

### Sites of international importance in the UK

Strangford Lough	11,337	11,614	11,184	13,196	13,376	Nov	12,141
Lough Foyle	5,550	4,757	3,820	2,766	1,934	Nov	3,765
Carlingford Lough	189	242	317	642	358	Feb	350
Killough Harbour	122	254	-	<sup>15</sup> 557	-		311
Larne Lough	209	177	232	218	253	Jan	218
Outer Ards	196	326	54	221	215	Feb	202

### Sites of national importance in Great Britain †

Inland Sea	<sup>37</sup> 46	63	17	23	51	Feb	40
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### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Guernsey Shore	31	Feb
Foryd Bay	27	Jan
Camel Estuary	26	Sep/Oct

† as no British threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 25 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## SVALBARD POPULATION

**GB max: 1,784 Nov**

Lindisfarne remains the key site for this population in Great Britain although numbers in 1999-2000 were 36% lower than the five year mean. Consequently, the British maximum in November was also much lower than normal. In contrast, the international population estimate has remained relatively stable in recent years, peaking at 5,900 in 1999-2000 (P. Clausen, M.J.H. Denny & S.M. Percival pers. comm.). This suggests that only 30% of this population

**International threshold: 50**

**Great Britain threshold: 25\***

\* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

**% young: 5.2 brood size: n/a**

wintered in Great Britain during 1999-2000, the majority of which had departed by March. This is no surprise since much lower numbers of birds move from the continent during mild winters. Overall, reproductive success, measured throughout northwest Europe, was relatively low.

Away from northeast England, notable numbers were recorded on the Inner Moray Firth and at Langstone Harbour, although the latter may have been of Canadian origin.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Lindisfarne	2,470	4,092	2,567	2,812	1,767	Nov	2,742
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Seahouses to Budle Point	0	107	0	22	0		26

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Eden Estuary

## RED-BREASTED GOOSE

*Branta ruficollis*

**Vagrant and escape**

**Native range: SE Europe and Asia**

Two on the Ouse Washes in February and one on the Deben Estuary in March may have been genuine vagrants. Singles present at Harewood

Lake during the summer and at Llyn Alaw in January, February and again in November were more likely to be escaped birds.

## EGYPTIAN GOOSE

*Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Naturalised introduction<sup>†</sup>

Native range: Africa

GB max: 421 Sep

NI max: 0

The peak national count showed a sharp increase over the previous year, rising to a new all-time high and increasing by 13% over the previous highest peak count in 1997-98.

Numbers at several sites showed a dramatic increase during 1999-2000, notably Cranwich Gravel Pits, Trinity Broads, Snetterton Gravel Pits

and Stanford Training Area. Away from the East Anglian stronghold, only two sites supported 10 or more birds. The number at Rutland Water continued to increase and double figures were also noted at Etherow Country Park, Greater Manchester, a noteworthy concentration for a site so far west.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain <sup>†</sup></b>							
North Norfolk Coast	97	113	198	170	197	Aug	155
St Benet's Levels	58	85	56	66	0		53
Cranwich Gravel Pits	-	-	8	26	92	Sep	42
Rutland Water	31	35	46	40	52	Dec	41
Lynford Gravel Pit	-	0	76	52	32	Jun	40
Trinity Broads	8	-	13	15	(58)	Jul	24
Middle Yare Marshes	6	4	52	16	44	Sep	24
Didlington Lakes	(28)	4	41	6	6	Feb	17
Nunnery Lakes	24	11	19	13	-		17
Snetterton Gravel Pits	-	-	-	2	29	Aug	16 ▲
Stanford Training Area	8	8	15	16	<sup>31</sup> 30	Dec	15
Livermere	12	13	14	15	9	Jul	13

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Ampton Water

### Sites not counted in last five years

Blickling Lake

Gunton Park Lake

Pentney Gravel Pits

R. Wensum: Fakenham to Great Ryburgh

Sennowe Park Lakes

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Breydon Water & Berney Marshes 15 Jun

Etherow Country Park 10 Jan/Feb

<sup>†</sup> as site designation does not occur and the 1% criterion is not applied, a qualifying level of 10 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## RUDDY SHELDUCK

*Tadorna ferruginea*

Escape and possible vagrant

Native range: Asia, N Africa and S Europe

Summed maxima of 34 birds for the 21 sites where this species was recorded was higher than the previous year and similar to values in the mid 1990s.

