

First Mississippi Breeding Record of Blue-winged Teal

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On 9 June 1979 JAT discovered an adult female Blue-winged Teal, (Anas discors) shepherding six slightly-larger-than-half-grown young in the area known as the Pascagoula River Marsh in Jackson County, Ms. The locality was a shallow roadside pond of fresh-brackish water just east of the industrial road which leads to Ingalls West Bank Shipyard.

Upon her approach, the female herded the young into the marsh grass and they did not reappear for several minutes. When they did reappear, they confined movements close to the pond edge. The young showed traces of down remaining on backs and rumps; their plumage was mottled, and each had a dark brown crown patch, very much like smaller editions of the adult female.

On 10 June, PVD took numerous photographs of the female and young at the same pond. On that occasion the teal were resting on the mud bank. PVD noted what were presumably the same birds later that week, but no further observations were made by either PVD or JAT.

The Blue-winged Teal is known to breed sparingly in Alabama, but only one record of breeding comes from the coastal area, that being Mobile County (Imhof 1976). The species also breeds in the Louisiana marshes, (Lowery 1974), being at times common and at other times rare as a breeding species. There are no known records of previous breeding in Mississippi.

Recent summer records of Blue-winged Teal in the Pascagoula River Marsh are numerous, with maximum number of 9 (males and females) in June, 1977, and of 12 (males and females) in June, 1978 ... and noted by many observers, (JAT, Robert P. Russell, Jerome A. Jackson, Wayne C. Weber, Bette J. Schardien, and Malcolm B. Hodges).

Breeding of the Blue-winged Teal in the Pascagoula area could have occurred as early as 1978. On 9 August 1978, JAT, Thomas Howell, and Martha Hays observed two young with adults in the diked pond west of this season's site. The young, although slightly smaller than the adults, were capable of flight, therefore positive breeding evidence was lacking.

Most Blue-winged Teal had migrated from the Pascagoula area at the time this 9 June breeding record was obtained ... only one adult male remained at the diked pond until at least 6 June (JAT, Malcolm Hodges).

Drake Blue-winged Teal usually desert their mates around the third week of incubation. The female and her brood often travel overland from

their nest sites to ponds selected by the female for brood rearing. They often leave one pond and travel overland to another nearby (Bellrose 1976), but a search of other pond areas in the vicinity on 16 June was unproductive.

Literature Cited

- Imhof, T.A. 1976. Alabama Birds. University of Alabama Press, University.
 Lowery, G.H., Jr. 1974. Louisiana Birds. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge.
 Bellrose, F.C. 1976. Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, Pa.

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Vermilion Flycatcher in Issaquena County, Mississippi

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On 2 December 1978 I was in a duck blind in a beaver pond about one mile northwest of Albermarle Lake in Issaquena County when I saw a female Vermilion Flycatcher (Pyrocephalus rubinus). She was in view, off and on, for about four hours that morning and I observed her at distances from 40 yards to 75 or 80 yards. She had several perches, usually on the branches or tops of dead trees, and sat on each one for several minutes, making short flights into the air and then returning to the perch. After a few minutes on one perch, she would move to another perch and repeat the performance. Occasionally she would disappear but would always reappear. The color on her flanks appeared to be more orange-red than shown in field guides, and was brilliant.

I returned the next day and the bird was still there, never more than 100 yards from the blind and sometimes as close as 30 to 40 yards. Using binoculars I had excellent viewing. She remained in the vicinity of the blind all morning until I left at noon.

On 10 December I returned to the blind and again saw the bird in the same area. I observed her again, off and on, for about four or five hours. I did not see any other Vermilion Flycatchers, only the one female. After 10 December I did not return to the area.

During the fall of 1976 and 1977 I saw a male Vermilion Flycatcher near the levee about one mile north of Delta, La., which is just across the Mississippi River from Vicksburg. Along with several others, I saw this bird three or four times during October, November, and December each year. We never saw more than one bird and assumed it was the same one each time because it was always in the same area. I do not know of any sighting of Vermilion Flycatchers in that area this past fall or this winter.