

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

REPORT FOR 2006

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Appendix 1: boat specification

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Fig. 1: area included in the 2006 survey and the distribution of shelduck broods recorded during the survey.

Fig 2: total numbers of broods recorded 1992 – 2006

Fig 3: average size of broods recorded 1992 - 2006

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 2005. The summer boat survey was repeated in June and July 2006, as part of a co-ordinated programme of environmental surveillance in the estuary system. The aims, and objectives, methods used and results obtained from the survey are described in this report.

The results indicate that, in terms of number of broods recorded, 2006 was one of the most successful years since 1998, although the average size of broods was slightly smaller than in 2005. Predation by ground and avian predators is thought to have been a significant factor in the size of broods seen, and may also have limited the number of broods seen. Disturbance (on water and/or the land) may also have played a part, together with poor weather in May. Data collected for other wetland birds once again underlined the importance of the estuary system during the autumn migration period, especially for species such as curlew. The report concludes with a recommendation for the continuation of the annual surveillance of summer shelduck populations in the estuary system, as part of the MHWESG annual work programme.