# Great Cormorant

***Phalacrocorax carbo***

**International threshold (NW Europe): 1,200**
**Great Britain threshold: 350**
**All-Ireland threshold: 140**

**GB max: 17,591 Oct**
**NI max: 1,862 Nov**

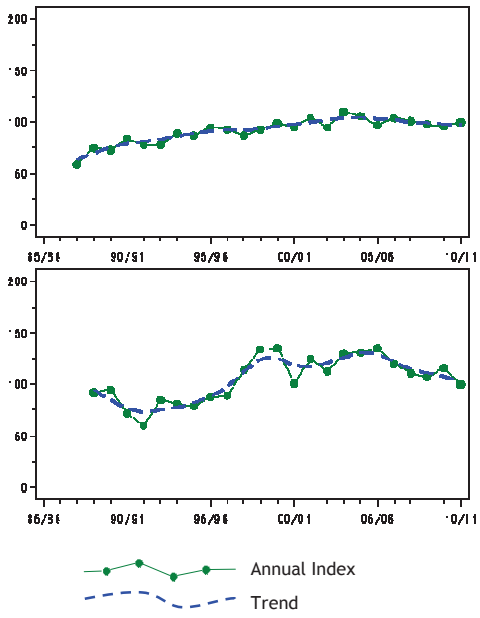


*Figure 34.a, Annual indices & trend for Cormorant in GB (above) & NI (below).*

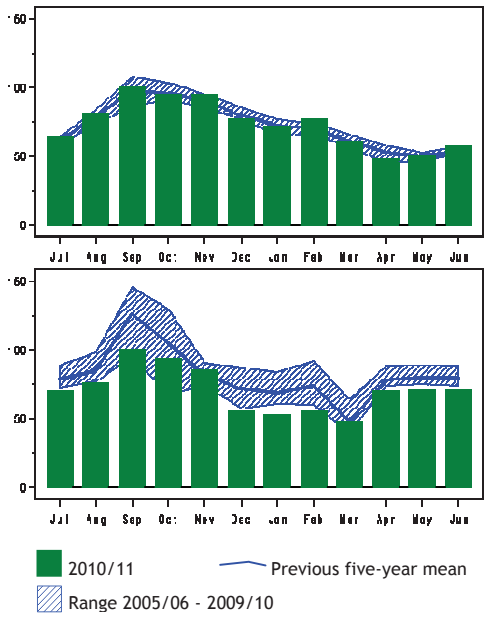


*Figure 34.b, Monthly indices for Cormorant in GB (above) & NI (below).*

Cormorants have increased steadily in Britain and Northern Ireland over the past twenty years. This has been in part due to the expansion of the race *sinensis*, which is more typical freshwater of freshwater habitats, from the continent, both as a breeder and non-breeder; thereby supplementing the UK population of the *carbo* race. Recent years however have indicated an apparent levelling off in the Cormorant index for Britain, potentially in response to increased culling effort nationally. Further work is probably required in order to improve the understanding of the effects of these measures on Cormorant populations in the UK. In Northern Ireland, the trend over the course of the last five years is a shallow decline.

In 2010/11, the peak from Dee Estuary surpassed that from Loughs Neagh & Beg for the third year in a row, and in doing so joined the Northern Irish site as one of international importance. The highest count of the year was from Alt Estuary, where the 1,459 noted in February is the most ever recorded there. Given the proximity of the sites, there may be some degree of exchange of Cormorants between the Dee and Alt Estuaries. Elsewhere, the 1,000+ threshold was surpassed at Morecambe Bay for the first time since September 2000.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites of international importance in the UK** | | | | | | | | |
| Loughs Neagh and Beg | 1,665 | 1,396 | 990 | 1,297 | 1,192 | Sep | 1,308 | |
| Dee Estuary (England and Wales) | 1,003 | 1,133 | 1,160 | 1,323 | 1,399 | Dec | 1,204 | ▲ |
| **Sites of national importance in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| Alt Estuary | 1,168 | 937 | 1,142 | 762 [12] | 1,459 | Feb | 1,094 | |
| Morecambe Bay | 641 | 937 | 669 | 814 | 1,047 | Sep | 822 | |
| Abberton Reservoir | 342 | 639 | 1,157 | 565 | 854 | Sep | 711 | |
| Dungeness and Rye Bay | 717 | 684 | 616 | 581 | 658 | Jan | 651 | |
| Ribble Estuary | 316 | 504 | 600 | 515 [10] | 928 | Nov | 573 | |
| Forth Estuary | 653 | 477 | (507) | (483) | 462 | Sep | 531 | |

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rutland Water | 918 | 396 | 326 | 470 | 393 | Sep | 501 | |
| Ranworth and Cockshoot Broads | 348 [11] | 287 [11] | 582 [11] | 629 [11] | 613 [11] | Mar | 492 | |
| Solway Estuary | 530 | 497 | (406) | (486) | 442 | Aug | 490 | |
| Poole Harbour | 374 | 254 | (349) | 457 | (630) | Oct | 429 | |
| Walthamstow Reservoirs | 640 | 433 | 395 | | 247 | May | 429 | |
| Alde Complex | 206 | 226 | 421 | 415 | 822 | Feb | 418 | ▲ |
| The Wash | 467 | 453 | 495 | 370 | 304 | Aug | 418 | |
| South Yell Sound | | 464 [9] | 335 [9] | | | | 400 | |
| Thames Estuary | 434 | (211) | 398 | 344 | (268) | Oct | 392 | |
| Hanningfield Reservoir | 500 | 215 | 600 | 245 | 279 | Sep | 368 | |
| Blackwater Estuary | 200 | 279 | (674) | 380 | 237 | Oct | 354 | |
| Queen Mary Reservoir | 88 | 295 | 211 | 406 | (750) | Dec | 350 | ▲ |
| **Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland** | | | | | | | | |
| Strangford Lough | 422 | 286 | (443) | 359 | 265 | Sep | 355 | |
| Belfast Lough | 350 | 312 | 267 | 286 | 302 | Oct | 303 | |
| Carlingford Lough | 230 | 142 | 98 | 381 | (91) | Nov | 213 | |
| Outer Ards Shoreline | 397 | 177 | 153 | 105 | 223 | Nov | 211 | |
| **Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2010/2011** | | | | | | | | |
| Tees Estuary | 329 | 378 | 306 | 284 | 241 | Aug | 308 | |
| Inner Firth of Clyde | 875 [11] | 104 | 229 | 112 | 131 | Sep | 290 | |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| River Avon - Fordingbridge to Ringwood | (198) | 135 | 184 | 217 | 529 | Dec | 266 | |
| River Avon - Ringwood to Christchurch | (67) | 73 | 52 | (45) | 461 | Jan | 195 | |
| Rostherne Mere | 273 | 328 | 317 | 333 | 398 | Jun | 330 | |
| Ouse Washes | 454 [12] | 294 | 189 [12] | 157 [11] | 398 [11] | Mar | 298 | |
| North Norfolk Coast | 265 | 300 [11] | 298 | 274 | 386 | Jul | 305 | |

