



Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park Authority

Daugleddau Estuary
and
Milford Haven Waterway
SURVEILLANCE OF SUMMER
SHELDUCK POPULATIONS

Report for 2004

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

REPORT FOR 2004

**J. E. HODGES
PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK**

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Fig. 1: area included in the 2004 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 surveys carried out between 1991 and 2003. The summer boat survey was repeated in June and early August 2004, as part of a co-ordinated programme of environmental surveillance in the estuary system. The aims, and objectives, methods used and results obtained during the survey are described in this report.

The results indicate that 2004 was a better year for shelducks in the estuary system than the previous two years. The number of broods was higher than in 2002 and 2003, although average brood size was relatively low. Predation by ground and avian predators is thought to be a significant factor influencing the number, size and rate of survival of broods. Disturbance (on water and on land) and poor weather in June and July may also have played a part. Data collected for other wetland birds once again confirmed the importance of the estuary system in August, especially for species such as curlew and redshank. 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.