

# NON-NATIVE BIRDS BREEDING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM IN 1997

MALCOLM OGILVIE AND THE RARE BREEDING BIRDS PANEL



Red-crested Pochards *Netta rufina* (Rosemary Powell)

This is the second report on non-native species of birds breeding in the United Kingdom and covers the year 1997. As explained in the introduction to the first report (Ogilvie *et al.* 1999b), the Rare Breeding Birds Panel has extended its remit to monitor the scarcer introduced and naturalised non-native species in addition to its traditional role.

Like the first report, this second one does not claim to be complete. The publication of the first report has, however, stimulated more observers and county recorders to contribute information, so that this second report does provide a fuller picture for most species. Records of all non-native species in 1997 involving breeding or potential breeding activity, including presence of a pair or more in suitable habitat, are listed below.

The letters after the species' names are the categories used by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC 1998):

- A Species which have been recorded in an apparently natural state at least once since 1st January 1950.
- B Species which were recorded in an apparently natural state at least once up to 31st December 1949, but have not been recorded subsequently.
- C Species that, although originally introduced by Man, either deliberately or accidentally, have established breeding populations derived from introduced stock, that maintain themselves without necessary recourse to further introduction.
- E Species that have been recorded as introductions, transportees or escapees from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining. Species of which Category E individuals have been recorded as nesting, with their own kind, are marked with an asterisk (E\*).

The following species, shown as Category C in the British List, are dealt with in

the Panel's reports on rare breeding birds (Ogilvie *et al.* 1999c): Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Red Kite *Milvus milvus* and Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*.

The Panel is not gathering information for the following commoner Category C species: Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*, Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*, Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata*, Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*, Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus*, Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*, Chukar Partridge *A. chukar*, Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*, Rock Dove (and Feral Pigeon) *Columbia livia*, and Little Owl *Athene noctua*.

Records are given by county, in alphabetical order within England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

### NIGHT HERON *Nycticorax nycticorax* (AE\*)

LOTHIAN An estimated five to ten pairs breed in Edinburgh Zoo, with a total of at least 30 free-flying individuals seen in recent years.

These birds, together with those at Great Witchingham Park, Norfolk, appear to be more or less sedentary.

### BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus* (E\*)

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Pair bred at Deene Lake and raised four young.

LOTHIAN Pair bred on Union Canal at Rotho and raised two young.

The only breeding reports received, though singles and occasional pairs are well distributed throughout southern England, with occasional birds farther north.

### TRUMPETER SWAN *Cygnus buccinator* (E\*)

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Pair bred at Tansor Gravel-pits, raising one young.

This appears to be the first breeding by this species in the wild state in the United Kingdom. The birds had escaped from a wildfowl collection.

### WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* (AE\*)

BEDFORDSHIRE Pair raised three young

at Wardown Park, Luton.

BERKSHIRE Pair, free-flying, on Great Meadow Pond, Windsor Great Park, May–July.

NORTHUMBERLAND Pair at Marden Quarry and other nearby waters, June – August.

DUNBARTONSHIRE Seven birds present, but no evidence of breeding at this regular locality.

These were the only known escaped pairs which bred or may have bred, though several others, and several singles, were present at localities in England. Apparently wild pairs also bred in Scotland in 1997 (Ogilvie *et al.* 1999c).

### PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus* (AE\*)

RUTLAND Adult paired with Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*, March – May.

Occasional pairs have bred – perhaps, if within the wintering range of the species, involving injured birds – but released birds exist in a number of locations.

### WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons* (AE\*)

GREATER MANCHESTER Pair of the Greenland race *flavirostris*, which appeared, with Canada Geese *Branta canadensis*, on the moorland reservoirs at Rochdale in winter 1991/92, was seen with four young in October 1997 and stayed to the year end.

ARGYLL Four full-winged pairs of the race *flavirostris* bred on Islay near a waterfowl collection; one brood of three young seen.

The origin of the Greater Manchester birds remains a mystery. The small group on Islay stems from a small waterfowl collection, but appears not to mix with wild visitors.

### BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus* (E\*)

DERBYSHIRE Pair present at one locality.

HAMPSHIRE Pair raised three young at Stratfield Saye.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Up to three pairs present during summer, but no proof of breeding.

Delany (1993) recorded birds at a minimum of 27 localities in 1991, but with breeding only at Stratfield Saye.

