Ducks, Geese, and Swans of the World: Glossary and Vernacular Name Derivations

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ROXIMAL, MEDIAL OR PRAL OR DISTAL
TERTIALS (INNERMOST SECONDARIES)

BILL
FOREHEAD
EYE-RING
FOREHEAD
UPPER MANDIBLE
LORE
CHEEK
EAR REGION
SUPRA-OCULAR STRIPE
NAPE OR OCCIPUT
POST-OCULAR STRIPE

UPPER BREAST
LOWER BREAST
SCAPULARS
TERTIALS
SIDE
FLANKS
RUMP
SIDE OF RUMP
UPPER TAIL COVERTS
LOWER TAIL COVERTS

DORSAL ANTERIOR
POSTERIOR
VENTRAL
TOE
WEB

ANATOMICAL TERMS:
MARGINAL COVERTS
ALLULA
PRIMARIES
SECONDARIES
UNDERWING COVERTS OR WING LINING
CROWN
NAIL
LOWER MANDIBLE
THROAT
EAR REGION
(LAURICULARS)

PHYSICAL MEASUREMENTS:
FOLDED WING MEASUREMENTS

OTHER:
LOWER BREAST
NAIL
LOWER MANDIBLE
THROAT
EAR REGION
(LAURICULARS)
Glossary and Vernacular Name Derivations

Amphipoda: the order of crustaceans that includes the
animals called sand fleas and scuds.
Anatidae: the family of birds that includes ducks, geese,
and swans.
Anhimidae: the family of birds that includes the screamers.
Anseriformes: the order of birds that includes the families
Anatidae and Anhimidae.
Arthropoda: the phylum of animals that includes insects,
crustaceans, and other "jointed-legged" invertebrates.
Austral: southern or southerly.
Baer: the Siberian white-eye, or Baer pochard, was named
in honor of M. Baer, the 19th-century German orni-
thologist.
Barrow: the Barrow goldeneye was named in honor of Sir
John Barrow (1764-1848), one-time secretary to the
British Admiralty.
Bernier: the Madagascan or Bernier teal was named in
honor of a ship surgeon associated with a French natural
history expedition to Madagascar in the 1830s.
Bewick: the Bewick swan was named in honor of Thomas
Bewick (1753-1828), English engraver and naturalist.
Billabong: in Australia, a stagnant backwater, oxbow, or
minor branch of a stream.
Bill-down display: a term applied to the post-copulatory
display of many pochard species, in which the male
swims away from the female in a strongly down-tilted
head posture.
Bivalve: a mollusk with two valves, or shells, such as
clams.
Boreal: northern or northerly.
Brant: the origin of this vernacular name (which is brent
in Great Britain) is perhaps from the Welsh breig, or from
the Aristotelian brentos or brinthos, an unknown bird.
Bridling: a term applied to a male display of some Anas
species, involving a drawing of the head backward along
the scapulars while calling.
Brood: collectively, the young hatched from a single clutch
of eggs. Brooding refers to the act of tending a brood;
double-brooding refers to the rearing of two broods in a
single season.
Bulla: an inflated or bubblelike cavity associated with the
syrinx in many male ducks.
Bulrushes: the inclusive name for plants such as tules and
three-squares of the genus Scirpus, in the family
Cyperaceae.
Burping: a term applied to a display of various Anas
species, consisting of a vocalization accompanied by
vertical neck stretching.
Caruncle: a fleshy enlargement of skin, usually on the head
or neck.
Cattails: emergent and shoreline plants of the genus
Typha, family Typhaceae, referred to as cumbungi in
Australia.
Cere: a fleshy enlargement of the bill above the nostrils,
and the basis for the generic name Cereopsis.
Chiloé: the name of the Chiloé wigeon refers to the island
of Chiloé, off the coast of Chile.
Cladocera: the order of crustaceans that includes the
animals called water fleas (Daphnia).
Clutch: the complete number of eggs laid by a single
female and incubated simultaneously.
Composite: a member of the plant family Compositae,
which includes asters, sunflowers, and similar forms.
Conspecific: a term meaning that two or more populations
are or should be considered part of the same species.
Coot: a vernacular name properly restricted to species of
the genus Fulica, family Rallidae, but sometimes inap-
propriately applied to scoters.
Copepoda: a subclass of the Crustacea, including many
zooplanktonic organisms.
Coscoroba: this swan's vernacular and generic name is
derived from the species' typical call.
Cracidae: that family of birds that includes chachalacas,
guans, and curassows, within the order Galliformes.
Crèche: an assemblage of flightless young representing
several families.
Crustacean: an animal of the class Crustacea, which in-
cludes crayfish, crabs, and their relatives.
Decrescendo call: a term applied to a female call of various
Anas species that is characterized by a series of notes
that descend in pitch and volume.
Dimorphism: occurring in two forms (such as sexual
dimorphism), and including size and/or color dif-
ferences.
Display: a term denoting movements and/or vocalizations
that through evolution have come to serve as social signals.

