



The Slimbridge Collection—the first 21 years

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When the Wildfowl Trust started in late 1946, the aftermath of war made the acquisition of waterfowl extremely difficult and it was due to the kindness of Gavin Maxwell, who loaned to the Trust his private collection, that we were able to show our early visitors a fairly representative selection of swans, geese and ducks of some sixty-five different kinds.

During the succeeding twenty-one years, this nucleus has been built up into the largest and most comprehensive collection of the Anatidae in the world. Of the 247 species and races of waterfowl, 185 have been represented at Slimbridge, 142 have nested and 137 have been reared. Fourteen of these were the first breeding recorded in captivity. At the present time there are some 2,000 birds of 171 different kinds.

The Magpie Goose has done well at Slimbridge. The original female that came with the Monreith collection, a pre-war wild-caught bird, was paired to a wild male from Australia. When she was at least eighteen years old she commenced breeding and did so for the succeeding ten years until her death this year. The only other recorded case of Magpie Geese

breeding in captivity was at San Diego Zoo.

All the whistling ducks have been established at Slimbridge and all have nested, although as yet we have not reared the Eyton's or Javan. We reared the Wandering Whistling Duck on two occasions, but sad to relate the species is no longer represented in the collection, and until such time as birds are again exported from Indonesia, it is unlikely that we shall be able to acquire new specimens.

Slimbridge has a comprehensive collection of swans and although they are perforce kept in rather small pens all have bred with the exception of the Whistling Swan. The nearest this form got to breeding was when the female died from an impaction of the oviduct when laying her first egg. We have the only breeding Bewick's Swans in captivity. The female, a wild bird caught in Holland, started to lay after being at Slimbridge for eight years. Her mate was a juvenile, caught in the Rushy Pen in 1947 which, after several years of breeding, died in the autumn of 1962. Subsequent efforts to find a satisfactory new mate for the

female proved unsuccessful until in 1966 she became enamoured of one of her sons and in 1967 again produced two fine cygnets.

There are forty kinds of geese and sheldgeese in the collection, the Kelp Goose being the only species that we have failed to establish at the New Grounds. Three attempts have been made to accomplish this: first by the collection of adult birds on the Falkland Islands by Dr. W. Sladen; secondly by the purchase of adult birds from Dutch dealers; thirdly by hand-rearing goslings on the islands with turkey starter crumbs and bringing the juvenile birds back. In each case the birds eventually succumbed to aspergillosis. This was particularly sad in the case of the last project; Peter Gladstone and Charles Martell on their expedition hand-reared some 17 Kelp Geese on the Falklands and brought them back to Slimbridge; but all had died within twelve months (see p. 25).

Our principal success in the goose field has been with the Hawaiian Goose or Ne-ne. In the sixteen years that we have been breeding this rare bird, 226 have been reared from the original two females that were sent to us in 1950 and a further 130 birds in other collections to which we have loaned breeding pairs.

Among the surface-feeding ducks, three kinds unique to our collection are the Salvadori's Duck, the New Zealand Blue or Mountain Duck and the Galapagos Pintail. Rare species that we have hand-reared and provided stock for world collections include Bronze-winged Duck, Kerguelen Pintail, New Zealand Brown Duck, Laysan Teal, Cape Shoveler, New Zealand Shoveler and Ringed Teal.

During the past year we have had seven of the eight forms of eiders in the collection. A pair of Pacific Eiders were reared from eggs collected in the Yukon but unfortunately they died last autumn. We have, however, two drake and four duck Spectacled Eiders which came as juveniles and have now joined our adult drake in the Rushy Pen. We have been breeding King Eiders for a number of years and have found that the females are much more robust than the males. None of the hand-reared males have survived for more than two years. It would appear that fast-flowing, and cold, water is essential to eiders' well-being; birds that we have kept on our Waterfall pond have fared much better than those put on ponds more remote from the source of supply. It is proposed to build a special pond for the eiders and other sea ducks

for, although we have kept a Longtail drake for nine years, Harlequins for five, and Common Scoters for seven years, it is felt that the new pond might facilitate the breeding of these attractive ducks. So far we have only bred the Common and Barrow's Goldeneyes.

All species of pochard are kept at the New Grounds and all breed regularly with the exception of the Ring-necked Duck which has nested, but its young have not been reared.

Among the perching ducks it is some years since we had a White-winged Wood Duck in the collection, and in spite of considerable efforts we have been unable to obtain new specimens. Our Hartlaub's Ducks were the first to breed in captivity and from these a hand-reared stock has been established in other collections where they are now breeding. We have managed to keep African and Indian Pygmy Geese going in fairly unsatisfactory conditions during the last ten years. Now we have a fine Tropical House where they are duly installed and we hope will breed.

