

blue-winged teal *Spatula discors*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Anseriformes

Family: Anatidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The blue-winged teal is 14 to 16 inches in length. Both sexes have dull-brown feathers and a powder-blue wing patch. In spring, the male has dark blue head feathers with a white, crescent moon-shaped patch between the bill and eye.

BEHAVIORS

The blue-winged teal is a common migrant through Illinois. It is a common summer resident in the northern two-thirds of the state. This bird winters as far south as Peru and Guyana. It occasionally winters in the southern one-third of Illinois. The blue-winged teal lives in and around ponds, lakes, sloughs, flooded fields, ditches and marshes. This species eats aquatic plants, mollusks (snails, mussels) and aquatic insects. Its call is "kick, kick, kick, kick." This bird flies very fast. It arrives in Illinois on its northward migration from late February through May. The blue-winged teal nests as far north as Canada. In Illinois, the species nests primarily in the northern two-thirds of the state although nests have been found statewide. Nests are built on the ground near a pond or in a marsh. Six to 11 white or green eggs are laid in May or June. Southern migration begins as early as July.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; temporary water supplies; swamps; marshes

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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