

Non-native breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2003, 2004 and 2005

Mark Holling and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel



Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*

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This is the eighth report by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (RBBP) summarising breeding reports of the rarer non-native species in the UK. The RBBP has monitored the establishment and spread of populations of these species since 1996, so there is now a decade's worth of data on a total of 38 species. This information assists the conservation agencies and the Government to fulfil Article 8 of the Biodiversity Convention, and other international treaties such as the EC Birds Directive, through the provision of the results of monitoring programmes. Any deliberate releases of non-native species must be closely monitored and care must be taken to minimise ecological conflicts with native fauna or flora. In fact, much of what is reported here reflects unregulated or accidental releases made in the past.

This report covers a three-year period, 2003–2005. In part, this is to allow the Panel to catch up with the delay in processing the

records they hold (see Holling *et al.* 2007), but also because coverage and reporting of these species is still patchy and a more coherent analysis is possible when several years' data can be considered together. It is likely that future Panel reports of rare non-native birds will also treat several years together. The Panel is keen to present more-detailed analysis of the breeding records of selected species in its reports and here we include such a review of breeding Eagle Owls *Bubo bubo* in the UK, from the first recorded nesting in 1984 up to the present day.

Holling *et al.* (2007) included details of the membership of the Panel and the key to the geographical regions used in this report.

Coverage and data inclusion

The Panel collects records from the whole of the United Kingdom as well as the Isle of Man, but not from the Channel Islands or the Republic of Ireland. Information for this report was sub-

mitted by most county and regional recorders along with their returns for native rare breeding birds, and some additional data were gleaned from annual bird reports. Although coverage in 2003 and 2004 was good (see Holling *et al.* 2007), a number of counties had not submitted data for 2005 by the deadline for this report. Moreover, many non-native species are not well reported by the birdwatching public and an unknown number of breeding attempts must go unrecorded. The Panel would like to encourage all birdwatchers and County Recorders to report and collate all records of breeding attempts by rare non-native bird species. Given the potential for some of these species to create conservation or economic problems, it is important that this report is as comprehensive as possible, and we hope that its publication will encourage better reporting of these species.

For the more elusive species, such as the rare pheasants (Phasianidae) and Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo*, all records are analysed here to present the most complete assessment possible. For several species of non-native wildfowl, there are now sizeable established populations, which are documented to varying degrees by the local bird reports. Submissions to the Panel for these species need include only actual breeding attempts. Readers are referred to the details in the systematic list for further guidance.

The list of non-native species considered by the RBBP is available on the Panel's website (www.rbbp.org.uk), but breeding attempts by

any other rare non-native species will be collected and archived. Broadly speaking, a rare non-native breeder is one with less than 300 pairs breeding in a typical year. However, Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* is retained on the list even though the population significantly exceeds this threshold, because to date it has not been well monitored by other means. Further information on other non-native species breeding in the UK was given by Ogilvie *et al.* (1999).

This report includes details of 25 species breeding or showing indications of breeding in the three years 2003, 2004 and 2005. The definitions of 'confirmed breeding', 'probable breeding' and 'possible breeding' used in the Panel's reports follow those recommended by the European Bird Census Council (www.ebcc.info). Within each species account, numbers given in the format '1–4 pairs' indicate (in this case) one proven breeding pair and a possible maximum total of four breeding pairs.

The letter categories next to each species heading refer to the categories assigned by the BOURC (see www.bou.org.uk/reccats). The absence of any letter indicates that the species is not currently listed. Note in particular that the code E refers to species that have been recorded as introductions, transportees or escapees from captivity, and whose British breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining. Those species designated with an additional asterisk (*) have been recorded nesting with their own kind outside captivity.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* (E*)

2003 8–14 pairs. 2004 11–16 pairs. 2005 8–13 pairs. The Black Swan, native to Australia, is an introduced species which occurs widely in Britain and is able to nest successfully here. Breeding has been confirmed in every year since 1996, when the Panel began to collect records, but the previous maximum number of confirmed breeding pairs was nine, in 2001; thus 11 confirmed breeding pairs in 2004 is a new record. Many local bird reports also include records of individuals present over long periods. Only confirmed breeding pairs or pairs faithful to a site are included here, but it is likely that the total underestimates the true population, and the figures for 2005 in particular may be low.

England, SW

Devon 2003 A flock of ten adults included one juvenile in July, although it is not known where that young bird was reared. Gloucestershire 2004 One pair bred. Wiltshire 2003 Two pairs present at two sites. One of these hatched two young, one of which survived into the autumn. Wiltshire 2004 Four sites: four pairs bred. Wiltshire 2005 Three sites: five pairs present, of which two bred.

