

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
REPORT FORM

81 -1

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all. Leave blank any details not observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographys, etc.; include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to the Secretary of the LOS Bird Records Committee.

1. Common and scientific name: Baikal Teal (Anas formosa)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2ad. in breeding plumage): 1 ad. ♂
3. Locality: Louisiana: 1 mi. W English Lookout, Parish: St. Tammany
near mouth of Pearl River
4. Date(s) when seen: 7 November 1974
5. Times of day when seen:
6. Reporting observer and address: Coll. by James Lee (duck hunter); prep. by G.H. Lowery, Jr., Mus. of Zool. LSU (#5618)
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):
11. Distance to bird:
12. Duration of observation:
13. Habitat (general and specific):
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):
15. Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc. Stress field marks):

Label notation: extremely fat; testes

00

Specimen LSUMZ 80123

No physical evidence of captivity, according to G. H. Lowery and Robert J. Newman. Various bird farms and aviaries were investigated and all reported no escapees and all birds accounted for. Investigation was limited to those farms and aviaries in S. La. and adjacent Mississippi.

16. Voice:

17. Similar species (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

18. Photographs (Was it photographed? By whom? Attached?):

19. Previous experience with this species:

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification
a) at time of observation;

b) after observation:

21. This description written from: _____ notes made during observation; _____ notes made after observation; _____ memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification? _____. If not, explain:

23. Signature of reporter: Report assembled by David B. Crider, Secretary

24. Date and time of writing this account: 2 February 1981

Louisiana Ornithological Society

Bird Records Committee

Validation Form

Record Number 81-1 Species Baikal Teal
Committee Member's Name Van Remsen Date of Review 13 Feb. 1981

Circulation: First ; Second ; Third .

Decision: Accept
Reject, origin questionable
Reject, identification questionable

Comments (please type or print):

Once this species has established a pattern of
vagrancy to North America (besides Bering Sea Islands),
I will accept this as a wild bird. At present,
I prefer to be cautious.

Louisiana Ornithological Society

Bird Records Committee

Validation Form

Record Number 81-2 Species Baikal Teal (Anas formosa)

Committee Member's Name Bruce Crider Date of Review 12 Feb 81

Circulation: First X; Second ; Third .

Decision: Accept
Reject, origin questionable X
Reject, identification questionable

Comments (please type or print):

Even though there is no evidence of captivity in this specimen (LSUMZ 8D12 the commercial use of the species and its consequent presence in aviaries, zoos, parks etc. is enough to render the origin of this bird questionable. The species is, however, not common in such situations, and further evidence of vagrancy to N. America of this species, would be cause enough for to reconsider.

I do recommend the inclusion of this species on a "hypothetical list," an entity not provided for in the BRC Bylaws.

Louisiana Ornithological Society

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record Number 81-1 Species Boikal Teal
(Anas formosa)

Committee Member's Name BUFORD M. (MAC) MYERS III Date of Review 29 APRIL 1981

Circulation: First ✓; Second ; Third .

Decision: Accept
Reject, origin questionable X
Reject, identification questionable

Comments (please type or print):

Although the bird might have been of wild origin,
my opinion is that this record must be regarded, ~~as~~
at best, as hypothetical

Louisiana Ornithological Society

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record Number 81-1 Species Boikal Teal
(Anas formosa)

Committee Member's Name Horzu N. Jeter Date of Review 20 Apr 81

Circulation: First ; Second ; Third .

Decision: Accept
Reject, origin questionable
Reject, identification questionable

Comments (please type or print):

There seems to be too many "bird farms" raising all manner of wildfowl with much less than ideal control for such a record as this to be acceptable.

Louisiana Ornithological Society

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record Number 81-1 Species Boikal Teal
(Anas formosa)

Committee Member's Name Harland D. Guilley Date of Review 18 May 1981

Circulation: First ; Second ; Third .

Decision: Accept
Reject, origin questionable
Reject, identification questionable

Comments (please type or print):

Louisiana Ornithological Society

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record Number 81-1 Species Boikal Teal
(Anas formosa)

Committee Member's Name PURRINGTON Date of Review 5/7/81

Circulation: First ; Second ; Third .

