

## Ruddy Shelduck

*Tadorna ferruginea*

Escape and possible vagrant  
Native Range: Asia, N Africa, SE Europe

Ruddy Shelducks were noted at 14 sites during the course of 2008/09, with a monthly peak of four birds in September. Sightings included one at Barcraigs

Reservoir in March and two at Montrose Basin in June; the first in Scotland since July 2005 and only the 6th-7th WeBS records there.

## Shelduck

*Tadorna tadorna*

GB max: 51,040 Jan  
NI max: 5,193 Jan

International threshold: 3,000  
Great Britain threshold: 782  
All-Ireland threshold: 150

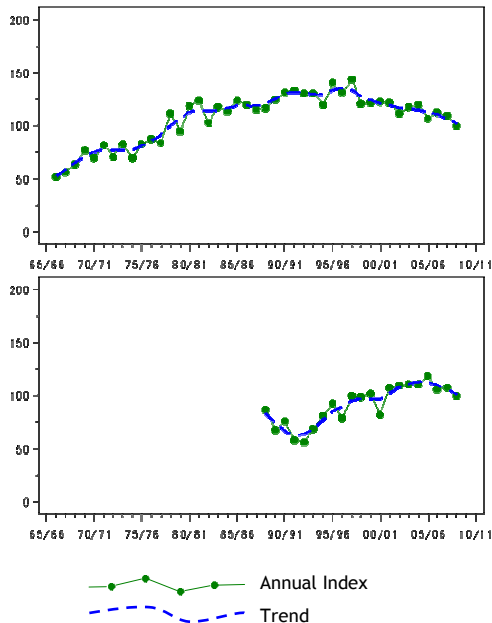


Figure 17.a, Annual indices & trend for Shelduck for GB (above) & NI (below).

Since reaching a peak in the mid 1990s, the annual indices for Shelduck in Britain have generally been in decline since. At the same time as this decrease, numbers in The Netherlands have increased (Hustings *et al.* 2009); whether the two are linked is not known.

The peak total during the year, 51,040 in January, was very similar to the maximum in 2007/08. However scrutiny of the monthly indices indicates that January was the only month in the winter period when numbers were near average compared to the previous five years. Consequently, 2008/09 saw a continuation of the downward trend, leaving the species at a comparable status to that of the late 1970s.

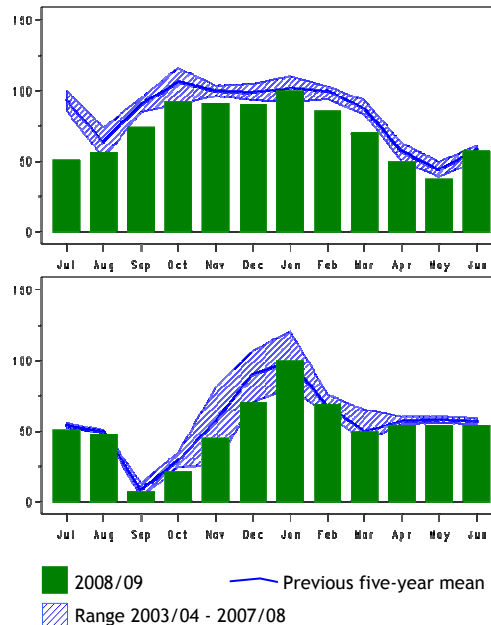


Figure 17.b, Monthly indices for Shelduck for GB (above) & NI (below).



Shelducks (Jill Pakenham)

Nine sites in Britain are of international importance for Shelducks. These no longer include Ribble Estuary, where counts have been below the threshold for the past four

years. Continuing reduced coverage at Mersey Estuary, traditionally the most important site in the UK where large concentrations of Shelducks gather to moult in late summer, has now resulted in incomplete counts in the last three years. As a consequence, the peak site count in 2008/09 was 9,457 at Dee Estuary in October, itself below average for the site.

A further drop in numbers was noted at The Wash, where a high of 6,046 birds in January represents the lowest peak there since complete coverage of the site. This fall, as well as earlier declines of Oystercatcher and Knot, has been linked to the over-exploitation of the cockle and

mussel fisheries there (Atkinson *et al.* 2010).

Peak counts of Shelducks were generally close to or slightly below average at most other important locations. The only site to report a notable rise in numbers was Wigtown Bay, where as a consequence the five-year mean rose above the threshold of national importance for the first time.

In Northern Ireland, site peaks were typical, although the maximum at Belfast Lough was the highest Core count since an unprecedented influx in early 1996 (when the highest ever count in Northern Ireland, of 1,062, was made), while the 931 birds at Larne Lough in January is the most ever there.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Mersey Estuary	13,420	15,605	(16,721)	(10,644)	(4,237)	Aug	15,249
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	13,334	(8,872)	10,869	9,425	9,457	Oct	10,771
Morecambe Bay	7,728	(6,609)	8,880	4,755	(8,409)	Oct	7,443
The Wash	7,451	6,904	6,855	6,656	6,046	Jan	6,782
Humber Estuary	(4,188)	(5,223)	4,823	5,804	(2,892)	Sep	5,314
Strangford Lough	3,801	4,451 <sup>11</sup>	3,413 <sup>11</sup>	6,084 <sup>11</sup>	5,583 <sup>11</sup>	Nov	4,666
Severn Estuary	(3,460)	4,182	3,711	(5,414)	3,826	Nov	4,283
Forth Estuary	3,164 <sup>12</sup>	3,063	(3,546)	3,283	2,774	Sep	3,166
Solway Estuary	5,359	1,863	2,888	1,902	(708)	Nov	3,003
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Ribble Estuary	3,850	2,935	2,577	2,216	2,878	Jun	2,891 ▼
Stour Estuary	(2,149)	(1,421)	1,641	2,402	3,499 <sup>11</sup>	Jan	2,514
Blackwater Estuary	2,073	(1,828)	2,623	(2,369)	2,642	Dec	2,446
Medway Estuary	2,360 <sup>11</sup>	1,949	(1,290)	(1,631)	(1,604)	Jan	2,155
Thames Estuary	2,318	1,968	1,870	2,099	(1,759)	Jan	2,064
Swale Estuary	2,207	2,140	1,406	2,003	1,926	Jan	1,936
Hamford Water	1,951	1,493	(1,496)	2,450	1,838	Jan	1,933
Lindisfarne	1,773 <sup>11</sup>	1,180 <sup>11</sup>	1,868	(1,406)	(2,302)	Jan	1,781
Poole Harbour	1,547	(1,857)	(1,043)	(788)	(899)	Jan	1,702
North Norfolk Coast	1,110	1,283	1,361	1,115	981	Mar	1,170
WWT Martin Mere	1,510 <sup>12</sup>	965	1,075	780	1,290	Jan	1,124
Alde Complex	1,025	925	1,181	1,120	1,041	Mar	1,058
Crouch-Roach Estuary	1,661 <sup>11</sup>	(397)	577	823	1,029	Jan	1,023
Montrose Basin	690	1,239 <sup>11</sup>	(1,106)	(1,098)	806	Dec	988
Wigtown Bay	705	750	751	880	1,017	Nov	821 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Larne Lough	808	880	832	486	931	Jan	787
Carlingford Lough	452	560	(349)	477	434	Jan	481
Belfast Lough	544 <sup>13</sup>	347 <sup>11</sup>	(378)	265	691	Feb	462
Lough Foyle	250	392	264	322	364	Jan	318
Dundrum Inner Bay	330	96	70	188	109	Feb	159
Loughs Neagh and Beg	260	98	124	95	193	Mar	154
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09</b>							
Deben Estuary	883	707	837	754	554	Feb	747
Colne Estuary	(701)	(471)	(326)	(698)	(406)	Mar	(701)
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain</b>							
Burry Inlet	804	637	690	780	(962)	Dec	775
Duddon Estuary	767	737	363	498	790	Mar	631
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland</b>							
Outer Ards Shoreline	30	42	42	35	171	Mar	64

