

the numerous streams and pools of the interior of the Floridas as on the Missouri and great lakes. When the weather becomes too cold for them they move southwards, many proceeding towards Mexico.

"The Hooded Merganser is a most expert diver, and so vigilant that at times it escapes even from the best percussion gun. If you wound one, never follow it; for the bird, when its strength is almost exhausted, immerses its body, raises the point of its bill above the surface, and in this manner makes its way among the plants until, finding some safe retreat along the shore, it there remains, and you may search for it in vain, unless you have a good dog. Even on wing it is not easily shot. If on a creek, ever so narrow, it will fly directly towards its mouth, although you may be standing knee-deep in the middle.

"Like all the rest of the genus, which, when far north, breed on the moss or ground, the Hooded Mergansers that remain with us nest in the same kind of situation as the Wood Duck. They dive as it were directly into their wooden burrows, where, on a few dried weeds and feathers of different kinds, with a small quantity of down from the breast of the female, the eggs are deposited. They are from five to eight in number, measure one inch and three-fourths by one inch and three-eighths, and in other respects perfectly resemble those of the Redbreasted Merganser. They are laid in May, and the young are out some time in June.

"The young are conveyed to the water by their mother, who carries them gently in her bill; for the male takes no part in providing for her offspring, but abandons his mate as soon as incubation has commenced.

"The affectionate mother leads her young among the tall rank grasses which fill the shallow pools or borders of creeks, and teaches them to procure snails, tadpoles, and insects. On two occasions the parents would not abandon the young, although I expected that the noises I made would have induced them so to do, but in both instances followed their offspring into the net I had set for them. The young all died in two days, when I set the old birds at liberty.

"The Hooded Mergansers move with ease on the ground, and even run with speed. When migrating, they fly at a great height, in small flocks, without any regard to order. Their notes consist of a kind of rough grunt, variously modulated, but by no means musical, resembling the syllables *croo*, *croo*, *crooh*. The female repeats it six or seven times in succession when she sees her young in danger. The same noise is made by the male, either when courting on the water, or as he passes on wing near the hole where the female is laying her eggs.

"The males do not acquire the full beauty of their plumage until the third spring, but resemble the females for the first year. In the course of the second the crest becomes more developed, and the white and black markings about the body are more distinct. The third spring it is complete."

The male has the forehead brown; sides of the head and crest black, with a large patch of white in the centre of the latter; back and two crescentic marks on each side of the chest black; scapularies black, with a stripe of white down the centre; flanks marked with undulated lines of yellowish brown and brownish black; bill reddish black; irides golden yellow; feet yellowish brown, claws dusky.

The female, which is considerably smaller than the male, has the head and crest of a yellowish brown; chin whitish, upper part of the neck and the sides of the head greyish brown; upper surface, wings, tail, and flanks blackish brown, with paler edges; speculum greyish white; breast and abdomen pale yellowish brown.

The young resemble the female from their first moult.

The accompanying Plate represents an adult, nearly as large as life, in its summer plumage; while in the distance are reduced figures of both sexes at the same period. The plant is the *Ranunculus fluiatilis*.