The majority of sites held single birds but

four were at Hamford Water and the Humber Estuary, three were at the Ouse Washes and two were at both Chew Valley Lake and the Mersey Estuary.

CAPE SHELDUCK
Tadorna cana

Escape
Native range: S Africa

One was at Cropston Reservoir in September

PARADISE SHELDUCK
Tadorna variegata

Escape
Native range: New Zealand

A single was at Blithfield Reservoir in September.

SHELDUCK
Tadorna tadorna

International threshold: 3,000
Great Britain threshold: 750
All-Ireland threshold: 70

GB max: 57,421 Jan
NI max: 4,404 Jan

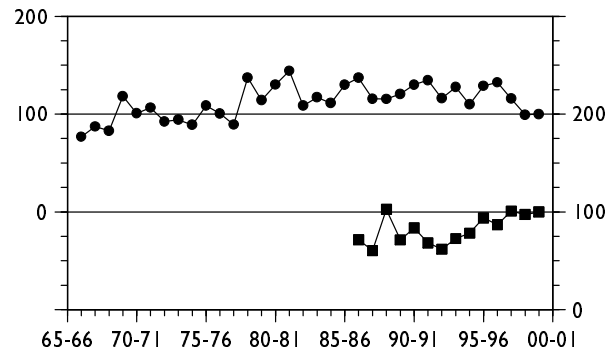


Figure 31. Annual indices for Shelduck in GB (circles, left axis) and NI (squares, right axis)

Peak counts in Great Britain fell for the third consecutive winter and were the lowest since the 1970s. Numbers were depressed in all months between September and March, though counts in the during December to February, when the peak typically occurs, seem to have been affected to a greater degree. Monthly indices support this, with the overall pattern suggesting a less pronounced peak than normal. The annual index value was almost unchanged from the previous year's low.

In Northern Ireland, the peak was very similar to those in recent winters. Annual indices have remained relatively stable since the mid 1990s following a rise in the early part of the

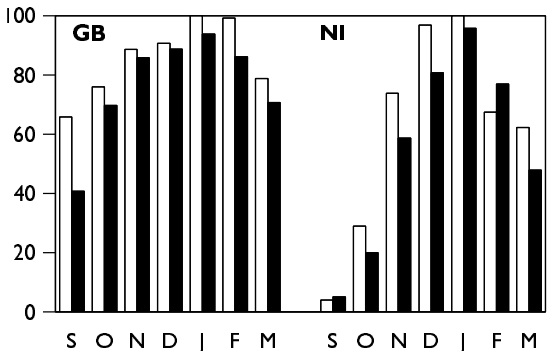


Figure 32. Monthly indices for Shelduck in GB and NI (white bars 1999-2000; black bars 1994-95 to 1998-99).

decade. Monthly indices suggest an above average proportion of birds present in the early winter months.

Not surprisingly, many key sites (over 70% of those featured in the table) held below average counts in 1999-2000. Most significant was a slump on the Wash, the peak being the lowest at the site since the mid 1970s. Sizeable decreases were also noted on the Severn Estuary, Poole Harbour and Hamford Water, whilst numbers at Langstone Harbour have fallen in each of the last four winters. Only the Mersey Estuary held notably high numbers, a result of the continuing growth of the recently established moulting flock in late summer (Wells & Friswell 2000).

