



PUBLISHER'S TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

Dugintsov V.A. (2016) On the Reliability of the Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* (Güldenstädt, 1770) Detections in the Amur Province, Russia // *Far East. J. Orn.* 5: 15–18.

SUMMARY

A critical analysis of published information concerning the Ferruginous duck *Aythya nyroca* (Güldenstädt, 1770) in Upper Amur (Amur Region, Far East Russia) concluded that all birds ever been mentioned here in publications as Ferruginous ducks, were actually Baer's Pochards *Aythya baeri*.

The referred figures and tables are in the original article in Russian, pp. 15—18

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* (Güldenstädt, 1770) is widespread in Eurasia: «from the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula to the east of the valley of the upper reaches of the Ob river, the foothills of Altai, the Urungu Valley, the headwaters of the Yellow River» (Stepanyan, 1990). Despite the considerable remoteness of the Amur Region from the eastern border of the area, there are two publications with brief information about the Ferruginous duck in the regional ornithological literature. However, nearly 40 years had passed since the publication of the latest works containing the author's information on observation of Ferruginous ducks (Kostin, Dymin, 1977). During this period none of the ornithologists working in the Amur region had observed this bird. Taking into account the characteristics of the geographical distribution of the Ferruginous duck in Russia and neighboring countries, and the lack of information about observations of it in the Amur region during the last forty years, the reliability of the findings of these birds in the region is under question.

The Ferruginous duck in the Amur Region was mentioned for the first time by L.M. Barancheev (1959, p. 260): «Among diving ducks the Amur region is inhabited by the Ferruginous Duck and the Tufted Duck.» In the search for truth it is important to note that the author mentions the Ferruginous Duck not

in the article of ornithological themed content, but in the eighth chapter of the book called «The nature of the Amur region», dedicated to the animal world. By its content and the style of writing this book was targeted at a broad range of readers - teachers, business professionals, local historians and, given the wide range of readers, the staff of its authors consciously decided not to duplicate the Russian names of animal and plant species with scientific names.

The published papers of L.M. Barancheev, reviewed by me, stated the details about the ducks of the Amur Region, and only provided information about the «Oriental White-eyed Duck *Nyroca baeri*» (1947, p. 20); «Oriental white-eyed duck (Baer's Pochard) *Nyroca baeri*» (1953, p. 26); «Baer's Pochard» (1954, p. 31); «Baer's Pochard *Nyroca baeri*» (1955, p. 220).

Thus, none of the works on the waterfowl of the Amur region, published prior to the publication of the book «The nature of the Amur region,» mentions the Ferruginous duck *Aythya nyroca*, the author only writes about the Baer's Pochard *Nyroca baeri*. In a paper published in 1947, L.M. Barancheev uses the Russian name of a duck «Oriental White-eyed Duck», duplicated with the species's Latin name - *Nyroca baeri*. The publication from 1953 mentions the Russian name as well - «Oriental White-eyed Duck», but in the brackets he explains this title as «Baer's Pochard». This implies that using the Russian name of the duck «Oriental White-eyed duck», which now stands for «Ferruginous Duck,» the author, in fact, meant Baer's Pochard *A. baeri*, but not the Ferruginous Duck *A. nyroca*.

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The question is, on what basis L.M. Barancheev writes about «The Ferruginous Duck» in the overview chapter on the fauna of the Amur region. The answer to this question is likely to be found in the historical Russian names of these two species of ducks - White-eyed Duck *Nyroca rufa*, outdated Latin name) and Eastern White-eyed Duck *Nyroca baeri*, outdated Latin name (Buturlin, Dementiev, 1935). The Russian name of the Ferruginous duck, at the same time, is literally translated as “White-eyed duck”. It is known that in Russian ornithology it was assumed that the Ferruginous duck *Nyroca nyroca* was divided into two subspecies: Western Ferruginous Duck *Nyroca nyroca nyroca* Gold. and eastern Ferruginous Duck *Nyroca nyroca baeri* Radde (Dementiev, 1941). In particular, these ducks were considered by B.K. Stegmann as subspecies *Nyroca nyroca nyroca* and *Nyroca nyroca baeri* with «different habitats» (1938, pp. 27-28). (I have not considered the question of the family relationship of these two species within the designated subject of this paper). Later A.Ya. Tugarinov (1941), having done anatomical and morphological studies of the skulls of these forms of ducks, came to the conclusion that «Baer's Pochard has significant differences from the western Ferruginous duck, and it is sufficient to distinguish it as an independent species» (p. 274). But despite giving *Nyroca nyroca baeri* the status of a species, many of the authors still used the subspecies names including the word «western» and «eastern» Ferruginous Duck for a long time in the Russian names of these ducks.

