

## A variety of the European Green-winged Teal

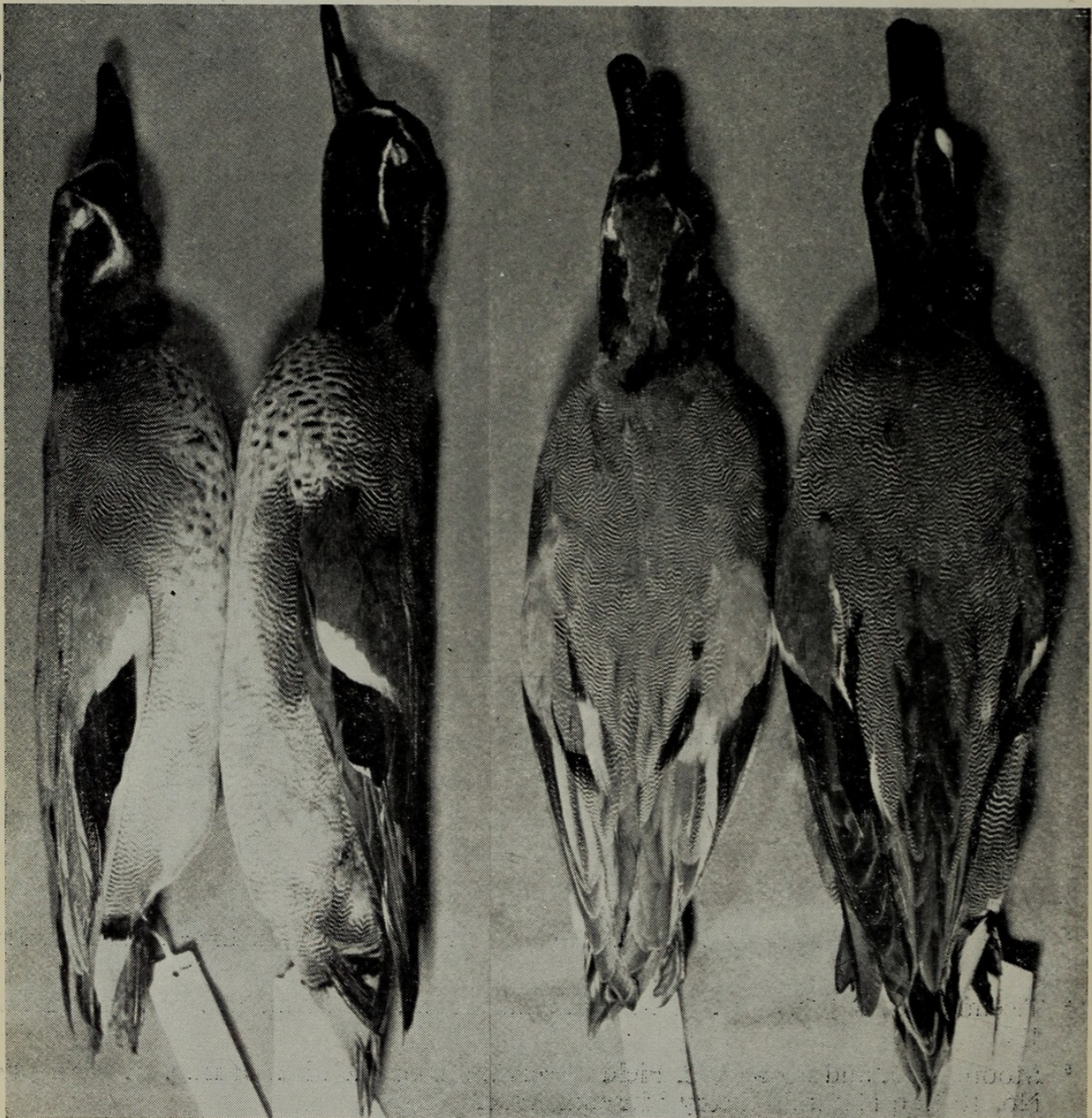
by JAMES M. HARRISON

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This note describes a type of leucism with a marked accentuation and some modification of the normal facial pattern in the drake European Green-winged Teal, *Anas crecca crecca* Linnaeus.

Leucism is frequently seen in birds and in general terms may be described as a degree of loss of pigmentation. This loss of melanin can as a result expose one of the underlying complementary and predominating pigments, converting for instance a yellow-green form or blue form into a yellow form. Where, however, no such other pigment is present a generalised pallor is produced and such a subject is well described as leucistic.

The subject of this note is an adult drake European Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca crecca* (Figs. I and II) which was caught in the duck decoy at Numansdorp, Bijerland, South Holland on 3rd December, 1961 (Collection of the Zoological Museum, Amsterdam, Registered No. 16,317).



(Photographs by P. F. Harrison)

Fig. I. European Green-winged Teal showing marked pallor and accentuation of facial pattern.

Fig. II. Dorsal aspect of same specimen. Note the white lines extending onto the forehead of the variant bird.



The leucistic character of this individual is well shown in the photographs, but in addition there are several points of especial interest. One of these is the marked accentuation of the head markings, particularly the white lines at the base of the bill, which almost meet in the mid-line of the forehead; these same lines run downwards and backwards below the eyes, measuring approximately 2 mm. to 2.5 mm. wide and terminating on either side posteriorly in broad fan-shaped markings approximately 11 mm. broad x 17 mm. long. In a series of thirty adult drakes of this species examined no similar variation, nor even tendency, was found.

Since the extent of the leucism is well shown in the photographs further detailed description is unnecessary. However, another curious feature this bird presents is what appears to be a degree of melanism affecting the specula, for these entirely lack the brilliant iridescent green of the normal bird and have become dull sooty-bronze; a similar change has affected the green of the sides of the head; the nuchal tuft, however, remains unaffected.

The measurements fall within the normal range for drakes of this species.

It should be noted that the changes described in the wing specula and of the sides of the head do not show in black and white prints; another point it is necessary to stress is that the smallest primary coverts are in fact *very* pale fawn-grey: this can be seen if this area in the lateral view is closely scrutinised, otherwise it could be thought to be white.

#### *Acknowledgements*

My sincere thanks are due to Professor K. H. Voous for the loan of this specimen and for permission to publish this note; also to Dr. Pamela Harrison for the photographs.

### **Notes on some specimens mainly from Aldabra**

by C. W. BENSON

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Thanks to the kindness of Drs. A. Wetmore and Philip S. Humphrey, and to generous assistance from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund, through Dr. D. Amadon, I have been able to study some of the specimens collected by Dr. W. L. Abbott on Aldabra Island, reported on by Ridgway (1895). The following notes are based on material in the United States National Museum except as otherwise indicated.

(1) *Eurystomus glaucurus*: Ridgway (1895: 534) records a specimen of *E. g. glaucurus* (Müller), 10th December. It is in adult dress, with wing 194 mm. There is another adult in the American Museum of Natural History, collected by F. R. Mortimer, 24th December, 1904, labelled 'Ile Piquart, Aladabra. Migratory bird. Shot by mistake.', wing 196 mm. Also in the American Museum is an immature specimen, collected by Krishnasamy Naidoo, on Anjouan, in the Comoros, 10th April, 1907, wing 192 mm., and not mentioned by Benson (1960: 55).

(2) *Tyto alba*: Although not mentioned from Aldabra by Sclater (1924) or by Peters (*Check-list of the Birds of the World*, 4, 1940), Ridgway (1895: 533) records four specimens (under the name *Strix flammea*), but had to leave the subspecies indeterminate for lack of comparative material. Compared to 10 African specimens, three of these four are rather paler





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