

The eradication of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palearctic:

A review of actions under the Bern Convention



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with the contribution of Tim Adriaens, Jean-Baptiste Mounronval, Iain Henderson & Rolf Ruks

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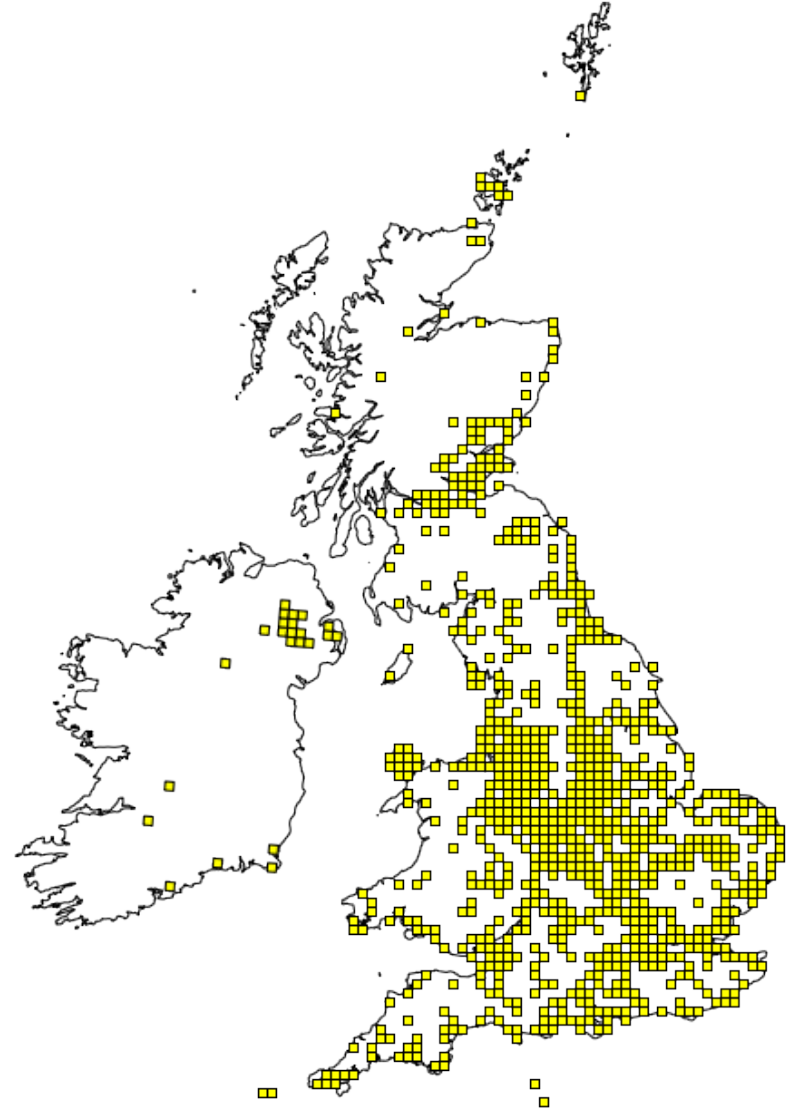
Introduction

The beginning:

Four males and three females imported from North America in 1940s.

UK feral population resulted from escapes and releases from captivity, and they first bred in the wild in 1960.

Rapid spread from 1975 onwards, including into neighboring countries.



United Kingdom: Background and first steps

The establishment:

1940: 7 birds imported from USA.

1960: first breeding in the wild.

