

# **Anseriformes in the United States**

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# State of Emergency

- Decline in the popularity of avicultural science
- Decline in waterfowl populations in North American zoos
- Waterfowl collectors have overlooked many species that have considerable biological importance



# Decline in the popularity of avicultural science

- Large private waterfowl collections in North America have disappeared
- Impinging regulatory issues from government agencies
- Lack of interest in aviculture among young people



# Decline in waterfowl populations in North American zoos



- Most of the major zoo collections have slowly vanished
- Few zoos conduct any substantial breeding program for waterfowl
- Competitive environment for exhibit space works against waterfowl species

# Collectors and zoos overlook many unpopular species despite their biological importance

- Need for zoos, nature centers and private aviculturalists to offer their facilities as destination sites for rare captive birds
- AZA Anseriformes Taxon Advisory Group and Duck DERP helpful
- IWWA assists qualified private aviculturalists with funding
- Need greater cooperation between zoos and private breeders

# Captive Waterfowl Survey



- Conducted by International Wild Waterfowl Association (IWWA) in 2004, 2010, and 2016.
- IWWA Conservation Committee selected 72 duck species and many goose species for survey
- Questionnaires returned from 100 members of the AZA and 51 private aviculturists in 2010. 2016 underway.

# Survey Results

- Certain species of both ducks and geese are rapidly disappearing from managed populations.
- The most seriously affected are those species that share the characteristics of being unpopular with the viewing public and having low market value.



Table 1 *Goose species with extremely low populations in U.S. Collections as of 2004\**

<i>Goose Species</i>	<i>Zoo ♂</i>	<i>Zoo ♀</i>	<i>Zoo ?</i>	<i>Private ♂</i>	<i>Private ♀</i>	<i>Private ?</i>	<i>SHWC ♂</i>	<i>SHWC ♀</i>	<i>SHWC ?</i>
Ruddy-headed	6	5	0	8	6	0	6	6	0
Ashy-headed	0	2	0	6	6	0	2	2	0
L. White-fronted	9	4	2	10	10	0	4	4	0
Orinoco	5	6	0	5	5	0	4	4	0

? = Unknown sex

\*All data for Private Breeders and SHWC is from May 2007; supplied by Michael Lubbock

# Action Plan

Immediate Breeding Programs funded by IWWA for:

- **Hawaiian Duck**
- **Chinese Spot-billed Duck**
- **Baer's Pochard**



# Rare Captive Waterfowl Species List

- Developed by Mike Lubbock
- Concentrates on birds once numerous in collections but have recently declined to levels where sustainability is uncertain
- May or may not be rare in the wild
- Breeding Program conducted at Sylvan Heights and participating zoos or private aviculturalists



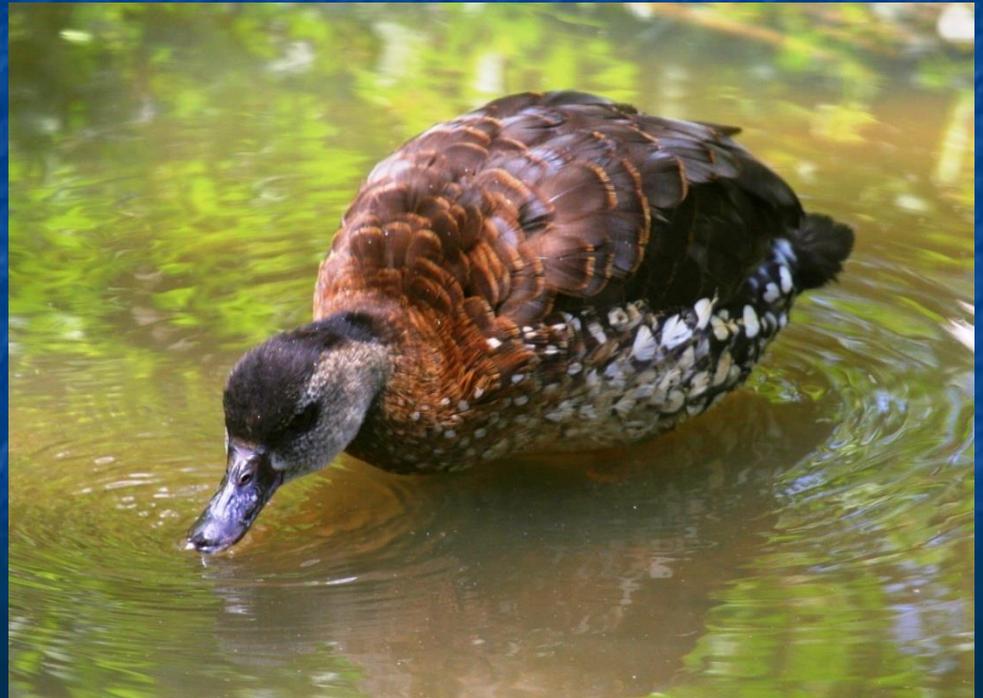
# Wandering Whistling-Duck



- Never very numerous in captivity
- Some may be available from Europe

# *Spotted Whistling-Duck*

- Captive population tends to go up and down very quickly
- Very few in North America and Europe
- Several are post-reproductive



