

WILDFOWL AND WADER COUNTS
in the
MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY
2013-14

Report prepared for the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group

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Executive Summary

The Wetland Bird Survey was carried out on the Cleddau Estuary system between September 2013 and March 2014, with additional counts for June and July 2013 made by Jane Hodges during the annual survey of summer shelduck populations.

The methodology used followed that set out in the BTO WeBS Counters Handbook.

A total peak count of 21,123 birds between November and February confirms that the estuary system is still of international importance for its waterfowl populations. This peak count was slightly higher than 2012-13, but these two years are still the lowest since 1996-97 when gulls were included in the counts.

The levels of “National Importance” for many water birds have been revised, and only three species now qualify (based on a five-year mean): wigeon (max. 3800 in October), greenshank (max 19 in November), and curlew (1795 in July). Shelduck (375 in February), Dunlin (1555 in February) and Little Egret (25 in October) were well below the qualifying level in 2013-14 but only just short based on the 5-year average.

Of the species that have declined, wigeon may be of particular concern as the decline, over the past two seasons, is large and in a single area of the estuary – Pembroke River. The reason for the decline is not yet known.

Winter 2013-14 was somewhat warmer than the recent long-term average, but this was offset by the extreme winds experienced between October and March, and the flooding in many parts of the country (Met Office data). This undoubtedly affected bird distribution and movements across the country, and the continent.

The total number of birds recorded each month was lower than the average recorded during the past decade, this was largely due to low numbers of wigeon in the early part of the winter, and to the relative lack of dunlin later on. Gull numbers were also low throughout the winter.

Comparison of counts with the national report for 2011-12 (the most recent that is available) show that for most species, the local trends in populations are similar to those experienced nationally.

In addition, low tide counts were carried out between November 2013 and February 2014. The resulting data will be analysed by the British Trust for Ornithology, and will be reported on in the future.

CYFRIFON ADAR DŴR AC ADAR HIRGOES AR DDYFRFFORDD HWLFFORDD 2013 – 14

Crynodeb Gweithredol

Gwnaethpwyd Arolwg Adar y Gwlyptir ar system aber y Cleddau rhwng Medi 2013 a Mawrth 2014. Gwnaeth Jane Hodges gyfrifon ychwanegol ar gyfer mis Mehefin a mis Gorffennaf 2013 yn ystod yr arolwg blynyddol o boblogaethau haf hwyaden yr eithin.

Defnyddiwyd yr un fethodoleg â'r un amlinellir yn Llawlyfr Cyfrifwyr AAyG y BTO.

Mae cyfanswm cyfrif uchaf o 21,123 o adar rhwng mis Tachwedd a mis Chwefror yn cadarnhau bod system yr aber yn parhau i fod o bwysigrwydd rhyngwladol yn achos ei phoblogaethau o adar dŵr. Roedd y cyfrif uchaf yma ychydig yn uwch nag yn 2012 – 13, ond mae'r ddwy flynedd yma yn parhau y rhai isaf er 1996 –97 pan gafodd gwylanod eu cynnwys yn y cyfrifon.

Yn achos nifer o adar dŵr mae lefelau'r 'Pwysigrwydd Cenedlaethol' wedi cael eu hadolygu a dim ond tri rhywogaeth sydd bellach yn gymwys (yn seiliedig ar gymedr pum mlynedd): chwiwell (uchafswm o 3800 ym mis Hydref), pibydd coeswyrdd (uchafswm o 19 ym mis Tachwedd), a'r gylfinir (1795 ym mis Gorffennaf). Roedd hwyaden yr eithin (375 ym mis Chwefror), pibydd y mawn (1555 ym mis Chwefror) a'r crëyr bach copog (25 ym mis Hydref) yn llawer is na'r lefel gymhwys yn 2013-14 ond dim ond ychydig islaw ar sail y cyfartaledd pum mlynedd.

O'r rhywogaethau sydd wedi lleihau, y chwiwell efallai sy'n peri'r pryder mwyaf gan fod y lleihad dros y ddau dymor diwethaf wedi bod yn fawr ac wedi digwydd mewn un rhan o'r aber – Afon Penfro. Ni wyddir hyd yma y rheswm dros y lleihad yma.

Roedd gaeaf 2013 -14 rhywfaint yn gynhesach na'r cyfartaledd hirdymor diweddar ond cafwyd gwyntoedd cryfion iawn rhwng Hydref a Mawrth a llifogydd mewn nifer o rannau o'r wlad (data'r Swyddfa Dywydd). Cafodd hyn yn sicr effaith ar ddisbarthiad adar a symudiadau ar draws y wlad a'r cyfandir.

Roedd cyfanswm yr adar a gofnodwyd bob mis yn is na'r cyfartaledd a gofnodwyd yn ystod y ddegawd ddiwethaf. Roedd hyn oherwydd niferoedd isel y chwiwell ddechrau'r gaeaf a diffyg cymharol o bibyddion y mawn yn ddiweddarach yn y flwyddyn. Roedd niferoedd y gwylanod hefyd yn isel trwy gydol y gaeaf.

Trwy gymharu'r cyfrifon gydag adroddiad cenedlaethol 2011-12 (yr adroddiad mwyaf diweddar sydd ar gael) gwelir fod y tueddiadau lleol o safbwynt poblogaethau yn debyg i'r rhai a geir yn genedlaethol yn achos y rhan fwyaf o rywogethau.