

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES

ON

THIRTY ABNORMAL COLOURED " ANATIDÆ "

CAUGHT IN THE VENETIAN TERRITORY

BY

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I give here the descriptions and some annotations upon several specimens of *Anatidæ* killed in the Venetian territory in these last years and preserved in the late Count Ninni's Collection at Venice and in my own Collection at Cáoddo near Monselice in the province of Padua. They belong to the following species : *Anas boscas*, *Mareca penelope*, *Dafila acuta*, *Querquedula crecca*, *Aethya ferina*, *Nyroca africana*, all birds common in our lagoons and marshes. These anomalies, which we can refer to the albino and melanistic varieties, are very rarely found in the family of *Anatidæ* and I, having also the opportunity to kill a great many Wild Ducks and to see many thousands of them caught in the Estuary or brought from everywhere to the markets, could collect or observe only these. I do not consider in this ornithological article those specimens which present especially the underparts ferruginous coloured which are pretty commonly killed in spring, more easily in fresh waters.

*Anas boscas*, L. — Common Mallard.

N° 3002 of my Collection. — Adult male. — Semi-albino variety.

Bill dark yellowish-green, with a brownish shade towards the tip, unguis black; irides dark brown; general colour pure white slightly rusty on all the underparts; on the space between the eye and bill, beyond the eye, on the sides of neck, but more especially on the anterior central line of neck, from the chin to the base of neck, numerous dark black feathers with rich glossy green reflections; legs and toes orange, the interdigital membranes darker.

This fine bird was killed in the *Valle Millecampi*, but it inhabited for about two months the open-lagoons, where it was approached sometimes by the punt-gunners, but without success, being very shy; on the morning of February the 7<sup>th</sup> of this year it flew on the lake named *Secco* in the *Sacche dei Millecampi* (closed lagoon in the Province of Padua) and was killed by Mr. Guillion's wild-fowl shooter I. Molon, being resting upon the water very far from the decoys; wounded it dived for a long time and afterwards was kept alive by Mr. A. Guillion Mangilli, who after a few days very kindly gave me this rare specimen. There is no doubt that this Mallard is a wild bird.

N° 428 of my Collection. — Adult female. — Semi-albino variety.

Bill and unguis orange-yellow spotted with black; irides black: feathers of the head and neck black with a dark black spot on the centre; lower part of neck pure-white; back, rump and upper tail-coverts white with black or greyish-black spots and stripes; underparts yellowish-white, some darkish spots on the throat, feathers of breast with black drop-spots on the tip, some reddish-coloured spots here and there; on the under tail-coverts some black spots; the outer margin of the

wings white ; wing-coverts white with brown spots on the shaft near the top ; scapulars white with the shafts and the inner webs yellowish-brownish ; speculum violet-black, anteriorly and posteriorly bordered with a black band, to which succeed a white one, greyish-whitish in the inner web ; quills white, some grey also in the outer web but only towards the tip, the web black ; tail-feathers silvery-grey, black on the shaft near the tip ; toes orange-red ; claws black.

This bird was killed in the *Valle Zappa* (Venetian Estuary) by my father's gamekeeper on the evening of September the 27<sup>th</sup> 1885, in its flight in a small flock of Mallards.

N° 256 *f-i*; four specimens of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult males in full plumage and with white colours-(domestic varieties).

From the size and way in which the white colour is distributed in these specimens, I firmly believe that they are not albinos, but born in confinement and then become wild again. I have several times seen such killed in the Estuary, some of which showed evident traces of having been captives.

All these four specimens were killed in the Venetian Estuary, but only the ticket of the 256 *f* brings the following annotation : Killed in the year 1870 in the *Valle Botenigo* on the lake of *Albora* by the punt-gunner I. Minotto.

N° 2975 of my Collection. — Adult male in spring dress. — Chlorochroistic variety.

