

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Tadorna tadorna

English name: Common shelduck	Scientific name: <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>
Taxonomical group: Class: Aves Order: Anseriformes Family: Anatidae	Species authority: Linné 1758
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 5 years
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category: LC Least Concern
Global / European IUCN Red List Category LC / LC	Annex I EU Birds Directive-no Annex II EU Birds Directive-no
Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark: LC, Estonia: LC, Finland: VU, Germany: * (Not threatened), Latvia: –, Lithuania: 2 (V, Vulnerable), Poland: LC, Russia: –, Sweden: LC	

Range description and general trends

The common shelduck is a widespread breeder in coastal areas of north-west and south-east Europe. The European breeding population counts 42 000–65 000 bp. It increased moderately in 1970–1990. During the period 1990–2000 the overall European trend was about stable (BirdLife International 2004).

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The common shelduck breeds throughout the Baltic Sea. It is rather rare in the northern and eastern parts and more common in the south-western Baltic. The largest populations are held by Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

The **Swedish** population counts 6 000–9 000 bp. The majority of the population breeds along the coasts but small numbers also breed inland, mainly in Scania and Öland. During the last 30 years the species has increased by >80%, but has been stable in more recent times (Ottvall et al. 2009; Ottosson 2012)).

Finland hosts only a small population of 200–400 bp. The species is strictly coastal; it breeds in the archipelagos of the Bothnian Bay and the Gulf of Finland. The range is expanding and the population size probably increasing (Valkama et al. 2011).

In **Russia** (both St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad regions), **Latvia** and **Lithuania** the common shelduck is a rare breeding bird. **Estonia** holds a larger population of 800–1 200 bp, which has been stable both in the long term as well as short term run.

In **Poland**, the main breeding areas are shallow bays, lagoons and river mouths in the coastal zone, especially Szczecin Lagoon and the Gulf of Gdansk, including Vistula Lagoon. Single pairs are breeding on other coastal lakes. However, the common shelduck is also breeding inland on reservoirs and in the valley of large, slow flowing rivers (Vistula, Odra). The population has declined at the coast, but increased inland (Sikora et al. 2007).

In **Germany, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania**, the species breeds along the entire coast, mainly in the lagoons and estuaries. However, there are also more or less regular inland breeding records, especially in the Elbe valley. The population seems to be about stable both in the long-term as well as short-term run (Nehls 2006). The breeding distribution in Schleswig-Holstein differs from that in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania by a much higher coverage of the inland. However, the main breeding areas are the

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North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts, with the North Sea hosting much higher numbers than the Baltic Sea (Hälterlein et al. 2000, Berndt et al. 2002).

The common shelduck is a poorly monitored species in **Denmark**. The long term trend is obviously an increase from almost none in the 1920s, some 1500 pairs in the 1960s and some 2500 pairs in the late 1970es. Due to poor data quality the more recent trend is quite uncertain, with opposing trends depending on the focus:

- 1) An increase in distribution from the 1970s Atlas to the 1990s Atlas by 13%;
- 2) A 50% decline within the Danish point count programme between early 1980s and today. This probably reflects the situation inland, where the point counts are performed, but it is probably a quite small fraction of the breeding shelducks in Denmark which are found inland.
- 3) A 100% increase in the nature reserve Tipperne – one of the few sites with regular surveys – in the same period;
- 4) An increase both in the breeding season and outside the breeding season in the Danish Wadden Sea in the same period.

In Summary, the species is data deficient; however, the existing information suggests that the species may decline inland and perform well at the coast.

It is difficult to estimate the proportions of breeding pairs in the Danish Baltic and North Sea area. Approximately 25–30% of the atlas dots are found in the North Sea area, and 70–75% on the Baltic side. However, this distribution pattern does not necessarily reflect directly the proportions of population numbers. Based on these low quality data, the Baltic Danish population of shelduck may be estimated at some 2 000 pairs and could be stable or slightly declining in the short term. In the long term it was increasing.

Table 1: Population numbers of the common shelduck in the Baltic Sea area. For population trends 0=stable, -=decreasing, +=increasing, (-)=(probably) slightly decreasing, (+)=slightly increasing, ?=unknown.

Country	Population size		Short-term population trend (10 years)	Long-term population trend (50 years)
	Breeding pairs	Year		
Sweden	6 000–9 000	2005–2010	0	+
Finland	200–400	2006–2010	+	+
Russia, PET	5–15	2009	+/-	+
Russia, KAL	8–15	2005–2009	+	+
Estonia	800–1 200	2003–2008	+	(+)
Latvia	30–40	2009	-	+/-
Lithuania	30–50	1999–2001	-	?
Poland	120–150	1994–2004	-	-
Germany - MV	150–200	1994–1998	0	0
Germany - SH	530	2005–2009	+	+
Denmark	2 000	2011	+	0 or (-)
Baltic Sea	9 900–13 600			

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Distribution map

Not included

Habitat and ecology

The common shelduck mainly breeds along sheltered coasts, especially those of lagoons, estuaries and archipelagos. Due to its feeding techniques (dabbling and wading), the species prefers mudflats and tidal areas with low water level. It may also breed inland (e.g., at fish ponds or ponds of wastewater treatment plants), but due to less availability of suitable habitats the inland numbers are very low compared to the population at the coast. The species builds its nests in burrows, e.g. of rabbits or foxes, under or even in buildings, in rock cavities and in dense vegetation. The European population moults in the Wadden Sea. The wintering areas are the Wadden Sea, the Atlantic coast of France and partly also Spain, as well as the Mediterranean Sea, including North Africa.

Description of major threats

Predation by mammals and habitat destruction (e.g., due to tourism, constructions) are potential threat factors. The very large moulting concentrations in river outflows are prone to stochastic hazards e.g. oil incidents and pollution.

Assessment justification

The common shelduck is stable or increasing in its main Baltic breeding areas and is classified as Least Concern (LC).

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

Predator control at the breeding sites is an important action for conserving the species. The construction of artificial caves may increase local breeding pair numbers.

Common names

Denmark: Gravand, Estonia: Ristpart, Finland: ristisorsa, Germany: Brandgans, Latvia: Sāmsalas pile, Lithuania: Urvine antis, Poland: ohar, Russia: Пеганка, Sweden: Gravand

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