years. The visitant sometimes passes to the waters of Ward's Pond.



*Larus argentatus*. HERRING GULL.—Occasionally one or two or a small flock appeared at the pond in November and December. They are infrequent visitors. But on January 5, 1909, a showery day, a flock numbering a hundred was seen. They also appear on occasion at Leverett Pond and in the Fens.

*Mergus americanus*. MERGANSER.—Two drakes in full adult plumage were seen on Leverett Pond on February 9 by Mr. E. E. Caduc, when in company with Mr. F. W. Jones some photographs of the wild ducks were taken. Mr. Caduc states that they were fully in view upon their arrival and remained for several minutes, when they took wing away. They have been regular winter visitors to Chestnut Hill Reservoir, two miles distant, when undisturbed, where on one day of the present winter sixty-six were counted by Mr. W. C. Levey. On March 20 Mr. Barron Brainerd states he saw two males circling about Jamaica Pond. This was at the time the ice had just disappeared. The Norfolk Bird Club reports that a drake was seen flying around the pond on December 14, 1908. The species is a very infrequent visitor to either of these ponds.

*Anas platyrhynchos*. MALLARD.—Several individuals, notably two drakes, either arrived with or associated themselves upon their arrival with the Black Ducks in November and December and remained with them apart from the park Mallards. Later they went with the Black Ducks, upon the closing up of the pond, to Chestnut Hill Reservoir and still later were seen with them on Fresh Pond. When the latter re-appeared upon the ice of Jamaica Pond several days successively in January, these two Mallard drakes were still with them. On several occasions one or two female Mallards also were identified among this flock of Black Ducks. It is quite probable that other wild Mallards arrived in the fall and either joined the park flock or departed. Several individuals were noted in the autumn that appeared shy for a time and kept well off on the pond, and later at Leverett Pond there continued to be shy individuals in the park flock.

*Anas rubripes* and *Anas rubripes tristis*. BLACK DUCK.—A small number arrived in early October, and this number was increased quite steadily up to December 11, on which day I counted one hundred and seventy. The numbers then diminished gradually



to nearly the end of December, when all were gone from the pond and one hundred and seventy-five were counted on Chestnut Hill Reservoir on December 31. There had been but ten on the reservoir on December 21, while the large flock still remained on Jamaica Pond. The Black Ducks make this change quite regularly season by season when Jamaica Pond freezes up, but they always choose the pond in preference to the reservoir when they arrive in the autumn and remain on the pond as long as it is open. Their return to sit on the ice some hours of the day, January 19, 20, and 22, as two independent observers inform me that they did, indicates their liking for the pond. This preference is doubtless strengthened by their sharing in the feeding of the park Mallards when they are associated with these in the fall and spring. Mr. J. H. Kelley, who cares for the park ducks, informs me that many of the Black Ducks come in shore with the Mallards for the corn which he scatters. It should be stated also that measures have been employed the present winter to keep all water-fowl off the waters of Chestnut Hill Reservoir under the direction of the Water Commissioners, who entertain the idea that the waters are polluted by the presence of the birds and that germs of disease may be conveyed by the gulls coming up from the sewage-contaminated waters of the harbor and bathing in the reservoir. So, acting upon this theory, a plan of firing blank cartridges, when they are gathering, was conceived and put in practice as a means of dislodging and deterring them. This expedient, closely followed up, has been efficacious. For I have been again and again to the reservoir this winter to find only, perhaps, two or a half-dozen American Mergansers and as many Herring Gulls, or none at all. In previous winters there have often been present from twenty to thirty mergansers, sometimes hundreds of gulls, including many Great Black-backed Gulls, and a permanent flock of Black Ducks, throughout the day, numbering a hundred or more, usually accompanied, whether on the ice or on the water, by severals Mallards. Such a company of water-fowl has been entirely absent the present winter, and the Black Ducks have had to seek a refuge elsewhere. This refuge was often Fresh Pond. On February 20, Mr. W. C. Levey informs me, the flock numbering one hundred and seventy-five was seen by him there, accompanied by three Mallards, two



drakes and a duck. The number of the flock seen on these several bodies of water indicates beyond a doubt that it is one and the same flock remaining tenaciously throughout the winter and occupying one or another of these places at will according to conditions.

