



## EX LIBRIS

by Sheldon Dingle

### WATERFOWL Ducks, Geese and Swans of the World

Many of you long-time readers have probably figured out that I love books. I'd rather read than work (which is precisely why so little gets done around here) and I'm always on the look out for a good book. You should also know that books are like gem-stones or horses — you have to look over a thousand to find one good one. Well, my looking has paid off again. There is new bird book on the market that is a one-in-a-thousand item.

The book is titled *Waterfowl; Ducks, Geese, and Swans of the World*, by Frank S. Todd, published by the Sea World Press, San Diego, CA. In the foreward, Dr. Jean Delacour states that this book, "... is the first major work by a recognized authority on the waterfowl of the world that includes quality color photo-

graphs of virtually every species and subspecies of wildfowl."

Of course, Dr. Delacour gets right to the heart of the matter. The volume is extremely impressive for two major reasons — the outstanding color photography, and a text that is very readable and is written with the authority of a man who really knows what he is writing about. After all, Frank Todd personally took over seven hundred and fifty of the photographs used in the book.

As an added bonus Mr. Todd has included a section (Appendix II) on photographing waterfowl. In it he admits to being a biologist first and a photographer second but the quality of his photos prove that even his second is first rate. He explains that fifteen years of photography has taught him some basic tricks of the trade and, of course, he passes these along to the reader. After reading his section on photography I had an irresistible impulse to load up my old camera and go into the backyard to photograph the swans. Mr. Todd did suggest that patience is probably the key ingredient in any animal photography so my pictures have little chance of turning out well — but his commentary is inspiring.

The organization of the volume is simple and effective. Mr. Todd begins with an introduction to the true waterfowl, moves to the classification of the waterfowl of the world and then devotes a full chapter to each of the tribes of waterfowl. These chapters are where you will find photographs and text relating to the individual species of birds.

One great blessing that has impressed me is that each of the many photographs has a rather complete caption that divulges a lot of information. If one is in a hurry one can learn quite a lot just by reading the captions under the photo of the bird of interest. The text presents a fuller account. These accounts are most often given as first hand experiences Mr. Todd gained in the field and while working with one of the largest wildfowl collections in the world.

After addressing all of the wildfowl in their appropriate chapters, Mr. Todd presents a very enlightening chapter on captive display, maintenance, and propagation. Here he deals with the aviculturist's responsibility as a custodian of nature and he explains in some detail the best ways to build and maintain a captive collection. He speaks of materials that work and that don't work. He explores the psychology of captive birds and suggests ways to make the birds more comfortable and to promote breeding. The thoughts expressed in this chapter are an intrinsic part of aviculture and no aviculturist should fail to read and ponder them.

The volume comes in two forms. The deluxe leather-bound limited edition (which I understand are all sold out) and the trade edition. Either volume will shortly become a collectors item and you would be wise to buy several of the books. Never before has there occurred in one volume so many outstanding photographs combined with such lucid commentary.

Frank Todd's excellent volume is designed to be displayed prominently in your library or upon your coffee table. It is to be read at your desk or in your wing-back before the fireplace. It will not do to take it into your boat on an early morning duck hunt. Fortunately, however, you can leave Todd's book at home and still take a waterfowl book into the field.

The book to take with you is *Key to North American Waterfowl* by Stephen R. Wylie and Stewart S. Furlong. It is illustrated by Jack R. Schroeder and published by Schroeder Prints Inc.

This colorful little volume is definitely designed for the outdoorsman, the bird watcher, naturalists, hunters, and all who venture into the uncertain elements of our great outdoors. It seems to be printed on magazine grade paper similar to the magazine in your hands right now but, believe it or not, it is printed on plastic and can withstand water, mud, grease, snow and other abuse without falling apart. The pages won't stick together, the color won't run, and the pages will not fall out. It can be washed.

If you have any interest at all in waterfowl you should have this *Key to North American Waterfowl* packed right along with your field gear. It is a key that will enable you to identify the waterfowl that you may see anywhere in our country. There is a map of the four flyways and a series of coded letters that tell you whether a given bird is common, uncommon, rare, or accidental in a particular flyway. There are forty-eight color plates, forty-six of which present pairs of waterfowl in full color accompanied by pertinent information. The plates show flight silhouettes, give descriptions of the flight habits, the food, and the normal habitats.

All in all, I think the *Key to North American Waterfowl* is a delightful little guide. Mr. Wylie has combined his waterfowl expertise with Mr. Furlong's innovative ideas about printing on plastic, and Mr. Schroeder's beautiful art work and the result is a unique one-of-a-kind field guide.

Ex Libris has presented two very different types of books on waterfowl but each is a leader in its field. For a reasonable sum you can have one volume in your library and one in your hip pocket. It will be money well spent.

