

A NEW BIRD FOR OKLAHOMA: GARGANEY

BY EVAN V. KLETT

On the morning of 15 May 1981 (sky 100% overcast; southwest wind), while conducting a bi-weekly waterfowl census on the Washita National Wildlife Refuge in Custer County, west-central Oklahoma, I observed a teal-sized duck that I did not recognize. It was feeding with 22 Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) in shallow water near the shore of Foss Reservoir. Its head was rust-colored. A very distinct line that resembled a broad white eyebrow extended



GARGANEY

Two photographs taken on 18 May 1981 by Evan V. Klett of the same male bird wading (above) and swimming with two Blue-winged Teal (below) in shallow water near the shore of Foss Reservoir on the Washita National Wildlife Refuge in Custer County, west-central Oklahoma.

from in front of and over each of its eyes to the back of its head and down its neck. Its sides were light gray, in sharp contrast to the darkness of the chest. Above its folded wing were dark and light stripes. I observed it through binocular and spotting scope from 0835 to 0911 at distances of 75 to 100 yards.

After taking notes on the bird's markings and color patterns, I returned to the refuge office to check books and references. A colorplate in Peter Scott's "A coloured key to the wildfowl of the world" (1977, H. F. and G. Witherby Ltd., London, England, p. 57) showed what appeared to be the same bird, a Garganey (*Anas querquedula*).

Returning to the area at 0924, Leonard D. Zerby and I observed the duck through a Questar telescope (130 X) and compared it with the colorplate in Peter Scott's book. The duck and colorplate matched. I stayed until 1020 observing the duck and taking color photographs through the telescope (80 X) at distances varying from 60 to 100 yards.

I called Ina S. Brown, an Oklahoma Ornithological Society member who lives in Elk City, Oklahoma, telling her of our sighting. She came to the refuge that afternoon, but was unable to find the strange duck. Still later that same day, my wife Jessie and I watched it from 1656 to 1716. It was feeding along the shore of the big reservoir with three drake and two hen Blue-winged Teal.

Because of rain and high wind the following day (16 May), I made no attempt to find the Garganey, but on 17 May I saw it again, this time with three drake and one hen Blue-winged Teal. The sky on that date was partly overcast and the wind continued to be from the southwest.

I watched the bird again from 0842 to 0926 on 18 May (weather clear; light southwest wind). It was with a drake and hen Blue-winged Teal, and a hen Northern Shoveler (*A. clypeata*) was not far away. I took photographs with a Questar-equipped camera.

The Garganey is an Old World species that has been seen in the New World only a few times. The first sighting for the North American continent was of a drake on a pond near the Cape Hatteras lighthouse in North Carolina on 25, 30, and 31 March 1957 (Chamberlain, 1957, Audubon Field Notes 11:334); the second of a single bird at Two Hills, Alberta, on 24, 25, and 26 June 1961 (Houston, 1971, Amer. Birds 25:754); the third of one swimming with Common Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*) and White-winged Scotors (*Melanitta deglandi*) at Kuluk Bay, Alaska on 29 May 1970 (Gibson, 1970, Audubon Field Notes 24:634); the fourth of a drake well photographed near the town of St. Ambrose at the south end of Lake Manitoba (Houston, *loc. cit.*).

Of special interest here is the fact that a bird believed to be a drake Garganey was carefully observed near Durham, Roger Mills County, Oklahoma on 2 May 1979; that bird was with a flock of Blue-winged Teal (Ross, 1982, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc. 15:7).