

darker; speculum green, blue violet, or amethyst-purple, bounded by velvet-black, the feathers also tipped with a narrow line of white; under surface of wing and axillaries white. Female more brown, with the speculum similar, but without the white terminal line.

Male, 24½, 38½. Female, 22, 34½.

Breeds in Texas, westward, and throughout the United States, British Provinces, and Labrador. Columbia River. Common in autumn and spring along the Middle Atlantic Districts. Abundant in the Southern and Western States, in winter.

Dusky Duck, *Anas obscura*, WILS. Amer. Orn. v. viii. p. 141.

Anas obscura, BONAP. Syn. p. 384.

Dusky Duck, *Anas obscura*, NUTT. Man. v. ii. p. 392.

Dusky Duck, *Anas obscura*, AUD. Orn. Biog. v. iv. p. 15.

ARTICLE XXIII.—On the Wood Duck, (*Anas sponsa*.)

ANAS SPONSA, THE WOOD DUCK, OR SUMMER DUCK.

SPECIFIC CHARACTERS.—*The most striking distinctive characters of the male of this species are: the upper part of the head and long pendulous crest deep bronze green, with white stripes; the throat pure white; breast reddish purple, spangled with small triangular white spots; belly white; back brownish black, a white crescent before the wings on either side; the white of the neck curving up towards the eye. Female, head dusky and very slightly crested; throat white; breast and abdomen white; back dark brown. Male, 20½-28; Female, 19½. Breeds throughout United States and British Provinces, to the Hudson's Bay Territories.*

The Wood Duck is remarkable among the swimming birds from the circumstance of its leading a partly arboreal life, perching upon trees, and thus approaching in habit the numerous feathered tribes classed in the order Insessores. There are only a few ducks known that have this habit, and it is said the greater proportion of them are confined to India. The subject of the present article is the only perching duck known to inhabit Canada. All the birds of this group of the Natatores have exceedingly beautiful and splendid plumage, and are particularly distinguished by a long pendulous crest of feathers arising from the posterior portion of the head and running down the back of the neck. Mr. LERT informs us "that our species makes its appearance here about the 5th of April, and remains until the latter end of October. It breeds in this country, building its nest in a hollow tree, to which the same bird will return year after year.

"This bird derives its name from the latter circumstance, as well as from its habit of perching on the branches of trees. This peculiarity is noticeable at the breeding season more than at any other time. Wood ducks are very seldom seen on trees in the fall of the year.

"The male bird of this species is the most beautiful of the whole tribe of Ducks. In a preserved state it is generally to be found among the ornamental curiosities of museums. The female possesses none of the elegant