Wildfowl 61

Editor
Eileen C. Rees

Associate Editor
Anthony D. Fox

Published by
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Slimbridge, Gloucestershire
GL2 7BT, UK
Registered Charity No. 1030884

Wildfowl

Cover photograph: Aleutian Geese on pasture at Arcata, California, USA, by Leslie Scopes Anderson.

Cover design by Nicholas Cottrell

Published by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7BT, UK

Wildfowl is available by subscription from the above address. For further information call +44 (0)1453 891900 (extension 257), or e-mail wildfowl@wwt.org.uk

ISBN 0 900806 60 5

Printed on FSC compliant paper
by Cambridge University Press

Contents

Short Communications

Announcements

To subscribe to *Wildfowl*, or to purchase back numbers, please contact
Mrs Margaret ("Maggie") Sage at the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge,
Gloucester GL2 7BT, UK, telephone +44 (0) 1453 891257
or send an e-mail to wildfowl@wwt.org.uk.

Wildfowl 61: Editorial

When I first joined the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (then the Wildfowl Trust) in the late 1970s, I was struck by the range of Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* subspecies and races in WWT's collection of captive birds. Although Canada Goose taxonomy was then and still remains debatable, paired geese from the main races (including the Atlantic *B. c. canadensis*, Interior *B. c. interior*, Richardson's *B. hutchinsii hutchinsii*, Lesser *B. c. parvipes,* Giant *B. c. maxima*, Cackling *B. h. minima*, Dusky *B. h. occidentalis* and Aleutian *B. h. leucopareia* Canada Geese) could be seen at Slimbridge. The physical variation in the Canada Geese was linked to differences in their distribution in both summer and winter, with the smaller northern-breeding geese (mainly *hutchinsii*) showing "leap-frog" migration and wintering to the south of the larger *B. canadensis*, the latter being better able to withstand cold mid-winter temperatures. Most Canada Goose races were considered to be abundant at that time, not only in their native North America but also in parts of Europe where the birds had been introduced to parks and estates as ornamental waterfowl. Notable exceptions were the Dusky Canada Goose and the Aleutian Canada Goose, with the latter classed as "endangered" under the USA's Endangered Species Preservation Act in 1967 and as "rare" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List in 1986.

The inclusion of two review papers on two very different types of Canada Geese in this year's edition of *Wildfowl* therefore is most satisfying. The first describes the substantial recovery of the Aleutian Goose, from an estimated 790 individuals in 1967 to > 100,000 birds today. Information on the recovery is given together with the management measures introduced to conserve the population. The second paper describes the historical evidence for the expansion of the breeding range of the larger Interior Canada Goose into west Greenland, where it was first recorded nesting in 1976. The race has been observed regularly and in increasing numbers in Greenland since the late 1980s.

Wildfowl 61 includes several other fine papers and also covers different technologies used to analyse bird movements and behaviour, both old and new. For instance, a third review paper outlines Konrad Lorenz's use of cinematic film for his research into dabbling duck courtship behaviour, some of the filming having been undertaken at Slimbridge during the 1950s. More recently, Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite-transmitters attached to individual birds have been used to describe both Swan Goose *Anser cygnoides* migration in the East Asian flyway and the home ranges of Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* wintering in India. Animal health is also addressed through papers on the occurrence of endoparasites in Greylag Geese *Anser anser* and on the causes of pink colouring found on Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* plumage. Preliminary observations made of Bewick's Swans *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* wintering in China are also described; a comparison of the ecology and population dynamics of Bewick's Swans in the Eastern population with those in northwest Europe should help to shed light on reasons for the decline of the Northwest European population over the past 10–15 years.

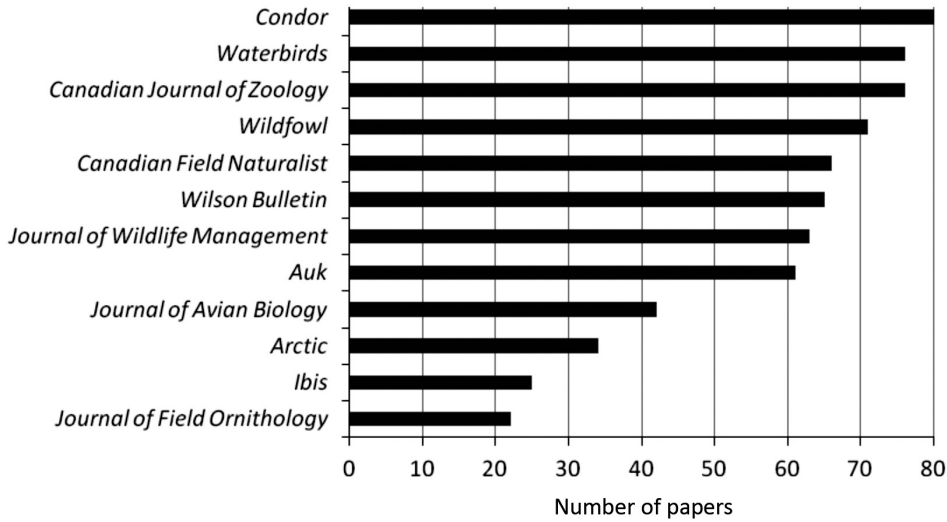

Figure 1. Sea duck publications in peer-reviewed journals: 1926–2011 (D. Esler pers. comm.).

Meanwhile, Dan Esler at the Simon Fraser University, BC, Canada, has made a thorough, formal assessment of the sea duck literature published in English (also papers with English summaries) which has appeared in peer-reviewed sources from 1926–2011, using the Web of Knowledge search service. *Wildfowl* was fourth in the table, with 71 sea duck papers in the journal; only *Condor, Canadian Journal of Zoology* and *Waterbirds* were found to have more (Fig. 1). This is most gratifying as, in addition to internationally renowned ornithological journals, ecological journals with high impact ratings were included in the survey, and also the main conservation journals. The most recent sea duck paper in *Wildfowl* appeared two years ago (in *Wildfowl* 59), and we hope that researchers into sea duck ecology will continue submitting their papers to the journal.

I am delighted to report that Tony Fox kindly agreed to continue in his role as Associate Editor for *Wildfowl*, that Andy Green, Matt Guillemain, Bruce Dugger and David Roshier continued to serve on the Editorial Board and that Jeff Black joined the Board earlier this year. Their advice and support has been of great help in maintaining the standards and interest of the journal. I am also grateful to the referees for their valuable comments on the papers, to Ellen Matthews (EM Typesetting) and Paul Cockerton (Cambridge University Press) for taking the papers forward to publication and, as always, to Maggie Sage, Karen Grainger and Jane Gawthorne for their assistance, including distributing *Wildfowl* 61.

Eileen Rees

Editor: *Wildfowl*
WWT Martin Mere