Bill yellowish-green ; irides hazel ; head and neck black-blackish without reflections, a bright green band on the sides of nape which departs from posterior angle of eye and runs backwards ; central nuchal band chestnut and whitish-chestnut ; white collar and the chestnut-brown of neck and breast very bright and dark, few white edges only on the breast ; back, rump and upper tail-co-

verts pearl-grey slighter and sky-coloured on back, broadly edged with buffish on the latter part, with brownish-black in the former ones, the four middle tail-feathers of a fine pearl-grey and curled upwards; the rest lancet-shaped white slightly ash-grey in the middle; scapulars with brown and white zig-zags much more faded than usual with a large band on the outer web of alight chestnut without zig-zags; wing-coverts pearl-grey brown edged, the greater with an almost white bar near the end and tipped with blackish-ash; primaries pearl-white, pure white on the shaft, secondaries the same on the inner web, the outer portion towards the end of the outer web brown-black with very light green reflections, so that there does not exist a speculum, but simply a space; the usual black bar is substituted by a pearl-grey tint, but there is the broad terminal white bar: inner secondaries greyish-pearl, the outer web of a pale chestnut-brown; lower breast, belly, vent and flanks as normal coloured, but slightly whiter; under tail-coverts dark pearl-grey, broadly black at the top; legs, toes and their membranes orange-yellow.

This handsome Drake was killed on March the 27<sup>th</sup> of this year in the *Valle Cornio* (Ven. Est.) by my friend the well-known sportsman Signor Silvio Lugli, who has given it me; at the same time I am very glad to present him my best thanks for his kind gift.

Our specimen is without doubt a wild Duck affected by a true chlorochroistic anomaly very far from being completed, but, nevertheless, no less important and which presents on the colour of upper parts (back, rump and upper tail-coverts) much resemblance with the *chlorochroistic-isabelline* variety of which I am now speaking, but at first sight one can see the differences between them, since our specimen is quite a grown pale Duck namely without any character of *isabelline* variety. It seems to me that this anomaly must be rightly classified amongst these commonly named Grey Blackbirds, Grey Blackcaps, Grey Redbreasts, Grey Coots and others.

N° 2825 of my Collection. — Adult female. — Chlorochroistic-isabelline variety.

Bill greenish-orange, shaded with black on the centre, unguis black ; irides hazel ; head and neck also on the foreside, as a normal one as to design, but with very much faded tints, in way however that are seen perfectly on the head and on the sides of the same the dark centres of the feathers and the buffish edges ; high back dark pearl-ash on all the visible portion of every feather with a lively reddish-buff edge, in some feathers small lines with brown or black zig-zags almost imperceptible ; superior part of the body pearl-ash here and there sky-coloured with rather broad reddish edges a little darker and brownish on the back and broader by degrees as we approach the upper tail-coverts, which are totally of a reddish tint, but more especially on the centre of feathers ; chin and throat unspotted light reddish-isabelline ; breast rather lively reddish-buff with small brownish lines crossing on every feather, these small lines are sometimes of a zig-zag form and they are preceded or followed by irregular spaces, which as design resemble the spots which generally the *boscas* female has in those parts, but their colour is so faded that one sees very little the analogy ; abdomen unspotted reddish-whitish ; here and there the feathers become dark, so that the design is not uniform ; the tint of abdomen towards the under tail-coverts is more whitish ; median and lesser wing-coverts light pearl-ash, here and there rather sky-coloured, edged at the top and on sides of brownish, lighter and whitish on the feathers near to the outer margin of wings, the greater ones whitish towards the top and tipped of blackish ash, with a whitish edge on the outermost ones, so that the double crossing band exists, but it is almost imperceptible ; primaries white on the shaft as far as towards the tip where it is brownish-reddish, secondaries pearl-grey on the inner web, brownish on the outer, broadly tipped with white ; does not exist any trace of metallic tint, but no less there are white spaces, instead



in some parts on the left wing exist dark spaces adherent to the shaft of only a feather; scapulars reddish-isabelline with black zig-zags, some of them pearl-greyish washed by reddish, and on some feathers here and there on the tone of colour fictitiously spotted of brownish, the outer ones of a rather whitish tint; toes of a little faded orange-yellow.

This fine and interesting bird was killed by Mr. A. Guillion Mangilli on the lake of *Mandracci* (*Valle Millecampi*, Ven. Est.) on December the 7<sup>th</sup> 1896 and I had it in exchange for my collection from the same sportman, to whom I here make my best thanks for his kindness.

