

A6.30 Teal *Anas crecca* (non-breeding)

1. Status in UK

Biological status		Legal status		Conservation status	
Breeding	✓	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	General Protection Schedule 2(1) Schedule 3(3)	Species of European Conservation Concern	Table 4
Migratory	✓	Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985	General Protection Schedule 2(1)	(UK) Species of Conservation Importance	
Wintering	✓	EC Birds Directive 1979	Annex II/1 Annex III/2 Migratory	All-Ireland Vertebrate Red Data Book	

2. Population data

	Population sizes (individuals)	Selection thresholds	Totals in species' SPA suite
GB	135,800	1,400	65,335 (47% of GB total)
Ireland	65,000	650	3,098 (5% of all-Ireland total)
Biogeographic population	400,000	4,000	68,433 (17% of biogeographic population)

GB population source: Kirby 1995a

Ireland population source: Pollitt et al. 2000

Biogeographic population source: Rose & Scott 1997

3. Distribution

Teal have a wide global distribution across Eurasia and North America, breeding in boreal regions on both continents, especially within taiga and steppe regions (south to about 45°N) but also extending north into the low Arctic (at about 70°N). The species is migratory on both continents, moving south in autumn from northern breeding areas to more southerly wintering grounds. In the Palearctic, these include western Europe, northern Africa and the Rift Valley, the Middle East, India, and South-east Asia.

Three sub-species have been described, and of these, only the nominate (which occurs throughout the Palearctic range of the Teal) regularly occurs in Europe. There are European records of the North America sub-species *A. c. carolinensis* but only as vagrants.

In Europe, Teal breed discontinuously from Iceland, Britain, Ireland, and France eastward to Russia. In winter, the species occurs across much of Europe, wherever there are suitable wetland habitats, including inland and coastal wetlands. Most non-breeding Teal in the UK,

as elsewhere in Europe, originate from the east and north, including Iceland, Fennoscandia, and Russia (Batten *et al.* 1990). Winter flocks also contain locally breeding birds that, within Europe, are of a more sedentary or dispersive nature.

Non-breeding Teal are widespread throughout Britain and Ireland, favouring areas of shallow water on estuarine coastal lagoons, coastal and inland marshes, and flooded pastures and ponds. They are absent only from mountainous areas, coastal stretches with high cliffs and inland areas which lack suitable freshwater habitats (Lack 1986).

4. Population structure and trends

Three biogeographic populations of Teal are recognised, two of which occur in Europe (Scott & Rose 1996). Birds wintering in the UK belong to the North-west European population, the size of which is currently estimated at 400,000 (Rose & Scott 1997). The general trend in the North-west European population over the last 23 years has been one of increase, with annual growth of 2.5% over the period 1967–1993 (Rose 1995). Recent international monitoring shows that the population increase has levelled off and numbers were generally stable between 1987–1996 (Delany *et al.* 1999).

Population changes in the UK have been largely similar to those noted elsewhere in north-west Europe. There has been an increase in British and Irish non-breeding numbers over the last three decades (Gilburn & Kirby 1992), but in recent years the increase has slowed, with peak counts fluctuating around 130,000 (Cranswick *et al.* 1999). The long-term increase in numbers of Teal in Britain has been attributed to an increase in the number of birds occurring on migration, as well as an increase in habitat availability, particularly through the creation of new inland wetlands as a consequence of mineral extraction (Gilburn & Kirby 1992).

Locally large fluctuations in numbers occur in response to changes in environmental conditions, such as the freezing of shallow waters. Indeed, Teal are highly susceptible to the consequences of periods of severe winter weather and often show significant dispersal to warmer areas (Ridgill & Fox 1990). Such movements can either be within the UK or to more southerly wintering areas.

5. Protection measures for population in UK

SPA suite

In the non-breeding season, the UK's SPA suite for Teal supports, on average, 68,433 individuals (calculated using WeBS December site totals for the period 1992/93 to 1996/97 – see section 4.4.1 and Appendix 2 for further explanation). This total amounts to about 47% of the British population, about 5% of the all-Ireland population, and about 17% of the international flyway population. The suite comprises 30 sites at which Teal has been listed as a qualifying species (Table 6.30.1).

6. Classification criteria

All eight sites in the UK that were known to support more than 1% of the international population of Teal were considered under Stage 1.2, and all were selected after consideration of Stage 2 judgements. A further 22 sites were considered and selected under Stage 1.3 (see section 5.3). At these sites, Teal was identified as an important component of non-breeding waterbird assemblages.

The sites are distributed throughout the population's UK, from sites in Northern Ireland and Wales, to the Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet in northern Scotland, to sites on the English south coast. All of the sites are multi-species SPAs, of importance also for a range of other waterbirds. There is a long recorded history of occupancy at most of these sites (Boyd in Atkinson-Willes 1963).

