

Has a beautiful songbird become an invasive species in Britain?

June 6 2022



Presumed adult Red-billed Leiothrix at a garden bird-feeder in Horningsham, Wiltshire, UK, on 4 May 2020. Credit: P. Mumby, *Ibis* (2022). DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13090

New research published in *Ibis* has identified the red-billed leiothrix, a small brightly colored bird native to subtropical Asia, as an emerging example of an invasive non-native species (INNS) in Britain. The work also demonstrates how climate change and human activity—such as the cage-bird trade and garden bird-feeding—could increase the likelihood

of INNS becoming established in new regions.

Scientists documented recent records of the red-billed leiothrix in Britain, including a cluster in southern England, suggesting that establishment of the species may already be underway.

The team notes that where red-billed leiothrixes have become established elsewhere—including in Continental Europe, Japan, and Hawaii—as a result of escapes and releases from the cage-bird trade, they can become an abundant and dominant component of the wild bird community. If they become more widely established in Britain, they could cause a significant change in the public's experience of wildlife, by introducing a novel garden bird and altering the current and well-known soundscape in woodland, parks, and gardens.

"This study raises awareness of the red-billed leiothrix's occurrence in Britain, what future impacts this may have, and what it may show us about the effects of [climate change](#) and [human activity](#) on our wildlife," said corresponding author Dr. Richard K. Broughton, of the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and University of Oxford. "The paper calls for increased public awareness and recording of observations."

More information: Richard K. Broughton et al, The Red-billed Leiothrix (*Leiothrix lutea*): a new invasive species for Britain?, *Ibis* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/ibi.13090](https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.13090)

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Has a beautiful songbird become an invasive species in Britain? (2022, June 6) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-06-beautiful-songbird-invasive-species-britain.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.