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Wash	14,238	10,352	12,368	11,430	7,608	Nov	11,199
Mersey Estuary	4,507	7,025	14,516	10,600	15,070	Aug	10,344
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	5,786	8,047	10,418	5,634	8,814	Oct	7,740
Morecambe Bay	6,098	5,632	8,426	8,030	6,225	Oct	6,882
Humber Estuary	5,240	(3,900)	(4,843)	5,262	4,020	Oct	4,841
Forth Estuary	5,077	5,065	5,507	4,684	3,775	Sep	4,822
Strangford Lough	<sup>37</sup> 4,673	<sup>37</sup> 3,493	<sup>37</sup> 4,142	3,574	3,193	Dec	3,815
Medway Estuary	3,853	<sup>37</sup> 5,618	4,160	1,951	2,629	Jan	3,642
Ribble Estuary	4,523	3,788	4,106	2,644	2,908	Oct	3,594

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Solway Estuary	3,293	3,450	3,370	4,049	<sup>37</sup> 3,270	Nov	3,486
Blackwater Estuary	4,356	4,129	2,123	(1,777)	3,093	Feb	3,425
Severn Estuary	3,508	4,117	2,371	<sup>37</sup> 3,730	2,098	Nov	3,165
Poole Harbour	3,575	4,650	2,662	2,318	2,192	Dec	3,079

#### Sites of national importance in Great Britain

Swale Estuary	2,782	2,760	3,027	3,015	2,929	Jan	2,903
Thames Estuary	2,472	3,094	2,089	2,121	1,804	Jan	2,316
Hamford Water	2,146	3,006	2,781	1,791	1,369	Feb	2,219
Stour Estuary	2,297	<sup>37</sup> 2,247	(2,029)	1,956	<sup>37</sup> 2,351	Feb	2,213
Alde Complex	1,074	765	1,935	2,129	1,664	Feb	1,513
Chichester Harbour	1,980	<sup>37</sup> 1,800	<sup>37</sup> 1,063	<sup>37</sup> 836	1,040	Jan	1,344
North Norfolk Coast	710	1,335	<sup>37</sup> 1,876	1,310	955	Jan	1,237
Colne Estuary	2,017	1,338	977	799	963	Nov	1,219
Burry Inlet	695	1,282	883	1,327	1,557	Dec	1,149
Orwell Estuary	1,989	1,039	<sup>37</sup> 939	<sup>37</sup> 645	846	Mar	1,092
Lindisfarne	855	1,295	927	973	1,224	Dec	1,055
Montrose Basin	1,039	596	<sup>37</sup> 1,174	973	1,071	Dec	971
Eden Estuary	930	(942)	1,088	(717)	768	Oct	932
Cleddau Estuary	1,008	1,023	939	921	696	Dec	917
Tees Estuary	1,267	893	837	755	784	Dec	907
Deben Estuary	950	824	875	895	952	Feb	899
Duddon Estuary	974	853	900	821	814	Nov	872
Crouch-Roach Estuary	<sup>37</sup> 1567	932	563	376	836	Feb	855
Langstone Harbour	1,477	889	826	<sup>37</sup> 700	368	Jan	852

#### Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland

Belfast Lough	1,062	<sup>37</sup> 775	497	<sup>37</sup> 184	250	Mar	554
Larne Lough	371	440	505	711	414	Mar	488
Lough Foyle	508	527	439	446	419	Mar	468
Carlingford Lough	172	165	198	213	321	Feb	214
Loughs Neagh & Beg	146	188	240	211	157	Mar	188
Dundrum Bay	76	<sup>37</sup> 131	64	98	104	Dec	95

#### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

WWT Martin Mere	913	Jan
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## MAGELLAN GOOSE

*Chloephaga picta*

Escape  
Native range: South America

The bird present at Merryton Ponds in 1998-99 remained until at least March 2000.

## MUSCOVY DUCK

*Cairina moschata*

Escape  
Native range: South America

GB max: 70 Nov  
NI max: 0

For the second year running the peak national total and summed maxima were well below

previous years despite birds being recorded at 37 sites, a similar number to previous years.