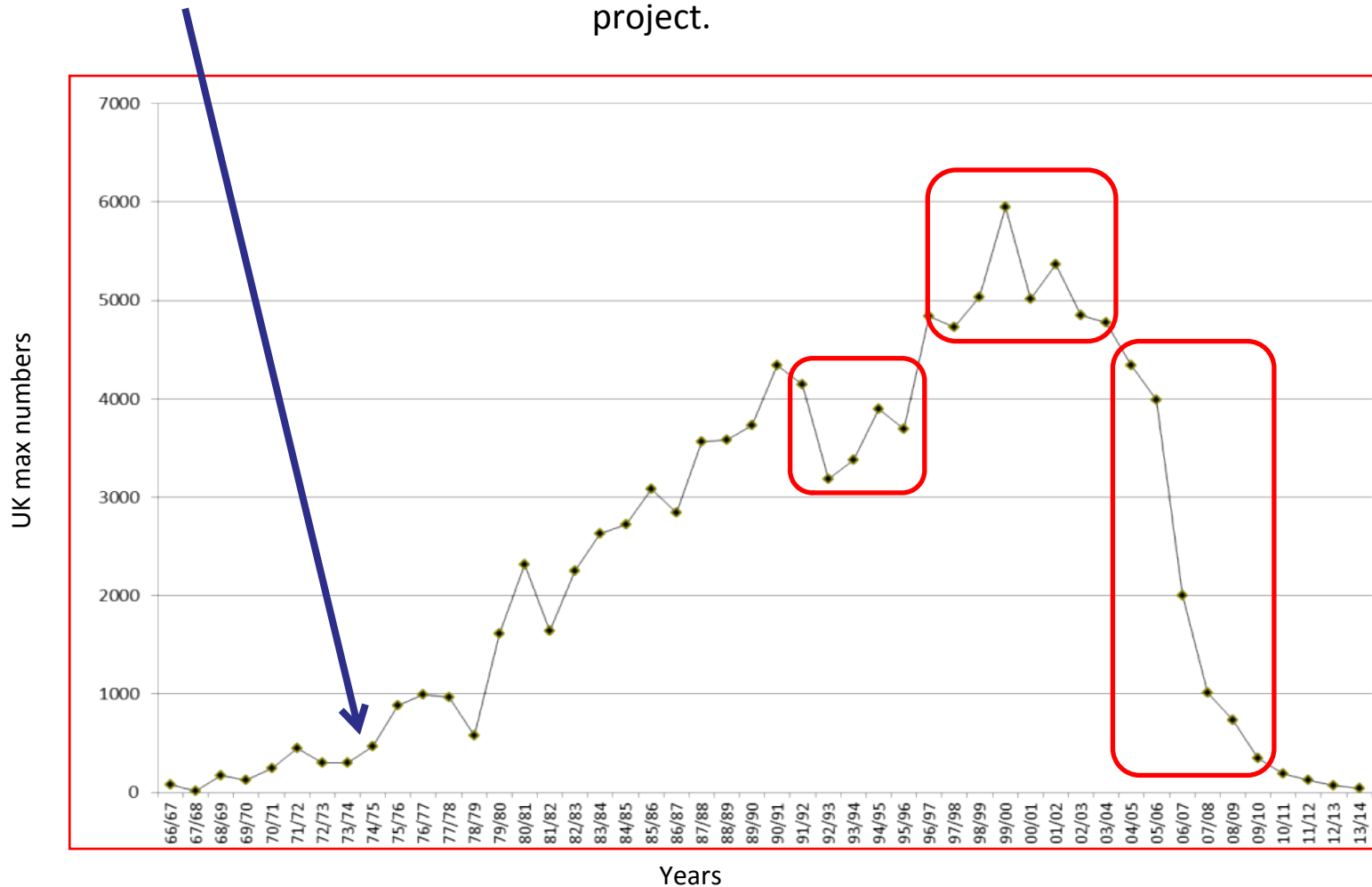
1975: rapid spread.

The eradication:

1993-1996: first trials for feasibility.

1999-2005: Large scale research

2005-2010: beginning of LIFE05 NAT/UK/000142 project.



First steps and background: the continent

1965: first continental sight in Sweden

1974: First sight in France

1995: Beginning of the increase.

2005: Peak numbers and beginning of decline.

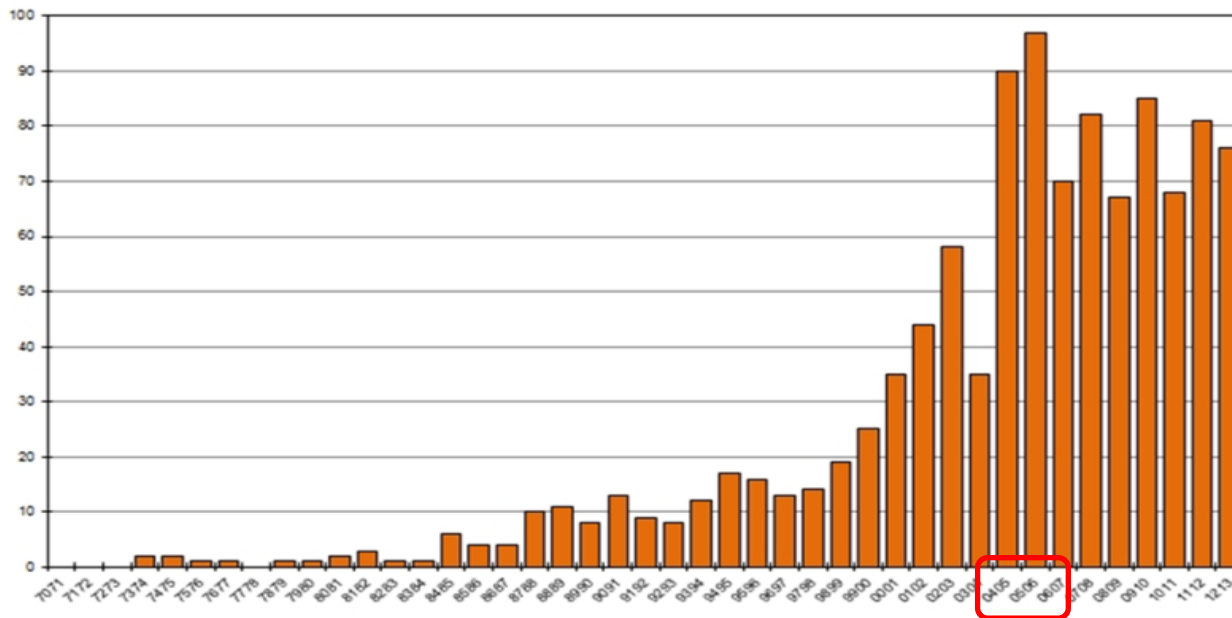
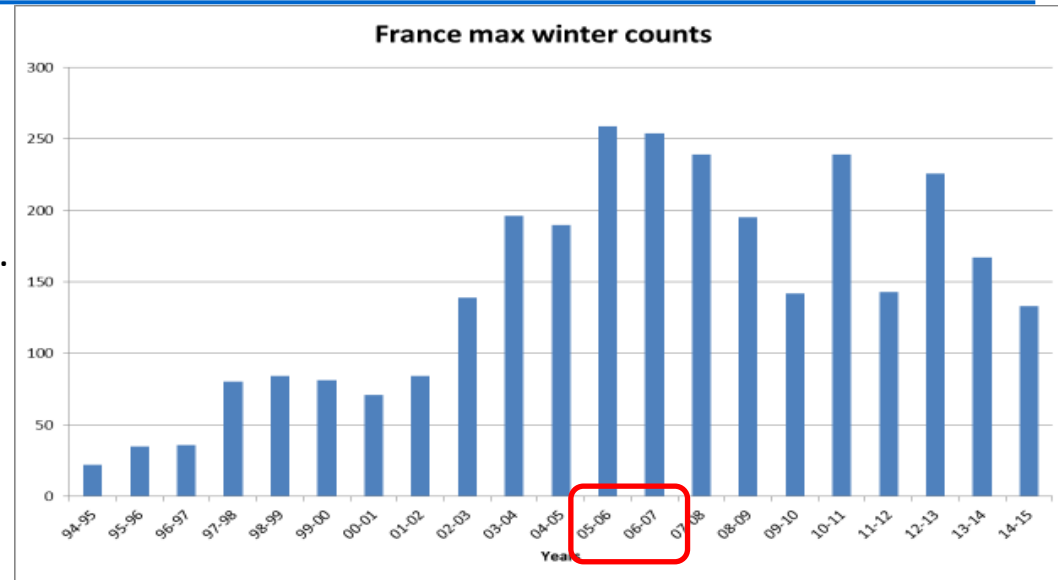
2010: Stabilization.