England, SE

Essex 2003 One pair raised four young. Essex 2004 Two sites: two pairs bred. Greater London 2003 One pair nested in St James's Park. Hertfordshire 2004 One site: two pairs hatched a total of 12 young, of which six survived. Hertfordshire 2005 Two sites: two pairs present but did not breed. Kent 2003 One, possibly two pairs present at two sites, but no breeding. Kent 2004 1–3 birds noted at ten sites but no evidence of breeding. Kent 2005 One site: one pair with two immatures in July. Sussex 2003 Two sites: two pairs hatched a total of four young. Sussex 2004 No

breeding recorded. **Sussex 2005** One site: two pairs reared four young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 Two sites: two pairs present, one nested but success not known. **Cambridgeshire 2004** Three sites: four pairs, one nested and laid four eggs, but none hatched. **Lincolnshire 2004** One pair fledged four young.

England, C

Staffordshire 2005 Two pairs bred.

England, N

Greater Manchester 2003 One pair fledged one young. **Greater Manchester 2005** One pair fledged four young. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004** One pair present but did not breed.

Scotland, S

Lothian 2003 The male from the breeding pair of 2001 remained and another female was introduced, but no breeding was observed and there were no records from this site in subsequent years. **Dumfries & Galloway 2004** One pair present, then three in September, so may have bred.

Scotland, N & W

Orkney 2003 A pair remained at the former breeding site but no breeding took place.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* (AE*)

2003 2–3 pairs. **2004** 3–5 pairs. **2005** 0–1 pairs. Breeding records of apparently wild Whooper Swans in 2003 and 2004 were listed in the Panel's main report. Breeding records presented here are believed to relate to feral birds; only pairs and nests are described. Summering individuals, of unknown provenance, were also reported from Cumbria, Hertfordshire (up to six in 2003), Gwent, Argyll, Borders, Dumfries & Galloway and Orkney.

Scotland, S

Clyde 2003 One site: one pair summered but did not build a nest. **Clyde 2004** One site: pair raised three young.

Clyde 2005 One site: one pair with nest in May, but no young seen.

Scotland, N & W

Highland 2003 Two sites: two pairs bred. Also up to seven other presumed-feral summering birds elsewhere. **Highland 2004** Two sites: two pairs present, one did not breed and it is not known if the second bred. Also two other presumed-feral summering birds elsewhere.

Northern Ireland

Co. Londonderry 2004 Two sites: two pairs bred and three juveniles were present in August.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* (AE*)

2003 One pair. The regular nesting of this species on Islay was repeated in 2003 but was not reported in 2004 or 2005, although a small population persists here. The birds are full-winged and breed close to a waterfowl collection. The White-fronted Geese breeding on Islay originate from injured wild birds of the Greenland race *flavirostris* which were taken into captivity and allowed to breed; none of the young from these pairings have been pinioned.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 One pair was seen with a brood in June.

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

2003 At least three pairs. **2004** At least one pair. **2005** Two pairs. Although small numbers of Bar-headed Geese, native to India and central Asia, are reported widely in England, breeding numbers remain at a low level and there is little indication of breeding becoming established at sites over a number of years. Breeding has been confirmed each year since 1996, with a maximum of eight pairs in 1999, all in England south of Manchester.

England, SW

Wiltshire 2005 One site: one pair fledged one young.

England, SE

Sussex 2003–2004 In Chichester Harbour area, six adults with up to three juveniles seen in autumn 2003 and nine adults with two juveniles in 2004 suggest local breeding of at least one pair in both years. No young were seen in 2005.

Greater London 2004 A flock of over 20 birds at Kew Gardens suggests that breeding may have occurred locally.

England, C

Warwickshire 2003–2004 One site: one pair raised six young in 2003 at Kineton Lake, which was also used in 2002;

although birds were present in 2004, they did not breed.

England, N

Greater Manchester 2003, 2005 At Hope Carr Nature Reserve single clutches were laid in both years but were destroyed (under licence) along with eggs of Greater Canada Geese *Branta canadensis*.

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens* (AE*)

2003 At least two pairs and a mixed pair. 2004 Five pairs. 2005 Eight pairs. There are two regular breeding sites for Snow Goose, and both have been used since 1996. In the period 2003–05 there were no other sites reported.

England, SW

Hampshire 2003 Two sites: at Stratfield Saye, a pair fledged one young, and at Somerley Lake a Snow Goose paired with a Greylag Goose *A. anser* fledged seven young. Hampshire 2004 No breeding occurred. Hampshire 2005 One site: at Stratfield Saye, two pairs fledged a total of five young but the total number of Snow Geese in the county continued to decline. The maximum roost count at Eversley Gravel-pits in 2005 was six, in January, and there were up to four there at the year's end.

