

## Wigeon

*Anas penelope*

International threshold: 15,000

Great Britain threshold: 4,400

All-Ireland threshold: 820

GB max: 372,331 Jan

NI max: 3,749 Nov

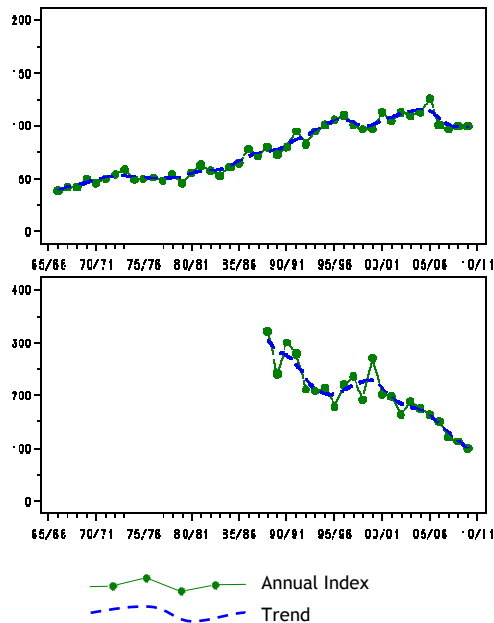


Figure 20.a, Annual indices & trend for Wigeon for GB (above) & NI (below).

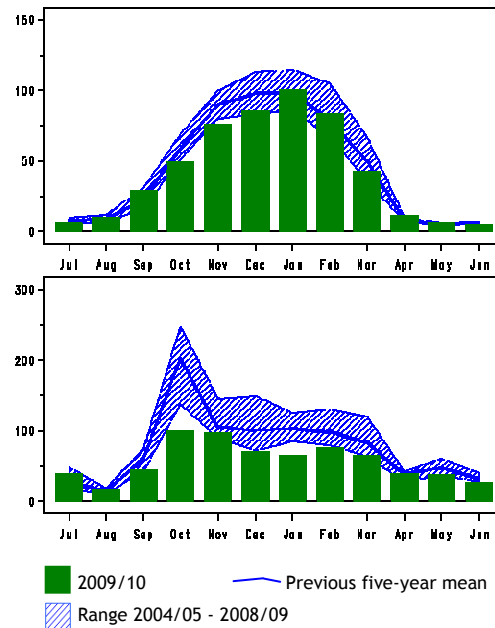


Figure 20.b, Monthly indices for Wigeon for GB (above) & NI (below).

Following the record high that was reached in 2005/06 the annual index for Wigeon has been relatively stable in the four years since, during which period the species has effectively been at the same status as during the mid 1990s when on an upward trend. Wigeon wintering in Britain largely comprise breeding birds from Scandinavia, northern Europe and eastern Russia.

Indications from The Netherlands are that wintering numbers may have also declined there in the last three to four years (Hornman *et al.* 2011), therefore any “short-stopping”, similar to the response shown by Maclean *et al.* (2008) for waders, is presumably leaving birds further north and east than there too. Perhaps linked, record numbers of Wigeon have been noted in Switzerland in recent years (Keller & Burkhardt 2011).

At the site level, an increase in the 1% threshold for national importance saw an associated decrease in the number of sites meeting the criterion. The UK’s premier

site for Wigeon is Ribble Estuary. In 2009/10, the peak of 64,633 birds in November represents the lowest WeBS monthly maximum of Wigeon there since 2000/01, and represents a particularly noticeable drop considering the peak noted during the previous year was only the second winter when more than 100,000 have been logged. However, the site remains of outstanding international importance for this species, and only time will tell if the drop in peak numbers in 2009/10 marks the beginning of a genuine longer-term decline. Elsewhere, peaks at the three other sites of international importance (Ouse Washes, Somerset Levels, and Breydon Water & Berney Marshes) were closer to recent averages.

There were mixed fortunes at some other sites currently under the threshold for international importance, with, for example, very high peaks noted at both Swale Estuary and Nene Washes. The total at the latter site represents a site maximum by a considerable margin, and is testament

to effective reserve management in the area. Meanwhile the total at Swale Estuary would also have set a local record but for an exceptional historical count of over 40,000 birds there in January 1997. In East Anglia, the drop in numbers of Wigeon on North Norfolk Coast continued with another marked fall to the lowest peak total of recent times, but the monthly maximum at The Wash represents the second highest ever there, falling just short of 13,434 in

December 1976. Among other sites, Alde Complex and Middle Yare Marshes both held notably above-average numbers.

In Northern Ireland, the Wigeon population continues to be in freefall, possibly an artefact of a shift in distribution in response to climate change. The annual index fell to its lowest ever value, and below average numbers were present throughout the winter period at all sites.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Ribble Estuary	79,659	(57,385)	85,964	101,594	64,633	Nov	82,963
Ouse Washes	55,816	26,984	19,800	(29,658)	24,175 <sup>12</sup>	Feb	31,694
Somerset Levels	18,142	27,391	28,882	21,186	26,073	Jan	24,335
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	22,134	18,184 <sup>12</sup>	21,400 <sup>12</sup>	21,074 <sup>12</sup>	22,770 <sup>12</sup>	Jan	21,112
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Swale Estuary	16,651	7,041	11,560	12,134	25,848	Jan	14,647
North Norfolk Coast	18,426	16,750	11,998	10,304	7,557	Feb	13,007
Lower Derwent Ings	14,320	14,200	11,600	9,614	14,803	Mar	12,907
Lindisfarne	13,614	10,840	(12,000)	10,194	(7,990)	Nov	11,662
Nene Washes	5,380	8,180	10,497	9,096	22,571	Feb	11,145
Dornoch Firth	13,811	9,763	11,115	(12,303)	8,221	Oct	11,043
Cromarty Firth	12,652	8,510	10,510	(9,109)	4,626	Oct	9,081
The Wash	5,887	6,612	8,961	(5,124)	13,224	Jan	8,671
Morecambe Bay	8,929	(6,201)	(6,260)	9,110	7,179	Jan	8,406
Severn Estuary	6,249	9,343	10,008	8,672 <sup>10</sup>	7,676	Jan	8,390
Cleddau Estuary	9,441	7,643	7,130	7,429	8,227	Nov	7,974
Alde Complex	7,182	8,280	6,337	5,345	9,128	Jan	7,254
Abberton Reservoir	13,954	654	6,572	5,815	4,906	Oct	6,380
Thames Estuary	6,449	3,566	9,293	4,428	6,641	Feb	6,075
Middle Yare Marshes	6,291	3,890	6,507	5,511	7,904	Jan	6,021
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	6,078	5,863	7,666	6,555	3,546	Jan	5,942
Blackwater Estuary	6,708	6,580	5,667	5,836	4,722	Jan	5,903
Dungeness and Rye Bay	6,285	5,193	4,010	2,711	5,574	Jan	4,755
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	6,695	5,797	(2,461)	1,776	3,512	Jan	4,445 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Lough Foyle	6,559	5,406	2,835	3,118	1,273	Oct	3,838
Strangford Lough	2,636	3,476	1,582	1,540	1,559	Oct	2,159
Loughs Neagh and Beg	2,701	1,878	1,614	1,427	1,528	Nov	1,830
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Upper Lough Erne	631	1,229	981	369	303	Feb	703
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Fleet and Wey	6,122	3,087	2,285	3,089	5,131	Dec	3,943
Rutland Water	3,678	2,278	2,773	3,414	4,883	Nov	3,405

## American Wigeon

*Anas americana*

Vagrant

Native Range: N & C America

American Wigeons were noted at seven sites: Sonning Eye & Henley GPs (Sep), Castle Loch Lochmaben and Loch Loy (Oct),

Loch of Hillwell (Nov), WWT Caerlaverock (Jan-Mar), WWT Martin Mere (Mar) and North Norfolk Coast (Apr).

## Chiloe Wigeon

*Anas sibilatrix*

Escape

Native Range: S America

Chiloe Wigeons were noted at seven sites; all singles with the exception of pairs

at Ramsbury Lake (Oct) and Kirkby-on-Bain Gravel Pits (Nov).

# Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

GB max: 22,418 Dec  
NI max: 169 Dec

International threshold: 600  
Great Britain threshold: 250  
All-Ireland threshold: 20\*

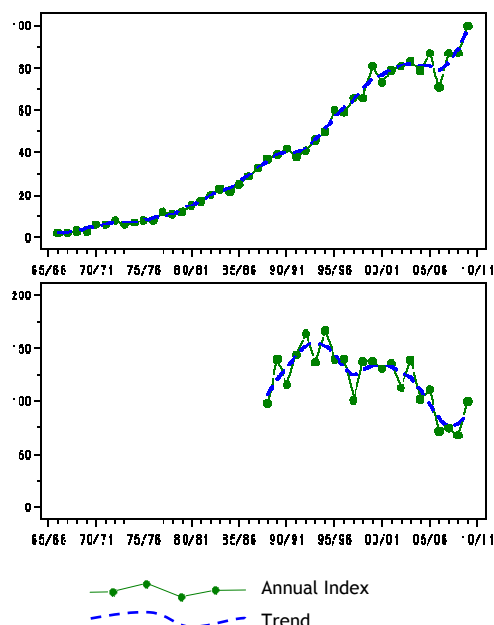


Figure 21.a, Annual indices & trend for Gadwall for GB (above) & NI (below).

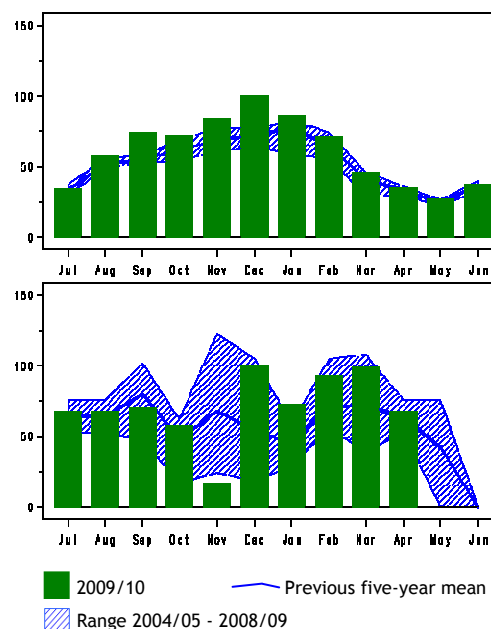


Figure 21.b, Monthly indices for Gadwall for GB (above) & NI (below).

Following a short period of relative stability, the British index for Gadwall rose sharply in 2009/10. As a consequence, the rapid increase shown by species in the UK over the longer term is maintained, a trend evidenced by monitoring schemes across other parts of Europe, e.g. The Netherlands (Hornman *et al.* 2011), Switzerland (Keller & Burkhardt 2011) and Slovakia (Slabeyova *et al.* 2009).

