AIX GALERICULATA.

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Mandarin Duck.

- Anas galericulata*, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 539.—Ib. Gmel. Edit., tom. i. p. 539.—Lath. Ind. Orn., tom. ii. p. 871.
—Shaw, Mus. Lev., t. 10.—Ib. Gen. Zool., vol. xii. part ii. p. 94. pl. 47.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. x.
p. 363.—Vieill. Gal. des Ois., tom. ii. pl. 287.—Temm. and Schleg. Fauna Jap., p. 127.—Less. Traité
d'Orn., p. 635.
Querquedula Sinensis, Briss. Orn., tom. vi. p. 450.—Id. Svo, tom. ii. p. 478.
Kinmodsui, Kæmpf. Jap., p. 129. pl. 10. fig. 3.
Yung-iang, of the Chinese.
Sarcelle de la Chine, Buff. Hist. des Ois., tom. ix. p. 276. pl. 19.—Ib. Pl. Enl. 805, 806.
Chinese Teal, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. vi. p. 548.—Edw. Glean., pl. 102.
Le Canard de la Chine, Cuv. Règn. Anim., tom. i. p. 538.
Aix galericulata, Boie, Isis, 1828, p. ?—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. p. 614.—List of Birds in Coll. of
Brit. Mus., part iii. p. 133.
Cosmonessa galericulata, Kaup, Isis, 1829.
Dendronessa galericulata, Swains.—Anim. in Menag., p. 233.
Lampronessa galericulata, Wagl. Isis, 1832.

PERHAPS no group of birds is so generally dispersed over the surface of the globe as the great family of the *Anatidæ* or Duck tribe; even the arctic and antarctic portions of the globe being tenanted by species peculiarly adapted to those regions; the distant islands of New South Shetland, New Zealand and Kerguelen's Land having species which never approach the continents of Australia, Africa or America, while in the temperate regions of both hemispheres the species are various and abundant. As might be supposed, the members of a family so universally dispersed present much diversity of form, and comprise numerous genera, some of which are strictly marine, others lacustrine, others adapted for a rocky residence, and others again for perching on trees, &c. In this great group of birds two species occur pre-eminent for their beauty, viz. the *Aix sponsa* of North America and the *Aix galericulata* of China and Japan; these two birds are so precisely alike in structure and so similar to each other in colour for a short period of the year, as to require the scrutinizing eye of a good ornithologist to determine which is the one and which is the other; during the remainder of the year, the males, in obedience to a law which pervades the entire group, are dressed in a style of plumage so very different and so gorgeous in colouring, that they may not only dispute for the palm of beauty with each other, but are rendered some of the most conspicuously beautiful, interesting and extraordinary objects in the whole range of ornithology; the Chinese bird here represented will, however, doubtless secure the preference. Both species are as proud as they are beautiful, at the same time they are extremely docile, and not only display their lovely hue on the ground and while swimming, but both have a habit of perching on the branches of trees, and, consequently, as pets they are esteemed in the highest degree. The Mandarin Duck, whose native habitat is China and Japan, is so highly prized there, that not only is a high price demanded for living examples, but they are held back from Europeans with a degree of obstinacy which almost amounts to prohibition of their import; notwithstanding which many examples of both sexes have lately been brought to Europe, and, contrary to the assertion of Latham and others that they will not breed in this country, have bred repeatedly in the Gardens of the Zoological Society of London, and in the Menagerie of the late Earl of Derby; and the like success has attended their introduction into Holland. May we not then hope, that through the instrumentality of the Zoological Society, the lovely bird here represented may become fully naturalized? for although it can scarcely be serviceable as an article for the table, a more ornamental addition to our lakes and lawns cannot be found.

George Bennett, Esq., of Sydney, New South Wales, who has given an interesting account of this species in his "Wanderings in New South Wales, China, &c.," having stated that in its native country the male bird loses his gay plumage in May and remains until August in a dress which bears a close resemblance to that of the female, I was anxious to ascertain if a similar change took place at the same period in this country, and the following is the result of my observations on the specimens in the Society's Gardens.