Common Ducks of a such *isabelline* form are exceedingly rare; I can mention only two killed in the Venetian territory, the above-mentioned and that preserved in Rev<sup>d</sup> P. Menin's collection at Collalto of which I have spoken this year (1).

This variety one can define as an isabelline female Duck with the wings, tail and upperparts (back, rump and upper tail-coverts) become of a fine pearl-grey tint, all this superficially speaking. My specimen and that of Rev<sup>d</sup> Menin are quite like, because the design is equal and only, on the latter, the colour of the head is darker and something is also different, but nothing of great importance. The wings in both are very alike to those of Garganey, but we want proofs to believe them hybrids. Then I think that in these specimens isabelline and chlorochroistic varieties are mixed together.

N° 328 of my Collection. — Adult female. — Isabelline-albino variety.

General colour faded reddish with darker spots on neck and head; back buffish with whitish edges; rump almost normal; underparts reddish undulated with whitish-reddish; under tail coverts almost white; wings buffish-white on the coverts, whitish on the quills, speculum

(1) See my article: *Nota sopra una varietà di colorito osservata in una Anas boscas*, Linn. (*Atti Soc. Ital. Sc. nat.*, vol. XXXVII, 1898).

greatly faded with the metallic tint almost imperceptible, tail whitish, slightly reddish.

This specimen was caught by Mr. B. Duse in the *Valle Morosina* (Ven. Est., in the Province of Padua), in January 1882, and I bought it from Mr. Gallo of Monse-lice.

N° 2826 of my Collection. — Adult female. — Isabelline-albino variety.

On the underparts this specimen one can almost consider as a bird of ordinary colour, only on the head and generally on the edges of the feathers there is a great deal of isabelline tint, the spots and the black portions are so coloured, but with faded tints. Underparts reddish-isabelline unicolour and lively on the throat and neck, with small black spots as a half-collar on the foreneck, lively and shaded with buffish on the abdomen, with brownish spots indistinctly marked on the centre of the feathers, this towards the half of feathers is faded brown, so that the tint is not unicolour; wings normal in their design, but very faded; the primaries especially whitish, slightly reddish; equally the metallic tint of speculum is very faded; tail in the outline and in the outer web is whitish slightly isabelline, the inner webs present here and there some not well marked traces of the ordinary tint; toes orange-yellow.

This variety was certainly *in fieri* and there is no doubt that it is a wild Duck. I bought this bird from Mr. Fulvio Rossi of Cremona, who received it from the marshes of the river Po, where it was killed on January the 21<sup>st</sup> of this year.

This fine specimen is rather like to the precedent one, only the anomaly is less advanced and it seems proceed with the same rule; one can say that both are two isabelline female Ducks with the tail and wings white, but the former is more faded also in the wing-speculum, while the latter is almost normal in his lower parts and the speculum shown again a light metallic hue.

N° 236 *l* of the late Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult female. — Isabelline variety.

Eyebrow, sides of head and neck and underparts whitish-buff with gradations of a lighter colour on lower abdomen ; head, mesial nuchal band, space between base of bill and eye of almost normal colour, only a little lighter ; back, rump and upper tail-coverts of a normal colour, but the brownish buff spots are lighter and bright ; wings also normal about half their length.

There is no note on the ticket of the date and locality of the capture of this beautiful bird, but there is no doubt that it was killed in the Estuary by the punt-gunner and stuffer John Minotto of Venice in the Winter 1890.

This variety seems to be distinguished from the usual anomalies of colour and would appear with characters so well determined, that it can almost be defined with a specific key ; analogous specimens are preserved in the beautiful Civic Museum of Pavia and were caught in that province (1), these and the above described are the only ones I know of.

Then concluding, in the Venetian territory were found the following isabelline varieties of female Ducks :

*a*) Specimens reddish with wings and tail white, speculum paler ; all these colours more or less vivid or faded.

It is certainly a fact that these are simple isabelline varieties, which appear with lighter or darker tints, with more or less regular design and not with symmetrical and almost constant characters.

