

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Key to symbols commonly used in the species accounts (see Presentation and notation)

As footnotes to thresholds (see Appendix 2)

- ? population size not accurately known
- + population too small for meaningful threshold
- * where 1% of the national population is less than 50 birds, 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold for national importance
- ** a site regularly holding more than 20,000 waterbirds (excluding non-native species) qualifies as internationally important by virtue of absolute numbers
- † denotes that a qualifying level different to the national threshold has been used for the purposes of presenting sites in this report

In tables of important sites:

- no data available
 - () incomplete count
 - † same meaning as when used for thresholds
 - ▲ site was of a lower importance status in the previous year
 - ▼ site was of a higher importance status in the previous year
 - ^{1, 2} count obtained using different survey methodology (see table below for sources and references)
- A blank line within a section of a table is used to separate sites holding 50 or more birds where the relevant threshold is below this figure (e.g. Little Grebe, p36) or to separate those meeting the national or all-Ireland threshold from additional sites selected for presentation in this report (e.g. Long-tailed Duck, p92).

Sources of additional survey information used in compiling tables of important sites. Non-WeBS counts are identified in the table by the relevant number or letter below given in superscript preceding the count, e.g. ¹⁰ 231 represents a count from Greenland White-fronted Goose Study surveys.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 A. Webb (<i>in litt.</i>) | 19 P. Collin (<i>in litt.</i>) |
| 2 Argyll Bird Report | 20 R. Godfrey (<i>in litt.</i>) |
| 3 Argyll Bird report & SNH | 21 R. MacDonald (<i>in litt.</i>) |
| 4 B. Martin (<i>in litt.</i>) | 22 RSPB pers comm. |
| 5 Bean Goose Working Group, e.g. Smith <i>et al.</i> (1994), Simpson & Maciver (2000) | 23 RSPB/Talisman Energy studies, e.g. Stenning (1998) and Butterfield (<i>in litt.</i>) |
| 6 Cranswick <i>et al.</i> (1998) | 24 Roost counts |
| 7 D. Walker (<i>in litt.</i>) | 25 S. Gibson (<i>in litt.</i>) |
| 8 Delany & Ogilvie (1994), SNH data and Mitchell <i>et al.</i> (1997) | 26 SNH 'adopted' counts |
| 9 Friends of Cardigan Bay, e.g. Green & Elliott (1993) & R. Thorpe (<i>in litt.</i>) | 27 SNH (<i>in litt.</i>) |
| 10 Greenland White-fronted Goose Study, e.g. Fox & Francis (2001) | 28 SNH Greenland Goose Census |
| 11 Hayward <i>et al.</i> (1999) | 29 SOTEAG reports, e.g. Heubeck (1998) |
| 12 Little Egret Roost counts | 30 Stewart <i>et al.</i> (1996) |
| 13 M Parslow-Otsu (<i>in litt.</i>) | 31 Supplementary daytime counts |
| 14 M. Howe (<i>in litt.</i>) | 32 WWT data |
| 15 M. Tickner (<i>in litt.</i>) | 33 WWT studies, e.g. Rees <i>et al.</i> (2000) |
| 16 NEWS data | 34 WWT/JNCC National Grey Goose Census |
| 17 Orkney Bird Report | 35 WWT/SNH surveys, WWT unpubl. data |
| 18 Orkney Bird Report & J. Plowman (<i>in litt.</i>) | 36 Waltho, C.M. (2000) |
| | 37 WeBS Low Tide Counts |
| | 38 Williams (1999) |

RED-THROATED DIVER

Gavia stellata

GB max: 771 Jan
NI max: 43 Nov

International threshold: 750

Great Britain threshold: 50

All-Ireland threshold: 10*

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Totals in Britain and Northern Ireland were average for recent years. Whilst both totals are considerable underestimates of the true numbers, the numbers recorded each year by WeBS are relatively consistent. This consistency extends also to the monthly patterns, with a general increase to a mid winter peak in Britain, followed by a steady decline. Although relatively high numbers are recorded from September onwards and are still found into April, there is no evidence of marked passage numbers at a national level. In Northern Ireland, there is usually an early winter peak, and often a small peak in late winter also. Although the pattern in the province is more variable than for Britain, this is to be expected given the much smaller numbers recorded.

