

Non-native birds breeding in the United Kingdom in 2000

Malcolm Ogilvie and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*
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This is the fifth annual report by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel into the breeding of the rarer non-native species in the United Kingdom, and covers the year 2000. Compared with the previous report, the recording of some species has improved but it is clear that many observers still do not bother to document the occurrence of 'escapes', despite the fact that the majority of county bird reports now include a section devoted to them. The Panel continues to urge all observers to contribute records to their County Recorder and, through them, to the Panel.

Records of all non-native species involving

breeding or potential breeding activity in 2000 are listed below. Pairs or, for some species such as the pheasants (Phasianidae), just males in suitable habitat qualify for inclusion. The letter codes after the species' names are the categories used by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC 1998). The absence of a letter indicates that the species is not currently listed.

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 appar-

ently 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. These are marked E* when they have been recorded as nesting with their own kind.

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.* 2002): Gadwall *Anas strepera*, Red Kite *Milvus*

milvus and Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*.

The Panel does not gather information for the following relatively common species of which introduced or escaped populations breed in the wild (categories in brackets): Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* (AC), Greylag Goose *Anser anser* (AC), Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* (AC), Mandarin Duck *Aix galericulata* (C), Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (AC), Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* (C), Chukar Partridge *Alectoris chukar* (E*), Red-legged Partridge *A. rufa* (C), Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* (C), Rock Dove (and Feral Pigeon) *Columbia livia* (AC), and Little Owl *Athene noctua* (C).

Records are set out in the country order England, Wales, Scotland, and, within those, by alphabetical order of county. There were no records of scarcer non-native species breeding in Northern Ireland in 2000.

Systematic list

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (AE*)

Two localities in two counties: two populations of full-winged individuals.

NORFOLK The breeding colony containing full-winged birds at Great Witchingham Park was not counted this year. LOTHIAN No count was received of the Edinburgh Zoo population.

It is understood that no young were allowed to become full-winged at Edinburgh Zoo this year, in line with the policy of reducing the number of free-flying birds.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* (E*)

At least seven localities in seven counties: four pairs bred, three other pairs reported.

CLEVELAND Pair bred at Stewart Park and reared two young. DEVON Pair bred at Dawlish Warren and hatched three young. GREATER MANCHESTER Pair bred at Arley Hall and reared two young, one of which was shot; the other was taken into care and re-homed. NORFOLK Pair seen at various localities along the north coast during the year, but did not breed. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Pair possibly bred at Deene Lake where one of three adults present was sitting on a nest in September. SUSSEX Pair with one full-grown cygnet, Arlington Reservoir, August to October; breeding locality unknown. WARWICKSHIRE Pair summered in the Tame valley.

No breeding reports were received from either Wiltshire or Lothian, where pairs have bred in recent years. Reports of singles were received from a number of other areas.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* (AE*)

No reports of breeding by apparently escaped or introduced birds were received. Singles in Cumbria and the Scottish Borders may have been injured wild birds forced to summer.

Pink-footed Goose

Anser brachyrhynchus (AE*)

Small numbers were recorded from a number of localities, but no breeding was reported. Delany (1993) found a total of 88 individuals at 29 sites in 1991, including a breeding pair in Lancashire.

White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons (AE*)

Two localities in two counties: four pairs bred. NORFOLK A pair of the European race *albifrons* bred at Stiffkey Fen, but the outcome was not reported. ARGYLL Three full-winged pairs of the Greenland race *flavirostris* bred on Islay; only three young fledged.

Delany (1993) reported a total of 54 *albifrons* in 1991, of which 40 were at six localities in Norfolk; the only record of a breeding pair that year was at one of these sites. The small group

of *flavirostris* on Islay stems from a waterfowl collection, and breeding success is typically low.

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus* (E*)

Four localities in three counties: three pairs and one mixed pair bred.

GREATER MANCHESTER Two localities: pair bred unsuccessfully at Pennington Flash; pair with two fledged young in west of county from October onwards, but breeding site unknown. **SHROPSHIRE** Mixed pair (with Greylag Goose *A. anser*) bred, with four young seen. **SOMERSET** Pair with five young, Shapwick Heath, 30th May, had only three young by 14th June; the final outcome was not reported.

Reports of singles and small flocks were received from a number of counties. Delany (1993) reported 85 individuals at 27 localities in 1991, but very few breeding attempts have been reported and success seems low.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens* (AE*)

Two localities in two counties: two pairs bred.

HAMPSHIRE Two pairs bred at the regular site of Stratfield Saye and reared four young. **ARGYLL** A flock of 30-40 introduced birds, which moves between Coll and Mull, was present during the year, but there was no report of breeding.

