WHITE MERGANSER.—SMEW, OR WHITE NUN.

+ *MERGUS ALBELLUS*, *Linn.*

PLATE CCCCXIV.—MALE AND FEMALE.

The Smew is a bird of extremely rare occurrence in the United States, insomuch that it must be considered merely as a transient or accidental visiter. Indeed I have felt strong misgivings on reading WILSON's article on this species, and cannot but think that he is mistaken when he states that it "is much more common on the coast of New England than farther south;" and again "in the ponds of New England, and some of the lakes in the State of New York, where the Smew is frequently observed—." Now, although I have made diligent inquiry, not only in New England, but in every part of our country where I thought it likely that the Smew might occur, I have not met with any person well acquainted with birds of this family, who has seen it. WILSON, in short, was in all probability misinformed, and it is my opinion that his figure was made from a stuffed European specimen which was then in Peale's Museum in Philadelphia, and that he had taken the Buffel-headed Duck, seen at a distance, for this species, as I am aware has been the case with other individuals.

The only specimen procured by me was shot by myself on Lake Barataria, not far from New Orleans, in the winter of 1819. It was an adult female in fine plumage. How it had wandered so far south is an enigma to me; but having found it, and made a drawing of it on the spot, I have taken the liberty to add one of the other sex from an equally fine specimen. After all, the Smew can scarcely be considered as belonging to the American Fauna, any more than our Fork-tailed Hawk can with propriety be called a denizen of England; and in this I am supported by all the great navigators of our Arctic Seas, such as ROSS, PARRY, and FRANKLIN, none of whom, nor any of their companions, ever met with a single individual of this beautiful bird.

SMEW OR WHITE NUN, *Mergus Albellus*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. viii. p. 126.

MERGUS ALBELLUS, Bonap. Syn., p. 398.

SMEW OR WHITE NUN, Nutt. Man. vol. ii. p. 467.

SMEW OR WHITE NUN, *Mergus Albellus*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 350.

Male, $17\frac{1}{2}$, 27. Female, $15\frac{1}{2}$, 25.

W.H.

White Merganser. Smeu. White Nun.

1. Male. 2. Female.

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon, F.R.S. F.L.S.

Lith. Printed & Col^d by J. T. Bowen, Philad^a

Exceedingly rare in America, one specimen only having been procured at New Orleans.

Adult Male.

Bill rather shorter than the head, straight, rather slender, a little higher than broad at the base, tapering, somewhat cylindrical toward the end. Upper mandible with the dorsal outline sloping gently and slightly concave to the middle, then straight, at the tip decurved, the ridge rather broad and flat at the base, then convex, the sides sloping at the base, convex toward the end, the edges serrate beneath, with about forty slightly reversed, compressed, tapering, tooth-like lamellæ, the unguis elliptical, much curved. Nasal groove oblong, sub-basal, filled by a soft membrane; nostrils oblong, sub-medial, direct, pervious. Lower mandible with the angle very narrow and extended to the obovate, very convex unguis, the sides rounded, with a long groove, the edges with about sixty perpendicular sharp lamellæ.

Head of moderate size, oblong, compressed. Neck of moderate length. Body full and depressed. Feet placed far behind, extremely short; tibia bare for a quarter of an inch; tarsus extremely short, much compressed, anteriorly covered with a series of very small scutella, and another row on the lower half externally, the sides reticulate. Hind toe very small, with an inferior free membrane; anterior toes double the length of the tarsus; the second shorter than the fourth, which is nearly as long as the third; all connected by reticulated webs, of which the outer is deeply emarginate. Claws short, considerably curved, compressed, acute, that of the middle toe with a thin inner edge.

Plumage full, soft, and blended; feathers of the head and upper part of the hind neck very slender, and elongated along the median line into a narrow decurved crest; those of the shoulders obovate and abrupt, of the rest of the upper parts ovate, of the lower elliptical. Wings very short, narrow, curved, and pointed; primaries narrow, tapering, the first scarcely longer than the second, the rest rapidly graduated; secondaries short, narrow, rounded, the inner tapering to an obtuse point. Tail short, graduated, of sixteen rather narrow, tapering feathers.

Bill dark greyish-blue. Iris bright red. Feet livid blue, claws dusky. The general colour of the plumage is pure white; a short band on each side of the hind neck bordering the crest, duck-green; a broad patch on the lore and below the eye, a narrow band across the lower part of the hind neck, formed by single bars near the tips of the feathers, the middle of the back in its whole length, a short transverse bar under the fore edge of the wing, the anterior margin of that organ to beyond the carpal joint, the outer edges of the scapulars, the primary coverts, the secondary coverts, and the outer secondary quills, excepting the tips of both, deep black. The quills are also

black, but of a less deep tint; the hind part of the back becomes tinged with grey, and the rump and tail-feathers are dusky grey. The sides of the body and rump are white, finely undulated with blackish-grey.

Length to end of tail $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to end of claws $18\frac{1}{4}$, to end of wings $15\frac{1}{2}$; extent of wings 27; bill along the ridge $1\frac{3\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, along the edge of lower mandible $1\frac{7\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; wing from flexure $7\frac{3}{4}$; tail $3\frac{1}{2}$; tarsus $1\frac{1\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; first toe $\frac{1}{2}$, its claw $\frac{2}{12}$; second toe $1\frac{1}{2}$, its claw $\frac{4}{12}$; third toe $1\frac{1\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, its claw $\frac{4\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; fourth toe $1\frac{1\frac{0}{12}}{12}$, its claw $\frac{3}{12}$. Weight 1 lb. 8 oz.