Scotland, N & W

Argyll 2003 In July the flock on Coll contained 25 adults and four juveniles, so at least one pair had raised young. Argyll 2004 On Coll, five pairs fledged 12 young. Argyll 2005 On Coll, six pairs hatched 22 young of which six fledged.

Emperor Goose *Anser canagicus* (E*)

2003 Two pairs. 2004 One pair. 2005 Two pairs. At Walney Island in Cumbria, a flock of 21 Emperor Geese was present in both 2003 and 2004, and there were breeding pairs in both years and 2005. This site also produced breeding reports in 2000 and 2001. Breeding was also recorded in Surrey in 2001. Wild Emperor Geese nest in Alaska and Siberia.

England, N

Cumbria 2003 Two pairs fledged three young. Cumbria 2004 One pair fledged two young. Cumbria 2005 Two pairs fledged three young.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* (AE*)

2003 At least 80 pairs. 2004 At least 106 pairs, including one mixed pair. 2005 At least 120 pairs, including one mixed pair. These totals refer to confirmed breeding pairs only. The largest number of breeding pairs reported previously was 59 in 2000. The largest concentration is in Northern Ireland, where a naturalised breeding population had built up to 78 pairs in 2005. In many parts of England, flocks of established Barnacle Geese are now common, often associating with Greylag and Greater Canada Geese. Breeding is probably more widespread than documented here, given the large flock sizes noted in county bird reports. The records received by the Panel are clearly not consistent between years, making comparisons difficult. Only records relating to breeding attempts are listed.

England, SW

Hampshire One site: Stratfield Saye. 2003 No breeding. 2004 2–3 pairs raised six young. 2005 Five pairs raised 14 young and a sixth nest contained eggs.

England, SE

Bedfordshire 2003 Two sites: 14 pairs fledged 41 young. Bedfordshire 2004 One site: five pairs fledged 20 young. Bedfordshire 2005 One site: 15 pairs fledged 46 young. Berkshire 2005 One site: one pair fledged one young. Essex 2003 One site: one pair bred. Essex 2004 Two sites: two pairs bred. Hertfordshire 2003 One site: one pair probably bred. Kent 2003 One site: one pair bred with one brood seen. Kent 2005 One site: three pairs bred but just two broods seen.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 One site: one pair raised three young. Norfolk 2004 Two sites: two pairs raised nine young. Suffolk 2003 One site: 20 nests at Bungay Otter Trust. Suffolk 2004 The number in the county was a minimum of 481, including 70 goslings. Suffolk 2005 One site: three pairs bred at Minsmere, but fledged just three young. This was the only breeding report in 2005, but information received in other years points to a much larger breeding population in Suffolk.

England, C

Derbyshire 2004 One site: four pairs fledged one young each. Derbyshire 2005 One site: seven pairs fledged 22 young

and a further individual paired with a Greylag Goose reared hybrid young. **Warwickshire 2003** Two sites: (1) four pairs bred; (2) one bird laid eggs but was probably unpaired. **Warwickshire 2004** One site: mixed pair with Greater Canada Goose hatched young.

England, N

Cumbria 2003 Two sites: (1) five pairs bred; (2) one pair bred. **Cumbria 2004** 21 pairs bred and 20 broods totalling 41 young noted. **Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004** Breeding occurred but no details.

Wales

Brecon 2005 One site: one pair hatched four young, which did not survive.

Scotland, S

Clyde 2005 One site: one pair bred fledging six young.

Scotland, Mid

Perth & Kinross 2003 Two sites: four pairs bred. **Perth & Kinross 2005** One site: four pairs bred but only one young fledged.

Northern Ireland

Co. Down One site: Strangford Lough. **2003** 29 nests. **2004** 69 nests. **2005** 78 nests.

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (AE*)

2003 One pair. This species has not featured previously in these reports.

England, N

Yorkshire 2003 One site: a clutch of eggs at Nosterfield Nature Reserve in mid June had disappeared by early July.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* (CE*)

2003 78–130 pairs. **2004** 70–97 pairs. **2005** At least 82 pairs. Recording of this species varies from year to year. The maximum number in 2003 exceeds the previous highest total, of 127 pairs from 2000. Data from some regular counties were missing in 2005, although data from Berkshire and Nottinghamshire are included only for that year. Overall, the suggestion here is of a stable population concentrated in Norfolk and Suffolk with smaller numbers in other areas and a limited spread westwards. However, atlas survey work in Norfolk has shown an expansion in range from 6% of tetrads in 1980–85 to 27% in 2000–05. This would indicate that Panel returns at county level significantly under-record this species. It is likely that results from the forthcoming BTO/SOC/BWI Bird Atlas 2007–11 project will give a more definitive picture of the status and distribution of Egyptian Geese in England.