#### Sites with more than five birds in 1998-99

Nafferton Mere	12	Nov	R. Devon: Kersiepow Ponds	7	Dec/Mar
Blairdrummond Safari Park Loch	10	Mar	Par Sands Pools/St Andrews Road	6	Oct/Nov/Dec
Redwell Fishery	7	Sept/Oct/Dec	Dart Estuary	5	Nov
Derwent Water	7	Nov	Margam Park Ponds	5	Nov

## WOOD DUCK

*Aix sponsa*

Escape

Native range: North America

A similar number of birds were recorded in 1999-2000 but at fewer sites than in recent years. A maximum of three were at Thrapston Gravel Pits

and two at Middle Pool. Single birds were recorded at a further six sites, four of which were long staying birds.

## MANDARIN

*Aix galericulata*

Naturalised introduction<sup>†</sup>

Native range: Eastern Asia

**GB max:** 268 Jan  
**NI max:** 5 Aug/Sep

Peak national totals vary widely dependent on coverage of the small wooded or parkland lakes which are this species preferred habitat, sites which are seldom of importance for other wildfowl, and are often irregularly monitored. Counts in 1999-2000 were typical of recent years. There has been a welcome increase in coverage of key sites, with few data missing from sites featured in the table.

Additional information provided for ponds in the Forest of Dean illustrates that many sites holding significant numbers are still not covered by the scheme. Counts at many sites are prone to wide variation, partly a result of the suitability of WeBS methods (see Epsom Common in particular) and, with the exception of a relatively high count at Osterley Park Lakes, few sites held numbers significantly different from normal.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean	
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>								
Forest of Dean Ponds	-	-	<sup>20</sup> 146	<sup>20</sup> 221	<sup>20</sup> 195	Jan	187	▲
Severn Estuary	40	113	40	102	32	Sep	65	
Cuttmil Ponds	51	106	44	41	65	Jan	61	
Arun Valley	51	48	59	45	46	Jun	50	
Passfield Lake	-	48	15	66	(10)	Oct	43	
Stockgrove Country Park	-	-	-	34	46	Jan	40	
Epsom Common Ponds	<sup>25</sup> 133	4	6	8	-		38	
Dee Flood Meadows	34	34	<sup>31</sup> 38	38	36	Sep	36	
Connaught Water	-	28	39	51	27	Oct	36	
Osterley Park Lakes	19	24	27	20	41	Jun	26	
Bradley Pools	-	-	-	-	26	Oct	26	▲
Panshanger Flash	18	51	-	22	6	Sep	24	
Overstone Park Lakes	20	18	32	-	-		23	
Bramshill Park Lake	16	7	60	5	19	Oct	21	
Norbury Pond	-	-	-	-	20	Jan	20	▲
Fonthill Lake	10	18	(12)	5	23	Mar	14	
Headley Mill Pond	-	4	16	12	18	Dec	13	
Thursley Lake	35	8	6	4	-		13	
Woburn Park Lakes	7	16	9	13	9	Nov	11	▲

### Important sites not counted in last five years

Frenchess Road Pond  
Hammer Wood Pond  
Paultons Bird Park  
Virginia Water

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Fleet Pond

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Elfordleigh Golf & Country Club 11 Sep  
Radnor Mere 11 Nov

<sup>†</sup> as site designation does not occur and the 1% criterion is not applied, a qualifying level of 10 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## CRESTED DUCK

*Lophonetta specularioides*

Escape  
Native range: South America

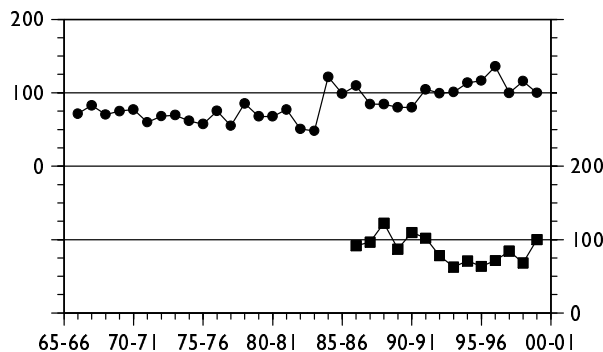
The bird first recorded in 1998-99 at Hindley Golf Course was present from September to November.

