

The Food of Wild Ducks.—In December, 1893, Mr. William Dutcher brought to me the stomach contents of a Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) shot at Montauk Point, Long Island, about the 3rd of the month. An examination of the material showed what an industrious collector the bird must have been, for it had in its crop remains of no less than three individuals of the small mud crab of our coast, *Panopeus depressa* Smith, one carapace being almost entire; besides remains of some other forms of Crustaceans. Of the little shell *Columbella lunata* (*Astyris lunata* of the Fish Com. Reports), there were no less than 39 individuals represented, besides several small Littorinas. This shell is seldom more than one-sixth of an inch long, and is usually quite rare on our shores. It could only have been obtained in such numbers by a sort of sifting of the bottom mud of the bays by the Duck, and indicates how carefully the process had been carried on in order to obtain so small an article of food.

The contents of the crop of an Eider Duck (*Somateria dresseri*) taken by Mr. Dutcher at Montauk Point, L. I., on March 25, 1894, contained the remains of five right claws of *Cancer irroratus*, our common sand crab, showing that he had dined sumptuously on this species on several occasions. The last dinner consisted of an individual entire, a small female burdened with a large quantity of eggs under the flipper, making an object nearly two inches by one and three-eighths, and almost an inch thick, which he must have taken into his crop at a single gulp, without even disturbing a limb.

From the stomach of a King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) the contents of which Mr. Dutcher sent, I find the objects so thoroughly comminuted that but little can be identified. The hand and figure of *Cancer irroratus*, young shells of *Mytilus edulis*, and a young shell of *Lunatia heros* Say, which still retains the horny operculum, is all that can be recognized.

Two gizzards of wild Ducks, the contents very much comminuted, furnish, one of them, the almost entire carapace of *Carcinus amœnus* Linn. sp. (= *Cancer granulatus* Say,) measuring about three-fourths of an inch in diameter, the limbs all removed and the whole badly macerated. There were also fragments of *Cancer irroratus*, our common sand crab, and quite a quantity of young mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) none of which measured more than one-half an inch in length. A second gizzard gave evidence of three or four specimens of the small mud crab, *Panopeus depressus*, with many fragments of mussle shells, but nothing else which could be determined.

There is nothing among these remains which would indicate that the birds had been feeding at different localities within a few days of the time they were shot. On the contrary all the contents of their crops and gizzards would show that their food had been for some days obtained in or near our own waters, or at least within the limits of our own coastal fauna, and that crustaceans form a very large percentage of their food during the spring months of the year.—R. P. WHITFIELD, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*