

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species:	Cinnamon Teal <i>Spatula cyanoptera</i>	Number: (leave blank)			
Location:	Fairfax Pond-Rehe WMA, Reedsville, WV	Date:	8/8/23-8/12/23	Time:	See Below
Bird Seen:	Tuesday, 8/8/23	To:	Saturday, 8/12/23	Age/Sex:	Age Unknown/Female Type

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.)

The bird was a small *Spatula* teal, significantly smaller than nearby Mallards. It had a long spatulate bill that I noticed immediately. The bill is the most important field mark to consider because it rules out the similar female-type Blue-winged Teal. People can argue back and forth over whether plumage patterns are those of a Cinnamon Teal or Blue-winged Teal, but Blue-winged Teal would not have such a long spatulate bill. The bills of Cinnamon Teal are 10% longer than those of Blue-winged Teal and have an extended tip with overlapping bill flanges, giving the species the look of a "miniature shoveler". The photographs show the structure of the bill, including the overlapping flanges, especially the one with the bird standing to the right of the Mallard. As can also be seen in some of the photographs, a line drawn from the tip of the bill to the top of the crown is almost a straight line, with little or no angle between the base of the upper mandible and the forehead. The head was rounded and not blocky.

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt)

Distinguishing female-type Blue-winged Teal from Cinnamon Teal can be difficult, but there are subtle differences. As with female-type Blue-winged Teal, this bird had powder-blue shoulder patches and green speculums. The overall background plumage of this bird was a rich, warm brown with a rufous or cinnamon tinge to lower breast. The bird had a bland, pale face with a buffy wash, with little contrasting features. There was a pencil-thin eye line that did not continue into the lores and that faded away before reaching the nape. Unlike female-type Blue-winged Teal, many Cinnamon Teal do not have a pale patch at the base of the bill. But when they do (like this bird) it tends to be a pale creamy-yellow and not overly conspicuous. Additional field marks included a thin, broken, whitish eye ring and a buffy throat.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard:

N/A

Description of behavior:

During the times I observed the bird, it remained in the same general area, either resting or sleeping on the shoreline, or feeding at or near the surface of the water by sweeping its bill back and forth to take in plants, insects, etc.

Habitat: (General and Specific)

Each time I observed the bird it was at the edge of one of the ponds at Fairfax Pond-Rehe Wildlife Management Area. It remained in an area of extensive lilly pads growing in the shallow water, and grasses and sedges at the water's edge.

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)

I saw the bird four times between Tuesday, August 8 and Friday, August 11. During those times, I was able to view it through my Kowa TSN-661 spotting scope from a distance of about 150 yards or more. Each observation was during a brief after-work visit. Because I was in work clothes, I was not able to walk through the grass and mud to get a closer look. On Saturday, August 12, I was able to get within about 30 yards of the bird, where I was able to observe it through my Zeiss Terra Ed 10x42 binoculars as well as my scope. I was able to take several photographs, which are included with this report, with my Canon SX620 HS camera. The lighter photographs with more glare were digiscoped, and the darker photographs were taken with my camera alone.

Previous experience with this species:

I have had previous experience with Cinnamon Teal in several states in the American West and Peru.

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific)

Compared to Cinnamon Teal, Blue-winged Teal have a comparatively smaller, evenly rounded bill. Blue-winged Teal would have a blockier head with more of a pronounced angle between the base of the upper mandible and the forehead than is exhibited by this bird. The overall background color of female-type Blue-winged Teal is more of a light gray, rather than the richer warm brown tones of this bird. Female-type Blue-winged Teal tend to have more contrasting facial features which include coarse streaking on the face and a pale supercilium that contrasts with a thick, smudgy eye line that often continues into the lores and merges into the dark feathers of the nape. The white patch at the base of the bill is comparatively larger and more conspicuous than the pale creamy-yellow patch of this bird. Finally, the eye ring on Blue-winged Teal should be bolder, and there should be some white on the throat, which this bird was lacking.

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report.

