

WILDFOWL AND WADER COUNTS
in the
MILFORD HAVEN WATERWAY
2017-18

Report prepared for the Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group

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Executive Summary

The Wetland Bird Survey was carried out on the Cleddau Estuary system between September 2017 and March 2018 with additional counts for June and July 2017 made by Jane Hodges during the annual survey of summer shelduck populations.

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

A total peak count of 26,556 birds between November and February confirms that the estuary system is still of international importance for its winter waterbird populations. Counts of migrating birds (notably curlew) in July takes this total to 27,435. This peak count is about average for the site, in winters when there is no great influx of lapwing and golden plover.

The levels of “National Importance” for many water birds were revised in 2011, and only four species now qualify (based on a five-year mean): wigeon (max. 8703 in November), teal (max 1812 in December), greenshank (max 39 in October), and Little Egret (68 in October)

Curlew (1244 in July) were at their lowest level since 1999-2000, a reflection of the decline recorded across their range.

Dunlin (3214 in December) reached the qualifying level in 2017-18 but were short based on the 5-year average. Shelduck (449 in March) is still well below the qualifying level,

Wigeon numbers seem to have recovered from the low counts in 2013-15, reaching their highest count since 2005-06. The peak count was in November, with numbers remaining higher than average in December. The reason for these changes is not yet known, however the Milford Haven Waterway is not the only site to have experienced temporary reductions in numbers in recent years.

The total number of birds recorded in September and October was lower than the average of the past twenty years, except in November when the influx of wigeon boosted the total.

Numbers remained similar to or just above average for the rest of the winter. However, there were considerable differences from month to month, and from species to species. This was particularly noticeable in March with very cold and windy weather conditions (the ‘Beast from the East’) caused many birds, particularly shelduck and teal, to pause in their migration.

Comparison of counts with the national report for 2016-17 (the most recent that is available) show that for most species, the local population trends are similar to those experienced nationally.

CYFRIFON ADAR DŴR AC ADAR HIRGOES AR DDYFRFFORDD ABERDAUGLEDDAU 2017 – 18

Crynodeb Gweithredol

Gwnaethpwyd Arolwg Adar y Gwlyptir ar system aber y Cleddau rhwng Medi 2017 a Mawrth 2018. Gwnaeth Jane Hodges gyfrifon ychwanegol ar gyfer mis Mehefin a mis Gorffennaf 2017 yn ystod yr arolwg blynyddol o boblogaethau haf hwyaden yr eithin.

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

Mae cyfanswm cyfrif uchaf o 26,556 o adar rhwng mis Tachwedd a mis Chwefror yn cadarnhau bod system yr aber yn parhau i fod o bwysigrwydd rhyngwladol yn achos ei phoblogaethau gaeaf o adar dŵr. Mae cyfrifon o adar sy'n mudo (y gylfinir yn arbennig) ym mis Gorffennaf yn dod â'r cyfanswm i 27,435. Mae'r cyfrif uchaf yma tua'r cyfartaledd ar gyfer y safle, mewn gaeafau lle nad oes dylifiad mawr o gornchwiglod a chwtiaid aur.

Cafodd lefelau'r 'Pwysigrwydd Cenedlaethol' eu hadolygu yn 2011 yn achos nifer o adar dŵr a dim ond pedwar rhywogaeth sydd bellach yn gymwys (yn seiliedig ar gymedr pum mlynedd): chwiwell (uchafswm o 8703 ym mis Tachwedd), corhwyaden (uchafswm o 1812 ym mis Rhagfyr), pibydd coeswyrdd (uchafswm o 39 ym mis Hydref), a'r crer bach (68 ym mis Hydref).

Roedd y gylfinir (1244 ym mis Gorffennaf) ar eu lefel isaf ers 1999-2000, sy'n adlewyrchu'r dirywiad a gofnodwyd ar draws eu rhywogaethau.

Cyrhaeddodd pibydd y mawn (3214 ym mis Rhagfyr) y lefel cymhwys yn 2017-18 ond roedd y nifer yn disgyn yn fyr ar y cyfartaledd pum mlynedd. Mae hwyaden yr eithin (449 ym mis Mawrth) yn dal ymhell islaw'r lefel cymhwys.

Mae'n ymddangos fod niferoedd y chwiwell wedi gwella ar ôl cyfrifon isel 2013-15 gan gyrraedd eu cyfrif uchaf ers 2005-06. Cyrhaeddwyd y cyfrif uchaf ym mis Tachwedd gyda'r niferoedd yn parhau'n uwch nag oedd yn arferol ym mis Rhagfyr. Ni wyddir hyd yma beth yw'r rheswm dros y newidiadau hyn ond nid dyfrffordd Aberdaugleddau yw'r unig safle yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf i brofi lleihad dros dro mewn niferoedd.

Roedd cyfanswm yr adar a gofnodwyd ym mis Medi ac ym mis Hydref yn is na chyfartaledd yr ugain mlynedd ddiwethaf, ac eithrio mis Tachwedd pan wnaeth dylifiad o chwiwellod godi'r cyfanswm. Arhosodd y niferoedd yn debyg i neu ychydig yn uwch na'r cyfartaledd am weddill y gaeaf. Roedd yna, fodd bynnag, gryn wahaniaethau o fis i fis, a rhwng rhywogaethau â'i gilydd. Roedd hyn yn arbennig o wir am fis Mawrth pan achosodd y tywydd oer a gwyntog iawn (y 'Bwystfil o'r Dwytain') i nifer o adar, yn arbennig hwyaden yr eithin a'r gorhwyaden, orffwys yn ystod eu mudo.

Trwy gymharu'r cyfrifon gydag adroddiad cenedlaethol 2016-17 (yr adroddiad diweddera sydd ar gael) gwelir fod y tueddiadau lleol o safbwynt poblogaethau yn debyg i'r rhai a geir yn genedlaethol yn achos y rhan fwyaf o rywogethau.