*Nettion carolinense*. GREEN-WINGED TEAL.—A female was seen on the pond November 12 and 13, frequently coming to the shore with the Mallards and allowing approach as near as fifty feet. This was a transient visitor only. Two days later, Mrs. Edmund Bridge, who had seen the bird with me at Jamaica Pond, saw a female on a small pond in the Arnold Arboretum about a mile southward, presumably the same teal. Mrs. Bridge says it was as unconcerned there as it had been on Jamaica Pond.

In connection with this record it may be interesting to state that in the season of 1907-8 a Green-winged Teal drake passed the entire winter in Boston and vicinity. I first saw him on December 13 in the Back Bay Fens. When the waters here became frozen, he passed for a time in January to Jamaica Pond, I am informed. Later he accompanied a flock of park Mallards to the Charles River Basin, where Muddy River enters, and lived there for a while. I saw him there on January 28 and February 10 and 14. On February 15 he had gone to Leverett Pond, and on February 26 was on Chestnut Hill Reservoir. On March 12 and 14 he was again seen in the Fens and on March 16 was on Fresh Pond. Further he was not traced. He was very handsomely plumaged, would swim about happily with the Mallards, and allow one to view him as near as twenty or thirty feet. I was informed by a patrolman in the Fens, where I first saw this teal, that he had come and joined the Mallards about the first of December. In all probability the teal seen in succession on these six different bodies of water was one and the same teal. It was my wont, when I found him in a new location, to go to the place where I had last seen him, and I found in every instance that he was absent from there. Thus it proved impossible to locate two Green-winged Teal drakes in the vicinity. One other record in a recent year should be mentioned, that of a female on Leverett Pond, December 22, 1906.

*Aix sponsa*. WOOD DUCK.—Mr. Barron Brainerd informs me



that on October 29 he saw in company with Dr. W. C. Mackie a female Wood Duck fly in from the southeast and settle upon the pond. When he called to another observer, who was not far away, the duck took wing and disappeared over Brookline. Occasionally in previous seasons one has made a brief call to the pond.

*Clangula clangula americana*. GOLDEN-EYE.—The Golden-eye is an infrequent visitor to the pond, and when a bird or two of the species appears, it is usually for the day only. On November 26 a single female was seen. Mrs. Edmund Bridge mentions seeing a drake on the pond on December 13. Mr. Brainerd states that he saw a pair of Golden-eyes on Leverett Pond on March 6, 1910.

*Charitonetta albeola*. BUFFLE-HEAD.—In two seasons in recent years I have a record of this species on the waters under consideration. On November 16 and 18, 1906, I saw a young drake in the Back Bay Fens, and on November 26 and December 15 an immature bird, perhaps the same, on the Charles River Basin. This basin had been the winter home of a pair during the season of 1905-6. A flock numbering eight birds, two of them drakes in adult plumage, had been present in December, and this pair continued on through January to early February.

Mr. Barron Brainerd testifies to seeing four ducks on Jamaica Pond in the early morning of October 29, which appeared to him and his companion, Dr. Mackie, to be Buffle-heads on account of their size and color, but the light and their distance out on the middle of the pond prevented a positive identification.

*Erismatura jamaicensis*. RUDDY DUCK.—The Ruddy Duck is a regular visitor to the pond. On October 19 six were present and in the same forenoon two others were seen on Leverett Pond. The Norfolk Bird Club reports that on October 10 the first Ruddy appeared. At the end of October there had been an increase in number. Nine were on the pond at that time and three others on Leverett Pond. Mr. Brainerd reports that he saw seventeen on Jamaica Pond on November 18. The number fluctuated from day to day up to December 17, when there were still eleven present. On the 20th there were but five, and on the 21st there was but one. On the next day none remained. All the Ruddies, therefore, left the pond in advance of its complete freezing up, but not until a strong suggestion that this was impending gave them a plain





Wright, Horace Winslow. 1910. "Some Rare Wild Ducks Wintering at Boston, Massachusetts, 1909-1910." *The Auk* 27, 390–408.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/4070897>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/54324>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.2307/4070897>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/87172>

#### **Holding Institution**

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

#### **Sponsored by**

Smithsonian

#### **Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.