## European Shag

*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

**International threshold:** 2,000
**Great Britain threshold:** 1,100†
**All-Ireland threshold:** ?†

**GB max:** 2,777 Nov
**NI max:** 479 Nov

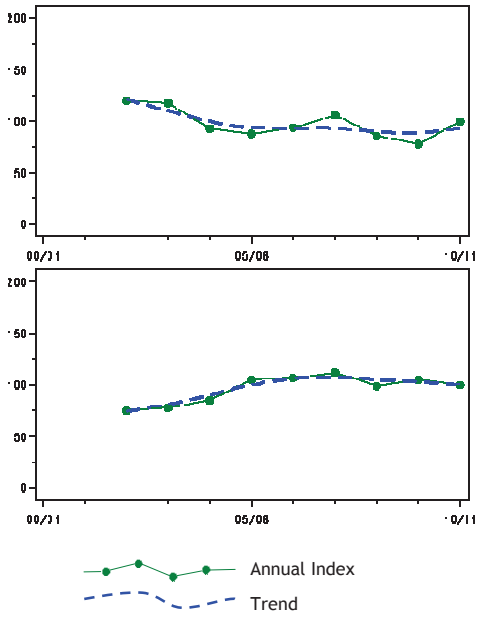


*Figure 35.a, Annual indices & trend for Shag in GB (above) & NI (below).*

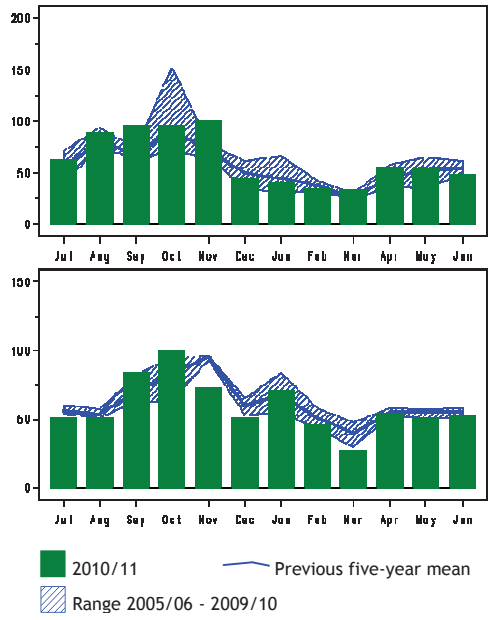


*Figure 35.b, Monthly indices for Shag in GB (above) & NI (below).*

In 2010/11, the largest WeBS counts of Shags were in autumn/early winter; 496 at Forth Estuary and 400 Widewall Bay. In Northern Ireland, the peak count was 353 at Outer Ards Shoreline in January. In England, numbers on the coast were close to average, and there were a small number of scattered inland records.

The UK's breeding population of Shags is well-monitored by the JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme, results of which have shown a decline of 15% between 2000 and 2010 (JNCC 2011). However, wintering numbers are relatively poorly monitored; currently the table below is largely populated with data collected by SOTEAG in Shetland.

In contrast to the breeding trend, analysis of winter numbers based on WeBS data (presented here for the first time) indicates stability at WeBS sites in both Britain and Northern Ireland. Distribution of Shags in winter can affect subsequent breeding phenology (e.g. Daunt *et al.* 2006), it being a species highly dependent on a particular food resource; the lesser sandeel (*Ammodytes tobianus*). The application of improved knowledge of winter distribution and enhanced robustness of the winter trends, both potentially attainable through improved WeBS coverage, could therefore be of conservation value.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 120 or more birds in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| South Yell Sound | | 1,065 [9] | 886 [9] | | | | 976 |
| Forth Estuary | 719 | (384) | (456) | (424) | (496) | Sep | 719 |
| Rova Head to Wadbister Ness | | 253 [9] | 377 [9] | 507 [9] | 327 [9] | Jan | 366 |
| Widewall Bay | 390 | 800 | 70 | 50 | 400 | Nov | 342 |
| Burra and Trondra | | 332 [9] | | | | | 332 |
| Island of Egilsay | 230 | | 286 | 161 | (380) | Nov | 264 |
| Quendale to Virkie | | 102 [9] | | 418 [9] | | | 260 |
| Scalloway Islands | | 221 [9] | | | | | 221 |
| Sullom Voe | | 219 [9] | 145 [9] | | | | 182 |
| Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness | | 183 [9] | 166 [9] | | | | 175 |
| Island of Papa Westray | 232 | 160 | 146 | (190) | 131 | Oct | 172 |
| Moray Coast (Consolidated) | 193 | 347 | (132) | 42 | 17 | Dec | 150 |
| Loch Ewe | 261 | (98) | 76 | 82 | (75) | Jan | 140 |
| Inner Firth of Clyde | (150)[11] | 104 | 108 | 108 | 150 | Sep | 124 |
| Thurso Bay | 170 | 70 | 262 [12] | 106 | 5 | Jan | 123 |
| Gerrans Bay | 86 | 328 | 128 | 28 | 28 | Sep | 120 |
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 120 or more birds in Northern Ireland†** | | | | | | | |
| Outer Ards Shoreline | 284 | 317 | 437 | 334 | 353 | Jan | 345 |
| Strangford Lough | (291) | (156) | 247 | (277) | (265) | Sep | 270 |
| Belfast Lough | 191 [10] | 107 | 90 [10] | 139 [10] | 116 | Oct | 129 |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Kingsbridge Estuary | 45 | 93 | 132 | | 197 | Oct | 117 |
| Winterfield to Catcraig | 120 | 98 | 128 | 70 | 160 | Sep | 115 |
| Anstruther Bay | 73 | 40 | 55 | 25 | 137 | Sep | 66 |
| Exe Estuary | 5 [10] | 40 | 0 | 0 | 125 | Nov | 34 |

