DUCK AND GEESE OF THE ETHIOPIAN REGION.

By Hugh Woodman, M.B.O.U.

The Ethiopian Region is an arbitrary avifaunal area of Africa which reaches from the Cape in the south to the Tropic of Cancer, just south of Assuan in Egypt, in the north. These notes mainly concern the migratory and resident members of the family anatidae as they occur in Ethiopia proper within that region, i.e., Abyssinia. Although it lies beyond the strictly geographical borders of Kenya and Uganda, the same species are being described as are familiar in the East African list (with three exceptions), and the little that is added to our knowledge of their occurrence and movements there is closely inter-related with what has been written of East African birds (notably by Jackson; and van Someren in Nos. 38, 39, 47 and 48 of this Journal). As far as resident duck are concerned it broadens our records of distribution and where migrant duck are described it is a part of the mosaic which goes to make up the full story.

Abyssinia marks the southernmost limit of the Common Pochard (Aythya ferina fernia L.) which was recorded for the first time in 1941 in lat. 12.40 N.; and until recently was believed to be the southernmost goal of Gadwall (Anas strepera L.) but there are now a number of records of this rare visitor in Kenya. It also marks the northernmost records of the African Pochard (Aythya erythropthalma Wild.) found up to the same latitude. Jackson, quoting Lynes, states that it is known as far as Kordofan in the Sudan, but Lynes mentions no such record, and it is not known in the Sudan list from skins although it is believed to occur there. The Maccoa (Erismatura maccoa Eyton.), White-backed Duck (Thalassornis leuconotus leuconotus Eyton.) and Cape Teal (Anas capensis Gmel.) are known up to lat. 8.50 N., and the Black River-Duck (Anas sparsa Eyton.) to lat. 10.0, but the latter probably occurs up to lat. 13.0.

The only members of the family which occur in Abyssinia but do not also occur in East Africa are the Common Pochard, Bluewing Goose (Cyanochen cyanopterus Rüpp.) and the Black Spurwing (Plectropterus gambensis niger P. Sc!.). The Yellowbill is not the same as the Kenya subspecies but Anas undulata rüppelli Blyth. This, however, intergrades with the East African form and is, therefore, not listed as a duck not occurring in East Africa.

There is no authentic record of Mallard (Anas p. platyrhyncha L.) or South African Shoveller (Spatula capeusis Eyton.) in Abyssinia, although the former has been rumoured to occur more than once but never supported by a skin.

For detailed description of individual drakes, ducks and immature and eclipse plumages I would refer the reader to van Someren’s account in the back numbers of this Journal, referred to above (May, 1930, and October, 1932) and the detail, still the most classical existing of Reichenow’s “Die Vögel Afrikas.”

PREVIOUS RECORDS.

Bird observations have been made for over a century by travellers in various parts of Abyssinia, and a number of collections have been made since Rüppell’s in 1822. All, however, have been remarkably meagre and incomplete on the subject of the anatidae. With the exception of Marquis S. Patrizzi’s collection made during the Italian occupation, which obtained
skeins of 85% of the duck and geese that occur, but which was incomplete as regards sexes and immature and eclipse plumages, there were no adequate notes on the family at all. Since the dislodgement of the Italians I have had occasion to add considerably to both notes and skins, though not unfortunately being able to include the Southern Lake region. We still know extremely little of the nidification habits of the moults and movements of resident species.

The following have been some of the most important ornithological expeditions to Abyssinia:

- James Bruce's notes ... 1775.
- Petrus Forskål ... 1790.
- Ehrenberg and Hempich ... 1820. Eritrea and Danakil regions.
- Ferret and Galinier ... 1840. Northern Ethiopia.
- von Heuglin ... 1869.
- Antinori ... 1876.
- von Erlanger ... 1905-15.
- Oscar Neumann ... 1930. Arussi, Lake Abaye, Omo, etc.
- von Zedlitz (Simien region).
- Friedman on the Frick collection ... 1935. Gojjam.
- Cheesman ... 1934. Aussa.
- Haig and Thesiger ... 1936-40. General.
- Patrizzi ... 1941-42. Negelli-Yavello.
- Benson ...

In Abyssinia, all the resident duck of the entire Ethiopian Region occur except—

- Hartlaub's (Pteronetta hartlaubi Cassin) of South-West Sudan and North Congo to West Africa.
- South African Shoveller (Spatula eapinsis) of South Africa. There is one record of Horsburgh's in East Africa, but no skin or locality record.
- South African Sheldrake (Casarea cana Gmel.) of South Africa.

All the European visiting migrants come as far as Abyssinia except—

- Ruddy Sheldrake (Casarea ferruginea Pall.) of Northern Sudan.
- Mallard of Northern Sudan.
- White Fronted Goose (Anser albifrons albifrons Scop.).

