

SHORT NOTE

A wild Cape teal—yellowbill duck hybrid

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by

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On 22 April 1973 a full-grown duck with an orange bill was seen at Walvis Bay Municipal sewage ponds, known as "Bird Paradise" (22°58'S 14°30'E). Closer examination through binoculars revealed it to have several characters of both Cape Teal *Anas capensis* and Yellowbill Duck *A. undulata*. The former is a common species in this part of South West Africa, but the Yellowbill Duck is a vagrant — one example of unknown origin had been at the sewage ponds for about a year prior to, and including, the above date. H. H. Berry informed us that he had seen the hybrid for some months previously although he had not realized its identity. The hybrid was slightly smaller than a Yellowbill Duck, but considerably larger than a Cape Teal and tending towards the former in body and head proportions. Head and body colour resembled the Yellowbill type, but the speculum was very like the Cape Teal's (Plate 2). Bill was light orange, tending to Yellowbill size but Cape Teal shape. Legs were dusky and light orange. The bird gave the loud Yellowbill Duck quack (a call exclusive to the female of that species). It associated with both parental species, although tending to occur most often alone.

A subsequent visit by R.J. on 29 October 1973 revealed the hybrid still present, but the putative Yellowbill Duck parent had disappeared.

There appear to be no previous records of this cross either in the wild or in captivity (Gray 1958, Clancey 1967) although hybrids involving both parental species have been reported (e.g. Rowan 1963, Clancey 1967, Clark 1973, Pocock 1973).

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Plate 1. Yellowbill Duck x Cape Teal hybrid, Walvis Bay Oct. 1973 (Photo by W. Krouwds).



Plate 2. The hybrid duck displaying its speculum (Photo by W. Krouwds).