All the European sawbills have been reared at Slimbridge and the hand-reared birds did very well for a number of years. But subsequently the Goosanders and Red-breasted Mergansers developed tuberculosis, and a large number were lost. The disease so far has not affected the Smew which breed regularly. This may be because they are not really mergansers but more closely related to the goldeneyes. The first Hooded Mergansers to be reared at Slimbridge were from chipping eggs collected in the United States and flown over in special boxes, hatching a few days after arrival.

Of the stiff-tails, four species have been kept successfully — North American Ruddy Duck, Peruvian Ruddy Duck, Maccoa and White-headed Duck, also the more doubtfully related species, White-backed Duck and Black-headed Duck. Of these, the North American Ruddy has bred consistently and reared its young successfully by itself. The White-backed Ducks have laid for the last three years but so far we have not managed to rear any of the young that have hatched.

A list of kinds of waterfowl that have been represented at Slimbridge follows. Against those present at the end of 1967 is set the number of individuals. Forms which have been reared are marked (+), or (*) if we were the first to breed them in captivity.

Anatidae represented at Slimbridge, 1946-67

	Present at end of 1967	Breeding record 1946-67
Maggie Goose <i>Anseranas semipalmata</i>	6	+
Spotted Whistling Duck <i>Dendrocygna guttata</i>	1	*
Eyton's Whistling Duck <i>D. eytoni</i>	14	
Wandering Whistling Duck <i>D. arcuata</i>		+
Fulvous Whistling Duck <i>D. bicolor</i>	15	+
Cuban Whistling Duck <i>D. arborea</i>	8	+
Javan Whistling Duck <i>D. javanica</i>	20	
White-faced Whistling Duck <i>D. viduata</i>	30	+
Northern Red-billed Whistling Duck <i>D. a. autumnalis</i>	25	+
Southern Red-billed Whistling Duck <i>D. a. discolor</i>	25	+
Coscoroba Swan <i>Coscoroba coscoroba</i>	6	+
Black Swan <i>Cygnus atratus</i>	4	+
Mute Swan <i>C. olor</i>		+
Black-necked Swan <i>C. melanocoryphus</i>	5	+
Whistling Swan <i>C. c. columbianus</i>	4	
Bewick's Swan <i>C. c. bewickii</i>	6	*
Jankowski's Swan <i>C. c. jankowskii</i>	1	
Whooper Swan <i>C. c. cygnus</i>	6	+
Trumpeter Swan <i>C. c. buccinator</i>	17	+
Swan Goose <i>Anser cygnoides</i>	9	+
Western Bean Goose <i>A. f. fabalis</i>	9	+
Russian Bean Goose <i>A. f. rossicus</i>	5	*
Thick-billed Bean Goose <i>A. f. serroriostris</i>	3	
Pink-footed Goose <i>A. brachyrhynchus</i>	16	+
European White-fronted Goose <i>A. a. albifrons</i>	14	+
Pacific White-fronted Goose <i>A. a. frontalis</i>	9	
Greenland White-fronted Goose <i>A. a. flavirostris</i>	15	+
Lesser White-fronted Goose <i>A. erythropus</i>	19	+
Western Greylag Goose <i>A. a. anser</i>	20	+
Eastern Greylag Goose <i>A. a. rubrirostris</i>	5	+
Bar-headed Goose <i>A. indicus</i>	9	+
Emperor Goose <i>A. canagicus</i>	23	+
Lesser Snow Goose <i>A. c. caerulescens</i>	10	+
Greater Snow Goose <i>A. c. atlanticus</i>	24	+
Ross's Snow Goose <i>A. rossii</i>	28	+
Atlantic Canada Goose <i>Branta c. canadensis</i>	2	+
Moffitt's Canada Goose <i>B. c. moffitti</i>	4	+
Giant Canada Goose <i>B. c. maxima</i>	2	+
Taverner's Canada Goose <i>B. c. taverneri</i>	6	+
Dusky Canada Goose <i>B. c. occidentalis</i>	6	+
Vancouver Canada Goose <i>B. c. fulva</i>	2	+
Aleutian Canada Goose <i>B. c. leucopareia</i>	2	
Richardson's Canada Goose <i>B. c. hutchinsii</i>	3	
Cackling Canada Goose <i>B. c. minima</i>	8	+
Hawaiian Goose <i>B. sandvicensis</i>	101	+
Barnacle Goose <i>B. leucopsis</i>	30	+
Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>B. b. bernicla</i>	6	
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>B. b. hrota</i>		
Black Brant <i>B. b. orientalis</i>	15	*
Red-breasted Goose <i>B. ruficollis</i>	31	+
Ruddy Shelduck <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	6	+
Cape Shelduck <i>T. cana</i>	4	+
Australian Shelduck <i>T. tadornoides</i>	3	
Paradise Shelduck <i>T. variegata</i>	6	+
Moluccan Radjah Shelduck <i>T. r. radjah</i>	6	
Australian Radjah Shelduck <i>T. r. rufitergum</i>	4	+
Common Shelduck <i>T. tadorna</i>	5	+
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	4	+
Orinoco Goose <i>Neochen jubatus</i>	1	+
Abyssinian Blue-winged Goose <i>Cyanochen cyanopterus</i>	6	+
Andean Goose <i>Chloephaga melanoptera</i>	15	+
Ashy-headed Goose <i>C. poliocephala</i>	4	+
Ruddy-headed Goose <i>C. rubidiceps</i>	4	+
Lesser Magellan Goose <i>C. p. picta</i>	6	+
Greater Magellan Goose <i>C. p. leucoptera</i>	6	+
Greater Kelp Goose <i>C. hybrida malvinarum</i>		
Cereopsis Goose <i>Cereopsis novae-hollandiae</i>	5	+
Falkland Flightless Steamer Duck <i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>	3	

