

Common Shelduck

Scientific Name: *Tadorna tadorna*

Class: Aves

Order: Anseriformes

Family: Anatidae



Molting flocks can be very large (100,000 on the Wadden Sea), since most pairs leave their partially grown young in a crèche with just one or two adults. This species is mainly associated with lakes and rivers in open country, breeding in rabbit burrows, tree holes, and haystacks or similar. In winter it is common on suitable estuaries and tidal mudflats as well. The young will dive under water to avoid predators and the adults will fly away from them to act as a decoy.

Range

Coastal NW Europe and scattered Mediterranean sites eastwards through Central Asia to NE China, and south to Iran and Afghanistan

Habitat

Favors coastal mudflats and estuaries, generally occurring in saltwater only, particularly in Europe, but often intentionally seeking fresh water as well in order to drink.

Gestation

29-31 days

Litter

8-10 eggs

Behavior

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Reproduction

Starts in April or May. In single pairs or small groups; nest made of grass, moss or bracken, lined with down, in cavities such as hollow trees or rabbit burrows. Chicks have blackish down above and on thighs, white below.

Wild Diet

Mostly aquatic invertebrates (mollusks, insects, crustaceans) with predilection for saltwater snail.