The first egg was laid on the 2nd of May, 1851, the female began to sit on the 20th, and the young were hatched on the 20th of June. When the female commenced sitting the male began to throw off his fine plumage, and by the 1st of July had become so like the female as to be scarcely distinguishable; the primaries, however, which are only moulted once a year, were not fully perfected until the 3rd of August; these feathers were then beautiful green, with a narrow stripe of snow-white, for about an inch in length from their tips: the bill at this period was less brilliant, and the old male, the female, and their progeny were all so similar in size and colour as to render it difficult to distinguish one from the other, all having a beautiful olive mottled plumage, both chaste and elegant. One female laid six, another seven eggs; one set of which were incubated by one of the parent birds, the other by a common domestic hen; the latter incubating the eggs entrusted to her care two days earlier than the Duck. By the beginning of October the young males of these broods

as well as the old drakes had all assumed their full and gorgeous livery, the youthful birds being scarcely inferior in beauty to the adults ; and perhaps a more interesting and lovely sight was never seen in the Gardens of the Zoological Society, rich as it has ever been in objects of the highest interest, than was to be observed in the aviary which contained this double brood of Mandarin Ducks. At least ten out of the sixteen birds were males, which during a part of the day were frequently to be seen perched on the branches of the trees, and at others were exhibiting in the proudest manner their lovely hues while swimming in the oval stone basin of water provided for their use. Circumstances having prevented me from continuing my observations beyond the date above-mentioned, I requested B. Misselbrook, the intelligent keeper who had charge of the birds, to take notes of the resumption of the full plumage of the old males, and the following are the details with which he has furnished me :—

August the 20th. The old Mandarin male began to change his plumage. The first indication of the change was the appearance of two or three white feathers on each side of the breast.

August the 23rd. The crest began to appear and the under parts of the body became nearly white.

August the 28th. The purple feathers on the breast began to show themselves.

September the 5th. The two large fan-shaped feathers began to appear, and also the small speckled feathers which cover the thighs.

September the 29th. The change was now entirely completed and the bird in the height of his beauty.

The manners of this pretty species appear to be as gentle and loving as its dress is gay and beautiful ; on which account, as Mr. Bennett informs us, it is regarded by the Chinese as an emblem of conjugal fidelity, and is usually carried about in pairs in their marriage processions. When once mated their attachment appears to cease only with life ; even those in captivity being constantly seen moving about in pairs.

The adult male has the forehead deep green ; crown and back of the head chestnut, glossed with crimson ; crest-feathers deep bluish green ; feathers on the side of the head white ; lores stained with pale rust-red, passing into the rich deep reddish chestnut of the feathers of the sides of the neck, each of which has a lighter stripe down the centre, the stripes on the upper ones being nearly white ; back of the neck, back, wing-coverts, rump and upper tail-coverts olive ; lower part of the neck and sides of the breast rich reddish plum-colour, immediately behind which on each side are three irregular crescentic bands of black, between which are two bands of white ; scapularies nearest the body olive, the next row olive at the base, dull velvety black on the outer web, and shining purplish blue on the inner ; to this succeeds a row white on the external web, olive on the inner, and tipped with steel-blue, and lastly a row, curving upward, white broadly bordered externally with velvety black ; primaries dull black, broadly margined externally with silvery white and largely tipped on the internal web with green ; bases and inner webs of the secondaries olive, the apical half of their outer webs deep shining green, passing into dull black near the tips, which are white ; interior web of the inner secondary developed into a fan-shape, standing upright, and, together with a portion of the tip of the outer web, rich rust-red, edged on its upper half with white and on its lower half more broadly with black ; outer web rich blue ; flanks pale reddish brown, becoming much paler towards the extremity of the feathers, and transversely rayed with fine irregular lines of black, the rays increasing in breadth towards the extremities of the feathers, where they terminate in a conspicuous line of white, bounded at the tip with a broader one of black ; under surface pure white ; on either side near the tail a spot of purplish chestnut ; tail-coverts olive-green ; tail brown ; bill vermillion ; nail orange ; feet yellow ; eyes full, brownish black.

The female has the head, neck and crest dark brownish slate-grey ; transverse line down the sides of the upper mandible, circle surrounding the eye and continued down the side of the head, and the chin white ; upper surface, wings and tail olive-brown ; secondaries tipped with white, several of them with a mark of purplish green near the tip bounded with velvety black, and with a line of white along the basal portion of the margin ; breast and flanks brown, with an oval spot of very pale brown near the tip of each feather ; under surface white ; bill bluish grey ; nail orange ; tarsi and toes dull greyish yellow ; webs greyish black.

The nestling bird has the whole of the upper surface, wings and tail brown ; under surface brownish buff ; behind the eye two narrow lines of brown.

The egg is of a delicate buffy stone-colour, two inches long by one inch and a half broad.

The Plate represents the two sexes of the natural size, from a spirited and beautiful sketch taken by Mr. Wolf from the living birds in the Gardens of the Zoological Society.

Gould, John. 1852. "Mandarin Duck, *Aix galericulata* [Pl. 69]." *The Birds of Asia* 7(IV), -. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.323270>.

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