Breeding populations in:

Belgium

France

The Netherlands



Countries with regular sights:
Ireland, Denmark, Germany,
Spain, Switzerland, Sweden,
Norway, Italy & Morocco

Countries where cited:
Austria, Czech Rep., Finland,
Hungary, Iceland, Portugal,
Slovenia

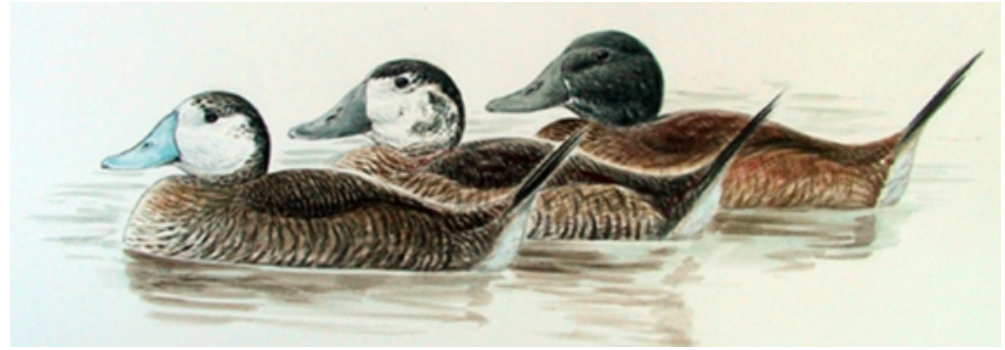
First steps and background: Spain

Three stages:

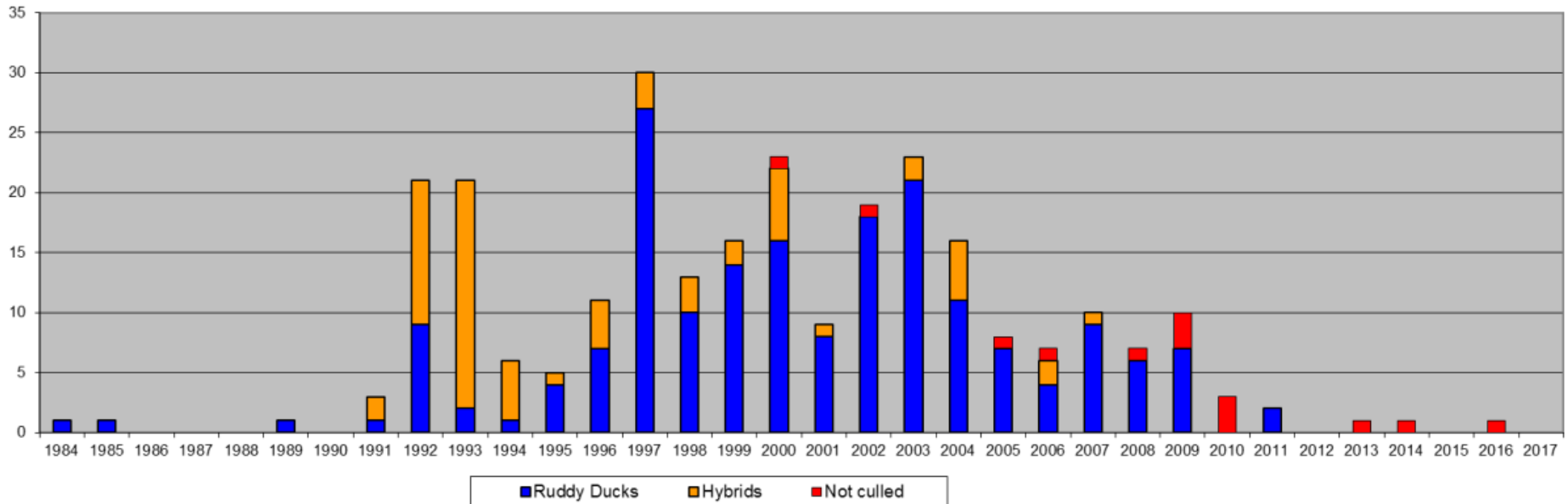
1984-2000: urgent actions to stop the severe hybridization process.

