

A6.33a Shoveler *Anas clypeata* (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 |
| Migratory | ✓ | Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 | General Protection Schedule 1(2) Schedule 2(1) (UK) Species of Conservation Importance Table 4 |
| Wintering | ✓ | EC Birds Directive 1979 | Annex II/1 Annex III/2 Migratory All-Ireland Vertebrate Red Data Book Rare |

2. Population data

| | Population sizes (pairs) | Selection thresholds | Totals in species' SPA suite |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| GB | 1,000 | 10 | 155 (16% of GB total) |
| Ireland | 100 | 1 | No SPAs selected in Northern Ireland |
| Biogeographic population | 13,300 | 133 | 155 (2% of biogeographic population) |

GB population source: Gibbons et al. 1993

Ireland population source: Gibbons et al. 1993

Biogeographic population source: Rose & Scott 1997

3. Distribution

The monotypic Shoveler has an extensive global distribution, breeding at northern latitudes throughout both Eurasia and North America. In the Palearctic, its range extends between 45° and 70°N, from Iceland in the west, to the Lena Delta in the eastern Russia Arctic (c. 162°E). It is absent as a breeding bird from southern Europe and the Mediterranean basin. It breeds across most of North America, from Alaska southwards to the Prairie Pothole region (Cramp & Simmons 1977). In the Palearctic, most Shovelers breed in Russia.

In Europe, the breeding distribution is scattered and discontinuous. Most breed in The Netherlands, with significant numbers in southern Scandinavia and around the Baltic (Hagemeyer & Blair 1997).

Within Britain the breeding strongholds are the Norfolk Broads, the north Kent Marshes and the East Anglian fens, with birds widely scattered elsewhere in eastern and central England, becoming scarcer in upland areas and the south-west. In Scotland, birds breed in lowland areas between the Forth and the Grampians, as well as on the lochs of the Uists, Tiree and

Orkney. They inhabit freshwater wetlands, typically nesting in sparse cover near to shallow eutrophic still waters (Gibbons *et al.* 1993).

4. Population structure and trends

A population decline has been evident in much of the NW European range (Gibbons *et al.* 1993) although there has been some expansion in the range itself, possibly linked with an increase in summer temperatures (Voous 1960). The latest biogeographic population estimate is around 13,300 pairs (Rose & Scott 1997). However, trend analysis is difficult because of the tendency of Shovelers to breed in areas subject to rapid natural change, with flooding and fluctuating water tables resulting in large year-to-year variation in numbers.

During the 1930s, Shovelers bred in all but eight English counties and the species' range continued to increase until the early 1950s (Holloway 1996), with local increases in the Shropshire meres and at Chew Valley Lake (Parslow 1973). There has also been a decline in numbers associated with loss of wetland habitat, which is already restricted because of its specialised method of feeding. Between the 1968–72 and the 1988–91 breeding bird atlases, there was a 12% reduction in the number of 10 km squares from which birds were recorded and a 39% reduction in squares with actual breeding evidence (Mitchell 1994). The drainage of wetlands earlier in the 20th century resulted in the collapse of the Trent Valley population around Nottingham, where numbers fell from 47 pairs in 1947 to just five or six pairs by the late 1960s (Dobbs 1975).

The current UK population is estimated at about 1,000 pairs (Gibbons *et al.* 1993) with a large proportion of this concentrated at a relatively small number of key sites.

5. Protection measures for population in UK

SPA suite

In the breeding season, the UK's SPA suite for Shovelers supports, on average, 155 pairs. This amounts to about 16% of the British breeding population, and about 2% of the international population. In an all-Ireland context, no sites have been selected in Northern Ireland. The SPA suite total is contained within a single site (Ouse Washes - Table 6.33a.1) where Shoveler has been listed as a qualifying species.

6. Classification criteria

The single site (Ouse Washes) in the UK supporting more than 1% of the international population was considered under Stage 1.2, and was selected after consideration of Stage 2 judgements.

There is a long history of occupancy by Shovelers at the Ouse Washes (Thomas 1978; 1980) which is a multi-species wetland site supporting many other qualifying species. It is a high-quality semi-natural habitat with lowland wet grassland, specifically managed by maintenance of appropriate water levels and grazing, for the benefit of breeding waterbirds.

It was not considered necessary to select additional sites using Stage 1.4, as Shovelers are widely, though thinly, dispersed elsewhere in the UK and in Europe.

Distribution map for breeding Shoveler SPA suite

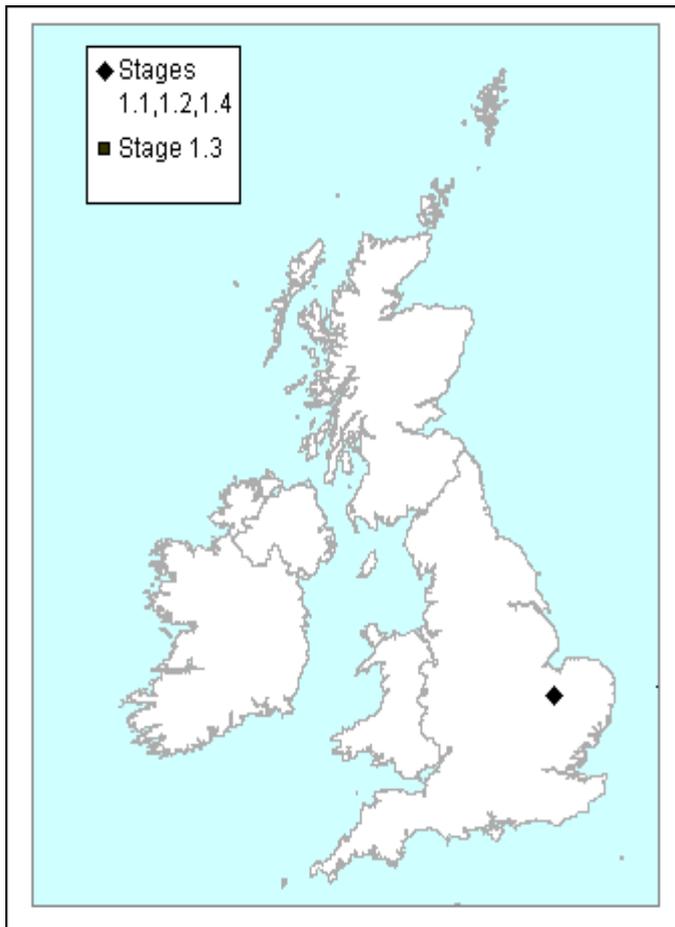


Table 6.33a.1 – SPA suite

| Site name | Site total | % of biogeographical population | % of national population | Selection stage |
|---------------|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Ouse Washes | 155 | 1.6 | 15.5 | 1.2 |
| TOTALS | 155 | 1.6% | 15.5% | |