Duck: this vernacular name comes from the Medieval English *duken*, “to dive,” and has no taxonomic significance inasmuch as it has been applied to nearly all of the smaller species of Anatidae. It is also sometimes used in the sense of female, as in *duck and drake*.

Duckweeds: tiny stemless floating plants of the family Lemnaceae, mostly in the genus *Lemna*.

Dump nesting: the laying of eggs in a common nest by two or more females. Among waterfowl, it is difficult to distinguish from “parasitic nesting;” the laying of one or more eggs by a female in another’s nest, to be incubated by the latter.

Eclipse: the dull, femalelike plumage of male waterfowl assumed after the breeding season in some sexually dimorphic species; actually a highly abbreviated winter or nonbreeding plumage.

Ecotone: an ecological transition zone between two community types.

Eider: the vernacular names for this group of sea ducks is from the Icelandic *eidar*, used there for the common eider.

Electrophoresis: the separation of a mixture of particles in a fluid medium under the influence of an electric field.

Endemic: a species or other taxon that is native and restricted to a particular area.

Ericad: a plant of the heather family Ericaceae.

Erythristic: a rufous or reddish plumage variation.

Estuarine: associated with an estuary, where a river joins the sea.

Extirpation: the local elimination of a population from an area, as distinct from extinction, the total elimination of a population.

Eyton: the plumed or Eyton whistling duck was named for and by T. C. Eyton, 19th-century English ornithologist (1809–80).

Falcated: sickle-shaped, like the elongated and decurved tertial feathers found on falcated ducks.

Family: a taxonomic category that represents a subdivision of an order and a grouping of related genera, identified by the suffix *idae*.

Feral: existing in a free-living state following escape from captivity or domestication.

Ferruginous: the color of rusty iron.

Fischer: the spectacled, or Fischer, eider was named in honor of J. Fischer von Waldheim, German and later Russian scientist.

Fledging period: the period between hatching and initial flight in birds.

Flightless period: the period between the molting of the flight feathers and their regrowth, during which flight is impossible in adult waterfowl.

Falcated: sickle-shaped, like the elongated and decurved tertial feathers found on falcated ducks.

Famil...
**Intergrade**: to exhibit a gradual rather than discontinuous transition in traits of adjoining populations.

**Isolating mechanism**: properties of individuals that prevent successful interbreeding with individuals belonging to different populations.

**Isopoda**: a subclass of the Crustacea, including many small aquatic forms.

**Jaejer**: raptorial gull-like birds of the family Stercorariidae.

**Jheel**: in India, a marsh, pool, or lake, particularly one left after inundation.

**Juvenile**: the age class in birds during which the juvenal plumage is carried, and in which initial flight (fledging) occurs.

**Kinked-neck call**: a term applied to a display of pochards, involving calling while stretching and bending the neck.

**Lacustrine**: associated with a lake.

**Legumes**: plants of the family Leguminoseae, such as peas and beans.

**Littoral**: the tidal zone of the ocean; also applied to the shallow edges of a lake.

**Maccoa**: the vernacular name of the maccoa duck probably stems from the Afrikaans *kacaaou*, later *makou*, a term used for a kind of duck (*makou-eend*) and also the spur-winged goose (*makougregans*).

**Mantle**: feathers of the back, including the scapulars and interscapulars.

**Mast**: acorns and similar nutlike fruits from trees.

**Meller**: the Meller duck was named in honor of Dr. C. Meller, an Englishman who discovered this species and collected the first specimens.

**Mock drinking**: a term applied to ritualized drinking; also called false drinking.

**Mock preening**: a term applied to a ritualized preening of the feathers.

**Molt-migration**: a migration undertaken prior to the postnuptial molt, to an area where the flightless period is passed.

**Monotypic**: a term applied to a taxonomic category that has only one unit in the category immediately subordinate to it, such as a tribe with only one genus.

**Muskgrass**: plants of the genus *Chara*, in the algae family Characeae, sometimes also called stonewort.

**Nuptial**: refers to the plumage in which pair formation or breeding occurs.

**Ochraceous**: the color of ochre, earthy yellow.

**Order**: a taxonomic category that represents a grouping of related families.

**Ostracoda**: a subclass of the Crustacea, including many small aquatic forms.

**Pair bond**: a prolonged individual association between a male and female in monogamous species, lasting either for a single breeding season or permanently.

**Páramo**: the moist, grassy, and shrubby zone above timberline in the northern Andes.

**Phyletic**: refers to the evolutionary history of a taxon.

**Phyllodoca**: a group of crustaceans having leaflike swimming feet that also serve as gills, such as fairy shrimp.

**Phylum**: a taxonomic category representing a major subdivision of the animal kingdom.

**Plankton**: small animals (zooplankton) and plants (phytoplankton) that float or drift in the water.

**Pochard**: a vernacular name applied to various species of the genera *Netta* and *Aytha*, probably derived from Low German *poken*, “to poke,” or Old French *poiard*, “a drunkard.”