*b*) Specimens reddish with the wings, tail and upper-parts partly (back, rump and upper tail-coverts) of a pearl-grey tint with more or less developed buffish edges.

These varieties seem to present a more regular design, always keeping the account that these are varieties and not species with equal and constant characters.

(1) They have been described by Prof. Balsamo-Crivelli, in the paper *Il Patriotta*, July 18<sup>th</sup> 1874 ; by Prof. C. Parona in the *Atti Soc. ital. Sc. nat.*, vol. XIX, 1876, p. 462-67 and by Prof. Pavesi, *ibid.*, vol. XXXII, 1889, p. 313.



c) Specimens of the type N° 236 *l* of Count Ninni's Collection and of those preserved in the Civic Museum of Pavia, the latter killed in Lombardy.

These seem to present themselves with defined enough characters and, if my memory does not betray the truth, it appears to me that they are Wild Ducks with a great deal of buffish tint more or less tawny, especially developed on underparts, eyebrow, outer web of quills, and with the upperparts and wings almost of a regular design and colour. These varieties could be perhaps ascribed not far from the ferruginous ones, but I have not before me these specimens, then I am in doubt relating my opinion. I have never seen isabelline Drakes caught in our regions.

N° 4507 of my Collection. — Adult male in summer dress. — Melanistic variety.

Bill greenish-yellowish olive with the unguis and a blackish stripe on the upper mandible as far as a third from unguis and a shade on the sides; irides dark-chestnut; head and neck brownish-black with buffish edges; pileum black-green with metallic reflections; back black green with reflections and the feathers buffish tipped; rump and upper tail-coverts dark black-blue with rich metallic reflections; on the back one sees a few zig-zags on some feathers near the wing; underparts, especially on the breast and flanks, blackish with broad buffish-chestnut edges, so that only the centre of the feathers is black; such edges are much narrower on the belly and vent, so that there the predominant tint is the dark one, which is not black, as on the breast, but of a brownish tint, in all the underparts, but more fictitiously on the abdomen and vent, many feathers with brownish and whitish zig-zags; wing-coverts dark ash-brown; speculum of a rich dark black-blue with few reflections, with greyish edges along the outer web, and tipped with greyish-white; wing-feathers darker than usual; under tail-coverts velvety-black with broad buffish edges; tail-feathers brownish-black on the centre, brownish on the

sides and at the top; one only of the longest upper tail-coverts is curled upwards at the tip; toes lively orange-red.

This Drake was killed on August the 19<sup>th</sup> 1896 in the *Valle Zappa* on the lake *of the Countess* by my father. It is again, but not completely, in his summer dress. To give an idea of his plumage one can rather say that it is a very dark coloured Mallard in summer; what is of no little interest is that also the metallic tint became darker, because generally they very rarely change their tone of tint.

N° 256 *a* of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult male. — Melanistic variety.

Head and neck rich dark glossy-green followed by a white collar that occupies only the sides of the neck; lower nape, upper back and scapulars dark-blackish; upper breast deep shiny chestnut, edged with grey; the rest of breast, abdomen and flanks whitish with black zig-zags, the black colour prevails especially in the lower belly between the legs where it forms, as it were, a large band; under tail-coverts black; greater coverts without the white band at the top, but tipped by a black zone preceded by a narrow buffish one; speculum of a beautiful blue-steel colour edged with white, so that on the wing the double cross-band does not exist, as with the normal; primaries like the normal colour but a little darker; upper tail-coverts black with green gloss, with scarce buffish spots; tail-feathers darker than usual.

No date and locality on ticket, but it was killed by the punt-gunner I. Minotto in our lagoons, several years ago.

N° 256 *b* of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult male. — Melanistic variety.

Like the preceding, but the white collar is stretched also on the former part of neck; the general colour is less dark and the zig-zags on underparts more distinct; the band on abdomen less visible; it would appear from the brilliant and uniform colour of the breast that this fine specimen was caught in spring.

No date and locality on ticket, but Mr. I. Minotto told me that it was killed by the punt-gunner Ossi near the port of Lido, near Venice.

N° 1036 of my Collection. — Adult male. — Melanistic variety.