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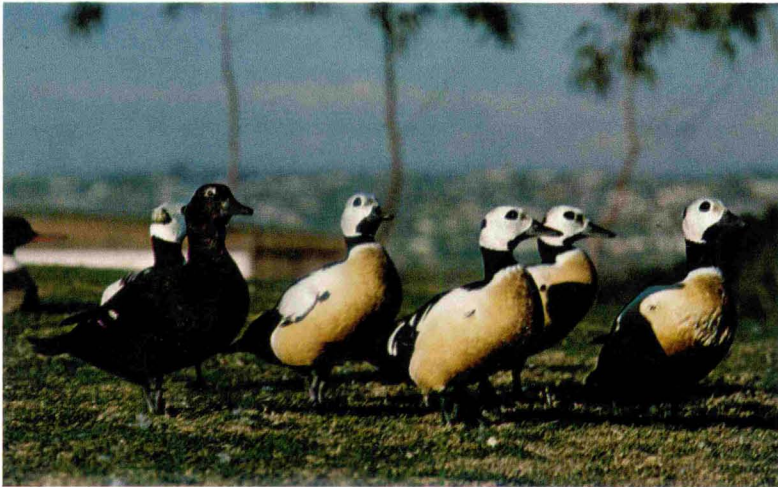




*Greater Magellan Goose  
(female) with gosling*

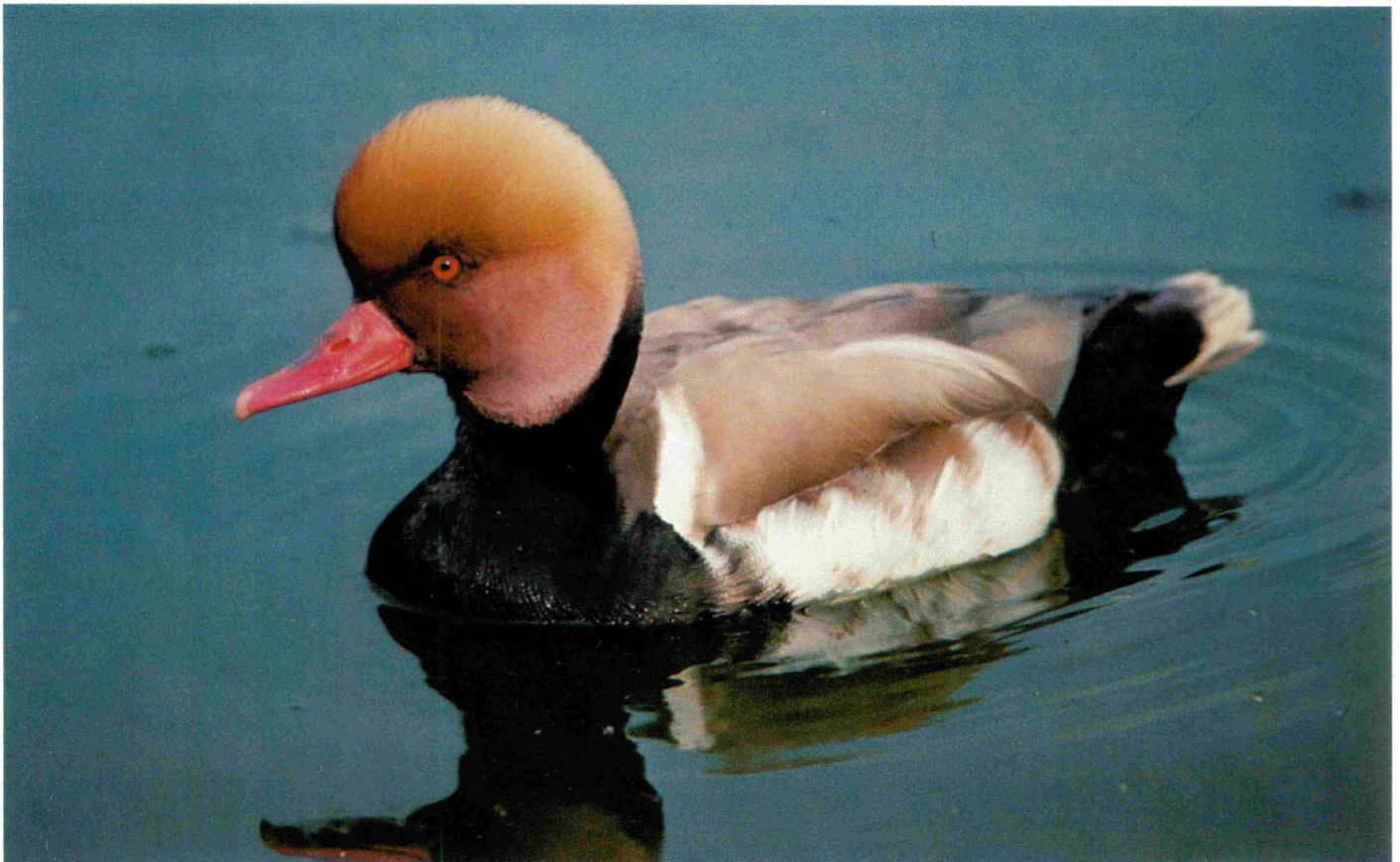


*African White-backed Duck (male)*



*Steller's  
Eiders*

*Red-crested Pochard (male)*



All photos courtesy of Frank S. Todd, Sea World, San Diego.