The WeBS monthly maximum of 22,418 was the highest on record, an increase evidenced in the latest wintering population estimate for Britain which has been revised to 25,000 birds (Musgrove *et al.* 2011). The associated rise in the 1% threshold for national importance has led to a reduction in the number of sites that now reach that particular criterion. This has resulted in a somewhat more concise (yet still impressive) table of sites compared to those which had inevitably developed in WeBS reports of recent years.

Following 2009/10, five-year means at six sites in the UK continued to be of

international importance for Gadwalls. The selection of sites involved promotion of Thames Estuary, but relegation of Somerset Levels. Rutland Water regained its position at the top of the table, following an exceptional 2,119 birds in November, the second highest total ever recorded by WeBS during a standard Core count (surpassed only by 2,181 there in November 1997). In contrast, the peak at Ouse Washes in 2009/10 was down compared to the previous year, but still largely in keeping with the recent five-year average. Maxima were also typical of recent years at three other sites of most importance; River Avon (Fordingbridge to Ringwood), Lee Valley Gravel Pits and Abberton Reservoir, while the promotion of Thames Estuary was attributable to the highest ever peak there.

Sixteen WeBS sites surpassed the revised threshold of national importance. Among these, Dungeness & Rye Bay (1,014, Dec), Pitsford Reservoir (916, Nov) and Blackwater Estuary (488, Dec) all held maxima well in excess of numbers typically

present at the sites. Notably high counts emanated from a number of other sites too, both during the winter (e.g. Whitlingham Country Park; 547, Dec) and outside the winter period (e.g. North Norfolk Coast Country Park; 418, Jun). The latter is a good indication of the increased breeding population (Holling *et al.* 2010).

In eastern France, breeding densities of Gadwall are higher on wetlands with colonies of Black-headed gulls, but nesting

success does not differ between sites with and without gulls (Broyer 2009). Breeding waterbirds have been shown to benefit from the anti-predator influence generated by gull colonies, although contemporary studies at sites in the UK are lacking.

The relatively small population of Gadwalls in Northern Ireland, most of which are to be found at Loughs Neagh & Beg and Strangford Lough, was similar to recent years.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Rutland Water	670	904	992	1,520	2,119	Nov	1,241
Ouse Washes	2,289 <sup>12</sup>	220	970	1,508	998	Mar	1,197
R.Avon: Ford'bridge-Ringwood	678	755	725	653	854	Jan	733
Abberton Reservoir	1,024	(535)	483	493	797	Sep	699
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	878	518	703	700	669	Nov	694
Thames Estuary	377	451	(431)	687	909	Jan	606 ▲
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Somerset Levels	704	424	706	614	485	Nov	587 ▼
Dungeness and Rye Bay	268	362	485	417	1,014	Dec	509
Pitsford Reservoir	482	444	264	352	916	Nov	492
Tees Estuary	(332)	433	464	342	480	Oct	430
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	378	553	387	442	361	Sep	424
Minsmere	398	410	468	388	434	Aug	420
Orwell Estuary	347 <sup>10</sup>	340 <sup>10</sup>	268	722 <sup>10</sup>	414	Dec	418
Cotswold Water Park (West)	427	330	(217)	(395)	420	Jan	393
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	(304)	425	437	282			381
Loch Leven	392	309	284	345 <sup>12</sup>	417	Oct	349
North Norfolk Coast	262	186	314	388	418	Jun	314
Woolston Eyes	196	(84)	397	192	439	Sep	306
Little Paxton Gravel Pits	315	215	324	280	307	Dec	288
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(74)	(131)	(108)	275	(36)	Oct	275
Meadow Lane Gravel Pits	354	165		(2) <sup>12</sup>	306	Jan	275
Blackwater Estuary	66	231	395	154	488	Dec	267 ▲
Alton Water	495	166	109	226	330	Dec	265 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	172	143	132	164	144	Dec	151
Strangford Lough	113 <sup>10</sup>	68 <sup>10</sup>	86 <sup>10</sup>	60 <sup>10</sup>	69	Sep	79
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Eversley Cross & Yateley GPs	315	226	216	243	170	Jan	234
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	(9)	(2)	(0)				(9)
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Whitlingham Country Park	149	111	114	230 <sup>12</sup>	547	Dec	230
Nene Washes	64	151	277	170	494	Mar	231
Bewl Water	61	89	158	183	345 <sup>12</sup>	Dec	167
Brent Reservoir	102	107	114	109	329	Dec	152
Redgrave Lake		253	75	214	301	Dec	211
Chew Valley Lake	200	150	245	210	295	Aug	220
Ouse Fen & Pits	152	(49)	203	317	293	Dec	241
Theale Gravel Pits	(169)	(207)	205	181	281	Nov	222
Ditchford Gravel Pits	178	184	176	253	263	Feb	211
Old Moor	168	165	239	208	260	Oct	208
Burghfield Gravel Pits	156	261	206	290	257	Dec	234
Whisby Nature Park	76	104	109	87 <sup>12</sup>	256	Nov	126
Alde Complex	172	171	221	157	255	Jan	195

# Teal

*Anas crecca*

GB max: 164,288 Jan  
NI max: 5164 Dec

International threshold: 5,000  
Great Britain threshold: 2,100  
All-Ireland threshold: 450

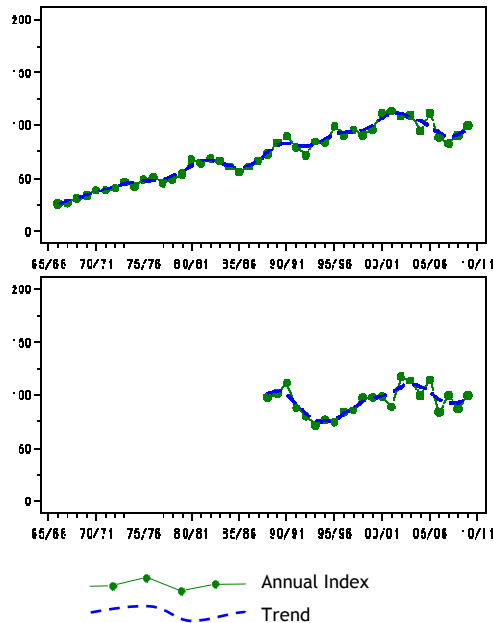


Figure 22.a, Annual indices & trend for Teal for GB (above) & NI (below).

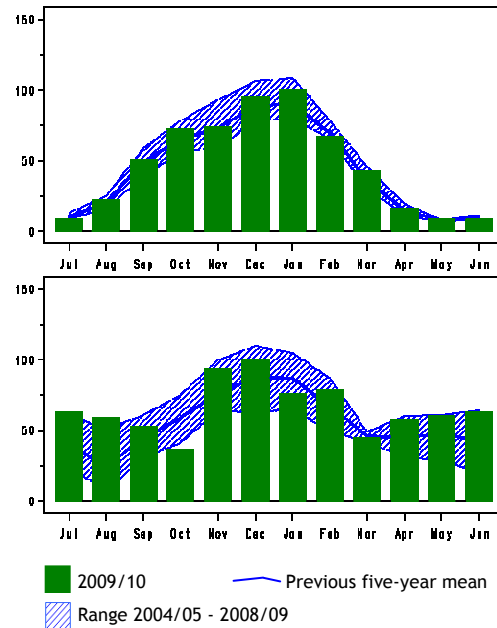


Figure 22.b, Monthly indices for Teal for GB (above) & NI (below).

Most Teal that spend the winter in Great Britain breed either on the near continent, in Iceland, or in Scandinavia. However, Guillemain *et al.* (2005) suggested that any splitting into distinct 'north-western European' and 'Mediterranean' sub-populations was inappropriate, and that all birds wintering in west Europe should be considered to belong to a single larger population. However, this view is not yet reflected in the international threshold used here.

Following the drop in the national index two years ago, Teal in Britain showed a slight improvement in 2009/10. Only time will tell if the species again exhibits the upward trend which had characterised the bulk of the previous forty years. Seven sites in the UK held internationally important numbers of Teal in 2009/10 and 20 surpassed the revised threshold for national importance. The principal site continues to be Somerset Levels, despite a relatively poor showing there compared to the previous three years in terms of the peak

number recorded. Another favoured inland wetland managed for conservation, the Ouse Washes, also yielded a relatively low peak this year. However, it is possible that this decline may be linked with a steep rise noted at the nearby Nene Washes, where the 9,012 in February is more than twice as many as have been counted there before.

At the other major sites where complete coverage was attained, peak numbers during Core counts were generally close to or slightly above average. Maxima at Thames Estuary and Lower Derwent Ings were the highest since 2003/04 and 1994/95, respectively. As in 2008/09, notably high numbers were again reported from Morecambe Bay.

The current trend in Northern Ireland is relatively stable, although the species tends to show a high degree variation from year to year. At the three principal sites, peak numbers were typical at both Strangford Lough and Loughs Neagh & Beg (see Mallard), but somewhat higher at Lough Foyle for the second year in succession.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Somerset Levels	8,719	21,581	17,663	24,029	13,680	Jan	17,134
Ribble Estuary	9,571	(6,959)	8,045	6,072	8,064	Nov	7,938
Mersey Estuary	9,200 <sup>10</sup>	3,593	(2,072)	(2,000)	(3,230)	Jan	6,397
Swale Estuary	(5,783)	(3,728)	4,470	5,485	7,030	Jan	5,692 ▲
Hamford Water	3,276	(1,969)	3,255	10,684 <sup>10</sup>	3,952	Dec	5,292 ▲
Loch Leven	4,840	2,527	4,920	7,580 <sup>12</sup>	5,591	Oct	5,092
Ouse Washes	9,772	4,333 <sup>12</sup>	3,135	5,351	2,492 <sup>12</sup>	Dec	5,017
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Thames Estuary	5,361	3,940	(3,373)	4,393	5,917	Jan	4,903
Severn Estuary	5,293	4,233	5,428	4,710	3,882	Jan	4,709
Lower Derwent Ings	4,479	4,221	3,714	3,393	6,411	Mar	4,444
Morecambe Bay	2,538	(2,338)	2,934	7,327	(4,009)	Jan	4,266
North Norfolk Coast	4,994	3,638	3,278 <sup>10</sup>	3,524	5,708	Dec	4,228
Alde Complex	3,913	3,560	3,334	3,961	4,986	Jan	3,951
Abberton Reservoir	7,741	2,662	3,410	872	4,975	Oct	3,932
The Wash	4,107	2,138	2,537	(2,308)	5,811	Jan	3,648
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	2,854	3,719	2,144	3,129 <sup>10</sup>	4,413	Jan	3,252
Breydon Water and Berney Marshes	2,372	3,620 <sup>12</sup>	5,612 <sup>12</sup>	3,216 <sup>12</sup>	1,337 <sup>12</sup>	Feb	3,231
Humber Estuary	(3,739)	(2,009)	2,137	(3,385)	(3,418)	Jan	3,170
Nene Washes	584	1,677	2,078	1,851	9,012	Feb	3,040 ▲
Hickling Broad	4,550	2,000		3,150	2,401	Oct	3,025
Blackwater Estuary	2,751	(2,786)	2,207	(4,002)	(2,730)	Dec	2,895
Mersehead RSPB Reserve		3,900	1,045		3,560	Nov	2,835
Solway Estuary	3,152	(2,265)	(839)	(1,648)	1,342	Nov	2,253
Forth Estuary	2,130	2,531	1,877	2,370	2,293	Nov	2,240
WWT Martin Mere	3,800	1,430	1,200	2,005	2,640	Jan	2,215
Arun Valley	2,390	2,129	(2,343)	1,985	(2,026)	Jan	2,212 ▲
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	2,995	(1,890)	(2,208)	1,944	1,338	Jan	2,121
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Strangford Lough	2,573	1,724	1,752	1,347	1,790	Nov	1,837
Lough Foyle	1,405	915	1,562	2,000	2,020	Dec	1,580
Loughs Neagh and Beg	1,427	1,049	1,297	889	1,345	Sep	1,201
Belfast Lough	573 <sup>10</sup>	488	640	479	618	Dec	560
Carlingford Lough	710	440	565	571	309	Feb	519
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Stodmarsh	3,633	831	2,508	1,100	2,150	Dec	2,044
<i>No data for years 2005/06 to 2009/10: Holburn Moss</i>							
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(1,926)	1,455	(1,900)	1,754	3,010	Nov	2,073
Stodmarsh	3,633	831	2,508	1,100	2,150	Dec	2,044

