

PRINCIPAL SITES

Table 4 below lists the principal sites for non-breeding waterfowl in the UK as monitored by WeBS. All sites supporting more than 10,000 waterbirds are listed, as are all sites supporting internationally important numbers of one or more waterbird species. Naturalised species (e.g. Canada Goose and Ruddy Duck) or non-native species presumed to have escaped from captive collections have been excluded from the calculations, as have gulls and terns since recording of these species is optional (see *Analysis* for further details).

A total of 153 sites are listed. Of these, 132 supported one or more internationally important waterbird populations and 83 held five year peak means of 10,000 or more birds. The top 20 sites remain the same as last year with relatively few changes in order. High counts on the North Norfolk Coast and at Breydon Water & Berney Marshes saw both sites rise in the table, whilst the Severn Estuary fell as high counts in 1994-95 slipped from the calculations.

Of sites with 10,000 or more birds, 1999-2000 numbers at a third of these remained stable (within 10% of the previous five year mean), 55% recorded a drop in numbers (a fall of more than 10%) and only 12% increased (a rise of 10% or more). These figures are similar to those in 1998-99, and reflect the relatively mild winters in these years with few cold spells in continental Europe. Only three sites recorded counts 30% or more above the previous average. Increases on the Ouse Washes (+38%) were primarily accounted for by large flocks of Lapwing and Golden Plover and other wildfowl numbers returned to more normal levels following very

low counts in 1998-99. Although improvements in coverage may account for some of the Lavan Sands increase (+58%), genuine high counts of Dunlin, Oystercatcher, and to a lesser extent Wigeon and Shelduck, undoubtedly contributed. Figures for WWT Martin Mere (+53%) are influenced by the number of Pink-footed Geese recorded during WeBS counts, which was high in 1999-2000, as were counts of Lapwing. Of those showing a drop, fluctuations of roosting grey geese numbers accounted for changes at Dupplin Lochs (-46%), Dinnet Lochs (-63%) and Loch of Skene (-35%). On the Ribble Estuary (-33%), Wigeon, Knot and Dunlin numbers all dropped and on the Thames Estuary (-31%), low counts of Dark-bellied Brent, Knot and a continued fall in Bar-tailed Godwit numbers were the major factors. Numbers at Hamford Water (-43%) fell for the third consecutive year, and though Dark-bellied Brent numbers have dropped considerably over the five year period, declines in several other wildfowl and wader species (notably Teal, Wigeon, Dunlin, Grey Plover amongst others) are of some concern. Low Dunlin numbers affected counts on the Orwell Estuary (-30%), Southampton Water (-30%) and the Cromarty Firth (-33%), where there were also low counts of Knot. The absence of large flocks of Lapwing or Golden Plover, species whose numbers fluctuate widely at many sites, contributed to low counts at Carmarthen Bay (-49%) and the Lower Derwent Valley (-32%). Finally, the absence of an accurate assessment of the large and difficult to count Eider flock substantially lowered the total waterbird numbers on the Tay Estuary (-47%).

Table 4. Total number of waterfowl at principal waterfowl sites in the UK, 1995-96 to 1999-2000 (includes only Core Count data and roost counts of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese), and species occurring in internationally important numbers at each (based on all survey data). Species codes are listed at the end of the table.

Site	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	Average	Int. imp. species
Wash	330,724	279,907	345,431	291,113	367,647	322,964	DB SU OC GP GV L KN DN BW BA CU RK TT
Ribble Estuary	281,603	299,134	281,428	259,593	193,394	263,030	BS WS PG SU WN T. PT OC GV KN DN BW BA RK
Morecambe Bay	232,796	251,817	312,954	265,614	232,031	259,042	PG SU PT OC L KN DN BA CU RK TT BH LB HG
Thames Estuary	155,427	171,110	185,178	154,471	115,941	156,425	DB OC RP GV KN DN BA RK
Humber Estuary	150,327	81,553	159,764	192,472	170,927	151,009	SU GP GV L KN DN BA RK