England, SW

Devon 2005 One site: one pair fledged six young. **Hampshire 2003** One site: one pair fledged nine young. **Hampshire 2004** One site: one pair fledged nine young. **Hampshire 2005** Three sites: three pairs fledged 25 young.

England, SE

Berkshire 2005 14 pairs bred; now common in county. **Buckinghamshire 2003** Two sites: two pairs present but did not breed, although a pair did breed at one site in 2002 (not previously reported). **Buckinghamshire 2004** One site: one pair fledged seven young. **Buckinghamshire 2005** Two sites: two pairs fledged nine young. **Essex 2003** 16 pairs: three pairs bred and 13 other pairs reported. **Essex 2004** Three sites: three pairs bred and two pairs possibly bred. **Greater London 2003** Two sites: four pairs bred, fledging a total of 23 young. **Greater London 2004** At least four pairs possibly bred. **Hertfordshire 2003** Two sites: (1) one pair fledged two broods of two and three young; (2) one pair fledged five young. **Hertfordshire 2004** One site: one pair possibly bred, seen displaying in May and present throughout year. **Hertfordshire 2005** One site: one pair bred hatching three young but may not all have survived. **Kent 2003** One site: one pair present but did not breed. **Kent 2004** One site: one pair present but did not breed; records of higher numbers in autumn suggest local breeding. **Surrey 2003** 14 pairs: three pairs bred, one pair probably bred and ten pairs possibly bred. **Surrey 2004** Ten pairs: two pairs bred, and at least eight pairs possibly bred.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2003 Five pairs: three pairs bred, one pair probably bred and one pair possibly bred. **Lincolnshire 2004** One site: one pair fledged three young and one pair probably bred. **Norfolk 2003** Breeding reported from 43 sites. **Norfolk 2004** Breeding reported from 38 sites. **Norfolk 2005** Breeding reported from 30 sites. **Suffolk 2003** 19 sites: eight pairs bred, one pair probably bred and 21 pairs possibly bred. **Suffolk 2004** At least 28 sites: 15 pairs fledged at least 20 young and ten pairs possibly bred. **Suffolk 2005** 13 pairs bred and seven young reported, but counts of young believed to suffer from under-recording.

England, C

Leicestershire 2003 One site: at least 11 pairs bred fledging at least 54 young. **Leicestershire 2004** One site: at least

nine pairs bred fledging at least 41 young. **Leicestershire 2005** One site: at least 11 pairs bred hatching at least 33 young of which at least 26 fledged. **Nottinghamshire 2005** Three sites: seven pairs bred. **Warwickshire 2003** One site: one pair possibly bred. A pair with three juveniles reported in November may have fledged locally.

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* (BE*)

2003 0–2 pairs. **2004** 1 pair. **2005** 3–4 pairs. Norfolk holds a small naturalised population of this species, originally from Asia and North Africa. In 2005, 22 sites reported Ruddy Shelducks at some point in the year, and there were three confirmed breeding records. Breeding previously occurred in Norfolk in 1996, 1997 and 2000 but the annual total of three confirmed breeding pairs in 2005 is the highest reported to date.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 Two sites: two pairs possibly bred. **Norfolk 2004** One site: one pair with a brood of five on 26th May but no ducklings by 29th May. **Norfolk 2005** Three sites: three pairs with 21 young plus a fourth pair.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata* (E*)

2003 Six pairs. **2004** Five pairs. **2005** No breeding reported. Muscovy Ducks are native to Central and South America, and although there are a number of Muscovy Ducks at large in the UK, these are the only breeding records received. More widespread breeding has been reported in the past, for example 14 pairs in seven counties in 1997, although the only regular site is at Ely, Cambridgeshire. Apparently, the flock here relies on feeding by the public and the local council is attempting to control numbers by oiling eggs.

England, SW

Devon 2003 One site: one pair with 13 young.

England, E

Cambridgeshire 2003 One site: at least five broods at Ely and a minimum of 41 young. **Cambridgeshire 2004** One site: at least five broods at Ely and a minimum of 59 young.

Wood Duck *Aix sponsa* (E*)

2003 0–6 pairs. **2004** 0–4 pairs. **2005** 0–4 pairs. The most regular site, Stanton Park in Wiltshire, held 6–8 non-breeding birds during the three years reviewed here, but a pair fledged one young there in 2002. Breeding has also been recorded in Berkshire, Devon and Kent. Wood Duck is a native of North and Central America.