† *as few sites surpass the GB threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a threshold of 120 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report.*

## Great Bittern

***Botaurus stellaris***

**International threshold: 65**
**Great Britain threshold: 6**

Bitterns were recorded at a record 99 WeBS sites in 2010/11, and a high monthly maximum of 92 birds in December was probably largely attributable to increased visibility of Bitterns when foraging for food away from frozen reedbeds. There may also have been an influx of continental immigrants. This total is set against the background of an increasing UK breeding population (Brown *et al.* 2011), and would also tend to suggest the number actually present in the UK during winter 2010/11 may have been higher than the estimate of a minimum of 600 individuals (Wotton *et al.* 2011). Singles were widespread, while several sites also hosted multiple birds. The site maximum was an impressive 18 at Dungeness & Rye Bay (Dec). Elsewhere, at least four were recorded in winter at Testwood Lakes, Godmanchester GP, London Wetland Centre and Kenfig Pool; all sites that are traditionally favoured by Bitterns in winter.

## Black-crowned Night Heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

**Vagrant and escape**
**Native Range: Europe & Africa**

Three were recorded in spring; at Thames Estuary, Earlswood Lakes and Bainton Pits. This represents the most ever in a WeBS-year.

## Squacco Heron

*Ardeola ralloides*

**Vagrant**
**Native Range: Worldwide**

One lingered at Cleddau Estuary from October into November; the sixth WeBS record and first since October 2004.

## Cattle Egret

*Bubulcus ibis*

**Vagrant**
**Native Range: Worldwide**

Cattle Egrets were recorded at six WeBS sites in southern England during 2010/11: Colne Fen Gravel Pits (Aug), Dungeness & Rye Bay (Aug), Severn Estuary (Oct), Kingsbridge Estuary (Nov), Ouse Washes (Nov) and Somerset Levels (Feb).

## Little Egret

*Egretta garzetta*

**International threshold**
**(W Europe & NW Africa): 1,300**
**Great Britain threshold: 45**
**All-Ireland threshold: ?†**

**GB max: 4,423 Oct**
**NI max: 63 Oct**

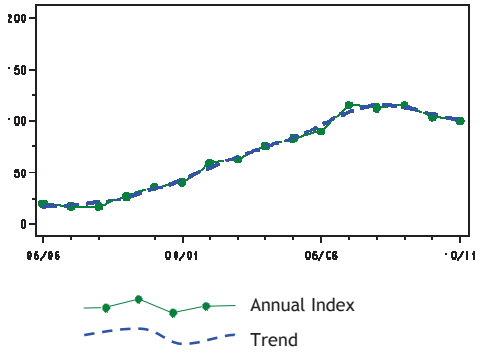


*Figure 36.a, Annual indices & trend for Little Egret in GB.*

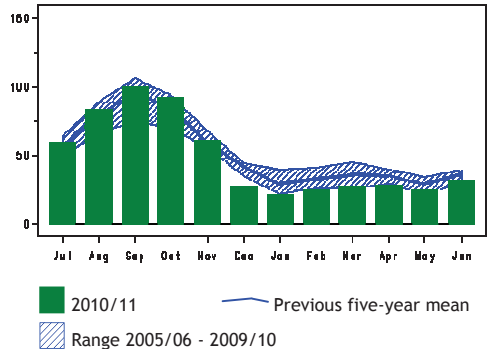


*Figure 36.b, Monthly indices for Little Egret in GB.*

Having expanded both in terms of numbers and range, the Little Egret is now a familiar sight at wetlands, both coastal and inland, throughout the southern half of Britain. Since 2006/07 the trend has reached a plateau, and the number of Little Egrets at WeBS sites appears to have levelled off and may now be even dropping slightly. At other sites in the wider countryside the species continues to expand, as indicated by data collected for Bird Atlas 2007-11 (D. Balmer, pers. comm.).

The WeBS monthly indices show a negative response to the onset of freezing conditions in December, which affected the numbers present in subsequent months. The cold weather may have directly increased mortality and/or may have resulted in redistribution of birds to milder areas.

At regularly counted sites, the September maximum at The Wash of 543 birds is in keeping with the recent average there, but somewhat lower than the last two years. The gradual expansion away from southern coasts continues; exemplified by promotion of the Ribble Estuary to a site of national importance where it joins others in north-west England such as Dee Estuary and Morecambe Bay.