## Green-winged Teal

*Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant

Native Range: N America

Green-winged Teals were recorded at 15 WeBS sites in Britain and one in Northern Ireland, an identical distribution to the previous year. A monthly peak of five was logged in both November and January. All

records related to singles with the exception of two birds at Wigan Flashes in December. None at any of the sites were seen in more than one month.

## Silver Teal

*Anas versicolor*

Escape

Native Range: S America

What was presumably the same individual was seen at Hollowell Reservoir

in September and November, and then at Ravensthorpe Reservoir in March.

## Mallard

*Anas platyrhynchos*

International threshold: 20,000\*\*

Great Britain threshold: 6,800†

All-Ireland threshold: 380

GB max: 124,748 Dec

NI max: 7,495 Sep

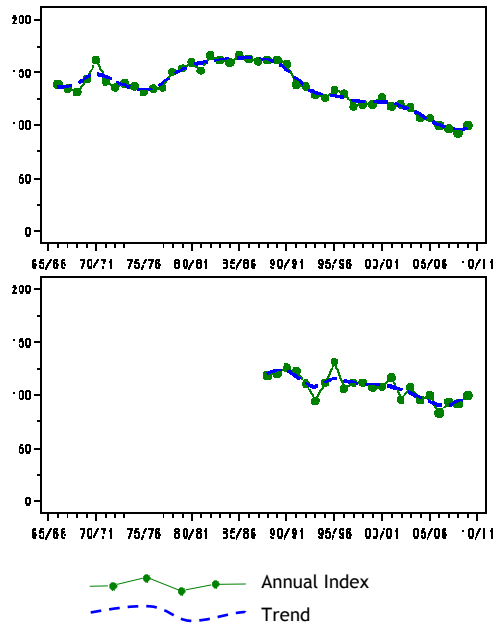


Figure 23.a, Annual indices & trend for Mallard for GB (above) & NI (below).

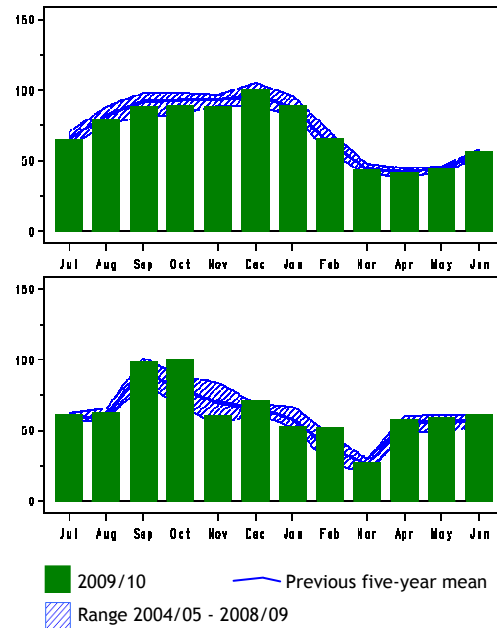


Figure 23.b, Monthly indices for Mallard for GB (above) & NI (below).

The trend for Mallard has steadily declined since the early 1990s, although the index for 2009/10 did show a slight rise compared to the low reached in the previous year. As documented in previous WeBS reports, this trend contrasts with that of the breeding population which increased by 20% during the ten-year period 1998 to 2008 (Baillie *et al.* 2010).

Ring-recovery data (at least up to the end of 1997) suggested that 75% of the birds in Britain and Ireland during the winter months were continental immigrants (Wernham *et al.* 2002). The monthly indices for 2009/10 indicate that above average numbers were present on WeBS sites in Britain in December. This is suggestive of an arrival of birds from the continent in winter in response to the cold weather experienced during that period - thereby concurring with the assumption that the recent downward trend is linked with a decrease in continental immigration (Sauter *et al.* 2010). It should be noted however that the trend for Mallards in The

Netherlands (Hornman *et al.* 2011) is very similar to the trend in Britain; hence any longer term range shift of the wintering population is more profound than a minimal 'short stop' across the North Sea. Further east in Europe, wintering populations currently appear to be stable, for example in Slovakia (Slabeyova *et al.* 2009).

Milder winters, with associated decline in frozen conditions, could also have the effect of Mallards not being forced to concentrate at the larger UK wetlands traditionally covered through WeBS. Hence, the trends below should be considered as those occurring specifically at WeBS sites; improved stratification of monitored wetlands would improve understanding of changes taking place in the population within the wider countryside.

The largest count in the UK was from Loughs Neagh & Beg, where 4,287 Mallards were counted in October. This represents a welcome improvement after a poor year in 2008/09, helping to contribute to a slight rise in the national index (comparable to

that shown in Britain). The historical peak count of Mallards at Loughs Neagh & Beg is 8,791 in August 1995. Maxima in 2009/10 at the four other sites of All-Ireland importance were close to average.

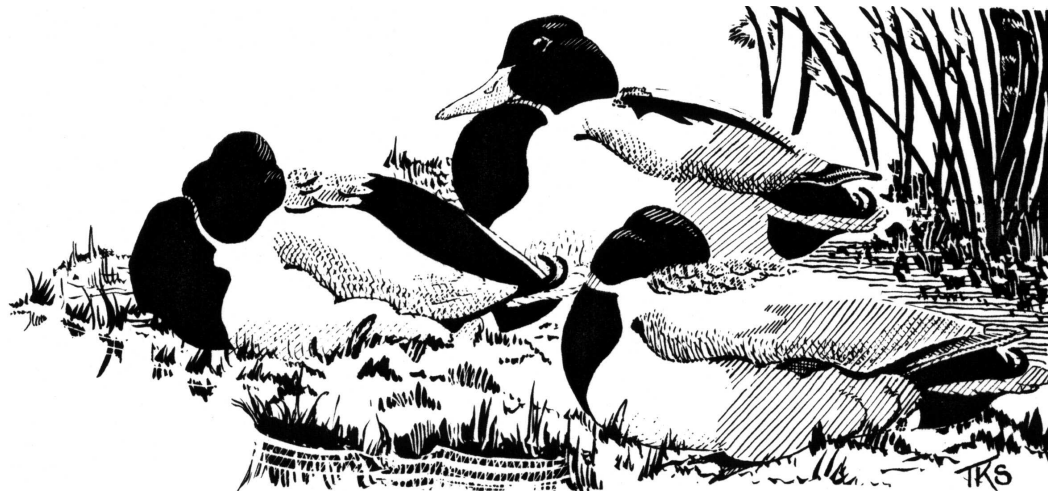
In Britain, no WeBS sites exceeded the 1% threshold for national importance, but for the first time since 2004/05, three sites held maxima in excess of 3,000 birds; Severn Estuary, Ouse Washes and The Wash. Also notable were the highest peaks for several years from North Norfolk Coast

(highest since 1989/90), Nene Washes (1993/94) and Morecambe Bay (1993/94).

Considering the 'short stopping' findings of Sauter *et al.* (2010), the slight rise in the UK indices noted during the relatively cold winter of 2009/10 may be pertinent. Suffice to say, results from monitoring schemes such as WeBS will be fundamental in any research aimed at better understanding the processes underpinning the apparent decline in wintering numbers of the UK's most familiar duck.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	4,612	4,351	3,767	1,911	4,287	Oct	3,786
Strangford Lough	1,586	(1,010)	1,950	2,177	2,125	Dec	1,960
Lough Foyle	1,133	1,036	830	965	995	Nov	992
Lower Lough Erne	556	551	702	(295)	(226)	Oct	603
Belfast Lough	346	(344)	457	447	419	Dec	417
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 2,000 or more birds in Great Britain</b>							
Severn Estuary	(3,884)	3,661	2,954	3,091	3,086	Oct	3,335
Ouse Washes	2,454	2,606 <sup>12</sup>	2,918 <sup>12</sup>	(3,024)	3,336 <sup>12</sup>	Nov	2,868
The Wash	2,534	2,417	2,316	(2,586)	3,030	Dec	2,577
WWT Martin Mere	3,150	2,211	2,000	1,665	2,250	Nov	2,255
Swale Estuary	2,247	(1,301)	2,972	(1,981)	1,432	Oct	2,217
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Clifford Hill Gravel Pits Consolidated	1,686	2,027	1,733	2,048	2,199	Sep	1,939
Morecambe Bay	(1,740)	1,837	(1,240)	(1,926)	2,145	Jan	1,991

<sup>†</sup> as no sites exceed the British threshold a qualifying level of 2,000 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report



Mallards (Thelma Sykes)

A relatively cold midwinter period in 2009/10 may have forced birds to the UK from the continent.



## Pintail

*Anas acuta*

GB max: 20,374 Jan  
NI max: 567 Nov

International threshold: 600  
Great Britain threshold: 290  
All-Ireland threshold: 20\*

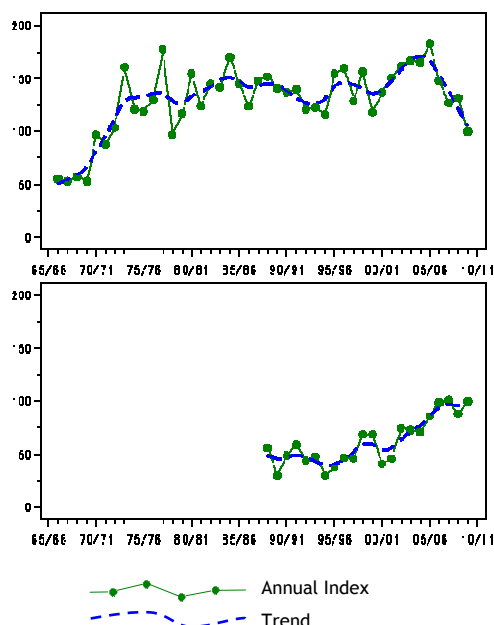


Figure 24.a, Annual indices & trend for Pintail for GB (above) & NI (below).

