



Scaup

Aythya marila

Status

Amber listed: BR, SPEC 3^W (L)^W
Schedule 1 of WCA 1981
Annex II/2 of EC Wild Birds Directive

National monitoring

Rare Breeding Birds Panel.
WeBS.

Population and distribution

The scaup is the rarest of Britain's breeding ducks, there being no evidence of regular annual breeding attempts anywhere in the country. Britain does, however, have sites of national and international importance for wintering populations (*WeBS 1994–95*). This is one of the few wildfowl that has declined in numbers in the UK in recent years, and the number of scaup wintering around the UK is estimated to be 13,400 birds (*Population Estimates*).

Ecology

In winter, scaup occur mainly in coastal or estuarine areas, and a strong attraction to sewage outfalls has been noted. Food consists of mussels and also items in, or prey benefiting from, sewage outfalls (*Red Data Birds*).

Breeding season survey

No method is given here.

Winter survey

See the generic methods section on WeBS counts.

Detailed survey

Where a more detailed survey of wintering scaup than WeBS is required, two main generic methods are available. These involve counts either onshore or offshore (from an aeroplane or ship). Both methods are outlined in the generic methods section under *Inshore marine waterfowl* and *Waterfowl and seabirds at sea*.

Scaup feed mainly at night and tend to flock together to roost on the sea during the day. If daytime roosting areas in large estuaries are known or located, a variation on the onshore method specific to scaup involves approaching on foot at low tide where they can be counted, sometimes with greater accuracy than at high tide. In the Solway, for example, low-tide counts have picked up higher numbers of scaup than high-tide counts. See *Low Tide Counts* in the generic survey methods section.