

**NAMES AND PORTRAITS OF
BIRDS WHICH INTEREST
GUNNERS, WITH DESCRIPTIONS
IN LANGUAGES UNDERSTANDED
OF THE PEOPLE**

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Names and portraits of birds which interest gunners, with descriptions in languages understood of the people by Gurdon Trumbull

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GURDON TRUMBULL

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683
T 79. 1

The cuckoo and the gowk,
The laverock and the fark,
The twere-snipe, the weather-bleak ;
How many birds is that ?

Riddle-rhyme, 17th century.

550872

NAMES AND PORTRAITS OF BIRDS.

No. 1.

Branta canadensis.

Head, neck, bill, and legs, black; patch about throat, and feathers above and below tail, white. Upper parts of plumage principally brown, this fading into light gray beneath; brown of rump and tail darker, or blackish.

Length a little over three feet; extent, five feet or more.

Range, as given in A. O. U. Check List: "Temperate North America, breeding in the northern United States and British Provinces; south in winter to Mexico."

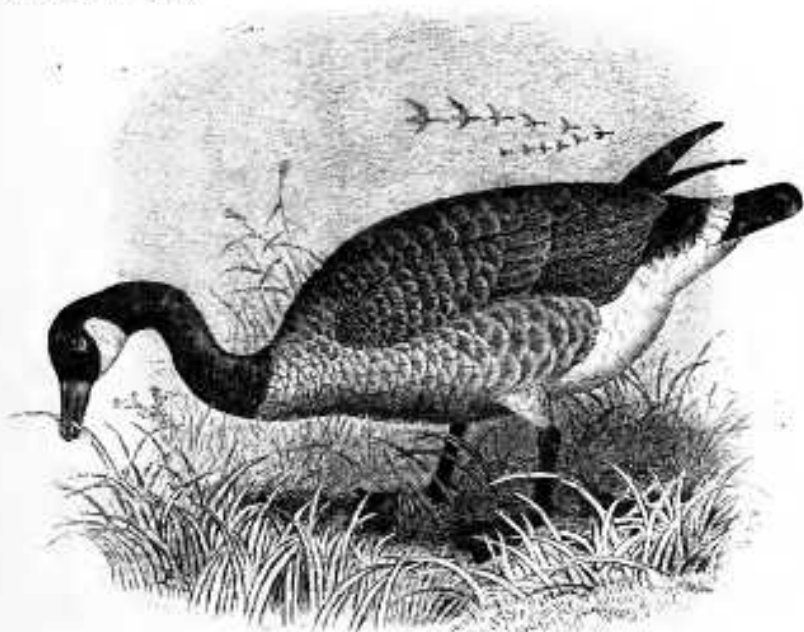
CANADA GOOSE: COMMON WILD GOOSE: BIG GRAY GOOSE: COMMON GRAY GOOSE—Early writers (Hutchins and Hearne) using the latter name for this fowl, but giving that of "Canada Goose" to No. 2, a very similar but smaller bird.

Referred to not infrequently as **HONKER** or **OLD HONKER** in recognition of its hoarse notes, or "honking." At Morehead, North Carolina, **REEF GOOSE** (No. 2 being known there as Marsh Goose); and Dresser writes in *Birds of Southern Texas*, 1865-66: "The shore gunners are well aware of the difference between this [No. 1] and *B. hutchinsii* [No. 2], calling the former the **BAY GOOSE**, and the latter the **Prairie Goose**."

Early authors tell of its being known at Hudson's Bay as **BUSTARD**,* and Sir John Richardson, in *Fauna Boreali-Ameri-*

*The bustard of ornithologists belongs to the ostrich family, the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) being the largest land bird of Europe.

cana, 1831, speaks of its arrival in the fur countries as "hailed with great joy by the natives of the woody and swampy districts, who depend principally upon it for subsistence during the summer. . . . One goose, which when fat weighs about nine pounds, is the daily ration for one of the Company's servants during the season, and is reckoned equivalent to two snow-geese, or three ducks, or eight pounds of buffalo and moose meat, or two pounds of pemmican, or a pint of maize and four ounces of suet."