I have skins of twenty different species of duck which are now known to occur in Abyssinia, nine of them palaearctic visitors and eleven residents. There are also four geese.

Geophysical Conditions and Incidence of Duck.

The best duck feeding-grounds of Abyssinia are:

1. The high plateau which consists of vast rolling plains of short grass and undulating land bordered by ranges of high mountains or ravines and gorges 3,000 to 4,000 ft. deep. These plateaus are intersected by narrow winding streams only a few feet across but in which there are scattered pools. The altitude averages 8,000 to 9,000 ft. Permanent marshes are small and scarce at this altitude,
but during the rains the whole countryside is waterlogged. The landscape is almost treeless save for small groups of eucalyptus on the tops of the low hills, often marking churches, and around the peasants' huts. There is no cover along the streams except in the natural drop of the ground or in cuttings made by the water. The country is full of stock, mainly horses, cattle and goats.

A big plateau 100 miles across lies north-west of Addis Ababa reaching to the Blue Nile gorge, which is nearly 6,000 ft. deep. The whole Gojjam in the west is a plateau and mountain country, some 150 miles across. Another more waterless plateau lies north-east of Addis. The pools on these streams are beloved by all the European visiting duck and a few of the residents, in the following order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duck</th>
<th>Abundance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wigeon</td>
<td>Abundant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoveller</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowbill</td>
<td>Fairly common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garganey</td>
<td>Rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Teal</td>
<td>Very rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pintail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadwall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Teal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink-billed Teal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Pochard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-eyed Pochard</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(2) The marshes and shallow water pans of the Awash river basin, from 7,000 ft. south-west of Addis down to 4,000 ft. east of Addis.

On these are found at 7,000 ft. Shoveller, Wigeon, Pintail, Teal, Garganey, Yellowbill, African Teal, Pinkbill (not common), African Pochard (during wettest months only) and Fulvous Tree Duck (occasional seasons). At 6,000 ft. and lower, Fulvous and White-faced Tree Duck become abundant, Teal, Wigeon and Pintail become rarer. The Knob-billed Comb Duck is fairly common. Yellowbill are seldom seen.

(3) Lakes such as Akaki reservoir, 7,000 ft. near Addis; Haik and Ashangi, (8,000 ft.) to the north, Zwai, Abayata, etc., (6,000 ft.) to the south; Tana (southern end) in the Gojjam. On Lake Haik, I have seen, all the resident duck at the same time (except White-eyed Pochard). These included Common Pochard but only one resident duck, the African Pochard. Although the lake's edge was black with duck there was no other bird life on the water except Coot. The northern lakes are deep and free of reeds, except in small patches along the water's edge. From the southern Rift lakes have been recorded, Dwarf Goose, Pintail, African Teal, Wigeon and White Eyed Pochard (Patritzi).

(4) The deep crater lakes 30 miles south-east of Addis, at about 6,000 ft. one of which is green, and is the haunt of several Maccoa. Here also are found the Cape Teal and White-backed Duck.

(5) The waters of the low country inland from Assab. Major Kenyon Slaney has reported these to carry a dense duck population.
**Resident African Duck.**

As mentioned above, these are eleven in number and are all familiar in East Africa. Notes will be found in Jackson and van Someren.

*Arismatura maccoa* Eyton. Maccoa Duck.

So far only recorded from two localities in Abyssinia: the Green Lake at Bishoftu (Ada), thirty-five miles south-east of Addis Ababa, at about 6,500 ft.; and lake Aramaya, a shallow lake near Harar at 6,000 feet.

On the former they are believed to be present all the year round, and do not fly across to other lakes only seven miles away. The sides of this crater are some 300 ft. deep descending precipitously to a narrow beach. The water is bright green and is full of algae and minute plant life unlike the other crater lakes which stand in a group seven miles distant. One side of the lake which is about one mile across, is thick with reeds and overhung with foliage. The surface is clear and there are no water lilies.

Maccoa are found scattered all over this and are pairing by June, and certainly breeding there, although they have not been visited at the actual time of nesting. There is no sign of moult from April to June, and I have not been able to get access to the lake in other months. In Abyssinia, they are an entirely lake-inhabiting, and very localized, duck.

*Thalassornis leuconotus leuconotus* Eyton. White-backed Duck.