There were no markedly high or low counts at individual sites in 1999-00 with the exception of a relatively low peak in the Moray. Whilst Red-

throated Divers are considered to occur closer to shore than other divers, they may still occur sufficiently far from land to make observations difficult and, particularly at large, open sites, may range widely. Thus it might be expected that counts in the Moray would vary between years. Elsewhere, although the peak on the Solway Firth in 1999-2000 was the lowest of the complete counts in the last five years, it was sufficient to elevate this site to national importance. The count on Traeth Lafan was also notable, particularly given the relatively small and enclosed nature of this site compared with others in the table.

As noted in previous reports, the mid Suffolk coast is of key importance for this species. A remarkable 2,680 birds recorded off Aldringham Walks, just south of Minsmere, in mid January 2000 demonstrates the continued importance of this area (Rafe 2000).

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Cardigan Bay	900	528	⁹ 536	270	229	Jan	493
Moray Firth	(72)	(52)	²³ 284	²³ 179	²³ 103	Dec	189
Clyde Estuary	126	195	136	138	123	Mar	144
Forth Estuary	98	124	75	121	66	Oct	97
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	11	35	166	81	101	Sep	79
Dengie Flats	41	96	100	45	92	Feb	75
Wash	56	15	26	224	24	Jan	69
Scapa Flow	-	-	-	³⁸ 59	-		59
Solway Estuary	³¹ (9)	37	59	78	28	Feb	51 ▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Lough Foyle	83	18	4	³¹ 50	15	Mar	34
Belfast Lough	10	11	41	57	39	Nov	32
Craigalea to Newcastle	13	-	-	-	-		13
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels							
Durham Coast							
Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000							
Traeth Lafan	90	Feb					
Morecambe Bay	52	Jan					
Outer Ards	10	Feb					

BLACK-THROATED DIVER

Gavia arctica

GB max: 83 Feb
NI max: 5 Nov

International threshold: 1,200

Great Britain threshold: 7*

All-Ireland threshold: 1*

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Counts of Black-throated Divers in 1999-2000 were high by WeBS standards: the peak total in Northern Ireland was the highest in the province yet recorded by WeBS, whilst that in Britain was only six fewer than the largest total to date. However, counts in other months for both countries were very much smaller.

In winter, Black-throated Divers are found primarily off the west coast of Scotland, particularly in sandy, shallow areas around the Hebridean islands (Webb *et al.* 1990). The paucity of observers in this area is a key reason why WeBS records only a small fraction of the 700 or so birds estimated to use British waters. It is clear from the table below that, at many of the

coastal sites which are traditionally covered by WeBS, significant numbers are recorded on a regular basis.

A dedicated survey of divers, grebes and seaducks was made of the South Cornwall Coast Important Bird Area (IBA), stretching from Helford River to St Austell Bay (Geary & Lock 2001). Over 100 Black-throated Divers were recorded on four of five survey visits between December and March, with a peak of 160 in March. Following a peak of 135 birds in 1994-95 (Slade 1996), the site clearly continues to be of key importance for this species, almost certainly the most important in England and perhaps in Great Britain as a whole.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Scapa Flow	-	-	-	³⁸ 57	-		57
Loch Ewe	-	-	-	26	29	Feb	28
Moray Firth	(5)	(5)	²³ 22	²³ 5	²³ 14	Nov	14
Loch Coalisport	-	-	-	12	-		12
Forth Estuary	19	7	8	10	(4)	Nov	11
Gruinard Bay	-	-	-	5	14	Feb	10 ▲
Girvan to Turnberry	6	8	23	3	7	Nov-Feb	9
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	³⁷ 5	³⁷ 2	³⁷ 7	0	0		3 ▲
Belfast Lough	2	2	0	0	3	Nov	1
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels							
Loch Indaal							
Polbain							
Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000							
Red Point to Port Henderson	9	Feb					
Kentra Moss/Loch Shiel	7	Jul					
Outer Ards	2	Nov					