No. 1.

In appendix to Townsend's Narrative of Journey Across Rocky Mountains, etc., 1839, it is **BLACK-HEADED GOOSE**; and some writers have termed it **CANADA BRANT**; and in England it has been called the **CRAVAT GOOSE** (Buffon's *L'Oie à cravaté*). Yarrell speaks of its being entitled to a place in his British Birds, specimens being so frequently shot "which do not exhibit either in their actions or plumage any signs of having escaped from confinement."

No. 2.

Branta canadensis hutchinsii.

A small variety of our common wild goose No. 1, and in appearance (excepting size) like it in all respects.

Length about twenty-seven inches; extent a little over four feet.

Not common on, or very near to, our Eastern coast, but numerous in the West during migrations. Breeds in Arctic regions.

HUTCHINS'S GOOSE: HUTCHINS'S CANADA GOOSE: HUTCHINS'S BARNACLE GOOSE (the Barnacle Goose proper, *Branta leucopsis*, "casual in Eastern North America," was named from an early belief that it originated in the shell of a barnacle, or, rather, was the natural fruit of a little crustacean): **HUTCHINS'S BRANT: LESSER CANADA GOOSE: SMALL GRAY GOOSE: LITTLE WILD GOOSE.**

Hearne writes, referring to this variety in his *Journey to Northern Ocean*, published 1795, "**CANADA GOOSE**, or **PISK A SISH**, as it is called by the Indians, as well as the English in Hudson's Bay," and Richardson, in *Boat Voyage*, 1851, speaks of its being called **ESKIMO GOOSE** in Rupert's Land.

In Audubon's *Ornithological Biography*, Vol. III., 1835, we find under the heading of Hutchins's Goose, the following: "In the first article in this volume, that of the Canada Goose, . . . I had occasion to allude to a small species, called by the gunners of Maine the Winter or Flight Goose, which they described to me as resembling the large and common kind in almost every particular except its size. Although it was not my good-fortune while there to meet with the bird spoken of by men who were well acquainted with it, I have no doubt that

it is the very species which has been named in honor of Mr. Hutchins." In the "first article," to which Audubon refers, we do not find "Winter Goose," but the other name is introduced as follows: "It is alleged in the state of Maine that a distinct species of Canada Goose resides there, which is said to be much smaller than the one now under your notice, and is described as resembling it in all other particulars. Like the true Canada Goose, it builds a large nest which it lines with its own down; sometimes it is placed on the sea-shore, at other times by the margin of a fresh-water lake or pond. That species is distinguished there by the name of *Flight Goose*, and is said to be entirely migratory, whereas the Canada Goose is resident." Linsley says, in *Catalogue of the Birds of Connecticut*, 1843: "*Anser hutchinsii*, it is believed, is not unfrequently taken here in the spring, and is called Southern Goose, because it does not winter here." Though this name "Southern Goose" is still remembered in Connecticut, at Stratford, where Linsley wrote, and at Milford as well, the descriptions of the goose to which it belongs, as given by the different gunners, vary very materially; they all agree, however, that the name belongs to a variety smaller than the common wild goose, and very rarely, or never, now encountered.

As these quotations from Audubon and Linsley are both so worded as to leave at least some little room for doubt concerning the local names included, it seems better to give said names just as they appear in the text, without using a more emphatic type.

Giraud writes (1844): "At the eastern extremity of Long Island this species is not uncommon. At Montauk it is known by the name of **MUD GOOSE**."

