

Green-winged Teal

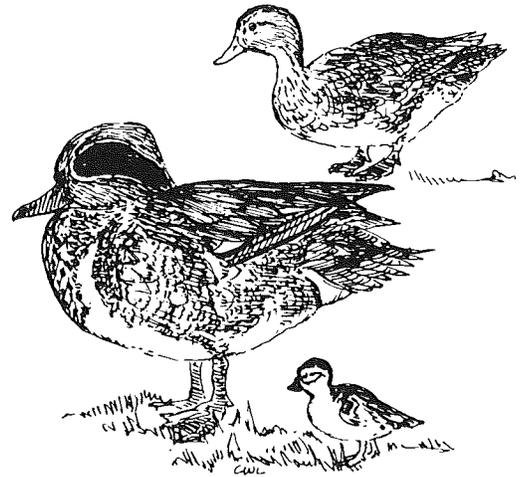
Anas crecca

The smallest North American duck, the Green-winged Teal is essentially of boreal and western distribution. The American Green-winged Teal is now considered a race of a species with a broad holarctic distribution; until 1973 it was often treated as a separate species—*Anas carolinensis* (AOU 1973). The Green-winged Teal's breeding range extends across northern North America; in the East the species' distribution extends southward to upstate New York and northern New England. Breeding appears to be only sporadic further to the south (Johnsgard 1975).

The species begins arriving in Vermont in mid to late March and early April, reaching peak numbers from late April to early May (RVB, Spring 1973–83). In the fall, the largest numbers are encountered during September and early October; most Green-winged Teals depart by early November. A few may be seen in December and occasional birds attempt to over-winter (RVB, Winter 1975–83). A hardy species, the Green-winged winters from southern British Columbia throughout most of the U.S.—wherever open water is available—south to the Bahamas and West Indies (Terres 1980).

Pair formation occurs on the winter range, and continues during the protracted spring migration, extending sometimes until after arrival on the breeding grounds (Johnsgard 1975; Palmer 1976). Marshy ponds and shallow lakes are favored habitat. Courtship displays are animated: two or more drakes perform around a female, often mirroring each other's movements; they turn, bob their heads, and vocalize loudly as they circle the hen (Johnsgard 1975).

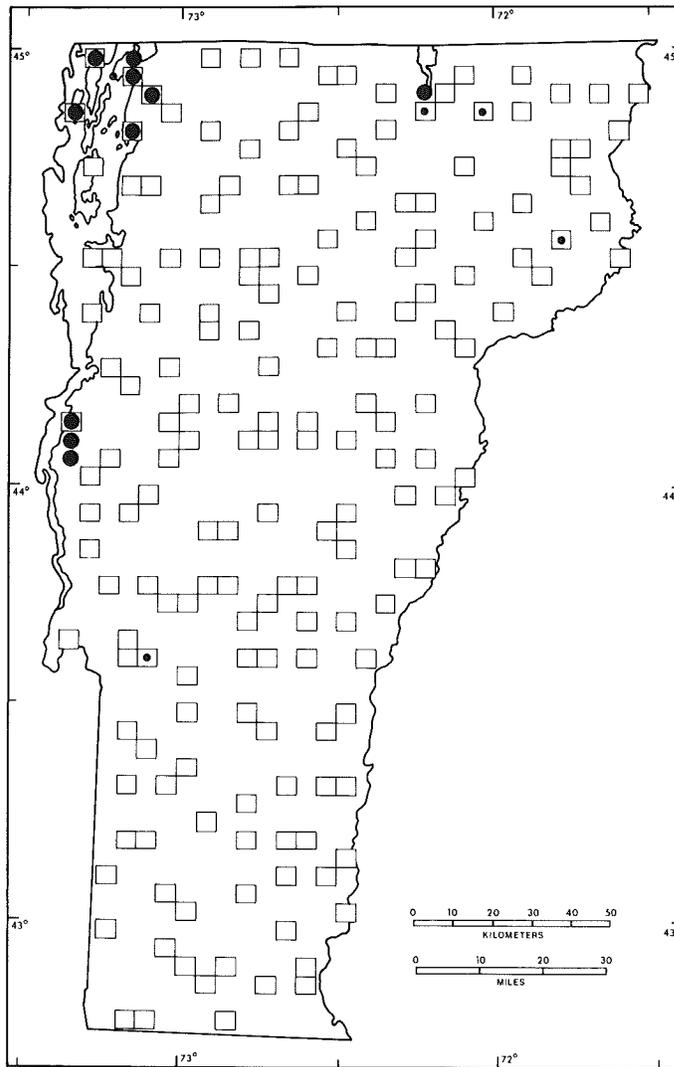
The Green-winged Teal generally nests in dry upland sites adjacent to small ponds, lakes, and wetlands (Bellrose 1980). The nest is in a depression in the ground, extremely well hidden in dense vegetation. The hen lines the hollow with dry grass and other plant material, adding her own down.



The eggs are dull white, creamy, or pale olive-buff (Bent 1923). The average of 91 sets examined by Bellrose (1980) was 8.6 per clutch, within a range of 5 to 16. Incubation is reported by Bent (1923) and Delacour (1956) as 21 to 23 days. The drake deserts the hen as soon as incubation has begun, and joins other males in large wetlands for wing-molt from mid-June to July (Bellrose 1980). The young follow the hen from the nest to adjacent ponds and wetlands within a day of hatching, and first fly at about 34–35 days (Bellrose 1980).

Like the Blue-winged Teal, the Green-winged is a swift flier, with speeds estimated at 49–69 km per hour (30–40 mi per hour) (Cottam et al. 1942). The Green-winged Teal travels well over land, often for long distances in search of food.

A dabbling duck, the species prefers to feed on mudflats and in the very shallow water of ponds and slow streams (Bellrose 1980) by probing the mud for the seeds of aquatic and semi-aquatic plants such as pond-weeds (*Potamogeton*), smartweeds (*Polygonum*), and sedges; they will also take crustaceans; tadpoles; and aquatic insects (Johnsgard 1975). When it visits upland areas and woods it eats berries, wild grapes, and acorns. In migration and on the wintering grounds, the species sometimes visits grainfields for waste corn, wheat, oats, barley, or buckwheat.



No. of priority blocks in which recorded

TOTAL 10 (2%)

Possible breeding: 4 (40% of total)

Probable breeding: 0 (0% of total)

Confirmed breeding: 6 (60% of total)

Physiographic regions in which recorded

	no. of priority blocks	% of region's priority blocks	% of species' total priority blocks
Champlain Lowlands	6	19	60
Green Mountains	0	0	0
North Central	2	11	20
Northeast Highlands	1	6	10
East Central	0	0	0
Taconic Mountains	1	6	10
Eastern Foothills	0	0	0

Historical references to the species in Vermont are practically nonexistent. Fortner et al. (1933) referred to the Green-winged Teal as a "rare migrant and summer resident"; Spear (1976) indicated that the species was common only during migration periods, considering it "rare" during the summer months. Atlas Project workers located the bird in 15 survey blocks, 10 of them priority blocks. More than half of the records (those for 6 priority blocks) were from the Champlain Lowlands. With the exception of a single record from the Taconics, all records were from northern Vermont. It is possible that the species may be more widespread in

the North Central and Northeast Highlands areas than is indicated by Atlas Project data, since in the more thickly settled Champlain Lowlands coverage was more exhaustive than in those less heavily populated areas. Confirmation in most cases referred to the observation of a hen accompanied by a brood.

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