

Cinnamon Teal Pair at Hazlet State Park

by Dan Kassebaum

On Sunday, 21 April 2002, I discovered a Cinnamon Teal (*Anas cyanoptera*) pair at Hazlet State Park in Clinton County. This strongly bonded pair was photographed near the park entrance in association with a large group of Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*). Evident in the color photos are the ruddy breast, dark crown, and shoveler-like bill of the female. This is the sixth documented spring record for Cinnamon Teal at Carlyle Lake. Previous records are of singleton breeding plumage drakes: 18 April 1984 (Skip Russell at the Carlyle Sewage Pond), 28 March - 9 April 1986 (Denny Jones at the Keyesport Marsh), 12 April 1992 (Dan Kassebaum at the Sub-impoundment), 9 April 1995 (Dan Kassebaum at the Carlyle Sewage Pond), 29-30 March 1997 (Dan Kassebaum at the Sub-impoundment).

The 2002 teal pair at Hazlet State Park is unusual in that both male and female were seen together. This is also significant in that it is the first female and first pair to be adequately documented in Illinois, and the first to be documented with photographs. Bohlen (1989) lists a record for a "pair, Hartford" in Madison Co., on 18 Sept. 1987. However, the record as it appears in Kleen (1988) states "male + a possible female, juvenile or eclipse male," so the record in Bohlen should not be presented as the first (and only) record of a pair (and female).

In "Birds of Illinois," Bohlen (1989) lists the species as a rare vagrant in Illinois. However, this status has changed somewhat in the last decade as this species has now been seen every single spring since 1990, and it no longer is necessary to document a male Cinnamon Teal in the state, although records of males that represent first county records, out of season records or other significant records are still encouraged. Any female records for Cinnamon Teal still need to be documented.

The Cinnamon Teal is now considered a regular migrant to Illinois (I.O.R.C. 1999), albeit few in number. Bohlen (1989) offers the statement "there are more than 20 published records" for this species in Illinois, with "most records...in spring." He gives two recent fall records, as well as two records of hybrids. Since that publication (spring 1988-spring 2002), there have been an additional 26 spring records (all males), plus an additional 8 hybrids (7 with Blue-winged Teal, one with a Northern Shoveler) from 20 different Illinois counties. Records from this period have ranged from 16 March -18 May, with the bulk of these records having come from the last week in March and the first two

weeks in April, showing the best time to be on the lookout for this species. There have only been two additional fall records (including a 29 August molting male at Carlyle Lake), for a total of 28 records post Bohlen (1989). The only other location other than Carlyle Lake in Illinois with more than five records for this species is the Springfield/Sangamon County region, although records come from many other areas throughout the state.

This species should be sought out in fall when large numbers of teal pass through the state, although fall plumage makes identity of this bird more difficult. Bill size and shape (more like Northern Shoveler than Blue-winged Teal) and red eye color (in males only) should offer some help.

The Cinnamon Teal is a common breeding duck of wetlands in the western United States, with increasingly more records east of the Mississippi River.

Literature Cited

- Bohlen, H. D. 1989. The birds of Illinois. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN. 221pp.
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Dan Kassebaum, 308 E B St., Belleville, IL 62220-1411; kdan@htc.net



Adult male and female Cinnamon Teal at Hazlet State Park, Clinton County. 21 April 2002. Photo by Dan Kassebaum.



Female Cinnamon Teal at Hazlet State Park, Clinton County. 21 April 2002. Note the shoveler-like bill helping identify this species. Photo by Dan Kassebaum.