As the selection of sites under Stage 1.3 resulted in a suite which gives adequate coverage of the population and range of non-breeding Teal in the UK, it was not considered necessary to select additional sites using Stage 1.4.

Distribution map for non-breeding Teal SPA suite

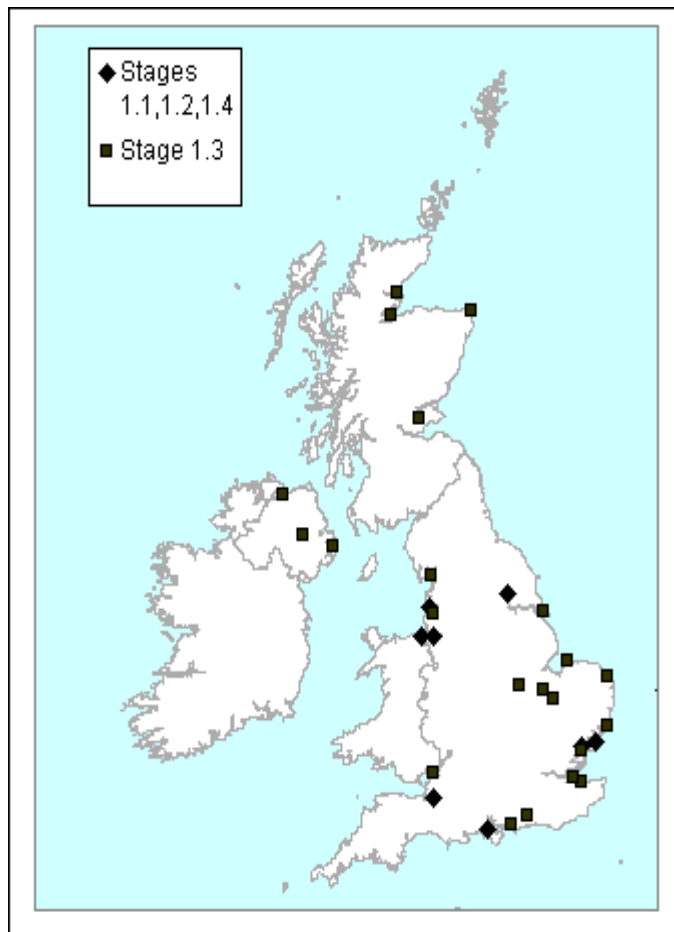


Table 6.30.1 – SPA suite

Site name	Site total	% of biogeographical population	% of national population	Selection stage
Abberton Reservoir	5,326	1.3	3.9	1.2
Alde-Ore Estuary	1,931	0.5	1.4	1.3
Arun Valley	1,849	0.5	1.4	1.3
Blackwater Estuary	2,963	0.7	2.2	1.3
Broadland	3,869	0.9	2.8	1.3
Chichester and Langstone Harbours	1,824	0.5	1.3	1.3
Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet	1,462	0.4	1.1	1.3
Hamford Water	4,206	1.1	3.1	1.2
Humber Flats, Marshes and Coast	1,652	0.4	1.2	1.3
Inner Moray Firth	1,849	0.5	1.4	1.3
Loch Leven	2,483	0.6	1.8	1.3
Loch of Strathbeg	1,898	0.5	1.4	1.3
Lough Foyle	751	0.2	1.2 (Ire)	1.3
Lough Neagh and Lough Beg	1,596	0.4	2.5 (Ire)	1.3
Lower Derwent Valley	5,853	1.5	4.3	1.2
Martin Mere	3,282	0.8	2.4	1.3
Medway Estuary and Marshes	1,824	0.5	1.3	1.3
Mersey Estuary	11,667	2.9	8.6	1.2
Morecambe Bay	2,163	0.5	1.6	1.3
Nene Washes	2,179	0.5	1.6	1.3
North Norfolk Coast	2,837	0.7	2.1	1.3
Ouse Washes	3,085	0.8	2.3	1.3
Ribble and Alt Estuaries	7,641	1.9	5.6	1.2
Rutland Water	1,420	0.4	1.1	1.3
Severn Estuary	3,276	0.8	2.4	1.3
Solent and Southampton Water	4,400	1.1	3.2	1.2
Somerset Levels and Moors	13,307	3.3	9.8	1.2
Strangford Lough	1,435	0.4	2.2 (Ire)	1.3
The Dee Estuary	5,918	1.5	4.2	1.2
The Swale	2,969	0.7	2.2	1.3

TOTALS	68,433 (in December)	17.1%	46.7% 4.8% (Ire)
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