## Muscovy Duck

*Cairina moschata*

Escape

Native Range: S America

Muscovys were recorded at 29 sites in 2008/09, five fewer than the previous year, with peak counts of 14 at Hesketh Park Lake and Brayford Pool, Lincoln. Just a single was noted at Fort Henry Ponds &

Exton Park Lakes, where numbers appear to have crashed; the site consistently provided the highest counts up until 2007/08. Reasons for the decline are unclear.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park Lakes	14	25	43	5	1	Sep	18
Brayford Pool Lincoln		0	26	17	14	Oct	14
Hesketh Park Lake				11	14	Jan	13
High Batts Recording Area	8						8
Dane Valley: Holmes Chapel to Swettenham			0	14	(0)		7
Nafferton Mere	6	5	5	5	9	Feb	6
Derwent Water	11	7	5	3	2	Nov	6
Wilderness Pond				3	8	Aug	6
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Ladyburn Lake (Druridge Bay CP)	0	0	0	0	7	Nov	1

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

## Wood Duck

*Aix sponsa*

Escape

Native Range: N America

Wood Ducks were seen at nine sites in 2008/09, including the regular site of Stanton Lake where up to three were

present throughout. All other records were of singles, including a drake at Loch of Brow (Shetland) in April-May.

## Mandarin Duck

*Aix galericulata*

Naturalised introduction

Native Range: E Asia

GB max: 418 Jan  
NI max: 0 0

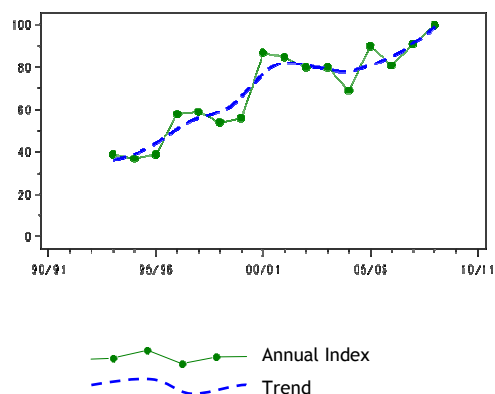


Figure 18.a, Annual indices & trend for Mandarin Duck for GB.

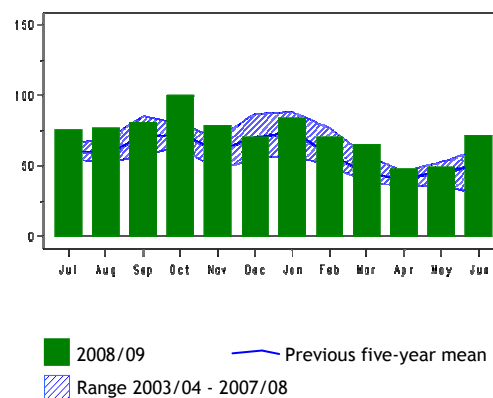


Figure 18.b, Monthly indices for Mandarin Duck for GB.

Records of Mandarin Ducks were received from 161 sites in 2008/09, 22% more than the previous year, and generated a mid-winter peak of 418 birds in January.

However, annual variation in distribution and numbers tends to result from year-to-year changes in coverage of the species' favoured habitats, namely small wooded

lakes and ponds. Furthermore, this species can be particularly unobtrusive, and counts can vary depending on birds' behaviour.

Outside England, Mandarin Ducks were seen at three sites in Wales, three on the Channel Islands and two in Scotland; the latter involving long-staying birds at Ugie Estuary and Culzean Pond.

In 2008/09, counts exceeding 50 birds were received from five sites. These included Forest of Dean Ponds, the UK's traditional stronghold for the species, and

Stockgrove Country Park and Brookleys Lake, both sites where numbers have risen sharply in recent years at least partly as a result of improved coverage.

Supplementary data from sites not routinely counted each month through WeBS (as was the case with Brookleys Lake prior to 2009/10) are welcomed in order to help populate the table below, and thereby derive an improved picture of the species' distribution and abundance in the UK.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Forest of Dean Ponds	221 <sup>16</sup>	66 <sup>16</sup>	236 <sup>13</sup>		232 <sup>13</sup>	Nov	189
Bradley Pools	65	144					105
Headley Mill Pond	23	132	15	64	28	Feb	52
Bough Beech Reservoir	60 <sup>33</sup>	45 <sup>33</sup>	60 <sup>13</sup>	42	48	Dec	51
Wraysbury Pond	51	48	51 <sup>13</sup>	53			51
Dee Flood Meadows	42	36	83	48	35	Oct	49
Arun Valley	37	47	25	53	71	Aug	47
Darwell Reservoir	13	58	74	33	41	Oct	44
Busbridge Lakes			41	31	52	Oct	41
Brookleys Lake		4 <sup>56</sup>	11 <sup>56</sup>	98 <sup>56</sup>	51 <sup>56</sup>	Dec	41
Connaught Water (Epping Forest)	32	35	44	40	38	Jul	38
Cuttmill Ponds	61	66	27	22	8	Jun	37
Stockgrove Country Park				3	67	Nov	35
Harewood Lake	31	15		25	44	Oct	29
Strawberry Hill Ponds	15	32	44	33	17	Jan	28
Linacre Reservoirs	23	23	25	35	23	Sep	26
Osterley Park Lakes	31	18	14	21	37	Jun	24
Passfield Pond	16	15	30	18	18	Sep	19
Kedleston Park Lake	14	24					19
Allestree Park Lakes	5	37	16				19
Fonthill Lake	38	22	4	10	4	Jan	16
Panshanger Estate	11	16	8	19	19	Jan	15
Blatherwyke Lake	2	0	3	21	48	Nov	15
Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve			9	23	11	Oct	14
Hampstead and Highgate Ponds	8	13	13	19	16	Jan	14
Woburn Park Lakes	6	18	11	11	20	Jul	13
Eversley Cross & Yateley Gravel Pits	25	4	8	21	4	Dec	12
Powdermill Reservoir	6	7	18	22	6	Oct	12
Sutton Place	20	4					12
Stibbington GP	12						12
River Test: Broadlands Estate	9	15	13	10	10 <sup>13</sup>	Jan	11
Pen Ponds			17	11	5	Jun	11
Blackbrook Reservoir	2	17	16	13	8	Feb	11
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Grimsthorpe Lake	0	0	10	3	25	Feb	8
Warnham Mill Pond	0	1	8	2	22	Dec	7
Ardingly Reservoir	0	2	12	9	20	Jan	9
Gatton Park	4	5	4	18	15	Sep	9
Weirwood Reservoir	0	0	0	18	15	Oct	7
Chatsworth Park Lakes	4	0	0	5	14	Oct	5
R.Kennet: Ramsbury to Chilton Foliat	0	(0)	0	8	13	Oct	5
Plym Estuary	0	0	2	2	13	Sep	3
Bewl Water	0	0	2	1	13	Jan	3
Aldenham Reservoir	5	11	12	3	11	Nov	8
Stratfield Saye	7	5	6	13	10	Dec	8
Drakelow Gravel Pit	0	1	8	3	10	Oct	4