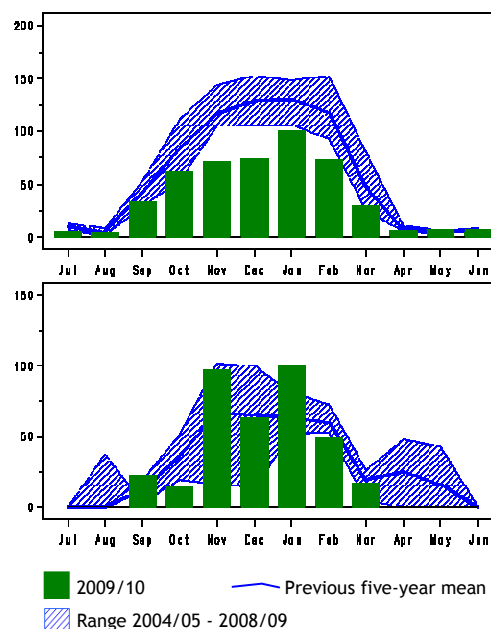


Figure 24.b, Monthly indices for Pintail for GB (above) & NI (below).

WeBS-year 2009/10 represented one of the poorest years on record for Pintails, with the annual index falling to its lowest value for over thirty years. Just four years previously the species had reached a historic peak in terms of index, this fall therefore represents a marked change in fortune over a very short period of time.

The monthly indices indicate that numbers were well below average throughout the winter period of November to February. The relatively cold conditions experienced during winter 2009/10 may have been at least partly responsible for this showing, with all else being equal a greater proportion of the population expected to winter at more southern latitudes when conditions are relatively harsh further north. Compared to other dabbling waterfowl, Pintails tend to aggregate at a relatively small number of sites. This behaviour, in combination with high mobility and an ability to exploit temporary wetland habitats, would perhaps indicate that it has the potential to respond

particularly profoundly to severe weather events.

In recent years, a shift in core wintering range had been implied by an increase in The Netherlands (Hornman *et al.* 2011). Hence, any assertions regarding the possible effects of cold winter on the UK index are best made when it is clear how birds in areas such as The Netherlands responded.

It appears that species more dependent on shallow freshwater sites, such as grazing marshes and river flood plains, e.g. Pintail, Shoveler, Lapwing and Golden Plover, responded to the cold winter more noticeably than other species. Although large declines at such sites in Britain are not immediately apparent based on the peak numbers featured in the table below, effects may have been more marked in neighbouring countries, such as The Netherlands.

Fourteen sites surpassed the threshold for international importance. At the two most important sites in Britain, the maxima

in 2009/10 were much lower than those which have typified recent years. At the Dee Estuary, where numbers have shown a gradual decline in recent years, the count of 2,960 in January compares poorly with both the recent five-year average and especially the historic peak of 11,945 in October 1989. Similarly, at Burry Inlet, the peak was much lower than expected for the second year in a row. In contrast, the peaks at Morecambe Bay and Nene Washes were the highest at those sites since 2004/05 and 2002/03, respectively.

Fifteen WeBS sites surpassed the threshold for national importance, following the slight change in 1% threshold (Musgrove *et al.* 2011). These included Pagham Harbour, North Norfolk Coast and Swale Estuary, all of which yielded maxima markedly lower than recent years.

The species continued its recent strong showing in Northern Ireland. Both sites of All-Ireland importance, Strangford Lough and Lough Foyle, held peaks close to recent average. The contrast in the fortunes of this species and that of Wigeon in Northern Ireland (see page 55) is particularly striking.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Dee Estuary (England & Wales)	6,330	6,172	(4,334)	3,932	2,960	Jan	4,849
Burry Inlet	4,837	4,692	6,244	2,209	1,382	Jan	3,873
Ribble Estuary	3,579	(1,094)	3,639	2,178	(2,124)	Nov	3,132
Morecambe Bay	3,045	2,609	(2,543)	2,593	3,186	Dec	2,858
Solway Estuary	(1,575)	(2,429)	(1,047)	(888)	(977)	Jan	(2,429)
Duddon Estuary	2,210 <sup>10</sup>	(2,317)	(1,153)	2,481	(629)	Feb	2,346
Ouse Washes	3,343 <sup>12</sup>	1,823 <sup>12</sup>	1,713 <sup>12</sup>	(1,697)	743 <sup>12</sup>	Feb	1,906
Nene Washes	281	1,931	1,267	1,951	2,400	Feb	1,566
Mersehead RSPB Reserve		1,010	1,445		1,690	Nov	1,382
Severn Estuary	905	(1,161)	668	655 <sup>10</sup>	(494)	Dec	847
Medway Estuary	(809)	(582)	663	(351)	(353)	Feb	736
The Wash	(567)	1,215	652	(560)	294	Nov	720
Loch Leven	130	217	213	1,554 <sup>12</sup>	1,396	Oct	702 ▲
Somerset Levels	333	530	985	682	534	Jan	613 ▲
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Pagham Harbour	893	566	(464)	(447)	337	Dec	599 ▼
North Norfolk Coast	657	753	697 <sup>10</sup>	421	437	Jan	593 ▼
Swale Estuary	579	731	597	630	381	Oct	584 ▼
Wigtown Bay	349	166	834	642	689	Oct	536
Dee Flood Meadows	(329)	916	750	196	227	Nov	522
WWT Martin Mere	(535)	580	380	380	550	Jan	485
Lindisfarne	536	445	327	(272)	(200)	Jan	436
North West Solent	670	484	407	320	279	Jan	432
Blackwater Estuary	387	(401)	(201)	(488)	(203)	Jan	425
Lower Derwent Ings	167	656	674	298	278	Feb	415
Stour Estuary	473	467	303	486 <sup>10</sup>	228	Jan	391
Arun Valley	290	574	(322)	227	(142)	Nov	364
Alde Complex	307	441	447	276	281	Feb	350
R.Avon: Ringwood - Chr'church	1	(456)	507	245	(274)	Jan	297 ▲
Foryd Bay	449	330	152	360 <sup>12</sup>	160	Dec	290 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Strangford Lough	643 <sup>10</sup>	496	395	449	487	Jan	494
Lough Foyle	94	123	157	185	112	Feb	134
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Orwell Estuary	308 <sup>10</sup>	753 <sup>10</sup>	158	125 <sup>10</sup>	95	Jan	288
Malltraeth Cob and Pools	397	287	146	266	252	Dec	270
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	281	314	232	236	211	Feb	255
Blyth Estuary	(209)	394	185	(264)	74	Feb	229
Poole Harbour	(208)	(140)	(155)	(110)	(41)	Jan	(208)

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## Yellow-billed Pintail

*Anas georgica*

Escape  
Native Range: S America

Up to three were recorded at Westwood Park in November and December.

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## White-cheeked Pintail

*Anas bahamensis*

Escape  
Native Range: S America

One was present for most of the year at the regular site of Stanton Lake.

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## Garganey

*Anas querquedula*

International threshold: 20,000  
Great Britain threshold: +<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: +<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 39 Aug  
NI max: 0

Being summer visitors, Garganey are reported for the calendar year, here 2009. Records were received from 63 sites, a similar number to the previous two years. With the exception of two singles in Scotland, all birds were in England.

A small number were seen during spring passage, when typically records of pairs predominated; dabbling duck pairs are known to form in winter and the two birds then migrate together to their breeding

grounds (e.g. Paulus 1983). As in 2008, one was noted at Cotswold Water Park in February, followed by records from seven other sites during March. Spring peaks up to May comprised four at both Arun Valley and The Wash. During June-August, maxima were seven at Dungeness & Rye Bay, and five at both Stodmarsh and Rutland Water. Towards the year's end, birds were noted at five sites in October and three in November.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 4 or more birds in Great Britain</b>							
Dungeness and Rye Bay	8	9	9	8	7	Aug	8
<b>Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in Summer 2009 in Great Britain</b>							
Stodmarsh		1	2	0	5	Jun	2
Rutland Water	1	0	2	2	5	Aug	2
Chew Valley Lake	4	6	1	1	4	Aug	3
The Wash	2	2	1	(0)	4	May	2
Arun Valley	1	0	0	1	4	Apr	1
Ossmere			0	0	4	Jun	1

<sup>†</sup> as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of four has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

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## Blue-winged Teal

*Anas discors*

Vagrant  
Native Range: N America

A drake was at Ouse Fen & Pits in June, and seen to be bearing a metal ring ([per www.birdguides.com](http://www.birdguides.com)). The first ever WeBS

record of this species was also in Cambridgeshire, at Fen Drayton Gravel Pits in 1988.

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## Ringed Teal

*Callonetta leucophrys*

Escape  
Native Range: S America

One was present at Thorpe Water Park in January.

# Shoveler

*Anas clypeata*

International threshold: 400  
Great Britain threshold: 180  
All-Ireland threshold: 20\*

GB max: 12,296 Oct  
NI max: 141 Dec

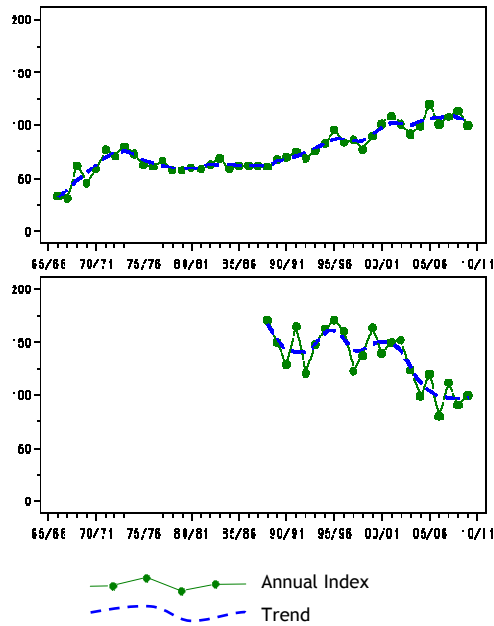


Figure 25.a, Annual indices & trend for Shoveler for GB (above) & NI (below).