2000-2010: creation of a national team with almost special dedication.

2010 onwards: responsibilities lay in each local government.



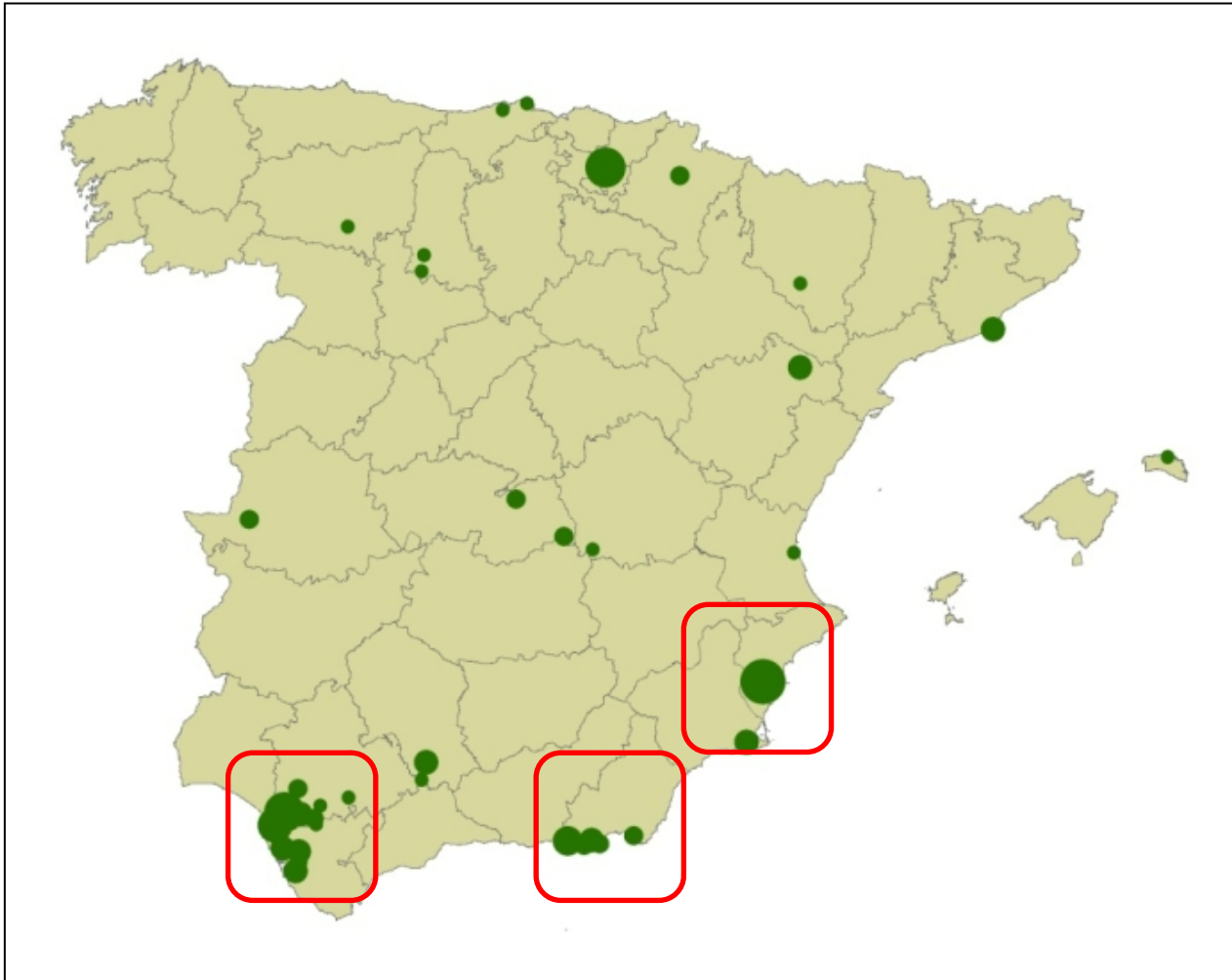
Ruddy Duck totals in Spain 1984 - 2017



First steps and background: Spain

All hybrids detected in three main areas, coinciding with the main distribution areas for White-headed Ducks

Almost 80% of Ruddy Ducks and hybrids culled here



The Eradication Action Plans

Bern Convention 30th meeting of Standing Committee, Strasbourg 09/12/2010.

