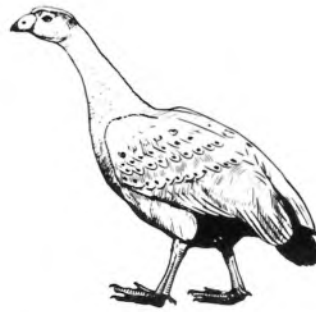


## Progress in Aviculture by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust during 1991

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This year saw an increase in the size of the Trust's collection, continuing the trend of the last four years which has been linked partly to the development of the Llanelli Centre and the acquisition of Castle Espie. In 1991 the largest increase was again at Llanelli, which at the end of the year held 1132 birds (370 more than the previous year), close to its present carrying capacity. The pattern at other Centres was of smaller changes including both increases and decreases.

More birds (of fewer types) were reared in 1991 than in 1990; 125 taxa produced eggs, and 2120 birds of 110 taxa were reared. All Centres reared more birds than in the previous season, with the exception of Llanelli, where fewer eggs were imported from other Centres as the collection approached its target size. Four hundred and sixteen birds were raised at Llanelli, including for the first time a large number from eggs laid at the Centre, though 50% of birds reared were hatched from eggs laid elsewhere. These came principally from Trust Centres, though a few other breeders kindly donated eggs. Most eggs laid by White-winged Wood Duck *Cairina scutulata* at other Centres were moved to Llanelli for hatching and 17 were reared there.

At Arundel, Blue Ducks *Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus* bred again; for the first time more than one pair nested and we now have offspring from all three surviving founders sent from New Zealand. We should be able to establish the first non-sibling British-bred pairs, though our stock is still quite closely related. Bewick's Swans *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* also nested at Arundel: three pairs hatched young (the first year that more than one pair has done so) but, for various reasons, none were reared.

At Martin Mere, new propagation facilities enabled the rearing of 332 birds (only 31 were reared in 1990 while the duckery was being redeveloped). There were some

teething problems with the new unit but following minor alterations the new design was felt to be successful.

Castle Espie also experienced a better rearing season; birds raised included 18 Smew *Mergus albellus*, 19 Hooded Merganser *M. cucullatus* and a single Light-bellied Brent *Branta bernicla hrota*.

The Chilean Flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis* breeding season was the latest ever; two groups bred, with the first egg at Slimbridge laid on 8 July and at Peakirk on 14 July. Twelve chicks were reared at Slimbridge and five at Peakirk, and Caribbean *P. ruber ruber* and Greater *P. r. roseus* Flamingos also raised young at Slimbridge.

In the tropical house at Slimbridge, Fairy Bluebirds *Irena puella* and Spotted Whistling Ducks *Dendrocygna guttata* reared young, and four Turquoise Tanagers *Tangara mexicana* were incubator-hatched and hand-reared (the first time this species has bred in the UK).

Bird movements included the establishment of a flock of Caribbean Flamingos at Llanelli by moving 33 birds from Slimbridge. These are the only adult birds to be moved to Llanelli. The policy of introducing only eggs or chicks to avoid disease transmission was waived in this case because of the difficulties of establishing a flamingo flock in this way and the low incidence of transmissible disease, particularly avian tuberculosis, in flamingos. Three male Andean Flamingos *Phoenicoparrus andinus* were sent from Slimbridge to Vogelpark Walsrode in Germany in exchange for three James' Flamingos *P. jamesii* which improves the breeding potential of both institutions. Following several seasons with no successful breeding, the flocks of both species at Slimbridge were moved to an enclosure already occupied by breeding Chilean Flamingos, but neither species bred in 1991.

Other international bird movements

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included an Andean Goose *Chloephaga melanoptera* and Trumpeter Swan *C. cygnus buccinator* eggs sent to Moscow Zoo in exchange for Thick-billed Bean Geese *Anser fabalis serrirostris* and Australian Black Ducks *Anas superciliosa rogersi*.

Taxa lost from the collection through deaths in 1991 were Recherche Cereopsis

Goose *Cereopsis novaehollandiae grisea*, Atlantic Canada Goose *Branta c. canadensis* and Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*, while Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* was added (a disabled wild bird taken in at Martin Mere). At the end of 1991 the Trust held 8470 wildfowl and flamingos of 161 kinds.

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