Decision: Accept
Reject, origin questionable
Reject, identification questionable

Comments (please type or print):

I would accept it on a hypothetical list
only.

Louisiana Ornithological Society

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Validation Form

Record Number 81-1 Species Boikal Teal
(Anas formosa)

Committee Member's Name JAMES R. FRENCH Date of Review APRIL 20, 1981

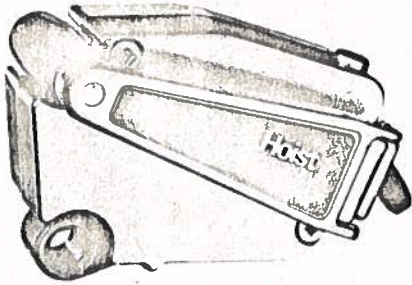
Circulation: First ✓; Second _____; Third _____.

Decision: Accept _____
Reject, origin questionable ✓
Reject, identification questionable _____

Comments (please type or print):

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Letters to the Editor

STRANGE DUCK



Dear Sirs:

On the morning of November 7, 1974 while hunting out of the Pearl River Rod & Gun Club in Southeast Louisiana, I took a most unusual duck. While at the time of the kill I did not know the exact identification, I did know it was something that I had never seen before. After several hours of research through some books, I arrived at the conclusion that it must be a Baikal Teal. I still did not realize the true rarity of this duck until a visit with Dr. George H. Lowery, Director of the Museum of Natural Science at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. Lowery positively identified the duck as a Baikal Teal (Please see letter below.). After some consideration I decided to donate the specimen to Dr. Lowery for the University Museum, where it may remain forever.

I hope this information may be worthy

of publication in a future edition of the Ducks Unlimited Magazine for all the members reading. Also I am enclosing picture of the actual duck.

I would like to congratulate you and your staff on its superb publication, only wish it came weekly!

Very truly yours:
James E. Le
Blouxi, Mississippi

IN REPLY:

Dear Mr. Lee:

There is absolutely no question about the identification of your duck as a Baikal Teal (*Anas formosa*). It is a sub-adult male and is now LSUMZ 80123. This specimen constitutes the first record of this species from Louisiana and the only one to my knowledge that has been obtained anywhere in the southeaster United States. There are very few records of the species anywhere in North America, even in Alaska where one might be expected to appear from time to time. The possibility exists that your bird may have been an escapee from a waterfowl collection, such as that found in some zoos but also in private collections. However, I know of no one in this part of the country who has had a Baikal Teal in captivity. The specimen itself showed no evidence of having been in captivity.

I appreciate beyond all words you donating the specimen to this Museum. The specimen, despite being exceeding fat, made into a beautiful skin and now bears a label showing you as the collector.

Sincerely,

George H. Lowery, Jr.
Boyd Professor of Zoology and
Director, Museum of Natural Science
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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For Full Information: phone 218-365-3211 or write Dept. DUJAY, Box 29, Ely, Minn. 55731

White-tailed Kites near Sacramento.—The writer is gratified to report the presence of a pair of White-tailed Kites (*Elanus leucurus majusculus*) in Yolo County close to Sacramento, California, on June 7, 1932. The specific location was in jungles of willows and cottonwoods along the east side of the Yolo By-pass about two miles to the northward of the east end of the Yolo Causeway, or about one and one-half miles north of west from Lovdal Station. The latter point is not over four miles from the capitol building in Sacramento.

The birds flew out of the jungle of willows and cottonwood as I approached, and circled silently about and close above me for a period of fully ten minutes. They were closely observed with 6x binoculars, and every characteristic point of identification was carefully noted. After the period of aerial evolutions they glided off over the tall trees, and were lost to sight. The topography of the surrounding area is closely similar to typical kite nesting-habitats as described in many of the bird publications. I could not ascertain whether these birds were nesting, or were merely casual visitors.

Reference to the files of the Condor fails to show any records in recent years for this species anywhere in this general vicinity, so this record is thought worthy of publication.—JOHNSON A. NEFF, *Bureau of Biological Survey, Sacramento, California, July 10, 1932.*

Slight Extension of Breeding Range of Barn Swallow in Orange County.—The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo erythrogaster*), formerly nesting only in certain places along the beaches in this section of California, has been gradually extending its breeding range inland during the last few years, using, for the most part, small bridges over drainage ditches as nesting sites.