Recommendation No. 149 (2010) on the eradication of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palearctic.:

All Contracting Parties:

Implement without delay the actions specified in the “Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palearctic, 2011-2015”

Bern Convention 36th meeting of Standing Committee, Strasbourg 15-18 November 2016.

Recommendation No. 185 (2016) on the eradication of the Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in the Western Palearctic by 2020:

All Contracting Parties:

Implement without delay the actions specified in the “Action Plan for the Eradication of the Ruddy Duck in the Western Palearctic, 2016-2020”

Key countries

1. Regularly held >10 Ruddy Ducks, 2010 to 2016
or where poses major concern for breeding White-headed Duck

BE

FR

NL

ES

GB

2. Held <5 Ruddy Ducks at least once, 2010 to 2016

CZ

HU

IT

FI

NO

PL

PT

SK

CH

TU

3. No Ruddy Ducks, 2010 to 2016

AL

AM

BA

HR

EE

IS

LV

LI

LT

MT

MD

MA

SI

SE

Action 1. Remove legal barriers to control	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 2. Monitor wild birds (non breeding)	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 2. Monitor wild birds (breeding)	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 3. Eradicate wild Ruddy Ducks	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 4. Establish national working group	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 5. Ban release from captivity	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 6. Establish legislation to ban trade	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 6. Prohibit trade in Ruddy Ducks by 2015	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 7. Monitor Ruddy Ducks in captivity	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 8. Prevent captive Ruddy Ducks breeding	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB
Action 9. Raise awareness about control	BE	FR	NL	ES	GB

The Eradication Strategy - goals

Belgium urgently implement an eradication program aimed at achieving the common target of eliminating annually at least 50 % of Ruddy Duck national population to achieve total eradication in its territory no later than 2015.

France intensify present efforts to eradicate Ruddy Duck and carry out an extensive public awareness campaign.

The Netherlands urgently implement the existing eradication program, providing the resources needed for its completion; and as a matter of urgency establish the national co-ordination foreseen in the plan so as to facilitate its implementation, taking into account that delays will increase costs.

Spain continue its current policy to eradicate every single Ruddy Duck or hybrid detected in its territory.

United Kingdom continue present efforts to eradicate the remaining populations of Ruddy Duck and pursue them after the end of the very effective and positive LIFE project.

The Eradication Strategy - goals

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DONE and in progress

France intensify present efforts to eradicate Ruddy Duck and carry out an extensive public awareness campaign.

DONE and a national eradication strategy (2015-2019) in progress

The Netherlands urgently implement the existing eradication program, providing the resources needed for its completion; and as a matter of urgency establish the national co-ordination foreseen in the plan so as to facilitate its implementation, taking into account that delays will increase costs.

In progress, but still many work to do

Spain continue its current policy to eradicate every single Ruddy Duck or hybrid detected in its territory.

In progress (do not relax)

United Kingdom continue present efforts to eradicate the remaining populations of Ruddy Duck and pursue them after the end of the very effective and positive LIFE project.

DONE and in progress

The Eradication Strategy - goals

Belgium continue its current policy to eradicate every single ruddy duck or hybrid detected in its territory, outline and implement a rapid response protocol to improve reaction time.

France finalise and implement the national action plan for the eradication of Ruddy Duck; intensify winter controls - especially in Lac de Grand Lieu - and provide the necessary human and financial means to intensify birds culling, increasing also monitoring of breeding and moulting birds in Loire Atlantique and neighbouring departments.

The Netherlands continue the present efforts to eradicate the remaining ruddy ducks.

Spain continue its current policy to eradicate every single Ruddy Duck or hybrid detected in its territory.

