

PRINCIPAL SITES

Table 6 below lists the principal sites for non-breeding waterbirds 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) and non-native species presumed to have escaped from captive collections have been excluded from the totals, as have gulls and terns since the recording of these species is optional (see *Analysis*). Table 7 lists other sites holding internationally important numbers of waterbirds, which are not routinely monitored by standard WeBS surveys but rather by the Icelandic Goose Census and aerial surveys.

A total of 234 sites are listed in tables 6 and 7. Of these 215 supported one or more species in internationally important numbers and 83 held a five-year mean peak of 10,000 or more birds. Typically there are few changes to the top twenty sites listed in the principal sites table, with the order of the top ten rarely changing. The Wash remains as the key waterbird site with regard to numbers and in 2005/06 held the highest numbers of the preceding five years. Numbers on the North Norfolk Coast continue to rise and the five-year mean surpassed that of Morecambe Bay to become the third most important site in the UK in terms of numbers of waterbirds.

Following a low year in 2004/05, numbers on the Humber Estuary were back up to around average on the previous year, which saw the Humber Estuary climb back into the top five sites at the expense of the Thames. Total numbers on the Solway Estuary were over 40% lower than for 2004/05 and counts on both the Mersey and Forth Estuaries continue to fall and are now their lowest for over ten years. Conversely, numbers on the Ouse Washes rose by over 30% to their highest total during the past five years. Following recent declines in the Severn Estuary, numbers rose to well above the five-year average. The recent decline in the numbers of diving ducks at Loughs Neagh and Beg that have contributed to the fall in numbers at the site seem not to be as severe as first thought. The site remained internationally important for Scaup and total numbers at the site were average for the five-year period.

Five-year averages of sites holding 10,000 or more waterbirds were relatively similar compared to the previous year, with 75 of the 83 sites undergoing changes of less than 10%. The greatest increases were experienced at Abberton Reservoir (52%) and Ouse Washes (31%). The greatest decreases were seen at Solway Estuary (43%) and the Mersey Estuary (12%).

Table 6. Total number of waterbirds at principal sites in the UK, 2001/2002 to 2005/06 (includes data from all available sources) and species occurring in internationally important numbers at each. (Species codes for those listed are provided in Table 8.)

Site	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	Average	Int.Imp.species
The Wash	332,655	343,467	338,382	369,516	398,233	356,451	PG DB SU PT OC RP GP GV L. KN SS DN BW BA CU RK
Ribble Estuary	210,308	255,012	252,374	242,666	220,693	236,211	BS WS PG SU WN T. PT OC RP GV L. KN SS DN BW BA RK
North Norfolk Coast	185,106	212,442	284,590	235,276	246,946	232,872	PG DB WN PT RP KN BW BA
Morecambe Bay	211,422	250,769	249,321	204,094	201,456	223,412	PG SU PT OC KN DN BW BA CU RK
Humber Estuary	159,720	174,931	217,799	163,062	171,097	177,322	PG DB SU RP GP GV L. KN DN BW BA RK
Thames Estuary	169,963	197,181	160,183	172,439	176,503	175,254	DB T. SV OC AV RP GV KN DN BW BA RK
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	195,534	127,015	171,901	115,285	130,282	148,003	SU PT OC KN DN BW BA RK
Solway Estuary	124,042	153,365	145,051	140,102	81,921	128,896	WS PG YS SU PT SP OC RP KN DN BA RK
Somerset Levels	114,998	102,800	85,154	99,759	87,810	98,104	MS WN GA T. PT SV L.
Mersey Estuary	102,668	108,764	97,787	85,571	75,333	94,025	SU T. DN BW RK
Forth Estuary	88,248	109,461	91,991	84,780	79,243	90,745	PG JI SU KN BA RK
Ouse Washes	76,122	66,419	85,715	89,847	130,682	89,757	MS BS WS WN GA T. PT SV BW