This is always present on the crater lake mentioned above and until 1943, this was its only recorded locality in Abyssinia. I found a large number flying over a shallow lake at a duck shoot in April, 1943. This lake was only four or five feet deep and about fifteen miles south of Maggio. One end of the lake was overgrown with reeds and vegetation. When we were wading waist deep among scattered leafless reeds, providing little cover, these duck were disturbed and came flying across, usually singly, and at from twenty to thirty feet above the water. Other duck at the same shoot were Fulvous, White-faced Tree Duck, Garganey and Pintail. They looked not unlike Garganey, which were also inclined to fly singly and at much the same height, but darker in marking and, when going away, the white stern was a conspicuous feature. It was noted that in flight they seemed nearly as fast as Garganey. From van Someren's description it seems in Kenya they do not often get under way well above the water like this, but when they do they are definitely fast fliers. Another interesting point was that they were in the open stick-like reeds, bordered by wide expanses of open water, and a long way from the floating water lilies and vegetation at the far end of the lake. They certainly breed on the crater lake although there are no records. They have not been found in the low country, although in Kenya, they are known down to sea-level. Skins of birds taken in April and August, are without sign of moult.

A low whistle reminiscent of, but of a different character to that of Wigeon was heard when taking off the water.

*Aythya erythropthalma* (Wied.). African Pochard.

On the high plateau north-west of Addis Ababa described above, which is frequented by all the migrants during the season, and by Yellowbill, these duck have not been found. On the other hand, in similar conditions, but on more marshy country, they are common throughout the winter, and present throughout the rains near Dessie, 250 miles to the north. They are also common on Lakes Haik and Ashangi. They are found during the
summer (wet) months on marshes south-west and south-east of Addis, but seldom turn up there in the dry season. They seem, therefore, to be rather local in distribution and to move about the country at different seasons. They, very probably, breed during the rains on the 6,000 to 7,000 ft. marshes south of Addis, but unfortunately no data have as yet been obtained. It is interesting to note that none of the paler buff "bleached" birds, such as have been collected from the lakes of East Africa, has been taken in Abyssinia, and this possibly supports the contention that it is contact with the soda lakes that causes this marking in certain Kenya specimens.

The African Pochard is a lake and marsh bird and is not fond of rivers and stream pools. I have watched scores of them on Lake Haik where as a strong diving duck they are seen in company with Tufted and keep furthest off shore in company with Wigeon, leaving the Shoveller, Garganey, Pintail and Teal to feed in the mud and shallows of the water's edge.

The bright ruby eye of the drake can be observed a good fifty yards away with glasses. They can be described as the second-commonest resident duck, but are nothing like so abundant as Yellowbill, and seem to be nowhere as common or widely distributed as in East Africa.

*Anas undulata ruppeUi* Blyth. Abyssinian Yellowbill.

This is the commonest duck in Abyssinia, and differs only slightly from the Common Yellowbill. The former has a rich blue wing speculum, with a greenish sheen in certain angles of light, whereas the latter's is green, changing to a purplish blue in different angles of light and the underparts are lighter. It seems to prefer the higher altitudes and is commonest from 7,000 ft. upwards, on rivers and marshes. I have seldom seen it below 6,500 ft.

It is not usually its habit to frequent lakes or wide pans of open water, and it appears to be a river and marsh bird throughout the high plateau. They tend to keep rather to themselves when other duck are about, their taste in food approximating to that of the Shovellers' which are often their nearest neighbours. When flying in flocks they are not often to be seen mixed with other duck. I have no record of nest and eggs. They fly fairly fast but are often very tame.

*Anas sparsa* Eyton. Black River-Duck.

Notes apply as for the East African residents. As far as is known they do not occur below 8,000 ft. They are usually single or in pairs on the narrow plateau streams, where they choose the rapids and stretches winding through small ravines, upon which they depend for their cover, as there are no forest trees or generous undergrowths such as are familiar in Kenya. I have once seen three Black Duck and a few Yellowbill on a small pan of open water on the plains, in June, miles from the nearest cover. During the heavy rains it is probable they venture like this further afield from their usual habitat.

*Anas capensis* Gmel. Cape Wigeon.

This is a rare duck throughout the Ethiopian region and is somewhat mysterious in its local migrations. Although recorded at one time or another from all the Rift lakes of Kenya, it is only known to be plentiful in Abyssinia, i.e., the Green Bishoftu lake, frequented as aforementioned by Maccoa and White-backed Duck. Here I have seen it in parties up to
ten in number scattered over the lake, in April, 1942, and June, 1943. It is almost certainly resident there. There are also records of it from Lake Aramaya and Lake Abbe (Tosci) in November and February, and Metahara (Patritzi) in February.

A bird was taken at the latter place on the same day that one was collected by Prof. Tosci on lake Abbe 120 miles away. It is not known whether a migration was taking place across this line at that time, but it is a possibility. There are records in Abyssinia, therefore, from November to July (and almost certainly resides in at least one locality throughout the year) and in Kenya from June to February (van Someren). Again it makes occasional appearances in Darfur in April and July (Lynes) where it has also been found breeding. More records are badly needed to throw light on its movements about the continent, and on its breeding localities.