## WIGEON

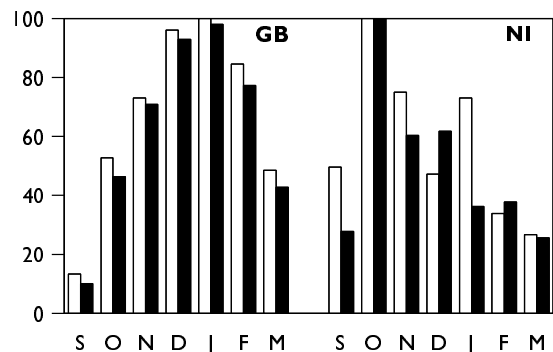
*Anas penelope*

International threshold: 12,500  
Great Britain threshold: 2,800  
All-Ireland threshold: 1,250

GB max: 325,803 Jan  
NI max: 13,686 Oct



**Figure 33.** Annual indices for Wigeon in GB (circles, left axis) and NI (squares, right axis)



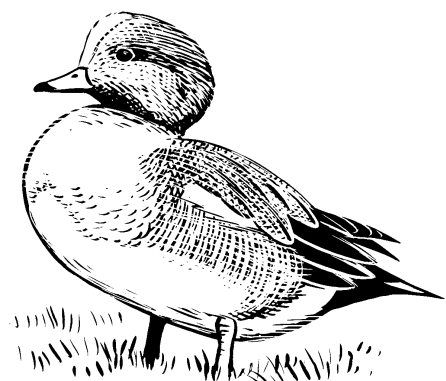
**Figure 34.** Monthly indices for Wigeon in GB and NI (white bars 1999-2000; black bars 1994-95 to 1998-99)

The peak British count was the lowest for six years though still well within the typical range for the last decade. Annual indices, which are based solely on January counts, dropped accordingly (down 13%) and monthly indices, slightly above average in all winter months, also suggest lower than normal midwinter counts. The Northern Ireland peak, predictably occurring in October, was the highest since 1991-92, and this, coupled with above average counts in several other months, saw indices for the province rise by almost 50%.

Counts on the Ribble Estuary, which have exceeded 100,000 in the past, barely surpassed half this value, those on the Severn Estuary and at Hamford Water were also well down on recent years, while the peak on Walland Marsh has fallen for three years in succession. In total, two-thirds of the key sites in Great Britain held below average numbers in 1999-2000. By contrast, counts at Breydon Water & Berney Marshes and the Blackwater Estuary have risen consistently during the last five years, numbers trebling and doubling respectively during this period. Reflecting the rise in Northern Ireland totals, all important sites in the province supported above average counts.

Studies of Wigeon and Light-bellied Brent

Geese on Strangford Lough suggest that lower tolerance to disturbance of the former may have been a contributory factor to the decline in numbers at the site since the 1970s (Mathers *et al.* 2000). Wigeon were more likely to fly greater distances once disturbed, and less likely to return to their former activities at the disturbed area. Energy requirement models which assessed the suitability of areas within Strangford Lough based on current disturbance activities correctly predicted the presence or absence of Wigeon. Such research into disturbance effects has important implications for the design and management of refuge areas, which need to be large enough to accommodate the most sensitive species.