Site	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	Average	Int.Imp.species
Breydon Wtr / Berney Mrshs	78,429	64,807	75,827	110,697	106,431	87,238	BS PG WN SV AV GP L. BW
Swale Estuary	88,292	86,102	86,967	73,830	82,846	83,607	WN T. PT RP GP BW
Strangford Lough	80,423	79,525	88,519	78,451	83,271	82,038	MS QN SU GP KN BA RK
Loch of Strathbeg	68,135	49,492	79,327	81,645	86,258	72,971	WS PG YS
Blackwater Estuary	66,476	81,687	64,534	78,257	70,054	72,202	DB GP GV KN DN BW RK
Severn Estuary	60,735	68,658	64,675	64,055	80,250	67,675	MS BS SU PT DN
Inner Moray/Inverness Firth	59,617	59,711	80,226	65,878	68,475	66,781	PG JI
Alt Estuary	90,066	63,502	72,793	53,073	41,838	64,254	GV KN SS BA
Lindisfarne	63,760	64,120	57,578	53,365	59,790	59,723	PG YS QS WN BA
Loughs Neagh and Beg	63,479	53,401	59,026	56,259	58,255	58,084	MS WS PO SP
Stour Estuary	59,755	50,206	48,587	46,677	48,214	50,688	RP GV KN BW
Montrose Basin	63,766	37,034	35,478	50,208	57,045	48,706	PG
Burry Inlet	41,384	43,830	52,852	49,289	45,360	46,543	PT OC BW
Chichester Harbour	51,494	44,826	43,732	43,375	47,646	46,215	DB DN BW
Dengie Flats	55,929	39,325	23,895	45,747	58,302	44,640	GV KN BA
Carmarthen Bay	31,358	36,917	47,067	55,748	45,084	43,235	CX
Hamford Water	44,225	40,135	37,991	39,939	43,465	41,151	DB RP GV
Langstone Harbour	33,738	37,457	43,775	45,649	41,477	40,419	DB DN BW
Loch Leven	38,128	39,589	37,329	33,773	40,355	37,835	MS PG T.
Dornoch Firth	41,744	39,106	37,819	36,329	33,712	37,742	JI WN BA
WWT Martin Mere	37,482	39,106	30,884	45,320	30,938	36,746	WS PG
Cromarty Firth	36,642	26,278	41,307	37,970	36,785	35,796	JI BA
Lough Foyle	29,448	34,154	37,291	33,076	38,651	34,524	WS QN BA
Lower Derwent Ings	26,151	33,262	32,630	34,614	38,396	33,011	
Alde Complex	29,086	29,647	22,905	31,838	34,369	29,569	AV BW
Abberton Reservoir	20,604	20,677	31,382	24,133	50,286	29,416	MS SV PO
Duddon Estuary	25,067	22,185	32,592	29,175	35,351	28,874	PT
Nene Washes	19,343	52,857	20,912	29,263	20,701	28,615	BS PT
Medway Estuary	29,796	27,291	25,863	27,025	30,871	28,169	PT AV BW
Rutland Water	22,151	26,193	28,239	26,196	31,192	26,794	MS GA SV
WWT Caerlaverock (Inland)	19,217	34,020	25,174	26,988	.	26,350	WS YS
Crouch-Roach Estuary	21,024	21,377	18,219	34,182	29,553	24,871	DB RK