This beautiful specimen differs from the normal ones by the absence of the large chestnut space on neck and breast, which is substituted with numerous zig-zags very approached amongst themselves; the white collar is very narrow; besides all the general colour is darker than the usual and the underparts present very numerous zig-zag lines with a slightly reddish shade, which is more visible towards the abdomen; under tail-coverts not quite black, but mixed with white tint; wing and tail of normal design, but rather darker.

This specimen was caught by the punt-gunner I. Minotto in the *Valle Dogà*, not far from Venice, in the winter 1888.

N° 929 of my Collection. — Young of a few days in down. — Melanistic variety.

Bill black, in the lower mandible yellowish; upper parts smoke-black; under parts of the same colour, with the middle of abdomen a little greyish coloured; under tail-coverts smoke-black; toes black, yellowish-orange towards the top of interdigital membranes in the larger portion.

This young in down was snared in the marshes of Monselice on July the 18<sup>th</sup> 1892. It is sure that its dress is the same of that of the Tufted Duck and Mr. Minotto, a very keen observer of *Anatidæ*, was immediately of this opinion.

But first of all, the Tufted Duck breeds rarely, perhaps doubtfully, in Italy, M. Naccari assured that this succeeds commonly, but it is an erroneous assertion; I have never seen Tufted Ducks during summer in Italy, from where it departs in the first fortnight of April at the latest. In the second place, at the same time that this was caught, seven other youngs in down, perfectly like to the ordinary ones of *A. boscas*, and the female was seen not very far from

them. Finally I observe that the hind toe is not furnished with a well developed lobe; it is quite like to those of a young of the same age, but this character in so small subjects could be of no importance.

N° 714 of my Collection. — Semi-adult female. — Melanistic but not surely wild variety.

Head black, feathers of neck, of sides of head and upperparts black with yellowish-reddish edges; underparts brownish with the same edges, but broader; tail-feathers black with a narrow outer reddish-yellow border; quills black; coverts yellowish edged, the greater ones narrowly tipped with yellowish; speculum very dark black, slightly bluish, with imperceptible reflections; toes yellowish, claws black.

This specimen was caught in the marshes of Monselice on September the 30<sup>th</sup> 1880, but I thought that it was not a Wild Duck, although of small dimensions. I have had a few months ago, in communication from Miss Cecilia Picchi of Florence, a female Duck very like my specimen with the request to give her my opinion in this question and I, observing also my melanistic Mallard, concluded that both are hybrids between the Wild Duck and the *Canard de Labrador* (a tame race of *A. boscas*); but the microscopic examination of the feathers of my Duck showed me a greater quantity of pigment than in the usual ones one sees, and it was for that reason that I put this in my list, but very doubtfully. Miss Picchi's Duck is certainly a domestic hybrid between the above mentioned races; it was killed on the river Po last year by Mr. Ferragni of Cremona, who sold it to Miss Picchi as a wild hybrid between *A. boscas* and *A. strepera*.

*Mareca penelope* (Linnaeus). — Wigeon.

N° 258 *b* of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult male. — Semi-albino variety.

It presents a white colour on the sides of head beyond the

eye, as far as the nape, and on the throat, where a collar is formed, interrupted here and there by a black normal colour. The head can therefore be said to be surrounded by a large band, which begins on the nape, passes under the throat and reaches up to the other side of the nape; around the eye are white feathers.

It is a fine adult male in full winter-dress killed in the winter of 1890, near the bridge of the railway, between Mestre and Venice.

N° 1815 of my Collection. — Adult male. — Semi-albino variety.

It presents a white colour only on the sides of head; beyond the eye, as far as the nape, few white feathers are observed on the cheeks, on the auricular region and on the sides of the upper part of neck; the buff and cinnamon of the head are not very lively; but the throat is quite normal and the white colour does not form a collar.

This handsome Wigeon was killed by the above mentioned swivel-gunner I. Minotto on January the 27<sup>th</sup> 1897 in the *Valle Riola* (Ven. Est.).

N° 258 f of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult female. — Semi-albino variety.