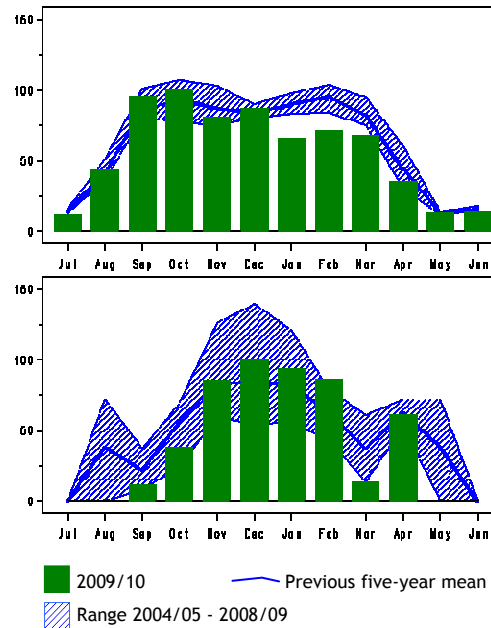


Figure 25.b, Monthly indices for Shoveler for GB (above) & NI (below).

2009/10 was a somewhat atypical year for Shovelers in Britain, with the top two sites supporting relatively low peak counts. The national index value fell in comparison to the previous year, to a level consistent with that of the previous eight or so years. Over the longer term, the species has increased slowly, exhibiting a trend similar to that shown in The Netherlands (Hornman *et al.* 2011).

The peaks at Ouse Washes and Somerset Levels were the lowest at the respective sites for nine and ten years. Reasons for this are assumed to be associated with the frozen conditions prevalent during winter 2009/10, which may have affected the habitat suitability of sites such as grazing marshes and others with shallow, fresh water. In contrast, the site maxima during the year, both in October at Rutland Water and Dungeness & Rye Bay, represented the most at those sites for several years. The Rutland count had only been surpassed once before, by a total of 1,154 birds ten years previously, while that at Dungeness & Rye

Bay was the most since a peak of 860 was recorded in February 2002.

The monthly indices illustrate the sensitivity of this species to a relatively cold winter. Shovelers have generally always peaked in the UK during late autumn, when en route to wintering areas in France and Spain, where very large numbers occur. However, as described in last year's report, there had been some recent evidence of a greater proportion of birds wintering at sites in more northern latitudes in response to milder winters. Therefore, the marked drop-off in the number of Shovelers in Britain during the cold weather period in January 2010 is especially pertinent; one assumes an influx of Shovelers into France and Spain may have taken place at this time. Furthermore, one can only speculate that a similar pattern will prove to be evident for winter 2010/11 (which was the coldest winter in the UK for over thirty years).

A further four sites surpassed the threshold for international importance,

while 29 surpassed the threshold for national importance. Among those listed, particularly notable counts included 612 at Lower Derwent Ings (Apr), 453 at Fairburn Ings (Oct) and 351 at Theale Gravel Pits (Jan), the latter propelling the site to one of national importance for the first time

despite the revised threshold having increased by over 20%, from 148 to 180 birds (Musgrove *et al.* 2011).

The trend for Northern Ireland shows a continued fall in numbers, with peaks at the more important sites close to recent average.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Somerset Levels	845	1,520	1,806	971	713	Feb	1,171
Ouse Washes	1,548 <sup>13</sup>	696 <sup>13</sup>	1,071	2,039	503	Mar	1,171
Rutland Water	680	495	620	525	773	Oct	619
Dungeness and Rye Bay	626	553	581	588	735	Oct	617
Abberton Reservoir	(674)	(152)	604	606	566	Oct	613
Severn Estuary	603	600	796	526	497	Dec	607
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	333	540 <sup>13</sup>	754	570 <sup>13</sup>	546 <sup>13</sup>	Dec	594
Thames Estuary	357	524	(227)	486	355	Feb	431
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Chew Valley Lake	660	300	180	270 <sup>13</sup>	435	Oct	369
Medway Estuary	248	(509)	(156)	298	(51)	Feb	352
Ribble Estuary	286	532	188	478	271	Nov	351
Lower Derwent Ings	107	301	341	333	612	Apr	339
Swale Estuary	199	(144)	331	(216)	459	Mar	330
Nene Washes	213	448	384	272	330	Mar	329
North Norfolk Coast	278	380	258	297	309	Dec	304
Stodmarsh	384	400	147	284	220	Nov	287
Alde Complex	253	441	295	260	156	Jan	281
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(32)	(78)	(259)	330	227	Dec	279
Fairburn Ings	288	226	54	304	453	Oct	265
Pitsford Reservoir	347	329	148	148	349	Oct	264
Burry Inlet	437	101	309	(283)	54	Sep	237
Middle Yare Marshes	(170)	(84)	(174)	(352)	174	Oct	233
R.Avon: Fordingbridge-Ringwood	195	153	312	245	245	Mar	230
Tees Estuary	145	309	170	225	300	Oct	230
Tring Reservoirs	225	130	256	250	219	Oct	216
Staines Reservoirs	469	149	65	232	147	Oct	212
Llynau Y Fali	210	135	59	419	213	Feb	207
Blagdon Lake	(220)	542	137	76	41	Oct	203
Arun Valley	98	278	217	215	197	Mar	201
Grafham Water	357	170	157	121	200	Jan	201
Cotswold Water Park (West)	163	222	176 <sup>13</sup>	251	184	Nov	199
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	282	164	184	145	222	Dec	199
London Wetland Centre	176	185	327	158	139	Oct	197
Loch Leven	204	279	205	192	80	Sep	192
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(39)	(68)	111	270	(10)	Feb	191
Theale Gravel Pits	(128)	157 <sup>13</sup>	73	140	351	Jan	180 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Strangford Lough	147	139 <sup>10</sup>	73	69 <sup>11</sup>	123	Jan	110
Loughs Neagh and Beg	55	34	90	57	32	Oct	54
Belfast Lough	17 <sup>11</sup>	15	28	49	31	Feb	28
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Minsmere	183	218	138	157	171	Nov	173
Trinity Broad	(0)	(27)	338	162	(63)	Feb	167
Morecambe Bay	159	174	22	326	38	Dec	160
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Blithfield Reservoir			7	6	(239)	Sep	84
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	173	93	59	121	205	Mar	130
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	109	73	60	140	197	Oct	116
Edderthorpe Flash		210	68	170	195	Oct	161
Malltraeth RSPB	147	250	156	148	193	Dec	179
Llyn Maelog	2	9	126	4	193	Sep	67

## Red-crested Pochard

*Netta rufina*

International threshold: 500  
Great Britain threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 386 Nov  
NI max: 0

A patchily distributed species throughout central and southern Europe, the majority of UK records, including those pertaining to the ancestors of the core of the Cotswold Water Park population, are considered to relate to birds descended from escapes. Twenty pairs bred at Cotswold Water Park in 2008 (Holling *et al.* 2011).

The species has shown a change in international winter distribution in recent decades, involving a shift in core range from the western Mediterranean to the region north of the Alps and the use of a greater number of sites (Keller 2000), perhaps increasing the likelihood of wild birds reaching Britain. An exceptional total

of 35,000 were present in Switzerland in November 2009 (Keller & Burkhardt 2011).

In 2009/10, the species was recorded at 89 WeBS sites in Britain and the counted maximum was within one bird of the all-time high noted during the previous year. In England, it appears that the species continues to slowly expand, exemplified by notable mid-winter peaks of 90+ and 84 at Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits and Rutland Water, respectively. Counts of 16-25 at sites such as Cheddar Reservoir, Chimney Corner Gravel Pit, Pitsford Reservoir, and Grafham Water, also provide an indication of the range expansion away from the traditional Cotswold stronghold.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Cotswold Water Park (West)	119	207	170 <sup>12</sup>	327	252	Nov	215
Cotswold Water Park (East)	70	106	72	104	91	Feb	89
Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits	41	26	(26)	(36)	(90)	Dec	48
St James's Park				22	32	Sep	27
Rutland Water	1	10	8	13	84	Jan	23
Chimney Corner GP South					17	Jan	17
Hanningfield Reservoir	21	17	10	11	21	Jun	16
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	12	22	13	10			14
Arnot Park Lake	18	16	14	9	9	Aug	13
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	8	23	10	4	8	Dec	11
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Pitsford Reservoir	3	6	7	3	25	Jan	9
Cheddar Reservoir	0	0	1	0	21	Jan	4
Grafham Water	2	2	1	9	16	Jan	6
Carsington Water	4	2	5	0	12	Oct	5

<sup>†</sup> as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 10 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report



Red-crested Pochards (Sue Clayton)  
Numbers have risen at Cotswold WP since breeding first occurred in 1975.

## Pochard

*Aythya ferina*

GB max: 20,157 Feb  
NI max: 9,292 Jan

International threshold: 3,500  
Great Britain threshold: 380  
All-Ireland threshold: 380

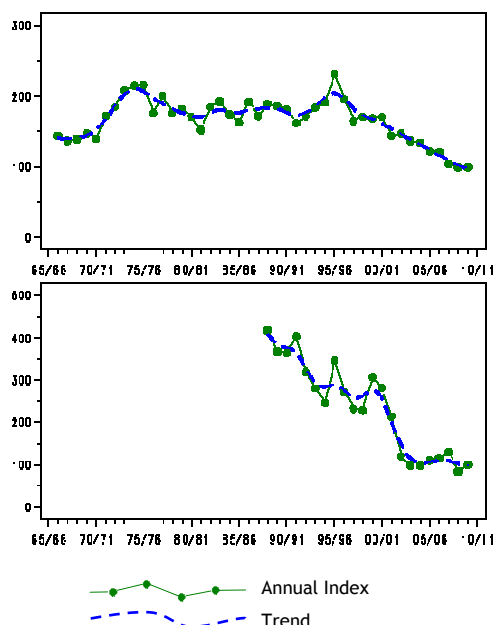


Figure 26.a, Annual indices & trend for Pochard for GB (above) & NI (below).

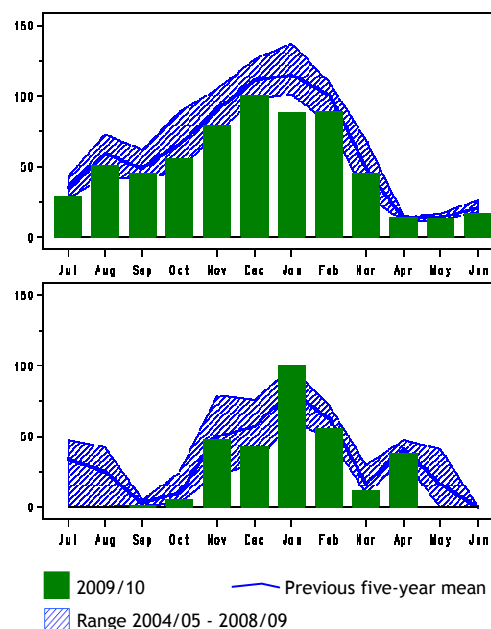
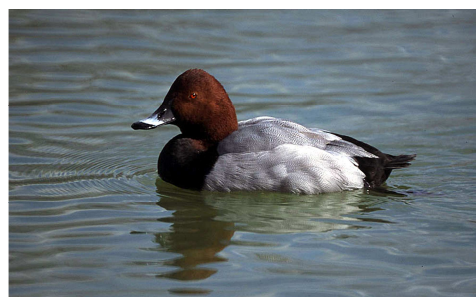


Figure 26.b, Monthly indices for Pochard for GB (above) & NI (below).