Tees Estuary	22,198	25,355	30,085	21,040	23,568	24,449	
Poole Harbour	24,561	25,955	24,856	26,360	17,672	23,881	AV BW
Orwell Estuary	21,444	24,794	25,228	19,983	25,192	23,328	BW
Cleddau Estuary	18,585	17,879	20,398	27,752	31,431	23,209	
Pegwell Bay	21,256	28,801	25,509	18,222	20,188	22,795	
Inner Firth of Clyde	22,904	23,199	23,739	19,916	23,242	22,600	
Tay Estuary	25,699	20,723	21,302	19,903	24,545	22,434	PG BA
Loch Spynie	15,467	19,523	15,748	30,734	27,247	21,744	PG JI
Exe Estuary	24,754	20,590	22,895	20,125	19,139	21,501	BW
Lavan Sands	17,281	21,637	21,062	22,025	19,284	20,258	
Belfast Lough	18,818	18,789	19,417	20,077	19,528	19,326	BW
Deben Estuary	16,969	17,080	17,873	19,050	19,081	18,011	
Wigtown Bay	18,134	14,868	22,295	19,461	15,144	17,980	PG YS
Colne Estuary	25,665	4,187	19,342	18,294	19,102	17,318	DB
Mersehead RSPB Reserve	19,864	24,166	16,820	24,490	124	17,093	YS PT
Loch of Skene	17,136	11,004	13,695	18,834	24,732	17,080	PG JI
Fleet and Wey	19,678	14,551	16,290	17,494	17,347	17,072	MS
Pagham Harbour	14,287	13,223	14,566	20,528	20,774	16,676	DB PT BW
Carsebreck & Rhynd Lochs	19,947	15,252	16,530	12,262	17,028	16,204	PG
Southampton Water	16,867	16,684	15,441	15,039	12,560	15,318	
Eden Estuary	15,169	15,124	15,496	14,216	12,191	14,439	
Taw-Torridge Estuary	14,195	11,847	10,315	16,422	17,243	14,004	
Middle Yare Marshes	13,852	10,682	9,739	17,519	18,133	13,985	
Blyth Estuary	13,713	.	.	.	.	13,713	BW
North West Solent	12,307	10,071	15,139	16,224	13,707	13,490	DB
Portsmouth Harbour	8,125	14,911	16,420	9,663	17,232	13,270	DB
Walland Marsh	21,016	5,109	5,951	21,164	12,904	13,229	
Ythan Estuary	13,569	10,757	8,049	13,599	16,182	12,431	
Rye Harbour and Pett Level	11,458	10,854	16,921	9,717	11,389	12,068	
Dungeness Gravel Pits	11,073	13,872	11,673	11,003	12,626	12,049	SV
R. Nith: Keltonbnk-Nunholm	12,215	11,697	14,855	8,972	.	11,935	PG YS
Loch of Lintrathen	10,476	9,243	16,418	11,070	10,330	11,507	PG
Dyfi Estuary	9,391	11,490	11,524	12,418	12,016	11,368	
Arun Valley	10,719	15,688	11,913	8,724	9,379	11,285	
Cotswold Water Park (West)	10,032	9,103	12,475	10,176	12,105	10,778	
Pitsford Reservoir	9,022	8,852	12,523	10,266	12,197	10,572	
Carlingford Lough	9,763	10,764	10,516	11,302	10,458	10,561	QN
Beaulieu Estuary	11,774	11,148	6,140	10,793	10,776	10,126	

