

# Blue-winged Teal

*Anas discors*

## General Information:

-One of the smallest ducks in North America travels great distances between breeding and wintering grounds, as much as 7,000 miles. Both sexes have a large pale blue patch on the forewings and a long metallic green speculum that is visible when wings are spread.

Males in breeding colors have gray-violet head bordered by a bold white facial crescent.



## Song:

-In flight, the male often make a high sibilant *tsell*. The female make *wak* quacking sounds.

## Behavior:

-Very fast taking off from the water, this bird flies quickly and rapidly, often twisting and turning in small compact flocks. Plants make up the bulk of its diet. Often forages in shallow waters. One of the earliest ducks to migrate southward to wintering areas, of which over 90% winters south of the US border.

## Breeding:

-Monogamous and a solitary nester.

## Nesting:

-Incubation of 22-27 days by the female. The 1 brood per year of precocial young are tended by the female and take their first flight at 35-49 days.

## Population:

-Fairly common in the East; uncommon in the West. Apparently stable.

## Conservation:

-Most Blue-winged Teals winter south of US borders, so Latin American cooperation is needed to further conservation efforts.

## Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Blue-winged Teal on your shoreland property you need to remember that extensive lawns are attractive to ducks, but when lawns are too prevalent, ducks leave unwanted “presents”. To circumvent unwanted “presents” it is important to plant shrubs and shoreline plants directly on the shoreline to keep the ducks in the water. Some of the best things to plant to attract the Blue-winged Teal, but keep it from pooping in your recreational area are Sandbar Willow, Ninebark, Sweet Gale, High-bush Cranberry, Wool-Grass, Sweet Flag, Blue Flag Iris, Swamp Rose, Eastern White Pine, and Red Pine. Mallards will eat acorns, so I also suggest planting some Swamp White Oak along the shoreline.