

produce a most useful and detailed publication on the legal measures for the protection of birds in the United Kingdom.

Following an introduction to birds and their habitats, the booklet covers the four international conventions ie Ramsar (1971) on wetlands of international importance, CITES (1973) on international trade in endangered species, Bonn (1979) on migratory species and Berne (1979) on conservation of habitats.

There is then a section on the European legislation ie the Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC), the Regulation on the Designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (797/85) and the Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC).

The next piece covers the threats to bird survival in Britain and considers such matters as changes in land use, pollution, and killing or disturbance by man.

The last main section covers the UK's Wildlife and Countryside Acts 1981 and 1985, the Agriculture Act 1986 and the Land Drainage Act 1994. There is much emphasis on planning control, environmental impact assessment and development plans. It ends with a look at future legislation.

The booklet, which contains a number of colour photographs, has at the back some 21 tables and figures containing a vast amount of species and habitat specific information.

This is a carefully prepared and well-produced document. The authors, the BTO and Simmons & Simmons have, between them, rendered a real service to the bird conservation and animal welfare communities.

Ruffled Feathers and Worse - an outline of the legal measures for the protection of birds in the United Kingdom. James Fitzgerald and Nick Carter. (No date: but 1995). British Trust for Ornithology: Thetford, and Simmons & Simmons: London. 72pp, A4 bound booklet. Obtainable from BTO, The National Centre for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, UK. Price £5.95 including postage.

Live animal exports

December 1994 and January 1995 saw a significant increase in demonstrations against the live export of sheep and calves at several ports and airfields all over the UK. These demonstrations followed the decision by some of the larger ferry companies to 'ban' the carrying of sheep and calves; a decision which has since been deemed illegal and reversed by the High Court. Nevertheless, the welfare of these animals is now firmly in the public eye and there is great pressure on the livestock industry to reduce the number of animals exported live to mainland Europe for 'immediate' slaughter or further fattening and slaughter.

Aware of this, the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC) has produced this short report which examines the economic implications of a significant reduction in live exports for the UK meat and livestock industry. The report steers clear of the more emotive aspects of the live export issue, but it does state in the introduction that live exports are legal and also emphasizes the important financial contribution they have made to the meat and livestock industry in recent years. It also states that the MLC supports the highest welfare standards in livestock production systems.

Sheep for slaughter and calves for rearing in veal systems are, quite rightly, dealt with as separate issues. The larger part of the report is given over to calf exports and explores the reasons why calves are exported, the options for their use should exports cease (including expansion of British veal production), market and policy implications, and areas for action. The report looks at the potential effect should calf exports continue at their present rate, halve or cease altogether. Any reduction, it is concluded, will lead to an increased amount of poorer quality beef on the market. This will in turn cause lower prices and possibly undermine farmers' confidence to continue in beef production.

A significant reduction in sheep exports is examined in the same way, with a useful background section which explains clearly the different reasons why 20 per cent of UK sheep exports are in the form of live animals. It is emphasized that the number of sheep exported was on the decline before the ferry ban, and assumes that live sheep exports will fall by 70 per cent compared with the 1993 high of 1.9 million head. Areas for action which, it is suggested, could help to increase carcass exports as live animal exports decline, include improving the eating quality of the meat, maximizing the value of cuts and promoting the image of British Quality Lamb.

Although the benefits of reduced live exports for UK abattoirs (through increased throughput), and to consumers (through decreased price) are acknowledged, these are predicted to be short-term. The overall conclusion is that a reduction or cessation of live exports would lead to a fall in prices which could adversely affect farm incomes. This would be especially true in upland areas, where farmers are almost entirely dependent on livestock production. To counter this fall in income, measures are proposed which include safeguarding quality, developing new products, securing and expanding meat exports and amending agricultural policy.

This is a useful publication which explains very clearly the complex issue of live exports. For the majority of people this subject has long been oversimplified by the media and others. Its publication is also encouraging from the point of view that the industry has reacted quickly to the situation and is seriously looking at viable alternatives for the future, rather than burying its head in the sand and hoping that 'Middle England' will go back to its lawns and borders now that summer is here once again. However, the price of the publication makes one wonder who could *afford* to have this information at hand.

UK Live Animal Exports: Future Options. Produced and published by the Meat and Livestock Commission: Milton Keynes (1995). 32pp. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, PO Box 44, Winterhill House, Snowdon Drive, Milton Keynes MK6 1AX, UK (ISBN 0 904650 43 X). Price £20.

Animal rights issues

Independence, the education publishers based in Cambridge (UK), have produced a number of booklets which offer up-to-date information on important issues in society. These booklets are aimed at GCSE and A level students (14 to 18-year-olds) and each is essentially a collection of previously published information ie leaflets, press-releases and pieces from newspapers and magazines. They have been selectively gathered together with the intent of providing the reader with a balanced view of the subject.

It can be argued that animal experimentation and field (blood) sports – the subject of *Independence's Do Animal Have Rights?* booklet – are special cases in animal welfare in that