

Teal

Anas crecca

Bird · Mostly a winter visitor · Sep–Apr



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A tiny, neat dabbling duck. Drakes have a chestnut head with a bottle-green comma through the eye, finely vermiculated grey flanks, a horizontal white stripe and a creamy-yellow triangle under the tail; females are mottled brown with a green wing patch. Teal winter in large numbers on the Solway marshes, flooded fields and quiet pools, with only small numbers breeding locally.

BEHAVIOUR

Teal feed by dabbling and up-ending in very shallow water and on wet mud, sieving out tiny seeds and invertebrates. When disturbed a flock 'springs' — leaping almost vertically off the water and twisting away fast and low in tight formation, which is where the collective name a spring of teal comes from. Drakes give a distinctive short, clear, bell-like whistle through the winter.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Ducks, geese and swans (Anatidae)
SIZE	34–38 cm · Britain's smallest duck
UK STATUS	Amber-listed

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