The trends for Pochards in both Britain and Northern Ireland show alarming declines since the 1990s. A similar decline is being experienced in The Netherlands (Hornman *et al.* 2011), although numbers are more stable in Switzerland having increased steadily there during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (Keller & Burkhardt 2011).

In 2009/10, the annual index for Britain remained at the all-time low point reached during the previous year, with numbers approaching 20% lower during the mid winter period compared to the recent five-year average. Interestingly, the lowest monthly index in Britain occurred in January, coinciding with an apparent influx of birds into Northern Ireland. It is possible that this was a cold weather movement in response to the frozen conditions prevalent at the time, as indicated by studies of within-winter movements by Keller *et al.* (2009). In Northern Ireland, January saw the highest total of Pochards at Loughs Neagh & Beg since 2001/02. As recently as 1990/91 over 40,000 birds were counted at

this site, a decline considered primarily attributable to effects of eutrophication which may have impacted invertebrates fed upon by Pochard and other diving species (Maclean *et al.* 2007).



Pochard (Jill Pakenham)

For the first year since 2005/06, six sites in Britain yielded maxima in excess of 1,000 birds. These comprised the five sites at the top of the table below, as well as Loch of Harray (Orkney) where a count of 1,184 in October represents the most since 1995/96. Loch of Harray was a traditional stronghold for the species, with 2,000+ regularly

recorded during the 1970s and early 1980s, including a peak of 4,500 in February 1983. Results from the other sites of national importance were mixed; at many, maxima were typically slightly below recent averages. These included Fleet & Wey

where the lowest peak count since 1986/87 was noted, and Abberton Reservoir where a very low total was recorded for the second year in a row. Other sites fared better, such as Dungeness & Rye Bay where an all-time peak was recorded.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	8,256	8,884	9,023	5,799	9,288	Jan	8,250
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Ouse Washes	1,227	4,197	2,987	2,367 <sup>12</sup>	3,151 <sup>12</sup>	Feb	2,786
Loch Leven	1,715	3,666	1,650	4,326	1,281	Oct	2,528
Abberton Reservoir	2,852	3,167	2,355	850	1,134	Sep	2,072
Dungeness and Rye Bay	1,053	1,049	728	1,019	1,356	Aug	1,041
Chew Valley Lake	1,580	1,220	600	530	1,065	Nov	999
Fleet and Wey	682	879	980	718	674	Jan	787
Hornsea Mere	1,150	710	650	560	550	Mar	724
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(12)	296	783	1,042	(10)	Feb	707
Cotswold Water Park (East)	524	993	884	685	421	Nov	701
Severn Estuary	760	786	583	617	593	Feb	668
Thames Estuary	590	484	854	588	714	Feb	646
Brogborough Clay Pit					645	Jan	645 ▲
Loch of Harray	341	532	468	454	1,184	Oct	596
Cotswold Water Park (West)	573	(641)	553	568	639	Feb	595
Loch of Boardhouse	709	623	441	665	312	Nov	550
Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits	(410)	467	(409)	(316)	(312)	Dec	467
Pitsford Reservoir	363	365	505	328	407	Aug	394
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Upper Lough Erne	329	503	422	459	177	Feb	378
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Grafham Water	78	48	84	78	526	Jan	163
Kenfig Pool	245	252	143	78	451	Dec	234
Pugneys Country Park Lakes	107	169	267	48	451	Dec	208
Cheddar Reservoir	285	443	80	230	435	Dec	295
Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir	260	160	4	132	420	Dec	195
Staines Reservoirs	338	164	12	150	417	Jan	216

## Ring-necked Duck

*Aythya collaris*

Vagrant

Native Range: N America

Ring-necked Ducks were recorded at 14 sites during Core counts; split evenly between England and Scotland. These included long-staying birds at Westport Lake (Aug-Sep), Foxcote Reservoir (Oct-Dec), Pugneys Country Park Lakes (Jan-Feb) and Gaddon Loch (May-Jun). Others were

noted at Blagdon Lake (Oct), Cheddar Reservoir (Dec), Porth Reservoir (Jan) and Frampton Pools (Mar), Kilconquhar Loch (Aug), Loch Gelly (Aug), Loch a' Phuill, Tiree (Sep), Loch Borralie (Feb), Dornoch Firth (Feb) and Loch Leven (Sep, Jun).

## Ferruginous Duck

*Aythya nyroca*

Vagrant and escape

Native Range: N America, Asia

Ferruginous Ducks were reported from eleven WeBS sites in 2009/10. Chew Valley Lake, where the species may have bred in recent years (Davis & Vinicombe 2011) again featured, and there were further records from Loch Gelly, Pitsford Reservoir,

Belvide Reservoir, Calvert Brick Works, Blackwater Estuary, Fen Drayton Gravel Pits, The Wash, Cheddar Reservoir, Durkar Sand Quarry and Gatton Park. As ever, some are likely to refer to escapes from captivity.



## Tufted Duck

*Aythya fuligula*

International threshold: 12,000

Great Britain threshold: 1,100

All-Ireland threshold: 370

GB max: 56,000 Oct

NI max: 9,261 Jan

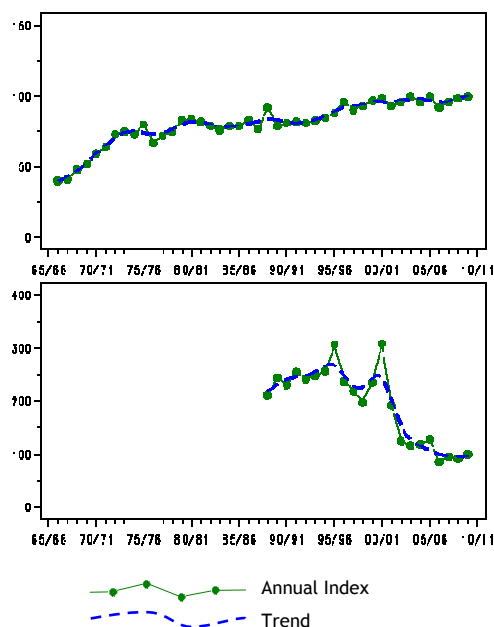


Figure 27.a, Annual indices & trend for Tufted Duck for GB (above) & NI (below).

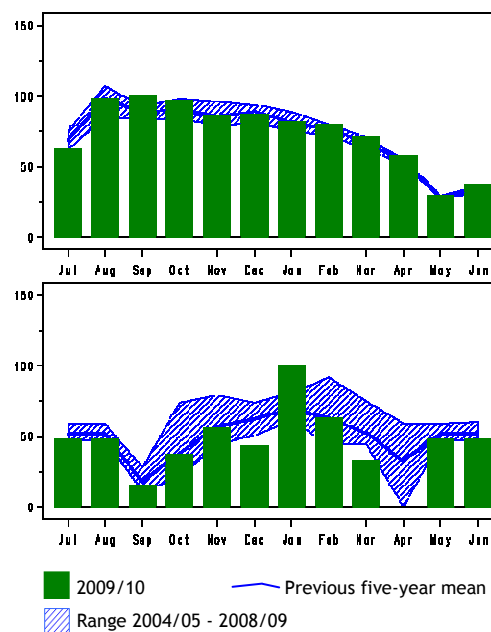


Figure 27.b, Monthly indices for Tufted Duck for GB (above) & NI (below).

Annual maxima and indices for Tufted Duck in Britain have exhibited a gradual increase over the course of the WeBS indexing period, and the index in 2009/10 was consistent with that trend.

The two sites at the top of the table below both fared relatively well in 2009/10. The peak at Rutland Water was the highest for three years and that at Abberton Reservoir was the most since October 2004. A notable maximum was also reported from Grafham Water; the January count of 2,242 has only been surpassed by historical peaks at the site dating back to the 1970s. Compared to the previous two years, a relatively low peak was reported from Ouse

Washes, where diving waterfowl may be susceptible to variation in water levels. More strikingly, the maximum at Staines Reservoirs was the lowest for at least twenty years.

In Northern Ireland, the highest total since 2004/05 was reported from Loughs Neagh & Beg, where in common with other species of diving duck a sharp decline in peak numbers of Tufted Ducks took place from 2001/02 onwards. A record WeBS count of 29,393 dates back to December 1989. Perhaps even more impressive, relatively, was the peak count at Upper Lough Erne, 2,240 in February, which represents the most ever there.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Rutland Water	8,487	9,758	5,134	3,678	7,216	Sep	6,855
Abberton Reservoir	(4,857)	1,187	3,796	3,928	5,078	Oct	3,769
Loch Leven	3,802	3,553	4,140	3,610	3,601	Aug	3,741
Ouse Washes	1,140 <sup>12</sup>	2,057	3,328	(2,978)	1,647	Mar	2,230
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(64)	1,243	1,766	3,372	(70)	Oct	2,127
Hanningfield Reservoir	1,573	2,194	486	3,269	2,275	Aug	1,959
Walthamstow Reservoirs	1,828	1,516	900	2,103			1,587
Chew Valley Lake	2,115	1,325	1,480	1,350	1,480	Oct	1,550

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
Pitsford Reservoir	2,066	1,374	774	1,654	1,749	Sep	1,523
Staines Reservoirs	2,844	1,865	1,074	1,097	730	Jul	1,522
Grafham Water	1,337	521	1,464	1,591	2,242	Jan	1,431
Cotswold Water Park (West)	1,199	1,372	1,343	1,354	1,541	Nov	1,362
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	985	1,215	1,231	1,519	1,673	Nov	1,325
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	7,871	6,441	6,076	5,126	8,968	Jan	6,896
Upper Lough Erne	1,457	1,478	1,772	1,895	2,240	Feb	1,768
Lower Lough Erne	575	705	638	(183)	(201)	Dec	639
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Little Paxton Gravel Pits	768	502	831	614	1,746 <sup>12</sup>	Oct	892
Rostherne Mere	168	97	156	221	1,465	Jan	421
Loch Watten	545	784	779	610	1,128	Oct	769

## Scaup

*Aythya marila*

International threshold: 3,100  
Great Britain threshold: 52  
All-Ireland threshold: 45

GB max: 3,119 Oct

NI max: 3,722 Jan

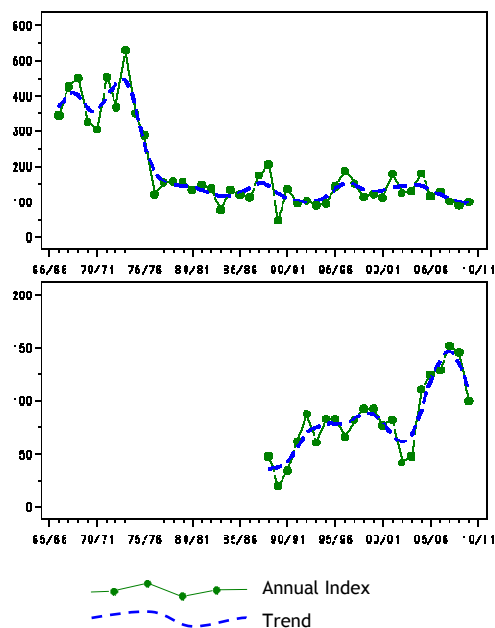


Figure 28.a, Annual indices & trend for Scaup for GB (above) & NI (below).