**SNOW GOOSE** *Anser caerulescens* (AE\*)

BERKSHIRE Up to six pairs bred unsuccessfully at Eversley Gravel-pits.

HAMPSHIRE Pair bred unsuccessfully at Stratfield Saye.

LEICESTERSHIRE Two males at Priory Water, both hybridised with Greylag Geese *A. anser* and produced broods of four and three.

ARGYLL Maximum of 49 seen on Coll in April, but no information on breeding.

The Argyll flock, which moves between Coll and Mull, appears to be an apparently self-sustaining flock which has remained remarkably stable for the last 30 years or more, during which period flocks of other introduced geese have managed steady increases.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis* (AE\*)

BERKSHIRE Two pairs bred unsuccessfully at Eversley Gravel-pits.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Flock of about 50 near Emberton (present for some years), no information on breeding.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE Up to 32, moving between New Grounds and Frampton Pools, with six goslings seen on 28th May.

HAMPSHIRE 21 pairs bred at four localities (Stratfield Saye, Eversley Cross, Baffin's Pond, Portsmouth, and Sowley Pond), raising at least 56 young.

LANCASHIRE and NORTH MERSEYSIDE Single pairs bred at two localities.

NORFOLK Single pairs bred at two localities. Flocks of up to 60 seen in county during year.

SUFFOLK Single pairs bred at two localities.

GLAMORGAN Pair bred successfully at Roath Park Lake, Cardiff.

Reports were received from 14 localities, compared with 11 in 1996, while Delany (1993) reported successful breeding occurring at 15 localities in 1991.

**EGYPTIAN GOOSE** *Alopochen aegyptiacus* (CE\*)

BERKSHIRE Pair with three young on River Thames, Bray, on 2nd July; pair bred unsuccessfully (twice) at Whiteknights Park; and pair incubating at South Lake, Woodley, in December, hatched seven young in January 1998.

ESSEX Single pairs present at two localities, breeding took place at one.

GREATER MANCHESTER Two pairs bred at Compstall Reservoirs, Stockport, where introduced several years ago; up to nine adults in January.

RUTLAND Three pairs bred at Rutland Water (seen with broods of ten, seven and three); maximum of 46 birds in September-October.

SUFFOLK Single pairs with young reported from seven localities.

SURREY Up to 18 birds seen at four localities; two pairs thought to have bred.

No meaningful records were received from the traditional stronghold in Norfolk, but elsewhere there is evidence of a slow spread.

**RUDDY SHELDUCK** *Tadorna ferruginea* (BE\*)

NORFOLK Pair bred, hatching 11 young, but none survived.

This species is reported quite frequently from widely scattered localities including in Scotland, but few if any show signs of breeding, with just the one pair in Norfolk for the second year running.

**CAPE SHELDUCK** *Tadorna cana* (E)

SURREY Two adults and four juveniles, Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir on 3rd May, later moved to Walton Reservoir where three adults and two juveniles until mid July. One of the adults was considered to be a hybrid with Paradise Shelduck *T. variegata*.

The breeding locality of these birds was not reported, nor is their origin known. If they did breed in the wild, then this would be a first record for the United Kingdom.

**MUSCOVY DUCK** *Cairina moschata* (E\*)

BEDFORDSHIRE Pair bred at East Hyde and raised one young.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE Eight pairs present on the River Ouse at Ely, with confirmed breeding by at least two, with broods of 17 and seven seen.

DERBYSHIRE Pair bred at Bradford Dale, with brood of five seen on 13th July.

NORFOLK One pair known to have bred, with brood noted.

NORTHUMBERLAND Pair bred at Derwent Reservoir, brood of three seen.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Up to 16 at Rufford, including four pairs.

SURREY Up to three pairs at one locality and a pair at another, no evidence of breeding.

Reported from seven counties, compared with just three in 1996. The species is also well established at Lothing Lake and Oulton Broad in Norfolk, where 99 were counted in December 1996 (Waters *et al.* 1998), but the breeding status there is unknown.

**WOOD DUCK** *Aix sponsa* (E\*)

Several reports of singles and small flocks, but no breeding or possible breeding records were received.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** *Anas discors* (AE\*)

ESSEX The pair, which has been present at Connaught Water, Epping Forest, since at least 1994, bred successfully.

This is the first proved successful breeding of this species in the wild in the United Kingdom.

