

SASKATCHEWAN'S FIRST GARGANEY OBSERVATIONS

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The following passages were excerpted from my field records for 11 May 1990: "Garganey: One male seen at 50' to 80 yds. For ~10 min. on flooded field to southwest of road that runs south from "Spruce Farm" on Highway 99 in Qu'Appelle R. Valley. First seen with 7 x 35 binocs at 50' at ~12:45 (Forgot to bring my watch today!)—with 4 other ducks & several dowicher [sic] sp. & Am. Avocets (2). Three ducks took off after a moment, these were all B.W. Teal. The duck that already had my attention was about the same size & shape as these teal, it had prominent, wide, white eyebrows on each side of its brownish head. It had many long pointed feathers over its back that gave it a somewhat white-lined appearance there. Otherwise a basically non-descriptly patterned brownish/greyish duck. It swam towards the west with a female duck that was much the same in shape but otherwise I noted nothing else to distinguish it (by this time they were much farther away & scope lense was catching light on objective lense. After consulting Audubon Master, I initiated phone circle.

When I returned from phoning, the bird was no longer in sight and I wrote out the notes above. The bird was seen later by Trevor and Karen Herriot, John Nelson, Frank Brazier, Carol Bjorklund, Martin Bailey, Bob Kreba, Tom Riffel, Lori Skulski and Fred Lahrman. The weather conditions at the initial sighting were clear, ~12°C, weak wind from the northwest. The bird was last seen at dusk on 12 May to the best of my knowledge.

The Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) is an Old World teal that was first recorded for the North American interior at Two Hills,

Alberta, 22-24 June 1961.² Another record occurs for Strathmore, Alberta, 12-15 June 1982.² Manitoba has a 23 May 1971 record for St. Ambroise.² With regards to the status of the Garganey in Canada, Godfrey in *The birds of Canada* states: "Although we cannot be completely sure that some of these were not escapees from captivity, the species is widely distributed in Eurasia and is known to wander."¹

¹ GODFREY, W.E. 1986. *The birds of Canada*. National Mus. of Canada, Ottawa. 595 pp.

² SPEAR, L.B., M.J. LEWIS, M.P. MYRES and R.L. PYLE. 1988. The recent occurrence of Garganey in North America and the Hawaiian Islands. *Am. Birds* (42(3)): 385-392.

EDITORS NOTE:

Unprecedented numbers (12) of Garganey were reported in North America during the 1990 spring migration (*American Birds* 44(3):regional reports). There were singles in California, Idaho, Alberta, North Dakota, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Virginia and two in each of Quebec and Colorado; most, if not all, were males except for the pair in Colorado. Where all these birds came from is anyone's guess. They normally winter in Africa and are one of the most common winter ducks in Gambia and Senegal; they breed in Europe and Asia. Was a flock of south-bound Garganey blown across the Atlantic Ocean, spent the winter intermingling with Blue-winged Teal in South America and moved northward with these in the spring? A good hypothesis, but hard to prove! — W. Harris