Forehead, feathers round the bill and partly those of the crown and throat are normal; neck, sides of head and nape yellowish white with a few feathers of normal colour.

There are not any indications where this beautiful specimen was killed, but Mr. J. Minotto told me that it was bought at the shop of Mr. Molin, the greatest Venetian bird-seller.

N° 1107 of my Collection. — Adult female. — Melanistic variety.

This specimen is quite normal in the design, but the general colour, especially on the breast and on the upper-parts, is much darker than in usual Wigeons.

It was killed by me in the *Lake of Gaorna* of my *Valle Zappa*, January the 22<sup>th</sup> 1894.



Besides I possess in my Collection some female specimens of Wigeon which, without presenting any specific anomaly, have for example the throat coloured in white, in reddish, in black or other intermediate hues. I think indeed that these colours are not quite abnormal, as I suppose that no one of the several European *Anatidæ* offer greater varieties of plumage than the Wigeon. These moreover are not so different amongst themselves as those which are seen in the Honey-Buzzards or in the Ruffs, but many specimens very and quite equal are not easily found. Wigeon is one of the most common Ducks in the Venetian lagoons and sea, then I have put in my Collection not less than seventy specimens which offer many of these different colourings, which are more conspicuous in the adult males in summer dress, in semi-adult males, and are seen especially on the head and neck and on the wings in the young ones; in females also there are differences in the tint of general ground colour of upperparts, which is more or less dark; there are white, blackish or reddish spots as a large space on the throat, etc. I think that the differences amongst the males are principally due to the age and to the summer plumage, which sometimes is again clothed in the January, so that for these the summer-dress, more or less completed, lasts for about seven months. I have also observed this thing in other species, as in Pintail. This is no place or time to explain at large speaking upon this moulting of which I have collected much material and upon which I hope to give henceforth some interesting notes. Now I wished show that I had not neglected that strange fact that several species of wild Ducks offer various differences in their plumage, which I do not think depends on true anomalies of colour.

*Dafila acuta* (Linnæus). — Pintail.

N° 259 of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult female. — Semi-albino variety.

Head partly brownish-buff, lighter on the neck; buffish

and brownish-buff tints very much faded on the back ; rump and under tail-coverts ; wing-speculum almost invisible ; quills and tail-feathers almost entirely white ; general colour dusty-white ; irides light-hazel.

This specimen was killed by the punt-gunner I. Minotto in January 1874, near Venice.

*Aethya ferina* (Linnaeus). — Common Pochard.

N° 266 *c* of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult male. — Semi-albino variety.

Head and neck yellowish-buff-white ; upper part of back and breast pale-chestnut and brown, lighter in the latter part ; upper parts with grey and pure white zig-zags not very distinct ; abdomen white ; vent with zig-zags ; under tail-coverts brownish ; wing-coverts like back, medians white ; quills and tail-feathers brownish-white.

This specimen was killed in the winter of 1889 by the punt-gunner Minotto in our lagoons.

N° 266 *b* of Count Ninni's Collection. — Adult female. — Semi-isabelline variety.

Entirely washed with reddish colour very rich and dark around bill, on scapulars, on underparts and tail. It was killed by the swivel-gunner V. Florian on the Sea of Venice, few miles far from the porto of Lido, on December the 28<sup>th</sup> 1890.

#### SPECIMENS WITH ABNORMAL WHITE COLLARS.

*Querquedula crecca* (Linnaeus). — Teal.

N° 2954 of my Collection. — Adult male in summer moulting. — Semi-albino variety.

This is again in summer plumage, only on the breast some round black spots begin to appear. The anomaly consists in a narrow white collar here and there interrupted and only extended on the forepart of neck.

It was shot by the punt-gunner I. Minotto on the port of Tre Porti, near Venice, October the 6<sup>th</sup> 1897.

N° 1587 of my Collection. — Young female of the year. Semi-albino variety.

This is a young female of the year in which it exists again many brown stripes on underparts, numerous edges on feathers of upperparts, etc. ; it has a rather broad white collar on the forepart of neck, the white is sparkling and slightly yellowish.

I killed myself this interesting specimen on the *Lake of Cassaura* in my salt *Valle Zappa* on September the 9<sup>th</sup> of 1896.

