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A WILD HYBRID IN THE GENUS ANAS L. (ANATIDAE)

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SUMMARY

An adult female with black duck and grey teal affinities, the only one of its type taken amongst 15,500 birds of the two species, is described.

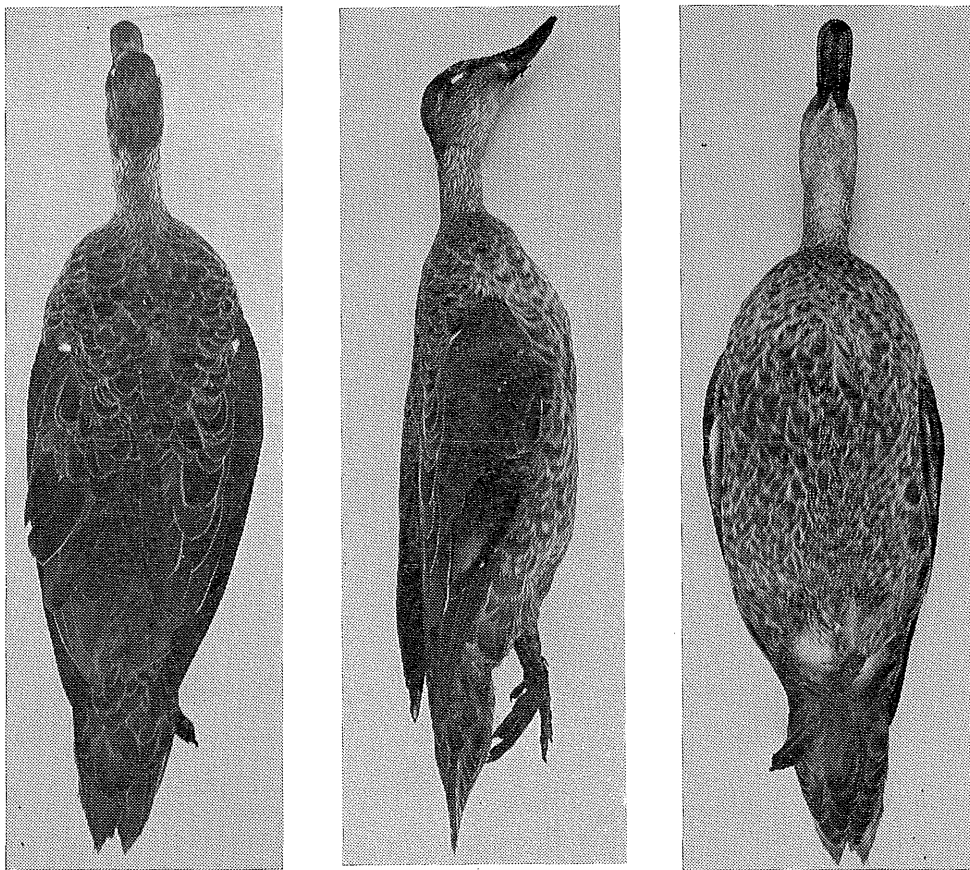


Fig. 1.—Study skin of hybrid specimen from Serpentine Creek, Q., September 1965, viewed from above, side and below.

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Although hybrids within *Anatidae* have been recorded frequently, most are from birds held in captivity. Zietz (1912) refers to wild-living specimens that were presumed hybrids of black duck (*Anas superciliosa rogersi* Mathews) and grey teal (*A. gibberifrons gracilis* Buller). On September 25, 1965, an adult female with black duck and grey teal affinities was shot by Mr. C. Ray, at Serpentine Creek, near Woodstock, North Queensland. The specimen (Figure 1), now in the collection of the Department of Primary Industries at the Animal Health Station, Townsville, is described below.

	Black duck	Specimen	Grey teal
Head and neck	Top of head dark brown to black, clearly defined; facial pattern as distinct dark brown stripe through eye and smaller, less well-defined stripe from corner of bill	Head generally as for grey teal but with faint facial pattern of black duck	Top of head brown extending well down sides of face; no marked facial pattern
Upper parts ..	Plumage evenly dark brown, feathers having fine pale brown borders; upper wings with metallic-green purple speculum bordered with black; other feathers dark brown with fine pale brown edgings	Generally as for grey teal; upper wings with speculum and exposed portions of secondary coverts as for black duck, otherwise as for grey teal	Plumage of upper back mottled with light and dark brown feathers, each with broad pale brown border; upper wings with black speculum with small metallic green patch included; exposed portions of secondary coverts white; secondary quills tipped white; other feathers dark brown
Under parts	Feathers dark brown with slight pale brown border; juveniles have broader pale edges with feathers less rounded in appearance; under wings white	Generally as for grey teal rather than adult black duck, but some resemblance to juvenile black duck; under wings as for black duck except for some grey on shoulders; tips of secondaries as for grey teal	Feathers medium brown with broad pale brown borders; under wings dark grey except for small white patch near flank; tips of secondaries clearly marked white
Colour of bare parts—			
Bill ..	Dark grey	As for grey teal	Grey with darker tip; front half of lower mandible yellow
Iris ..	Medium brown	As for black duck	Deep red to brown
Legs ..	Variable; grey, tan, reddish black	Similar to grey teal	Medium grey

Measurements (mm) of adult female black ducks and grey teal from North Queensland, and those of the specimen, are as follows:

	Black duck	Specimen	Grey teal
Body	458.8 ± 5.03	420.0	347.0 ± 4.26
Wing	370.7 ± 4.47	337.0	296.8 ± 2.33
Culmen	49.0 ± 0.862	38.5	36.5 ± 0.493
Tarsus	37.8 ± 0.791	31.3	31.2 ± 0.569
Mid-toe + claw	64.3 ± 0.894	61.4	50.2 ± 1.12

The weight of the specimen was not available; from the dimensions, however, it would be intermediate between those of the female black duck (mean 969.6 ± 11.52 g) and female grey teal (451.1 ± 6.47 g). The ovary was small, oocytes were macroscopic and measured up to 1 mm in diameter, and the oviduct was enlarged, slightly convoluted and opening into the cloaca.

In north-eastern Queensland, black ducks and grey teal are found frequently in association; this specimen was the only one of its type taken amongst some 15,500 of these two species.

REFERENCE

- ZIETZ, F. R. (1912).—Descriptions of wild hybrids of Australian ducks contained in the S.A. Museum collection. *Trans. R. Soc. S. Aust.* 36:178-80.

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