	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Ribble Estuary	83,922	74,068	66,197	96,855	50,678	Nov	74,344
Ouse Washes	30,545	<sup>31</sup> 31,980	26,922	<sup>31</sup> 16,999	24,540	Dec	26,197
Swale Estuary	15,906	40,090	13,292	13,837	11,725	Jan	18,970
Somerset Levels	24,302	11,000	16,010	14,522	<sup>31</sup> (21,965)	Jan	17,560
North Norfolk Coast	14,377	14,247	12,423	16,398	18,950	Jan	15,279
Dornoch Firth	12,540	11,615	17,240	13,282	9,305	Oct	12,796
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Cromarty Firth	11,973	8,516	11,199	9,338	<sup>37</sup> 14,956	Nov	11,196
Mersey Estuary	11,254	<sup>37</sup> 12,133	10,520	12,013	<sup>37</sup> 8,731	Jan	10,930 ▼
Nene Washes	11,526	8,090	12,699	13,533	6,994	Jan	10,568
Lower Derwent Valley	13,060	10,600	7,900	8,100	8,600	Dec	9,652
Breydon Wtr & Berney Marshes	4,300	6,500	10,200	11,200	14,130	Jan	9,266
Inner Moray Firth	8,200	10,097	7,964	8,208	9,746	Dec	8,843
Alde Complex	5,827	8,181	6,810	7,247	6,676	Jan	6,948
Middle Yare Marshes	6,223	7,189	6,306	5,460	5,387	Jan	6,113
Severn Estuary	6,267	11,548	5,304	4,011	3,276	Jan	6,081
Morecambe Bay	7,045	6,432	6,002	4,783	5,289	Nov	5,910
WWT Martin Mere	9,280	2,460	3,620	6,000	5,430	Feb	5,358
Humber Estuary	(3,000)	(5,802)	7,667	4,416	3,315	Oct	5,300
Walland Marsh	-	8,600	5,400	3,900	3,200	Jan	5,275
Arun Valley	5,138	4,411	5,155	4,421	4,173	Dec	4,660
Lindisfarne	3,662	4,368	5,600	4,612	5,006	Oct	4,650
Hamford Water	<sup>31</sup> 6,040	9,511	2,668	2,825	1,959	Dec	4,601
Rutland Water	5,014	4,968	4,669	3,611	3,630	Jan	4,378
Loch of Harray	3,222	2,384	5,070	5,263	5,092	Mar	4,206
Montrose Basin	4,856	2,735	3,170	3,503	4,402	Jan	3,733
Medway Estuary	5,131	2,951	3,736	4,592	1,751	Jan	3,632
Exe Estuary	2,263	3,184	4,344	4,231	-		3,506
Cleddau Estuary	3,455	3,351	3,058	4,009	3,532	Dec	3,481
Dyfi Estuary	4,363	4,681	2,911	2,489	2,900	Dec	3,469
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	2,191	3,682	5,366	3,302	2,751	Dec	3,458
Southampton Water	3,804	3,233	2,790	2,830	3,924	Jan	3,316
Thames Estuary	3,690	5,146	1,260	3,407	2,775	Jan	3,256
Foryd Bay	3,740	2,330	1,980	4,140	3,350	Oct	3,108
Blackwater Estuary	2,080	2,534	3,031	3,401	4,296	Feb	3068 ▲
Burry Inlet	2,252	4,436	3,144	2,514	2,821	Jan	3,033
Fleet/Wey	2,957	3,021	2,637	4,262	1,889	Jan	2,953
Dungeness Gravel Pits	3,919	4,011	1,770	2,274	2,291	Dec	2853 ▲
Stour Estuary	1,958	<sup>37</sup> 3,847	3,628	2,277	<sup>37</sup> 2,518	Dec	2,846
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Lough Foyle	8,438	6,850	9,440	8,829	11,496	Oct	9,011
Loughs Neagh & Beg	3,229	2,398	3,052	2,333	5,743	Jan	3,351
Strangford Lough	2,457	1,900	1,937	2,153	2,469	Nov	2,183
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels</b>							
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits							
Upper Lough Erne							
<b>Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000</b>							
Ashleworth Ham	5,662	Jan					
R. Avon: R'wood to Christchurch	3,051	Jan					