It appears to be the most migratory of all the African residents.

In the field, it is a pale grey duck, has a Teal-like appearance, and flies well for short distances if flushed, but is probably slower than the other Teal. In life, the bill is a wonderful semi-transparent flesh pink, of the delicacy of egg-shell china, and with a black base. The speculum is green with a black, followed by a white, margin in both sexes. The drake and duck appear, in the field, identical.

There has been a little confusion about its English designation due to use of the names “Pink-billed Teal” and “Cape Wigeon.” The former is only applicable to *Anas erythrorhynca*,—the Red-billed or Pink-billed Teal, which also has a bill of remarkable colouration, quite different from that of *Anas capensis*, and most aptly described as “Unripe plum.”

When seen on this Bishoftu (Ada) Lake they invariably keep to the deep water and may be in twos and threes, or parties up to seven or ten, swimming slowly in a long line. I have only once disturbed them on shore in the day time and on this occasion, as they took off in the distance, they bore a remote resemblance to Garganey. They are actually very distinct, in their pale greyness, from both Garganey and Pink-bill.

*Anas punctata* Burchell. Hottentot Teal.

This little Teal, the smallest of them all, is known from Nigeria to the Cape. Its furthest limit in Abyssinia is sixty miles north of Addis, at 9,000 ft. where its occurrence is rare, only two authentic specimens being obtained in two long seasons of duck-shooting. Along the marshes and lake edges further south it is to be found in small parties five to seven in number, and in habit exactly as described by van Someren (ibid., No. 38). It is met with on Akaki reservoir, Tafki marshes (uncommon), Boli lake, Lake Zwai, and probably in the waters of the lower country to the east of Addis Ababa. When seen on the water in some sheltered and reedy lake corner the sunlight throws up vividly the sheen on their dark green backs, which is almost metallic in quality, and quite unlike any other Teal.

*Anas erythrorhynca* Gmel. Pink-billed Teal.

This Teal is common in East Africa, where it occurs in flocks of forty at times. Stray birds have been recorded as far north as the southern Sudan. In Central Abyssinia, it is rare, and I have not seen records of it from the southern Rift lakes, although it must occasionally turn up there. My records are:—

Tafki marshes, 7,000 ft. 9/11/41.
Stream, 9,000 ft., 80 kilometres north-west of Addis; one in a bag of ninety duck.
Akaki reservoir, 6,000 ft. 10/2/43. (Whalley.)
The Italian collection had one skin only from Tafki. Abyssinia, therefore, appears to be too far north for its liking, as it is everywhere an uncommon duck. Cheesman, in 1934, made an interesting record of a marsh in the mountains, thirty miles west of Addis and 10,000 ft. up, which carried considerable numbers of Pink-bill and where he believed they bred. This is the only known locality where breeding may take place, and it has never been visited since. The pinkish-cinnamon wing speculum and the reddish unripe-plum colour of the bill are unmistakable field characters.

*Dendrocygne vidua* (Linn.). White-faced Duck.

*Dendrocygne fulva* (Gmel.). Fulvous Tree-duck.

These duck are well-known throughout Africa. In Abyssinia, they do not occur north of Addis, except on inland coastal waters. Fulvous Tree-duck has been seen as high as Tafki swamp one season. Below the altitude of 7,000 ft. both kinds become abundant on the open shallow lakes and swamps. On Boli lake they number hundreds. Fulvous are somewhat less common than White-faced.

*Sarkidiornis melenonotus* (Pennam). Knob-nosed Duck.

This is also universally known. In Abyssinia, it is commonest south of Addis, and has only once been recorded at Salulta,—9,000 ft. to the north-west

**PALAEARCTIC VISITING DUCK.**

Of these there are nine, eight of which are known in East Africa, though two are rare there, viz., White-eyed Pochard and Gadwall.

*Aythys nyroca nyroca* (Güld.). White-eyed Pochard.

This is a rare winter visitor to East Africa. van Someren has the only definitely known Kenya skin, taken on Naivasha in 1925. In the Sudan, it is uncommon. The Khartoum Museum has two skins from Dongola. In Central Abyssinia, it is exceedingly rare. I obtained a female on 22/3/42, on a marsh near Dessie at 8,000 ft. at about lat. 12-0, and there was one not definitely confirmed from Tafki on 6/12/41. In Southern Abyssinia, it is more common. The Italian collection had three drakes and two ducks from lakes Zwai and Aramaya. It seems, therefore, to occur in “pockets” on its way south, and probably leaves the Nile valley somewhere in the Northern Sudan, coming down the east side of Abyssinia until it reaches the Rift lake region.

The duck can easily be confused with the female Tufted.

*Aythya ferina* (Linn.). Common Pochard.