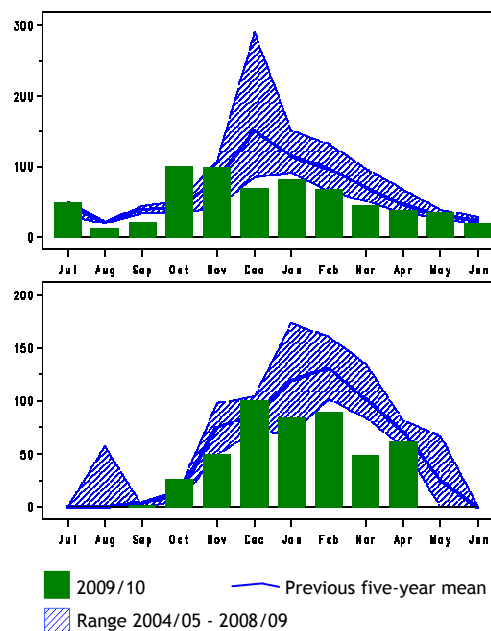


Figure 28.b, Monthly indices for Scaup for GB (above) & NI (below).

Since the mid 1970s, the indices for Scaup in Britain have changed little from year to year, with just small periodic fluctuations. The contemporary situation is in stark contrast to that prior to the mid 1970s when up to 25,000 birds were regular on the Forth Estuary. The disappearance of that aggregation was largely responsible for the plunge in the value of the national index at the time, occurring in isolation from the stable trend elsewhere in the country.

The recent revision of numbers of wintering waterbirds in Britain estimates a population of 5,200 birds (Musgrove *et al.* 2011). However, a supplementary count of 4,000 birds at Solway Estuary in January 2010 provides an indication of the potential numbers not routinely monitored through WeBS (from which the estimate was largely derived). The peak Core count there during the winter was 2,354 in October, the most counted there for five years, while the historical maximum at the site relates to

5,092 birds in December 1988. As with all seaducks, there is an inherent susceptibility to effects of bad weather and associated viewing conditions, and totals of Scaup from several sites in Britain (e.g. Cromarty Firth, Loch of Stenness and Loch of Harray) were down compared to recent averages.

In Northern Ireland, recent years had seen the wintering population of Scaup at Loughs Neagh & Beg on an upward trend, considered to be associated with the recovery of the Icelandic breeding population. However, in 2009/10, the winter maximum at the site dropped to 2,997 in February, the lowest peak there for six years. It is unknown whether this decrease at UK's only site of international importance is in any way linked to the apparent increase in size of the regular aggregation at Solway Estuary during 2009/10, and hence representative of a shift in site use. Only further years of monitoring will determine whether Scaup at Loughs Neagh & Beg return to the level that

saw the species become the most abundant *Aythya* duck wintering there in 2008/09.



Scaup (Nigel Clark)

Away from the traditionally listed sites, notable maxima included 95 at Wigtown Bay (Nov) and 39 at Dee Estuary (Jan), while the peak count inland was 11 at Rutland Water (Feb) which is in keeping with peak counts there in recent years.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	5,826	4,349	5,587	6,335	2,997	Feb	5,019
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Solway Estuary	(575)	1,060	(499)	(257)	(4,000) <sup>12</sup>	Oct	2,530
Loch Ryan	1,020	1,047	1,654	705	800 <sup>12</sup>	Oct	1,045
Inner Loch Indaal	960 <sup>21</sup>	810 <sup>21</sup>	870 <sup>21</sup>		485	Dec	781
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	576	690	148	493	386	Feb	459
Cromarty Firth	400	401	(516)	363	262	Jan	388
Loch of Stenness	306	429	259	276	197	Nov	293
Loch of Harray	360	306	67	(67)	149	Oct	221
Dornoch Firth	77	222	280	108	174	Feb	172
Firth of Clyde & Loch Ryan	161 <sup>21</sup>						161
Auchenharvie Golf Course	97	98	120	105	73	Feb	99
Montrose Basin	44 <sup>10</sup>	28	35	120	62	Nov	58 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Belfast Lough	833	849 <sup>10</sup>	1,895	1,334 <sup>10</sup>	1,950	Dec	1,372
Carlingford Lough	222	225	177	85	62	Jan	154
Strangford Lough	0	70	90	103 <sup>10</sup>	2	Nov	53
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Rough Firth			3	7	(1)	Nov	5
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Wigtown Bay	0	0	20	0	95	Nov	23

## Lesser Scaup

*Aythya affinis*

Vagrant

Native Range: N America

First recorded by WeBS in 1992/93, Lesser Scaup has featured in the annual report in almost every year since. In 2009/10, the species was seen at six sites. Long-stayers were present at Cardiff Bay

(Jan-Feb) and Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir Loch (Feb-Mar), with other records from Colliford Reservoir and Loch Fitty (Feb) and Hayle Kimbro Pool and Hogganfield Loch (Mar).

## Common Eider (outside Shetland)

*Somateria mollissima mollissima*

International threshold: 12,850

Great Britain threshold: 550

All-Ireland threshold: 30

GB max: 20,257 Sep

NI max: 3,521 Feb

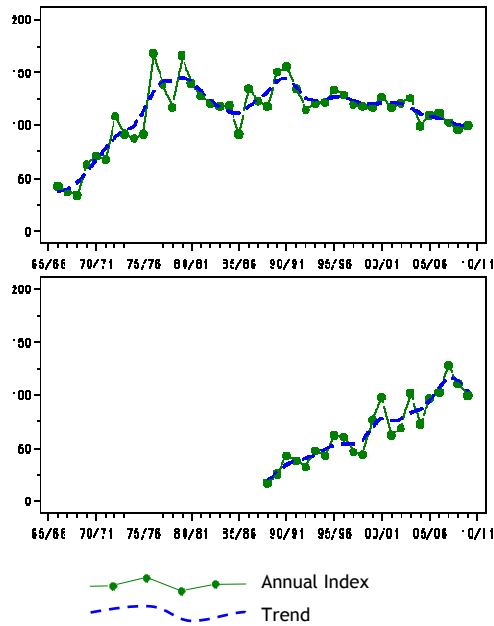


Figure 29.a, Annual indices & trend for Eider (outside Shetland) for GB (above) & NI (below).

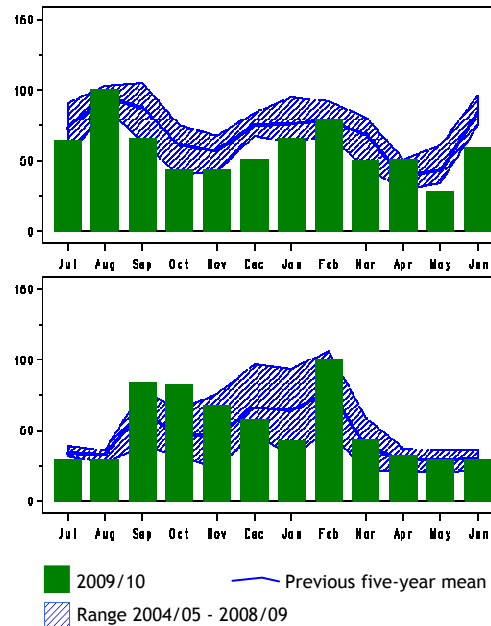


Figure 29.b, Monthly indices for Eider (Except Shetland) for GB (above) & NI (below).

The British trend over the course of the last twenty years has shown a slow, yet consistent, decline in numbers of Eiders. It has been suggested that this could be in response to diminishing food supplies which have extended over much of northern Europe (Coulson 2010). It should also be borne in mind that winter climate change can affect Eiders in the subsequent breeding season (Lehikoinen *et al.* 2006), for example, climatic amelioration is considered to have benefited Eiders in Iceland owing to advancement in laying dates (D'Alba *et al.* 2010).

In 2009/10, a further decline was apparent on the Firth of Clyde where numbers have fallen steadily in recent years. The Firth of Clyde held a peak of over 17,500 birds just ten years ago, but

the census in September 2009 yielded a total of 7,573 birds. The reason appears to be increased mortality within that area; there is no evidence of movement of birds between there and Northern Ireland where numbers have increased in recent years (C. Waltho, pers. comm.). The maximum from Tay Estuary, the second most important site in the table, was also relatively low for the second year in succession.

In contrast, a total of 2,970 Eiders at The Wash in April represents the most ever there, surpassed the previous maximum at the site of 2,546 in January 2003, and elevated the site over the threshold for national importance. Seawatching from the Norfolk coast strongly suggests that these birds originate from continental breeding colonies (F. Cooke, pers. comm.).

