

FULIGULA MARILA.

Scaup Duck.

Anas marila, Linn. Faun. Suec., p. 39.

— *frenata*, Sparrm. Mus. Carls., tab. 38.

Fuligula marila, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xii. p. 198.

— *Gesneri*, Ray; Eyton, Hist. of Rarer Brit. Birds, p. 58.

Nyroca marila, Flem. Phil. of Zool., vol. ii. p. 260.

Aythya marila, Boie, Isis, 1822, p. 564.

— *islandicus*, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 911.

— *leuconotus*, Brehm, *ibid.*, p. 913.

Marila frenata, Bonap. Compt. Rend. de l'Acad. Sci., tom. xliii. séances des 15 et 22 Sept. 1856.

Anas subterranea, Scopoli (Bonap.).

Fulix marila, Baird, Cat. of N. Amer. Birds in Mus. Smiths. Instit., p. 1.

How much more numerous are the members of the great family of *Anatidæ*, or Ducks, in all the northern portions of the globe than in the countries lying southward of the equator! Such genera as *Clangula*, *Harelda*, *Fuligula*, *Mareca*, *Nyroca*, *Oidemia*, and *Somateria* are almost wholly wanting in the latter division of the world: they are exclusively northern forms; and species of most (if not of all) of them are inhabitants of the British Islands.

The Scaup Duck with us is strictly a winter visitant; for, although it is stated that Sir William Jardine shot a female attended by her young on a small loch between Loch Hope and Eriboll, in Sutherlandshire, in the month of June 1834, that is, I believe, the only instance of such an occurrence, and it is just possible that he may have been mistaken as to the young bird. Scaups, like many other species, begin to arrive from the north in autumn, and immediately spread themselves over the maritime portion of Britain, where they enter bays, estuaries, and the mouths of all the great rivers, from north to south. If the weather be severe, the London markets receive a fair supply; no epicure, however, would think of purchasing a Scaup for the table, any more than he would a Scoter or a Sheldrake—the flesh of this molluscous-feeding bird being strong, fishy, tough, and unpalatable, when compared with that of the delicate grass-eating Pintail, Teal, Widgeon, and Mallard. The unsavoury nature of its flesh does not, however, detract from its interest in the eyes of the naturalist; for he sees in it the typical illustration of one of the many genera into which the *Anatidæ* are now divided.

In a state of nature the Scaup is a fine showy species, the males with their large dark-green heads and hoary-grey backs presenting a strong contrast to the brown bodies and white faces of the other sex. I am unable to say whether the transformation of plumage common to so many of the males of other Ducks takes place in this species also; in all probability it does, and both sexes closely assimilate in outward appearance just after the season of incubation. In Iceland the Scaup breeds freely, and most of the collectors who have visited that island have had no difficulty in procuring its eggs. Professor Reinhardt states that it is also found in Greenland, at which we need not be surprised, since it is known to inhabit the whole of the northern regions of America, as well as all the countries in the same latitude in the Old World, from Norway to Siberia, China, and Japan; the Scaup is, in fact, a frequenter of the countries just within and without the arctic circle in all situations suitable to its habits. That in the cold season it goes as far south as Amoy, in China, we have the authority of Mr. Swinhoe; while, nearer home, it not only occurs at the same period in all parts of Southern Europe, but also in Algeria and in most of the other provinces of Africa north of the line. In India it is scarce and, according to Mr. Jerdon, is only found on the northern hills.

If the various local faunas of the birds of our islands be consulted, the reader will learn that, according to Mr. Rodd, it is rare in the western districts of Cornwall, a few only occurring in severe weather, that in Morayshire it is now less numerous than formerly (at least so says Mr. St. John); and Mr. Dunn states that it is plentiful in Orkney, but less so in Shetland. These affirmations apply more or less to particular periods; for at one season it may be scarce in those and many other localities, and at another just as numerous. Why this should be, it is not easy to explain; and hence it will answer no good end to enumerate in detail the rivers, lakes, and indentations of the sea in which the Scaup has been seen or shot in this country; but I may state that, besides being found on the southern part of the European continent, it is especially abundant in Holland and in all the fluvial portions of Austria, Hungary, Turkey, &c.

“The Scaup,” says Mr. Selby, “prefers the muddy shores of the ocean or such parts only of rivers as