

Jardine, who accompanied Mr. Selby, mentions that "Widgeons were seen upon Loch Shin, Loch Naver, Loch Loyal, and Loch Hope. They were by no means abundant; and it is possible that the birds in this district were at the most southern limit of their breeding-stations, and bore no proportion whatever to the immense flocks which frequent our coasts in winter." A more recent writer, St. John, in his 'Natural History and Sport in Moray,' says:—"In Sutherland I have found the nest, and in Loch Naver and elsewhere the Widgeon breeds regularly, though not in any great numbers. I have shot Widgeon in this country on the 9th of September. There was a small flock of eight or nine; and the two which I shot were evidently young, and must have been bred in the neighbourhood. The migrating Widgeon begin to arrive early in October or at the end of September; by the beginning of November there are immense numbers, and their shrill whistle enlivens all the larger lochs and swamps. Towards night every Widgeon seems to be in motion, flying to their feeding-places, either in the shallows or along the edges of the water, where they can get at the grass and water-plants which form their food. Their flight is very rapid, and divided into small companies; they flit to and fro in every direction until they settle down to feed. During the daytime they all collect and rest in the centre of the lochs. The Widgeon, like the Teal, is late in acquiring its full plumage; and in the flocks but a small proportion of Drakes, in full beauty, are seen. It is also late in coming into full season for the table, and is in best condition from February to April. Like other wild fowl, when driven to feed on the sea-shore, it soon loses its eatable quality. The Widgeon is the most perfectly proportioned of any water-fowl, and the plumage of the male is peculiarly bright and beautiful. Both on land and in the water it is very active; when on shore it walks upright and rapidly, and on the water is unrivalled in swimming. The nest is similar to that of other water-birds, the eggs being well protected by the down of the female. The young, when hatched, have rather a brown- than a green-coloured covering, in this also differing from the common duck, teal, &c."

Mr. Dann informed Mr. Yarrell that the Widgeon "is the most abundant of all the Duck tribe in Lapland, frequenting the grassy swamps, lakes, and rivers. They appear with the first breaking-up of the ice, in pairs; and as soon as the females begin to lay, the male loses his beautiful plumage, and secretes himself in willow-swamps and in the most inaccessible morasses; nor does he recover his former appearance until November or December. The females lay from five to eight eggs. They also breed on the Dovre fjeld, as high as the birch grows, and in many other parts of Norway and Sweden, but only in straggling pairs. They migrate south early in September, appearing in great flocks on the coasts of Norway and Sweden. The young keep among the rushes and reeds in the lakes, the old birds betaking themselves to the shallows on the coast. They entirely leave Sweden in the winter."

The following interesting note respecting this species was communicated to the late Sir John Richardson by the Rev. Mr. Booth, of Friskney, in Lincolnshire:—"Skelton tells me that the Widgeon does not willingly dive: of course, if driven to it, it can; but it does not dive for its food; and though in play it sometimes splashes under water, it never remains beneath the surface. The Widgeon is '*an amazing fowl to graze, a strange eater of grass.*' It is especially fond of 'flutter-grass' (*Glyceria aquatica* vel *fluitans*?), which it crops on the surface; but it likewise eats many other herbs. When the decoy has been so full of Widgeons that they have devoured every blade on the landings, Skelton has taken advantage of their absence in the night, when they resort to the salt marshes on the sea-coast, and laid down sods pared from the fields, on which they readily graze. In common with the Mallard, Teal, and Pintail, they are very fond of Willow-weed seeds (*Epilobium*), with which he feeds all the fowl in the decoy, as they prefer it to oats and every other kind of grain."—*Faun. Bor.-Amer.* vol. ii. p. 436, note.

Dr. Jerdon, speaking of the Widgeon in India, remarks that it "cannot be said to be either common or abundant, although it is met with occasionally in every part of the country in small or moderate flocks."

The Widgeon emits, chiefly during flight, a peculiarly shrill whistling note, which has obtained for it, in some parts of England, the name of Whew Duck; and its French name of *Canard siffleur* has reference to the same sound.

During the proper season great numbers of Widgeons are taken in the decoys; and we have the authority of Colonel Hawker that, like the fox in hunting, it affords the finest sport for coast night-shooting, ample directions for which will be found in that gentleman's well-known work on sport and sporting.

Mr. Thompson, after stating that the Widgeon frequents the marine loughs &c. of Ireland in great numbers for above six months of the year, gives an interesting account of the modes of shooting it, &c., to which, as it is too lengthy for extract, I must refer my readers (see his 'Natural History of Ireland,' vol. iii. p. 100 *et seq.*).

The Plate represents a male and a female, about the natural size.