This is not of much interest to East Africa, so far south as which it is not very likely to stray. In Egypt, it is one of the commonest winter visitors. In the Northern Sudan, it is well-known but not common. In Abyssinia, it was not believed to occur until a female was shot on 11/1/42, on a stream on the high plateau, eighty-five kilometres north-west of Addis Ababa. On Lake Haik, lat. 12.30 N., I watched a party of some score mixed with nine different species of duck, and took a skin to prove the identification. The drakes were then in their full plumage. Again on Lake Ashangi, lat. 13.50 N., on 3/5/42, I saw a number mixed with Wigeon, Tufted and African Pochard. As this is a very large lake, about twelve miles in length, it is probable there were several others. The drake is a very handsome bird, and on the water looks at first sight remarkably like the Wigeon.
Both have a chestnut brown head and neck and both are grey on the back and have black rumps. The Pochard, however, has no conspicuous cream patch on the forehead and is black on the lower chest.

Since the Mallard is always expected to be found in East Africa (there being Sharpe's record of one said to have been shot, though unsupported by a skin, at Marsabit in 1930), it may be just as likely that Pochard will also turn up. A Mallard skin is said to have been obtained at Aden (Barnes). This record of Pochard, therefore, is further south than any proved record of Mallard, and it may be worth watching closely parties of Wigeon to be certain that the Common Pochard does not occasionally appear in Kenya.

*Aythya fuligula* (Linn.). Tufted Duck.

These are quite common on the high plateau between December and April. They are among the latest arrivals. My first record of the season was November 29th. They have usually left by early May, but I have one record as late as 12th June.

They have not been shot below the 8,000 ft. plateau streams and I have not seen them south of Addis. The Italian collection had no specimens. They are numerous on Lake Haik and it has been observed that they feed further out from the shore than most other duck by day, mixing mostly with African Pochard. They seem to remain later in East Africa than others though arriving about the same time. They are as fast as Teal and Pintail, and as good as Teal for the table.

*Spatula clypeata* (Linn.). Shoveller.

This is the commonest winter migrant duck but is rivalled closely by Wigeon in the high country. It is familiar on all waters from 9,000 ft. downwards, and in the low lying country inland from Assab.

Earliest arrivals were October 18th, 1941, at Salulta, 9,000 ft., twelve out of eighteen duck being Shoveller. There were none present there a week before.

On 18/10/42, at Tafki, Shoveller had arrived with a few Garganey. A drake in full plumage was occasionally observed by the end of February; the full rich green of the head was sometimes not complete until April. The bulk of them depart during May.

*MOULTS.*—This duck and Pintail are the only migrants proved occasionally to commence a full moult and remain throughout the summer in the highlands of Abyssinia. Although suspected, I could not prove that certain Shoveller lagged behind for the whole year, until July, 1943. We had a record of Shoveller shot on Akaki Reservoir as late as 13th of June, and again on 27/6/43, beyond Salulta (Whalley), but these were strong fliers still in good feather.

On 11/7/43, visiting the Green Lake, Bishoftu, I found a number of Shoveller,—some commencing moult of wing primaries, although fairly strong fliers, and others in such an advanced state of moult that they could barely take off the water. Between these extremes there seemed to be all degrees of plumage-shedding and the interesting fact was definitely established that a small percentage of Shoveller stay in the country throughout the year.

*Anas cracca* Linn. Common Teal.

First recorded arrivals were November 8th. They appear to be among the earliest visitors to leave. From Lake Ashangi they had gone by the 3rd of May. Major Whalley, however, obtained one as late as 27/6/43, on the high plateau. They are nowhere abundant. Of a mixed bag of duck I never saw more than 15% Common Teal. The drakes are mostly in full plumage by March. The earliest note was January 11.
They afford some of the best sport of all duck, being small and fast. They were noticed to be more gregarious than most duck and, instead of flying on their own, were often in company with Pintail and Shoveller. It is possible that Teal may be the most inclined of wild duck to depart from nature’s strict rules and occasionally to cohabit with their migratory confrères. At all events not only is their company with these species quite usual, but the existence of hybrid offspring is not unknown. In fact of the only four records I can trace of wild duck hybrids the Common Teal has been involved in three.

Hybrid Records:


Teal Drake X Mallard Duck. Edinburgh, on ornamental water, about 1906, (verbal communication, van Someren).

Teal X Pintail. Vide Meinertzhagen’s “Birds of Egypt,” coloured plate of specimen found in the Nile delta.

White-eyed Pochard Drake X Tufted Duck. On Lord Grey’s Northumberland bird reserve recorded in his “Charm of Birds.”

In eclipse the differentiation of Teal from Garganey is not easy until the skins are handled and the points studied. A note on this is given below.

Anas querquedula Linn. Garganey.

