

NOTES

FIRST NORTH AMERICAN SPECIMEN OF THE SPOTBILL DUCK

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On 30 October 1977 Trapp, MacIntosh, and Malcolm E. Isleib flushed a large, dark-bodied, pale-headed, dabbling duck from the estuary of Kalsin Bay, Kodiak Island, Alaska (57°34' N, 152°27' W). MacIntosh tentatively identified the bird as a Spotbill Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*) on 31 October and on 1 November it was collected, providing the first specimen and second record of this Asiatic duck for North America. The adult female weighed 1050 g, had heavy fat, and the ovary contained varied-sized follicles (largest 1.5 mm diameter). The specimen (UAM 3631), determined to be *A. p. zonorhyncha* on the basis of the faint moustachial stripe (Scott 1968, Daniel D. Gibson pers. comm.), has been deposited in the University of Alaska Museum. Previously, a Spotbill Duck identified as *zonorhyncha* remained at Adak Island, Aleutian Islands, Alaska for nearly a year, 1970-71 (Byrd et al. 1974; photograph published, Gibson 1971).

The bird was about the size of a Black Duck (*A. rubripes*), with dark body and pale head. The crown and nape were very dark, appearing almost black; a dark ocular stripe was also present. Contrasting with the dark crown and ocular stripe, a white supercilium was visible at a great distance. The sides of the head, chin, neck and upper breast were pale, merging into the dark brown lower breast and abdomen; the back and sides were also very dark. In flight the speculum appeared all dark and a large white patch was visible on the trailing edge of the wing near the body. In the folded wing this conspicuous white patch was located posterior to the speculum (see illustration in King and Dickinson 1975). The bill was black with a yellow tip, and the legs and feet were bright orange-red. Color illustrations are found in Kobayashi (1963), Scott (1968) and Yamashina (1961).

The Spotbill Duck ranges throughout much of Southeast Asia from Mongolia and the Soviet Maritime Territory south to India and the Indochina countries (Vaurie 1965). *A. p. zonorhyncha* breeds in eastern Siberia, Manchuria, Mongolia, northern China, Korea, southern Sakhalin, the Kurile Islands and Japan (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1952). The northernmost populations are migratory.

An examination of weather records for the week preceding the sighting suggests the means by which the bird arrived at Kodiak. Tropical storm *Harriet* developed off Japan and on 24 October was off the Kamchatka Peninsula coast. The storm center moved eastward across the Bering Sea at a speed of 37-46 km/hr, producing 130-148 km/hr westerly winds in the Aleutians from 24-26 October, with several localities reporting sustained gusts exceeding 185 km/hr. By the morning of 26 October the storm center was 322 km south of Cold Bay, at the tip of the Alaska Peninsula. The system then continued in a southeasterly direction, passing south of Kodiak Island. It moved across the Gulf of Alaska to a point about 725 km west-southwest of Annette, southeast Alaska, where it began filling and weakening rapidly. A bird caught in this intense storm system could easily have been transported to Kodiak.

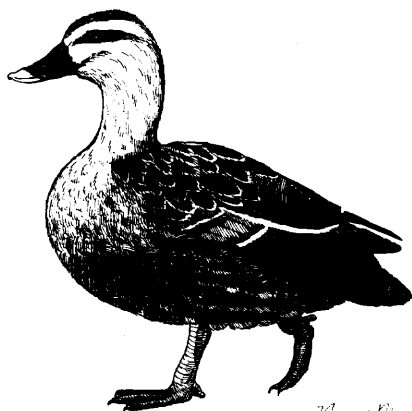
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Sketch by Narca A. Moore