England, SW

Wiltshire 2003 One site: up to seven birds present but no sign of breeding. **Wiltshire 2004** One site: up to eight birds present but no sign of breeding. **Wiltshire 2005** Two sites: (1) up to six birds present but no sign of breeding; (2) one male present to late April and again in autumn.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2003 One site: one pair possibly bred.

England, N

Cheshire & Wirral 2003 One site: two pairs possibly bred.

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

2003 4–8 pairs. **2004** 6–19 pairs. **2005** 5–8 pairs. It is pleasing to include breeding data from the well-established population in the Cotswold Water Park, where 1–4 pairs produced young in 2003–05, accounting for the majority of proved breeding records. Breeding was also confirmed in four other counties. The nearest wild population of breeding Red-crested Pochard is in The Netherlands.

England, SW

Gloucestershire 2003 One site: one pair with three young in August; flock here built up to 101 in autumn. **Gloucestershire 2004** One site: three pairs bred, fledging 22 young, and one pair probably bred. **Gloucestershire 2005** One site: four pairs bred, fledging 15 young.

England, SE

Berkshire 2005 One site: two pairs probably bred. **Essex 2003** One site: two pairs bred. **Essex 2004** One site: two pairs bred. **Hertfordshire 2005** One site: one pair bred. Five young were seen in late May but only one remained by 23rd June.

England, E

Lincolnshire 2003 One site: one pair bred and two pairs possibly bred. **Lincolnshire 2004** Two sites: 11 pairs probably bred. **Norfolk 2003** One site: two pairs possibly bred. **Norfolk 2004** One site: one pair fledged seven young. **Norfolk 2005** One site: one pair probably bred.

England, N

Cleveland 2004 One site: one male present throughout spring and summer was seen to mate frequently with a female Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* but no young were seen.

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

2003 At least eight males. **2004** At least eight males. **2005** At least three males. This ornamental species from north-central China seems to be maintaining a small presence at the Stanford Training Area in Norfolk, but there have not yet been any records of nests or broods.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 Two sites: (1) eight males were seen displaying in late March and early April; (2) one single bird on two dates only. **Norfolk 2004** Two sites: (1) eight males were seen displaying in late March and early April; (2) one single bird on one date only. **Norfolk 2005** Six sites: (1) at least three males were seen displaying at the usual site; (2)–(6) records of one bird on 1–2 dates only.

Green Pheasant *Phasianus versicolor* (E)

2003–2005 A small and apparently growing population of this Japanese pheasant, possibly of hybrid stock, has been recorded in northeast Norfolk since 2000. The maximum count was 81 in the Colby–Banningham area in October 2005. There were, however, no reports of breeding.

Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus* (CE*)

2003 At least 42 birds. **2004** At least 33 birds. **2005** At least 34 birds. Golden Pheasants, indigenous to central China, are elusive birds and difficult to census. A summary of all reports is included here. Most records stem from just two counties. It would be useful if, in submissions to the Panel, the sexes of the birds reported were given to enable more precise counting.

England, SE

Sussex 2003 Two sites: (1) breeding territory reported; (2) two males on one date in May.

England, E

Norfolk 2003 Reported from three regular and nine further sites, with a maximum total of 32 birds. Now considered to be absent from former haunts in Breckland. **Norfolk 2004** Reported from three regular and eight further sites, with a maximum total of 26 birds. **Norfolk 2005** Reported from four regular and four further sites, with a maximum total of 18 birds. **Suffolk 2003** Reported from four sites with four calling males at one in April. **Suffolk 2004** Reported from three sites with at least six birds involved. **Suffolk 2005** A total of 16 birds reported included ten at one Breckland site.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2004 No reports from the former site at Lytham Hall, but one other bird elsewhere in April.

Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae* (CE*)

2003 One male. **2004** One male. **2005** Two males. Lady Amherst's Pheasant is native to southeast Asia and was first bred in captivity in Britain in 1871. It was subsequently released in a number of locations, but Bedfordshire always held the main self-sustaining population, which spread into neighbouring Buckinghamshire. The status of Lady Amherst's Pheasant in Britain was reviewed by Nightingale (2005), when it was concluded that extinction within Britain was almost inevitable. The data presented here reinforce this view, as no more than two males are reported in any one year and all within one county.

England, SE

Buckinghamshire 2003 Two sites: one male at each in January but the records probably referred to the same bird. **Buckinghamshire 2004** One site: one male in February, April and May. **Buckinghamshire 2005** One site: one male in April, two birds heard 1st May, and one bird heard in July.

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris* (E*)

2003 Breeding reported. According to a gamekeeper, this species, a native of trans-Saharan Africa, was breeding ferally in Hampshire in 2003, although the population was not thought to be sustainable. Previously, Helmeted Guineafowl had bred only in 2001, in Norfolk.

