

SPATULA VARIEGATA, Gould.

Variegated Shoveller.

Spatula variegata, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xxiv. p. 95.

Among the novelties brought by Mr. Walter Mantell from New Zealand was a species of Shoveller Duck, which is certainly new to science, for with no one of the members of this well-defined genus of typical ducks can it be confounded. Its nearest ally is the Australian species, *Spatula rhynchotis*; but it differs from it in its more variegated plumage, and in other particulars, as will be readily seen on an examination of the accompanying Plate. Supposing it to have been collected at the same time as the fine Parrot *Nestor notabilis*, the Middle Island of New Zealand will be the part where at least it is occasionally found. It is somewhat strange that so large a bird as this duck should not have fallen to the gun of the collector before; yet, on the other hand, how seldom does the common Shoveller of Europe (*Spatula clypeata*) fall before the gun of the sportsman; even in the parts of England where it is most common, he may pass years without an opportunity occurring for shooting one.

The *Spatula variegata*, which forms the fifth and is by far the handsomest species of the genus *Spatula*, is distinguished from the other members by the dark crescentic markings which decorate the feathers of the breast, sides of the neck, and scapularies. The species of this well-defined form previously described are *Spatula clypeata*, which inhabits Europe, North America, India and China; *S. rhynchotis*, which is found throughout Australia; *S. maculata*, the habitat of which is Chili and probably the neighbouring countries of Peru and Bolivia; and *S. capensis* of South Africa.

Crown of the head and space surrounding the base of the bill brownish black; on either side of the face between the bill and the eye a lunar-shaped streak of white, bounded posteriorly with speckles of black; cheeks, sides and back of the neck dark grey with greenish reflexions; front of the neck dark brown, each feather narrowly fringed with white; back brownish black, the feathers of the upper part margined with greyish brown; feathers of the breast, sides of lower part of the neck, the mantle and scapularies white, with a crescent of blackish brown near the tip; under surface dark chestnut blotched with black; flanks lighter chestnut barred with black; lesser wing-coverts dull greenish blue; greater wing-coverts dark brown, fringed at the tip with white; first elongated scapularies blue-grey, with a conspicuous line of white on the outer web next the shaft, bounded posteriorly with black; the next blue-grey, margined on the inner web with white; the remainder greenish black, with a lengthened lanceolate mark of dull or brownish white down the centre of the apical half; speculum deep green; primaries dark brown with lighter shafts; under surface of the shoulder white; on each side of the vent a patch of white freckled with black; under tail-coverts black, tinged with shining green; tail dark brown; irides bright yellow; bill dark purplish black, the under mandible clouded with yellow; legs and feet yellow.

Total length, $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches; bill, 3; wing, $9\frac{1}{4}$; tail, $4\frac{1}{2}$; tarsi, $1\frac{3}{4}$.

The figure is of the natural size.