First record of Eurasian Wigeon Anas penelope for Cuba

Eurasian Wigeon Anas penelope is one of the most widespread and numerous Eurasian ducks. It is also a regular winter visitor to coastal North America in small numbers with occasional records as far south as Mexico\(^1,2\). There is just one record for South America, in northern Venezuela, in March 2002\(^3\). In the West Indies, A. penelope is a vagrant or casual visitor to the Bahamas, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Barbuda and Barbados\(^1,3\). There is also an undocumented record of two on Bermuda in October 2006\(^4\).

On 14 March 2014, P. López Delgado was leading P. Garland, S. Smith, C. Viney and myself in the El Jado area, Cayo Coco, Cuba (22°26.026′N 78°20.242′W) in search of waterbirds, when, among a group of American Wigeon A. americana and Blue-winged Teal A. discors, first one adult male Eurasian Wigeon and then a second were found. The true significance of the record was not immediately realised, so no photographs were taken, and on a return visit next day they could not be relocated.

Other than PLD, all of the other observers have many years of birdwatching experience and Eurasian Wigeon is a species they are extremely familiar with. Compared to American Wigeon, the rich rufous head and broad straw-coloured coronal-stripe are diagnostic of European Wigeon. Viewing conditions were good with bright sunlight and the birds were watched at a distance of <150 m using 10 × 42 binoculars and a 20 × 77 telescope for several minutes. This is the first record of Eurasian Wigeon for Cuba.

References

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