



Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park Authority

Daugleddau Estuary
and
Milford Haven Waterway
SURVEILLANCE OF SUMMER
SHELDUCK POPULATIONS

Report for 2003

DAUGLEDDAU ESTUARY AND
MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY:
ANNUAL SURVEILLANCE OF
SUMMER SHELDUCK
POPULATIONS

REPORT FOR 2003

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Fig. 1: area included in the 2003 survey and the distribution of shelduck broods recorded during the survey.

Summary

The Daugleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway hold nationally important numbers of shelducks during the winter months. In addition, there is a small summer population which has been the subject of annual boat-based surveys between 1991 and 2002. The summer boat-based survey was repeated in 2003, in June and late July/early August, as part of a co-ordinated programme of environmental surveillance in the estuary system. The methods used and results obtained during the survey are described in this report. The results indicate that 2003 was a much better year for shelducks in the estuary system than 2002 (which was a particularly poor year). The number and average size of broods were significantly higher/larger than in the previous year. Predation by ground and avian predators, poor weather in May and early June and possibly localized disturbance are thought to influence the numbers and size of broods coming onto the water, and also survival of ducklings to fledging. Data collected for other wetland birds in August once again confirmed the importance of the estuary system, especially for species such as curlew. The report concludes with a recommendation for the continuation of the annual surveillance of summer shelduck populations, as part of the MHWESG annual work programme.