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER

Gavia immer

GB max: 107 Feb
NI max: 8 Dec

International threshold: 50

Great Britain threshold: 30*†

All-Ireland threshold: ?†

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

The peak total recorded by WeBS in Britain rose again in 1999-2000, exceeding the previous highest of 95 in the preceding winter. Whilst the fact that WeBS monitors only a small proportion of the true number in Britain precludes any meaningful comment about trends, it does

appear that coverage by WeBS is improving. Counts in four months in 1999-2000 exceeded 80 birds, and all of these in midwinter rather than during passage, whilst it is immediately apparent from the table below that many of the key sites are being visited more regularly, at least

compared with the mid 1990s when counts were provided for only a proportion of these sites. Continued counts at Loch Eriboll may boost totals in future years, while the count on the Forth Estuary is particularly noteworthy given that counts of divers, grebes and seaducks at this have been made regularly there but never approached the 1999-2000 total.

A proper assessment of the status and distribution of this species requires extensive (and expensive) aerial or boat based survey to complement the land-based counts of birds in

sea lochs, since a large proportion of birds is found many kilometres from shore and particularly off the Scottish west coast and Hebrides (Webb *et al.* 1990). Dedicated land-based counts of the South Cornwall Important Bird Area (between Helford River and St Austell Bay) recorded over 50 birds during four of five winter counts in 1999-2000, with a peak of 109 in March (Geary & Lock 2001). This follows a peak of 89 birds in the same area in 1994-95 (Slade 1996) and indicates that the site is of national importance for this species.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Scapa Flow	-	-	-	³⁸ 781	-		781
Tankerness	-	²⁹ 393	²⁹ 330	-	-		362
Sites of national importance in Great Britain [†]							
Whiteness to Scarvister	-	-	-	²⁹ 44	-		44
Moray Firth	(1)	(8)	²³ 54	²³ 17	²³ 12	Dec	28
Loch Indaal	14	11	33	27	25	Nov	22
Traigh Luskentyre	12	39	8	16	8	Jan	17
Loch Eriboll	-	-	-	-	15	Jan	15 ▲
South Yell Sound	-	²⁹ 10	²⁹ 10	²⁹ 11	²⁹ 4	Feb	9
Kyle of Tongue	-	-	-	(9)	-		9 ▲
Gruinard Bay	-	-	-	5	9	Feb	7 ▲
Lochs Beg & Scridain	6	(6)	6	6	(8)	Nov	7
Red Point to Port Henderson	-	-	-	9	4	Feb	7
Sullom Voe	-	-	²⁹ 5	²⁹ 5	²⁹ 8	Dec	6
Loch Ewe	-	-	-	4	8	Feb	6 ▲
Forth Estuary	2	3	2	2	17	Sep	5 ▲
Easting/Sand Wick	-	-	-	-	5	Dec/Mar	5 ▲
Loch Coalisport	-	-	-	5	-		5
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland [†]							
Tyrella Shore	12	-	-	-	-		12
Lough Foyle	15	9	3	³¹ 22	2	Mar	10
Carlingford Lough	26	1	2	6	7	Dec	8
Kilkeel to Lee Stone Point	8	-	-	-	-		8
Dundrum Bay	2	0	0	23	0		5
Craigalea to Newcastle	5	-	-	-	-		5

Internationally or nationally important sites not counted in last five years

Sound of Taransay

Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Fleet/Wey	8	Dec
Egilsay	6	Feb
North Norfolk Coast	6	Nov
Blackwater Estuary	5	Feb
Belfast Lough	5	Jan

[†] as few sites in Great Britain and Northern Ireland exceed the respective thresholds, a qualifying level of five has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

PIED-BILLED GREBE

Podilymbus podiceps

Vagrant

Native range: North America

A single was at Thompson Water during April.