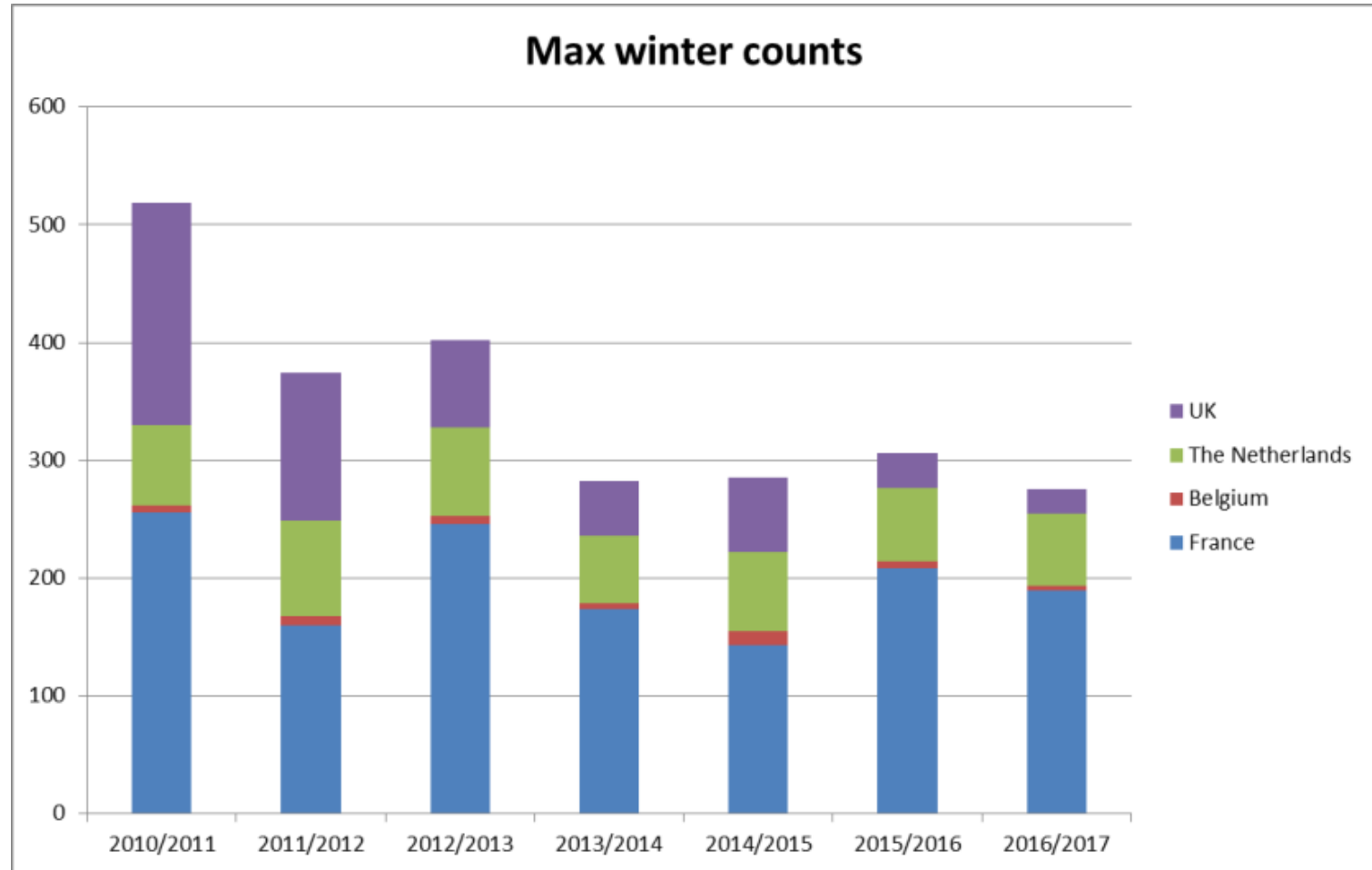
United Kingdom continue present efforts to eradicate the remaining populations of Ruddy Duck.

The situation 2010 - 2017

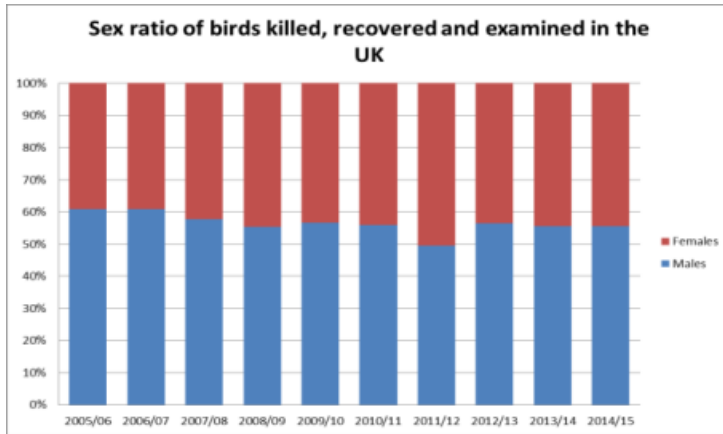
UK is not longer the stronghold for Ruddy Ducks

Ruddy Ducks are extirpated from Spain (and Morocco), where can be considered as a vagrant

