

2010

## Waterfowl of North America: Name Derivations

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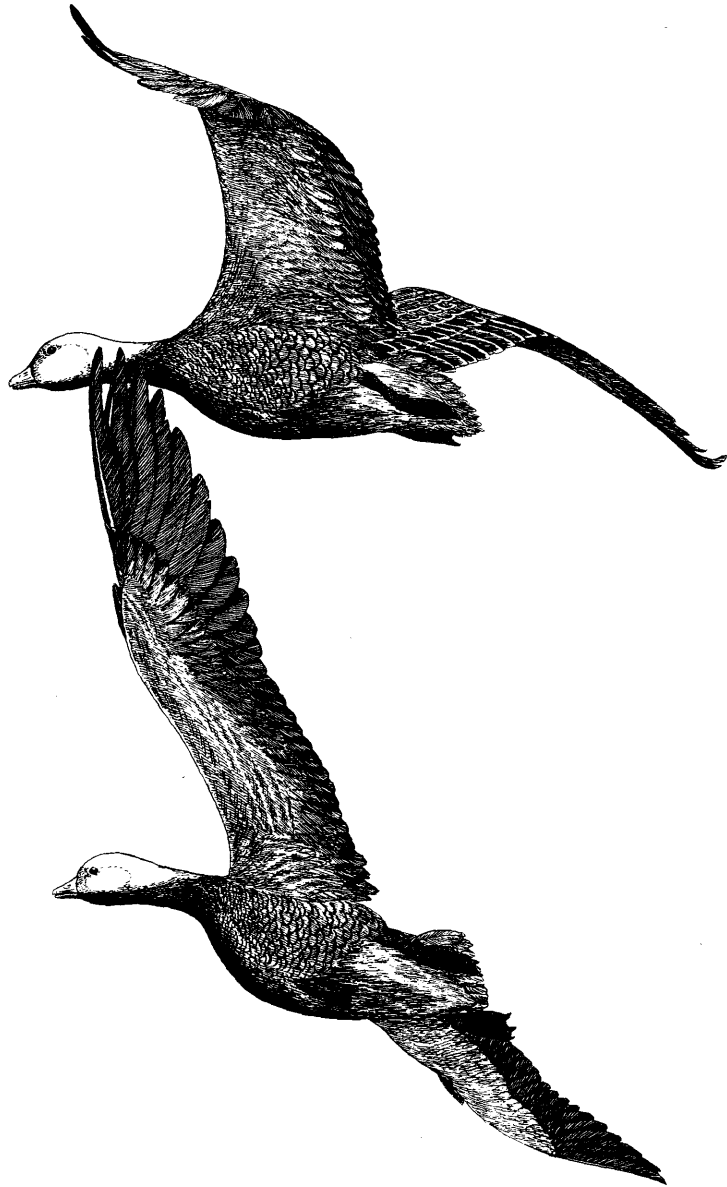
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## Name Derivations

*(Excluding extralimital species and most subspecies unless these are sometimes considered full species)*

- Aix* – from Greek, a kind of waterfowl mentioned by Aristotle.
- sponsa* – from Latin: betrothed, as if in wedding dress.
- Anas* – from Latin: a kind of duck.
- acuta* – from Latin, referring to the sharp tail of the male.
- americana* – of America. The derivation of the vernacular name wigeon is from the French *vigeon* and perhaps in turn from the Latin *vipio*, a kind of crane.
- bahamensis* – of the Bahama Islands.
- carolinensis* – of Carolina. The derivation of the vernacular name teal is unknown, but earlier English versions include “teale” and “tele.”
- clypeata* – from Latin *clypeum*: shield-like, referring to the bill.
- crecca* – from Latin, formed like *crex*, to express the sound.
- cyanoptera* – from Greek *kuanos*: blue, and *pteron*: wing.
- diazii* – in honor of Augustin Diaz, Director of the Mexican Geographical and Exploring Commission, 1886.
- discors* – from Latin: discordant.
- falcata* – from Latin, referring to the sickle-shaped feathers of the male.
- formosa* – from Latin: beautiful.
- fulvigula* – from Latin *fulvus*: reddish, and *gula*: throat.
- penelope* – referring either to the mythological character Penelope, who was celebrated for her virtue, or more probably from the Latin *penelops*, a kind of duck mentioned by Pliny.
- platyrhynchos* – from Greek *platys*: broad, and *rhynchos*: bill. The vernacular name mallard is derived from the French *malart*, a male duck.
- querquedula* – from Latin: a kind of small duck.
- rubripes* – from Latin *ruber*: red, and *pes*: a foot, or red-footed.
- strepera* – from Latin *streperus*: noisy, obstreperous. The derivation of the vernacular name gadwall is unknown, the oldest known English variant being “gaddel.”
- Anser* – from Latin, meaning a goose.
- albifrons* – from Latin *albus*: white, and *frons*: forehead.
- caerulescens* – from Latin: bluish.
- canagicus* – of the island of Kanaga or Kyktak (Aleutian Islands).
- hyperborea* – from Latin *hyperboreus*: beyond the north wind.