Site	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	Average	Int. imp. species
Solway Estuary	145,358	157,686	146,733	152,586	141,513	148,775	WS PG YS SU PT OC KN DN BA CU RK
North Norfolk Coast	98,758	119,203	170,690	143,220	178,006	141,975	PG DB WN PT GV KN BA RK
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	130,231	151,208	128,418	108,018	91,895	121,954	SU T. PT OC GV KN DN BW BA CU RK TT
Mersey Estuary	90,638	116,030	117,312	93,910	106,031	104,784	SU T. PT DN BA RK TT
Loughs Neagh & Beg	110,195	101,707	82,232	103,350	97,308	98,958	CA WS PO TU SP GN
Forth Estuary	101,765	87,508	85,469	89,583	69,199	86,705	SZ PG SU KN BA RK TT TE
Somerset Levels	110,050	38,394	111,431	96,862	76,624	86,672	BS WN GA T. SV L.
Swale Estuary	63,258	100,444	88,975	80,037	76,290	81,801	WN SV GV KN BW
Blackwater Estuary	71,390	85,778	83,812	77,416	84,473	80,574	DB SU GV DN BW RK
Strangford Lough	80,598	90,390	73,205	69,731	61,268	75,038	QN SU KN BA RK
Severn Estuary	71,047	80,326	69,978	75,556	67,231	72,828	BS SU PT DN RK LB
Ouse Washes	62,840	57,076	72,265	44,900	85,082	64,433	BS WS WN GA PT SV PO BW
Breydon Water & Berney	46,447	58,537	54,951	67,207	65,645	58,557	BS PG L.
Medway Estuary	60,627	64,539	60,098	45,720	50,876	56,372	SU PT GV DN RK
Hamford Water	69,916	70,068	56,295	48,099	32,706	55,417	DB T. GV KN RK
Alt Estuary	44,411	54,760	69,639	47,151	50,368	53,266	GV KN BA
Burry Inlet	53,085	64,395	35,233	52,063	52,527	51,461	PT SV OC KN
Chichester Harbour	58,871	49,308	45,868	45,134	47,091	49,254	DB GV DN BA
Montrose Basin	45,219	38,830	62,010	58,465	41,123	49,129	PG KN RK
Inner Moray Firth	46,587	54,706	47,120	45,936	46,909	48,252	JI KN BA RK
Stour Estuary	48,755	45,024	47,696	45,102	53,727	48,061	GV KN DN BW RK
Loch of Strathbeg	58,401	40,121	47,285	48,440	37,239	46,297	WS PG YS
Lindisfarne	39,281	42,568	38,657	48,771	40,285	41,912	QS GV KN BA
Lough Foyle	46,975	37,810	37,486	45,243	34,963	40,495	WS QN BA
Langstone Harbour	44,868	32,843	36,702	42,072	43,819	40,061	DB RP GV DN
Lower Derwent Valley	50,678	41,305	42,110	32,836	29,107	39,207	T.
Abberton Reservoir	48,293	34,801	42,264	24,514	33,681	36,711	GA T. SV
Colne Estuary	38,466	27,953	42,271	33,808	35,396	35,579	DB RP RK
Loch Leven	35,881	38,737	32,810	35,653	30,882	34,793	PG GA SV
Duddon Estuary	38,108	37,113	34,087	32,601	31,921	34,766	PT RK
Dengie Flats	23,595	39,339	39,374	36,539	33,361	34,442	GV KN BA
Dupplin Lochs	35,030	40,665	29,998	42,504	22,826	34,205	PG
Cromarty Firth	44,104	34,481	31,712	31,412	24,249	33,192	PG JI KN BA
Alde Complex	31,137	27,343	35,367	36,752	29,296	31,979	AV RK LB
Dornoch Firth	27,468	29,591	36,937	31,425	32,028	31,490	JI WN BA
West Water Reservoir	31,500	25,879	39,173	21,969	28,438	29,392	PG
Nene Washes	28,440	15,167	37,827	33,800	27,053	28,457	BS PT SV
Poole Harbour	30,672	32,849	28,479	26,250	23,897	28,429	SU BW
WWT Martin Mere	30,606	16,867	22,015	29,295	37,637	27,284	BS WS PG
Walland Marsh	-	18,103	29,771	30,710	28,975	26,890	BS
Rutland Water	31,604	22,890	28,300	23,252	24,066	26,022	GA SV
Tees Estuary	33,483	24,257	20,148	22,147	19,332	23,873	
Exe Estuary	26,967	19,925	23,847	23,286	-	23,506	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	21,270	19,484	24,419	22,173	25,103	22,490	DB
Clyde Estuary	22,643	23,035	21,728	20,084	23,012	22,100	RK
Lochs Davan & Kinord	41,513	27,095	25,656	4,996	10,000	21,852	JI
Belfast Lough	21,496	18,390	21,669	20,868	20,177	20,520	GG RK
Cleddau Estuary	19,479	21,636	19,916	20,372	19,013	20,083	
Orwell Estuary	30,158	23,939	13,813	17,136	15,206	20,050	RK
Ythan Estuary	32,390	12,952	18,789	15,622	18,461	19,643	PG RK

