



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

## Canvas backed Duck. *Fulligula Vallisneria*. Steph. 1, 2, Male, 3, Female. View of Baltimore. Plate 395.

**Stock#:** 96489  
**Map Maker:** Audubon & Bien  
**Date:** 1860  
**Place:** New York  
**Color:** Color  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 39 x 26.5 inches whole sheet  
**Price:** \$ 9,500.00



### Description:

*Canvas backed Duck. Fulligula Vallisneria. Steph. 1, 2, Male, 3, Female. View of Baltimore*, drawn from nature by John James Audubon and rendered in chromolithography by J. Bien in New York, 1860, is a compelling portrayal of avian elegance set against the historical backdrop of Baltimore. The chromolithograph showcases three striking canvas-backed ducks in the foreground, with a vivid depiction of Baltimore across the water, offering a harmonious blend of ornithological precision and scenic beauty.

The canvasback duck (*Aythya valisineria*) is a North American diving duck distinguished by its unique sloping profile. With a long, tapered bill and a striking red head sitting atop a white back and neck, this duck is easily recognizable and admired by both bird enthusiasts and waterfowl hunters. Primarily inhabiting freshwater lakes, rivers, and marshes, the canvasback's diet consists largely of aquatic plants, particularly wild celery, from which its scientific name is derived. Over the years, factors such as habitat loss and hunting have led to fluctuations in its population, making conservation efforts crucial to ensuring its continued survival.

The presence of Baltimore in the background is emblematic of the intricate relationship between the natural world and human civilization. Baltimore, a burgeoning city of the mid-19th century, known for its rich history and vibrant port, serves not only as a geographical point of reference but also as a nod to Audubon's personal experiences. His acknowledgment of Baltimore's hospitality and the city's citizens' generosity during a particularly trying episode of political unrest further deepens the historical significance of the piece. In the *Ornithological Biography*, Audubon explains his reason for including the view of Baltimore:



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**Canvas backed Duck. *Fulligula Vallisneria*. Steph. 1, 2, Male, 3, Female. View of  
Baltimore. Plate 395.**

*In the Plate are represented two Males and a Female. In the background is a view of Baltimore, which I have had great pleasure in introducing, on account of the hospitality which I have there experienced, and the generosity of its inhabitants, who, on the occasion of a quantity of my plates having been destroyed by the mob during an outburst of political feeling, indemnified me for the loss.*

Moreover, the plate's ornithological details, representing two males and a female of the species, align with Audubon's comprehensive documentation found in his *Ornithological Biography*. His commitment to capturing each bird in its natural environment, based on firsthand observation, underlines the exacting nature of his work. This plate, beyond its evident aesthetic appeal, is an encapsulation of a time, a place, and a man's undying passion for the natural world, making it a significant artifact for those seeking insight into 19th-century America's scientific and cultural tapestry.

**Detailed Condition:**

Chromolithograph on a double elephant folio sheet of wove paper.