	Present at end of 1967	Breeding record 1946-67
Patagonian Crested Duck <i>Lophonetta s. specularioides</i>	10	*
Andean Crested Duck <i>L. s. alticola</i>	10	+
Marbled Teal <i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i>	15	+
Bronze-winged Duck <i>Anas specularis</i>	8	*
Salvadori's Duck <i>A. waigiensis</i>	1	
Cape Teal <i>A. capensis</i>	20	+
Hottentot Teal <i>A. punctata</i>	11	+
Northern Versicolor Teal <i>A. v. versicolor</i>	16	+
Puna Teal <i>A. v. puna</i>	17	+
Red-billed Pintail <i>A. erythrorhyncha</i>	18	+
Southern Bahama Pintail <i>A. bahamensis rubrirostris</i>	22	+
Galapagos Pintail <i>A. b. galapagensis</i>	1	
South Georgian Teal <i>A. g. georgica</i>	1	
Chilean Pintail <i>A. g. spinicauda</i>	12	+
Northern Pintail <i>A. a. acuta</i>	12	+
Kerguelen Pintail <i>A. a. eatoni</i>	6	*
Chilean Teal <i>A. f. flavirostris</i>	20	+
Sharp-winged Teal <i>A. f. oxyptera</i>	5	+
European Green-winged Teal <i>A. c. crecca</i>	8	+
American Green-winged Teal <i>A. c. carolinensis</i>		+
Baikal Teal <i>A. formosa</i>	20	+
Falcated Teal <i>A. falcata</i>	20	+
Australian Grey Teal <i>A. gibberifrons gracilis</i>	10	+
Chestnut-breasted Teal <i>A. castanea</i>	15	+
Auckland Island Flightless Teal <i>A. a. aucklandica</i>		
New Zealand Brown Teal <i>A. a. chlorotis</i>	8	*
Mallard <i>A. p. platyrhynchos</i>		+
Greenland Mallard <i>A. p. conboschas</i>	2	+
Hawaiian Duck <i>A. p. wyvilliana</i>	6	+
Laysan Teal <i>A. p. laysanensis</i>	20	*
Florida Duck <i>A. p. fulvigula</i>	6	+
Mexican Duck <i>A. p. diazi</i>	1	
North American Black Duck <i>A. rubripes</i>	8	+
Indian Spotbill <i>A. p. pæcilorhyncha</i>	4	+
Chinese Spotbill <i>A. p. zonorhyncha</i>	8	+
New Zealand Grey Duck <i>A. s. superciliosa</i>	10	+
Pelew Island Grey Duck <i>A. s. pelewensis</i>	4	
Australian Black Duck <i>A. s. rogersi</i>	2	+
Philippine Duck <i>A. luzonica</i>	20	+
African Yellowbill <i>A. u. undulata</i>	20	+
Abyssinian Yellowbill <i>A. u. ruppelli</i>	10	+
African Black Duck <i>A. s. sparsa</i>	7	+
Abyssinian Black Duck <i>A. s. leucostigma</i>		
Gadwall <i>A. s. strepera</i>	6	+
European Wigeon <i>A. penelope</i>	20	+
American Wigeon <i>A. americana</i>	10	+
Chiloe Wigeon <i>A. sibilatrix</i>	12	+
Blue-winged Teal <i>A. discors</i>	12	+
Argentine Cinnamon Teal <i>A. c. cyanoptera</i>		+
Northern Cinnamon Teal <i>A. c. septentrionalium</i>	12	+
Garganey <i>A. querquedula</i>	8	+
Argentine Red Shoveler <i>A. platalea</i>	10	+
Cape Shoveler <i>A. smithi</i>	8	*
New Zealand Shoveler <i>A. rhynchotis variegata</i>	12	+
Common Shoveler <i>A. clypeata</i>	12	+
Ringed Teal <i>A. leucophrys</i>	30	+
Blue Duck <i>Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos</i>	1	
European Eider <i>Somateria m. mollissima</i>	24	+
Pacific Eider <i>S. m. v-nigra</i>		
Northern Eider <i>S. m. borealis</i>	2	
American Eider <i>S. m. dresseri</i>	3	
King Eider <i>S. spectabilis</i>	9	*
Spectacled Eider <i>S. fischeri</i>	7	
Steller's Eider <i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	3	
Red-crested Pochard <i>Netta rufina</i>	24	+
Rosy-bill <i>N. peposaca</i>	19	+
South American Pochard <i>N. e. erythrophthalma</i>	3	+
African Pochard <i>N. e. brunnea</i>	16	+