<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

## Wigeon

*Anas penelope*

GB max: 359,236 Dec  
NI max: 4,769 Oct

International threshold: 15,000  
Great Britain threshold: 4,060  
All-Ireland threshold: 1,250

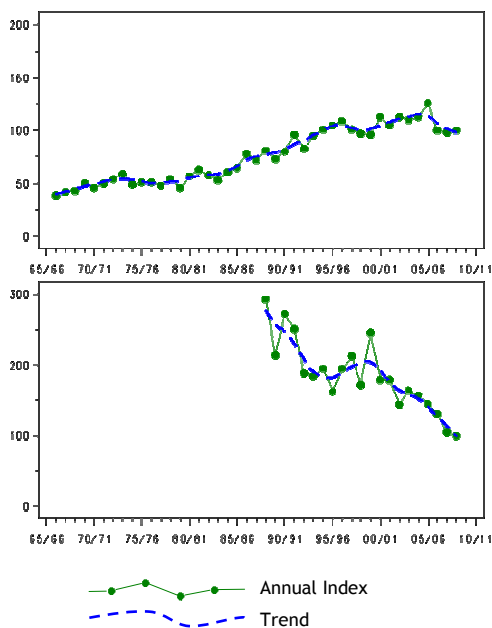


Figure 19.a, Annual indices & trend for Wigeon for GB (above) & NI (below).

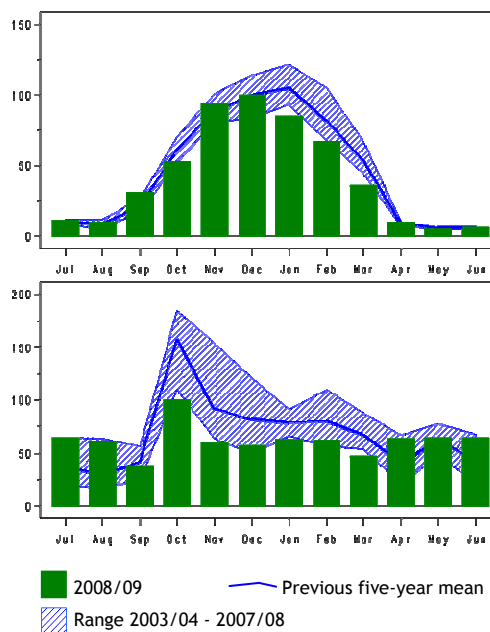


Figure 19.b, Monthly indices for Wigeon for GB (above) & NI (below).

Following the record high reached in 2005/06, the annual index for Wigeon has been nearly 10% lower during the last three years - placing the species at the same level of abundance as in the mid 1990s, when on its upward trend. In Northern Ireland, where the Wigeon population continues to be in freefall, the annual index fell for the sixth year in succession. Not only did the index there its lowest ever value, but below average numbers were present throughout the winter period and monthly maxima at all four sites of All-Ireland importance were significantly below five-year averages.

Wigeon wintering in Great Britain largely comprise birds breeding in Scandinavia, northern Europe and eastern Russia. It would therefore be expected that this species may have responded to recent mild winters by showing a shift in winter distribution towards the core of the breeding range, as illustrated for waders by Maclean *et al.* (2008). This may be supported by the steep decline in Northern Ireland as well as the apparent marked drop

in Britain during the second part of the winter, where numbers were well below average in January, February and March. However, indications from The Netherlands are that wintering numbers may have also fallen there in the last three to four years (Hustings *et al.* 2009). Therefore, any short-stopping is presumably leaving birds further north and east than there too; perhaps, although not necessarily, linked to this, record numbers have recently been recorded in Switzerland (Keller & Burkhardt 2010) and the Czech Republic (Musilova *et al.* 2009).

In an historical context however, the wintering population of Wigeon in the UK remains high. The key site, Ribble Estuary, continues to support exceptionally high numbers; the monthly maximum of 101,594 noted in November is the only the third time that a single WeBS count of Wigeon has reached six figures. Unsurprisingly, the previous two such counts emanate from the same site, the highest of which was 110,278 in December 1994. Maxima at three other sites of international importance (Ouse

Washes, Somerset Levels and Breydon Water & Berney Marshes) were close to recent averages in 2008/09. However, a drop in the peak count from North Norfolk Coast, for a second successive year, brought that site's five-year mean below the international threshold of 15,000 birds for the first time. This follows a similar fall

in status experienced by Swale Estuary and Lindisfarne in 2007/08. Among the other sites of national importance, there were relatively low peaks, all approximately half of what would be expected at Lower Derwent Ings, Thames Estuary and Dungeness & Rye Bay.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Ribble Estuary	86,157	79,659	(57,385)	85,964	101,594	Nov	88,344
Ouse Washes	34,853 <sup>13</sup>	55,816	26,984	19,800	(29,658)	Jan	34,363
Somerset Levels	15,346	18,142	27,391	28,882	21,186	Feb	22,189
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	19,019	22,134	18,184 <sup>13</sup>	21,400 <sup>13</sup>	21,074 <sup>13</sup>	Dec	20,362
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
North Norfolk Coast	17,444	18,426	16,750	11,998	10,304	Jan	14,984 ▼
Lindisfarne	15,960	13,614	10,840	(12,000)	10,194	Sep	12,652
Dornoch Firth	14,861	13,811	9,763	11,115	(12,303)	Oct	12,388
Swale Estuary	13,832	16,651	7,041	11,560	12,134	Jan	12,244
Cromarty Firth	13,487	12,652	8,510	10,510	(9,109)	Oct	11,290
Lower Derwent Ings	10,215	14,320	11,710	11,600	5,075	Nov	10,584
Severn Estuary	8,058	6,249	9,343	10,008	8,672 <sup>11</sup>	Jan	8,466
Cleddau Estuary	8,468	9,441	7,643	7,130	7,429	Nov	8,022
Morecambe Bay	8,095	8,929	(6,201)	5,654	9,110	Dec	7,947
Nene Washes	4,998	5,380	8,180	10,497	9,096	Mar	7,630
Alde Complex	7,274	7,182	8,280	6,337	5,345	Jan	6,884
Blackwater Estuary	7,385	6,708	6,580	5,667	5,836	Nov	6,435
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	5,595	6,078	5,863	(7,666)	6,555	Jan	6,351
Middle Yare Marshes	7,846	6,291	3,890	6,507	5,511	Dec	6,009
The Wash	3,444	5,887	6,612	8,961	5,124	Dec	6,006
Abberton Reservoir	573	13,954	654	6,572	5,815	Oct	5,514
Thames Estuary	4,343	6,449	3,566	9,293	3,218	Feb	5,374
Dungeness and Rye Bay	4,937	6,285	5,193	4,010	2,711	Jan	4,627
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	2,464	6,695	5,797	(2,461)	1,776	Dec	4,183
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Lough Foyle	4,589	6,559	5,406	2,835	3,118	Oct	4,501
Strangford Lough	3,281	2,636	3,476	1,582	1,540	Nov	2,503
Loughs Neagh and Beg	3,611	2,701	1,878	1,614	1,427	Jan	2,246
Upper Lough Erne	1,284	631	1,229	981	369	Feb	899
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain</b>							
Stour Estuary	2,564	2,418	2,949	2,366	4,329 <sup>11</sup>	Feb	2,925
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09</b>							
Montrose Basin	(4,147)	5,065	3,047	3,608	3,851	Nov	3,944
Fleet and Wey	4,469	6,122	3,087	2,285	3,089	Dec	3,810
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland</b>							
Larne Lough	352	642	390	437	1,088	Dec	582

