

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*



Folk Name: Red-head Teal

Status: Winter Visitor

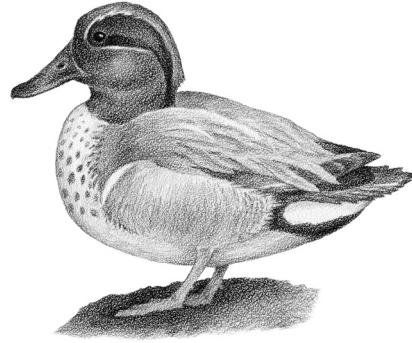
Abundance: Uncommon

Habitat: Shallow lakes, ponds, flooded fields, mudflats

The Green-winged Teal is the last of our eight species of dabbling ducks and at 14 ½ inches, it is the smallest dabbler. It is only half an inch larger than the Bufflehead, which is the smallest duck found in our region. Males are easily identified by their gray body, rufous-chestnut head, and metallic-green ear patch. They have a distinct vertical white stripe on the side of their breast. Both sexes have a green speculum that is most obvious in flight.

The Green-winged Teal is an uncommon duck here in the Central Carolinas, and is generally found in small numbers between October and March. Our earliest recorded arrival is 13 September in 2011, when Lori Owenby found a flock of three at Mountain Creek Park. A late date of departure is 1 May in 1965 with six counted on the Stanly Spring Bird Count. A high count of 1,773 was estimated on the Pee Dee Christmas Bird Count on January 4, 2003. Most sightings are of 50 or fewer birds.

It is interesting to note that the “Eurasian” form of Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*, formerly known as the Common Teal) has been found at least once amongst teal flocks at Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge. Barbara Gearhart picked one out of a flock that was foraging there on December 11, 1999. This form lacks the vertical white stripe found on the drake of our usual race of Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca carolinensis*).



Male Green-winged Teal. (Jeff Lemons)

South Carolina duck harvest data summarized from the last 12 years ranks the Green-winged Teal as the third most harvested duck in the Broad River region, just behind Ring-necked Duck and the Mallard.