Site	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	Average	Int.Imp.species
Chew Valley Lake	8,775	8,369	10,109	9,285	13,497	10,007	SV
Hule Moss	9,726	7,109	15,860	8,994	6,992	9,736	PG
Loch of Harray	9,129	10,010	12,330	8,501	7,566	9,507	MS JI
Outer Ards Shoreline	210	12,694	12,749	9,552	9,893	9,020	QN
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	9,592	9,316	8,996	8,394	8,053	8,870	GA
Upper Lough Erne	7,717	8,777	9,239	9,369	9,151	8,851	MS WS
Cameron Reservoir	18,249	4,495	11,228	5,088	2,847	8,381	PG
R. Avon: R'wood-Christch	4,838	24,594	4,766	2,794	2,795	7,957	BW
Loch Fleet Complex	11,677	8,275	6,486	5,177	7,923	7,908	JI
Dundrum Bay	9,257	6,859	6,959	7,490	8,421	7,797	QN
R. Avon: Fordingbr-R'wood	7,420	10,022	6,781	6,100	6,198	7,304	GA
R Clyde: Carstairs-Thankert	14,501	4,683	6,623	4,510	5,785	7,220	PG
Tring Reservoirs	6,838	6,420	6,912	8,405	6,831	7,081	MS
Hornsea Mere	5,720	8,905	7,341	6,912	6,340	7,044	MS
Loch Eye	5,210	1,926	4,479	8,352	15,006	6,995	WS JI
Orchardton and Auchencairn Bays	.	7,813	11,246	4,170	4,371	6,900	YS
Slains Lochs (Meikle and Sand and Cotehill)	2,832	360	576	17,311	12,615	6,739	PG
Loch of Stenness	9,129	7,098	5,636	5,072	6,475	6,682	JI
Loch of Boardhouse	5,096	5,257	7,111	5,904	7,159	6,105	JI
Hickling Broad	5,303	6,109	7,070	4,980	6,382	5,969	BS
Milldam & Balfour Mains Pools	5,037	7,755	6,217	3,918	4,841	5,554	JI
Holburn Moss	1,776	6,378	10,501	5,397	3,000	5,410	PG
Loch Gruinart Floods	.	3,541	5,021	4,299	4,145	4,252	JH
Severn Hams	6,080	2,320	4,245	4,639	3,065	4,070	PT
Kilconquhar Loch	3,284	3,942	5,871	2,985	3,734	3,963	JI
Tweed Estuary	3,807	3,516	4,181	3,527	3,523	3,711	MS
Lake of Menteith	732	4,958	4,639	6,462	732	3,505	PG
Dee Flood Meadows	4,603	3,887	2,859	1,550	4,109	3,402	PT
Loch a' Phuill (Tiree)	2,632	2,643	3,077	2,800	5,428	3,316	JH
Island of Egilsay	1,463	2,570	3,548	5,401	3,480	3,292	JI
R. Tay: Haughs of Kercock	1,804	1,306	808	6,027	6,257	3,240	JI
Loch Watten	5,356	3,024	2,199	3,100	2,448	3,225	JI
Loch of Hundland	3,123	4,343	3,100	2,562	2,821	3,190	JI
Loch of Skail	2,372	3,363	3,053	2,652	4,312	3,150	JI
St Benet's Levels	3,216	2,262	3,762	.	.	3,080	BS
Loch Scarmclate	2,025	2,870	3,198	2,700	3,868	2,932	JI
Loch Bee (South Uist)	1,416	3,048	2,674	4,038	3,428	2,921	JH
Lower Lough Erne	.	2,931	2,484	3,341	2,877	2,908	MS
Loch Lomond	1,718	4,224	2,968	3,194	2,185	2,858	NW
Loch of Swannay	2,880	2,975	2,660	2,910	2,779	2,841	JI
Loch Ken	2,893	4,220	4,037	2,333	618	2,820	JI
Loch of Wester	5,776	.	.	1,129	1,162	2,689	JI
Loch Hempriggs	2,785	.	.	3,891	1,242	2,639	JI
Balrinald Nature Reserve	3,484	2,815	2,167	2,894	1,722	2,616	JH
Isle of Coll	1,638	2,296	2,027	3,072	4,000	2,607	NW JH YN
Killough Harbour	1,815	2,732	1,158	2,736	3,977	2,484	QN
Lochs Davan and Kinord	5,567	3,124	1,335	913	1,034	2,395	JI
Loch Paible (North Uist)	1,169	2,253	2,609	2,698	1,687	2,083	JH
Upper Quoile River	2,758	897	1,239	977	4,394	2,053	MS
Lower Teviot Valley	1,134	2,781	.	1,621	.	1,845	JI
Loch Garten	2,804	1,000	1,133	2,417	1,715	1,814	JI
Teviot Haughs	.	.	1,127	.	2,393	1,760	JI
Melbost Sands, Broad Bay & Tong Saltings (Lewis)	1,729	.	394	1,808	1,527	1,365	JH
Loch Bhasapoll (Tiree)	2,163	777	1,135	1,173	1,574	1,364	JH
Balnakiel Farm	.	.	.	.	1,198	1,198	YN
Loch Mor: Baleshare (North Uist)	686	789	1,353	1,112	770	942	JH
Loch Gorm	.	.	.	187	1,629	908	NW JH YN
Loch Riaghain (Tiree)	736	647	604	684	494	633	JH
Loch An Eilein (Tiree)	366	569	492	643	861	586	JH
Moine Mhor & Add Estuary	221	586	1,072	344	471	539	JH
Balnakeil Bay	.	.	925	16	52	331	YN
Branahuie Saltings	324	.	.	.	.	324	JH
Kentra Moss and Lower Loch Shiel	207	216	277	364	306	274	JH