## American Wigeon

*Anas americana*

Vagrant

Native Range: N & C America

Drakes were recorded at three sites in Scotland; St Johns Loch in October, Loch

Bee in December, and Loch of Tankerness in March.

## Chiloe Wigeon

*Anas sibilatrix*

Escape

Native Range: S America

Chiloe Wigeons were noted at eight sites; all were singles with the exception of five

at Hereford Quarry in August and two at Gnoll Ponds in December.

## Falcated Duck

*Anas falcata*

Escape and possible vagrant  
Native Range: Asia

A presumed escaped Falcated Duck was at Clifford Hill Gravel Pits in March and

April, the third year in a row that this species has been recorded through WeBS.

## Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

GB max: 19,596 Jan  
NI max: 182 Mar

International threshold: 600  
Great Britain threshold: 171  
All-Ireland threshold: 20\*

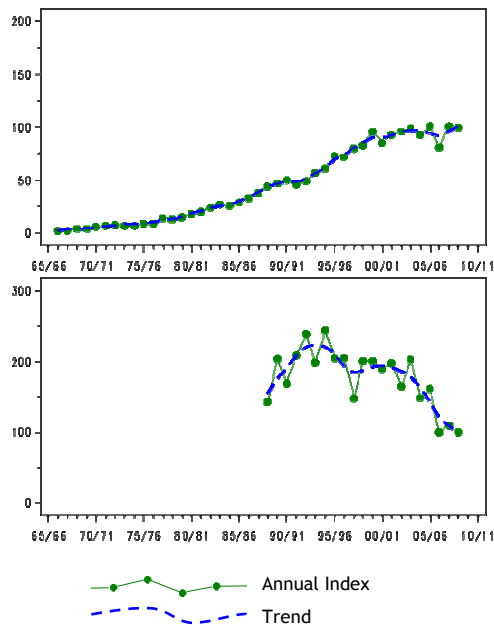


Figure 20.a, Annual indices & trend for Gadwall for GB (above) & NI (below).

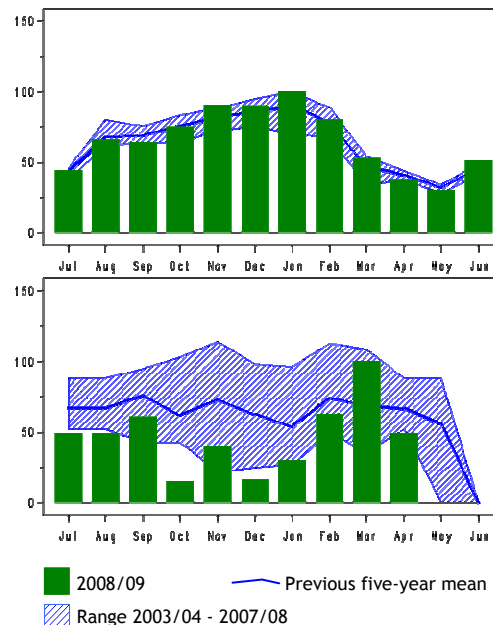


Figure 20.b, Monthly indices for Gadwall for GB (above) & NI (below).

Numbers of Gadwall have risen considerably across the central belt of Europe in the last twenty to thirty years, with an especially marked rise experienced in Britain during the 1980s and 1990s. Other European countries also experiencing notable increases include France (Fouque *et al.* 2009), The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009), Switzerland (Keller & Burkhardt 2010) and Slovakia (Slabeyova *et al.* 2009) (although the latter two countries support birds from the separate Central European population).

Following 2008/09, six sites in the UK continued to be of international importance for Gadwall. The top two sites, Ouse Washes and Rutland Water, both hosted peak numbers in excess of 1,500 birds. The count from Rutland is the highest since

September 1999, a time which marked the end of a period of several years during which annual peaks in excess of 1,000 were the norm for the site. Such counts included the highest ever recorded through WeBS; 2,181 individuals in November 1997. Maxima were typical of recent years at the four other sites of international importance; River Avon (Fordingbridge to Ringwood), Lee Valley Gravel Pits, Somerset Levels and Abberton Reservoir.

A further 38 sites are currently classified as nationally important, virtually all of which held peak numbers in 2008/09 that were close to their respective five-year average. In eastern England, above average counts included all-time highs at Ouse Fen & Pits in February and North Norfolk Coast in June, the latter reflecting the increasing

breeding population there (Holling *et al.* 2009). Of sites faring less well, the sharp falls noted at Blagdon Lake and Fairburn Ings during the previous year were not repeated in 2008/09, although Tring Reservoirs appears to have hosted far fewer Gadwalls than normal (as was the case with most wildfowl at the site).