LITTLE GREBE
Tachybaptus ruficollis

GB max: 4,382 **Oct**
NI max: 613 **Nov**

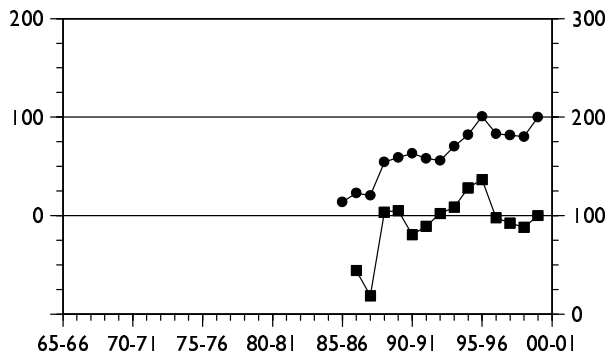


Figure 3. Annual indices for Little Grebe in GB (circles, left axis) and NI (squares, right axis)

The October 1999 count in Britain was the highest monthly total recorded by WeBS to date, surpassing the previous highest of 4,128 in 1995-96. Accordingly, annual indices also rose sharply, matching the value of 1995-96. Counts remained relatively high throughout the rest of the winter, exceeding 3,000 even in March, and monthly indices showed values to be around 25% higher than normal for recent years from January onwards. In Northern Ireland, numbers were slightly higher than in the preceding three winters, but remained below the 700-800 birds regularly recorded from the late 1980s to mid 1990s.

Despite the larger British totals, counts on the Thames Estuary and Chew Valley Lake, two of the key sites for Little Grebe, were much lower than normal and continued marked declines in

International threshold: ?
Great Britain threshold: 30*
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

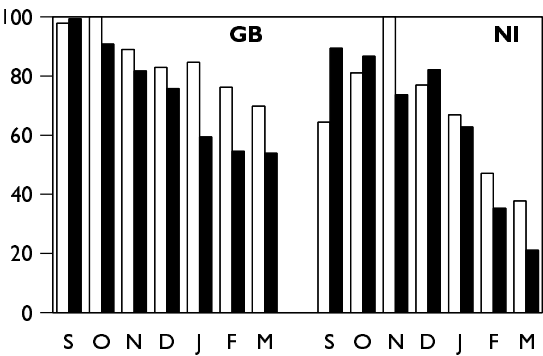


Figure 4. Monthly indices for Little Grebe in GB and NI (white bars 1999-2000; black bars 1994-95 to 1998-99)

recent years. Notably higher counts were recorded at around 10 sites, mostly those with average maxima of 40-50 birds, with several holding around double the normal number in 1999-2000. Several attained national importance status (with a mean of 50 or more birds) as a result. Both Lee Valley Gravel Pits and Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits also achieved this status, although 1999-2000 counts were lower than average. It is also notable that in a year with a large national total, only two new sites were added to the table below whereas three dropped from the table as a result of their means falling below 30 birds. However, the number of sites which held 30 or more birds in 1999-2000 alone increased to 17 from the average of around 10 in recent years.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Swale Estuary	195	213	244	201	238	Jan	218
Thames Estuary	477	255	124	130	87	Nov	215
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	162	80	100	109	158	Sep	122
Chew Valley Lake	122	152	105	80	65	Sep	105
North Norfolk Coast	93	51	87	105	74	Jan	82
Rutland Water	83	35	62	78	120	Sep	76
Cleddau Estuary	75	91	72	56	69	Nov	73
Deben Estuary	49	63	78	37 84	72	Dec	69
Chichester Harbour	100	52	72	50	58	Nov	66
Wash	146	53	29	32	56	Dec	63
Eyebrook Reservoir	70	76	56	49	-		63
Sutton/Lound Gravel Pits	72	39	72	-	45	Mar	57
R. Test: Fullerton to Stockbridge	62	52	52	63	51	Jan	56
R. Avon: F'bridge to Ringwood	86	39	49	46	52	Mar	54
Tees Estuary	42	47	52	67	56	Sep	53
Blackwater Estuary	59	44	47	41	70	Sep	52 ▲
Somerset Levels	37	55	47	62	56	Oct/Mar	51
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	45	39	56	77	37	Oct	51 ▲