Table 7. Other sites in the UK holding internationally important numbers of waterbirds in 2005/06, which are not routinely monitored by standard WeBS surveys. (Species codes for those listed are provided in Table 8.)

Site	Int.Imp.species	Site	Int.Imp.species
Aberlady Bay Roost	PG	Scot Head Roost	PG
Banks Marsh West	PG	Snettisham Roost	PG
Beaully Firth Roost	Jl	Wells-next-the-Sea	PG
Benbecula	JH	North Sutherland	YN
Berney Marshes	PG	North Uist	JH YN
Bridge of Crathies	WS	Baleshare and Carinish (Grimsay)	JH
Bute	Jl JH	Balrarnald Cletraval and Tigharry	JH
Caithness Lochs	Jl	Berneray	JH YN
Colonsay/Oronsay	YN	Boreray and Lingay	JH
Dingwall Bay	Jl	Malaclate To Grenitote	JH
Dupplin Lochs	PG	Oronsay	JH
East Mainland	Jl	Paible	JH
East Mains Flood	Jl	Trumisgarry Clachan and Newton	JH
Easterton - Fort George	PG Jl	Norton Marsh	PG
Fala Flow	PG	Orkney	Jl YN
Findhorn Bay Roost	PG	South Walls (Hoy)	YN
Hule Moss (West)	PG	Pilling to Cockerham	PG
Inner Cromarty Firth - Conor Islands	Jl	Read's Island Flats	PG
Inner Cromarty Firth - Urquhart	Jl	Rhunahaorine	NW
Inner Firth of Tay	PG Jl	Rossie Bog	PG
Island of Eday	Jl	Sanday	Jl
Island of Islay	NW YN	Skinflats Roost	PG
Islands of Shapinsay	Jl	Solway Firth	YS
Isle of Oronsay	YN	Sound of Harris (NW) (Harris)	YN
Isle of Colonsay	NW	South Mainland	Jl
Isle of Lismore	NW	South Uist	JH
Isle of South Ronaldsay	Jl	Askernish To Smerclate	JH
Keills Peninsula and Isle of Danna	NW	Bornish To Askernish	JH
Liverpool Bay	CX	Drimore To Howmore	JH
Loans of Tullich	WS	Howbeg To Bornish	JH
Loch Eye and Cromarty Firth	WS PG Jl	Lochdar, Gerinish and Drimsdale	JH
Loch Fleet	Jl	Lochdar Gerinish To Drimore	JH
Loch Tullybelton	PG	Southwest Lancashire	PG
Lune Estuary	PG	Stranraer Lochs	NW
Machrihanish	NW JH	Strathearn (West)	PG Jl
Martin Mere and Ribble Estuary	BS WS	Stronsay (Whole Island)	Jl
Meikle Loch - Slains	PG	Tay Estuary - Tentsmuir Point	PG
Munlochy Bay Roost	Jl	Tay and Isla Valley	PG Jl
Nigg Bay	Jl	Tayinloan	JH
North Norfolk Coast & The Wash	PG	Tiree	NW JH YN
Heigham Holmes	PG	West Mainland	Jl
Holkham Bay Roost	PG	West Water Reservoir	PG
Holkham and Wells	PG	Wyre Estuary	PG
Holme and Thornham	PG	Ythan Estuary and Slains Lochs	PG
Horse Mere	PG		

Table 8. Species codes for species listed in tables 6, 7 and 9.

AV	Avocet	PG	Pink-footed Goose
BA	Bar-tailed Godwit	PO	Pochard
BS	Bewick's Swan	PT	Pintail
BW	Black-tailed Godwit	QN	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Nearctic population)
CA	Cormorant	QS	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Svalbard population)
CU	Curlew	RK	Redshank
DB	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	RP	Ringed Plover
DN	Dunlin	SP	Scaup
GA	Gadwall	SS	Sanderling
GN	Goldeneye	SU	Shelduck
GP	Golden Plover	SV	Shoveler
GV	Grey Plover	SZ	Slavonian Grebe
JH	Greylag Goose (Northwest Scotland population)	T.	Teal
Jl	Greylag Goose (Icelandic population)	TT	Turnstone
KN	Knot	TU	Tufted Duck
L.	Lapwing	WN	Wigeon
MS	Mute Swan	WS	Whooper Swan
ND	Great Northern Diver	YN	Barnacle Goose (Nearctic population)
NW	Greenland White-fronted Goose	YS	Barnacle Goose (Svalbard population)
OC	Oystercatcher		