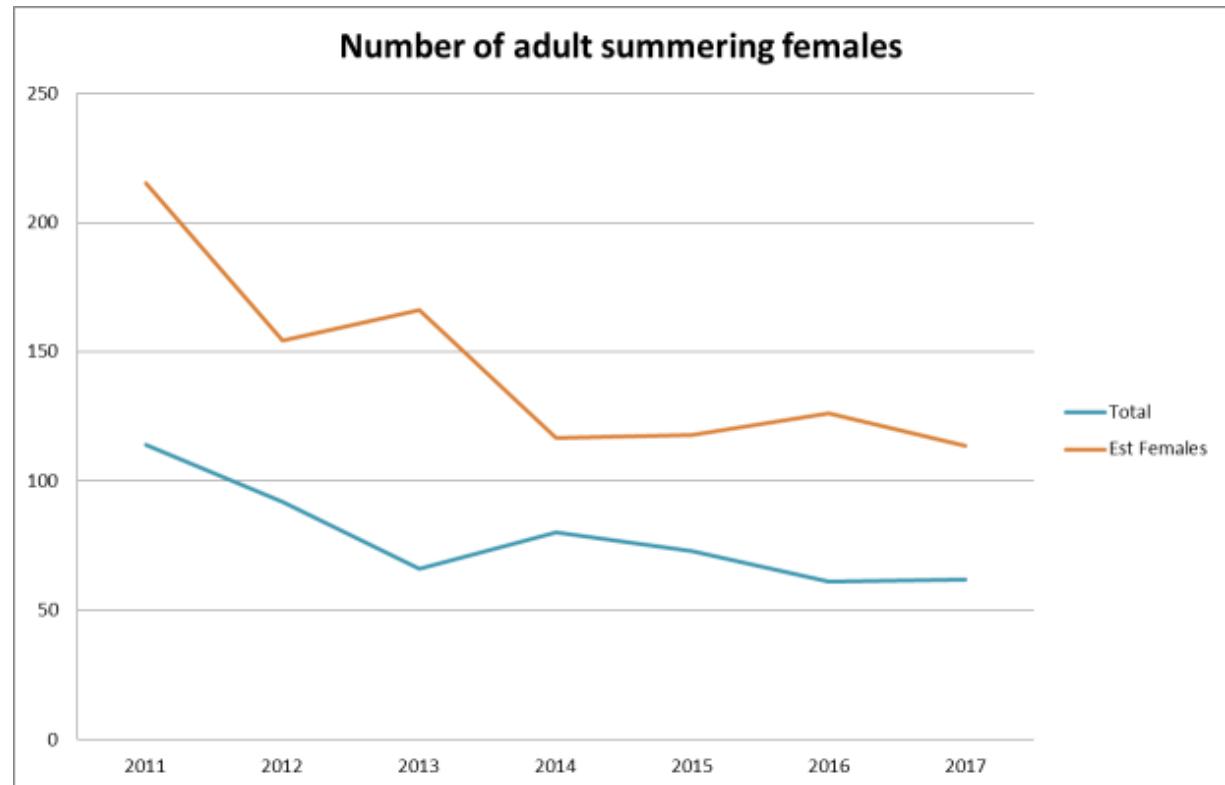
Main population is in France but not growing and stable thanks to continue shooting



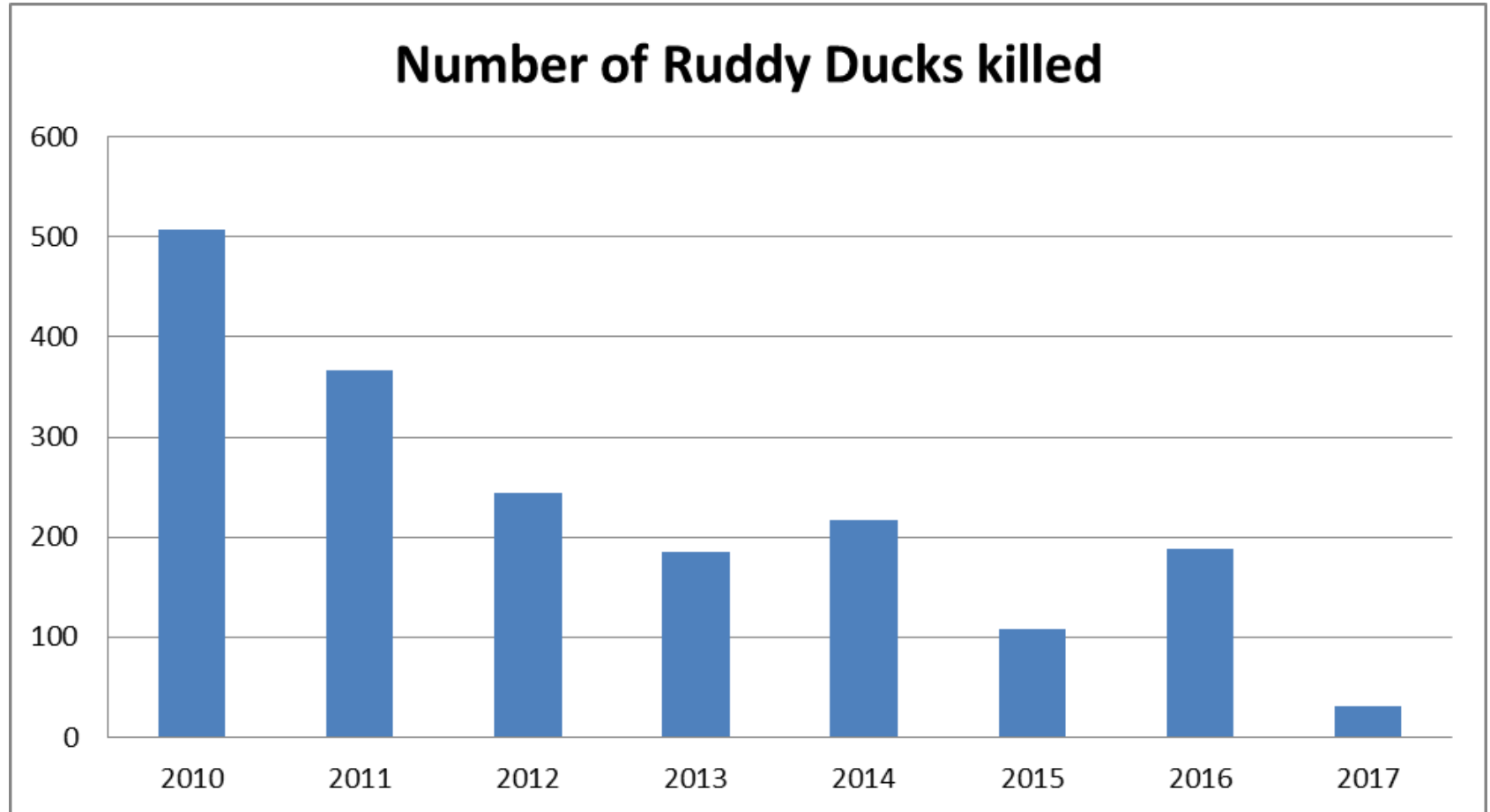
The situation 2010 - 2016



Sex ratio remains quite stable along the years, with a weighted average of 58,7% males and 41,3% females (including immatures) at the end of the winter

