



MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY
ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEILLANCE GROUP

GRŴP CADW GOLWG AMGYLCHEDDOL
AR DDYFRFFORDD ABERDAUGLEDDAU



Annual surveillance of summer shelduck populations in the Daugleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway: Method Statement

Jane E. Hodges

**Annual surveillance of summer shelduck populations in the
Daugleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway - Method
Statement**

**A report to the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance
Group**

**J. E. Hodges
Independent Ecologist**

August 2022

Use of this document to inform environmental decision-making in the Milford Haven Waterway and Daugleddau Estuary is welcomed, however:

All use should be appropriately acknowledged and referenced.

The information contained here-in is without warranty of any kind, either express or implied and the MHWESG does not make any warranties or representations as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained. Use of the information is at the user's sole risk. Under no circumstances shall MHWESG or its members be liable for any loss, damage, liability or expense incurred or suffered which is claimed to have resulted from the use of this information. Under no circumstances, including but not limited to negligence shall MHWESG be liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, special or consequential damages.

Cover Image: Male and female shelducks. Photo: M. Camplin

Recommended citation: Hodges, J. E. 2022. Annual surveillance of summer shelduck populations in the Daugleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway: Method Statement. Report to the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Daugleddau Estuary and Milford Haven Waterway (referred to in this report as the estuary system) hold regionally important numbers of shelducks during the winter months. There is also a small summer population that has been the subject of annual surveillance between 1991 (when a trial survey was carried out: the first full surveys were carried out in 1992) and 2021. These annual surveys have provided a long-running dataset on the distribution and numbers of adult breeding and non-breeding shelducks and young in the estuary system.

The opportunity has been taken to collect data on the distribution and numbers of other wetland birds present in the estuary system during the surveys. These data complement those obtained during the annual Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts that are carried out in Pembrokeshire as part of the UK-wide WeBS project. They are not, however, the subject of this report.

The report includes a general introduction to shelducks, including some of the key features of their annual lifecycle, and an over-view of the distribution of shelducks in the estuary system during the summer. Factors that may affect the adult breeding and non-breeding summer shelduck population and on the numbers of young in the estuary system are briefly summarised.

The main purpose of the report is to document the aims and objectives of the annual surveillance project and the methods used to carry out the surveys. The outputs from the annual surveillance project are also described, as are data capture and management.

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Yn ystod misoedd y gaeaf, ceir niferoedd o hwyaid yr eithin o bwysigrwydd rhanbarthol yn Aber Daugleddau ac ar Ddyfrffordd Aberdaugleddu (y cyfeirir atynt yn yr adroddiad yma fel system yr aber). Ceir hefyd bologaeth haf fechan y bu gwylidwriaeth flynyddol arni rhwng 1991 (pan wnaethpwyd arolwg brawf: cafodd yr arolygon llawn cyntaf eu cynnal yn 1992) a 2021. Mae'r arolygon blynyddol hyn wedi darparu setddata hirdymor o ddsbarthiad a niferoedd hwyaid yr eithin llawn dwf yn system yr aber, y rhai sy'n bridio a'r rhai sydd ddim yn bridio yn ogystal â'r rhai ifanc.

Manteisiwyd hefyd ar y cyfle yn ystod yr arolygon i gasglu data ar ddsbarthiad a niferoedd adar gwlyptir eraill oedd yn bresennol yn system yr aber. Mae'r data yma yn ategu'r rhai a gasglwyd yn ystod cyfrifon blynyddol Arolwg Adar y Gwlyptir a wneir yn Sir Benfro fel rhan o brosiect Adar y Gwlyptir Prydain gyfan. Nid ydynt, fodd bynnag, yn destun yr adroddiad yma.

Mae'r adroddiad yn cynnwys cyflwyniad cyffredinol i hwyaid yr eithin, gan gynnwys rhai o brif nodweddion eu cylch bywyd blynyddol a throsolwg o ddsbarthiad hwyaid yr eithin yn system yr aber yn ystod yr haf. Ceir crynodeb byr o'r ffactorau allai effeithio ar boblogaeth haf hwyaid yr eithin llawn dwf sy'n bridio a'r rhai sydd ddim yn bridio ac ar niferoedd y rhai ifanc yn system yr aber.

Prif bwrpas yr adroddiad yw dogfennu nodau ac amcanion y prosiect gwylidwriaeth blynyddol a'r dulliau a ddefnyddir i weithredu'r prosiectau hyn. Disgrifir hefyd allbynnau'r prosiect gwylidwriaeth blynyddol yn ogystal â'r casgliad data a'r rheolaeth.