

In England this is one of the species captured in thousands, in the fens, by means of decoys. It is spread all over Europe and North America, and it is said to exist even in India, and like most of the prolific and widely extended species, subject to great variations of form and plumage in domestication.

The specific name is Greek, (*Boschas*), a wild duck.

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ARTICLE XXVII.—*On a Sea-Gull shot at Ottawa.*

LARUS ARGENTATUS, (Brunnich,) HERRING OR SILVERY GULL.

On the 15th of April inst., Mr. W. H. Baldwin, of the ALBION HOTEL, shot a fine gull near this city, which appears to us to be the common species described by Ornithologists under the name of LARUS ARGENTATUS, the Herring or Silvery Gull. The bird had one of the wings broken by the shot, but it appears to be otherwise uninjured. Mr. Baldwin has amputated the broken wing, and his patient seems to feel very little inconvenience by the loss. It is a very beautiful bird, with pure snow-white plumage, except the upper part of the wings and back, which are greyish blue. It is exceedingly tame, suffering itself to be handled and caressed without exhibiting any alarm, and feeding upon the small fish and bread provided for it with as much nonchalance as if it were feasting in freedom on its native waters. It will eat almost anything given to it, but prefers the small fresh fish. It exhibits no disposition to escape, and is not confined otherwise than being shut up in an out-house, where it runs about at will, and when turned out in the yard endeavours to return to the building. These facts seem to prove that this gull can be easily domesticated after the first terror arising from the contact with man has been passed through.

The Gulls are web-footed, but their legs are longer than those of the Ducks, and nearer the centre of the body, so that these birds are good walkers, approaching in this respect the appearance of waders. Some of this family, such as the Petrels, "seem even to employ their feet in their own element as if on land, walking as it were upon the surface of the waters." They are also characterised by the strength and expansiveness of their wings, with the aid of which they traverse immeasurable tracts of the ocean in search of food, and support their flight at great distances from the land, seldom having recourse to their powers of swimming. They are a numerous tribe, and spread over the whole world of waters in every clime. They are omnivorous, many are of large size, and all are voracious devourers of fish, and of every marine animal, whether dead or alive, which is cast upon the shore. The Herring or Silvery Gull is common about our great lakes and rivers, most numerous in the spring and autumn, but although apparently always upon the wing and flying about for hours in the same place, does not usually approach within gun shot, and specimens are therefore not often procured. We give below the technical description of the species from Audubon's Synopsis. Mr. Baldwin's specimen differs somewhat, and still we think it the same.—