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and especially how did these influence this description:

I consulted the "National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America" and the "Sibley Guide to Birds" but the standard field guides are inadequate in their descriptions and illustrations of the finer points of female-type teal plumage. I therefore did some online research on female-type Blue-winged Teal and similar species. I looked at numerous photographs on various websites, including eBird. The two resources with the best information and photographs that I relied upon were cvbirds.org, "Photo Feature: Identifying Wintering Female Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal in the Central Valley, California" and BirdGuides.com, "Focus On: identifying female Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teals". The field marks of female-type Cinnamon Teal depicted in the photographs and discussed in both of these sites were a good match for those of this bird.

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

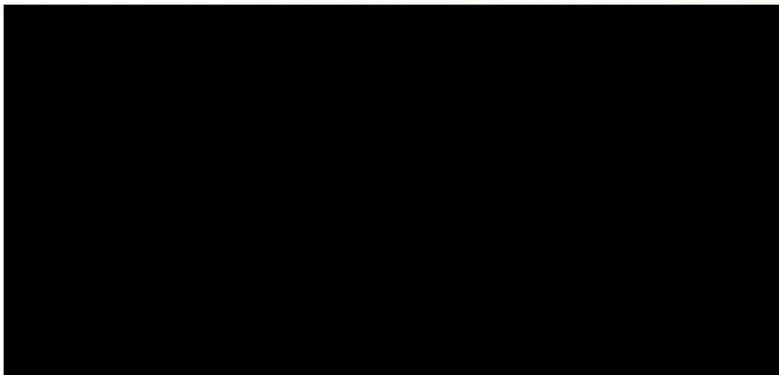
I observed the bird on five successive days between August 8, 2023 through August 12, 2023. This report was written on August 18, 2023. In preparing this report, I referred to the description I posted on eBird on August 12.

Name:

Address:

Date:

Signature:



Mail to: WV Bird Records Committee
Attn: Wil Hershberger
170 Stallion Ct.
Hedgesville, WV 25427
Or E-mail to:
wilhershberger@mac.com

Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:

I first saw the bird during a brief after-work stop. At first glance I immediately noticed its long spatulate bill and I actually thought the bird was a Northern Shoveler due to the structure of the bill. However, I ruled out that species because the bill was not as massive as that of a shoveler and the bird was too small. I initially identified the bird as a female-type Blue Winged Teal based on its powder-blue shoulder patches, green speculums, and pale patch at the base of the bill. However, something about the bird did not seem quite right, and I was uncertain about the identification. I had never experienced this uncertainty during any of my previous experiences with female-type Blue-winged Teal. I saw the bird again over the next three days after work. Each time, I could only observe the bird through my scope from about 150 yards or more away. I was in work clothes and could not walk through the grass and mud to get closer. After seeing it on Friday, August 11, I decided the bird had to be something other than a Blue-winged Teal, but I wasn't sure what it was. That night I did some online research on female-type Blue-winged Teal and similar species which led me to believe the bird might be a female-type Cinnamon Teal. (The possibility of a Cinnamon Teal had never crossed my mind). On Saturday, August 12, I was able to get close enough to get good views through my scope and binoculars and to get some photographs.

A review of the eBird species map for Cinnamon Teal reveals that this species has a pattern of regular vagrancy to the eastern United States. Most of the reports (I did not look at them all) are of adult male birds. Female types are probably overlooked due to their similarity to female-type Blue-winged Teal.

Dates and times of observation:

Tuesday, August 8: 5:08 pm to 5:29 pm

Wednesday, August 9: 5:09 pm to 5:26 pm

Thursday, August 10: 5:09 pm to 5:23 pm

Friday, August 11: 4:31 pm to 4:56 pm

Saturday, August 12: 8:32 am to approximately 9:30 am

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Please Type or Print Legibly

Species: Number: (leave blank)

Location: Date: Time:

Bird Seen: To: Age/Sex:

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.)