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean	
Alde Complex	51	38	44	47	72	Dec	50	▲
Kirkby-on-Bain Gravel Pits	-	(6)	40	43	68	Sep	50	▲
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	52	(53)	(68)	36	40	Oct	50	▲
King's Dyke Pits	48	18	31	52	92	Oct	48	
Hogganfield Lough	31	45	56	35	72	Sep	48	
Abberton Reservoir	45	21	24	(12)	96	Sep	47	▲
Hamford Water	³¹ 83	18	26	61	41	Nov	46	
Rye Harbour & Pett Level	46	28	37	51	65	Aug	45	
Cameron Reservoir	70	33	56	44	24	Sep	45	▼
Bewl Water	57	44	36	43	38	Oct	44	
Portsmouth Harbour	36	30	35	43	65	Feb	42	
Kilconquhar Loch	52	42	49	25	44	Sep	42	
Langstone Harbour	30	24	37	60	55	Nov	41	
Southampton Water	37	³⁷ 46	34	³⁷ 43	40	Nov	40	
Pitsford Reservoir	64	32	10	(27)	50	Sep	39	
Blagdon Lake	59	23	31	29	46	Sep	38	
Dungeness Gravel Pits	29	16	19	39	73	Aug	35	▲
Fleet/Wey	37	30	34	27	47	Oct	35	
Avon Valley: Salisbury to F'bridge	42	38	33	25	38	Dec	35	
Barton Pits	19	43	44	47	24	Sep	35	
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	27	32	27	47	38	Mar	34	
Medway Estuary	60	42	(18)	16	17	Nov	34	
Orwell Estuary	36	45	34	21	³⁷ 28	Nov	33	
Lower Derwent Valley	³¹ 49	37	42	21	14	Several	33	▲
Humber Estuary	29	(10)	(22)	30	37	Dec	32	▲
Hampton & Kempton Reservoirs	54	28	16	30	29	Oct	31	
Pirton Pool	37	41	32	18	23	Sep	30	
Hilfield Park Reservoir	28	35	(34)	32	21	Aug/Sep	30	

Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland [†]

Loughs Neagh & Beg	626	376	330	380	413	Nov	425	
Strangford Lough	169	140	101	99	87	Dec	119	
Upper Lough Erne	62	73	50	86	67	Mar	68	
Lough Money	33	35	51	46	55	Oct	44	
Larne Lough	20	24	28	48	35	Nov	31	▲

Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Cemlyn Bay & Lagoon
Hickling Broad
King's Mill Reservoir

Internationally or nationally important sites not counted in last five years

R. Soar: Leicester

Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

R. Avon: R'wood to Christchurch	76	Dec	East Wretham Meres	32	Aug
Old Moor Wetlands	56	Sep	Burry Inlet	32	Jan
R. Irwell	50	Jan	Woolston Eyes	32	Sep
Netherfield Gravel Pits	45	Sep	Wimbleball Lake	31	Feb
Loch Etive: Connel to Taynuilt	42	Jan	Belfast Lough	31	Sep
Crouch-Roach Estuary	42	Sep	Haverton Hole	30	Aug
Brent Reservoir	42	Sep	Inner Moray Firth	30	Dec
Upper Quoile River	36	Dec	Poole Harbour	30	Nov
Carriston Reservoirs	35	Sep			

[†] as no all-Ireland threshold has been set for Little Grebe, a qualifying level of 30 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

Podiceps cristatus

GB max: 9,190 Oct

NI max: 2,406 Sep

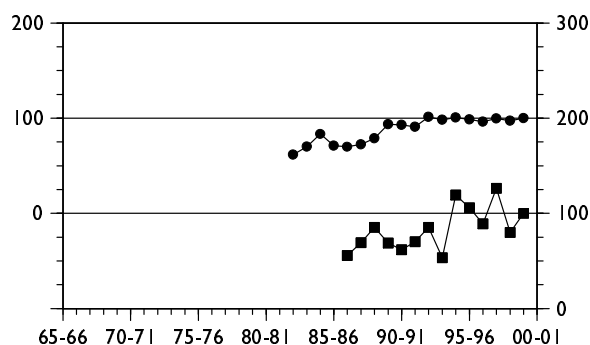


Figure 5. Annual indices for Great Crested Grebe in GB (circles, left axis) and NI (squares, right axis)

