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Myrlyn Owen, G. L. Atkinson-Willes and D. G. Salmon
Frontmatter
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SECOND EDITION

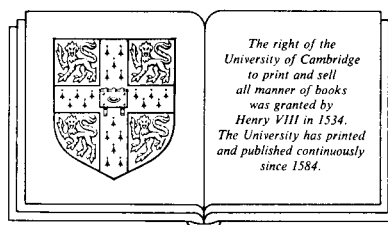
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Foreword

WILLIAM WILKINSON, *Chairman of the Nature Conservancy Council*

As one who, in his time, has been a wildfowl counter, both in Britain for the Wildfowl Trust and abroad for the International Waterfowl Research Bureau, it is a particular pleasure to welcome the completion of this Domesday Book of the wildfowl and their wetland habitats. Since its predecessor was published in 1963, the range and bulk of data have greatly increased, thanks to the efforts of several thousand dedicated volunteer workers. The Wildfowl Trust, supported by the Nature Conservancy Council, has played the central role in collecting and analysing the data, but their sister organisations, the British Trust for Ornithology and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, have been more than supportive, as have been the Naturalists' Trusts and Ornithological Societies throughout the country. Indeed this is a very British achievement, basically one of free enterprise but underpinned by a, relatively modest, funding from Government sources.

The vulnerability of wetlands to modern technological developments was recognised by the drawing up in 1971 at Ramsar, in Iran, of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat. With 38 countries now adhering to the convention, and more than 300 wetlands covering some 19 million hectares afforded special protection, the international effort has clearly had considerable success. In the United Kingdom 19 wetlands of international importance have been designated for the Ramsar List and our aim is to extend that status to cover the 132 which satisfy the agreed criteria. The data presented in this book are of crucial importance in this task. Having so many hard facts neatly and clearly available is also of enormous value to the NCC's Regional Officers, and their non-governmental counterparts, in combating threats to valuable areas. The level of awareness of local authorities has been increased by the assemblage of data of this kind, enabling them to build essential environmental safeguards into their planning procedures. The importance of maintaining regular and extensive coverage of Britain, to this end, cannot be overestimated.

The international dimension of wildfowl conservation is well illustrated in this book, particularly by the clear maps of ringing recoveries and migration routes. In their migrations, wildfowl pass over many national borders and use chains of wetlands throughout their range. More than any other factor, they emphasise the need for international action in conserving wetlands, and the benefits of such conservation accrue particularly to the fortunate countries endowed with these habitats. By their very presence, the spectacular flocks of wildfowl provide one of the strongest arguments to convince the layman, planner and politician that wetlands are not wastelands, but a very precious though vulnerable part of our national heritage.

Many wildfowl have shown adaptability to a changing scene in the countryside and have turned to feeding on agricultural land when their natural feeding grounds have been destroyed or rendered untenable. They thus are in the forefront of what I regard as the most important conservation issue of the present time, the need to work out rational and harmonious policies for the rural estate which recognise the legitimate rights of the various interests, be they agriculture or wildlife, tourism or wilderness.

Throughout known history, wildfowl have been a quarry for the hunter, and many a long-time conservationist has begun as a wildfowler. In a crowded island, and with modern weapons and increased mobility, the hunter must accept restrictions in time, through open seasons, and in space, through refuges, if he is to continue as an acceptable predator in the ecosystem. The planning of an adequate network of wildfowl refuges was one of the initial stimuli for collecting together the data in this volume and its predecessor. The wildfowlers, and in particular their coordinating organisation, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, have lent considerable support to the research and monitoring work of the Wildfowl Trust.

Wildfowl thus impinge on many aspects of modern nature conservation and it is fitting that their

Foreword

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story should be set out in such adequate detail. The name of Slimbridge has become synonymous with conservation since Sir Peter Scott founded the Wildfowl Trust there in 1946. This volume will surely be reckoned as one of the finest fruits of the team that he

has inspired over the years. I would wish to commend them on their painstaking labours and their ability to put over an enormous amount of data in a way that makes it readily accessible and understandable.