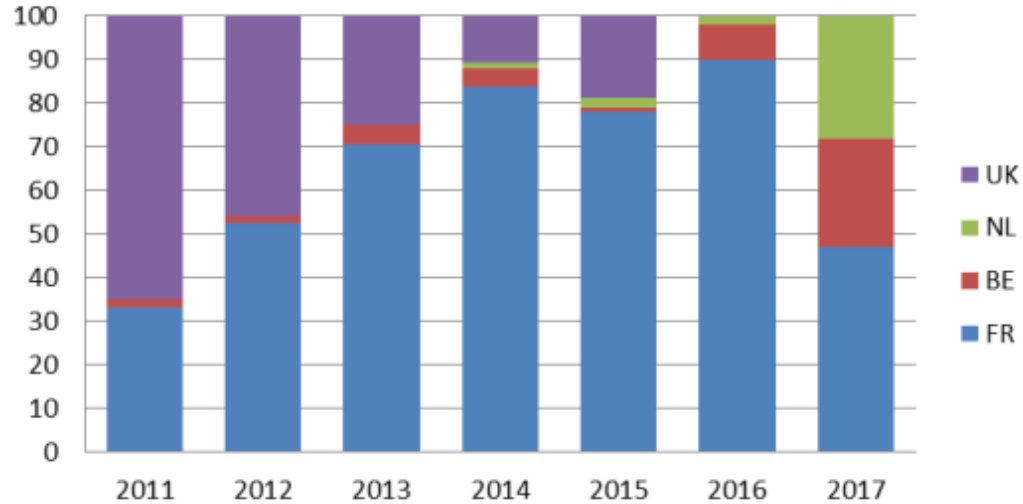


The situation 2010 - 2017

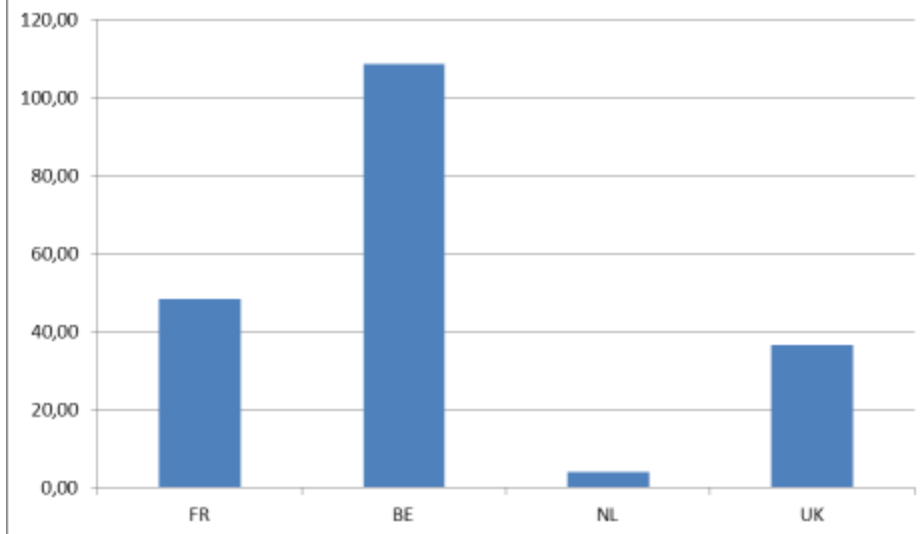


The situation 2010 - 2017

% Ruddy Ducks killed



Average % Birds eliminated 2011 - 2017



The Eradication Strategy – Take-home

After the sacrifice of about 14000 birds, In a new scenery of low numbers and very dispersed birds (with the exception of Lac Grand Lieu), it will be necessary:

Consider Ruddy Duck elimination simply as a conservation and management action, not an exception to laws or an extraordinary hunting event.

Is necessary to convince owners and private reserve managers that action must take place in their properties to assure the total elimination of the problem.

Eradication teams must react as immediately as possible to each sight to maintain a positive feedback with observers and informers.

Do not give a breath for breeding, do not relax during breeding season.

Promote the same monitoring indexes in all countries to have better data.

Learn the lesson, of the huge economic cost and the great social and technical difficulties, when prevention and early action can make it effectively easy.

With well coordinated actions across all European countries, COMPLETE REMOVAL of Ruddy Ducks from the Old World could be a fact in a reasonable time lapse



Thanks so much for your attention



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Warenautoriteit
Ministerie van Economische Zaken,
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All drawings by francisco j. hernández www.avestrazos.com