AMERICAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL.

†ANAS CAROLINENSIS, *Steph.*

PLATE CCCXCII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

Nothing can be more pleasing to an American sportsman, than the arrival of this beautiful little Duck in our Southern or Western States. There, in the month of September, just as the sun sinks beneath the horizon, you may find him standing on some mote or embankment of a rice-field in Carolina, or a neck of land between two large ponds in Kentucky, his gun loaded with number four, and his dog lying at his feet. He sees advancing from afar, at a brisk rate, a small dark cloud, which he has some minutes ago marked and pronounced to be a flock of Green-winged Teals. Now he squats on his haunches; his dog lies close; and ere another minute has elapsed, right over his head, but too high to be shot at, pass the winged travellers. Some of them remember the place well, for there they have reposed and fed before. Now they wheel, dash irregularly through the air, sweep in a close body over the watery fields, and in their course pass near the fatal spot where the gunner anxiously awaits. Hark, two shots in rapid succession! The troop is in disorder, and the dog dashes through the water. Here and there lies a Teal, with its legs quivering; there, one is whirling round in the agonies of death; some, which are only winged, quickly and in silence make their way towards a hiding-place, while one, with a single pellet in his head, rises perpendicularly with uncertain beats, and falls with a splash on the water. The gunner has charged his tubes, his faithful follower has brought up all the game, and the frightened Teals have dressed their ranks, and flying now high, now low, seem curious to see the place where their companions have been left. Again they fly over the dangerous spot, and again receive the double shower of shot. Were it not that darkness has now set in, the carnage might continue until the sportsman should no longer consider the thinned flock worthy of his notice. In this manner, at the first arrival of the Green-winged Teal in the Western Country, I have seen upwards of six dozen shot by a single gunner in the course of one day.

I have often thought that water-birds, Ducks for example, like land-birds which migrate in flocks, are very apt to pass over the place where others of the same kind had been before. Pigeons, Starlings, Robins, and other land-

birds are often observed to do so; while Curlews, Cormorants, Plovers, Ducks and Geese, are similar in this respect. The first object in view with such species is to remove from one part of the country to another, as every one knows; and as to reach a place of safety abundantly supplied with food, is the next object, you may perhaps join me in concluding, that, to the spot or district in which birds have once been and spent a season, they are ever afterwards inclined to return. Well, the Green-wings are known to follow each other in flocks, sometimes consisting of a few families, sometimes of many hundred individuals, particularly in autumn, when old and young leave the north to avoid the rigours of its dreary winter. In spring, again, many species both of land and water birds perform their migrations, either singly or in smaller groups, the males departing before the females, and in some cases the young keeping by themselves, an arrangement perhaps intended for the greater dispersion of the species.

In Louisiana, the Green-winged Teal is named *Sarcelle d'hiver*, while the Blue-winged species bears the name of *Sarcelle d'été*, although the latter remains only some weeks in that country after the departure of the former. Its general name, however, is the "Green-wing;" and a poor name in my opinion it is, for the bird has not more green on its wings than several other species have. Indeed, very many birds are strangely named, not less in *pure* Latin, than in English, French, and Dutch; and very many are every year receiving names still stranger than those they bore. For my part, I am at present a kind of conservative, and adhere to the old system until I see the mud raised up by the waders subside, when I may probe my way with more chance of success.

The Green-winged Teal is a fresh-water bird, being rarely met with in marine bays, creeks, or lagoons, where, however, it may sometimes spend a few days. It is accordingly enabled to feed with its body half immersed, in the manner of the Mallard and several other species, for which purpose it is furnished with a comparatively long neck. Its food consists principally of the seeds of grasses, which are collected either when floating or when still adhering to their stalks, small acorns, fallen grapes or berries, as well as aquatic insects, worms, and small snails. I have never found water lizards, leeches, fishes, or even tadpoles in their gizzards. The food of this bird being thus more select than that of most other Ducks, its flesh is delicious, probably the best of any of its tribe; and I would readily agree with any epicure in saying, that when it has fed on wild oats at Green Bay, or on soaked rice in the fields of Georgia and the Carolinas, for a few weeks after its arrival in those countries, it is much superior to the Canvass-back in tenderness, juiciness, and flavour. Indeed, the Green-wing is as much superior to the Canvass-back, as the European Quail is to the Capercailie, or

the Sora of the Delaware to the Scolopaceous Courlan of the Florida everglades.