In Northern Ireland, where the species now breeds (S. Wolsey, pers. comm.), the maximum count in 2010/11 was 51 at Strangford Lough in October.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites of national importance in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| The Wash | 323 | (319) | 633 | 618 | 543 | Sep | 529 | |
| Thames Estuary | 316 | 277 | 421 | 383 | 326 | Oct | 345 | |
| Dee Estuary (England & Wales) | 132 [12] | 163 | 258 [12] | 315 [12] | 303 [12] | Aug | 251 | |
| North Norfolk Coast | 193 | 272 [12] | 258 | 281 [12] | 245 | Sep | 250 | |
| Chichester Harbour | 192 | 264 | 267 | 198 | 219 | Oct | 228 | |
| Blackwater Estuary | (58) | 245 | 221 | (213) | (167) | Oct | 193 | |
| Poole Harbour | (84) | (79) | (136) | (146) | (115) | Sep | (146) | |
| Stour Estuary | 143 | 102 | 102 | 184 | 166 | Oct | 139 | |
| Swale Estuary | (72) | (100) | (109) | 139 | 127 | Oct | 133 | |
| Jersey Shore | 98 | 156 | | | 118 | Jan | 124 | |
| Exe Estuary | 116 | 135 | 103 | 137 | 122 | Sep | 123 | |
| Lavan Sands | 133 | 131 | 107 | 136 | 101 | Sep | 122 | |
| Crouch-Roach Estuary | 102 | 100 | 83 | 104 | 170 | Sep | 112 | |
| Tamar Complex | 97 | (126) | 125 | 70 | 97 | Sep | 103 | |
| Burry Inlet | 86 | 87 | 156 | 99 | 79 | Oct | 101 | |
| Taw-Torridge Estuary | 78 | (121) | 92 | 108 | 74 | Aug | 99 | |
| Severn Estuary | 74 | 105 | 103 | 84 | 121 | Aug | 98 | |
| Hamford Water | 135 | 95 | 70 | (115) | 74 | Oct | 98 | |
| Langstone Harbour | 77 | 76 | 112 | 135 | 84 | Oct | 97 | |
| Breydon Water & Berney Marshes | 71 [12] | 126 [12] | 114 [12] | 81 [12] | 85 [12] | Oct | 95 | |
| Morecambe Bay | 28 | (24) | 56 | 69 | 149 | Sep | 91 | |
| Cleddau Estuary | (68) | 120 | (104) | 69 | 61 | Oct | 89 | |
| Kingsbridge Estuary | 89 | 67 | 91 | 90 | 90 | Aug | 85 | |
| Southampton Water | 80 | (24) | (40) | (67) | (52) | Aug | 80 | |
| Carmarthen Bay | 57 | 106 | 64 | 106 | 66 | Sep | 80 | |
| Portsmouth Harbour | 96 | 111 | 49 [11] | 51 | (81) | Oct | 78 | |
| Somerset Levels | 64 | 73 | 90 | 90 | 68 | Feb | 77 | |
| Pagham Harbour | 90 | 63 | 67 | 95 | 70 | Oct | 77 | |
| Camel Estuary | 80 | 74 | 88 | 83 | 57 | Aug | 76 | |
| Medway Estuary | (32) | (71) | (75) | (37) | (69) | Sep | (75) | |
| Fal Complex | 82 | 79 | 84 | 71 | 50 | Sep | 73 | |
| Humber Estuary | (36) | 41 | 95 | 51 | 68 | Aug | 66 | |
| Fleet and Wey | 59 | 67 | 66 | 58 | (39) | Jul | 63 | |
| North West Solent | 53 | 56 | 61 | 52 | 69 | Oct | 60 | |
| Ribble Estuary | (21) | 31 | 50 | 86 | (73) | Sep | 60 | ▲ |
| Pegwell Bay | 71 | 33 | 79 | 62 | 45 [12] | Sep | 58 | |
| Grouville Marsh | 165 | | 4 | 1 | | | 57 | |
| Alde Complex | 56 | 66 | 50 | 51 | 62 | Nov | 57 | |
| Dengie Flats | 51 | 58 | 63 | 59 | 43 | Oct | 55 | |
| Newtown Estuary | 52 | 41 | 41 | 71 [12] | (25) | Sep | 52 | |
| Colne Estuary | 34 | 64 [11] | 53 | (51) | (62) | Nov | 49 | |
| Deben Estuary | 42 | 56 | 37 | 42 | 68 | Sep | 49 | ▲ |
| Avon Valley: Salisbury-Fordingbridge | 57 | 46 | 41 | 40 | 53 | Jan | 47 | |
| Guernsey Shore | 42 | 41 | 49 | 53 | (39) | Dec | 46 | |
| Dungeness and Rye Bay | 45 | 28 | 91 | 33 | 29 | Sep | 45 | ▲ |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| Ouse Washes | 5 | 29 | 55 | 12 | 113 [11] | Mar | 43 | |
| Leighton Moss | 1 | 14 | 26 | 52 | 71 | Aug | 33 | |
| Orwell Estuary | 54 | (41) | 28 | 29 | 64 | Oct | 44 | |
| Christchurch Harbour | 46 | 32 | (28) | 43 | 47 | Sep | 42 | |

## Great White Egret

*Ardea alba*

**Scarce**
**Native Range: S Europe, Africa, Asia, N & C America**

Great White Egrets were reported from 18 WeBS sites; one fewer than the previous year. A monthly peak of ten birds was seen in January. During 2010/11, all records were from England and most involved singles, although up to five were reported from Somerset Levels during the winter period.

## Grey Heron

*Ardea cinerea*

**International threshold (N & W Europe): 2,700**
**Great Britain threshold: 610**
**All-Ireland threshold: 30**

**GB max: 4,178 Oct**
**NI max: 398 Nov**

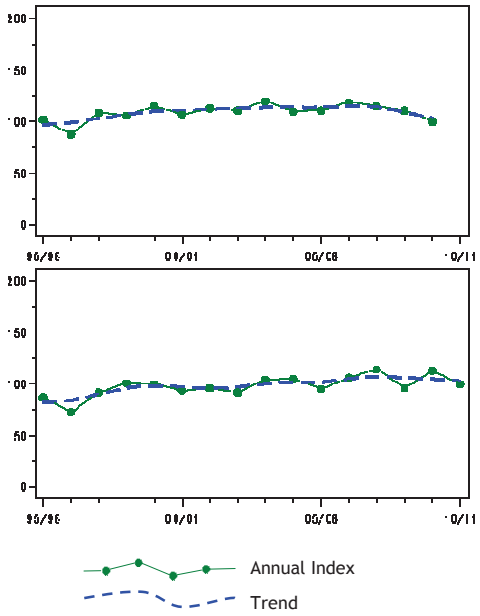


*Figure 37.a, Annual indices & trend for Grey Heron in GB (above) & NI (below).*

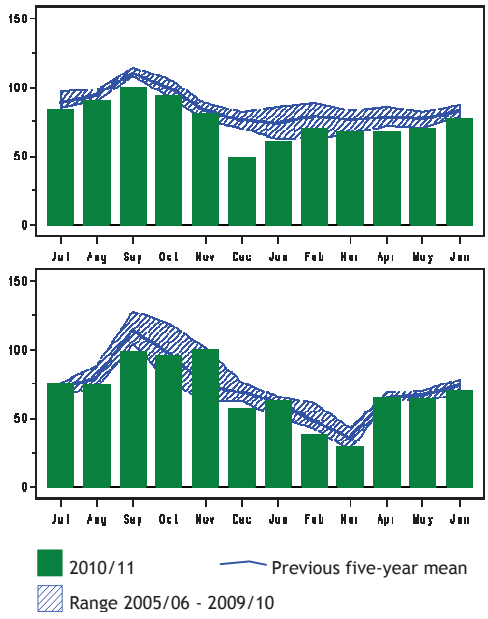


*Figure 37.b, Monthly indices for Grey Heron in GB (above) & NI (below).*

Although increasing slowly in terms of the breeding population (Baillie *et al.* 2012), national WeBS indices for Grey Heron in both Britain and Northern Ireland tend to show very little in the way of variation from year to year. However, there was a pronounced drop in the monthly index value for December in response to the frozen conditions, when potentially there may have been an increase in mortality rates.