Earliest arrivals, 11th October, Salulta, 9,000 ft. Several reach Egypt in August, so that it is surprising that they have not been found earlier in Abyssinia.

Skins have been taken in the Sudan in September, although Cheesman has seen large flocks still flighting south over Khartoum in December.

With Shoveller they are the earliest arrivals in Abyssinia. Most of them have left by the beginning of May. Major Whalley saw an undoubted small party on the wing but did not obtain a skin, as late as 27th June. They are always present where migratory duck are to be found, from the high plateau to 5,000 ft., but never very common. They may very slightly exceed the Common Teal in number.

Anas penelope Linn. Wigeon.

Kenya is too far south for them to appear except as a somewhat uncommon visitor but Wigeon come to the central highlands of Abyssinia by the thousand and, at the height of the season, exceed all other migrants, including the Shoveller, and are second only to Yellowbill in abundance. They frequent Lakes Haik and Ashangi, the marshes around Dessie, and the plateaus of the Gojjam and Fiché. South of Addis and below 7,000 ft. they are not common, and there are no records of them from southern Abyssinia. The first recorded arrival was at Tafki, on 9/11/41, and Dessie 3/11/42. They reach their maximum numbers in January and begin to go north at the end of March. On Quoram lake in March, they are the commonest duck. On this lake on 25/3/42, I counted ninety-one Wigeon scattered on this water with a few Shoveller and Pintail. The latest date one was shot was 21/6/42, in company with Yellowbill, African Pochard and Teal and not in mould—an unusually late date. The drakes are mostly in full plumage in January.

Anas strepera Linn. Gadwall.

Gadwall were believed not to occur in East Africa up to the time of W. L. Sclater’s revision of Sir Frederick Jackson’s bird records, but since that date it has made a few appearances (vide this Journal, Vols. 16, 223,
and 17, 127, 1942-43) and a skin is now set up in the duck group of the Coryndon Museum (albeit, if a trivial criticism is permissible, the bill of this specimen has been painted a too bright and too uniformly yellow colour which catches the eye and is unlike the dull and spotted appearance seen in real life). Nevertheless, the Gadwall is a very rare visitor to Kenya and the few recently recorded have been sufficiently of a phenomenon to report.

In Abyssinia, Gadwall were also believed to be rare, and there was no example in the Italian collection. It has, however, been shown by records of duck shoots in the last two seasons that, on the high plateau, they are fairly common. From January to April, they are not much fewer in number than the Pintail. Out of mixed duck bags obtained in January, Gadwall have numbered as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total duck.</th>
<th>Gadwall.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All these were from the high plateau river-pools at 9,000 ft.

I have only one record from a lower altitude: the Awash river, 6,000 ft., on 15/3/42. The earliest arrival was noted on 29th of November, and the last taken were 22nd of March, but they certainly remain later than that.

Drakes were in full plumage by February, and their rich chocolate-brown vermiculations were a most handsome feature. In eclipse they are not unlike female Pintail. The female of both species being very much alike in the field. This is the only duck, other than Pintail, which has a longish neck and a rather pointed tail. In flight they are impossible to distinguish. It is probable that Gadwall have sometimes been mistaken for Pintail by sportsmen. Apart from the confusion between Garganey and Common Teal, in eclipse, immature and moult plumage they are about the best known "catch" in differentiating duck. The same thing may have happened in Kenya. It is also quite possible that these migrants have taken a fancy for venturing further south to fresh feeding-grounds in recent years, as may be the case with the Common Pochard mentioned above. They are as fast fliers as Pintail and equally good eating.

_Dafila acuta_ Linn. Pintail.

This duck is widely distributed, but nowhere very common, from 9,000 ft. down to the 6,000 ft. marshes and lower. It is a river, lake and marsh bird. van Someren reports that in Uganda, the bulk arrive in October. In Abyssinia, the first record so far, is 8th of November, and they seem to arrive in large numbers in early January. The drakes occasionally don their full magnificent black, white and grey plumage in December, but some are not complete even in March. The bulk of them leave in April-May. My last actual record of a normal-plumaged bird was April 25th.

The interesting fact about Pintail is that they have been known since von Heuglin's time, 1869, to leave a few behind for the summer. Cheesman found one in the Gojjam (1935). I have three records: on 30/6/42, I found a female in moult and flying weakly at Tafki. A drake was brought to me by a native boy, in full moult, and only able to run, on 11/10/42, at Salulta. Both these birds were going to spend or had spent the year in
Ethiopia. A drake was brought to me by Major Whalley on 27/6/43, from a 9,000 ft. stream beyond Salulta, with old and faded primaries. He was preparing to moult and remain for the summer.

The only migrants known to moult and remain in Abyssinia throughout the year, therefore, are Pintail and Shoveller.