# West Indian (Cuban) Whistling-Duck

- Captive population up from where it was a few years ago
- Close watch is needed



# New World Comb Duck

- Population of these birds in North America is hanging by a thread
- 18.19 pairs in 2016
- Still needs work



# Patagonian Crested Duck

- Tends to be aggressive; most zoos do not like to keep them
- May be less than 20 birds total in the U.S



# Hawaiian Duck



- Recently received a pair of Hawaiian Ducks at Sylvan Heights
- Questions as to purity of bloodlines

# Pacific Black Duck



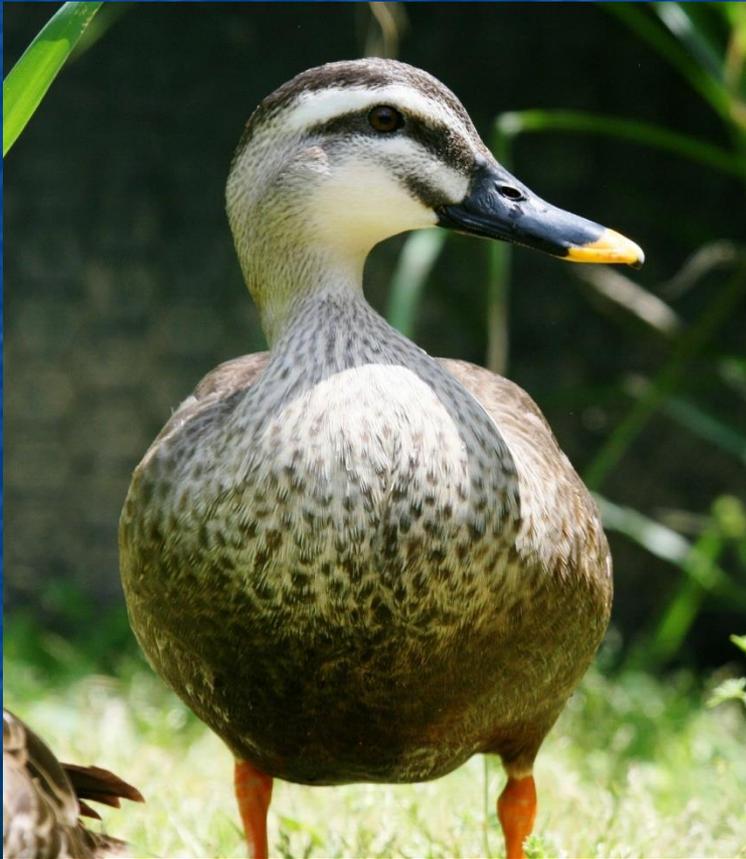
- IWWA imported a few in 2007 or there probably would not be any in the U.S. today

# Philippine Duck



- Beginning to increase the population again
- Must have reliable system in place to monitor captive populations
- 2016 survey shows 42 pairs, but still needs watching

# Chinese Spot-billed Duck



- Disappeared in the U.S. until the IWWA imported three pairs in May 2007
- Breeding Program at SHWC

# Cape Shoveler

- None remain in North America, and probably none in Europe
- Potential exists to import some from Africa