In 2010/11, the monthly peaks in both Britain and Northern Ireland occurred during the autumn/early winter months of October and November, respectively, typical of recent years. Five sites held monthly peaks in excess of 100 birds, including the year's largest count; 194 at Loughs Neagh & Beg. In Britain, the maximum of 167 at River Avon (Fordingbridge to Ringwood) represents the most ever there.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland** | | | | | | | |
| Loughs Neagh and Beg | 225 | 173 | 147 | 208 | 194 | Nov | 189 |
| Strangford Lough | 95 [10] | 138 [10] | 92 | 111 | 89 [10] | Nov | 102 |
| Carlingford Lough | 51 | 62 | (34) | (12) | 14 | Feb | 39 |
| Lough Foyle | 42 | 44 | 42 | 30 | 36 | Oct | 39 |
| Dundrum Inner Bay | 36 | 41 | 27 | 34 | 40 | Jul | 36 |

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belfast Lough | (32) | 43 | 35 | 39 | 24 | Oct | 35 |
| Outer Ards Shoreline | 35 | 24 | 18 | 31 | 52 | Nov | 32 |
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 70+ birds in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Somerset Levels | 143 | 135 | 161 | 122 | 112 | Nov | 135 |
| River Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood | 83 | 82 | 109 | 181 | 167 | Sep | 124 |
| Avon Valley - Salisbury to Fordingbridge | 114 | 144 | 92 | 118 | 97 | Mar | 113 |
| Ouse Washes | 55 [12] | 143 | 199 | 39 | 123 [12] | Mar | 112 |
| Morecambe Bay | 105 | (38) | 107 | 115 | 109 | Jul | 110 |
| Forth Estuary | 111 | 125 | 102 | 99 | 93 | Oct | 106 |
| Thames Estuary | 89 | (91) | (63) | (110) | (81) | Aug | 97 |
| Coombe Country Park | 107 | 106 | 81 | 50 | 78 | May | 84 |
| Dee Estuary (England and Wales) | (66) | 73 | 67 | 97 | 61 | Nov | 75 |
| Walthamstow Reservoirs | 75 | 76 | 62 | | (23) | Jan | 71 |

† *as few sites surpass the British threshold, sites with mean peak counts of 70+ are also listed.*

## Purple Heron

***Ardea purpurea***

**Vagrant**
**Native Range: Worldwide**

Four is the most ever in a WeBS-year, and comprised singles at Dungeness & Rye Bay (Jul-Aug), College Reservoir (Apr), Mount Castle Quarry (Apr) and Wellington Gravel Pits (Jun).

## White Stork

***Ciconia ciconia***

**Vagrant and escape**
**Native Range: Europe, Africa, Asia**

One was at Pegwell Bay in September.

## Glossy Ibis

***Plegadis falcinellus***

**Vagrant**
**Native Range: S Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, N & C America**

Several Glossy Ibis featured during 2010/11, continuing the recent positive trend. During the period of September to November, birds were seen at Avon Estuary (Devon), Otter Estuary, Christchurch Harbour, Loughs Neagh & Beg, Cotswold Water Park and Ouse Washes. Later in the winter, one was at Dungeness & Rye Bay in January.

## Eurasian Spoonbill

***Platalea leucorodia***

**International threshold (W Europe & W Africa): 110**
**Great Britain threshold: 1**

Spoonbills continue to slowly expand in the UK and were recorded at 29 sites during WeBS Core counts, with a monthly peak of 47 in August. All records were in England with the exception of four at Ythan Estuary (Scotland) in July and one on the Welsh side of the Severn Estuary in June. Most counts were of one to four birds, notable exceptions being maxima of 31 at North Norfolk Coast (Aug), 14 at The Wash (Aug) and 14 at Poole Harbour (Nov). The only inland record was one at Blithfield Reservoir in June (a WeBS-first for Staffordshire).

## Greater Flamingo

***Phoenicopterus ruber***

**Escape and possible vagrant**
**Native Range: S Europe, Africa & SW Asia**

One resided at Minsmere from April to June, with presumably the same bird having been seen at Dunstable Wetland in January. These are the fourth and fifth WeBS records, and the first since March 2004.

## Pied-billed Grebe

***Podilymbus podiceps***

**Vagrant**
**Native Range: America**

One at Hollingworth Lake in November is the ninth WeBS record. The previous eight were all during the 1990s, most recently in Norfolk in April 1999.

## Little Grebe

***Tachybaptus ruficollis***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **GB max:** | **5,276** | **Sep** |
| **NI max:** | **544** | **Oct** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **International threshold (Europe & NW Africa):** | **3,900** |
| **Great Britain threshold:** | **160†** |
| **All-Ireland threshold:** | **25** |

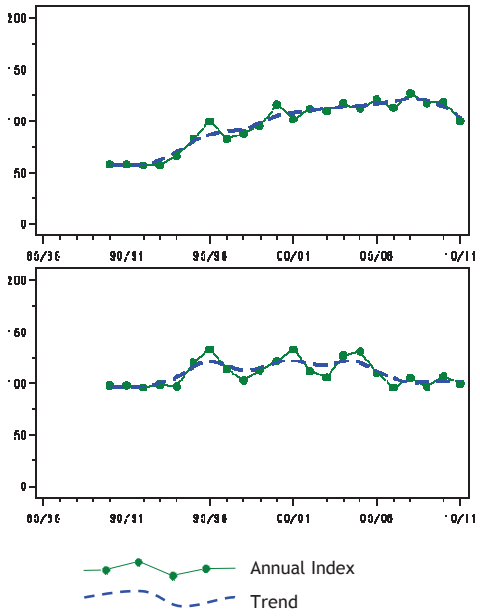


*Figure 38.a, Annual indices & trend for Little Grebe in GB (above) & NI (below).*

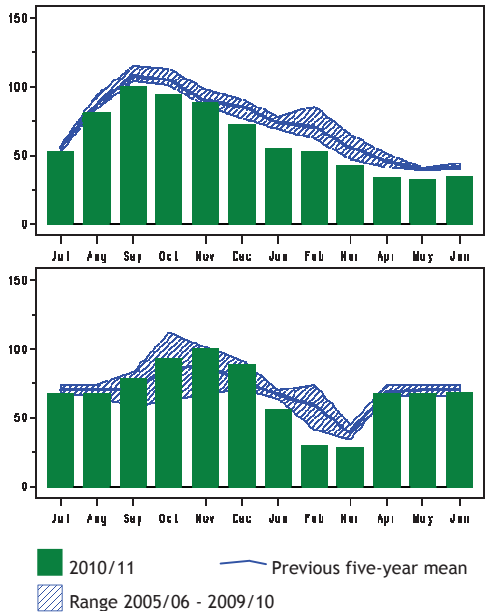


*Figure 38.b, Monthly indices for Little Grebe in GB (above) & NI (below).*

Little Grebes are widely dispersed on small water bodies, canals and riverine habitats throughout much of the UK. Thus, WeBS monitors a relatively small proportion of the total population and care should be taken if attempting to interpret national trends based on WeBS data alone.

