

# Bar-headed Goose

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Anser indicus*

**AKA:** Gŵydd benrhesog (Welsh)

**Native to:** High altitude areas in central Asia

**Habitat:** Marshes, lakes and rivers

The bar-headed goose is an easily recognisable species with grey body, black horizontal stripes on the head and orange-yellow bill and legs.

The bar-headed goose is commonly kept in captivity with small numbers of feral individuals scattered across the UK. Breeding has been confirmed annually since 1996, with a maximum of eight pairs in 1999, south of Manchester.

At present, due to the small numbers and scattered distribution of the feral population, this species is not having a major deleterious environmental impact. However, if it becomes more common and widespread it could have similar impacts to Canada geese: damage to amenity grasslands, pastures and crops through grazing and trampling. Droppings could pose a health and safety risk to humans.

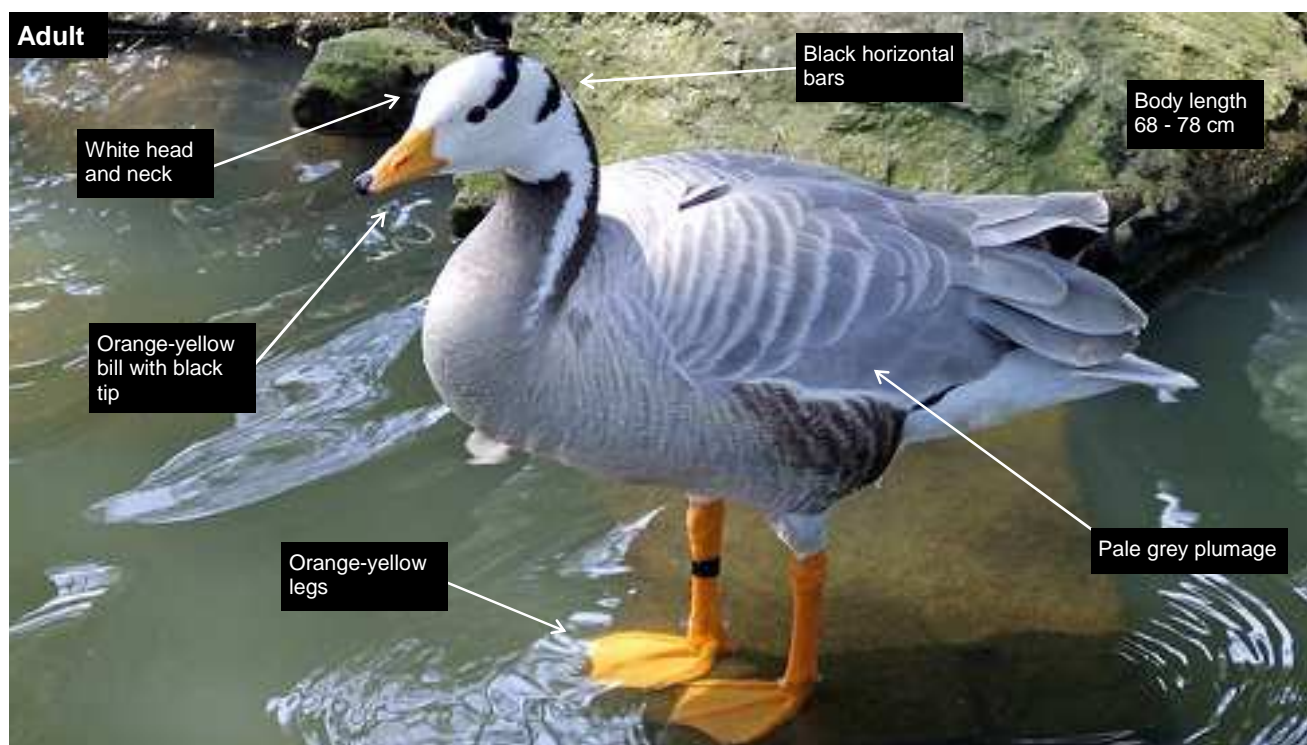
The Bar-headed Goose is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to release or allow the escape of this species into the wild.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features

Male and female bar-headed geese are identical in plumage and cannot be distinguished in the field. Juvenile birds lack the horizontal bars on the back of the head.



# Identification throughout the year

Bar-headed goose is resident in the UK throughout the year and its appearance remains the same.

# Field Signs

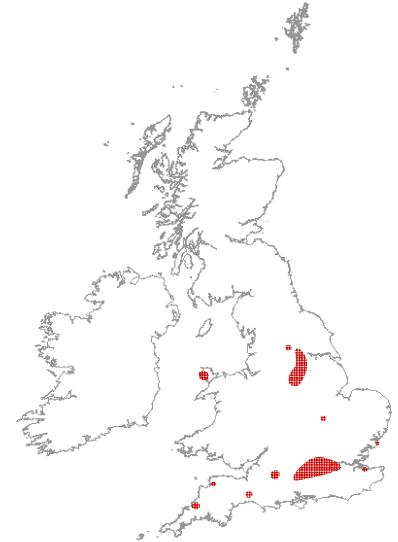
The following field signs are shared by many species of wildfowl and should not be used for the purpose of specific identification as bar-headed goose:

