

to attribute it to the simple fact that these northern parts of the empire are too cold for the Pochard, in proof of which it passes them over that it may, by going more southerly, secure to itself a warmer atmosphere for the winter.

"The Pochard is a remarkably good diver, swims very rapidly, and flies swiftly, in a compact flock, differing in this from the generality of the Ducks, which fly in a triangular form. Mr. Selby says that it breeds among aquatic herbage, laying twelve or fourteen eggs of a greenish-white colour; Mr. Yarrell, ten or twelve.

"In former times, when these birds were much more abundant than they are now, vast numbers were taken with nets. This mode of capture is thus described by Montagu, 'Poles were erected in the avenues of the decoy; and after a great number of these birds had collected for some time on the pool, to which Wild Fowl only resort by day, going to the neighbouring fens to feed by night, a net at a given time was erected by pulleys to these poles, beneath which a deep pit had previously been dug; and as these birds go to feed just as it is dark, and are said always to rise against the wind, a whole flock may be taken together in this manner: for when once they strike against the net they never attempt to return, but flutter down its sides till they are received into the pit, whence they cannot rise; and thus, we have been told, twenty dozen have been taken at one catch.'"—*Anim. in Menag.* p. 259.

The Rev. Mr. Lubbock, in his 'Birds of Norfolk,' says:—"The Pochard frequents our broads in large flocks during winter, resting generally in the daytime on some of the larger decoys, and in the evening flight removing to the most extensive waters, such as Brandon Water, Horsey Mere, Hickling Broad, &c. This last is a favourite haunt of the Pochard, on account of its shallowness, which gives the bird easy access to those beds of weed from which it draws its support. The whole night is spent by these birds in diving for their food; and the 'working,' as the gunners call it, of a large flock of Pochards may be heard on a still night at least half a mile. During this time they, in general, do not present a favourable shot to the fowler, as half the flock is under water, and they sit very widely dispersed. But no sooner does the grey light of morning glimmer faintly than the Pochards begin, as the gunners term it, to 'head up' together, in preparation for a flight to their day-quarters, and at this time a very profitable shot is often made with a swivel gun and punt. Although they frequent decoys they will not enter the pipe: or if stragglers do so, they immediately escape by diving back again. The plan of taking this bird by a net stretched on lofty poles, which rises suddenly and takes the Pochards in their flight, has never been resorted to in Norfolk." The bird is said to breed, occasionally at least, in Norfolk; for, according to Mr. Girdlestone's memoranda, three examples shot by him on Hickling Broad proved to be young birds, which had doubtless been bred in the neighbourhood; and it is believed still to breed in Yorkshire; for some eggs sold in one of Mr. Wolley's collections were said to be from that county, but, for obvious reasons, the precise locality was withheld.

Mr. Thompson states that "in Ireland the Pochard is a regular winter visitant, but varies much in numbers in different years. In some seasons scarcely any are to be seen; the more severe the winter the more numerous they generally are. During portions of two or three successive winters about the years 1837, 1838, and 1839 they were very abundant. Where the river called Conswater joins Belfast Bay, at 'Adam's Point,' is a favourite resort; and one day in particular, during a very severe snowstorm, they were literally in thousands there—the surface of the river exhibited one living mass."

The voice of the Pochard is a low whistle when not alarmed; at other times it becomes a rough croak. As will be seen on reference to the opposite plate, the two sexes differ considerably in their colouring, the red head and neck and black breast of the male being replaced by mottled brown in the female.

The front figure represents a male, of the natural size.