

beach, so, assuming my luck had run out, I headed west to I-90 and my office.

As I cruised along I-90 and approached Illinois 47, I noticed a buteo circling near the exit ramp. It had the flight shape of a Swainson's, and, since that species nests nearby, I exited the toll road to take a look at it through my binoculars. My conscience wasn't nagging me too badly, so, after indulging myself with the Swainson's Hawk for five minutes, and since there is no westbound entrance ramp on to I-90 from Illinois 47, I had to take US 20 to continue toward. Since US 20 passed just north of Garden Prairie Slough, in southeast Boone County, I figured there would still be time to cruise past the wetland and check out any migrating shorebirds.

Garden Prairie Slough has produced some very good birds in the past, such as a March record of Black-necked Stilt (3/20/97) and 200 Franklin's Gulls (11/21/98). It's also a good spot to find Virginia Rails and Least Bitterns in migration. Until 1998, it also had a small population of nesting Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

At 2:30 p.m., as I was slowly working my way south along the road, I saw about 20 teal in and around a small pond on the east side. All of the birds I could view in profile were Blue-winged Teal, but then a bird that was approximately 100 feet away and swimming away from me turned its head. It displayed a broad white eyebrow that extended down the side of its head, and I knew that I was looking at a male Garganey (*Anas querquedula*). I stopped the car just as fast as the anti-lock brakes allowed, and gave the bird a very careful examination. Fortunately, it cooperated by stopping and idling around in circles in open water,



*Garganey. 10 May 1999. Garden Prairie Slough, Boone County. Photo by Daniel Williams.*

where I had an unobstructed view. Using the car as a blind, I reached for my field notebook and started taking notes and making quick sketches.

I was looking at a small duck identical in size to the Blue-winged Teal with which it was sharing the pond. The large white stripe was on both sides of the head, and extended back from the eye, behind the ear, and down the side of the neck, where it tapered to a narrower point, stopping near the base of the neck, below the nape. The crown was dark, and the face was reddish-brown. The bill was black, and the eye dark. The bird's breast was dark, although lighter brown than the face, and speckled with fine black marks, appearing to be dots at that distance and magnification. The back was grayish brown, and long, finger-like tertials covered the speculum. The tertials were striped black and white. The breast, head, neck, and back contrasted sharply with pearl gray sides and flanks. At this point, the bird swam over to the edge of the pond and stood on the bank, showing off its dark legs and an off-white lower breast and belly. Later, through my scope, I could also see that the flanks had a faint gray barring. There were no bands on the legs.

At this point, I wrote off any hope of going back to the office, and I started making calls from my cell phone, starting with my wife, Bar-

bara, who also runs the Rockford bird hotline from the Burpee Natural History Museum. Barbara got the local rare bird calling tree going and grabbed her car keys. She had never seen one of these before. I called everyone whose telephone number I could remember, which, fortunately, includes Rich Biss.

As I was waiting for the posse of birders to arrive, I quietly crept out of my car and set up my tele-

scope. Taking a picture with a 600mm lens was out of the question at the distance, so I tried a technique which I had seen-taking a smaller lens, like a 55mm, and putting it against the eyepiece of a telescope. In this way, I was able to take some slide photographs of the bird which, when developed, represented a Garganey as seen through a pipe. After some inter-negatives were made and cropped, I was able to obtain enlargements that were diagnostic photos.

The Garganey remained for several days, allowing visiting birders to add a new species to their Illinois list, perhaps even their life list!

This is the state's second record for Garganey. The first was seen at Fermilab National Accelerator Laboratory (DuPage County) in May 1982. See previous article for details. Bohlen (1989) also lists this record. The Old World duck is rarely found in North America and most wild Garganeys probably arrive in the lower United States via western Alaska. Bohlen lists the Garganey as a rare, but regular visitor to the state.

### Literature Cited

Bohlen, H. 1989. The birds of Illinois. Indiana University Press.

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