On land, the Green-wing moves with more ease and grace than any other species with which I am acquainted, excepting our beautiful Wood Duck. It can run at a good rate, without entangling its webbed feet, as many others do; and in this, too, there is a marked difference between fresh-water and salt-water Ducks, as one may very readily perceive. On the water, also, it moves with great ease, at times with considerable rapidity, and when not severely wounded, is able to dive in a very creditable manner. On wing it has no rivals among Ducks. Our two smaller Mergansers, however, are swifter, although they exhibit none of the graceful movements every now and then shewn by the Green-wings, when coursing in the air over and around a pond, a river, or a large wet savannah. They rise from the water at a single spring, and so swiftly too, that none but an expert marksman need attempt to shoot them, if when starting they are many yards distant. While feeding, they proceed in a close body along the shores, or wherever the water is so shallow that they can reach the bottom with ease. In savannahs or watery fields intersected by dry ridges, they remove from one pool to another on foot, unless the distance is considerable; and in effecting the transit, they run so huddled together, as to enable a gunner to make great havoc among them. When the cravings of hunger are satisfied, they retire to some clean part of the shore, or a sand-bar, where they rest in perfect harmony, each individual composing its dress, and afterwards, with wings slightly drooping, placing its breast to the sun. There they remain for an hour or more at a time, some sound asleep, some dosing, but rarely without a trusty sentinel watching over their safety. In this manner they spend the winter months in the Southern and Western Countries. There, indeed, they are far more abundant than in our eastern districts, just because the climate is milder, the human population more dispersed, and the damp fields, meadows, and savannahs more abundant.

The migrations of this species are performed more over the land than along the borders of the sea; and it is probable that its principal breeding-places are in the interior of the Fur Countries; as it has been met there by Sir EDWARD PARRY, Sir JAMES ROSS, Dr. RICHARDSON, and other intrepid travellers. Some, however, remain on our great lakes, and I have seen individuals breeding on the banks of the Wabash, in Illinois, where I found a female and young, all of which I obtained. It was not far above Vincennes, in the month of July. On Lakes Erie and Michigan, nests containing eggs have also been found; but these may have been cases in which the birds were unable to proceed farther north, on account of wounds or other circumstances, or because of the early period at which they might have paired

before the general departure of the flocks, a cause of detention more common in migratory birds than people seem to be aware of. These opportunities, few as they were, have enabled me to see the kinds of places in which the nests were found, the structure of the nest, the number, size, and colour of the eggs; so that I have in so far been qualified to draw a comparison between our Green-winged Teal and that of Europe.

The Green-wings leave the neighbourhood of New Orleans in the end of February; but in the Carolinas they remain until late in March, at which time also they depart from all the places between the Atlantic and the States of Kentucky, Indiana, &c. Farther eastward I have seen this species as late as the 9th of May, when I shot a few not far from Philadelphia. As you advance farther along our coast, you find it more rare; and scarcely any are met with near the shores of the British provinces. In Newfoundland and Labrador, it is never seen. Its migrations southward, I am satisfied, extend beyond the United States; but their extreme limits are unknown to me. I have seldom seen it associate with other species, although I have frequently observed individuals on a pond or river not far from other Ducks. It is more shy than the Blue-winged Teal, but less so than most of our other fresh-water Ducks. Its voice is seldom heard during winter, except when a flock is passing over another that has alighted, when a few of the males call to the voyagers, as if to invite them to join them. Before they depart, however, they become noisy. Combats take place among the males; the females are seen coquetting around them, and most of the birds are paired before they leave us.

