

Wildfowl 68

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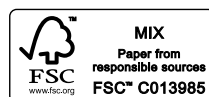
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Photograph: Common Pochard male, by Walter Soestbergen/Minden Pictures/FLPA.

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Wildfowl 68: Editorial

One of the many delights in serving as Editor of *Wildfowl* is that it provides a preview of fledgling research programmes, giving first insight into exciting new projects. This is particularly true for *Wildfowl* 68, where preliminary information is presented on a small, geographically-discrete, population of Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* breeding at Tabatskuri Lake in Georgia, and on conservation efforts underway to reduce threats to the birds nesting at the site. The species illustrating the front cover is usually influenced by papers within the issue, so the Velvet Scoter study has the additional benefit of providing an opportunity to use Ingo Waschkies' stunning photograph, which was not to be missed. Closer to home, it was fascinating to learn about a long-term study of Eurasian Curlew *Numenius a. arquata* wintering on the River Severn estuary in Gloucestershire, UK, where John Sanders has been monitoring the comings and goings of colour-marked individuals in great detail since 2010. His dedication in visiting the estuary to record Curlew rings, in all conditions throughout the year, has generated a wealth of data on their movements to and from the site. These are now described, together with reports on the breeding distribution of Curlew sighted in their nesting areas.

In addition to hearing about new studies, it is always rewarding to receive the latest news from established research programmes, such as on the Greylag Geese *Anser anser* breeding in southern Sweden. Leif Nilsson has been following these birds since the early 1980s, and several papers resulting from this work have appeared in previous issues of the journal. Nothing remains static in population ecology, however, as the birds respond to changing environmental conditions. So we now learn of how a more northerly distribution in recent milder winters influences the timing of return to the breeding grounds, the knock-on effects for the rest of the breeding season, and whether this influences the Greylags' breeding success. The journal also includes updates on other goose research programmes, with the latest population estimates for the globally-threatened Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* and Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*, and new information on the movements of Interior Canada Geese *Branta canadensis interior* migrating between Greenland and the Atlantic coast of North America. The importance of long-term studies is also evident in an analysis of sex ratios recorded annually for five duck species wintering at WWT Martin Mere in northwest England. This found, *inter alia*, that the proportion of males among Common Pochard *Aythya farina* at the site showed a general increase in the period from 1991/92 and 2005/06, differing from a national assessment (derived from two surveys) which found no change in the Pochard sex ratio on comparing winters 1989/90 and 2015/16 for the country as a whole. Potential reasons for the discrepancy are discussed in the paper.

Further contributions on wildfowl in North America include a study using stratified sampling methods to inform ground surveys for an assessment of habitat selection by Mottled Duck *Anas fulvigula* broods, and radio-tracking combined with ground surveys to investigate the nesting ecology of the Hawaiian Duck *Anas nyvilliana* on northern K aua'i in

Hawai'i. Papers on Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* from opposite sides of the world illustrate the different conditions facing the species. The consequences of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami continue to be felt at coastal habitats in Japan and Black Brant *Branta b. nigricans* now sometimes use terrestrial habitat in this area, whilst in Ireland varying disturbance levels influence the behaviour and energy intake of Light-bellied Brent Geese at different sites. Finally, from the Southern Hemisphere, we learn about variation between Andean Flamingos *Phoenicoparrus andinus* and Chilean Flamingos *Phoenicopterus chilensis* in their feeding selectivity and diet at a site where the species coexist – valuable information for the management and protection of habitats for these species.

I remain indebted to the whole team involved in the production of *Wildfowl*, and particularly to the generosity of the referees who kindly give their time to peer-review the manuscripts, sometimes at very short notice. I am, as ever, immensely grateful to Tony Fox – Associate Editor of *Wildfowl* – for his major contribution in commenting on and refining the papers. Editorial Board members Jeff Black, Bruce Dugger, Andy Green and Matt Guillemain continue to provide vital support and sound scientific advice throughout the process. I also thank Ellen Matthews (EM Typesetting) for her expertise in preparing the proofs and keeping the work on schedule, Paul Marshall for designing the lovely cover, the staff at Henry Ling Ltd for the printed copies and Maggie Sage, Linda Dickerson and Jane Gawthorne-Dover for their administrative support. *Wildfowl* 68 covers a fascinating range of studies of some very different species from across the globe, and I hope that readers enjoy learning about them as much as I did.

Eileen Rees

**Editor: *Wildfowl*
WWT Martin Mere**



Photograph: Eurasian Curlew in flight, by Daniele Occhiato/Minden Pictures/FLPA.