

BREEDING OF THE HARLEQUIN DUCK  
(*HISTRIONICUS MINUTUS*).

BY C. HART MERRIAM, M. D.

The Harlequin Duck is an inhabitant of the southern part of the circumpolar zone which Mr. J. A. Allen, in his admirable paper upon the Geographical Distribution of Animals, has designated the "Arctic Realm"; and is also found in some parts of the "Boreal Province" of the "North-Temperate Realm." At the commencement of the breeding season it retires from the sea-coast to the lakes and rivers of the interior, to return again with its young in autumn, whence, keeping the salt water, it migrates southward a sufficient distance to escape the masses of drifting ice that harass the ragged shores of the North during the winter.

In Siberia it is known to breed about Lake Baikal and in the Bureja Mountains (Radde); in Mantchuria and at various points in the great Stanowoi Range (Von Middendorff); about the Upper Amoor (Von Schrenck); and in Kamtchatka. On the American Continent it has been found breeding along the tributaries of the Yukon in Alaska (Dall); in the interior of the Fur Countries and about Hudson's Bay (Richardson); on the fresh water ponds of Labrador (Audubon); and in the Rocky Mountains within the limits of the United States (in Montana, Coues). It also nests in Newfoundland, Greenland, and Iceland (Kruper).

The accounts of the breeding habits of this species are extremely meagre, but all agree in placing its nest upon the ground, and usually in close proximity to swiftly-running water.

While in Newfoundland last winter I learned that these birds, which are here called "Lords and Ladies," are common summer residents on the Island, breeding along the little-frequented water-courses of the interior. I was also informed, by many different people, that their nests were built in *hollow trees*, like the Wood Duck's with us. Mr. James P. Howley, Geologist of Newfoundland, has favored me with the following response to a letter addressed to him on this subject:

"I received your note enquiring about the Harlequin Duck, but delayed answering it till the arrival of one of our Indians. . . . It is quite true the birds nest in hollow stumps of trees, usually on islets in the lakes or tarns of the interior. They usually frequent the larger lakes and rivers far from the sea-coast, but are also found scattered all over the country."