Little Grebes slowly, but steadily, increased in Britain from the mid 1990s, soon after the species was first routinely monitored. Interestingly, this coincided with a similar trend in the Netherlands (Hornman *et al.* 2012). However, as evidenced by the annual index, there was a pronounced drop in numbers in Britain in 2010/11. Reasons for this may be linked to the frozen conditions which will have forced diving species away from traditional sites. The cold conditions may also have increased mortality; pertinently, the monthly indices for both Britain and Northern Ireland initially dropped during the frozen conditions in January, and they appear not to have recovered by the spring implying negative effects on the local breeding populations.

The Thames Estuary is the only site to surpass the threshold of national importance in Britain. The monthly peak there (402, Dec) was similar to the longer-term average, but numbers at twelve further sites with a five-year mean of 80+ birds showed no clear pattern. In general, coastal sites held higher peaks than inland sites which is probably to be expected given the cold winter.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites of national importance in Great Britain** | | | | | | | |
| Thames Estuary | 499 | 315 | 474 | 369 | (402) | Dec | 414 |
| **Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland** | | | | | | | |
| Loughs Neagh and Beg | 278 | 396 | 318 | 410 | 391 | Oct | 359 |
| Upper Lough Erne | 106 | 53 | 78 | 46 | 120 | Dec | 81 |
| Strangford Lough | 80 | 79 | 76 [10] | 94 | 73 | Jan | 80 |
| Lower Lough Erne | 78 | 50 | (23) | (50) | (94) | Jan | 74 |
| Lough Money | 40 | 51 | | | | | 46 |
| Portavo Lake | | | | | 45 | Oct | 45 ▲ |
| Lough Foyle | 28 | 28 | 26 | 35 | 16 | Sep | 27 |
| **Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2010/2011** | | | | | | | |
| Larne Lough | 20 | 27 | 16 | 23 | 10 | Nov | 19 |
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 80 or more birds in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Humber Estuary | 94 | (150) | (91) | 102 | (42) | Nov | 115 |
| Chew Valley Lake | 80 | 80 | 70 | 180 | 150 | Sep | 112 |
| Rutland Water | 67 | 93 | 116 | 164 | 120 | Sep | 112 |
| Dungeness and Rye Bay | 97 | 90 | 124 | 152 | 92 | Sep | 111 |
| Crouch-Roach Estuary | 44 | 81 | 115 | 146 | 152 | Aug | 108 |
| Portsmouth Harbour | (69) | (69) | 104 | (68) | (64) | Feb | 104 |
| Hamford Water | 87 | 84 | 119 | 120 | 97 | Dec | 101 |
| Pitsford Reservoir | 96 | 72 | 78 | 104 | 105 | Oct | 91 |
| Cameron Reservoir | 133 | 122 | 56 | 68 | 71 [12] | Aug | 90 |
| Severn Estuary | 86 | 91 | 87 | 80 | 87 | Sep | 86 |
| Blackwater Estuary | 54 | 74 | 94 | 113 | 96 | Oct | 86 |
| The Wash | 88 | 113 | 66 | 62 | (65) | Nov | 82 |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain** | | | | | | | |
| Deben Estuary | 82 | 50 | 60 | 64 | 102 | Dec | 72 |
| Colne Fen Gravel Pits | 24 | 42 | 64 | 91 [12] | 80 [12] | Sep | 60 |

† *as few sites surpass the GB threshold, a threshold of 80 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report.*

## Great Crested Grebe

***Podiceps cristatus***

**International threshold (NW & W Europe): 3,500**
**Great Britain threshold: 190**
**All-Ireland threshold: 55**

**GB max: 9,312 Sep**
**NI max: 1,324 Oct**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

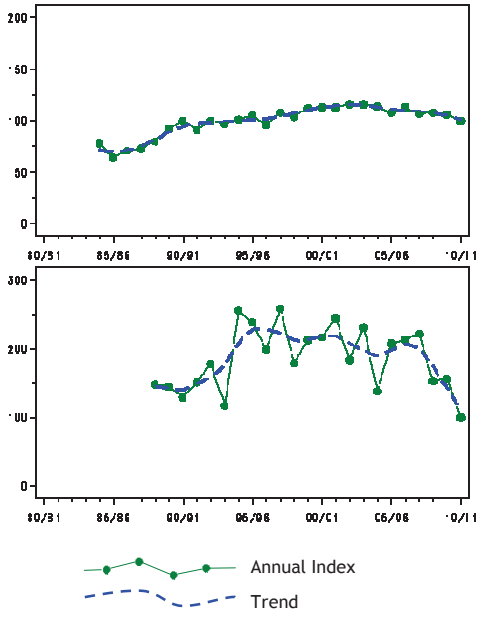


*Figure 39.a, Annual indices & trend for Great Crested Grebe in GB (above) & NI (below).*

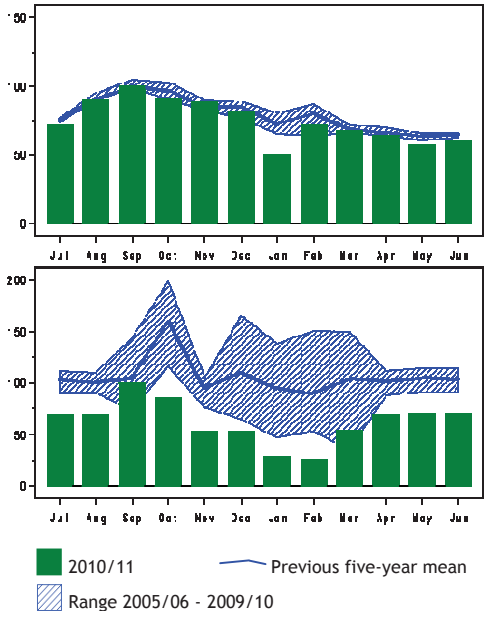


*Figure 39.b, Monthly indices for Great Crested Grebe in GB (above) & NI (below).*

During the winter, Great Crested Grebes are found at both inland and coastal wetlands. At the latter, birds are often difficult to monitor accurately particularly when frequenting open sea and/or in unsuitable weather conditions.

