Pochard
Aythya ferina

Status
Amber listed: WI, WL
SPEC 4 (S)
Annex II/1 and III/2 of EC Wild Birds Directive

National monitoring
Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
WeBS.

Population and distribution
The pochard became established as a UK breeding species early in the 19th century, and it is now largely found in the east of England and Scotland, at lowland waters with significant emergent and submergent vegetation (88–91 Atlas). The wintering numbers expanded quickly up to the 1970s, with numbers then decreasing in line with those in northwest Europe (Winter Atlas). The reasons for the reduction in pochard numbers remain unclear (Kirby et al 1995). There are an estimated 250–400 pairs breeding and 81,200 individuals wintering in the UK (Population Estimates).

Ecology
Pochards breed on large pools, lakes or slow-moving streams in Britain. A clutch of 8–10 eggs is laid between early May and the end of July but mainly in June. There is a single brood and the young fledge by mid-August. In winter, pochards occur on lowland freshwater reservoirs, lakes, ponds, gravel pits, etc, usually with a good growth of submergent aquatic plants and small molluscs (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