

The Poultry Yard.

The Carolina Duck.

The Carolina Duck, also called the Summer Duck or Wood Duck of America, is the most beautiful of all our native ducks and is only equalled by the Mandarin Duck. In both varieties the drake possesses a beautiful crest, but the Carolina is bereft of the singular fans which give so peculiar an appearance to the Mandarin. The Carolina Duck is but seldom seen on the northern part of this continent, and then only during the summer months. It is, however, familiarly known in the United States from Florida to Lake Ontario.

It rarely visits the sea shore or salt marshes, its favorite haunts being the solitary deep and muddy creeks, ponds and mill-dams of the interior, making its nest sometimes in the old hollow tree that overhangs the water, hence it is sometimes called the Wood Duck. It is also called the Summer Duck because of its remaining with us during the summer. It may occasionally be seen in the winter in the states south of the Potomac, and instances are mentioned of their having been met with in January in a creek near Petersburg, in Virginia. It is also stated that in Pennsylvania the female begins to lay late in April or early in May. In Mexico and many of the West Indian Islands it is equally known. It breeds from Mexico to the Columbia river, and eastwardly to Nova Scotia.

There is no fixed standard in regard to the weight or size of the domesticated Carolinas, some prefer them as small as possible, while others prefer a good big bird, some of the most extensive breeders are of the opinion that size should have nothing to do with the judging, but prizes should be given to birds the clearest and most brilliant in color, inclining however to the smallness in size. Others again are in favor of largeness in size, and think as time goes on for practical reasons this latter will come most into favor. One of the most successful exhibitors of this breed, Mr. Matthew Leno, gives the following description of them, which we take from Wright's "Book of Poultry."

"The Carolina or Summer Duck is a native of North America. It is certainly one of the most beautiful specimens of ornamental water-fowl, and no poultry show is complete without it, where, if in full plumage, it never fails to have plenty of admirers. It is said rarely to visit the sea-shore, and in its habits to be somewhat solitary, while also strictly monogamous. It is usually seen flying singly or in pairs. The note of the male is like the syllables 'Put, peet!' The adult drake has a red bill margined with black nearly to the tip, with a spot of black between the nostrils, and a sort of hooked nail at the extreme point. The irides of the eyes are orange red. The crown, front of the head, and pendent crest are a rich glossy bronze green, changing into violet to finish off, and beautifully marked with a line of pure white running from the upper mandible over the eye, with another band of white proceeding from behind the eye; and both mingling their long plumes with the green and violet of the crest, produce a very striking appearance. The throat and a kind of collar in front of the neck are pure white, curving up in the form of a crescent nearly to behind the eye. The cheeks and side of the upper neck are violet, the breast dark brown or chestnut tinged with violet (we should call it claret color), and marked with small white spots, which increase in size till they reach the white of the belly. Each side of the breast at the shoulder, has a large crescent of white shaded by a broader one of deep black immediately behind it. The sides of the body, under the wings, are thickly marked with fine undulating parallel lines of black, over a ground of yellowish drab, the flanks being ornamented with broad semi-circular bands or stripes of white shaded with black. The sides of the vent are light violet; the tail coverts long, of a hair like texture at the sides, and in color, of a deep black tinged with yellow. The back is dusky bronze tinged with green; scapulars blackish green and purple, tail tapering, and black glossed with green above, dusky below; wing-spot, a speculum, blue and green, legs and feet yellowish red, with strong hooked claws. About June the plumage changes to nearly the same color as the female, the drake assuming his brilliant dress in September. The head of the duck also has a small crest. Behind the eye is a bar of white, the chin and throat

also being white. The head and neck are a dark drab; breast a dusky brown marked with white spots; back and part of the wings dark glossy bronze brown. The brighter reflections of gold and green over the duck, the more she is esteemed in value. She has a wing-spot like the male but not so bright. The nests of the duck, when wild, are mostly built in the hollow of a tree, whence the name of Wood Duck frequently given to them. The nesting time is April, May, and June; the eggs are of an oval shape, and nearly resemble polished ivory in color. It is a singular fact, but well established, that when the young are hatched, the parent carries them down to the water from the tree. The Carolinas bear confinement very well; they are now kept by many fanciers, and I think nothing can be prettier on a piece of ornamental water than those splendid birds. They will, however, only breed in confinement under very favorable circumstances, and great care is then necessary to protect them from rats and other vermin." To which Mr. Wright adds:

"With regard to the Carolina Duck flying in pairs, there is some difference of opinion among naturalists, Wilson states the matter so in his 'American Ornithology'; but Audubon, who in such matters is generally preferable, expresses downright astonishment at such a statement, and assures his readers that he has actually seen hundreds in a single flock, and has known fifteen to be killed by one shot. He also gives some interesting particulars of its habits. The flight, he says, is remarkable for ease and elegance, and the bird passes through the woods with almost the facility of a pigeon, and making little or no noise from its wings. Incubation lasts twenty-five days, and is generally carried on as stated by Mr. Leno, in some hole of a tree, during which time the drake joins the other males and roams in their company over adjoining lakes. When hatched, Audubon states that, 'if the nest is placed immediately over the water, the young scramble to the mouth of the hole, launch into the air with their little wings and feet spread out and drop into their favorite element; but whenever their birth place is at some distance from it, the mother carries them to it one by one in her bill, holding them so as not to injure their tender frames. On several occasions, however, when the hole was thirty, forty, or more yards from a pool or other piece of water, I observed the mother suffered the young to fall on the grasses or dried leaves beneath the trees, and afterwards led them to the edge of the nearest pool or creek.' Wilson was told by an eye witness that he had seen a Carolina Duck carry down thirteen young ones from her nest to the ground within ten minutes. She managed it by seizing one at a time with her bill, by the wing or back of the neck, and thus bearing them to the foot of the tree, from which she led them to the water."

