

Second record of Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera* for Morocco and Africa, a feral or a wild bird?

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Deuxième mention de Sarcelle cannelle *Spatula cyanoptera* pour le Maroc et l'Afrique, un oiseau feral ou sauvage ?

Une Sarcelle cannelle *Spatula cyanoptera* mâle a été observée parmi une centaine de Canard colvert *Anas platyrhynchos* au Barrage Hassar (33°34'26"N 07°26'04"O) à environ 17 km à l'est-sud-est de Casablanca, Maroc, du 30 mai au 22 juin 2024. Cette observation constitue la deuxième mention pour le Maroc et l'Afrique de cette espèce originaire de l'Amérique du Nord et Sud, la première datant du 8 octobre 2016 à Oualidia, Doukkala, région Casablanca-Settat, et concernant également un mâle.

On 30 May 2024, during a bird survey at Hassar Dam (33°34'26"N 07°26'04"W), c.17 km east-southeast of Casablanca, Morocco, an unusual, smaller, duck was noticed among a group of c.100 Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos*. It was reddish-brown with dull blue upperwing-coverts. The duck remained at the site until at least 22 June, when I was able to photograph it from a distance of c.200 m. Additional features observed and revealed by the photographs are a black, relatively broad bill, an orange-red eye, a green mirror bordered above by white, and white underwing-coverts with a black band on the leading edge of the wing (Figs. 1–4). This enabled the bird to be identified as a male Cinnamon Teal *Spatula cyanoptera* (Gammonley 2020). The observed male is not ringed and its wings are complete (see photos). Cinnamon Teal occurs in western North America and South America, with most populations being short- to intermediate-distance migrants or resident (Gammonley 2020). The male is unmistakable. The species has been reported only once previously in Morocco, at the Oualidia salt flats, Doukkala, on 8 October 2016, where a male was photographed (Fareh *et al.* 2017, Bergier *et al.* 2022). The record was accepted by the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (MRBC or CHM), which commented that the bird's behavior, the date and the site were *a priori* compatible with a wild origin, and also noted that the species is not held by animal parks in Morocco and is not sold as an ornamental bird in the country (Fareh *et al.* 2017). In Morocco, captive ducks are ringed and have their wings clipped. The nearest park with a zoo, Dream Village, located between Casablanca and Mohammedia, holds a large number of exotic Anseriformes (Appendix 1, 2), including two male and two female Cinnamon Teals, all ringed and wing-clipped (Fig. 5). Our investigations with the Dream Village officials have confirmed that the two males (along with the two females) Cinnamon Teals they have never left the park. In conclusion, it's difficult to say where this bird came from (wild or feral), especially as the trade in exotic birds is flourishing in Morocco and a large number of species that are not part of the Moroccan avifauna are kept in captivity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mohamed Mgharfaoui and Yassine Binou of Dream Village for their contributions to this note. I would also like to thank El Khyati and Ahmed Dardour, the Hassar dam guards, for their efforts to protect the birds in the reservoir and for the notes and observations they provided.

References

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Figures 1–4. Cinnamon Teal / Sarcelle cannelle *Spatula cyanoptera*, Hassar Dam, Morocco, (A. Rihane, 22 June 2024).



Figure 5. Male and female Cinnamon Teals in captivity at the Dream Village bird park near Mohammedia. Note that both birds are ringed (A. Rihane).