

FRECKLED DUCKS AT NORTH GLENELG

— On 10 July 1976, I was recording along the Patawalonga Creek, North Glenelg (AP), between the Patawalonga Golf Course and Adelaide Airport, when I saw an unusual duck swimming in a broad part of the creek. The banks here are low and the surroundings are grassy with vehicle tracks.

Many Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* and a few hybrids of this species with the Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* were in the area, and these allowed direct comparisons. The bird of interest appeared about the same size and shape as a Black Duck but was dark all over, much darker than any of the hybrid ducks ever seen around Adelaide. The body, but not the head, was marked with light fringes. The bill and iris were dark.

I identified the bird as a probable female Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa* from its plumage, despite the apparent similarity of its bill to a Black Duck's.

On 27 May 1978 I saw a similar duck in the same place; swimming with Grey Teal *A. gibberifrons* and Black Duck. This bird was observed with binoculars for five minutes from a distance about 40 m. It was about the same size as a Black Duck but plumper, and had dark grey plumage with fine light fringes. Its bill was dark grey with the end flattened and turned up, and there was a slight crest. There could be no doubt that this was a female Freckled Duck.

The two sightings were probably unrelated; but there are several drains in the area where a duck might remain unobserved for many months. — R. J. WHATMOUGH.

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