The peak British count of Great Crested Grebes has only once before exceeded 9,000, when 9,571 were recorded in 1992-93, although the figure of 8,000 has been surpassed in all years since 1989-90. This is reflected in the annual indices, which show values to have remained stable since the late 1980s. Numbers in Northern Ireland fluctuate between years, and the 1999-2000 peak was around average for the last decade, having ranged between 1,500 and 3,800. Monthly indices showed that numbers of Great Crested Grebes remained much higher than normal after mid winter, interestingly with almost exactly the same pattern as for Little Grebe. Monthly indices for Northern Ireland were almost twice the normal value for much of the winter, although this may in part be due to lower numbers on Loughs Neagh & Beg at the start and end of the winter.

The low count at Loughs Neagh & Beg in

International threshold: 1,500

Great Britain threshold: 100

All-Ireland threshold: *30

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

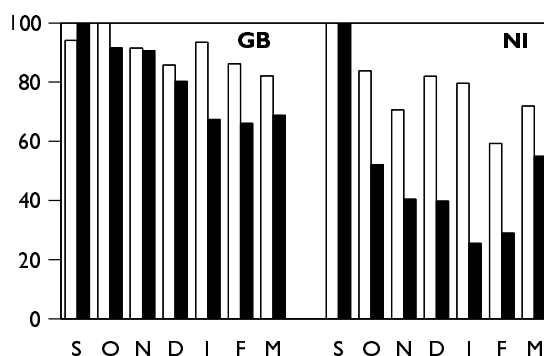


Figure 6. Monthly indices for Great Crested Grebe in GB and NI (white bars 1999-2000; black bars 1994-95 to 1998-99)

1999-2000 meant the site no longer qualified as internationally important and, with counts not surpassing 1,000 in two of the last five years, it seems unlikely that the site will regain this status in the near future. Although peak counts at Lough Foyle have been variable in recent years, that in 1999-2000 was especially low. Counts at most sites in Britain were around average for recent years. Numbers were low on the Forth Estuary, Grafham Water and Lafan Sands. Peak counts in 1999-2000 were markedly higher at just five sites, notably Lade Sands, where large numbers have been noted offshore previously, but perhaps only congregate or are visible from suitable vantage points under certain conditions. Perhaps part of the same concentration was responsible for the much larger than normal count at nearby Rye Harbour & Pett Level, elevating this site to national importance.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Belfast Lough	1,350	1,200	2,403	1,935	1,508	Dec	1,679
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Rutland Water	579	378	767	843	726	Sep	659
Chew Valley Lake	615	645	460	585	550	Sep	571
Lade Sands	⁷ 277	7	425	730	³¹ 1,100	Feb	508
Forth Estuary	411	597	491	319	297	Sep	423
Queen Mary Reservoir	298	593	271	185	312	Jan	332
Solway Estuary	36	³¹ (430)	³¹ 710	191	³⁷ 251	Feb	324
Grafham Water	377	506	197	272	150	Jan	300
Traeth Lafan	¹⁴ 283	¹⁴ 244	¹⁴ 360	¹⁴ 389	¹⁴ 165	Aug	288
Morecambe Bay	296	286	282	191	239	Dec	259
Stour Estuary	312	261	185	196	³⁷ 290	Nov	249
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	167	263	246	289	202	Jan	233
Cardigan Bay	⁹ 176	⁹ 311	⁹ 177	(58)	(29)	Jan	221
Pitsford Reservoir	188	304	147	(218)	195	Sep	210
Abberton Reservoir	238	248	149	185	207	Oct	205