This beautiful bird is easily domesticated, and, it is stated, soon becomes so familiar as to permit one to stroke its back with the hand. A writer in the *Field* says:—"My Wood Ducks, though pinioned are not only unconfined by wire netting, but allowed to range at large in an open park, and on an open stream, without any fence or enclosure that would prevent them wandering over the whole country, if so inclined; they are, moreover, close to an uninclosed wood of some five and thirty acres, but never wander far, and are seldom out of sight of the house. They have no shelter beyond that of trees and bushes for three years past, night or day, summer and winter, and, in spite of the frost and snow of Aberdeenshire seem as contented in the one season as in the other. In the evening they generally wander rapidly over the lawns in search of slugs, insects and worms, which they devour greedily; they also appear to find a good deal of aquatic food in the bed and banks of the stream, and, with the exception of a small supply of barley brought every evening at a certain hour by the game keeper (whose coming they watch for with extraordinary punctuality) are left to shift for themselves. The Wood Duck evidently prefers the vicinity of man, and is, I believe, one of the most easily domesticated of ducks."

Mr. Hewitt states that his experience of both Mandarin and Carolina Ducks is, that they very considerably increase in size as they become quite tame and domesticated, and that this remark applies equally to both sexes. He further states that he had in 1873 a pair of Carolinas of which the duck had invariably laid during the last seven years—a strong proof of both longevity and doing well in confinement, and adds that he never knew of his own knowledge a pair of very small birds—Mandarins or Carolinas—bred at all, until time had rendered them reconciled to their new situation.

The Apiary.

August Management of Bees.

In many localities flowers begin to fail this month and bee pasture becomes scarce. Opening hives and removing surplus honey should now be done early in the morning or on a cool day. Expose the honey as little as possible to tempt the bees. When flowers begin to fail is the time of greatest danger from robbing. The entrance to all weak colonies should be so contracted that they can defend themselves. (One ounce of prevention, in this respect, is worth a pound of cure.)

Boxes nearly filled with clover honey may be removed before buckwheat honey—which is darker—is stored with it. If any stocks should be queenless, now is a good time to supply the deficiency. Examine a few of the centre combs and if they contain eggs all is well; if not, give them a comb from another stock containing newly-laid eggs and they will soon rear a queen.

Early sown buckwheat will produce honey the last of this month, which often causes swarming. A buckwheat swarm, if properly cared for, is as productive as any. Bees are more irritable this and the succeeding month than any other period of the year. All timid or fearful apiarians should be provided with a bee hat and fumigator—the former costing only 75 cents and the latter 30 cents—which will enable them to control the bees at their pleasure, and make such examinations as may be necessary without fear. In handling great care should be taken not to jar them in any way, and prevent the putrid breath discharged from the lungs from going among them, as it has a tendency to irritate them. When once aroused by bad treatment, they are restless for some time afterwards.—*Practical Farmer*.

How to Prepare Comb Honey for Market.

Make a strong case of rough boards in shape to suit the boxes, the weight when filled not to exceed 200 lbs.

Prepare the boxes by making all as tight as possible, so that should any leakage occur, the honey will be in the package.

Pack the boxes either in the original position as filled by the bees or inverted; never on the side or end.

Make all firm within the case; when needed, drive in a rough wedge.

When this is completed, fasten securely near the top on each side of the case a strip four inches by one, projecting eight inches at each end, to serve the purpose of handling in carrying, and prevent its being turned over or otherwise roughly handled.

Mark plainly on the cover, "Honey—this is all up with care."

We prefer to return all packages, for the following reasons:

The producer generally weighs his cap boxes when new and dry, and deducts the same as tare when selling. The buyer purchases net weight, and after cutting out the honey finds that each box weighs from eight to twelve ounces more than the tare allowed him. This difference is almost certain to cause dissatisfaction on the part of either the buyer or seller.

We take the box apart carefully, and fasten the several pieces together with a nail or cord.

When packed in a case and shipped in this manner the freight seldom exceeds two cents per box. These packages, when wanted for use, have only to be tacked together, and they are equally as good as new ones costing from ten to fifteen cents each.

We refer to the box most commonly used (and really the most profitable for the bee-keeper), made of 3 inch stuff, 14 inches long by 6 inches square, containing from 12 to 15 pounds of honey.—*Cor. American Bee Journal*.

AMERICAN VARIETIES OF THE HONEY-BEE.—It is the opinion of some American Apianians that the great differences of climate, natural tendency to variation and sport, has produced in the United States distinct varieties of the honey-bee as dissimilar as the Italian and our common bee.