Common Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* (E*)

2005 One pair. This is a familiar bird at ornamental gardens and parks, and families of peacocks are often seen at these locations, but it is records of birds living in an apparently wild state that are collated by the Panel. However, we suspect that this species is greatly under-recorded, as demonstrated by the single record received during the period under review. Common Peafowl are native to India and Sri Lanka.

England, SE

Sussex 2005 An adult with young in late May was reported from Markwell's Wood.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (AE*)

2003 Eight pairs. Breeding again occurred at Great Witchingham Wildlife Park in Norfolk in 2003, where a free-flying colony has been in existence since at least 1996. However, there was no breeding there in 2004 or 2005. The nearest wild breeding Night Herons are in The Netherlands and northern France.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* (E)

2003 Two birds. 2004 Two birds. These records demonstrate that escaped falconers' birds can make nesting attempts in the UK. Red-tailed Hawks are native to North America. This is the first time that this species has featured in this report, although one bird was at large in Norfolk during 2000.

England, SW

Hampshire 2003 One site: one bird seen displaying with Common Buzzards *B. buteo* in spring, and five other sightings during the year.

England, SE

Sussex 2003 One site: one bird had apparently 'started nesting' when retrieved by a falconer in late April.

England, N

Lancashire & North Merseyside 2003 & 2004 One site: one bird, present since 1992, has associated with Common Buzzards, but there have been no indications of mixed breeding.

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

Rose-ringed Parakeets are native to Africa and Asia. The data submitted to the Panel do not allow reasonable estimates of breeding numbers to be made, although there are clearly large populations in southeast England judging by the size of the roosts in Kent and Surrey. Elsewhere, smaller numbers in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Greater London, Hertfordshire and Sussex indicate viable populations here too. Other counties in southern England report only occasional Rose-ringed Parakeets, so the breeding in Derbyshire and Lancashire, and hinted at in Cleveland, is noteworthy. The most recent estimate for the UK population is 4,300 adults (Baker *et al.* 2006), although the data presented here suggest that this is already too low. In 2006, Rose-ringed Parakeet was sufficiently numerous to be monitored by the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey for the first time since the survey began in 1994 (Raven *et al.* 2007).

England, SE

Berkshire 2005 At least one pair bred. This species is now common in the east of the county along the Thames.

Buckinghamshire 2003 Six sites: a total of 46 birds, with juveniles seen at one site in June and nest-prospecting at two sites by a total of nine pairs in December. Buckinghamshire 2004 Six sites: a total of 35 birds recorded but no breeding reported. Buckinghamshire 2005 Three sites: three pairs bred at two sites, and there were a total of 100–200 birds in the county. Essex 2004 One site: one pair fledged two young. This is the first breeding in Essex since the 1980s. Greater London 2003 Present at 20 sites and at least seven pairs breeding. Greater London 2004 Recorded at four sites but no further details. Hertfordshire 2004 1–2 birds at around ten sites (no breeding) until autumn, when an influx of about 40 birds. Hertfordshire 2005 Possibly up to two pairs breeding. Kent 2003 Resident breeder, but no numbers available. The maximum number at autumn roosts was around 1,400. Kent 2004 The

maximum number at autumn roosts in Thanet was 1,050. **Kent 2005** In the Thanet area, perhaps 250–300 pairs breeding. **Surrey 2003** At least 17 sites: one pair bred, three pairs probably bred and 26 pairs possibly bred. The maximum roost count was 6,818 in August, with many coming in from outside the county. **Surrey 2004** 19 sites: eight pairs bred and at least 30 pairs possibly bred. Roost counts again over 6,000 birds. **Sussex 2003–05** Apparently breeding but no evidence during this period and fewer than 20 individuals reported in each year.

England, C

Derbyshire 2003 One site: one pair probably bred, as seen entering a nest hole in March and June, and showing agitated behaviour in late June. This is the first breeding attempt for Derbyshire. **Derbyshire 2004** One site: one pair probably bred at the same site, but not in 2005.

England, N

Cleveland 2005 One site: a female present from July to December was investigating potential nest holes. **Lancashire 2004** One site: one pair probably bred and at least six birds were seen regularly.

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus* (E*)

2003 One pair. **2004** One pair. **2005** Three pairs. All but one record refers to the flock at Borehamwood in Hertfordshire, where breeding was noted in 2004 and 2005. There were no records from other counties where colonies or breeding attempts have been reported in the past: Cheshire & Wirral, Devon, Surrey and Wiltshire. Monk Parakeets are native to South America.