On July 28, 1932, a brood of four young Barn Swallows left a nest built under a small road bridge about one mile northwest of Cypress, this location being about nine miles airline from the nearest point on the beach and in territory where the species has not nested before to my knowledge. The floor timbers of this bridge were only about two feet above the stagnant water, and the bridge is only about ten feet long. Neither the adults nor the young have been seen since the day the young left the nest, and a canvass of the other bridges within a radius of two miles failed to show any other birds of the same species.—JOHN MCB. ROBERTSON, *Buena Park, California, August 3, 1932.*

Status of the Baikal Teal in California.—Mr. James Moffitt has recently recorded the capture of a specimen of the Baikal Teal (*Nettion formosum*) in California, with expression of his belief that it was a wild bird (see Condor, xxxiv, 1932, p. 193). He may be right in his assumption, but the following facts suggest otherwise.

The species is frequently handled by San Francisco dealers in live birds. I first became familiar with it when I began to inspect imported wild birds for the United States Biological Survey in 1910; next to the Mandarin Duck it is the commonest water fowl in the live-bird market. To satisfy my curiosity I have checked up recent records of inspection and find that between January 1, 1928, and June 30, 1932, Mrs. Davidson and myself have recorded 527 Baikal Teal entered at San Francisco, as many as 136 birds being shipped in one lot. Of course the species had been coming in steadily for years prior to the dates given. Under the circumstances it is surprising that it has not turned up in the marshes before now.

Next to the Baikal Teal ranks the Falcate Teal (*Eunetta falcata*) in point of numbers, another Asiatic species whose capture here should not be misinterpreted as the result of a wild bird's volitional movements. I have examined altogether 32 species of foreign wild ducks that have been brought here alive, some in considerable numbers. Any of these, shot in a wild state, I would certainly regard as escaped or released from captivity unless there was absolute proof to the contrary.—H. S. SWARTH, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, July 19, 1932.*

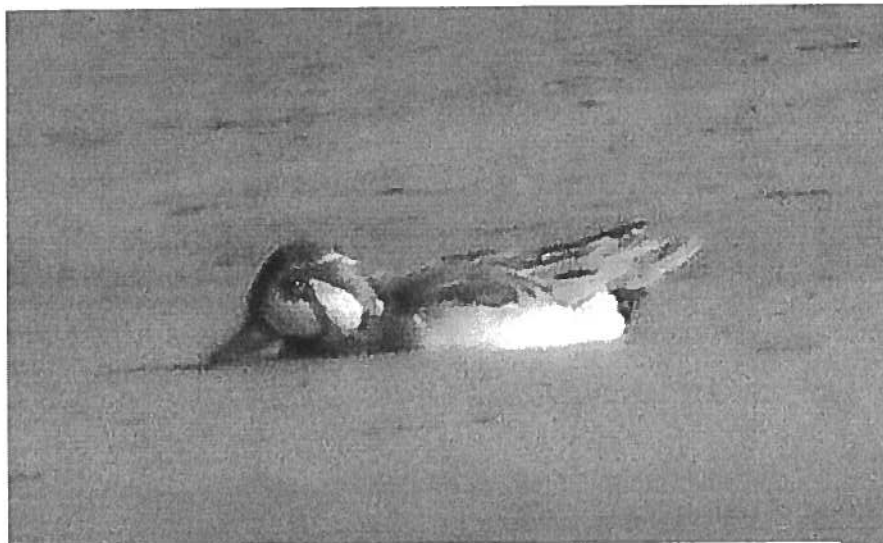
Nesting of the Western Tanager in Solano County, California.—While following a footpath along Green Valley Creek in a shaded cañon five miles northwest of Cordelia, Solano County, California, on May 30, 1932, H. W. Carriger and I passed almost directly below a nest twelve feet up, near the tip of the first horizontal limb of an

Baikal Teal (*Anas formosa*)

Mission Hills Sewage Treatment Plant, Lompoc, Santa Barbara County, California

12 December 2005

Joseph Morlan



Photos © 12 December 2005 by Joseph Morlan. All rights reserved.

