

Wigeon

Anas penelope

Status

Amber listed: WI, WL
Non-SPEC
Annex II/1 of EC Wild Birds Directive

National monitoring

WeBS.

Population and distribution

Only 300–500 pairs of wigeon breed in the UK, in Scotland and northern England (*Population Estimates*). However, the species is common in winter throughout the UK, both inland and on the coast (*Winter Atlas*). The estimated number of wigeon wintering in the UK is 291,000 individuals (*Population Estimates*), but the actual size of the wintering wigeon varies according to the severity of the weather (Kirby et al 1995).

Ecology

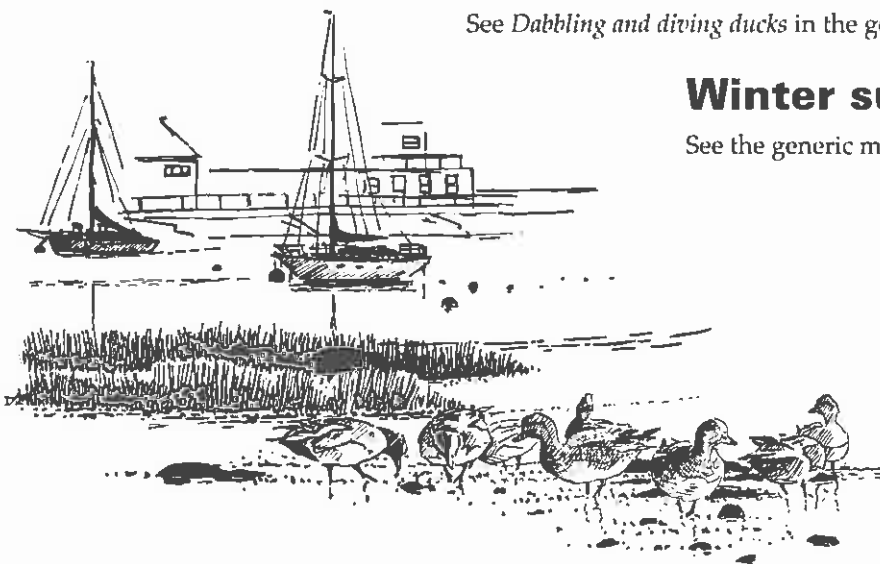
Breeds mainly along the shores of upland lakes and boglands, where it nests in marginal grass or shrub cover, or on islands (*88–91 Atlas*). A clutch of 8–9 eggs can be laid as early as mid-April but the main laying period is May. There is one brood and the young fledge in July (*Red Data Birds*). Outside the breeding season the feeding and roosting habitat is varied. On coastal mudflats the traditional diet is eel-grass *Zostera*, but birds also graze on land and will take grain in stubble fields. About 20% of British wintering wigeon are found on inland flooded grassland (*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 C, 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.