

Ringling by the Wildfowl Trust, 1979

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The total of ducks ringed by the Wildfowl Trust in 1979 (see table below) was over 2,000 more than in the previous year. The largest part of this rise was due to the successful operation of cage traps by Mr A. Zwetsloot at Blunham, Bedfordshire. The traps are located on a gravel pit and were responsible for significant contributions to the totals of both Pochard and Tufted Duck. The overall total for the former species adds 50% to the number previously ringed in Britain. In addition only the third Ringed-necked Duck to be caught in Britain was trapped at Blunham.

Abberton Reservoir and Slimbridge both had better years than in 1978, though the number of Teal caught at the former site remains very low, and very far below the totals reached in earlier years. Indeed the largest number of Teal ringed in the year was at Abbotsbury, Dorset, where the decoy is now in operation again after a gap of some years. The highlight there was the capture and ringing of a Blue-winged Teal, the first of this American vagrant to be ringed in Britain. At Slimbridge the decoy only contributed a part of the catch, mainly

Mallard, with most of the birds being caught in the swan 'pipe'.

Nacton Decoy continued to find ducks hard to come by, while Borough Fen Decoy was hardly operated during the year. Instead effort was put into nearby Deeping Lake, where cage traps provided a useful sample of Mallard.

A single catch of Barnacle Geese on the Solway, in November, produced 63 new birds for ringing, as well as many retraps. The total number of this Solway-Svalbard population of Barnacle Geese caught since the present study began in the early 1970s has now reached 3,462, of which the total ringed stands at 2,697.

Two catches of Bewick's Swans were made at Slimbridge, in January and in December. A total of 138 birds were newly ringed, bringing the grand total of Bewick's Swans ringed at Slimbridge to 1,027. The study of colonially-breeding Mute Swans at Abbotsbury and Weymouth, Dorset, continued, jointly with the Edward Grey Institute, Oxford University. A total of 182 birds were ringed during the year, including virtually all the cygnets reared.

Ducks ringed by the Wildfowl Trust, 1979.

	Abberton	Abbotsbury	Blunham	Borough Deeping			Slimbridge	Total
				Fen	Lake	Nacton		
Shelduck	11							11
Wigeon	54	4			1	23		82
Gadwall	43	1	8		1	3	155	211
Teal	203	233	6	39	21	52	1	555
Mallard	1,793	42	5	38	588	308	404	3,178
Pintail	20	42		1		41	134	211
Garganey	1							1
Blue-winged Teal		1						1
Shoveler	30	2	6		3	8	54	103
Red-crested Pochard			1					1
Pochard	131	7	471		1		191	801
Ring-necked Duck			1					1
Tufted Duck	474		553		49		93	1,169
Scaup	2							2
Goldeneye	2							2
Smew	1							1
Ruddy Duck	1							1
Totals	2,766	305	1,061	78	664	435	1,032	6,331