Today, I decided to drive down to Lompoc hoping to see the Baikal Teal found 10 December by Wes Fritz. I arrived at the dirt road that runs along the outside of the Mission Hills Sewer Plant about 10:30am. There I recognized Kaaren Perry who advised me that I could see the teal by standing on the hillside with the other people who had scopes trained on the bird. The Baikal Teal was swimming out in the open at the far end of the third pond when I got

to the viewing area. The light was good and I was able to watch the bird for about a half hour before it hauled out on the far shore. At first it stood on the shore feeding on the floating green algae. After disappearing for a while behind a female Blue-winged Teal, it eventually reappeared and worked its way up the embankment away from the other ducks. Most of the original observers left while I was there, but they were replaced by additional observers and I was able to show them the bird. I spent about 45 minutes with the bird, but much of the time was spent attempting photographs.



Description

I did not take notes at the time, but concentrated on photography instead. Photos were digiscoped from a considerable distance (approximately 1,000 feet), hand-held, with an Olympus D-550z / Nikon FieldScope 3 / 30XWA. I probably could have obtained better images by getting permission to enter the ponds, but I opted to stay outside the fence to avoid flushing the bird and disappointing arriving birders.

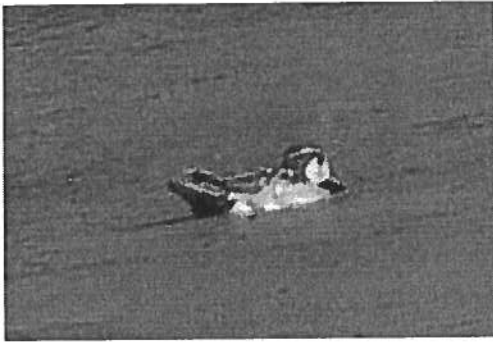


From memory and reference to photos I can say, that it was a small duck, about the size of Blue-winged/Cinnamon teal, but clearly smaller than adjacent Northern Shovelers. The head was boldly patterned. Its face was pale yellowish buff with a contrasting large dark eye with an irregular blackish eyering. A black line extended from the rear of the eye down the side of the face and looped under the head, connecting to the black chin and throat. A broad wedge-shaped iridescent green stripe began at the top of the eye and curved back, broadening at the nape and connecting across it. This green patch was bordered above by a crisp pale yellowish buff stripe, separating the green from the contrasting dark crown and forehead. The body was grayish with fine gray vermiculations on the sides. The long scapulars were rusty brown and curved down over the wing coverts. The tertials were mostly gray with black edges. The tail seemed rather

long, grayish centrally, but with rusty edging to the bases of the outer rectrices. The undertail coverts were black contrasting with a white flank patch. A small white stripe was visible extending down the side of the breast from the shoulder, similar to the more extensive white shoulder stripe found on male Green-winged Teal. The breast was brownish with a purple cast, recalling the coloration of American Wigeon. The bill was dark, outlined with black at the base and with a fairly broad black tip.

Photos taken by Jim Greaves on 10 December have been posted [here](#). Additional photos taken by Andrew Birch on 11 December are [here](#) and [here](#).

Discussion



Identification is relatively straightforward, although some hybrid duck combinations are known to produce birds with a superficial resemblance to Baikal Teal. Sibley (June 1994, *Birding*) discussed hybrid ducks (neither parent being a Baikal Teal) that can look like Baikal Teal. Click [here](#) for discussion on the ID Frontiers mailing list regarding such hybrids. An example of such a misidentified hybrid, is a claimed Baikal Teal from the Cayman Islands photographed [here](#). This bird is clearly a hybrid involving Northern Pintail and some other species. 'Hybrid Ducks' by Eric & Barry Gillham has several

photographs of drake hybrids, involving Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, both wigeons, Falcated Duck, Northern Pintail and Gadwall in various combinations, showing this 'bimaculated' pattern, which may be an ancestral trait. Similar birds have also been seen in the field in Europe and in California. Nevertheless, the combination of head pattern on this bird, combined with the long scapulars and body plumage is typical of true Baikal Teal. I see no evidence of hybrid origin for this individual.