In the general narrative review of the birds of Amur region L.M. Barancheev, without a doubt, did not use the approved Russian specific name - Baer's Pochard by negligence, and used the earlier subspecific name «Ferruginous Duck» instead, omitting the word «eastern».

There have not been any reliable observations of the Ferruginous duck *Aythya nyroca* in the Amur region by L.M. Barancheev, which follows from the content of his published works on waterfowl in the region and summary reports on the findings of the new species of birds in the region. The author was very meticulous in the matter of timely publication of his observations of rare vagrant birds (Yellow-billed loon, Pied avocet, Pallas's sandgrouse) in the Amur

Region. There is no doubt that in the case of findings of the Ferruginous duck in the Amur region, he would have devoted an official report to this fact.

The second published article which outlines a summary of the observations of Ferruginous ducks in the Amur region is written by B.G. Kostin and V.A. Dymin (1977). The results of the authors' field observations of birds on the river Dep, left tributary of the river Zeya, during the period from 09/08/1974 to 02/09/1974 were used as the material for this article.

The Ferruginous duck is described by authors as follows: «it is common, found in the upper and lower reaches of the river. Wasn't observed on the lakes and in the floodplain. All observed adult and young birds kept on the reaches of the river» (p. 57).

When reading the authors' data about the Ferruginous duck it is noteworthy that the Russian name of the duck, as well as other bird species mentioned in the article - in violation of generally accepted rules - was not duplicated by its Latin name.

It is not only alarming, but doubtful that the verbal assessment of the relative abundance of species is «common», whereas in the long-term observations of birds in the Amur region none of ornithologists, either before or after the observations of the authors, up to the present day, had observed these ducks. Characterizing the features of distribution of the Ferruginous ducks, Yu.A. Isakov and E.P. Ptushenko (1952) write that these ducks make «regular, sometimes massive, flights outside their area with settling of some pairs for nesting.» Taking into account the remark of these authors, it is difficult to assume that the ferruginous ducks in significant numbers made such a long flight from the eastern borders of their natural habitat to the Amur Region, and nested on the river Dep in a large number of pairs. In addition, Yu.A. Isakov and E.P. Ptushenko note that «the biotopes of the Ferruginous duck are fairly deep lakes rich in aquatic vegetation and with reeds. This duck prefers ponds and lowlands and particularly wide floodplains of the southern rivers ...». However, B.G. Kostin and V.A. Dymin noticed that the Ferruginous ducks had not been observed in the lakes of the floodplain of Dep river.

I turned to one of the authors, B.G. Kostin, with the question on the Ferruginous ducks observations on the river Dep. In an interview, he explained that the material on ferruginous ducks during the expedition

was not collected because the Ferruginous ducks were well-known to V.A. Dymin (now deceased) due to his work on Lake Khanka, and there was no need to collect and store the skins of these birds, or use a handbook. He himself just began practicing as an ornithologist at that time, and did not save the diary entries (oral communication B.G. Kostin, 2014). The narrative of B.G. Kostin, without a doubt, holds the answer to the question of the reliability of the Ferruginous ducks observations on the river Dep and consequently in the Amur region. If the basis for determining the species of the observed «Ferruginous ducks» was only the observation of these birds by one of the co-authors on Lake Khanka, we can say with certainty that it was not Ferruginous ducks *Aythya nyroca*, since these birds had never been seen by any of the bird watchers on the Khanka lake up to the present time (Vorobyev, 1954; Polivanova, 1971; Nazarov, 1988, etc.). One must assume that the «Ferruginous ducks» observed by authors, in fact were Baer's Pochards.

Thus, failure to observe the rules of the collection of material, determining the species of caught birds, maintenance and storage of field diaries, text formatting of scientific articles led the authors to a gross faunal error.

Working on the list of birds of the Upper Amur region, we included it to the list, basing on the publication of B.G. Kostin and V.A. Dymin and without proper critical analysis of the available information about the «Ferruginous duck» (Dugintsov, Pankin, 1993). Later the Ferruginous Duck was included in the «List of animals included in the Red Book of the Amur Region» (2008), and subsequently in the Red Book of the Amur Region (2009).

Due to the fact that the initial information on the Ferruginous ducks *Aythya nyroca* in the Amur region was not reliable on the basis of the foregoing critical analysis of available publications, Ferruginous Duck should be excluded from the list of birds of the Amur Region, the list of animals listed in the Red Book of Amur Region and the Red Book of Amur region.

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