

ABERRANT WOOD DUCK, *CHENONETTA JUBATA* (LATHAM)\*

By H. J. FRITH†

During banding operations by the Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O., a wood duck, *Chenonetta jubata* (Latham), of aberrant coloration was trapped by B. K. Brown and G. Booth. The bird was taken at Gum Creek Station, near Willbriggie, N.S.W., on January 23, 1957. It was held in captivity at Griffith, 14 miles from the trapping site, until February 9, 1957, when it escaped. Two days later it was again found in a trap at the site of original capture, and is now held in Canberra.

*Description.*—Juvenile female. Band No. 100-01048. General colour above: white flecked with cocoa brown; scapulars, lower back, rump, and tail dark cocoa brown; wing speculum across the secondaries cocoa brown; the apical part of the outer secondaries white; head and neck pale cocoa brown with white stripe above and below the eye; chin and throat white; breast and flanks very pale brown, flecked with darker brown; centre of breast, abdomen, and undertail coverts white. Legs and bill light cocoa brown; iris dark brown; inside of bill and tongue pink.

It can be seen from the above description that the bird differs from the normal wood duck in the complete lack of the pigment causing black and grey coloration, so that only the brown elements remain, and these are much paler than normal.

Aberrant plumage in birds is rather common, but individuals that differ strikingly from the normal would tend to be short-lived, particularly in a game species subject to both human and natural predation. In this case the coloration of the bird is such that it was a highly conspicuous object in the area. Its survival and the circumstance of its double capture render it worthy of report.

\* Manuscript received March 25, 1957.

† Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra.