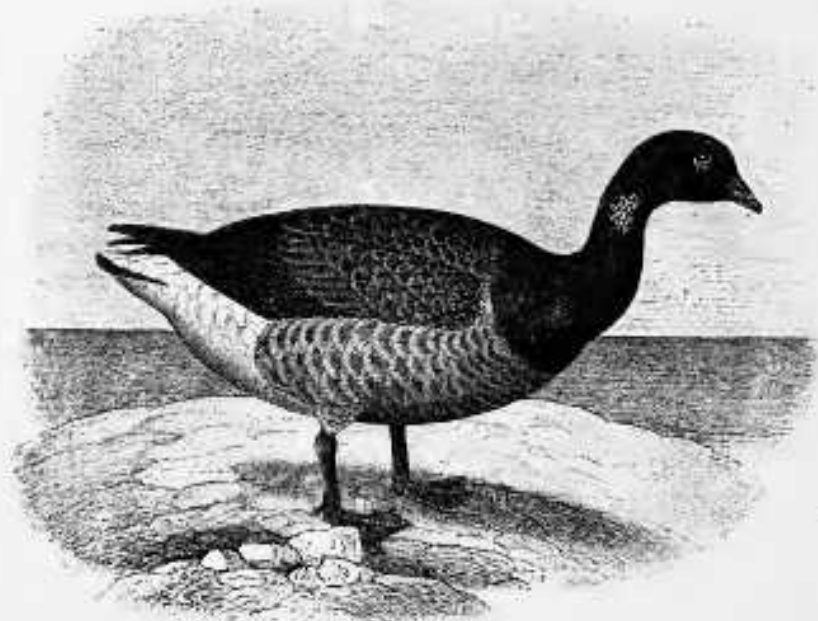
In an article about common names of wildfowl in Western States (*Forest and Stream*, May 27, 1886), Mr. J. P. Leach, of Rushville, Illinois, states that the gunners include this with other small geese under the general term "brant," and that this bird is "further distinguished" as **GOOSE BRANT**.

In the neighborhood of Morehead, North Carolina, **MARSH GOOSE**, and on the coast of Texas, **PRAIRIE GOOSE**. (Compare names of this variety with those of No. 1.)

No. 3.

Branta bernicla.

Head and bill, with neck all around, and extreme fore part of body black; on either side of neck a group of white scratches, as indicated in picture. The back, with front of wings, brown,



No. 3.

the feathers paler at their ends; remainder of wings black, or nearly so, as is the tail; the latter, however, being almost concealed by covering of white feathers technically known as tail "coverts." Under parts of plumage grayish brown, the ends of

the feathers touched with white, this producing transverse bars. Under parts of other specimens, more correctly described as white, shaded beneath black of fore-breast and along the sides with ill-defined bars of light brown; in all cases becoming pure white back of legs.

Length about twenty-four inches; extent forty-six to forty-eight inches. Legs blackish.

Range, as given in A. O. U. Check List, northern parts of Northern Hemisphere; in North America chiefly on Atlantic coast; rare in the interior, or away from salt water.

BRANT: BRENT: BRANT GOOSE: BRENT GOOSE: BRAND GOOSE: COMMON BRANT: has been also called **BLACK BRANT**, though this latter name is generally applied, and more appropriately, to *Branta nigricans*, a similar but darker bird, rare on our Eastern coast. The old names "brant," "brent," etc., refer to the dark color: it is *burnt* or *branded* goose. It ranks high for table use, and being exceptionally fine when shot late in spring, the term "May Brant" has long had a momentous meaning among epicures.

We read in Yarrell's British Birds that "in Shetland it is called **HORRA GOOSE**, from the numbers that frequent Horra Sound," and the Rev. Charles Swainson says, in his Provincial Names of British Birds, 1885: "From the cry of this bird, which is varied, sounding like the different expressions 'prott,' 'rott,' and 'crook,' are derived the names **ROTT GOOSE**, or **RAT GOOSE: ROAD GOOSE**, or **ROOD GOOSE: CLATTER GOOSE** (East Lothian): **QUINK GOOSE: CROCKER**." Mr. Swainson also mentions Horra Goose, and **HORIE GOOSE** as in use at Shetland Isles, and adds that **BARNACLE** is "the common name for this species in Ireland—a name entirely erroneous. But in some parts the true Barnacle Goose (*B. leucopsis*) and the Brant are distinguished as the Norway Barnacle and the **WEXFORD BARNACLE**."

(See index for other "brant" geese.)