

Preface

Recent years have seen a growing concern over the increasing number and variety of birds becoming established in the United Kingdom as a result of introduction by man. The papers in this volume are the result of a conference organised by the JNCC and BOU in April 1995 on the theme of 'feral and introduced birds'. The aim was to examine the conservation issues surrounding bird species introduced to new areas or within their natural ranges for a variety of reasons, both within the UK and elsewhere.

As the conference proceeded it became clear that a variety of terms such as 'exotic', 'introduced', 'alien' and 'feral' are used to describe species introduced by man to a particular location, either deliberately or through escape from captivity. These terms are often used interchangeably leading to confusion. A discussion session towards the end of the conference considered the meanings of these words to seek a common understanding. The results of this discussion have been reported by Holmes & Stroud (1995) and are summarised below.

Terms such as 'exotic', 'alien' and 'non-native' describe the *origins* of the species concerned, whereas 'feral', 'introduced' and 're-established' describe the *process* by which establishment in the wild has occurred. The consensus at the conference was that 'naturalised' was a more appropriate all-encompassing term for wild self-sustaining populations of such species, describing the *outcome* of the process. The term 'naturalised' can be accompanied by a qualifier explaining the origin of the species concerned to produce the following categories:

- i. Naturalised feral: a domesticated species established in the wild. Note that mere keeping in captivity does not necessarily constitute domestication. The species must undergo some change in genotype, phenotype or behaviour in captivity.
- ii. Naturalised introduction: established species which would not occur without introduction by man.
- iii. Naturalised re-establishment: a successful re-establishment of a species in areas of former occurrence. Note that 're-established' is favoured over 'reintroduced'. The latter is often used to describe species which have been re-established in an area of former natural occurrence, following extinction. This usage is incorrect, however, since reintroduction implies that the species was *introduced* in the first place.
- iv. Naturalised establishment: establishment of a species which occurs but does not breed naturally in a given area e.g. a vagrant, passage migrant or winter visitor.

Note that these terms are meaningless without some geographical reference. For example, the greylag goose *Anser anser* is a naturalised re-establishment across much of Britain where it had previously become extinct as a breeding species. It could, however, be considered a naturalised establishment in certain areas (i.e. in areas where it had not formerly bred naturally) and is also a native breeder in Caithness, Sutherland and the Hebrides.

In submitting papers for this volume, authors were asked to follow the terms developed as far as possible. All the papers were subject to peer review. Common names for bird species follow BOU (1992) for species on the British and Irish List (J. Marchant, this volume) and Howard & Moore (1994) for other species, except where quoting from listings (e.g. legislation) which use other names or where the author considers an alternative name more appropriate. All scientific names follow Howard & Moore (1994).

John Holmes
Jonathan Simons

References

- Holmes, J.S., & Stroud, D.A. 1995. Naturalised birds: feral, exotic, introduced or alien? *British Birds*, 88 (12): 602-603.
- Howard, R., & Moore, A. 1994. *A complete checklist of the birds of the world*. 2nd ed. London, Academic Press.
- British Ornithologists' Union. 1992. *Checklist of birds of Britain and Ireland*. 6th ed. Tring, BOU.