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Cotswold Water Park (West)	189	181	175	235	224	Oct	201
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	132	164	175	148	201	Oct	164
Blithfield Reservoir	70	169	105	198	240	Dec	156
Bough Beech Reservoir	145	-	-	-	-		145
Loch Ryan	³¹ 201	³¹ 145	54	64	258	Sep	144
Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir	258	118	168	88	90	Jul	144
Loch Leven	210	98	112	119	170	Sep	142
Southampton Water	169	94	169	³⁷ 127	106	Nov	133
Attenborough Gravel Pits	120	155	135	107	135	Dec	130
Blagdon Lake	67	270	73	89	(98)	Oct	125
Draycote Water	77	93	84	133	200	Jan	117 ▲
Alton Water	120	109	73	139	143	Dec	117
Eyebrook Reservoir	167	155	103	37	-		116
Thrapston Gravel Pits	(110)	88	(82)	76	(179)	Nov	114 ▲
Blackwater Estuary	171	118	99	100	71	Oct/Mar	112
Ardleigh Reservoir	82	84	171	112	98	Jul	109
King George VI Reservoir	401	41	16	37	47	Sep/Oct	108
Mersey Estuary	61	169	214	³⁷ 70	13	Jan	105
Hanningfield Reservoir	124	59	123	80	130	Aug	103
Rye Harbour & Pett Level	33	22	88	68	299	Jan	102 ▲
Bewl Water	³¹ 85	73	111	136	104	Aug	102

Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland

Loughs Neagh & Beg	2,440	1,537	863	1,596	847	Sep	1,457 ▼
Upper Lough Erne	90	276	304	145	243	Mar	212
Carlingford Lough	143	364	231	270	249	Nov	251
Lough Foyle	488	116	86	³¹ 189	24	Oct	181
Larne Lough	147	124	76	124	140	Sep	122
Strangford Lough	182	83	64	69	111	Jan	102

Craigalea to Newcastle

35 - - - - 35

Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)
Wraysbury Reservoir
Pegwell Bay
Thanet Coast

Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Swansea Bay	204	Jan	S Muskham & N Newark GP	123	Nov
Thanet Coast	³¹ 202	Dec	Cotswold Water Park (East)	117	Sep
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	140	Oct	Clyde Estuary	116	Sep
Langstone Harbour	129	Oct			

RED-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps grisegena

GB max: 58 **Aug**
NI max: 0

International threshold: 150

Great Britain threshold: 1*†

All-Ireland threshold: ?

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Although the size of the traditional late summer peak of Red-necked Grebes, almost wholly comprising birds on the Firth of Forth, was around average for recent years, national totals for the winter were period were only around half their normal value, only twice exceeding 20 birds.

Dedicated surveys of the south Cornwall Coast recorded small numbers throughout the winter, but with a marked increase to 35 birds in

March between Helford River and St Austell Bay (Geary & Lock 2001). Following a peak of 26 in 1994-95, it is clear that the area supports a sizeable proportion of the British total. The survey also hints that perhaps numbers of relatively dispersed and unobtrusive species, such as divers and the rarer grebes, might be easily overlooked in the absence of appropriate surveys.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain [†]							
Forth Estuary	³⁵ 52	44	64	41	55	Aug	51
Scapa Flow	-	-	-	³⁸ 23	-		23
North Norfolk Coast	19	2	17	8	6	Nov	10

[†] as the British threshold for national importance is so small, a qualifying level of five has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

SLAVONIAN GREBE

Podiceps auritus

GB max: 175 Feb
NI max: 3 Dec

International threshold: 50

Great Britain threshold: 4*

All-Ireland threshold: ?

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Country totals of Slavonian Grebes in 1999-2000 were lower than normal for recent winters, particularly in Northern Ireland. Although counts at many of the sites which traditionally hold fewer birds are rather variable, they were without exception smaller than usual in 1999-2000. Counts on the Moray Firth and Lough Foyle were especially low, the latter dropping well below international threshold as a consequence. The only notably above average count was at Traigh Luskentyre, Harris. A dedicated survey of the South Cornwall Coast between Helford River and St Austell Bay recorded a peak of 57 Slavonian Grebes (Geary & Lock 2001), sufficient to qualify the site as internationally important if such numbers occur on a regular basis.