The relatively small population of Gadwall in Northern Ireland, most of which are found at Loughs Neagh & Beg and Strangford Lough, was similar to the past few years, but longer term is another example of a duck species showing a sharp decline over the past decade.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Ouse Washes	1,799 <sup>13</sup>	2,289 <sup>13</sup>	220	970	1,508	Mar	1,357
Rutland Water	491	670	904	992	1,520	Oct	915
R.Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood	708	678	755	725	653	Feb	704
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	622	878	518	703	706	Jan	685
Somerset Levels	729	704	424	706	614	Nov	635
Abberton Reservoir	425	1,024	(535)	483	493	Sep	606
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Thames Estuary	471	377	451	(320)	(453)	Jan	438
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	400	378	553	387	442	Nov	432
Minsmere	309	398	410	468	388	Jul	395
Tees Estuary	289	(332)	433	464	342	Oct	382
Orwell Estuary	234 <sup>11</sup>	347 <sup>11</sup>	340 <sup>11</sup>	268	722 <sup>11</sup>	Jan	382
Dungeness and Rye Bay	340	268	362	485	417	Dec	374
Cotswold Water Park (West)	327	427	330	(217)	(395)	Jan	370
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	307	(304)	425	437	282	Aug	363
Loch Leven	360	392	309	284	345 <sup>13</sup>	Sep	338
Pitsford Reservoir	124	482	444	264	352	Aug	333
Woolston Eyes	470	196	(84)	397	192	Jan	314
North Norfolk Coast	231	262	186	314	388	Jun	276
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(69)	(74)	(131)	(108)	275	Nov	275
Little Paxton Gravel Pits	225	315	215	324	280	Feb	272
Eversley Cross & Yateley Gravel Pits	256	315	226	216	243	Jan	251
Hickling Broad	216	340	356		76	Nov	247
Severn Estuary	194	297	241	240	(197)	Dec	243
Alton Water	182	495	166	109	226	Jan	236
Fairburn Ings		278	266	63	337	Jun	236
Burghfield Gravel Pits	255	156	261	206	290	Dec	234
North Warren and Thorpeness Mere	353	170 <sup>13</sup>	220	218	178	Dec	228
Chew Valley Lake	315	200	150	245	210	Jun	224
Ouse Fen and Pits (Hanson/RSPB)	(104)	152	(49)	203	317	Feb	224
Hornsea Mere	235	315	162	215	190	Oct	223
Alde Complex	352	172	171	221	157	Dec	215
Stodmarsh	217	252	136	250	183	Dec	208
Theale Gravel Pits	(86)	(169)	(207)	205	181	Dec	198
Potteric Carr	(36)	(216)	182	176	209	Oct	196
Blackwater Estuary	126	66	231	395	154	Feb	194
Ditchford Gravel Pits	180	178	184	176	253	Feb	194
Leighton Moss	186	155	205	246	146	Feb	188 ▲
Buckden and Stirtloe Pits					187	Oct	187 ▲
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	706	21	2	0			182
Redgrave Lake			253	75	214	Dec	181 ▲
Humber Estuary	(82)	(112)	(179)	(144)	178	Jan	179 ▲
Earls Barton Gravel Pits	(146)	73	281	226	128	Dec	177
Edderthorpe Flash			237	81	200	Sep	173 ▲
Lower Derwent Ings	147	108	319	171	114	Oct	172
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	130	172	143	132	164	Mar	148
Strangford Lough	48	113 <sup>11</sup>	68 <sup>11</sup>	86 <sup>11</sup>	60 <sup>11</sup>	Nov	75
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09</b>							
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	144	160	130	176	239	Jan	170
Welbeck Estate	(98)	186	215	(183)	94	Dec	170
Meadow Lane Gravel Pits	153	354	165		2 <sup>13</sup>	Mar	169
Chichester Gravel Pits	176	149	148	186	(4)	Mar	165



	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Tring Reservoirs	252	107	238	151	41	Feb	158
Blagdon Lake	204	287	52	73	(119)	Jul	154
Lakenheath Fen	139	113	189	151	108	Sep	140
Thrapston Gravel Pits					102	Oct	102
Hoveton Great Broad		49	13	117			60
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain</b>							
Grafham Water	64	109	125		383	Jan	170
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	144	160	130	176	239	Jan	170
Whitlingham Country Park	72	149	111	114	230 <sup>13</sup>	Jan	135
Tattershall Pits	30	95	112	160	220	Oct	123
Old Moor	36	168	165	239	208	Aug	163
Swale Estuary	98	86	(82)	(65)	(198)	Jan	127
Bewl Water	225 <sup>13</sup>	61	89	158	183	Jan	143
Fort Henry Ponds & Exton Park Lakes	133	84	79	95	171	Jan	112

## Baikal Teal

*Anas formosa*

Escape and possible vagrant  
Native Range: E Asia

A drake, or possible hybrid (*per* www.birdguides.com), was reported at Ditchford Gravel Pits in November. There

have been two previous WeBS records of this species, including one at Minsmere in 2001; considered to be a genuine vagrant.

## Madagascar Teal

*Anas bernieri*

Escape  
Native Range: Madagascar

The first WeBS record of this species was at Beddington Sewage Farm in September.

## Eurasian Teal

*Anas crecca*

International threshold: 5,000  
Great Britain threshold: 1,920  
All-Ireland threshold: 450

GB max: 144,200 Dec  
NI max: 5,179 Dec

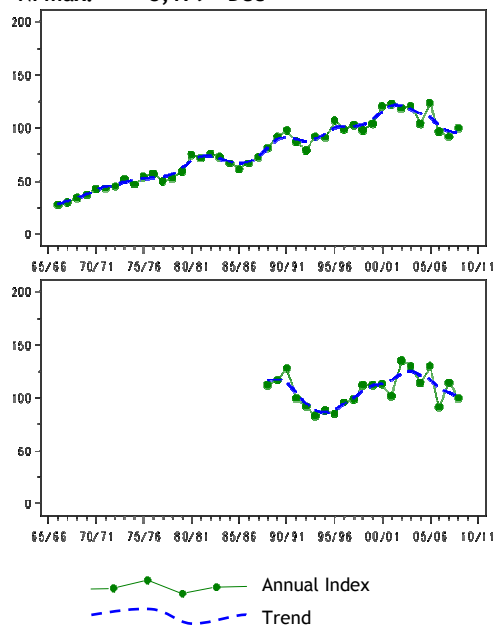


Figure 21.a, Annual indices & trend for Teal for GB (above) & NI (below).

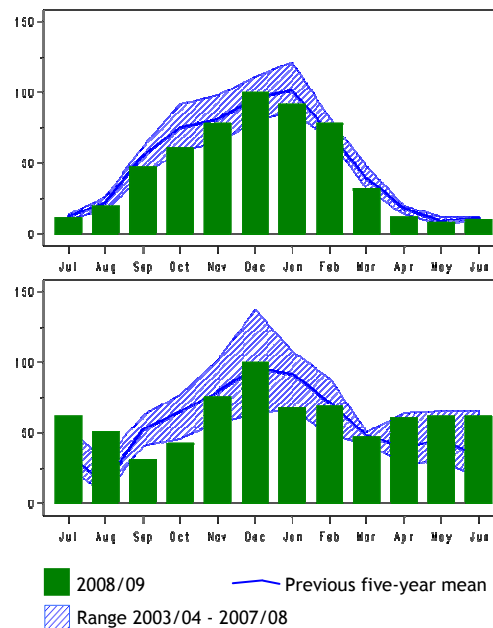


Figure 21.b, Monthly indices for Teal for GB (above) & NI (below).

The index for Teal in Britain in 2008/09 showed a slight improvement on the most recent two years, but is still below the values reached during the high point in the early 2000s.

Six sites in the UK held internationally important numbers of Teal in 2008/09 and 24 surpassed the national importance threshold. The principal site is Somerset Levels where the peak of more than 24,000 birds in February has only ever been surpassed on three previous occasions in WeBS history. These include the all-time record of 33,390 there in January 2003. At the other major sites where complete coverage was attained, peak numbers during Core counts were generally close to or slightly below average.

Among the nationally important sites, a notable increase in numbers was reported from Morecambe Bay, where the counts during November (4,767) and December (7,317) were very high compared to normal for the site. The previous highest monthly maximum there was 3,699 in November 2004. Similarly, the peak Core count from Hamford Water of 5,933 was the highest for

five years and significantly greater than the longer term average for the site. Moreover, Low Tide counts at the site in January yielded a very high total of 10,684 birds; considered to be attributable to a cold weather influx (J. Novorol, pers. comm.). In contrast, declines in peak totals were noted at a small number of locations, most strikingly at Abberton Reservoir where a peak of just 872 birds represents the lowest since 2002/03.