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Firth of Clyde	8,055 <sup>14</sup>	9,590 <sup>14</sup>	9,521 <sup>14</sup>	9,271 <sup>14</sup>	7,573 <sup>14</sup>	Sep	8,802
Tay Estuary	11,500	(9,164)	(7,500)	4,000	5,100	Nov	7,453
Aberdeen Bay offshore	5,302 <sup>39</sup>	6,269 <sup>39</sup>					5,786
Forth Estuary	5,047	5,646	4,571	(5,925)	(4,210)	Aug	5,297

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
Morecambe Bay	3,815	3,374	(2,138)	5,534	4,248	Mar	4,243
Inner Firth of Clyde	3,837	4,881	3,960	3,262	2,932	Aug	3,774
Ythan Estuary	3,580	(3,607)	(3,140)	3,351	3,079	Jun	3,404
Gare Loch	2,582 <sup>14</sup>	2,782 <sup>14</sup>					2,682
Montrose Basin	4,322	2,584	2,321	1,099	1,555	Sep	2,376
Moray Firth	1,390 <sup>1</sup>						1,390
Dee Estuary (Scotland)	1,673	1,229	1,411	539	(1,417)	Dec	1,254
Loch Long and Loch Goil	1,458 <sup>14</sup>	796 <sup>14</sup>					1,127
The Wash	557	491	125	1,438	2,970	Apr	1,116 ▲
Scarp to Vatersay offshore	948 <sup>21</sup>						948
Lindisfarne	1,097 <sup>10</sup>	(469)	619	(501)	1,074	Jun	930
Inner Loch Fyne	759 <sup>14</sup>	817 <sup>14</sup>					788
Scapa, Shapinsay & Deer Sounds	720 <sup>21</sup>						720
Holy Loch to Toward Point	766 <sup>14</sup>	634 <sup>14</sup>					700
Loch Ryan	539	(385)	772	429	1,025	Mar	691
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	(270)	538	(111)	(132)	(794)	Nov	666
Moray Coast (Consolidated)	(274)	603	683	939	303	Jan	632
Firth of Clyde & Loch Ryan	589 <sup>21</sup>						589
Gourrock to Largs	370 <sup>14</sup>	755 <sup>14</sup>					563
Duddon Estuary	(263)	(715)	513	525	480	Apr	558 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Belfast Lough	1,839 <sup>10</sup>	1,482	2,675	2,062 <sup>10</sup>	1,529	Dec	1,917
Outer Ards Shoreline	335	976	1,255	491	252	Mar	662
Strangford Lough	480	728	551 <sup>10</sup>	784	613	Oct	631
Lough Foyle	164	528	37	407	452	Oct	318
Larne Lough	67	76	48	106	86	Apr	77
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2009/2010</b>							
Ayr Bay					(23)	Feb	(23)
Killantringan Bay					8	Apr	8
<i>No data for years 2005/06 to 2009/10: Irvine Bay, Lower Loch Long, Otter Ferry, Outer Tay &amp; St Andrews Bay offshore, Sound of Barra (Barra), Scapa Flow</i>							
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain</b>							
Alnmouth to Boulmer	74	143	91	52	647	Sep	201

## Common Eider (Shetland)

*Somateria mollissima*

International threshold: 150  
Great Britain threshold: 55  
All-Ireland threshold: -

GB max: 45 Jul  
NI max: 0

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Bluemull & Colgrave Sounds	992 <sup>9</sup>	558 <sup>9</sup>	1,232 <sup>9</sup>		1,074 <sup>9</sup>	Jan	964
Burra, Trondra & Scalloway Islands	780 <sup>9</sup>		1,014 <sup>9</sup>		830 <sup>9</sup>	Jan	875
South Unst		601 <sup>9</sup>	450 <sup>9</sup>				526
Bressay Sound	265 <sup>9</sup>						265
Rova Head to Kirkabister	312 <sup>9</sup>	158 <sup>9</sup>	136 <sup>9</sup>	163 <sup>9</sup>	204 <sup>9</sup>	Jan	195
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	142 <sup>9</sup>	179 <sup>9</sup>	178 <sup>9</sup>		201 <sup>9</sup>	Jan	175
North Bressay	144 <sup>9</sup>						144
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	216 <sup>9</sup>		53 <sup>9</sup>				135
Gulberwick area	119 <sup>9</sup>						119
South Yell Sound	46 <sup>9</sup>	54 <sup>9</sup>	35 <sup>9</sup>	68 <sup>9</sup>	70 <sup>9</sup>	Jan	55

Following the recommendations of Scott & Rose (1996) and Furness *et al.* (2010), Common Eiders *Somateria mollissima* on Shetland are treated as a separate population from those elsewhere in Britain, and have been listed as such in the WeBS report since 2008/09 (Calbrade *et al.* 2010). However, the taxonomic recommendation

of Furness *et al.* (2010) has not been followed, since BOU has yet to recognise this population as belonging to the subspecies *faeroeensis*.

A full survey of the moulting population undertaken by SOTEAG in July-August 2009 generated a total of 6,040 birds in Shetland (Heubeck & Mellor 2011), thereby yielding a

five year-mean of 5,500 and an associated 1% threshold of 55 birds (Musgrove *et al.* 2011).

Relatively few Eiders are counted at the small number of sites on Shetland which are monitored routinely through WeBS (hence a counted monthly maximum of just 45 birds in July). There is therefore no long-term WeBS trend for Eiders on Shetland.

However, numbers are believed to have declined markedly over the last thirty or so years (Pennington *et al.* 2004), although, over a similar time period, climate change is considered to have benefited Eiders in Iceland (of the subspecies *faroeensis*) as a consequence of an advancement in laying dates (D'Alba *et al.* 2010).

## King Eider

*Somateria spectabilis*

Vagrant

Native range: Arctic

Drakes graced two WeBS sites in the north of Scotland; Burghead on the Moray

Coast (Jan-Feb) and Ythan Estuary (May-June).

## Long-tailed Duck

*Clangula hyemalis*

International threshold: 20,000

Great Britain threshold: 110

All-Ireland threshold: +<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 2,100 Feb

NI max: 13 Mar

Long-tailed Ducks were recorded at 87 WeBS sites around the UK in 2009/10, some 10% fewer sites than in the previous two years. This species usually remains some distance from the coast, making ground-based counts difficult and accurate monitoring problematic. Typically, drawing meaningful conclusions from the totals listed below is fraught with difficulties and probably best avoided. The British maximum was similar to that of the previous year, and hence considerably lower than the longer-term average. This is largely as a result of the relatively low number, albeit typically the highest count of the year, again reported from Moray

Firth. It is unclear the extent to which the recent drop in recorded numbers at Moray Firth may have arisen as a result of reduced coverage, the influence of sea conditions affecting visibility and location of birds on the Core count dates, or a genuine decline in the population of birds using the site. The latter is probably at least partly responsible, as concurrent declines have been noted elsewhere (Musgrove *et al.* 2011). Some degree of shift in range in response to climatic amelioration would be expected, as effects of climatic conditions on seaduck distributions can be profound (Zipkin *et al.* 2010).

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Moray Firth	11,565	10,878	1,904	(690)	(759)		8,116
Scapa Flow, Shapinsay & Deer Sounds	300 <sup>21</sup>						300
Forth Estuary	237	220	163	146	(195)	Jan	192
Melbost Sands (Lewis)	11	121	144	1	610	Sep	177
Bluemull & Colgrave Sounds	160 <sup>9</sup>	83 <sup>9</sup>	118 <sup>9</sup>		299 <sup>9</sup>		165
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	25	0	(8)	(25)	(574)	Feb	156
Rova Head to Kirkabister	165 <sup>9</sup>	79 <sup>9</sup>	119 <sup>9</sup>	125 <sup>9</sup>	164 <sup>9</sup>	Jan	130
Quendale to Virkie	57 <sup>9</sup>		201 <sup>9</sup>				129
Burra, Trondra & Scalloway Islands	120 <sup>9</sup>		139 <sup>9</sup>		118 <sup>9</sup>		126
South Yell Sound	169 <sup>9</sup>	138 <sup>9</sup>	100 <sup>9</sup>	164 <sup>9</sup>	47 <sup>9</sup>	Jan	124
Loch of Stenness	96	107	130	89	50	Jan	94
Scarp to Vatersay offshore	75 <sup>21</sup>						75
Thurso Bay	30	200	30	26	20	Feb	61
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Burghead Bay: Burghead - Findhorn			15	70	62	Feb	49
Lunan Bay	24	19	8	(140)	50	Jan	48

<sup>†</sup> as few sites surpass the British threshold, sites with mean peak counts of 50+ are also listed.

Given on-going pressure from coastal and offshore developments and the potential effects of climate change on marine ecosystems, the need for regular and comprehensive surveys of wintering seaducks, divers and grebes around the UK has arguably never been greater. Such surveys would assist in estimating populations and identifying the spatial and temporal distribution around the coastline.

Away from Moray Firth, the highest count of Long-tailed Ducks in 2009/10 was 610 at Melbost Sands (Lewis), an indication of the numbers potentially present along the extensive stretches of the west coast of Scotland not regularly covered through WeBS. Outside Scotland, the highest counts were 43 between Seahouses and Budle Bay in December and 15 on North Norfolk Coast in January. Typically a small number of singles were seen at scattered inland sites.

## Common Scoter

*Melanitta nigra*

International threshold: 16,000  
Great Britain threshold: 1,000<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: 230

GB max: 9,910 Jan  
NI max: 719 Feb

Flocks of Common Scoter offshore are relatively poorly monitored by WeBS. In addition to aggregations recorded through the survey, this annual report attempts to collate as much supplementary data as possible; in recent years, this has tended to be collected during aerial surveys aimed specifically at monitoring this species.

It was a remarkable winter for Common Scoters in Carmarthen Bay, classified as a marine SPA, with a record-breaking 43,000 birds present. The cold weather during the midwinter period probably contributed to the size of the flock, with birds from Scandinavia likely to have been displaced to then settle in warmer waters off Wales.

Numbers recorded specifically during WeBS Core counts tend to be highly

dependent on weather and the associated viewing conditions at the key sites. For the fourth year running the highest Core count was from North Norfolk Coast, 6,679 birds in March. Meanwhile, away from the six sites surpassing the revised threshold for national importance (1,000 birds), notably higher maxima than usual were noted at Duddon Estuary, Ribble Estuary and offshore between Seahouses and Budle Bay. It is not known the extent to which the apparent increases at these sites may be attributable to changes in counting effort.

A small number of birds were seen at scattered inland sites, including six at Ranworth & Cockshoot Broads in July.

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 500 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Carmarthen Bay	20,287 <sup>28</sup>	14,412 <sup>28</sup>	6,189 <sup>28</sup>	22,930 <sup>29</sup>	43,000 <sup>29</sup>	Jan	21,364
Moray Firth	6,842	1,908	2,494	683	(215)	Jan	2,982
North Norfolk Coast	6,830	4,960	3,530	2,040	6,679	Mar	4,808
Alt Estuary	4,300	3,288	850	310	2,920	Jan	2,334
Towyn to Llanddulas	(1,680)	1,800	1,600	(23)	2,076	Feb	1,825
Forth Estuary	1,495	623	936	1,103	2,808	Jun	1,393
The Wash	100	1,810	207	641	711	Apr	694
St Andrews Bay	447	380 <sup>43</sup>	700 <sup>43</sup>	1,000 <sup>43</sup>			632
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	40	2,009	297	141	168	Nov	531
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Dundrum Bay				1,637	(719)	Feb	1,637
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2009/10 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Duddon Estuary	0	5	9	3	2,000	Dec	403
Ribble Estuary	(40)	1	20	(514)	1,071	Sep	402
Seahouses to Budle Point	48	(26)	28	140	1,000	Dec	304
Glyne Gap	117	(533)	544	(480)	610 <sup>6</sup>	Dec	457
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	603	(36)	500	300	590	Sep	498
Spittal to Cocklawburn	34	1	86	390	560	Nov	214
Lindisfarne	13 <sup>10</sup>	(6)	(15)	(1)	500	Jan	257

<sup>†</sup> as few sites surpass the British threshold (1,000), sites with mean peak counts of 500+ are also listed.