**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** *Netta rufina* (AE\*)

GLOUCESTERSHIRE Maximum of 88, in October, in Cotswold Water Park, with much smaller numbers in summer months: May 13, June 11, July 9 and August 10. No breeding details this year.

MIDDLESEX Two, Stoke Newington Reservoir, on 11th May and 20th August, three on 23rd August and six, including two juveniles, on 4th and 7th September.

SURREY Pair bred at Winkworth

Arboretum, with brood of six on 21st May.

SUSSEX Pair bred at Elms Farm, Icklesham, where brood of three seen.

WILTSHIRE Pair bred in Cotswold Water Park, brood of three seen on 2nd August, the first breeding in the Wiltshire part of the Park since 1990.

The population in the Cotswold Water Park, Gloucestershire/Wiltshire, is well established and apparently increasing, though actual breeding records are scarce.

**SILVER PHEASANT** *Lophura nycthemera* (E\*)

SUSSEX A single bird was seen in West Dean Woods on 18th June.

The only record received.

**REEVES'S PHEASANT** *Syrnaticus reevesii* (E\*)

No records received this year.

**GOLDEN PHEASANT** *Chrysolophus pictus* (CE\*)

BEDFORDSHIRE A male was heard calling in June near Woburn.

DORSET Present on Furzey and Brownsea Islands in Poole Harbour, where populations reported as stable, but no detailed information.

NORFOLK A total of at least 34 reported from at least 13 localities, but no proof of breeding.

SUSSEX Six males reported, but no evidence of breeding.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY Thought to be still present in Palnure area, though no records this year.

Reports of declines continue to be received. No report was received from Tresco, Isles of Scilly, where several pairs are believed to occur.

**LADY AMHERST'S PHEASANT** *Chrysolophus amherstiae* (CE\*)

BEDFORDSHIRE The Bedfordshire Bird Club is conducting a three-year survey of this elusive and declining species. Minimum totals of 37 males and nine females were found at nine localities. One brood of two young was seen.

SUSSEX Three males reported, but no evi-

dence of breeding.

A fuller picture of numbers in Bedfordshire, which is thought to hold the great majority of the British population should emerge from the current survey. There is much evidence that the species is declining.

**ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET** *Psittacula eupatria* (E\*)

LANCASHIRE and NORTH MERSEYSIDE  
A locally escaped pair bred successfully in north Liverpool.

This species has previously bred, rarely, in the wild in the United Kingdom.

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** *Psittacula krameri* (CE\*)

AVON Escaped pair attempted to breed, but failed when female killed in nest hole.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Up to 16 reported from four localities, with successful breeding by two pairs at one, where up to 20 seen in winter.

DORSET Three pairs in one locality, at least one bred, with three juveniles seen in October.

SURREY A total of 37 pairs reported, of which two were proved to breed and 12 probably did. The Esher Rugby Club roost held a new record total of 1,507 birds in August.

SUSSEX Up to 14 pairs reported, but no evidence of breeding.

Peak counts in 1997 from the area covered by the *London Bird Report* (London Natural History Society 1998) were Surrey 3,000, Middlesex 282, Kent 187, Buckinghamshire 63, Essex 1, Inner London 1 and Hertfordshire 1; further evidence of the continued increase in the population. It is clear from the late-summer counts that comparatively few breeding pairs are being reported, perhaps because they are widely dispersed.

**MONK PARAKEET** *Myiopsitta monachus* (E\*)

DEVON Seen regularly around Bickleigh Mill, Tiverton, with maxima of five in January, March and November. There was

no evidence of breeding in the wild.

SURREY A pair, present at the Lonsdale Road Reservoir from early March to the end of the year, built nests in March, November and December, but no further proof of breeding.

The same localities as last year. Further reports of scattered singles were received.

**EAGLE OWL** *Bubo bubo* (E\*)

ENGLAND Pair bred at a location in northern England for the second successive year and fledged three young.

The pair which bred in 1996 did so again. A certain amount of publicity was generated from the mention of it in the first report (Ogilvie *et al.* 1999b), with the popular newspapers and radio interviewers concentrating on the fact that the species has been known to kill domestic cats and dogs. The only previous breeding record was of a pair which bred in Moray & Nairn in 1984 and again in 1985, fledging a single chick (Cook 1992).

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## AUTHOR

Dr M. A. Ogilvie, Glencairn, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay PA49 7UN

