Genus **DAFILA**, *Leach.*

Gen. Char. *Beak* medial, its base unarmed, subcylindric, linear, its tip furnished with a very small hook: the *mandibles* with their edges lancinate, dentated. *Nostrils* basal, subovoal. *Tail* elongated, acute, furnished with sixteen feathers.

PINTAIL DUCK.

Anas acuta, *Linn.*

Dafila caudacuta, *Leach.*

Canard à longue queue.

We have thought it best to give the genus and generic characters as established by Dr. Leach, leaving it to our readers to adopt it or not at their pleasure. The present bird will form the only known species belonging to it. If we except the Mallard, *Anas boschas*, Linn., the Pintail has a more extensive range than any other of its tribe. In Europe it is very generally distributed, as also in the northern portion of Africa, the whole of the Asiatic continent, and the northern and temperate regions of North America. On comparing specimens from all these different quarters of the globe, we can trace no distinguishing difference among them. It is one of the most graceful examples of its race; although its colours are by no means remarkable for brilliancy or powerful contrast, yet its delicately penciled zigzag markings more than counterbalance its quiet and sober hues. Its form indicates it to be one of the true vegetable feeding ducks; hence its flesh is peculiarly delicate and palatable. Although we state this bird to be a vegetable feeder generally, we believe, notwithstanding, that all the species of the Duck tribe subsist more or less on aquatic insects and molluscous animals. Its flight is rapid and vigorous, and its disposition in a state of nature is extremely wary and suspicious; it is almost solely in the decoys of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, that it is obtained in such abundance for the London market. It is said not to breed in the British Isles, and our own experience does not enable us to decide the point. It breeds nevertheless in considerable abundance in Holland, France and Germany, choosing morasses and vast reed beds for the site of its nest, which is placed on the ground concealed among the flags and luxuriant herbage near the water. The eggs are eight in number, of a greenish blue.

The male and female of this interesting species offer very considerable difference in their plumage. The male is characterized by the top of the head being variegated with black and brown; the throat, cheeks, and upper part of the neck being brown with purple and violet reflections, a black band extending over the back of the neck, bordered on each side white; the front of the neck and under parts of a pure white; the back and sides barred with delicate zigzag lines of black and grey; the speculum purple green, bordered above with rufous, and below with white; the scapulars long and pointed, overhanging the quill-feathers, mostly of a deep velvet black with light grey edges; the two middle tail-feathers of a greenish black, considerably elongated and tapering; the beak blackish blue; irides light brown; feet dull reddish.

The female is known by her smaller size, and by the head and neck being of a light rufous dotted with small spots of black; all the upper parts blackish brown, marked with regular crescent-shaped spots of reddish yellow; the lower parts reddish yellow, spotted with light brown; speculum reddish brown, bordered above with yellowish, below with white; tail conical.

In the months of August and September the males resemble the females in the colour of the plumage.

We have figured a male and female two thirds of the natural size.