*Amy Lewis*

After a slow increase in Britain up to 2003/04, recent indices and associated trend show a shallow decline, mirroring the situation in the Netherlands (Hornman *et al.* 2012).

In 2010/11, Dungeness & Rye Bay hosted the largest aggregation during the year. A total of 1,739 in February is the highest number ever recorded there, thereby just surpassing similarly high totals of recent years. It is possible that some of this group may have been forced on to the sea from frozen freshwater bodies in the area. However, this again provides evidence of the potentially increasing importance of the rich foraging available in the shallow waters at the east end of the English Channel, both for this species and others such as Red-throated Diver and Common Scoter. Also in south-east England, two very high counts were noted at reservoirs in the Greater London area in December; 611 at Wraysbury Reservoir and 676 at Queen Mary Reservoir, both WeBS maxima for these sites.

In 2010/11, Great Crested Grebes fared very poorly in Northern Ireland, where the two other most important UK sites for the species are to be found. Although the maximum at Loughs Neagh & Beg was fairly typical, that reported from Belfast Lough was very low. It is not known the extent to which this apparent decline and those at a number of sites in the region were attributable to the cold winter.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites of national importance in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| Dungeness and Rye Bay | 880 [12] | (653) | 1,492 | (1,735) | 1,739 | Feb | 1,462 | |
| Rutland Water | 655 | 441 | 584 | 970 | 727 | Nov | 675 | |
| Wraysbury Reservoir | | | | | 611 | Dec | 611 | ▲ |
| Dee Estuary (England and Wales) | 378 [12] | 458 [12] | 435 [12] | 455 [12] | 1,195 [12] | Jan | 584 | |
| Chew Valley Lake | 430 | 665 | 690 | 665 | 440 | Aug | 578 | |
| Grafham Water | 471 | 132 | 471 | 525 | 486 | Dec | 417 | |
| Cotswold Water Park (West) | 284 | 309 | 317 | 365 | 360 | Sep | 327 | |
| Pegwell Bay | 48 | 110 | 300 | 585 [12] | 585 [12] | Jan | 326 | |
| Glyne Gap | 213 | (206) | 515 | 224 | (294)[12] | Jan | 317 | |
| Stour Estuary | 124 | 232 | 708 [10] | 327 [10] | 171 | Nov | 312 | |
| Queen Mary Reservoir | 130 | 208 | 98 | 362 | (676) | Dec | 295 | ▲ |
| Swansea Bay | 84 | 102 | 327 | 425 | 440 | Dec | 276 | |
| Southampton Water | (47) | (216) | 375 | 206 | 220 | Dec | 267 | |
| Minsmere | 57 | 1,210 [12] | 5 | 4 | 15 | Nov | 258 | |
| Pitsford Reservoir | 267 | 312 | 186 | 267 | 247 | Dec | 256 | |
| Bewl Water | 188 | 183 | 224 | 195 | 274 | Jul | 213 | |
| Lavan Sands | 329 | 260 | 124 | 106 | 236 [12] | Jan | 211 | ▲ |
| Stewartby Lake | | | | | 207 | Dec | 207 | ▲ |
| Loch Leven | 198 | 141 | 157 [12] | 266 | 190 | Sep | 190 | ▲ |
| **Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland** | | | | | | | | |
| Belfast Lough | 1,482 | 2,150 | (1,156) | 1,175 | 363 | Nov | 1,293 | |
| Loughs Neagh and Beg | 959 | 1,191 | 752 | 959 | 1,035 | Oct | 979 | |
| Upper Lough Erne | 206 | 171 | 197 | 174 | 69 | Feb | 163 | |
| Carlingford Lough | 116 | 93 | 146 | 186 | 110 | Dec | 130 | |
| Strangford Lough | 65 | 137 | 145 | 87 | 108 | Nov | 108 | |
| Lough Foyle | 116 | 116 | 49 | 160 | 37 | Oct | 96 | |
| Larne Lough | 84 | 105 | 81 | 61 | 37 | Sep | 74 | |
| Lower Lough Erne | 123 | 55 | (23) | (34) | 21 | Oct | 66 | |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| Hanningfield Reservoir | 200 | 30 | 128 | 118 | 221 | Oct | 139 | |
| Abberton Reservoir | 41 | 95 | 111 | 91 | 219 | Oct | 111 | |
| Inner Firth of Clyde | 120 | 135 | 190 | (130) | 207 | Feb | 163 | |

## Red-necked Grebe

*Podiceps grisegena*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **International threshold (NW Europe):** | **500** |
| **Great Britain threshold:** | **1*†** |
| **All-Ireland threshold:** | **?** |

**GB max:** **9** **Dec**
**NI max:** **0**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Red-necked Grebes were recorded at 29 WeBS sites in Britain during 2010/11. Despite the cold winter, a peak monthly total of just nine birds was recorded in both December and January.

The fall in numbers of this species registered by WeBS in recent years is largely attributable to a long-term decline on the Forth Estuary, the principal site in Britain. The WeBS peak there this year was just four in September; as recently as 1994/95 up to 100 birds were noted there in winter. Although it appears likely that the wintering population has indeed decreased on the Forth, it is also probable that WeBS counts do not effectively monitor the size of this population.

Elsewhere, all counts related to one or two birds at a scattering of sites, mainly in the south and east. The species featured at eight inland sites during the course of the year, including long-staying birds at Grafham Water, King George VI Reservoir and Avon Valley.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 2 or more birds in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Forth Estuary | (4) | 12 | 10 | 51[47] | 4 | Sep | 19 |
| Glyne Gap | (2) | (3) | 4 [12] | 2 | (2)[12] | Dec | 3 |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Seahouses to Budle Point | (1) | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | Jan | 1 |
| Avon Valley - Salisbury to Fordingbridge | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | Apr | 0 |

† *a qualifying level of 2 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report.*

## Slavonian Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **International threshold (NW Europe):** | **55** |
| **Great Britain threshold:** | **11*** |
| **All-Ireland threshold:** | **?†** |

**GB max:** **252** **Feb**
**NI max:** **11** **Mar**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Slavonian Grebes were recorded at 103 WeBS sites in the UK, including two in Northern Ireland. The British wintering population is now estimated to be in the order of 1,100 birds (Musgrove *et al.* 2011), hence all sites with five-year means of 11+ birds surpass the 1% threshold for national importance.