**Pondweeds**: the inclusive name for a group of aquatic plants, primarily of the genus *Potamogeton*, in the family Potamogetonaceae.

**Postnuptial**: refers to the molt following the breeding season, during which the flight feathers are lost and the body feathers are also replaced.

**Puna**: the dry, grassy alpine zone of the central Andes.

**Race**: as used here, equivalent to subspecies; not necessarily the same as “form,” a geographically definable population of unspecified taxonomic rank.

**Radjah**: the vernacular name of the radjah shelduck is apparently a variant of *rajah*, and is based on the specific name given the species by Garnot. The alternative name, *Burdekin duck*, is based on the name of a river in Queensland.

**Renesting**: a second or later attempt at nesting by a female whose initial nesting effort was a failure. Distinct from multiple brooding, the rearing of more than one brood per season.

**Reticulate**: having a fine network of scales on the tarsus.

**Ross**: the Ross goose was named in honor of Bernard Ross (1827-74), chief factor of the Hudson Bay Company.

**Salvadori**: the Salvadori duck was named in honor of Tomasso Salvadori (1835-1923), director of the Zoological Museum at Turin, Italy, and an authority on the birds of Papua, New Guinea.

**Scaup**: the vernacular name of this group of pochards is derived from the Old French *escaleope* and the Old Dutch *schelpe*, referring to the mollusks on which the birds often feed.

**Scutellate**: having a vertically aligned series of scales on the front of the tarsus.

**Sheldrake**: this vernacular name refers to shelducks and sheldgeese inclusively, and is derived from the Medieval English *shield*, and *drake*, a male duck.

**Sedge**: the vernacular name of a group of grasslike plants of the genus *Carex* in the family Cyperaceae.
Sneak: a term applied to a display of some pochards, in which the head and neck are lowered to or nearly to the water.

Species: a “kind” of organism, or more technically, a group or groups of actually or potentially interbreeding populations that are reproductively isolated from all other populations. The term species remains unchanged in the plural, and also refers to the taxonomic category below that of genus and above that of subspecies.

Speculum: a pattern of distinctive feather coloration on the wing, sometimes iridescent, usually involving the secondary feathers.

Steller: the Steller eider was named in honor of G. W. Steller (1709–46), a German naturalist who discovered this species.

Step-dance: a term applied to a display in which a pair of birds tread water in parallel while variably raising one wing.

Sternum: the breastbone of birds, which in all waterfowl is deeply keeled.

Subadult: refers to a late plumage of immature birds that require more than one year to attain their adult or definitive plumage.

Subfamily: a subdivision of a family composed of one or more genera, and identified by the suffix inae.

Subspecies: a group of local populations of a species that occupies part of the species’ range and differs taxonomically from other local populations; a geographic race.

Superspecies: two or more species with largely or entirely nonoverlapping ranges and that are clearly derived from a common ancestor but are too distinct to be considered conspecific.

Swan: this vernacular name is akin to the Medieval English soun and the Latin sonore, meaning to make a noise or sound. It is restricted in use to the species here included in the genera Cygnus and Coscoroba. The Latin cygnus is also the basis for cygnet, meaning a young swan.

Synonym: in taxonomy, referring to differing names proposed for the same taxon; in such cases the older, or “senior,” synonym represents the valid name, provided that other conditions are met.

Syrinx: the sound-producing structure of the trachea in birds.

Tarn: term used in Scotland and England for a small mountain lake or pool.

Taxon (plural, taxa): a term for any category used in scientific classification (taxonomy), or for any particular example of such a category.

Teal: this vernacular name has no taxonomic significance, and has been applied to a variety of small ducks of varied ancestry; the word’s origin is uncertain, but may be from the Dutch teilen or tele, “to produce.”

Territory: an area, either fixed (as around a nest) or moving (as around a mate or brood), that is defended by an individual or pair from incursion by other individuals of the species.

Tiaga: the boreal or northern coniferous forest.

Trachea: the windpipe, which extends from the glottis to the junction of the bronchi, where the syrinx of waterfowl is located.

Tribe: a subdivision of a family or subfamily composed of one or more genera and identified by the suffix ini.

Triumph ceremony: a behavior pattern of geese and swans that typically involves mutual calling and posturing by members of a pair following a hostile encounter.

Turning the back of the head: a term applied to a male display of various duck species, in which the nape region is oriented toward a female.

Univalve: a mollusk with a single valve, or shell, such as snails.

Vermiculations: fine, wavy pigmentation patterns on feathers that vaguely resemble worm tracks.

Vlei: a term used in South Africa for a temporary lake or marsh.

Water lily: a group of aquatic plants with large floating leaves, including several genera in the family Nymphaeaceae.

Wigeon (or widgeon): This name is now usually applied to three species of Anas formerly separated as Mareca, but sometimes is used for other species such as the Cape teal. The origin of the word is obscure, but it is related to the Old French vigeon.

Wigeon grass: the inclusive name of a genus (Ruppia) of plants in the pondweed family Potamogetonaceae.

Xerophytic: refers to plants adapted to life in dry environments.