The current trend in Northern Ireland suggests a decline in numbers. At the three most important sites, peak numbers fell at both Strangford Lough and Loughs Neagh & Beg (c.f. Mallard), but were somewhat higher at Lough Foyle.

Radio-tracking studies in France have shown that wintering Teal are more prone to leave nocturnal roosts for foraging than other dabbling species, and as a result tend to have patchier home ranges and travel further distances while at a particular site (Legagneux *et al.* 2009). Theoretically, this could have associated implications on the expected variation between visits in numbers of birds counted at adjacent sites.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Somerset Levels	7,161	8,719	21,581	17,663	24,029	Feb	15,831
Ribble Estuary	8,688	9,571	(6,959)	8,045	6,072	Nov	8,094
Ouse Washes	7,014 <sup>13</sup>	9,772	4,333 <sup>13</sup>	3,135	5,351	Jan	5,921
Mersey Estuary	6,023	9,200 <sup>11</sup>	2,249	(2,072)	(2,000)	Dec	5,824
Loch Leven	6,060	4,840	2,527	4,920	7,580 <sup>13</sup>	Sep	5,185 ▲
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Swale Estuary	4,187	(5,783)	(3,728)	4,470	5,485	Jan	4,981
Severn Estuary	(3,466)	5,293	4,233	5,428	4,710	Jan	4,916
Thames Estuary	5,433	5,361	3,940	(3,041)	(3,496)	Jan	4,911 ▼
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	4,733	2,372	3,620 <sup>13</sup>	5,612 <sup>13</sup>	3,216 <sup>13</sup>	Dec	3,911
Hamford Water	2,164	3,276	(1,969)	3,255	10,684 <sup>11</sup>	Jan	4,845
North Norfolk Coast	3,730	4,994	3,638	3,278 <sup>11</sup>	3,524	Dec	3,833
Morecambe Bay	(3,699)	2,538	2,338	2,716	7,327	Dec	3,730
Lower Derwent Ings	3,476	4,479	4,221	3,714	2,505	Oct	3,679
Alde Complex	3,028	3,913	3,560	3,334	3,961	Dec	3,559
WWT Martin Mere	8,300	3,800	1,430	1,200	2,005	Oct	3,347
Abberton Reservoir	1,224	7,741	2,662	3,410	872	Oct	3,182
Blackwater Estuary	(2,064)	2,751	(2,786)	(2,207)	(4,002)	Feb	3,180
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	2,752	2,854	4,429	2,144	3,129 <sup>11</sup>	Nov	3,062
Hickling Broad	2,400	4,550	2,000		3,150	Oct	3,025
Holburn Moss	3,000						3,000
Humber Estuary	2,349	(3,739)	(2,009)	2,137	3,234	Nov	2,865
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	3,397	2,995	(1,890)	(2,208)	1,944	Jan	2,779
The Wash	2,590	4,107	2,138	2,537	2,308	Dec	2,736
Mersehead RSPB Reserve	2,900		3,900	1,045			2,615
Solway Estuary	1,941	3,152	(2,265)	(839)	(1,648)	Jan	2,547
Stodmarsh	2,500	3,633	831	2,508	1,100	Nov	2,114
Forth Estuary	1,880	2,130	2,531	1,877	2,130	Dec	2,110
Crouch-Roach Estuary	2,981 <sup>11</sup>	(1,926)	1,455	(1,900)	1,754	Nov	2,063
Arun Valley	1,229	2,390	2,129	(2,343)	1,985	Nov	2,015

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Strangford Lough	2,015	2,573	1,724	1,752	1,347	Dec	1,882
Lough Foyle	1,038	1,405	915	1,562	2,000	Dec	1,384
Loughs Neagh and Beg	2,019	1,427	1,049	1,297	889	Feb	1,336
Carlingford Lough	647	710	440	565	571	Jan	587
Belfast Lough	544	573 <sup>11</sup>	488	640	479	Dec	545
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/2009</b>							
Dornoch Firth	2,571	2,174	(1,312)	1,055	1,844	Jan	1,911
Cleddau Estuary	2,269	2,435	1,389	1,991	1,171	Jan	1,851
Loch Gruinart Floods	2,549	2,058	1,467	1,373	1,421	Nov	1,774
Minsmere	1,984	1,796	1,252	1,155	924	Oct	1,422
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland</b>							
Larne Lough	221	371	189	168	543	Dec	298

## Green-winged Teal

*Anas carolinensis*

Vagrant

Native Range: N America

Drakes were recorded at 15 sites in Britain and one in Northern Ireland. Typically at a number of these, birds proved to be long-stayers; including at Belfast Lough, Dee Estuary, Eyebrook

Reservoir, Forth Estuary, Loch Bee (South Uist), Loch of Tankerness, Morecambe Bay, North Cave Wetlands and Tees Estuary (where two were present in March).

## Silver Teal

*Anas versicolor*

Escape

Native Range: S America

Two were at Hollowell Reservoir in September; the sixth WeBS record.

## Mallard

*Anas platyrhynchos*

International threshold: 20,000\*\*

Great Britain threshold: 3,520<sup>†</sup>

All-Ireland threshold: 380

GB max: 120,879 Dec  
NI max: 5,637 Dec

The decline in the wintering population of Mallards in the UK continued in 2008/09. Despite an increasing breeding population (Baillie *et al.* 2010), the monthly indices indicate that below average numbers were present on WeBS sites throughout the year. As a result, for the third successive year, Britain had no sites of national importance for its most familiar duck. Northern Ireland currently has one site of All-Ireland importance (Loughs Neagh & Beg) where numbers are now showing signs of a sharp decline. However, this year's peak from Strangford Lough was the highest since October 2001.

The falls in the WeBS indices for both Britain and Northern Ireland have been ongoing since the late 1980s, and are generally considered to be linked to a decrease in continental immigration. This theory can be contextualised by considering the trend in Mallard numbers on the

opposite side of the North Sea. Up until 2003/04, numbers in The Netherlands during the preceding twenty years had varied little, however since 2003/04 they have shown a marked decline there too. This is perhaps indicative of a continuation in a northward/eastward shift of core wintering range, as described for waders by Maclean *et al.* (2008). Further east in Europe, wintering populations currently appear to be either stable e.g. Slovakia (Slabeyova *et al.* 2009) or increasing e.g. Czech Republic (Musilova *et al.* 2009).

Research on wetlands in France indicates that wintering Mallards are more faithful to chosen sites within an individual winter than other dabbling species (Legagneux *et al.* 2009), but that the combined loss of grasslands and pressure from shooting has impacted negatively on them at some important sites (Duncan *et al.* 1999).

The five-year average declined at most of the principal sites, most markedly at Loughs Neagh & Beg in Northern Ireland (where the peak count in 2008/09 was the lowest ever and approximately 50% lower than the peak in the previous year), as well as at WWT Martin Mere and Humber Estuary

in England. Elsewhere, sites showing increases included Dungeness & Rye Bay (where 1,306 in August represented the highest monthly count for five years), but declines included a further drop at Tring Reservoirs (see Mute Swan and Gadwall).