Diminutive duck, smaller than nearby sub-adult Mallards, and much smaller than the adult Mallard, rounded, elongated head, sloping into dark spatulate bill, with wider tip, and overlapping flanges. Slight bump in the nose area of bill. No views of feet

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt)

Brownish with overall rufous tones throughout body, with richer coloration especially around breast. Buffy coloration on face. Broken white eye arcs noticeable but within range for CITE. Compact dark eyeline stopped before nape. Cream colored patch at base of bill, not on throat. Darkish eye, some other observers noted it appearing red in direct sunlight, a feature present on young males. Spread wing shots from others confirm a male teal, with a wide white wedge behind blue wing coverts, and a greenish speculum. Zooming in on the eye of photos others took. Smaller pupil fits CITE well.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard:

None heard

Description of behavior:

Frantic, faster feeding than nearby MALL, would occasionally swim deep into the thick lily pads, then reemerge a short time later. Spooked by sub-adult MALL and flew East-Southeast.

Habitat: (General and Specific)

Freshwater pond; lily pads on the edges, with grasses and cattails closer to shore. Bird was foraging in a small "channel" of open water through the lily pads

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)
Seen around sunset from approx 150 meters away. It was getting dark, but was still able to discern plumage and structure well.

Optics:

██████████ Nikon Prostaff 8x42 binoculars, Leupold SX-4 Pro Guide 20-60x85 spotting scope
██████████ Nikon Monarch 8x42 binoculars

Previous experience with this species:

None in the field, moderate amount of experience from studying plumage online, Experience with BWTE, Northern Shoveler and other similar species.

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific)

Mallard - eliminated by smaller size of WV individual

Green-winged Teal - eliminated by larger size of WV individual, lacking blue wing coverts

Northern Shoveler - although similar bill shape, WV individual is smaller with a smaller, less spatulate bill

adding BWTE comparison to last page so it fits. Will also include links to photos.

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report.

██████████
██████████
██████████ and I have discussed this individual pretty extensively via email, and he agrees with ID, unfortunately since we live so far apart, he was not able to sign my report. However, he is also submitting a report, and we would like them to be considered together.

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and especially how did these influence this description:
eBird and the Macaulay Library - compared juvenile male BWTE vs CITE photographs
[redacted] - communicated via email about our id, we both did research, and came to conclusion
of juv male CITE
[redacted] - details on last page so it fits

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?
Less than a day

Name: [redacted]

Address: [redacted]

Date: [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Mail to: WV Bird Records Committee
Attn: Wil Hershberger
170 Stallion Ct.
Hedgesville, WV 25427
Or E-mail to:
wilhershberger@mac.com

Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:

Blue-winged Teal - lack of blocky, squarish head, some males show long bills, but not spatulate "shoveler-like" bill. BWTE shows a smudged eyeline connecting with nape, unlike "pencil-like" eyeline tapering and ending before the nape. Some young BWTE show reddish breast coloration, but never reddish coloration throughout the body. These young male BWTE also lack the buffy face(vs colder gray face) and creamy patch at base of bill(vs whiter patch at base and on throat) BWTE of all sexes and ages would also show a more evenly curved bill.

██████████ - ornithologist with decades of experience. I reached out to him about the id, and he said eclipse male BWTE is out of the question considering date. He said the only main characteristic off for CITE here is the thicker broken eye arcs(he mentioned the 4 major marks he used "As I understand it, CITE don't usually have as distinct a broken eye line as this bird. So, bill size, eye line, and buffy face all fit CITE."(direct quotation). Although from my research, I found there to be a significant amount of variation in young individual teals. Another concerning mark was eye, but adjusting the lighting on one of David's photos, he was able to pull out some reddish coloration. Chart created by Bob comparing typical BWTE, typical CITE, and WV individual bill and head structure.

<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/604239141>

Another observer also noted a reddish eye in direct sunlight, consistent with juvenile male CITE photographed in British Columbia on 8/13/2023

<https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/603742651>

WV individual

My checklist here

██████████
showing reddish plumage even in low light, eliminating the possibility of the plumage coloration being a influenced by light.

██████████ checklist

██████████ checklist were he. describes what he saw of the eye color

stained individual BWTE

<https://search.macaulaylibrary.org/catalog?taxonCode=buwtea&subId=S38876523>

different then WV individual. Bill structure, while long, indicating male BWTE, lacks the widened and spatulate tip, also shows smudged eyeline continue into nape