A small number of records of non-breeding birds were received.

Emperor Goose *Anser canagicus* (E)

One locality: mixed pair bred.

CUMBRIA Mixed pair (of hybrid Emperor × Bar-headed Goose *A. indicus*) laid eggs but no young were seen.

This is the first time that this species has appeared in these reports, albeit as a mixed pair and thus not yet deserving the addition of an asterisk on the BOU's Category E list. Delany (1993) found just 14 individuals in 1991 at seven widely scattered localities. A handful of other records was received, including two Emperor Goose × Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* hybrids in Sussex.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* (AE*)

Minimum of nine localities in eight counties: at least 59 pairs bred or probably bred.

AVON Pair bred at Chew Valley Lake, laid three eggs, but no young seen. **BERKSHIRE** Five pairs bred at Eversley Gravel-pits, all failed.

CUMBRIA Ten pairs were proved to breed; a county-wide breeding-season survey revealed 96 adults and 18 young. **ESSEX** Single pairs bred at two sites, success not reported. **HAMPSHIRE** At least 25 pairs bred at Stratfield Saye, but all apparently failed. **LANCASHIRE** Estimated 15 pairs bred. **NORFOLK** No proven breeding records were received, but the presence of flocks of up to 133 birds indicates that the species breeds regularly somewhere in the county. **WEST MIDLANDS** Pair bred at the Vale and reared four young.

This is clearly an incomplete picture of the status of this species. Flocks of apparently non-breeding birds were reported from a number of localities.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus* (CE*)

Minimum of 14 localities in eight counties: at least 127 pairs recorded/estimated.

BERKSHIRE Pair hatched ten young at Billingbear Golf Course and fledged seven. **ESSEX** Two pairs bred and a third probably did so, at two localities. **GREATER MANCHESTER** Pair with three young at Compstall Reservoir in January; may have bred again as pair with one young at Audenshaw Reservoir in July where definitely did not breed. **NORFOLK** 47 pairs known to have bred, but county total at least 100 pairs. **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE** Three localities: pair reared three young at Attenborough Gravel-pits; pair reared six young at Center Parcs, Clipstone; one to three adults present at Rufford. **SUFFOLK** Nine pairs bred and four pairs possibly bred; incomplete survey. **SURREY** Four localities: pair with three young in June on River Thames, Shepperton; pair reared two young, Thorpe Water Park; pair with five small young, Camberley; three pairs at Old Oxted, but no proof of breeding. **SUSSEX** Pair with four well-grown young, River Adur, Shipley, in May-June; first breeding in county.

Coverage remains patchy.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* (BE*)

Three localities in two counties: one pair bred.

NORFOLK A pair bred at Sennowe Park, young were seen but final outcome unknown. A pair was present at Holkham Park all year, but is not thought to have bred. **GWENT** Pair at Celtic Manor Golf Course in April.

Single pairs bred in Norfolk in 1996 and 1997.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata* (E*)

Three localities in three counties: one pair bred. CAMBRIDGESHIRE 24 birds present at Ely on 30th June, but up to 20 subsequently removed by local council. CHESHIRE Pair bred at Shakerley, one young seen in July. SURREY Male and three females, Kew Gardens, June.

Records of non-breeding birds were received from a further seven counties. We do stress that this species is not simply a farmyard duck and that we welcome all records.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa* (E*)

No breeding records were received. DEVON Pair at Buckfastleigh, 1st April. KENT Single pairs present at Boughton Park in May and June, and Lamberhurst in April. SHROPSHIRE Pair at Middle Pool, Trench, from January to 22nd June. WEST MIDLANDS Pair at Dartmouth Park from July.

The above are the only breeding-season reports received of pairs. There were a number of other records of birds outside the breeding season from a further nine counties.

Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* (AE*)

Three localities in three counties: one pair and one mixed pair known to have bred. NORFOLK Introduced/escaped population in Wensum Valley reported as still present, but no further information received. NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Mixed pair (a female mated to a male Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*) at Lound produced one young seen on 21st June; male Red-crested Pochard present on 15th June only. SURREY Full-winged pair bred, Kew Gardens, three young reared.

Reports were received from a further eight counties, but with no indication of breeding. We would like to suggest to observers in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire that a survey of the apparently well-established population in the Cotswold Water Park would be extremely worthwhile.

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* (A)

One locality: one pair. LANCASHIRE One pair at Mere Sands Wood, but did not breed.

The birds at this site originally came from a waterfowl collection in 1988 and they may now have died out as a breeding population.

Silver Pheasant *Lophura nycthemera* (E*)

No reports were received.