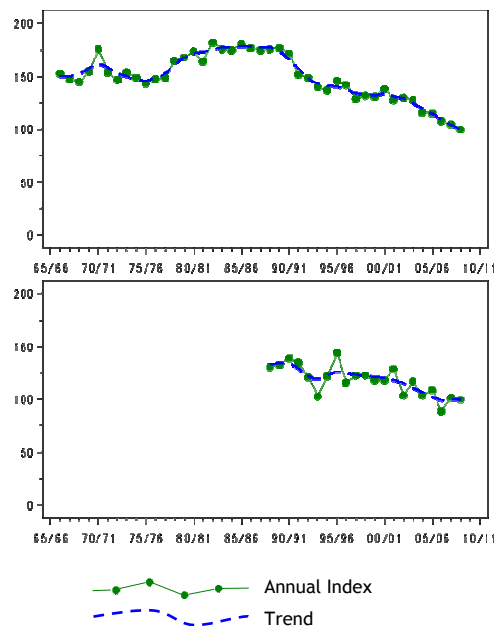


Figure 22.a, Annual indices & trend for Mallard for GB (above) & NI (below).

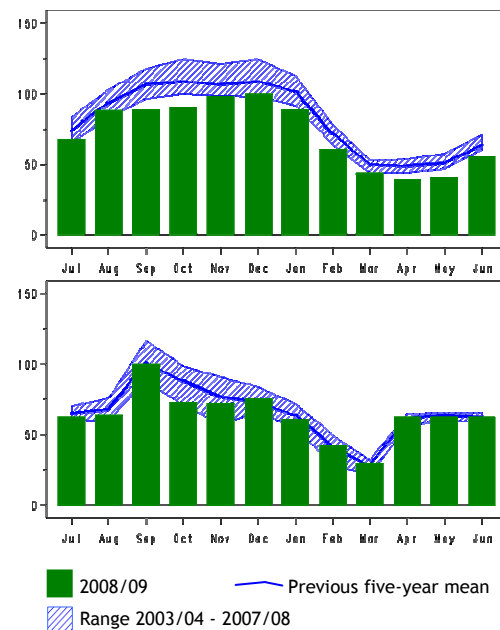


Figure 22.b, Monthly indices for Mallard for GB (above) & NI (below).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	4,027	4,612	4,351	3,767	1,911	Nov	3,734
Strangford Lough	1,621	1,586	(1,010)	1,950	2,177	Sep	1,834
Lough Foyle	1,025	1,133	1,036	830	965	Oct	998
Lower Lough Erne	754	556	551	702	(295)	Nov	641
Belfast Lough	371 <sup>11</sup>	346	(344)	457	447	Dec	405
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 2,000 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Severn Estuary	3,353	(3,884)	3,661	2,954	3,073	Nov	3,385
Ouse Washes	3,595 <sup>13</sup>	2,454	2,606 <sup>13</sup>	2,918 <sup>13</sup>	(3,024)	Jan	2,919
The Wash	2,453	2,534	2,417	2,316	(2,586)	Dec	2,461
Swale Estuary	2,010	2,247	(1,301)	2,972	(1,981)	Oct	2,410
WWT Martin Mere	2,930	3,150	2,211	2,000	1,665	Nov	2,391
Humber Estuary	2,455	2,155	(1,911)	2,166	1,607	Jan	2,096
Livermere and Ampton Water	2,517	1,106		2,279	2,376	Oct	2,070
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs	692	1,680	1,223	709	2,455	Dec	1,352
Clifford Hill Gravel Pits	2,143	1,686	2,027	1,733	2,048	Aug	1,927

<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

## Black Duck

*Anas rubripes*

Vagrant  
Native Range: N America

Two at Loch of Hillwell in May represents the first WeBS record since October 2002.

## Chestnut Teal

*Anas castanea*

Escape  
Native Range: S Australia

An escape was at Belvide Reservoir in August; the first record for three years.

## Pintail

*Anas acuta*

GB max: 22,611 Nov  
NI max: 597 Nov

International threshold: 600  
Great Britain threshold: 279  
All-Ireland threshold: 20\*

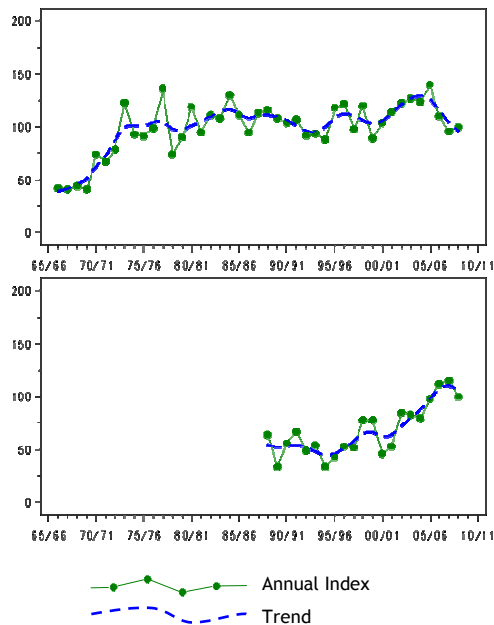


Figure 23.a, Annual indices & trend for Pintail for GB (above) & NI (below).

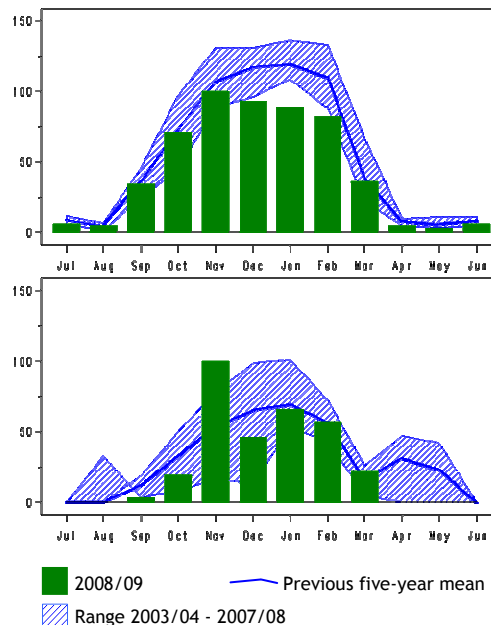
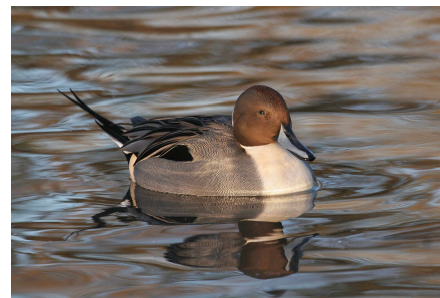


Figure 23.b, Monthly indices for Pintail for GB (above) & NI (below).

Although the annual indices for Pintail tend to show a high level of variation between years, the overall trend for the species in Britain has changed little over the course of the last thirty-five years and numbers have essentially remained reasonably stable. That said, the index values for the last three years have been relatively poor, at least compared to the preceding decade, and it remains to be seen whether this species' status quo will be maintained in the years ahead.