*Nyroca africana* (Gmelin). — Ferruginous Duck.

N° 1333 of my Collection. — Adult male. — Semi-albino variety.

This a specimen of rather small dimensions ; the neck presents a broad and large pure-white collar which occupies the anterior and lateral portion, the colour being normal on the posterior one. This collar is as size like to the space blackish-brown which we generally see in this species. The white spot on the chin, usually so small, is at least tenfold in extension, occupying also the higher part of throat : the general colour is also faded ; the feathers on the breast and abdomen edged ; it wants also the white abdominal space, which is substituted by greyish feathers broadly edged with dusty-white and intensely buffish coloured.

This specimen was killed by myself near the mouth of the river Po del Bastimento on September the 4<sup>th</sup> 1895.

N° 2250 of my Collection. — Only head and neck of an adult male in spring-dress. — Semi-albino variety.

On the forepart of neck one sees a broad spot pure white ; chin white as usual.

Mr. Camillo Dal Fiume kindly made me a present of

this specimen killed on the Province of Rovigo on March the 27<sup>th</sup> of 1897.

N° 1334 of my Collection. — Young female. — Semi-albino variety.

This is a specimen of small size in which the chin spot is very broad, but lesser than in the preceding one. The feathers of neck, on the forepart and sides, are of a slightly chestnut edged with dusty-white; in the central part towards the right side exists a rather broad white space; the colour is dark and with broad ferruginous edges on underparts. A rather dusty-white space on the abdomen with many dark feathers broadly edged with white.

Same date and locality of the n° 1333.

N° 1434 of my Collection. — Young male. — Semi-albino variety.

It is ordinary in size: the chin spot is rather large, but of such extension one finds in many quite normal specimens; on the neck, where the black tint one scarcely sees, we find a few entirely white feathers on the anterior and lateral parts: general colour bright enough; it exists the white abdominal space; the feathers of underparts are here and there edged with a brighter colour.

This young specimen was killed by the swivel-gunner L. Minotto, on March 4<sup>th</sup> 1896, not very far from Venice.

I have put in a special list those *Anatidæ* which offer only an abnormal white collar, remaining in the rest of the ordinary colour, because the general slightly faded tint and other not very important differences could depend from their age or the season in which they were killed: in fact they are only observed in the two specimens caught in the months of August, in which epoch remains of summer-dress can again be found. Last year I have spoken (1) on this anomaly then observed only in the *Nyroca africana* and added a plate to explain this interes-

(1) Nota sopra una varietà di *Nyroca africana* (Atti Soc. ital. sc. nat., vol. XXXVI, with plate, 1897).

ting fact. Now I have found it also in *Querquedula crecca* and I can say in the Gadwall, of which I have seen a very fine specimen preserved at Count Ridolfi's of Florence. It presents a broad collar of about an inch in breadth on the fore part of neck, likely as anomaly, as in ours pecimens. It is, if I rightly remember, a quite ordinary adult male in winter-dress, bought this year in the market of Florence and stuffed by Signor Magnelli. I think, as for the rest, that these particular anomalies are simple albino varieties which offer themselves with a tolerably regular design.

Besides in our region, especially during the spring season, are often killed specimens of wild Ducks with the underparts, and especially those which are in continuous contact with the water, more or less washed with a ferruginous tint, which sometimes, but much less frequently, colours also the upperparts. This tint is generally of no great intensity, but light and only diffused on the tip of the feathers: but sometimes I saw and killed also specimens intensely coloured with the ferruginous tint became of a very dark tawny colour, but they are not quite common. Such birds are more often killed on the fresh waters than in the salt ones and belong to the following species:

*A. boscas*, *Sp. clypeata*, *M. penelope*, *F. ferina*, *F. cristata* (less commonly).

*Ch. streperus* (four times observed).

*Q. crecca*, *Q. circia*, *D. acuta* (commonly).

*F. nyroca* (commonly enough).

*F. marila*. *C. glaucion*, *H. glacialis* (once observed).

*F. cornuta*, *F. rufina* (not observed).

I have not contemplated these varieties in my work.

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