

V ON TWO ABNORMAL SPECIMENS OF DUCKS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA.

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Amongst some six hundred duck shot on a swamp near Pathshala in Assam, near the Bhutan Hills, in April, 1917 by Mr. A. Milton were two somewhat uncommon specimens which were presented by him to the Indian Museum.

One of these (25450, Z.S.I.) is a typical male Gadwall *Chaulelasmus streperus* (Linn.) and calls for no special remark.

The other (25451, Z. S. I.), also a male, caused me some considerable trouble in its identification, and until recently I was inclined to consider it as a hybrid between the Common Mallard *Anas boschas*, (Linn.) and the Gadwall *Chaulelasmus streperus* (Linn.).

Comparison of the specimen with other skins and further consultation of the literature has convinced me that I was in error in this identification and that the bird is a hybrid between *Eunetta falcata* (Georgi) and *Chaulelasmus streperus* (Linn.), in which the characters of the first mentioned species are dominant.

The bird is not in full plumage and the highly elongate occipital feathers and strongly decurved and sickle-shaped tertiaries characteristic of the fully adult male Falcated Teal are not strongly in evidence.

The following is a full description of the bird :—

Tail, apparently of sixteen and not fourteen feathers, therein agreeing with *Chaulelasmus* and not *Eunetta*. Upper and lower tail coverts as long as rectrices. Occipital feathers produced, forming a slight "mane."

Anterior lores and an ill-defined frontal patch and a small subocular spot dirty white ; top of the head dull chestnut, sides of the head and occipital mane bronzy green, the feathers faintly tipped with whitish ; chin, throat and an interrupted collar white, narrowly bordered above with blackish ; a broad bronze green collar succeeded by a narrower white one, interrupted behind.

Mantle, hind-neck and breast with broad V-shaped vermiculations of white and brownish-black, with a bronzy tint, the white element narrowest. Scapulars and flanks the same, but the vermiculations finer and straighter. A black spot on the outer webs of the outer elongated scapulars. Upper back brownish, faintly vermiculated with white, lower back and upper tail coverts black.

Tail feathers greyish above, whitish beneath, the outer webs with dark edges. Under tail coverts black, the outermost with a large median spot of buff. Belly whitish, finely vermiculated with greyish-black.

Lesser wing coverts dove grey, the innermost vermiculated with whitish ; median coverts grey, the median portion of each feather whitish with the tips of the outer webs broadly chestnut, forming a double wing bar. Outer secondaries black on their outer webs, the inner

secondaries largely white, the inner webs brownish. Elongated tertiaries brownish with white shafts, the outermost with an oily green tinge, edges buff.

Primaries brownish, darker at the tips ; inner aspect of wing whitish, axillaries white.

Bill apparently uniform black, feet dull yellowish-brown (in skin).
Wing 248 mm. ; culmen 45 mm.

The Gadwall is of course a very common duck in India during the winter, though it is not known to breed within the Empire. *Eunetta falcata* on the other hand is very rare indeed within Indian limits, being normally an East Asiatic species. Individuals have, however, been recorded from localities so far apart as Bhamo, Burma and Narra, Sind. Several obtained in the Calcutta bazaar by Mr. F. Finn are in the collection of the Zoological Survey of India and full details of other occurrences are given by E. C. Stewart Baker (*Indian Ducks and their Allies*, p. 143. *et seq.*, London, 1908).

In 1891 Mr. W. L. Sclater (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 1891, p. 313) described a male duck (20505, Z.S.I.) brought in alive to the Indian Museum which he considered to be a hybrid between the Mallard and Gadwall (*Anas boschas* × *Chaulelasmus streperus*).

There is nothing to add to his very full description, but it would appear probable that the bird is a hybrid between *Anas boschas* and *Querquedula crecca* rather than with *Ch. streperus*. The sides of the head are rich brown and the breast has a distinctly spotted appearance, both of which features occur in *Q. crecca*, but cannot be said to be represented in *Ch. streperus*.

The cross is well known and numerous references to it occur in ornithological literature generally under the name of *Anas bimaculata* (Bp.).

The attached plate gives a good idea of the general appearance of the two specimens.