Evans (2000) recently reviewed Slavonian Grebe status and distribution in Britain and Ireland, based on supplementary counts gleaned from dedicated surveys, county bird reports and other information, between 1986 and 1993. He estimated the midwinter total to be 725-730 birds, around 50% higher than the figure given in the Winter Atlas (Chandler 1986), but similar to the estimate of 670 given in Prater (1981). This clearly demonstrates the need for additional counts to WeBS to monitor such species adequately. Evans (2000) estimated the total for Britain as 670 birds, with over 50% concentrated at just 10 sites. A large proportion of the estimate of 55 birds in Ireland were found at Lough Foyle and Strangford Lough.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Scapa Flow	-	-	-	³⁸ 124	-		124
Moray Firth	(8)	(22)	²³ 163	²³ 98	²³ 24	Nov	95
Forth Estuary	³⁵ 108	107	75	57	67	Mar	83
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Whitness to Scarvister	-	-	-	²⁹ 33	-		33
Pagham Harbour	³⁷ 26	29	39	22	34	Feb	30
Loch Indaal	20	(13)	32	21	27	Feb	25
North Norfolk Coast	77	17	9	11	5	Feb	24
Clyde Estuary	25	32	25	5	22	Mar	22
Traigh Luskentyre	24	13	8	19	38	Nov	20
Loch of Harray	31	6	14	14	24	Oct	18
Studland Bay	16	-	-	-	-		16
Loch Ryan	¹⁹ 19	³¹ 21	11	9	10	Nov	14
Blackwater Estuary	22	14	18	10	8	Dec	14
North West Solent	13	12	(16)	14	8	Jan	13
Lindisfarne	15	2	12	19	1	Feb	10
Poole Harbour	13	10	9	10	3	Several	9
Chichester Harbour	3	13	³⁷ 9	³⁷ 6	2	Nov	7
Exe Estuary	6	2	11	7	-		7
Tamar Complex	9	7	5	4	4	Feb	6
Loch of Swannay	8	10	5	4	3	Feb	6
Loch Eriboll	-	-	-	-	5	Jan	5 ▲
Upper Loch Torridon	-	-	-	9	0		5

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Lough Foyle	103	20	6	³¹ 48	2	Dec	36 ▼
Strangford Lough	³⁷ 6	³⁷ 4	³⁷ 11	0	0		4

Internationally or nationally important sites not counted in last five years

Sound of Taransay

Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Camel Estuary	7	Dec
Newtown Estuary	³⁷ 6	Feb
Southampton Water	³⁷ 5	Feb
Dengie Flats	4	Feb
Traeth Lafan	4	Feb

† as no all-Ireland threshold has been set for Slavonian Grebe, a qualifying level of 4 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

BLACK-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps nigricollis

International threshold: 1,000

Great Britain threshold: 1*†

All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 42 Apr

NI max: 0

* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

National totals of Black-necked Grebes remained low in 1999-2000, particularly given that the peak for the period September to March was just 35 birds. In part, this is again due to the absence of counts from Carrick Roads in the Fal Complex. However, dedicated counts of this area in 1999-2000 found just 18 birds, and even then, four of five count visits recorded nil birds in the whole South Cornwall Coast IBA (Geary & Lock 2001). Although this species can be extremely difficult to find under all but ideal conditions, these results

suggest a marked drop in numbers at this site. Relatively low counts at other sites in the table might also suggest a general decline in numbers in recent years, but perusal of county bird reports shows, for example, that *ad hoc* counts of 10 or more birds are regularly made at both Studland Bay and Portland Harbour (Davenport 2000). The collection of supplementary counts for many sites along the south coast would greatly boost reported totals of this species.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain †							
Langstone Harbour	24	19	9	17	12	Jan	16
Fal Complex	24	23	33	0	0		16
Woolston Eyes	4	(6)	17	25	0		12
Studland Bay	12	-	-	-	-		12
Poole Harbour	15	7	12	2	1	Feb	7
William Girling Reservoir	3	3	4	11	11	Oct	6 ▲
Tamar Complex	8	4	6	6	6	Dec	6 ▲

Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Fleet/Wey	11	Feb
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	5	Sep

† as the British threshold for national importance is so small, a qualifying level of five has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report