England, SE

Greater London 2003 One site: one pair probably bred, noted at a large stick nest in August and still present at the end of the year. **Hertfordshire 2003** One site: no breeding but a maximum of 32 birds leaving the roost in January. **Hertfordshire 2004** One site: one pair bred, seen at an active nest in February and March. Maximum post-roost count again 32, in December. **Hertfordshire 2005** One site: at least three active nests and a minimum post-roost count of 40.

Eagle Owl *Bubo bubo* (E*)

2003 Two pairs. **2004** One pair. **2005** Two pairs. The transmission of a BBC television programme about breeding Eagle Owls in 2005 generated considerable interest in this species and, as a result, more records have come to light. The Panel is keen to receive details of all Eagle Owls recorded in an apparently wild state in the UK, at any time in the past, so that its current status in the country may be better understood. All records of Eagle Owls apparently living in the wild received by the Panel for the years under review are listed below. In view of the persecution which some individuals have suffered, county names are not included, unless they are already widely known. The nearest wild breeding Eagle Owls are in The Netherlands and Belgium, but it has been suggested recently that the fossil and archaeological records support the theory that the Eagle Owl is a native British species (Stewart 2007).

England, SE

2004 One county: two sites. One present for three days from 30th January and another for one day in mid May. A pair also reported from this county may relate to these individuals. **2005** Three counties. (A) One pair fledged two young. (B) One single heard calling, plus a resident pair. One member of this pair was captured in September and placed in a zoo, the other bird then disappeared. (C) Two singles reported in December.

England, E

2005 One county: two sites. At least two birds present.

England, C

2005 Two counties: three singles reported. A weak bird found in August was taken into care and a second bird was present in the same county in October and November. In Shropshire, one immature found dead under power lines was from the brood raised in Yorkshire in 2004.

England, N

2003 Two sites: (1) established pair in Yorkshire fledged three young; (2) pair laid a clutch of infertile eggs. **2004** Four sites: (1) established pair in Yorkshire fledged four young; (2) one of the pair from 2003 present until April but then disappeared; (3) at least one bird. **2005** Three sites: (1) established pair in Yorkshire fledged three young, but female found dead in December; (2–3) at least one bird.

Scotland

2003 One county: a single bird in March may have been the same individual reported at a nearby site in August. **2004** Two counties. (A) Single bird in August. (B) A single bird from mid November into 2005 was one of the young fledged from Yorkshire. **2005** One county: single bird remained from 2004 until at least February.

A review of the records of Eagle Owl held by the RBBP is presented here in order to provide a contemporary summary of the status of this species. The Panel is most grateful for the assistance of Major Tony Crease in compiling this summary. Tony took the lead in monitoring the nesting pair in Yorkshire, as featured on the BBC programme, and subsequently has been involved with occurrences of Eagle Owl elsewhere.

The first documented records of breeding Eagle Owls in the UK came from Moray, where a pair attempted to breed in a quarry in 1984. The nest failed, one broken egg being found. In 1985 the pair moved to another quarry nearby and this time they bred successfully, fledging one chick. The male was, however, killed on a road nearby, in September 1985. The female remained in the area until at least December 1995, laying infertile clutches in at least seven of the subsequent ten years.

In 1993, a nest of four eggs was found by raptor workers in the Pennines; this clutch was deserted but there continued to be several sightings of Eagle Owls in the area that year and also in 2000 and 2001. In 2006, a sick bird in this area was taken into captivity but later died.

Breeding in Yorkshire was first confirmed in 1997, but it was discovered that a pair of Eagle Owls had been present in the area since at least 1996. One of the pair was definitely an escapee or unwanted pet: the female originally had the remains of purple-coloured jesses trailing from her tarsi. This pair bred each year from 1997 until 2005, raising a total of 23 young, all of which were ringed prior to fledging. Just two of these have been recovered, both from the 2004 brood: one was found dead in Shropshire (2005), the other in Borders (2006). Table 1 shows the number of young fledged per year from this site. The only year when no young were reared was 2001 when, because of access restrictions owing to foot-and-mouth disease, the usual surveillance and policing of the nest was not possible. On at least three occasions the eggs of this pair were smashed or removed – one clutch of eggs was found crushed with the chicks almost at hatching stage after being deliberately trampled. Note that the Panel's previous reports covering 2000 (Ogilvie *et al.* 2002) and 2001 (Ogilvie *et al.* 2003) stated incorrectly that no young were reared in 2000, but three fledged in 2001.