Recent genetic studies by Johnson and Sorenson indicate that Baikal Teal is not closely related to any other *Anas* species ([The Auk 116:792-805, 1999](#)). King (*Birding World* 12:344, 1999) noted that *Anas* hybrids often show Baikal-like facial patterns, and speculated that this may be a reappearance of characters that are ancestral to the whole dabbling duck tribe.

The bird's plumage has been a matter of discussion. The bird is clearly a male, but it has more brown on the scapulars than would be expected of a full adult. Also the white shoulder stripe is incomplete, the supercilium is buffy instead of white, and the white trim along the lower border of the green face patch found in fully adult males is not evident. These features may be due to retained juvenal plumage or retained "eclipse" plumage. In this species, some juvenal plumage feathers are known to persist until the following summer (Madge & Burn 1988), while adults usually attain full plumage by late fall (Palmer 1976). Thus I think it is likely that this is a hatching year bird.

There are five previously accepted records of Baikal Teal in California, all specimens:

BAIKAL TEAL *Anas formosa* (6,5,1,0)

Accepted

1.	29 Dec 46	Niland IMP	107-1983-8	(#MVZ)	
2.	12 Jan 74	Riverside RIV	108-1983-8	(#SBCM)	
3.	27 Nov 74	Honey L. LAS	109-1983-8	(#HSU)	
4.	4 Jan 75	Gray Lodge BUT	110-1983-8	(#HSU)	
5.	14 Oct 87	Tule L. NWR SIS/MOD			175-1988-13 (#private)

Not Accepted, natural occurrence questionable

Records from Colorado, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Ontario are usually regarded as escaped captives (AOU 1998, ABA 2002), although the natural provenience of some of these records has been argued. Records from Alaska, British Columbia, Washington and Oregon are usually considered natural. The natural occurrence of records from Europe is difficult to assess.

Because of over-hunting and pesticides, the Baikal Teal underwent a serious population decline in past decades. By the 1980's Baikal Teal populations had plummeted to a total world world population estimated to be only 20,000 birds. However, recent conservation efforts have been extremely successful and upwards of 400,000 Baikal Teal now winter in Korea alone. More details of this comeback can be found at the [BirdsKorea web site](#). The Baikal Teal is now Korea's most common duck and I think its recent recovery greatly increases the odds of finding stray wild birds in North America or Europe.

Updates, additions and corrections

13 December

- More information on the discovery and additional photos by Dawn King taken 10 December have been posted on the [La Purisima Audubon Society](#) web site.
- Another 10 December photo by Brad Schram has been posted [here](#).
- A sight record of this species by Jim Livaudias 20 March 2004 from Lower Klamath NWR was mentioned in [NAB \(Spring 2004\)](#). Additional information was posted on Calbirds [here](#). As far as I know, no other details are available and this record has not been submitted.
- Full details with photos of an immature male Baikal Teal at Kauai, Hawaii Dec-Jan 2003 has been posted [here](#). This site includes much research on status in captivity as well as molt and aging.
- Detailed discussion and photos of a similar looking Baikal Teal at Minsmere are [here](#). This article includes a detailed critique of aging criteria and molt.
- The bird was still present this morning, but had apparently moved to the fourth pond.
- The bird was still present this afternoon on the 3rd and 7th ponds. A white collar below the green face patch was noted by Mike Rogers.

14 December

- Bird seen today and well photographed from inside the fence by Roger Millikan. Photo [here](#).

15 December

- Bird seen today. A flight photo by Brad Schram taken 10 December reveals the right rear toe is intact and not clipped. Right rear toe clipping before the age of six weeks is an approved methods of marking captive bred waterfowl intended for release or sale. Cf. [here](#). Bird is unbanded and wary.

16 December

- Baikal Teal still present.

17 December

- Baikal Teal not seen all day.

18-23 December

-
- Baikal Teal still present.

21 December

- Article published in the Santa Maria Times newspaper [here](#).

24 December 2005 - 8 January 2006

- Baikal Teal not seen.

9 January 2006

- Baikal Teal refound at the same place and photographed by Mary Beth Stowe. Full account with photos [here](#).

10 January 2006 - present

- No further reports.
-