

Blue-winged Teal

Anas discors

Pairs and small groups of this tiny dabbling duck inhabit shallow ponds and wetlands across much of North America. Blue-winged Teal are long distance migrants, with some birds heading all the way to South America for the winter. One individual banded in Alberta was shot in Venezuela a month later. Therefore, they take off early on spring and fall migration, leaving their breeding grounds in the United States and Canada well before other species in the fall.

Keys to Identification

Size and Shape

A small dabbling duck, a Blue-winged Teal is dwarfed by a Mallard and only a touch larger than a Green-winged Teal. Head is rounded and bill is on the large side.

Color Pattern

Breeding males are brown-bodied with dark speckling on the breast, slaty-blue head with a white crescent behind the bill, and a small white flank patch in front of their black rear. Females and eclipse males are a cold, patterned brown. In flight, they reveal a bold powder-blue patch on their upperwing coverts.

Behavior

Pairs and small groups dabble and up-end to reach submerged vegetation. You'll often find Blue-winged Teal with other species of dabbling ducks. They are often around the edges of ponds under vegetation, choosing a concealed spot to forage or rest.

Habitat

Look for Blue-winged Teal on calm bodies of water from marshes to small lakes. The prairie-pothole region is the heart of their breeding range, where they thrive in grassy habitats intermixed with wetlands.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 14.2 - 16.1 inches
- Wingspan - 22 - 24.4 inches
- Weight - 8.1 - 19.2 ounces

