



ESWG project register

Questionnaire completed by:	
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Project title	Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i> monitoring in Carmarthen Bay following the <i>Sea Empress</i> oil spill
Project coordinator(s)	Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) Wetlands Advisory Service
Project partners and funders	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Main individual / organisation to contact for information about project	
Project website	

Target species and population [enter X against all that apply] <i>Population boundaries can be viewed on the CSN too!</i>			
Greater Scaup (W Europe)		King Eider (N Europe/W Siberia)	
Greater Scaup (Black Sea/Caspian Sea)		Steller's Eider (NW Europe)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. mollissima</i> (Britain/Ireland)		Harlequin Duck (Iceland)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. mollissima</i> (Baltic/Wadden Sea)		Long-tailed Duck (Iceland/Greenland)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. mollissima</i> (Norway/NW Russia)		Long-tailed Duck (W Siberia/N Europe)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. mollissima</i> (White Sea)		Common Scoter (European)	X
Common Eider <i>S. m. mollissima</i> (Black Sea)		Velvet Scoter (W European)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. faeroeensis</i> (Faeroe Islands)		Velvet Scoter (Black Sea)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. faeroeensis</i> (Shetland Islands)		Red-breasted Merganser (NW & C Europe)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. borealis</i> (Svalbard/Franz Joseph Land)		Red-breasted Merganser (Mediterranean/Black Sea)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. borealis</i> (Iceland)		Red-breasted Merganser (Greenland)	
Common Eider <i>S. m. borealis</i> (NE Greenland)			

Project type [enter X against all that apply and/or specify other]	
Abundance/distribution	X
Life history (breeding success/survival/recruitment)	
Population delineation / migration	
Ecological research (e.g. habitat use, diet)	
Methodological / techniques	
Anthropomorphic (e.g. contaminants, aquaculture)	
Physiology/energetic/genetics/disease	
Other (please specify below)	

Project description	
Project duration	
Start date	February 1996
End data/expected end date	March 1998
Will the project be repeated?	No
If yes, please provided estimated start year and end year	
Bird season [enter X against all that apply]	
Breeding	X
Non-breeding	X
Moulting	X
Migration	
Geographical location	
Carmarthen Bay, south Wales, UK (N 51.708857 W -004.540338)	
Main aims and objectives	
To make a qualitative assessment of the accuracy of data obtained by using ground and aerial survey methods and to determine the effect of the <i>Sea Empress</i> oil spill on numbers and distribution of Common Scoter in Carmarthen Bay.	

Methods

1996 – 1997 surveys

Land-based counts:

30 counts were made at two-week intervals between February 1996 – April 1997.

The site was divided into sectors, each counted from a vantage point

Birds were counted as near to high tide as possible

Aerial surveys:

Six surveys undertaken; two in February 1996, and one in each of September 1996, November 1996 and February and March 1997. The first two surveys were conducted during the oil spill and three were carried out simultaneously with ground counts.

The aircraft used was a high-winged Cessna 185 flying at 120m and 90 knots.

The survey followed a circular route around the bay with transect lines some 3-5 km apart.

Two observers, sat on either side of the plane, recorded the number of birds onto recording sheets divided into separate transect sections by longitude and latitude. Birds were only visible up to 500 m from either side of the plane. Locations of birds were mapped to the nearest 100m using a GPS.

The survey route only produced an index of scoter numbers and distribution rather than total numbers.

1997 – 1998 surveys

Land-based counts:

26 counts were made at two-week intervals between March 1997 – March 1998.

The methods used were the same as during the 1996 – 1997 surveys.

Aerial surveys:

Four surveys were carried out; in November 1997, and January, February and March 1998.

The aircraft used was a high-winged Cessna 185 flying at 500-550 ft and 90-100 knots.

The first flight followed the same route as during the 1996/97 surveys, plus a number of additional east-west transects. As this latter route produced a higher number of birds being recorded, a new route was designed for the subsequent surveys.

Two observers sat either side of the plane counted up to 500 m away from the plane.

The observers recorded the total number of birds observed within each 1 km grid line on to a recording sheet, producing a distribution map of 2 x 1 km grid.

Datasets

Project outputs

Reports and papers

Stewart, B., B. Hughes, I. Bullock & R. Haycock. 1997. *Common Scoter Melanitta nigra monitoring in Carmarthen Bay following the Sea Empress oil spill*. WWT Wetlands Advisory Service Report to CCW.

Cranswick, P.A., B. Stewart, I. Bullock, R. Haycock & B. Hughes. 1998. *Common Scoter monitoring in Carmarthen Bay following the Sea Empress oil spill: April 1997 to March 1998*. CCW Sea Empress Contract Report 320, CCW, Bangor.

Other outputs

Data ownership and access

Are data collated during the project available to external users?	
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Person/organisation that owns the data

Contact name	
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Organisation	
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Contact email	
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Person/organisation responsible for maintaining the dataset

Contact name	
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Organisation	
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Contact email	
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Person/organisation that can be contacted for accessing the data

Contact name	
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Organisation	
Contact email	

Additional information