

Garganey

Regno: fauna

Birds

 [marzaiola.jpg](#) [1]

Garganey - *Anas querquedula*

Small dabbling duck, easily recognised by its size, slender body and marked white eyebrow of drake.

In nuptial dress, the drake carries long, bluish-grey decorative feathers edged with white on its back. Its call (a strange rattling sound) is useful for identification, which it frequently emits especially during flight.

The Italian name of Marzaiola (Marzo = March, ndt) refers to the period it occurs in the country during its migration: actually this species is characterised by a prevalently circular type of migration, i.e. the autumnal and spring routes differ.

In August-September, moreover, the drakes are in their eclipse livery (i.e. they are similar to the ducks) and are often mistaken for Teal, which travel in greater numbers during this period.

The over-wintering grounds are mostly in the Sahel region of Africa, especially the flood plains of the River Niger, where the recent droughts have seriously threatened several migratory species.

The species appears to be in marked decline in all European countries, where at present there are estimated to be fewer than 5,000 nesting pairs.

Probably there are no more than 200 nesting pairs in Italy, 80-90% of which are in the northern regions.

Interesting cases of nesting has recently been reported in some ponds in the Florentine Plain as well as at the Fucecchio Marshes.

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[1] <http://zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/marzaiola.jpg>