	Present at end of 1967	Breeding record 1946-67
European Pochard <i>A. ferina</i>	12	+
Redhead <i>A. americana</i>	12	+
Canvasback <i>Aythya vallisneria</i>	6	+
Madagascar White-eye <i>A. innotata</i>		
Common White-eye <i>A. nyroca</i>	16	+
Baer's Pochard <i>A. baeri</i>	20	+
Australian White-eye <i>A. a. australis</i>	10	+
New Zealand Scaup <i>A. novae-seelandiae</i>	20	*
Ring-necked Duck <i>A. collaris</i>	6	
Tufted Duck <i>A. fuligula</i>	12	+
Lesser Scaup <i>A. affinis</i>	12	+
European Greater Scaup <i>A. m. marila</i>	12	+
Lesser Brazilian Teal <i>Amazonetta b. brasiliensis</i>	10	+
Greater Brazilian Teal <i>A. b. ipecutiri</i>		+
Maned Goose <i>Chenonetta jubata</i>	10	+
Mandarin Duck <i>Aix galericulata</i>	50	+
North American Wood Duck <i>A. sponsa</i>	50	+
African Pygmy Goose <i>Nettapus auritus</i>	4	
Indian Pygmy Goose <i>N. c. coromandelianus</i>	12	
Comb Duck <i>Sarkidiornis m. melanotus</i>	24	+
South American Comb Duck <i>S. m. carunculatus</i>	6	+
Hartlaub's Duck <i>Cairina hartlaubi</i>	8	*
White-winged Wood Duck <i>C. scutulata</i>		
Muscovy Duck <i>C. moschata</i>	10	+
Spur-winged Goose <i>Plectropterus g. gambensis</i>	2	
Black Spur-winged Goose <i>P. g. niger</i>	1	
Common Scoter <i>Melanitta n. nigra</i>	3	
Velvet Scoter <i>M. f. fusca</i>	1	
Atlantic Harlequin Duck <i>Histrionicus h. histrionicus</i>	12	
Long-tailed Duck <i>Clangula hyemalis</i>		
Barrow's Goldeneye <i>Bucephala islandica</i>	7	+
European Goldeneye <i>B. c. clangula</i>	14	+
American Goldeneye <i>B. c. americana</i>	4	
Bufflehead <i>B. albeola</i>	7	
Smew <i>Mergus albellus</i>	10	+
Hooded Merganser <i>M. cucullatus</i>	5	+
Red-breasted Merganser <i>M. s. serrator</i>	4	+
Goosander <i>M. m. merganser</i>		*
American Merganser <i>M. m. americanus</i>	1	
White-headed Duck <i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>	6	
North American Ruddy Duck <i>O. j. jamaicensis</i>	30	+
Peruvian Ruddy Duck <i>O. j. ferruginea</i>	1	
African Maccoa Duck <i>O. maccoa</i>		
African White-backed Duck <i>Thalassornis l. leuconotus</i>	7	
Black-headed Duck <i>Heteronetta atricapilla</i>		

