

"This species has several times been noticed :—by Professor Lovén, in Ice Sound, in 1837 ; by Professor Sundevall, in Bell Sound, the following year ; and by Professor Nordenskjöld, who killed two examples on the south-east coast in 1858 ; but it is certainly not of common occurrence there, as most writers have asserted. I very much question if it breeds in the country ; and it has not been met with further north than Ice Sound, lat. 76° N., where last year I believe I saw a young drake flying on the 22nd of July ; and Ludwig, the same day, was in unsuccessful pursuit of three birds which were, I suspect, of this species. Dr. Malmgren, however, showed me one which was shot out of a small flock at the beginning of the month, in Safe Haven. Another little flock was also observed by him in August, on the Horn-Sound Islands ; but in the south-east harbour of Bear Island, on the 18th–19th of June, he saw a very large flock, consisting of hundreds of ducks and young drakes, with only one or two old drakes among them. They do not appear to breed there."

From the late Mr. Wheelwright's 'Spring and Summer in Lapland,' we learn that the King Duck is only occasionally seen in Lapland ; and from Mr. Newton's 'Notes on the Birds of Iceland,' that it is by all accounts a rare bird in that country, and that those which occur there are generally only stragglers from Greenland and elsewhere.

In Mr. H. E. Dresser's Translation of Pastor Sommerfeldt's 'List of Birds noticed in East Finmark,' it is stated that the King Duck is not a common bird, though it has been said to have been found in numbers in the Varanger Fjord in October. It is true enough that in October and November the Eider Ducks collect in large flocks and fly about over the Fjord and the surrounding country in the afternoon and the dusk of the evening ; but in these flocks the Eider constitutes the chief portion. Steller's Duck is also found in large numbers, but the King Duck only singly in proportion to the other species.

In Mr. Henry Reeks's 'Notes on the Zoology of Newfoundland,' it is stated that "the King-Eider, which is there called 'King-bird,' is tolerably common during its periodical migrations, and is frequently shot in company with the Eider. On the 17th of December, 1867, I obtained an adult male, and on the 19th an immature bird of the same sex ; the latter was one of two killed at a shot, with eight of the Eider. King Ducks are more abundant at some seasons than others ; in 1865 twenty of these birds were killed at a double shot by one of the settlers at Cow-Head. Young males resemble the females during their first year, but in the second have the throat and neck copiously spotted with white. The adult female is easily distinguished from the female of *S. mollissima* by its much smaller size, its shorter bill, and by having a more decided rufous tinge on the upper plumage."—*Zoologist*, 1869, p. 1759.

Although several examples of the King Duck have undoubtedly been killed on the shores of the British Islands, all the recorded instances are not to be relied on. Messrs. Paget, on the authority of the late Mr. Samuel Wigg, state that a female was shot on Breydon Broad, near Yarmouth, in July 1813 ; and the Rev. L. Jenyns mentions one as having been killed at Aldborough, in Suffolk. More recently, two instances of its occurrence at Lowestoft have been recorded ; but Mr. Stevenson is not inclined to give credence to this statement. It is said that it formerly bred on Papa Westra, one of the Orkneys ; but the late Mr. R. Dunn sought for it there in vain. The late Mr. Thompson, after saying that it is extremely rare in Ireland, mentions the occurrence of the female, shot at Kingstown Harbour in October 1837 ; two on the coast of Kerry, one in the winter of 1843, at Derrynane, the other in that of 1845–6, at Tralee Bay ; and a fourth which was shot on the 11th of March 1853, while swimming alone in Belfast Bay. This bird, which came under Mr. Thompson's examination on the 12th, weighed 3 lbs. 5 oz. ; the bill was dusky, having the colour and appearance of india-rubber as sold by the stationers ; tarsi and toes very pale olive or dull fawn-colour ; the membranes dusky ; irides very dark brown. On dissection it proved to be a female ; the stomach was filled with the remains of crustacea and mollusca, viz. an *Inachus* of middle size, the largest *Portunus arcuatus* he had seen (and perfect, excepting the arms), a *Nucula margaritacea*, and a small *Buccinum undatum*. "The preceding notes," adds Mr. Thompson, "relate to more King-Eiders than are on record as obtained in Great Britain south of the Orkney Islands, at least until 1845."—*Nat. Hist. of Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 116.

I am especially indebted to my friend Dr. Rae, the celebrated Arctic traveller, for a drawing made by him, at my request, of the proportions and colouring of the bill and surrounding soft parts of the male, and which he kindly transmitted to me soon after his return from one of his journeys in search of the lamented Franklin ; the colouring of this ornamental part of the bird may therefore be regarded as strictly accurate. I believe that two, three, or more years elapse before the protuberance above the bill assumes the form and colouring represented ; for in some examples I have seen it was but little developed, while in others it was about midway in size ; and I suspect that it is only in the breeding-season that it is so large and so highly coloured as it is depicted in my Plate.

The front figures represent fully adult examples of the two sexes, somewhat under the natural size.