

Genus MERGUS, *Linn.*

GEN. CHAR. *Beak* lengthened, nearly cylindrical, largest at the base, curved at the tip, nailed; both *mandibles* armed at the edges with sharp angular teeth directed backwards. *Nostrils* one third from the base, oval, longitudinal, lateral, near the centre of the mandible. *Feet* webbed; *outer toe* longest; *hind toe* lobed and free; *tarsi* compressed. *Wings* moderate; second *quill-feathers* the longest.

GOOSANDER.

Mergus Merganser, Linn.

Le Grand Harle.

PRE-EMINENTLY distinguished by the breadth and boldness of its colouring, and the delicacy of some of its tints, the Goosander, both from its beauty and its superiority of size, is entitled to rank as the finest of its genus; admirably adapted for diving, it possesses great power and agility in the water; its flight also, when once fairly on the wing, is strong and rapid.

Its native locality appears to be the northern regions of the continents of Europe and America, where, among large and unfrequented lakes, it finds an asylum and breeding place: from these, its summer haunts, it migrates southwards on the approach of the severities of winter, seldom appearing in our latitudes unless the season indicates an extremely low temperature in the Arctic circle; at such times it frequents our shores and unfrozen lakes, either in pairs or in small flocks of seven or eight: but the extensive inland waters of Holland and Germany appear to be its favourite place of resort.

The form of the body is long and compressed; the total length twenty-six inches; the weight four pounds. Beak red on the sides, darker above, edges serrated; armed at the end with an abruptly hooked nail. Head ornamented with slender elongated hair-like feathers, forming a voluminous crest of a rich glossy black with green reflections, which colour is continued half-way down the neck, where it terminates abruptly. The back and scapulars of a fine black; wing-coverts and secondaries white. Quills blackish-brown; rump and tail grey, the sides irregularly marked with fine waved freckled darker lines; tail-feathers eighteen. The whole of the under surface of the body of a delicate yellowish cream-colour. Legs placed very far back. Tarsus and toes of a rich orange-red; interdigital membrane rather darker.

The trachea presents two enlargements of the tube before it enters the labyrinth or inferior larynx, which consists of two irregular cavities divided from each other by a membranous partition.

The female is considerably less than the male, and differs from him not only in plumage but also in the anatomical structure of the trachea, which wants the enlargement both of the tube and the bony labyrinth. The beak, irides and feet are less brilliant in colour. Head, neck and crest rufous brown; chin white; the uppersurface of the body uniform dark ash grey; the under part lighter with a tinge of cream-colour.

These differences in the female, connected with the similarity of plumage characterizing the young males of the year, (which are only to be distinguished by the masculine structure of the trachea, and rather larger size,) have induced early writers to consider them as a distinct species, to which they have applied the name of Dundiver; an error corrected by more recent observation.

Its food consists of fish, small crustacea, and molluscous animals. Its flesh is rank and unpalatable.

The female is said to lay twelve whitish eggs, but the nidification of this bird is little known.

Our Plate represents a male and female in full plumage, two thirds of the natural size.