In the few instances in which I found the nest of this bird, and they were only three, it was not placed nearer the water than five or six yards, and I should not have discovered it had I not first seen the birds swimming or washing themselves near the spot. By watching them carefully I discovered their landing places, and on going up found a path formed, in a direct line among the rushes. In two cases I came so near the nest, as almost to touch the sitting bird as it rose affrighted. While it flew round me, and then alighted on the water, I viewed the nest, with perhaps more interest than I have felt on most occasions of a like nature. On a scanty bed of the bird's own down and feathers, supported by another of grasses, intermixed with mud and stalks of the plants around, raised to the height of four or five inches, I found seven eggs in one, nine in another, and only five in a third. They were all found in the month of July, and not far from Green Bay. The average measurement of the eggs was an inch and three quarters by an inch and three-eighths. They were much rounded, of a dull yellowish colour, indistinctly marked with a deeper tint, as if soiled. In one of the nests only the eggs were fresh. I took two of them, which I afterwards

ate. Having planted a stick as a mark of recognition, I visited the nest three days in succession, but found that the bird had abandoned it; while those of the other two nests, which were not more than about a hundred yards distant, and whose eggs I had handled quite as much, although I took none away, continued to sit. No male birds were to be seen during my stay in that neighbourhood. I concluded that although the eggs may be touched or even handled and lifted from the nest, yet if they were all replaced, the bird did not take umbrage; but that should any of them be missed, some strong feeling urged her to abandon the rest. Again I thought that as incubation had just commenced with this bird, she cared less about her eggs than the other two whose eggs contained chicks.

Having met with the young of this species only once, at a time when I was less aware of the necessity of noting observations in writing, I am unwilling to speak of their colours from recollection. All I can say is that I had great trouble in catching four of them, so cunningly did they hide in the grass, and so expert were they at diving.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL, *Anas Crecca*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. viii. p. 101.

ANAS CRECCA, Bonap. Syn., p. 386.

AMERICAN TEAL, *Anas Crecca*, var. Nutt. Man., vol. ii. p. 400.

ANAS CRECCA, *Green-winged Teal*, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 400.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL, *Anas Crecca*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iii. p. 219; vol. v. p. 616.

Male, $14\frac{3}{4}$, 24. Female, $13\frac{3}{4}$, $22\frac{1}{2}$.

Dispersed throughout the country during autumn and spring. Extremely abundant during winter in all the Southern States and Texas. Breeds sparingly along the Great Lakes, and far north.

Adult Male.

Bill almost as long as the head, deeper than broad at the base, depressed towards the end, its breadth nearly equal in its whole length, being however a little enlarged towards the rounded tip. Upper mandible with the dorsal line at first sloping, then concave, towards the ends nearly straight, the ridge broad and flat at the base, then broadly convex, the sides convex, the edges soft, with about fifty-five lamellæ. Nostrils sub-basal, near the ridge, rather small, elliptical, pervious. Lower mandible flattish, with the angle very long and rather narrow, the dorsal line very short, straight, the sides perpendicular with about 130 lamellæ.

Head of moderate size, compressed. Neck of moderate length, rather slender. Body full, depressed. Wings rather small. Feet short, placed rather far back; tarsus short, compressed, at its lower part anteriorly with two series of scutella, the rest covered with reticulated angular scales. Toes scutellate above; first toe very small, free, with a narrow membrane beneath;

third longest; fourth a little shorter; the anterior toes united by reticulated webs, of which the outer is deeply sinuate; claws small, curved, compressed, acute, the hind one smaller and more curved, that of the third toe largest, and with an inner sharp edge.

Plumage dense, soft, blended. Feathers of the middle of the head and upper part of hind neck, very narrow, elongated, with soft filamentous dis-united bands, of the rest of the head and upper part of neck very short, of the back and lower parts in general broad and rounded. Wings of moderate length, narrow, acute; primaries strong, curved, tapering, second longest, first scarcely shorter; secondaries broad, rather pointed, the inner elongated and tapering, as are the scapulars. Tail short, rounded and acuminate, of sixteen acuminate feathers.