It is interesting to note that the apparent recent drop after a period of stability/increase is mirrored to varying degrees by the trends exhibited by Wigeon, Golden Plover, Lapwing and Ruff; a suite of species which tends to favour both

intertidal zones of estuaries as well as more freshwater riparian habitats.



Pintail (Jill Pakenham)

The monthly indices indicate that numbers of Pintail were as to be expected during the autumn months, but were particularly depressed from December to

January, typically the peak period at sites in Britain.

Fifteen sites in the UK are currently of international importance for Pintail. In general, peak numbers at these principal sites in 2008/09 were disappointing and only two sites (Duddon Estuary and Nene Washes) registered maxima in excess of the respective five-year average. Peaks were especially down at the two sites at the top of the table below, Dee Estuary and Burry Inlet, where the lowest totals since 1999/2000 and 2001/02, respectively, were logged. Eighteen further sites are of national importance, including Wigtown Bay and Somerset Levels, which based on peaks

recorded in the last two and three years, respectively, may well be the next sites to surpass the threshold for international importance. Numbers in Northern Ireland were again high, continuing the species' recent strong showing there.

Away from UK sites, in a novel study at wetlands in France, Pintail was one of three species of wintering dabbling duck studied through the use of radio-tracking. In an investigation of home-range sizes and movements of individual birds, foraging distances, generally 1-2 km from roosts, increased with temperature and time over the winter season (Legagneux *et al.* 2009).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	4,312	6,330	6,172	(4,334)	3,932	Oct	5,187
Burry Inlet	2,745	4,837	4,692	6,244	2,209	Nov	4,145
Ribble Estuary	(3,058)	3,579	(1,094)	3,639	2,178	Nov	3,132
Morecambe Bay	3,620	3,045	2,609	2,112	2,593	Oct	2,796
Solway Estuary	4,352	(1,575)	(2,429)	1,047	(888)	Nov	2,700
Ouse Washes	3,557 <sup>13</sup>	3,343 <sup>13</sup>	1,823 <sup>13</sup>	1,713 <sup>13</sup>	(1,697)	Jan	2,609
Duddon Estuary	1,626 <sup>11</sup>	2,210 <sup>11</sup>	(2,317)	(1,153)	2,481	Mar	2,159
Nene Washes	327	281	1,931	1,267	1,951	Feb	1,151
Mersehead RSPB Reserve	970		1,010	1,445			1,142
The Wash	917	(567)	1,215	652	560	Nov	836
Severn Estuary	(784)	905	(1,161)	668	655 <sup>11</sup>	Feb	835
Pagham Harbour	834	893	566	(464)	(447)	Jan	764
Medway Estuary	812 <sup>11</sup>	(809)	(582)	663	(351)	Dec	761
North Norfolk Coast	712	657	753	697 <sup>11</sup>	421	Nov	648
Swale Estuary	672	579	731	597	630	Feb	642
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Somerset Levels	261	333	530	985	682	Jan	558
Blackwater Estuary	555	(387)	(401)	(201)	(488)	Dec	555
Dee Flood Meadows	300 <sup>13</sup>	(329)	916	750	196	Jan	541 ▼
Wigtown Bay	(654)	349	166	834	642	Dec	529
WWT Martin Mere	710 <sup>12</sup>	(535)	580	380	380	Nov	517
North West Solent	412	670	484	407	320	Jan	459
Stour Estuary	289	473	467	303	486 <sup>11</sup>	Feb	404
Lindisfarne	301	536	445	327	(272)	Oct	402
Lower Derwent Ings	296	167	656	674	85	Nov	376
Alde Complex	313	307	441	447	276	Jan	357
Arun Valley	293	290	574	(322)	227	Jan	346
Poole Harbour	338	(208)	(140)	(155)	(110)	Dec	338
Blyth Estuary	425 <sup>13</sup>	(209)	394	185	(264)	Dec	335
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	518	281	314	232	236	Dec	316
Malltraeth Cob and Pools	421	397	287	146	266	Jan	303
Orwell Estuary	165 <sup>11</sup>	308 <sup>11</sup>	753 <sup>11</sup>	158	125 <sup>11</sup>	Dec	302
Fleet and Wey	420	360	188	360	100	Oct	286
Foryd Bay	136	449	330	152	360 <sup>13</sup>	Dec	285 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Strangford Lough	349	643 <sup>11</sup>	496	395	449	Nov	466
Lough Foyle	52	94	123	157	185	Dec	122
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain</b>							
Traeth Bach	80	65	325	341	403	Nov	243
Dornoch Firth	291	263	293	84	(400)	Oct	266
Carmarthen Bay	161	137	99	192	(396)	Dec	197
Cromarty Firth	229	76	205	(171)	287	Feb	199

## White-cheeked Pintail

*Anas bahamensis*

Escape

Native Range: S America

During the course of 2008/09, White-cheeked Pintails were recorded at Birnie Loch (2), Mount Castle Quarry (2), Thames

Estuary, Fleet & Wey, Aldenham Reservoir, Medway Estuary and the regular site of Stanton Lake.

## Garganey

*Anas querquedula*

International threshold: 20,000

Great Britain threshold: +<sup>†</sup>

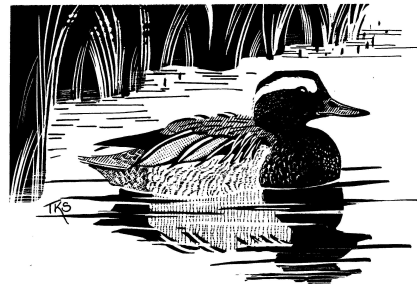
All-Ireland threshold: +<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 40 Apr

NI max: 0 0

Being summer visitors, Garganey are reported for the calendar year; here 2008. Records were received from 64 sites, a similar number to the previous year. Away from England, these included eight sites in Scotland and four in Wales, while a pair at Point of Ayr Gravel Pit in May represents the first WeBS record ever on the Isle of Man. Conversely, following records at Loughs Neagh & Beg in 2006 and 2007, none were seen in Northern Ireland in 2008.

One at Cotswold Water Park in February, which may have either been an early migrant or perhaps related to an over-wintering bird, was followed by more typical first spring migrants in March involving singles at six sites. Across all sites, slightly higher numbers were seen in spring than autumn with the monthly peak noted in April.



Garganey (Tim Sykes)

The highest individual counts during 2008 were eight at Dungeness & Rye Bay in September, six at Thames Estuary in July-August, five at Loch of Strathbeg in May and five at Fen Drayton Gravel Pits in August. Towards the end of the year, the last birds were recorded in October at Hayle Estuary (2), Severn Estuary, Chew Valley Lake and Chichester Harbour.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 4 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Dungeness and Rye Bay	4	8	9	9	8	Sep	8
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	14	12	6	2 <sup>10</sup>	0		7
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in 2008 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Loch of Strathbeg	1	6	2	1	5	May	3
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	0	0	0	1	5	Aug	1
Severn Estuary	1	(2)	4	1	4	Sep	3
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	4	0	3	0	4	Aug	2
Druridge Pool		0	0		4	May	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

## Blue-winged Teal

*Anas discors*

Vagrant

Native Range: N America

One was at Wigtown Bay in September. Since the first in 1988, this is the 25th

record for WeBS, but only the second in Scotland.