

Osberton Ducks in your work. I never saw so many on the water, and for that very reason I am the more particular not to allow them to be disturbed; but there is a reach of still water out of hearing of the lake, where I hope to be able to get them before the end of the week. I always consider that the frost, at least in this neighbourhood, saves the Ducks, as the decoys shorten the numbers of their mess ten to one more than the sportsman's gun; and even most of the rivers are now frozen up. I am especially well situated, and my sanctuary *swarms*; but I have only Mallard, Teal, Widgeon, Pochard, and Tufted Ducks in sight. Goosanders fly over, but the piece of water is too small for them to stay on it. I cannot recollect the time when the water has been without two or three pairs of Tufted Ducks from November to April; but I believe the first instance of their breeding here was in the year 1853 or '54. The nest was found by the keeper, and shown to me. To the best of my recollection it contained six eggs, of which I took four, placing three in the collection at this place, and giving one to Sir William Milner. The keepers at Clumber spoke to having observed broods on that lake a year or two previously. The nest I saw was thatched like a Magpie's; but I am told that those which have been found here since were not roofed. The Tufted Ducks have lately increased in number, I believe in consequence of the introduction of the American weed. During the frost we have had as many as forty together. We never find them in the river above or below the lake, except in a reach of still water which acts as a mill-dam. I noted that, when two or more were in company, *one* always remains as a sentry while the others are under water. They begin to leave in March; but two or three pairs annually remain till June and have occasionally brought off their broods in July. I do not allow the nests to be searched for or the birds at all disturbed. The nest mentioned above was built of rushes, or what we call 'flags,' and partially concealed amongst those growing close to the edge of the water. I have heard of eight eggs in one nest; and I believe, at Lord Galway's, at Serlby, a brood of eight was hatched off."

The late Mr. John Wolley informed me that the Tufted Duck also breeds freely at Osmaston and other places in Derbyshire; but these have originated in tamed birds.

Like the other Fuliguline Ducks, this species flies rapidly and directly, swims with the utmost ease and very quickly, and dives so expertly that it is with difficulty shot on the water; and by this means readily escapes from the decoy, as, instead of rising and flying forward when within the tunnel, it immediately dives and returns to the open pool: it is by diving, also, that it obtains its food, which, when among lakes, pools, marshes, and the still parts of rivers, chiefly consists of insects, testaceous mollusks, and worms; at sea, mainly of bivalve mollusca. Its flesh is tender and well flavoured, but is not in much demand; still it is not uncommon in the markets, where it is sometimes sold under the name of Black Widgeon.

Speaking of the bird in Ireland, Thompson says:—"At that beautiful sheet of water, Ballydrain Lake, this species is seen to great advantage. When it was frozen over on the 27th of January, 1833, in addition to a few wild Ducks and Teal, a number of Tufted Ducks appeared in company with Pochards. During February the Tufted Ducks continued there; and on the 3rd of March, a warm day for the season, twenty-six males, with fine crests and pure white sides, and twenty-five females, with apparently no crests, brownish sides, and generally of a brownish black colour, were congregated together. About a dozen Pochards, too, appeared, with their bills concealed in their dorsal plumage,—a favourite position of the *Fuligulae* when quietly resting on the calm waters of an inland lake or the sea by day; at full tide, in particular, they are thus seen sleeping or enjoying their rest after the toil of flight or feeding during the preceding night."

The following details were taken from the three examples shot by Mr. Foljambe, and kindly sent me to form the subjects of the accompanying illustrations. They consisted of two males and a female; one of the former weighed two pounds and two ounces, the other male and the female an ounce less than two pounds each. A white band across the primaries and partially across the secondaries of both sexes must show very conspicuously during flight, but not so when the wings are closed. The crown and crest of the male is purplish black; the cheeks and upper part of the head appear purple in one light and deep green in another; the tertiaries and tail-feathers are bronzy brown; centre of the back, upper surface, chest, and anal region black, the latter minutely freckled with brown; the remainder of the plumage white, freckled with brown on the flanks; irides brilliant orange-yellow; bill beautiful bluish grey; tarsi greyish brown.

The female is chestnut-brown where the male is black, has the anal region white, the irides not so fine as in the opposite sex and inclining to light brown, and a few light feathers in the front of the face. With respect to these light feathers, Mr. J. H. Gurney, Jun., informs me that he is "quite sure they are a mark of youth, though ignored by British authors, and that they exist in very young females, and, perhaps, in males."

The figures represent the two sexes, of the natural size.