### Migrant Palaeartic Visitors' Arrival Dates and Dates Last Seen Before Departure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>First arrival records</th>
<th>Last seen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White-eyed Pochard</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufted</td>
<td>29th November</td>
<td>3rd May. One exceptional, 12/6/43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Pochard</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Probably early May.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoveller</td>
<td>18th October</td>
<td>12th June, 1 a k e., 27th June, stream. Found in moult during July.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Teal</td>
<td>8th November</td>
<td>Mostly by end of May. One record, 27th June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garganey</td>
<td>11th October</td>
<td>19th April. Many remain to May.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigeon</td>
<td>3rd November</td>
<td>26th June. Mostly in May.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadwall</td>
<td>29th November</td>
<td>Not known. Probably early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pintail</td>
<td>8th November</td>
<td>Mostly in May. Found in moult, June and July.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Geese.

The four geese of Abyssinia are:

(1) Bluewing.
(2) Spurwing.
(3) Dwarf.
(4) Egyptian.

*Cygnocyno cyanopterus* (Rüpp.). Blue-winged Goose.

Quoting from notes sent to the *Ibis*, 1943: "This goose is peculiar to the highlands of Abyssinia and is common from 8,000 feet upwards, northwest of Addis Ababa. As Cheesman has noted they do not occur below this altitude. They are sometimes in company with Egyptian Geese but never with Spurwing, which do not come so high. They are invariably near the streams of the open grass land; not usually at stretches of open water or lakes.

"The gander and goose appear identical in the field except that the former is a little larger. Parties up to twenty-five in number are not uncommon. Seventy is the biggest number I have seen. Patrizzi reports flocks of over a hundred in the Arussi (Chilalo) at over 12,000 ft.

"Parties put out sentinels to keep watch as is the custom of other geese, but unless they have been shot at before they will allow human beings to approach too close for their safety, being accustomed to Abyssinian farmers frequently passing. They are not regarded as food by the native and, therefore, are not molested by them.

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"They are probably the easiest goose in the world to shoot, and perhaps the only variety that is really easy. Shooting parties I have been with usually put an arbitrary restriction on shooting them. Their flesh is much superior to that of the Egyptian or Spurwing Goose."

The field appearance is a general battleship grey without any contrasting colouring of the head and neck, though a little darker on the back. The wings are blue-grey and the legs and feet also grey. Their weight and size are roughly as with the Egyptian Goose. They breed most commonly in July and August, and the nest could be found if the waterlogged country side was explored during the height of the rains, and some way from the roads. I have seen goslings in down in early November. Young have been brought into Addis Ababa by native salesmen in October, but unfortunately not seen by any ornithologist.

**Plectropterus gambensis** subsp. Black Spurwing.

Horsbrugh has described four varieties of Spurwing Goose, with variation in the amount of white on the chest and neck, as one goes north from South Africa to the Zambesi. The form *Niger* P.L.Scl. is the blackest of these. But the Abyssinian sub-species, which is the only variety frequenting the Awash river and marshes within seventy miles of Addis Ababa, is the blackest Spurwing known. There is no white on the chin, head or lower chest, which are pure black. The lower abdomen and patch on the wing only are white. The Italians called this bird *Plectropterus gambensis salvadori*, a name not at present accepted by the British Museum. The matter will no doubt be settled when skins are taken to London after the war.

It is very common on all suitable waters below 7,000 ft. and south of Addis Ababa. I have seen flocks of hundreds in the open fields and around an adjoining marsh, south of Moggio. In the field they are a noticeably blacker bird than the ordinary Spurwing, and when seen through reeds, often appear to be a completely black goose. In habit they are like any other Spurwing and just as wary.

**Alopochen aegyptius** (Linn.). Egyptian Goose.

This bird is too well-known to require description here. It occurs from sea-level to 9,000 ft., where it accompanies the Blue Goose, and may occur even higher.

**Nettapus auritus** (Bodd.). Dwarf Goose.

Local, and as far as we know not common in Abyssinia. As in East Africa, it occurs on certain waters only, and as far as is known at present its favourite localities are:

(a) The Akaki Reservoir, 7,000 ft. (Whalley).
(b) Awash Swamps near Moggio, 6,000 ft.
(c) Lake Zwai (Patrizzi).
(d) Lake Tana (Cheesman).

I have no personal records of it at all.

Duck are not an easy family to tell with certainty in the field before one has had opportunity of handling each species, and seen the varying plumages of both sexes in all stages. The following table is an attempt to aid the bird-watcher by emphasizing the most constant features differentiating those species which are most alike. The commonest pitfalls in my experience are:
(1) The Garganey and Common Teal in eclipse plumage,—both drake and duck.
(2) The female Gadwall and female Pintail.
(3) The White-eyed Pochard and female Tufted.
(4) The Common Pochard and Wigeon.