Reeves's Pheasant *Syrnaticus reevesii* (E*)

Two localities in two counties: two birds. DERBYSHIRE Male at Haddon Fields, late March and April. NORFOLK One at the Stanford Training Area, May-June and October.

These were the only records received.

Green Pheasant *Phasianus versicolor*

One locality: six birds. NORFOLK Up to six birds, including five males, were present in potentially suitable habitat in the Ingham/Stalham/Sutton area in January to April and September to November.

This is a new species for these reports and one which does not appear in the BOU's British List Category E. The origin of the Norfolk birds is unknown.

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus* (CE*)

21 localities in five counties: approximately 85-118 pairs recorded.

DEVON Two individuals recorded from one locality. NORFOLK Total of 49 birds noted at 11 localities, probably representing a minimum of 30-50 pairs; one pair known to have bred. SUFFOLK County total estimated at eight pairs, with records of up to six calling males at Kings Forest and a female with three young seen at Rushford. SUSSEX A more extensive survey than usual was carried out, which included data from three private estates not normally included in this report. About 25-30 pairs present and breeding on estate 1, but chick survival very poor and population maintained by captive breeding and release; two or three pairs at each of three sites on estate 2, present all year, but no evidence of breeding; two pairs at each of three sites on estate 3, also 5-6 pairs killed by Red Foxes *Vulpes vulpes*; single male seen and heard at Powdermill Reservoir, March-May; one, Vinehall Footland Wood, May; male, West Dean Woods, March. ABERDEENSHIRE Male seen Brimmond Hill, Aberdeen, 24th June.

This represents the most individuals ever recorded in these reports, but there are still a number of areas where this species is thought to occur, and for which no reports were received.

Lady Amherst's Pheasant
Chrysolophus amherstiae (CE*)

No reports were received. In 1998, a total of 85 territories was identified in Bedfordshire, but the survey has not been repeated.

Common Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* (E*)

No reports were received from the sites in Northamptonshire where pairs bred in 1998-1999.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* (E)

One locality: three birds.
NORFOLK Three present all year at Stanford Water in apparently suitable habitat.
This is a new species for these reports.

Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* (E*)

No breeding reports received.
The pair which bred at Fazackerley, Merseyside, from 1997 to 1999, appears to be no longer present; several of the flock, which had built up to around 12 birds, were shot in 1998.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* (CE*)

Breeding in six counties: total population c. 4,300 individuals.
BERKSHIRE Concentrated in the easternmost part of the county, but has recently spread west as far as Bray and Maidenhead. At least 100 birds were roosting regularly at Wraysbury.
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Small population in southeast of county, around Burnham, Dorney and Langley Park, as well as further north to Bourne End and Marlow; estimated total of about 100 birds in 2000.
KENT Estimated 75-100 pairs on the Isle of Thanet, where principal roost, at Ramsgate, peaked at 435 in winter 2000/01 and total population estimated at 500 birds. Increasing population in west of county around Lewisham, with peak roost count of 641 in winter 2000/01.
MIDDLESEX Largest counts from Bushy Park and Hampton Court areas, with at least 150-200 birds present.
SURREY Peak roost counts in winter 2000/01 were of 2,999 at the Esher Rugby Club and 277 at Reigate.
SUSSEX Expansion south from Surrey has reached Gatwick in the north of the county. There were scattered sightings of small numbers at several localities along the south coast between Hastings and Bognor, as well as some evidence for a small population based around

Brighton, but no breeding reports were received.

Based on the figures above, the total population estimate for the UK in winter 2000/01 was 4,352. Sightings not involving breeding birds were received from Avon, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Dorset, Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Warwickshire. Much of the information above came from Butler (2002) and Raven (2002), as well as from Chris Butler's website at <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~wolf0977/plan.html>, to which observers are requested to contribute their sightings.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus* (E*)

Two localities in two counties: breeding at one locality.
HERTFORDSHIRE The breeding population in Borehamwood numbered at least 20 birds, with five or six breeding pairs.
SURREY The pair which bred at Lonsdale Reservoir in 1999 did not breed this year.

Scattered records suggest continuing escapes of this species, but no other breeding populations are known. The population of up to 30 birds which was present and breeding in Tiverton, Devon, between 1987 and 1998, died out after a change in ownership of the land where they were breeding.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* (E*)

Two localities in two counties: one pair bred.
ENGLAND Pair bred at a site in northern England; three eggs hatched but no young were reared, probably because of bad weather.
WARWICKSHIRE An unmated male held a territory all year in the same locality as in 1999.

The pair in the north of England bred for the fifth year running; this was their first failure.

References

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