

A Blast from the Past: Illinois' First Garganey

by Robert T. Chapel



The "lost" Garganey photos have been refound. Shown here are two of five photos developed from slides taken by Janine Polk Barth on 22 April 1982. Note the Northern Shoveler in the foreground and the Blue-winged Teal in the background, with the Garganey in the middle.

On 18 April 1982, a male Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) visited one of the marshy ponds at the Fermilab National Acceleratory Laboratory in DuPage County, sending the Illinois birding community into a frenzy. Many birders observed this extraordinary bird over the next few days. The Garganey was last seen at Fermilab on Friday 23 April 1982 (Meadowlark 7:55).

Daniel Ludwig, Jim Landing, and Larry Balch provided the written details, and Janine Polk Barth took photographs; however as recently as the July 1998 meeting of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee, no photographic record of the Garganey had yet been located.

Until now...

As the committee and I discussed the old Garganey record, I reminisced about the long-ago events of 22 April 1982. When I first learned about the Garganey on 19 April 1982, I was both exhilarated at the prospect of seeing the bird, and worried my my 17-year-old beater of a car would probably not survive the trip. I also knew I could only take off one day from work to search for the bird. I called a few downstate birders, but none of them were able to drive to Fermilab until the following weekend. I learned I could take a bus from my home to Geneva, Illinois, which



was "only" a six mile walk to Fermilab. I decided to go.

To my good fortune, Janine Polk Barth, a former Champaign birder who had moved to Wisconsin, called to tell me she was going to look for the bird. We arranged to meet in Batavia, then drive over to Fermilab on 22 April 1982.

We found the adult male Garganey and watched it for quite a while with great delight.

At the recent IORC meeting, I tried to remember whether Janine had taken photographs that day, but

couldn't. I decided to write her a letter in late August, and on 7 September 1998, I received a letter from her with five Garganey slides!

At first she thought she had not taken any photos, then she thought she might have, but gave them away. One day while looking for something else, she discovered a box of slides of the Garganey!

The long-awaited photographic documentation for this bird has finally been found, and the photos are published here for the first time.

The Garganey is a very rare vagrant in Illinois. This old World Duck has rarely been found in North America. A small teal, the Garganey has a wing patter similar to that of the Blue-winged Teal. Females of the two species are extremely difficult to differentiate.

— Robert T. Chapel
306 West California
Urbana, IL 61820

Garganey: Second State Record

by Daniel Williams

Monday, May 10, 1999 started innocently enough. Since I had a business meeting in Chicago at mid-morning, I had arranged to meet Sheryl De Vore at Montrose Harbor by 6:30 a.m. to look for the famously conspicuous Purple Gallinule that had been there over the weekend.

The gallinule displayed itself for us on schedule, and the meeting ended earlier than expected, so I decided to take the long road back to Rockford via Evanston, where some interesting gulls had been seen. I was fortunate to find both a Laughing and Franklin's Gull at the Northwestern