

It is not often that a Scaup Duck can be seen closely enough in life to make out the color of the reflections on the head. When such a case does occur, however, it seems entirely possible that a person seeing a Greater Scaup, with its head turned toward him, would see violet reflections and identify it as the Lesser. One might also easily imagine a case where an observer seeing a Golden-eye in such a position would make out violet reflections. The spot in front of the eye, from its foreshortened appearance, might be easily imagined crescentic, and the bird thought to be Barrow's Golden-eye.

Plumages of immature birds have not been described fully or completely in most text-books. In some cases these plumages differ enough from the adult to make mistakes for some other species possible. In December 1921, I was hunting Ducks on the Penfield Reef at Fairfield, Conn. I was particularly anxious to get a Scaup Duck, a bird that was less common on the reef than the Scoters and Old-squaws. Finally I saw a bird approaching with black neck and upper breast and lower parts abruptly white. I felt no doubt at all that this was a Scaup Duck, and as it flew almost directly over my head I took careful aim and shot it. The bird I picked up, proved a young male Surf Scoter.

Few books describe the plumages of young males of Surf and White-winged Scoters. While not so purely white beneath as is the Scaup, they nevertheless have much the same appearance when flying toward an observer. They seem to wear this plumage throughout the first winter, for I have seen birds in it in May. I puzzled for a number of years over a young male White-winged Scoter I had once seen under rather unusual circumstances. Its description remained unnamed in my note-book for a number of years, for none of the books I possessed described this plumage. Finally, when I happened to shoot a bird in this plumage, the mystery was solved.—ARETAS A. SAUNDERS, *Fairfield, Conn.*

**Ducks useful in Arkansas as Scavengers of Red Rice.**—At least \$150,000 a year is saved to Arkansas rice growers by migratory wild Ducks feeding on red rice, according to an estimate furnished to the Biological Survey by the Board of Directors of the Arkansas Rice Growers' Cooperative Association. In that State the Ducks are so beneficial that every effort is made to attract them on their way south. The present early closed season and an even smaller bag limit are protective measures strongly approved in Arkansas.

The control of the growth of wild or red rice is one of the greatest difficulties incidental to rice culture. The land becomes easily polluted with red rice which is scattered on the ground when the good rice is cut, and comes up in the next crop in the spring. Many of the red grains are forced below the surface of the ground by wagon wheels and the feet of the horses and men, when the bundles of good rice are hauled out to be threshed. Although thousands of Blackbirds use the rice fields for feeding grounds when migrating, they do not get the grains that are covered with water

or mud. The Ducks, however, which live in the wet fields in winter, sift out this buried wild rice, to the great advantage of the rice grower.

Rice fields are usually drained before the grain is cut, and the Ducks would fly over these dry fields were it not for the custom, rapidly increasing, for those who have learned to use the Ducks, to pump water into the cuts between the levees so as to attract migrating Mallards which soon come in by the thousands. Under these conditions it is said that the Ducks do not feed on the shocked rice. They feed on the ground rice and clean it all up in three or four days.

While instances of damage to rice by wild Ducks are on record for Arkansas and Louisiana such damage has occurred under extraordinary conditions, as when scarcity of labor or other causes have delayed the harvest until the full migration of Ducks was under way and the fields submerged by winter rains. This happened during the war but probably will not be allowed to occur again to any extent. While damage is sporadic, the good done by the wild Ducks is a yearly benefit of which it is hoped rice growers throughout the Southern States will avail themselves. All that it is necessary to do is to get the crop out of the fields in season, flood the ground when the Ducks first come, and protect them as long as they stay. With the help of these birds red rice will become a rarity instead of a common and persistent weed as at present.—W. L. MACATEE, *U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**The Harlequin Duck in Massachusetts.**—On February 22, 1923, in company with Mr. Charles Clark of Medford and Prof. F. E. Saunders of Cambridge I observed a Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) off Eastern Point, Essex County, Massachusetts. The Duck permitted a close inspection three times and was observed in flight and on the water. The bird was quite tame and though flushed twice it flew but a short distance and returned to the rocky point where it was first observed.

There are but few records of this rare Duck in this state. There are three records, and a possible fourth from this county.—CHARLES B. FLOYD, *Auburndale, Mass.*

**Occurrence of the Barnacle Goose on Long Island.**—I arrived at my office near Farmingdale, L. I., on the morning of November 28, 1922, and found that Mr. H. J. Hutchinson, one of my assistants had just shot a Goose on our pond. Being on the point of leaving, I wrote down a description of the bird in detail. A couple of days later I was able to look it up with Mr. A. C. Bent and found that it was a male Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) in fine plumage. It was then too late to secure it as a specimen. Mr. Hutchinson reported later that when he plucked it one wing seemed to have been badly bruised. It is quite likely that it had struck one of the numerous guy wires or ropes about our plant during the night, as it was flying by. This would account for its presence, alone, on our small pond which is but 450 feet. long and situated about six miles inland from the Great South Bay.—F. C. WILLARD, *Farmingdale, L. I.*