- Call - Typical goose honking noise
- Breeding season - Eggs laid from late May
- Eggs - Usually 4-6 eggs in a clutch
- Footprints - Large webbed footprint similar in size and shape to other common goose species
- Droppings - Cylindrical, typical in size and shape to other common goose species
- Social behaviour - Often encountered in flocks of other feral geese as well as independently

# Distribution

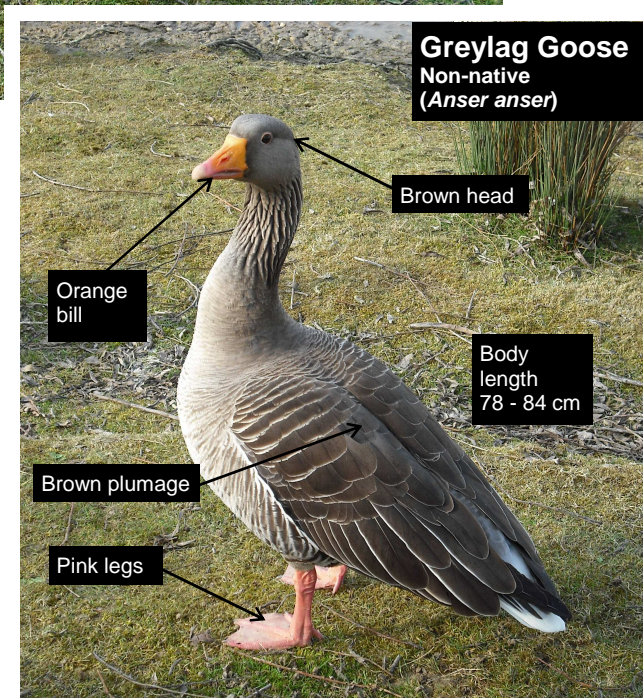
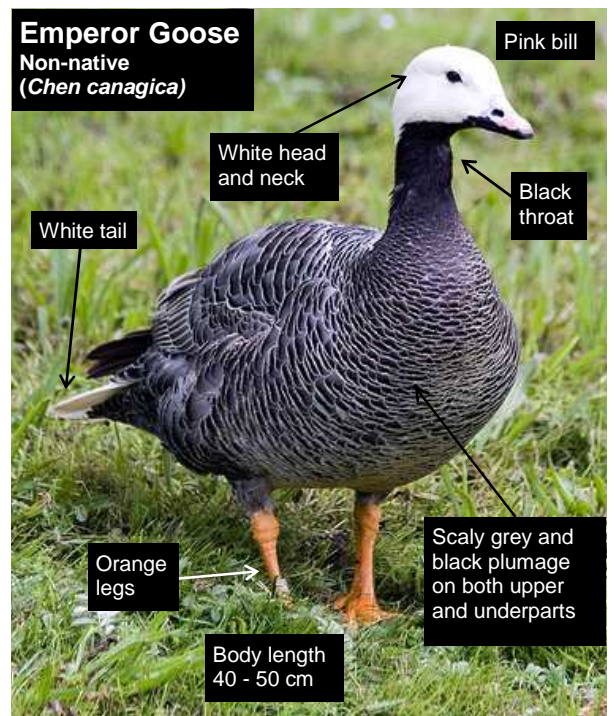
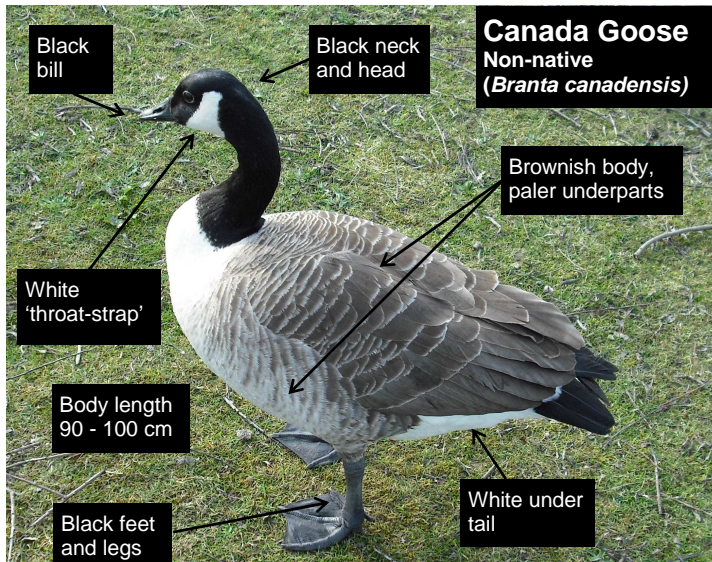
Bar-headed geese are found at a fairly limited number of sites in England and Wales.

Source: Rowell *et al.* 2004



# Similar Species

The bar-headed goose is similar in size to greylag and Canada geese but can be easily distinguished by the head pattern and bill, legs and overall plumage colouration.



### References and further reading:

Holling, M and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (2007) Non-native birds breeding in the United Kingdom in 2003, 2004 and 2005. *British Birds* 100: 638–649

Lever, C (2005) "Naturalised Birds of the World". T & A D Poyser

Rowell, H, Ward, R, Hall, C and Cranswick, P (2004) "The Naturalised Goose Survey 2000". WWT Research Report

Mullarney, K., Svensson, L., Zetterstrom, D. and Grant, P.J. (2001) *Bird Guide*. HarperCollins Ltd, London