- rossii* – in honor of Bernard R. Ross, of the Hudson's Bay Company, who provided the specimens on which the species' name was based.
- Aythya* – from the Greek *aithuia*, a kind of water bird mentioned in Aristotle's Natural History.
- affinis* – from Latin: allied. The vernacular name scaup is from the Old French *escalope* and Old Dutch *schelpe*, and refers to the mollusks on which the birds sometimes feed.
- americana* – of America.
- collaris* – from Latin: collared.
- fuligula* – from Latin, diminutive of *fulix* or *fulica*: a coot, or perhaps from *fuligo*: soot.
- marila* – probably from the Greek *marile*: charcoal.
- valisineria* – after the wild celery *Vallisneria*, which in turn was named in honor of Antonio Vallisneri (1661–1730), Italian naturalist.
- Branta* – probably corrupted from *brenthos* or *brinithos*, the Aristotelian name of an unknown bird. The vernacular name brant (brent in Great Britain) may be similarly derived, or possibly is from the Welsh *brenig*, a limpet.
- bernicla* – apparently from the Old English *bernekke*, original meaning unknown.
- canadensis* – of Canada.
- leucopsis* – from Greek *leucos*: white, and *opsis*: appearance, referring to the white face. The vernacular name barnacle goose refers to the once-held belief that these birds originated from barnacles.
- nigricans* – from Latin: blackish.
- Bucephala* – from Greek: a broad forehead.
- albeola* – diminutive of Latin *albus*: white. The vernacular name bufflehead is a corruption of the earlier name “buffalo-headed duck.”
- clangula* – diminutive of Latin *clangor*: a noise.
- islandica* – of Iceland. The vernacular name is in honor of Sir John Barrow (1764–1848), one-time secretary of the British Admiralty.
- Cairina* – supposed to be derived from Cairo, in Egypt, thus a misnomer for this American form.
- moschata* – from Latin *moschus*: musk. The vernacular name muscovy is a corruption of musk duck.
- Camptorhynchus* – from Greek *kamptos*: flexible, and *rhynchus*: beak, referring to the leathery bill.
- labradorius* – of Labrador.
- Chen* – from Greek: a goose. Here considered part of *Anser*.
- Clangula* – diminutive of Latin *clangor*: a noise.
- hyemalis* – from Latin, pertaining to *hiems*, winter or wintry. The vernacular name oldsquaw is based on the garrulous behavior of this species.
- Cygnus* – from Latin: a swan.
- buccinator* – from Latin: a trumpeter.
- columbianus* – of the Columbia River.
- olor* – from Latin: a swan.
- Dendrocygna* – from Latin *dendron*: a tree, and *cygnus*: a swan.
- arborea* – from Latin, pertaining to trees.
- autumnalis* – from Latin, meaning the period of harvest.
- bicolor* – from Latin: of two colors.
- Histrionicus* – from Latin, meaning histrionic and relating to *histrion*, a stageplayer.
- Lampronetta* – from Greek *lampros*: shining or beautiful, and *netta*: a kind of duck. Here considered part of *Somateria*.
- Lophodytes* – from Greek *lophos*: a crest, and *dutes*: a diver. Here considered part of *Mergus*.
- Mareca* – the Brazilian name for a kind of teal. Here considered part of *Anas*.

- Melanitta* – from *melas, melanos*: black, and *netta*: a duck. The vernacular name scoter is possibly from the Dutch word *koet*, or perhaps is a variant of "scout," which is in local use in Great Britain for scoters as well as guillemots and razor-bill auks.
- deglandi* – in honor of Dr. C. D. Degland (1787–1865), French naturalist.
- fusca* – from Latin: dusky.
- nigra* – from Latin *niger*: black.
- perspicillata* – from Latin: conspicuous or spectacular.
- Mergus* – from Latin: a diver.
- albellus* – diminutive of Latin *albus*: white.
- cucullatus* – from Latin: wearing a hood.
- merganser* – from Latin *mergus*: a diver, and *anser*: a goose. The vernacular name goosander is probably from the Old Norse *Gas* and *ønd*, meaning goose-duck.
- Oidemia* – from Greek *oidema*, Latin *oedema*: a swelling, in reference to the shape of the bill. Here considered part of *Melanitta*.
- Olor* – from Latin: a swan. Here considered part of *Cygnus*.
- Oxyura* – from Greek *oxy*: sharp, and *oura*: tail, referring to the pointed rectrices.
- dominica* – of Santo Domingo.
- jamaicensis* – of Jamaica (from which the species was first described).
- Philacte* – from Greek *philos*: loving, and *akte*: the seashore. Here considered part of *Anser*.
- Polysticta* – from Greek *poly*: many, and *sticte*: spotted.
- stelleri* – in honor of G. W. Steller (1709–1746), German naturalist on Bering's expedition to the arctic for Russia.
- Somateria* – from Greek *soma, somatos*: the body, and *erion*: wool or down. The vernacular name eider is derived from the Icelandic *ejdar*, used there for the common eider.
- fischeri* – in honor of G. von Waldheim Fischer (1771–1853), Russian naturalist.
- mollissima* – superlative of Latin *mollis*: very soft.
- spectabilis* – from Latin, meaning conspicuous or spectacular.
- Spatula* – from Latin, meaning spoonlike. Here considered part of *Anas*.