Bill black. Iris brown. Feet light bluish-grey. Head and upper part of the neck chestnut-brown; a broad band, narrowing backwards, from the eye down the back of the neck, deep shining green, edged with black below, under which is a white line, which before the eye meets another that curves forward and downward to the angle of the mouth; chin brownish-black, as are the feathers at the base of the upper mandible. Upper parts and flanks beautifully undulated, with narrow brownish-black and white bars; anterior to the wings is a short, broad, transverse band of white. Wings brownish-grey; the speculum in its lower half velvet-black, the upper bright green, changing to purple, and edged above with black, behind margined with white, before with reddish-white. Tail brownish-grey, the feathers margined with paler; the upper coverts brownish-black, edged with light yellowish-grey. Lower part of neck anteriorly barred as behind; breast yellowish-white, spotted with black, its lower part white; abdomen white, faintly barred with grey; a patch of black under the tail, the lateral tail-coverts cream-coloured, the larger black, with broad white margins and tips.

Length to end of tail $14\frac{3}{4}$ inches, to end of claws $15\frac{1}{4}$; extent of wings 24; wing from flexure $7\frac{1}{2}$; tail $3\frac{1}{4}$; bill along the back $1\frac{7}{12}$, along the edge of lower mandible $1\frac{9}{12}$; tarsus $1\frac{2}{12}$; middle toe $1\frac{6}{12}$, its claw $\frac{5}{12}$. Weight 10 oz.

Adult Female.

The female wants the elongated crest, and differs greatly in colouring. The head and neck are streaked with dark brown and light red, the fore neck whitish; the upper parts mottled with dark brown, the anterior feathers barred, the posterior margined with yellowish-white. The wings are nearly as in the male, but the green of the speculum is less extensive; the lower part of the fore neck is tinged with yellowish-red, and mottled with dark brown, as are the sides; the rest of the lower parts white.

Length to end of tail $13\frac{3}{4}$; to end of claws $1\frac{1}{4}$; extent of wings $22\frac{1}{2}$. Weight 10 oz.

Male. Width of mouth 5 twelfths; upper mandible very deeply concave, with a median prominent line, which is papillate for half its length; the lamellæ of the upper mandible 55, projecting a little beyond the margin, of the lower about 180, and extremely inconspicuous. Tongue $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, fleshy, deeply grooved above, with thin lamellate margins, the tip semi-circular, thin, and horny. Œsophagus $6\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths long, its width 4 twelfths, at the lower part of the neck enlarged to 7 twelfths, then contracting to 3 twelfths; the proventriculus oblong, 5 twelfths in breadth. Stomach a transversely elliptical, oblique gizzard, 1 inch 1 twelfth long, 1 inch 3 twelfths broad, its lateral muscles extremely developed, the right 6 twelfths, the left 5 twelfths in thickness, the inferior muscle narrow and prominent, as in all birds of this family; epithelium very dense, with two opposite concave grinding surfaces. Intestine 3 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, with 16 folds, its general width only $1\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths, enlarging here and there to 2 twelfths; cœca $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, for $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches 1 twelfth in breadth, enlarging to 3 twelfths, and toward the extremity 2 twelfths. Rectum $2\frac{1}{4}$ twelfths long, its width $2\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths. Right lobe of the liver 1 inch 5 twelfths, the other 1 inch 2 twelfths.

Trachea 5 inches long, from $2\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths to 2 twelfths in width, moderately flattened, ending in a transversely elongated tympanum, projecting to the left side, with a roundish thin bony prominence; its greatest breadth 8 twelfths, its length 3 twelfths; the rings rather broad, firm, 115, besides a few blended with the tympanum. The muscles as usual. Bronchial half rings 28 and 34.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL.

+ANAS DISCORS, *Linn.*

PLATE CCCXIII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

Is it not strange, reader, that birds which are known to be abundant on the Saskatchewan river during the breeding season, and which have been observed as far north as the 57th parallel, should also be found breeding at nearly the same period in Texas? Stranger still it is that species should proceed from certain points, or winter quarters, to both of the above-men-

American Green-winged Teal

1 Male 2 Female

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