

extremely lengthened, while others bear a relative proportion; the ground-colour of some is a beautiful pearl-white, of others a slight tinge of buff; their markings again differ considerably in form and in their disposition, being in some instances wholly confined to the larger end, in others distributed over the whole of the surface, but always inclined to form a zone at the larger end; in some these markings are of a deep chestnut-red, in others light red with large clouded spots of grey appearing as if beneath the surface of the shell. The eggs are generally four, but sometimes are only two in number; their medium length is one inch and three lines, and their breadth nine lines. It breeds in October and November.

Although the sexes are very similar in size, the female may at all times be distinguished from the male by her white forehead and throat, a fact I determined many times by actual dissection, thus showing the fallacy of the opinion entertained by some naturalists of their being two distinct species.

The male has a line over the eye, a patch on each side of the neck, a longitudinal stripe on the wing, tips of the secondaries, rump, upper tail-coverts, the basal two-thirds and the tips of the tail, under surface of the shoulder, breast, flanks, abdomen and under tail-coverts white, the remainder of the plumage black with a deep bluish tinge on the head, throat, chest and back, and a green tinge on the primaries and tail; bill yellowish white; irides straw-yellow; feet black.

The female differs in having the forehead, lores and chin white. The young on leaving the nest have the irides black; in other respects they resemble their parents, but are of course far less brilliant in colour.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.