Site	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	Average	Int. imp. species
Carsebreck & Rhynd Lo.	18,649	16,089	19,456	23,809	20,199	19,640	PG
Southampton Water	23,415	18,807	22,786	17,255	14,153	19,283	
Tay Estuary	20,493	24,017	15,998	23,420	10,636	18,913	PG JI BA
Wigtown Bay	20,008	15,894	17,980	17,123	15,643	17,330	PG
Pagham Harbour	18,325	20,359	19,262	13,937	14,575	17,292	PT
Hule Moss	16,488	20,433	21,089	12,114	15,403	17,105	PG
Deben Estuary	15,805	18,557	16,857	14,634	18,128	16,796	RK
Arun Valley	20,238	14,971	17,803	16,264	14,284	16,712	
Carmarthen Bay	21,220	23,365	13,192	12,833	12,560	16,634	
Beaulieu Estuary	14,868	16,109	19,077	17,434	12,174	15,932	
Taw-Torridge Estuary	14,732	14,925	17,161	13,259	19,217	15,859	
Outer Ards	14,272	21,863	11,126	16,786	14,720	15,753	QN TT
Fleet/Wey	16,495	15,701	15,138	16,503	12,499	15,267	
Dungeness Gravel Pits	12,258	11,155	20,799	13,394	14,796	14,480	
Eden Estuary	16,205	13,519	15,856	13,923	12,227	14,346	
Blyth Estuary (Suffolk)	12,269	13,472	15,502	-	-	13,748	
Loch of Skene	15,113	14,722	15,026	13,497	9,065	13,485	JI
North West Solent	14,865	13,520	11,900	12,844	10,713	12,768	
Cotswold WP (West)	10,800	9,090	13,056	16,015	12,201	12,232	
Pitsford Reservoir	9,799	13,168	13,521	13,292	8,909	11,738	GA
Loch of Harray	13,078	8,139	13,238	11,996	11,710	11,632	
Dyfi Estuary	12,978	13,827	8,614	9,948	12,502	11,574	
Lavan Sands	9,858	15,311	8,907	5,152	18,394	11,524	
Rye Harbour & Pett Level	10,780	10,632	11,664	13,451	10,821	11,470	
Hanningfield Reservoir	12,903	13,138	13,860	8,569	8,699	11,434	
Portsmouth Harbour	18,528	11,722	8,880	8,924	8,200	11,251	
Caithness Lochs	16,292	5,489	7,551	12,743	10,066	10,428	JI
Middle Tame Valley GP	9,687	11,701	10,970	8,927	9,535	10,164	
Loch of Lintrathen	5,565	4,735	13,369	8,525	14,616	9,362	PG JI
Upper Lough Erne	9,295	9,245	10,818	7,151	10,117	9,325	WS
Thanet		6,256	7,094	11,543	11,034	8,982	TT
Cameron Reservoir	13,704	5,475	13,068	6,596	4,526	8,674	PG
Carlingford Lough	6,819	7,460	8,729	9,172	9,955	8,427	QN
Carse of Stirling	8,235	-	-	-	-	8,235	PG JI
Chew Valley Lake	9,905	8,203	7,319	7,248	7,115	7,958	SV
Loch Spynie	9,671	6,491	5,690	9,802	5,370	7,405	JI
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	4,791	7,686	7,291	6,812	8,719	7,060	GA
Tophill Low Reservoirs	6,959	4,070	8,641	5,664	9,532	6,973	BH CM
Loch Fleet Complex	7,036	7,306	5,271	7,401	5,328	6,468	JI
River Avon: F'bridge to Ringwood	7,292	6,033	6,680	5,369	5,838	6,242	GA
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	4,479	5,787	7,341	6,710	5,629	5,989	GA
Gladhouse Reservoir	4,770	8,063	7,350	2,022	6,720	5,785	PG
Thrapston Gravel Pits	4,225	6,967	5,132	3,402	5,621	5,069	GA
Drummond Pond	2,842	8,645	5,476	5,192	2,876	5,006	PG JI
Fala Flow	2,437	5,000	7,500	2,100	7,550	4,917	PG
Haddo House Lakes	6,328	9,056	1,468	4,310	2,870	4,806	JI
Loch Tullybelton	1,395	4,658	8,000	8,600	0	4,531	PG
St Benet's Levels	10,633	4,003	4,120	2,707	795	4,452	BS
Larne Lough	4,148	4,231	3,742	4,270	4,467	4,172	QN
Upper Cowgill Reservoir	4,560	6,060	6,000	1,000	2,900	4,104	PG
Holburn Moss	3,182	3,533	5,010	4,930	2,460	3,823	PG
Kilconquhar Loch	4,018	4,323	4,250	2,986	2,885	3,692	JI
R. Clyde: Carstairs to Thankerton Bridge	-	-	627	2,076	7,795	3,499	WS PG
Loch Long	1,722	159	318	8,000	6,356	3,311	PG
Threipmuir & Harlaw Rsrs	1,086	2,433	1,051	4,464	6,910	3,189	JI

