

**Mallard and Black Ducks at Currituck, N. C.**— In looking over the shooting logs of three of the Currituck Duck Clubs the following rather interesting facts with regard to the relative frequency of Mallards and Black Ducks in Eastern North Carolina were brought to light.

The Swan Island Club is at the northern end of the sound, near its junction with the Back Bay of Virginia. The Currituck Club is some thirty miles farther south. At the former club the number of the different species taken, has only been kept for the past three years, seasons 1909–10 to 1911–12, while at the Currituck Club there are twenty-four years of records. During the twenty year period 1888–89 to 1909–10 the proportions at the Currituck Club were Mallards 47%, Blacks 100%, and this proportion does not vary essentially from season to season. It runs up as high as 80% and as low as 15%. This last happened only once, in 1899–00, and is in marked contrast to any other seasonal figure, except the season just past. The greatest Mallard year at Currituck Club was the season 1904–05.

Mr. John E. Thayer suggests that the large number of Mallards at the Currituck Club may be accounted for by the heavy baiting with corn. If this is so, it is a fact of some economic interest, but Swan Isle has also used corn, though to a less extent.

At Swan Isle for the last three winters, 1909 to 1912, the Mallards are only in the proportion of 11%. The last three seasons have certainly been poor Mallard years, but at Currituck Club they have yielded a proportion of 30%, nearly three times as great as Swan Isle.

At the False Cape Club, some fifteen miles north of Swan Island in Virginia, I have figures for the last six seasons, 1906–07 to 1911–12. The Mallards are 23%, Blacks 100%, while at Currituck Club for the same six seasons the Mallards are 37%. This shows more Mallards at False Cape than at Swan Isle, both relatively and absolutely, but the proportion of Mallards to Blacks is not nearly as great here as at the Currituck Club. We probably have to do with a question of artificial attraction which suggests that the Mallard shows a greater 'susceptibility' to corn and other grains than does the Black Duck.

For the northern part of the sound we have found from eleven to twenty-three per cent., and at the southern end, thirty-seven to forty-seven per cent., but this difference can hardly be significant in a geographical sense.

Another figure of interest can be considered. There is a chance that the Mallard is not holding out so well in numbers as the Black Duck, owing to greater interference over its breeding area. Thus we must compare an old period at Currituck Club, 1888 to 1898, with a later period, 1898–1910. The early period shows 55% of Mallards and the later one only 44%, a decrease of 9%, but this decrease is more apparent than real, because the Black Ducks have more than doubled their average yearly numbers from the first period to the second, while the Mallards are on an average a little less than twice as numerous. It is therefore probable that the Mallard is not holding out so well in this region as is the Black Duck.

The properties of all the Currituck Clubs are now gunned more systematically than in the old days, so that larger yearly averages do not necessarily point to an increase in actual numbers of the species.

A fact relative to the dispersal of the Mallard is brought out plainly by comparing the proportionate numbers of Mallards and Black Ducks month by month at Swan Isle. The season opens November 10 and ends the first of March. I give below the proportion of Mallards to Blacks month by month for the three seasons, 1909-10, 1910-11, 1911-12, and also the actual numbers of the Mallards themselves.

1909-10		Actual Nos.	1910-11		Actual Nos.	1911-12		Actual Nos.
Nov., 09	20%	50	Nov., 10	28%	107	Nov., 11	11%	29
Dec., 09	8.7	38	Dec., 10	20	95	Dec., 11	8	12
Jan., 10	7.7	16	Jan., 11	8.2	23	Jan., 12	2.2	4
Feb., 10	9.5	16	Feb., 11	10	7	Feb., 12	2.4	2

It is easy to see that there is a great falling off of Mallards from November to January. I believe that the diminishing numbers after November indicate the passing along of a flight.

I should attribute the extraordinarily small numbers of Mallards killed in the past season, 1911-12, at Swan Isle, to the fact that the Club cut down by at least one-half the usual output of bait, were it not for the fact that this was a very lean year for Mallards at the Currituck Club, the proportion being only 17% and the actual numbers well under one half of the usual bag. This is very nearly as low as the bad Mallard year of 1899-1900 which as mentioned above gave only 15%. Mr. Thayer assures me that the Currituck Club records can be absolutely relied upon, and I can vouch for the last three years at Swan Isle.— J. C. PHILLIPS, *Wenham, Mass.*

**Dispersal of the Australian Duck** (*Anas superciliosa*).— In 1911 an old pair of these birds was allowed to hatch and bring up nine young. These were banded on August 17 (not unfortunately with the American Association bands), and placed in the Wood Duck pond, where they grew their flight feathers. Late in September these young birds began to move about the place. They remained very tame. I know of three that were shot in Wenham. Two individuals, however, stayed about until December 17. By that time they had become fairly wild, having of course been more or less persecuted. After December 17 none was seen until mid-winter, when on February 20, 1912, a single one came back and was found in the winter duck yard. It allowed a close approach so that its band was plainly visible, and then flushed and flew away in an easterly direction. Up to the present date (Aug. 20) no more have returned.

The Australian duck, *Anas superciliosa* (I disregard the genus *Potilonetta* because it serves no useful purpose as far as I am aware), is a widely distributed species, probably nearly, if not entirely non-migratory. As given