

INJURY-FEIGNING IN THE ANATIDAE

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"INJURY-FEIGNING" or some apparently allied form of distraction behaviour performed by parents caring for broods when confronted by a predator has been recorded in at least 58 species of the family Anatidae. But it seems not to occur in a few species and there are many others whose parental behaviour is undescribed. The purpose of this paper is to summarize what is now known in the hope of stimulating further observations and to draw attention to the possible taxonomic value of the presence or absence of such behaviour.

The writer has supplemented his own observations by an extensive search of the literature, including periodicals, and by personal communications. He gratefully acknowledges the help of Dr. James Bond, M. Brooks, jr., B. W. Cartwright, Dr. Clarence Cottam, A. D. Cruickshank, J. Delacour, O. Hawksley, A. W. Johnson, Dr. H. L. Mendall, Dr. A. H. Miller, Dr. A. A. Sanders and Dr. L. H. Walkinshaw.

The following table summarises the available data:

Tribe	Total no. of species	Species in which		Insufficient information
		feigning is recorded	feigning seems not to occur	
Anseranatini	1	—	—	1
Dendrocygnini	8	6	—	2
Anserini	21	3	3	15
Tadornini	15	8	2	5
aberrant Tadornini	5	—	—	5
Anatini	38	19	2	17
aberrant Anatini	5	2	—	3
Somateriini	4	3	—	1
Aythini	15	7	3	5
Cairinini	12	3	2	7
Mergini	16	7	4	5
Oxyurini	7	0	1+	6
aberrant Oxyurini	2	—	—	2
	149	58	17	74

(The sequence of tribes, and of species in the subsequent notes, is that of Scott, *Coloured Key to the Wildfowl of the World*, 1957)

DENDROCYGNINI. Published records for *Dendrocygna eytoni*, *javanica*, *viduata* and *autumnalis*. Unpublished records for *D. bicolor* and *arborea*. By both sexes, which share incubation and brood-care in whistling ducks.

ANSERINI. Published records for *Anser brachyrhynchus*, *A. canagicus* (?) and several races of *Branta canadensis*. Seems not to occur in swans. Both parents may take part.

TADORNINI. Published records for *Tadorna ferruginea*, *cana*, *tadornoides*, *variegata* and *tadorna*, *Chloephaga melanoptera*, *picta*, *hybrida*. Both sexes may display in *Tadorna*, but perhaps only female in *Chloephaga*. Seems not to occur in *Alopochen aegyptiacus* and *Neochen jubatus* and perhaps in the aberrant genera *Cereopsis*, *Tachyeres* and *Lophonetta*.

ANATINI. Published records for *Anas angustirostris*, *erythrorhyncha*, *bahamensis*, *georgica*, *acuta*, *crecca*, *gibberifrons*, *platyrhynchos*, *rubripes*, *porcilorhyncha superciliosa*, *undulata*, *sparsa*, *strepera*, *americana*, *discors*, *cyanoptera*, *platalea*, *rhynchotis* and *clypeata*. Usually by female only, but has been recorded for both parents in *A. erythrorhyncha*, *crecca*, *acuta* and *platyrhynchos*. Not yet recorded for *A. penelope* and *querquedula*, amongst often-seen species.

Recorded also in *Malacorhynchus membranaceus* and *Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*.

SOMATERIINI. Recorded for females of *Somateria mollissima*, *spectabilis* and *fischeri*.

AYTHYINI. Published records for *Aythya vallisneria*, *americana*, *australis*, *novae-seelandiae*, *collaris*, *fuligula* and *affinis*, but not for *ferina* and *marila*. Females only (males take no part in brood-care). Seems not to occur in *Netta erythrophthalma brunnea* and no records for other species of *Netta*.

CAIRINI. Published records for *Chenonetta jubata*, *Aix galericulata* and *A. sponsa*. Seems not to occur in other species, but of these only *Cairina moschata* and *Plectropterus gambensis* are well-known.

MERGINI. Records for *Melanitta fusca*, *Histrionicus histrionicus*, *Clangula hyemalis*, *Bucephala clangula*, *Mergus cucullatus*, *M. serrator*, *M. merganser*. Not recorded for *Melanitta migratoria* or *perspicillata*, *Bucephala albeola*, or *Mergus octosetaceus*.

OXYURINI. Seems never to have been recorded for any species, though only *Oxyura jamaicensis* has been much studied.

Sowls (*Prairie Ducks* pp. 147-149, 1955) has distinguished "feigning behaviour" from "tolling": "A hen is said to *toll* when she diverts an intruder's attention from her brood by moving deliberately and conspicuously from it... [for] "A hen is said to *feign* when she exhibits a spectacular flapping movement across water or land similar to the escape behaviour of flightless moulting birds. This behaviour seems to attract attention away from a hen's brood as in tolling, but the hen uses a flapping movement across land or water whereas in tolling she swims or flies."

Only accounts which appear to refer to feigning have been used in compiling the foregoing notes. It would be helpful if observers seeking to fill the gaps in our knowledge would describe the actions seen in some detail and also note whether the intruder eliciting the behaviour was a man, another mammal or a bird.

A bibliography of the published records is filed at the Trust headquarters.