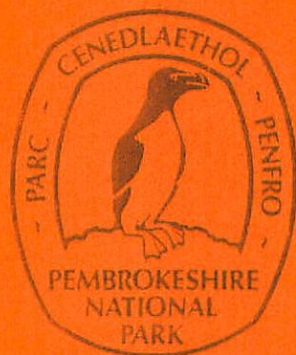


DAUGLEDDAU ESTUARY
AND
MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY

SHELDUCKS

Report of Survey 1992



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PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK

DAUGLEDDAU ESTUARY AND MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY: SHELDUCKS.

REPORT OF SURVEY - SUMMER 1992.

1. Introduction and background.

Data gathered during the annual wader and wildfowl counts organised by the Dyfed Wildlife Trust's Pembrokeshire Organising Committee for Ornithological Research (POCOR) as part of the British Trust for Ornithology's Birds of Estuaries Enquiry indicated that the Milford Haven Waterway and Daugleddau Estuary are nationally important for wintering shelduck. In addition to the winter population, there is a smaller summer population of shelduck comprising breeding and non-breeding birds. The numbers of breeding shelduck have been assessed at various times during the 1976's and 1970's. In June 1991, a full survey was carried out (by boat) of the Daugleddau Estuary, the primary aim of which was to locate and count pairs with broods (1). A land-based survey of the main pills and embayments in the Milford Haven Waterway was carried out at the same time by J.W. Donovan. These surveys yielded useful information on the distribution of non-breeding as well as breeding shelduck on the Estuary system, and it was decided to repeat the survey in 1992.

A major incentive to repeat (and extend) the 1991 survey was provided by the first national shelduck census organised by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge and co-ordinated locally by J.W. Donovan. This was carried out between April and July 1992, and the opportunity was taken to ensure that this survey was compatible with the national census.

Both the census and the local survey which is the subject of this report were carried out against a back-ground of considerable interest in the estuary system. This has been generated by the initiation of a new water ranger service provided by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, with grant aid and general support from the Countryside Council for Wales, Preseli Pembrokeshire District Council, South Pembrokeshire Council and the Milford Haven Port Authority. This initiative is a reflection of the increasing concern over the actual or potential conflict between the nature conservation importance of the Estuary system and the increasing levels of land and water-based recreational activities. An important aspect of the initiative is survey and monitoring, in addition to liaison with "water users".

This report includes a detailed description of the survey methodology, the results obtained and recommendations for future survey and monitoring. Reference is also made to the national shelduck census.