

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Daugleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway

Annual Surveillance of Summer Shelduck Populations



Report for 2011



Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro
Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park

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

REPORT FOR 2011

J. E. HODGES

PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL

PARK AUTHORITY

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 had been the subject of annual summer boat surveys carried out between 1991 and 2010. The summer boat surveys were repeated in 2011 as part of a co-ordinated programme of environmental surveillance in the estuary system. The aims, objectives and methods used, together with the data obtained are described in this report.

The results indicate that in terms of the numbers of broods of ducklings seen on the water, 2011 was the poorest year for breeding shelducks in the estuary since the current sequence of annual surveys began in 1991. Predation is thought to have been a major factor affecting the number and size of broods recorded in 2011. Disturbance may also have been a contributory factor, although adverse weather conditions are not thought to have been a factor affecting the population. 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 and green and redshank.

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 Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group's annual work programme.