Adult Female.

The female is much smaller. The feathers of the hind part of the head and neck are also elongated so as to form a crest. The bill, iris, and feet, are coloured as in the male. All the lower parts are white, excepting a broad band of light grey across the middle of the neck, and a narrow portion of the sides, which are of a deeper tint. There is a patch of brownish-black on the lore and beneath the eye; the upper part of the head and half of the hind neck are light reddish-brown; the rest of the hind neck, and all the upper parts, bluish-grey, darker behind, and in the middle of the back approaching to black. The wings as in the male, that is black, with a large patch of white, and two narrow transverse bands of the same; the tail dusky grey.

Length to end of tail $15\frac{1}{4}$ inches, to end of claws $16\frac{1}{2}$, to end of wings $14\frac{1}{2}$; extent of wings 25. Weight 1 lb. 4 oz.

FAMILY XLI.—PELECANINÆ. PELECANS.

Bill longer than the head, rather slender, straight, upper mandible with the ridge separated from the side by a groove, and terminated by a narrow, generally decurved, pointed unguis; lower mandible with the crura elastic and extensile, the angle very long and narrow. Nostrils basal, lateral, linear, small, or obsolete. Space around and before the eye generally bare, as is a portion of the gular sac. Head generally of moderate size, but various; neck long; body elongated, rather slender. Feet short and stout; tibia bare at its lower part; tarsus short, very stout, compressed, scaly or scutellate in front; toes four, all connected by webs, and scutellate; first small, fourth longest. Claws short, strong, curved, rather blunt, that of the third toe generally pectinate. Plumage soft, blended, on the back compact and imbricated. Wings long; tail of moderate length, narrow, rounded or tapering. Tongue extremely small, triangular, fleshy; œsophagus excessively wide; a gular sac, sometimes of enormous capacity; proventricular belt generally discontinuous; stomach very small, slightly muscular, epithelium smooth; a globular pyloric lobe; intestine very long and slender; cœca small, cylindrical; cloaca globular. Trachea simple, flattened; no inferior laryngeal muscles.

GENUS I.—PHALACROCORAX, *Briss.* CORMORANT.

Bill about the length of the head, rather slender, nearly straight, compressed toward the end; upper mandible with the dorsal line concave, until on the unguis, where it is decurved, the ridge convex, flattened toward the end, separated from the sides by a narrow groove, the sides convex, the edge sharp and nearly straight as far as the unguis, which is decurved, convex above, acute, its tip ascending far beyond that of the lower; lower mandible with the angle long and very narrow towards the end, filled up by an extensile membrane, which extends to the level of the angle of the mouth; the outline of the crura very slightly convex, that of the terminal part descending and very slightly convex, the sides convex, the edges sharp and inflected, the tip compressed, with its marginal outline decurved. Nostrils obliterated (in youth open). Head rather small, oblong; neck long and

rather thick; body full, elongated, depressed. Feet short, stout, placed far behind; tibia feathered in its whole length; tarsus very short, strong, much depressed, covered all round with angular scales; a series on part of the inner side anteriorly, and another on the lower part of the outer, scutelliform. Toes all placed in the same plane, connected by webs, and covered above by very numerous oblique scutella; first the smallest, fourth the longest. Claws rather small, strong, compressed, acute, convex above, arched, that of the third toe pectinated on its inner edge. Plumage soft, generally blended, compact on the back and wings; the small gular sac, and the space before and beneath the eye, with the eyelids, bare. Wings of moderate size, broad; primaries curved, pointed, the second longest. Tail of moderate length, very narrow, much rounded, of twelve or more narrow strong-shafted feathers. Gular sac small; tongue extremely small; œsophagus very wide; proventricular glands disposed in two large roundish masses; stomach small, slightly muscular, inner coat smooth and soft; a globular or triangular pyloric lobe; duodenum at first curving upwards; intestine very long, and of moderate width; cœca small; rectum narrow; cloaca globular. Trachea considerably flattened; bronchi of moderate width.

THE COMMON CORMORANT.

+*PHALACROCORAX CARBO*, *Linn.*

PLATE CCCCXV.—MALE, FEMALE, AND YOUNG.

Look at the birds before you, and mark the affectionate glance of the mother, as she stands beside her beloved younglings! I wish you could have witnessed the actions of such groups as I did while in Labrador. Methinks I still see the high rolling billows of the St. Lawrence breaking in foaming masses against the huge cliffs, on the shelves of which the Cormorant places its nest. I lie flat on the edge of the precipice some hundred feet above the turbulent waters, and now crawling along with all care, I find myself only a few yards above the spot on which the parent bird and her young are fondling each other, quite unconscious of my being near. How delighted I am to witness their affectionate gratulations, hear their lisping

W.H.

White Merganser. Smeu. White Nun.

1. Male. 2. Female.

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon, F.R.S. & L.S.

Lith. Printed & Col^d by J. T. Bowen, Philad^a

Audubon, John James. 1843. "White Merganser--Smew, or White Nun, *Mergus albellus*, Linn, [Pl. 414]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 6, 408–412. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319527>.

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