Site	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	Average	Int. imp. species
Bridge of Earn	3,014	-	-	-	-	3,014	Jl
Strathearn (West sites)	2,665	2,730	-	-	-	2,698	Jl
Loch Mahaick	776	2,779	6,792	1,458	875	2,536	PG
Loch Ken	1,764	1,780	2,611	1,977	3,431	2,313	NW
Loch Mullion	1,020	0	3,000	2,000	5,500	2,304	PG
Loch of the Clans	-	1,942	2,300	-	-	2,121	Jl
Bute	4,286	1,797	1,202	1,056	1,780	2,024	Jl
Killough Harbour	3,592	318	-	-	-	1,955	QN
R. Eamont & Eden: Honeypot to Edenhall		753	2,080	1,985	1,548	1,592	Jl
Birgham Haugh	-	1,150	-	-	-	1,150	Jl
Loch Garten	1,987	589	735			1,104	Jl
Stranraer Lochs/W Freugh	794	-	-	-	-	794	NW Jl
Black Cart Water	313	237	508	837	661	511	WS
R. Foyle: Grange	287	387	150	-	-	275	WS
Machrihanish	737	41	172	266	28	249	NW
South Walls	-	-	97	390	-	244	YN
Rhunahaorine	-	-	-	165	-	165	NW
SW Lancashire							PG
Benbecula							JH
Colonsay/Oronsay							JH YN
East Sanday Coast							TT
North Sutherland							YN
North Uist							JH YN
Scapa Flow							ND SV
South Uist							JH
Tankerness							ND
Holkham Bay							PG
Scot Head							PG
Snettisham							PG
Keills Peninsular & Danna							NW YN
Islay							NW YN
Tiree							NW JH YN RP TT
Coll							NW JH YN
Aberlady Bay							PG
Tay-Isla Valley							PG Jl
Ythan Estuary/Slains Lochs							PG
Findhorn Bay							Jl
Munlochy Bay							Jl
Loch Eye/Cromarty Firth							PG Jl
Moray Firth							SZ
Monach Isles							YN
Sound of Harris							YN
Orkney Islands							Jl

Note that no count data are presented for the last 26 sites in Table 4. These areas are important for geese or swans, or are non-estuarine coastal sites surveyed by local surveys for which WeBS data are not regularly received. Data for any important WeBS sites within these areas, e.g. Lochs Gruinart and Indaal on the island of Islay, are presented separately within the Table. Other internationally important sites within these areas are not routinely monitored.

Note that not all species have thresholds for international importance, hence, they do not feature in this table.

Species codes

AV	Avocet	ND	Great Northern Diver
BA	Bar-tailed Godwit	NW	Greenland White-fronted Goose
BS	Bewick's Swan	OC	Oystercatcher
BW	Black-tailed Godwit	PG	Pink-footed Goose
CA	Cormorant	PO	Pochard
CO	Coot	PT	Pintail
CU	Curlew	QS	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Svalbard population)
DB	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	QN	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Greenland population)
DN	Dunlin	RK	Redshank
E.	Eider	RM	Red-breasted Merganser
EW	European White-fronted Goose	RP	Ringed Plover
GA	Gadwall	SP	Scaup
GD	Goosander	SS	Sanderling
GN	Goldeneye	SU	Shelduck
GP	Golden Plover	SV	Shoveler
GV	Grey Plover	SZ	Slavonian Grebe
HG	Herring Gull	T.	Teal
JI	Greylag Goose (Icelandic population)	TE	Sandwich Tern
JH	Greylag Goose (Northwest Scotland population)	TT	Turnstone
KN	Knot	TU	Tufted Duck
L.	Lapwing	WM	Whimbrel
LB	Lesser Black-backed Gull	WN	Wigeon
LN	Long-tailed Duck	WS	Whooper Swan
MA	Mallard	YN	Barnacle Goose (Greenland population)
MS	Mute Swan	YS	Barnacle Goose (Svalbard population)