Acknowledgements

Although it is organised nationally from Slimbridge, the Wildfowl Counts scheme is heavily dependent on Regional and County Organisers, who are responsible for the coverage of waters in their own areas. Their contribution cannot be underestimated and we record our special gratitude to them. In Scotland the counts are organised under the auspices of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, formerly through a central organiser – successively Miss E.V. Baxter and Miss L.J. Rintoul, Miss E.A. Garden and Miss V.M. Thom – latterly through a network of Regional Organisers, as in England and Wales. Many thousands of individual counters have, over the twenty years, contributed to the enormous quantity of data on which this book is based. They have given freely of their time and travelled, at their own expense, often considerable distances to cover their areas. The quality and completeness of the data, especially for the most important resorts, is a tribute to their efforts. We hope that this volume will emphasise the value of this work, and will provide a spur to its continuation and expansion.

The ready cooperation of the British Trust for Ornithology, through the provision of data from their Birds of Estuaries Enquiry and ringing scheme, has proved immensely valuable.

We are grateful to the Wildfowl Trust for the opportunity of taking part in this work and in particular to its Honorary Director, Sir Peter Scott, who has shown continued interest and has kindly provided the line drawings which help to lighten the text. Our efforts have been guided by the Trust's Deputy Director, Professor G.V.T. Matthews, and we are grateful to him for his encouragement and support throughout. We received much valuable guidance from our Scientific Advisory Committee, and in particular from D.R. Langslow of the Nature Conservancy Council and C.J. Cadbury and G.J. Thomas of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

The survey of wildfowl and their habitats in Part II is a substantial work, which would not have been achieved without the help of our colleagues G.V.T.

Matthews and M.A. Ogilvie, who wrote a considerable proportion of this section. We are also extremely grateful to M. Smart and to G.M. Williams and A. Henderson, who also took part in the writing of Part II. The contributions of the additional writers are detailed on p.26.

Our other colleagues at the Wildfowl Trust have been a constant source of advice and assistance. In particular Joyce Portlock, over a period of three years, typed the manuscript and edited it several times on a word processor. We are also grateful to Angela Wenger and Pauline Jackson for additional secretarial help.

The Nature Conservancy Council have, since 1954, financed the central organisation of the counts and wildfowl ringing activities through generous grants and contracts. They have also covered some of the costs of producing this volume.

Finally, we are especially grateful to the following individuals (mainly wildfowl counters and Regional Organisers), who have provided additional data and/or made valuable comments on early drafts:

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Conventions and abbreviations

A number of terms are used conventionally throughout the text, and are defined as follows:

Season means the period between mid-September and mid-March, unless otherwise defined. Only the year in which the season began is normally quoted, e.g. 1970 means September 1970 to March 1971, and 1970-1975 means 1970-71 to 1975-76 inclusive.

1-200 means 100-200; 2-3,000 means 2,000-3,000; 15-20,000 means 15,000-20,000, and so on. Numbers below 100 are written in full.

100 Mallard and Teal means 100 Mallard and 100 Teal; a total of 100 Mallard and Teal means that the two species together total 100.

References in the text are given as bracketed numbers; the full list appears on p.551. For example, in paragraph one of Introduction to the Survey "(279)" refers to Hutchinson 1979. In the tables and figures references are given in conventional form (e.g. Ogilvie 1981).

Maximum Counts also appear in brackets, e.g. "Warwick Castle Park Lake with 99 (375) Mallard" on p.55. Here "99" denotes the regular count of Mallard at the site, "(375)" the maximum recorded there (see also p.27).

BASC
 British Association for Shooting and Conservation
 BTO
 British Trust for Ornithology
 IWRB
 International Waterfowl Research Bureau
 LNR
 Local Nature Reserve
 NCC
 Nature Conservancy Council
 NNR
 National Nature Reserve

RSPB
 Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
 SOC
 Scottish Ornithologists' Club
 SSSI
 Site of Special Scientific Interest
 SWT
 Scottish Wildlife Trust
 WAGBI
 Wildfowlers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland

Location maps:

Letters and numbers on the border refer to the National Grid 100km squares and divisions thereof.