The drakes of all the palaeartic visitors in full plumage are unmistakable. The Shoveller female is also unmistakable by the spatulate bill.

The following residents, where the drake and duck are nearly identical, will also cause no difficulty:

- White-Backed.
- Knob-nosed Duck.
- Yellowbill.
- White-faced Tree-Duck.
- Black Duck.
- Fulvous Tree-Duck.

The last species which is similar in shape, habit and, to a lesser degree, note to the commoner White-faced Duck has no white cheeks, is fulvous rufous on the under-parts, and has no white on the sides of the body.

The Maccoa and African Pochard drakes are easy. The females are slightly similar in colouring. Both are brown, but the Maccoa is smaller, has a very thick neck and large bill, has white on the neck, and is entirely different in habit of flight from the Pochard (vide supra).

**GENUS ANAS.**

Essential distinctive features between—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOTTENTOT TEAL.</th>
<th>COMMON TEAL.</th>
<th>GARGANEY.</th>
<th>PINK-BILLED TEAL.</th>
<th>CAPE WIGEON.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dark top to head strongly demarcated from the pale buff of cheeks and lores.</td>
<td>No contrast in head markings, in eclipse drake and female. Pale stripe above the eye always just distinguishable, all seasons.</td>
<td>White under tail coverts.</td>
<td>Bill, during life, reddish unripe plum.</td>
<td>Bill egg-shell pink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark bottle-green on back and wings. No true speculum.</td>
<td>Wing speculum; narrow white.</td>
<td>Speculum green, bordered above and below by black in both sexes, though small in and immature birds.</td>
<td>Speculum cinnamon pink. Sexes alike.</td>
<td>Speculum green with white edges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GENUS NYROCA.**

Distinctive features of females:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHITE-EYED POCHARD.</th>
<th>AFRICAN POCHARD.</th>
<th>TUFTED.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast brown; abdomen whitish.</td>
<td>No white on breast.</td>
<td>Breast and abdomen pale brown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris light brown.</td>
<td>Iris brown.</td>
<td>Iris yellow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head and neck dark chestnut.</td>
<td>Head and neck brown with white chin, and some white on sides of neck.</td>
<td>Head and neck greyish black.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wing speculum: narrow white.</td>
<td>No white wing speculum.</td>
<td>Wing speculum: narrow, white.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown.</td>
<td>Drake.</td>
<td>Obvious black and white bird with a tuft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris white.</td>
<td>Deep purple chestnut.</td>
<td>Iris bright yellow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PINTAIL FEMALE.

General brown and dusky markings slightly similar in both species.

Neck longer. Tail pointed.
Bill and legs GREY.

PINTAIL FEMALE.

General shape similar. Neck not quite so long.
Bill and legs DULL YELLOW, the former usually with faint large greyish spots.

WIGEON.

Drakes in full plumage:—

Head and neck richer brown, with no patch on forehead.
Under-parts BLACK.
On the water "sits" lower, and dives.

WIGEON.

Head and neck cinnamon-chestnut, with broad cream patch on forehead.
Under-parts WHITE.
Non diving.

GAZETEER OF LOCALITIES MENTIONED.

Ada= Village with four nearby crater lakes, at about 7,000 ft., and averaging thirty miles south-east of Addis Ababa.
Akaki=Reservoir lake, about 7,000 ft., twenty miles south of Addis.
Aramaya= Lake near Harar, of shallow water, 6,000 ft.
Arussi=Group of high forested mountains, 100 miles south of Addis.
Ashangi=Lake 400 miles north of Addis, about 8,000 ft.
Awash=River winding across Abyssinia, within thirty-five miles when south of Addis, and finally disappearing in the Aussa Sultanate to the north-east.
Bishoftu=See Ada.
Boli=Shallow lake, fifteen miles south of Moggio.
Dessie=Town, 240 miles north of Addis.
Dongola=Town and part of the Northern Province, Sudan.
Fiche=Town on high plateau, sixty-five miles north-west of Addis Ababa.
Gojjam=Abyssinian province, west of the Blue Nile.
Moggio=Town, about forty-five miles east of Addis.
Quoram=Village and temporary lake (during the rains), about 360 miles north of Addis, about 9,500 ft.
Salulta=Plains, 9,000 ft., 15 miles north-west of Addis.
Tafki=On Awash Marshes, thirty miles south-west of Addis.
Tana=Lake in the Gojjam, 6,000 ft.
Zwai=Southern lake, about 100 miles south of Addis, 6,500 ft.
Aythya ferina ferina Linn. The Common Pochard. From a photograph of a specimen taken in 1942.
Anas capensis Gmel. The Cape Wigeon. After the painting from life by Patrizzi.