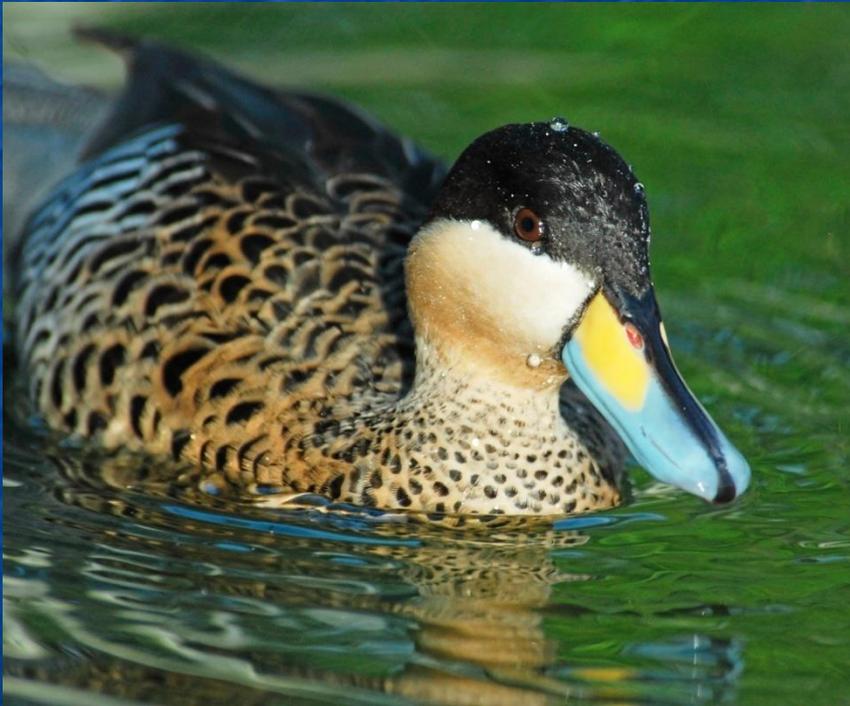


# Red-billed Pintail

- Popular in Africa-themed exhibits at zoos
- Must be monitored closely



# Silver (Versicolor) Teal



- Not as popular as the similar-looking Hottentot Teal

# Chile Teal



- There tend to be many hybrids between Sharpwing.
- Hope to bring in new birds from Europe.

# Australian White-eyed duck

- Very low numbers in zoos and private collections
- Fertility is poor with our pairs at Sylvan Heights
- None in Europe



# Baer's Pochard



- More of these birds in Europe than in North American collections
- IWWA imported birds in 2007
- Good example of importation success

# European Pochard



- Never many in the US because too much like the Redhead.
- However a species that needs to be worked with as their numbers have plummeted in the last few years.

# New Zealand Scaup



- No new bloodlines of this species have been brought into Europe or anywhere else in the last forty years

# East Indian Grey Teal

- None remain in North America
- A few may be in Europe
- It will be a struggle to get the Grey Teal back
- No Australian Greys and very few East Indian.

# Brent Geese



- Very few are kept,
- Birds have not been brought in from the wild in many years.

# Lesser White-fronted Goose



- Geese, in general, are more expensive to maintain due to the large amount of grazing area required, so there are very few geese bred every year compared to ducks.

# Ashy-headed Goose

- Essentially gone from zoo collections
- In critical need of an expanded breeding effort



# Ruddy-headed Goose



- More Ruddy-headed Geese are found in North American collections than Ashy-headed Geese

# Orinoco Goose



- Sylvan Heights and other private breeders are attempting to increase their numbers, but we are all working with the same bloodlines.
- The Orinoco needs a sustainable captive population for protection

# Recent List Additions

# Wild Muscovy



- Very few pure wild muscovy in captivity

# African Black Duck



- Not extremely popular bird
- Very aggressive in mixed collections

# Australian White-eyed Duck



- Only a handful of pairs in the USA
- Not very popular with aviculturists

# SUCCESS STORIES

Imported into the U.S., numbers increasing :



**Spotted Whistling Duck**

**Puna Teal**

**Silver (Versicolor) Teal**

**Ashy-headed Goose**

**Ruddy-headed Goose**

**Meller's Duck**

**New World Comb Duck**

**Chinese Spotbill**

**Pacific Black Duck**

**Garganey Teal**

**East Indian Grey Teal**

**Southern Pochard**

# Garganey

- Starting to disappear in captivity
- Sylvan Heights is beginning to increase its population



# SUCCESS STORIES

## Baer's Pochard



- Wild population numbers are very low
- Rare in European aviculture
- Imported to U.S. in 2009
- Now more than 50 individuals in U.S.

# SUCCESS STORIES

No import, concentrated breeding effort:



West Indian Whistling Duck

New Zealand Scaup

Lesser White-Fronted Goose

Orinoco Goose

Cape Teal

Garganey

# Keys to Waterfowl Conservation



- Cooperation between private aviculturists and zoological organizations
- General public must become willing supporters in reversing the plight of wild waterfowl
- Educate the next generation of aviculturists

# Cooperation between private aviculturalists and zoological organizations

- Allows for exchange of birds and better genetic distribution
- Increases living space and population expansion of rare captive species
- Improves monitoring of species in trouble



# Strength in numbers

I look forward to a time when many more zoos and private waterfowl aviculturists work together on preserving the most susceptible waterfowl species.

Time is growing short.

*Mike Lubbock*

