



CLEDDAU ESTUARY

(INCLUDING MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY)

WILDFOWL AND WADER COUNTS

1994-95

Report prepared for the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Steering Group

by Annie Poole and Richard Ellis (Estuary Count Coordinators)

on behalf of the Dyfed Wildlife Trust
and the Pembrokeshire Ornithological Research Committee.



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I. INTRODUCTION

Counts of wintering wildfowl and waders have taken place on the Cleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway (referred to hereafter as the Cleddau Estuary) since 1972 as part of the national Birds of the Estuary Enquiry. The national coordination of counts was formerly divided between the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) for waders and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) for wildfowl. From September 1993 the counts have been combined into WeBS, the Wetland Bird Survey, jointly run by WWT, BTO, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

The counts are overseen locally by the Pembrokeshire Organising Committee for Ornithological Research (PORC), which comprises members from Dyfed Wildlife Trust (DWT), Countryside Council for Wales (CCW.), Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (PCNP), RSPB, BTO and the National Trust (NT).

Between 1982 and 1990 counts were done between July and March, then reduced to November to February each year. In 1993 it was decided to extend the counting season again to cover September to March for the whole estuary (see Ellis & Poole, 1994).

This is the second report produced as part of an annual contract between DWT and the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Steering Group. We hope to find time to produce a report on the accumulated data from the past twelve years. The current report is for the 1994-95 season only, but includes summaries of the winter peak counts for many species.

Two other bird surveys have been carried out on the Cleddau in 1994-95. Grey Heron breeding sites were counted as part of the BTO's long running Heronries Census (see page 16), while the annual Summer Shelduck Census started in 1991 (see separate report "Dauclleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway: Annual Shelduck Census - 1994").

WeBS have periodically compiled and revised indices of National and International Importance for individual species based on the percentage of the total national figure. A wetland in Britain is considered Nationally Important if it regularly holds one percent of the estimated British population of one species, or subspecies of waterfowl. Any site regularly holding a total of 20,000 waterfowl also qualifies. In most years the Cleddau has been of National Importance for its Shelduck, Redshank and Curlew populations.