



Pochard

Aythya ferina

Status

Amber listed: WI, WL
SPEC 4 (S)
Annex II/1 and III/2 of EC Wild Birds Directive

National monitoring

Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
WeBS.

Population and distribution

The pochard became established as a UK breeding species early in the 19th century, and it is now largely found in the east of England and Scotland, at lowland waters with significant emergent and submergent vegetation (*88–91 Atlas*). The wintering numbers expanded quickly up to the 1970s, with numbers then decreasing in line with those in north-west Europe (*Winter Atlas*). The reasons for the reduction in pochard numbers remain unclear (Kirby et al 1995). There are an estimated 250–400 pairs breeding and 81,200 individuals wintering in the UK (*Population Estimates*).

Ecology

Pochards breed on large pools, lakes or slow-moving streams in Britain. A clutch of 8–10 eggs is laid between early May and the end of July but mainly in June. There is a single brood and the young fledge by mid-August. In winter, pochards occur on lowland freshwater reservoirs, lakes, ponds, gravel pits, etc, usually with a good growth of submerged aquatic plants and small molluscs (*Red Data Birds*).

Breeding season survey

See *Dabbling and diving ducks* in the generic survey methods section.

Winter survey

See the generic methods section on WeBS counts.

Reference

Kirby, J S, Salmon, D G, Atkinson-Willes, G L and Cranswick, PA (1995) Index numbers for waterbird populations. III. Long-term trends in the abundance of wintering wildfowl in Great Britain, 1966/67–1991/92. *J. Applied Ecology* 32: 536–551.