In November 2005, the BBC showed a programme in the *Natural World* series entitled 'Return of the Eagle Owl'. This showed the Yorkshire pair nesting on remote moorland in a Ministry of Defence restricted area. The publicity stemming from this programme raised the profile of the species in Britain and led to extensive discussions about the origins of Eagle Owls in the UK. The programme stated that, since the Eagle Owl is classified by the BOU as a non-native species, it does not carry full protection, but this error was corrected in repeat showings of the programme. The 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act provides statutory protection to *all* wild bird species, whether they are native or non-native to the UK, and licences are required for any control measures. The female of the pair was subsequently found dead in December 2005. Pellets found in the sternum showed that she had been shot but not killed; however, the injury sustained would have meant that she would have been unable to feed.

A new female was detected in the same area early in 2006 and was seen with the male in April, but not subsequently and no eggs were laid. A very aggressive, difficult to handle, bird found in Birmingham was ringed and then released in the Yorkshire nesting area in May, but after two days was never seen again. It is thought that it may have been a male and had been driven off by the resident bird. The original male remained on site into 2007.

In 2003 another pair laid a clutch of infertile eggs elsewhere in northern England, but only one bird was recorded here in 2004 and there have been no subsequent reports from this site.

During the period 1996 to 2002, additional birds were recorded from four different counties, including the area of the Pennines where breeding was attempted in 1993. However, only single birds were reported in each of these years. In Highland in 1996, a bird was seen for two days in April close to some captive Eagle Owls, whose owner was adamant that the visiting bird was not his. Elsewhere in Highland, a male held territory in 1997 and 1998. Calls were heard between January and March 1997, when a nest scrape was found, and in January 1998. From 1999 to 2002 a male held territory in Warwickshire. Also in 2002, there were two other

Table 1. The number of young Eagle Owls *Bubo bubo* fledged by a pair nesting in Yorkshire from 1997 to 2006.

No. fledged		No. fledged	
1997	3	2002	3
1998	2	2003	3
1999	2	2004	4
2000	3	2005	3
2001	0	2006	0

Table 2. Numbers of breeding pairs and other, individual Eagle Owls *Bubo bubo* reported to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel 1984–2007. Note that, at the time of writing, only limited data were available for 2006 and 2007 (given in square brackets).

	No. breeding pairs	Min. no. additional individuals reported
1984	1	0
1985	1	0
1986	0	1
1987	0	1
1988	0	1
1989	0	1
1990	0	1
1991	0	1
1992	0	1
1993	1	1
1994	0	1
1995	0	1
1996	0	4
1997	1	2
1998	1	1
1999	1	2
2000	1	2
2001	1	2
2002	1	3
2003	2	1
2004	1	6
2005	2	13
2006	[1]	[13]
2007	[2]	[4]

birds reported, from Norfolk and again from Highland.

The Panel has not yet collected all data for the 2006 and 2007 breeding seasons, but the nesting of a pair in Lancashire in 2007 has recently been widely reported. One to two birds had been reported from this area since 2004, and in 2006 a pair laid eggs, which were later abandoned. In 2007, though, what may have been the same pair nested close to a public footpath at Dunsop Bridge in Lancashire. The pair had a nest with three chicks and the adults were mobbing walkers with dogs, leading Lancashire County Council to close the right of way. Publicity led to an increase in visitor numbers (see <http://www.birdguides.com/webzine/article.asp?a=1026>). At another site in northern England in 2007, behaviour of a pair was indicative of there being young owls close by.

To date, the Panel has received records of at least ten other Eagle Owls from at least seven areas in 2006, including two pairs and an unmated female which laid eggs. All of these are in northern or central England and southern Scotland.

The evidence suggests that Eagle Owls are maintaining a small presence in at least northern and central England and perhaps southern Scotland, with a maximum so far of three pairs nesting in any one year. Table 2 shows the number of nesting pairs and other individuals reported to the Panel since 1984. It is clear that the number of records has increased since 2004 but it is not yet clear whether this is due to increased publicity or to a real increase in the number of Eagle Owls living in the wild. However, there are clearly other records which have not been reported and we would like to reiterate our request for any information on this species in the UK.

Red-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax formosus* (E*)

As stated in the Panel’s last report (Ogilvie *et al.* 2004), escapes from a wildlife park have been living in the wild in the Isle of Man, and breeding is believed to have occurred since at least 1996. Since 2000, sightings have been intermittent in the Ballaugh area and in August 2004 there was a report of a male singing at least 8 km farther east than any previous record (Thorpe & Sharpe 2004). There were no breeding reports for the period under review. This species is native to China and Vietnam.

England, N

Isle of Man 2003 One site: 1–2 birds reported. **2004** Two sites: (1) 1–2 birds; (2) one male singing in August. **2005** One site: reports of one bird on four occasions.

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Red-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax formosus*

Alan Harris