The count of 84 Slavonian Grebes at Inner Firth of Clyde represents the most ever reported there, and promotes that particular site to one of international importance for this species in the UK, alongside the stretch of the Shetland coast between Whiteness and Skelda Ness. The trend noted on the Clyde is probably associated with the increase in the number of Slavonian Grebes of Icelandic origin now wintering in UK waters, which has also led to higher numbers wintering around Shetland and Orkney in the last decade (Harvey & Heubeck, in prep.). In contrast, numbers wintering on the south and east coasts of England have declined during the same period, probably linked to a decline in the number of birds of Continental origin wintering there, either due to a shift in distribution or overall population decrease. In England, the highest count of the year in 2010/11 was 10 at Gerrans Bay in December.

Inland, there was a typical scattering of birds on gravel pits and reservoirs during the course of the year.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites of international importance in the UK** | | | | | | | |
| Whiteness to Skelda Ness | | | | 77 [9] | 73 [9] | Jan | 75 |
| Inner Firth of Clyde | 40 | 73[12] | 49[12] | 47[12] | 84 | Feb | 59 ▲ |
| **Sites of national importance in Great Britain** | | | | | | | |
| Sound of Gigha | | | 89[12] | 27 | 43 | Oct | 53 |
| Rova Head to Wadbister Ness | | | 36 [9] | 49 [9] | 61 [9] | Jan | 49 |

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moray Firth | 50 | 41 | (23) | (6) | (8) | Dec | 46 |
| Loch of Harray | 16 | 52 | 23 | 45 | 53 | Oct | 38 |
| Loch Ryan | 39 | 19 | 40 | 46[12] | 31 | Nov | 35 |
| Scapa Flow | | | | 37 | 30 | Dec | 34 |
| Loch Na Keal | (0) | 40[10] | 20 | 30 | 41[12] | Feb | 33 |
| Ulva | | | 26[9] | | | | 26 |
| Forth Estuary | 25[10] | 18 | 29 | 25 | 16 | Mar | 23 |
| Burghead Bay (Burghead to Findhorn) | | 5 | (0) | 26 | 26 | Feb | 19 |
| Inner Loch Indaal | | | | 16 | 12 | Nov | 14 |
| Broadford Bay | 13 | 17 | 7 | 17[12] | 14 | Dec | 14 |
| Loch Eriboll | 4 | 21 | 5 | 20 | (2) | Feb | 13 ▲ |
| **Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2010/2011** | | | | | | | |
| Gerrans Bay | 5 | 4 | 13 | 20 | 10 | Dec | 10 |
| Loch Ewe | 18 | 7 | (5) | 6 | (1) | Jan | 10 |
| Loch of Swannay | 15 | 14 | 11 | 9 | 3 | Nov | 10 |
| Lindisfarne | (18) | 4 | 9 | 7 | 7 | Nov | 9 |
| Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness | | | 7[9] | | | | 7 |
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 4 or more birds in Northern Ireland†** | | | | | | | |
| Lough Foyle | 4 | 11 | 31 | 60 | 11 | Mar | 23 |
| Strangford Lough | 0 | (0) | 22[12] | 22[10] | 0 | | 11 |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain** | | | | | | | |
| Jersey Shore | 4 | 10 | | | 17 | Feb | 10 |
| Pagham Harbour | 3 | 13 | 11 | 3 | 15 | Feb | 9 |
| Loch Leven | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 13 | Nov | 4 |
| Loch of Stenness | 11 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 11 | Mar | 9 |

† *as no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a threshold of 4 has been selected for presentation in this report.*

## Black-necked Grebe

***Podiceps nigricollis***

**GB max:** **71** **Dec**
**NI max:** **0**

**International threshold (Europe & N Africa):** **2,100**
**Great Britain threshold:** **1*†**
**All-Ireland threshold:** **?†**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

During 2010/11, Black-necked Grebes were seen at 65 sites in the UK, representing an increase in sites of more than 25% compared to the previous year. These included four sites in Scotland (where this species is traditionally very scarce), two in Wales and two in Channel Islands.

Two of the locations featured in the key sites table below have been kept confidential following advice from the *Rare Breeding Birds Panel* and/or local counters.

Each winter, birds can be reliably seen in relatively consistent numbers at favoured sites on the English coast from Cornwall to Hampshire. This is in contrast to the situation in the Netherlands, where marked increases have taken place since the 1990s (Hornman *et al.* 2011). In 2010/11, higher than average numbers were present at Studland Bay and Fal Complex; the supplementary count of 80 at the former site may represent the largest aggregation of Black-necked Grebes ever seen in the UK. It represents what has been a slow but steady recovery for this species in that area, following a major oiling incident in Poole Harbour in 1964 which more than halved the wintering population of approximately 50 individuals at the time (Green 2004).

Unfortunately, no WeBS Core count data were received for William Girling Reservoir during the winter period, but supplementary data from there indicate that it continues to be the most important inland site for wintering Black-necked Grebes. Double figure counts were reported from a further three sites, two of which were inland and probably featured breeding birds.

Away from the principal inland locations, counts of five Black-necked Grebes at both Sutton & Lound Gravel Pits (Oct) and Rutland Water (Dec) were notable.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Studland Bay | 20 [47] | 23 [47] | 37 [47] | 38 [47] | 80 [47] | Jan | 40 |
| Fal Complex | (4) | 5 | 32 | 17 [47] | 52 [47] | Dec | 27 |
| William Girling Reservoir | 26 | 32 | 26 | 28 | 25 [47] | Oct | 27 |
| Woolston Eyes | (35) | 17 | 26 | 22 | 11 | Apr | 22 |
| Tor Bay | | | | | 18 | Jan | 18 |
| Langstone Harbour | 24 [12] | 5 | 16 | 22 | 12 | Dec | 16 |
| Confidential Hertfordshire Site | 9 | 12 | 18 | 14 | 21 | Apr | 15 |
| Thames Estuary | 4 | 4 | 4 | 38 | 0 | | 10 |
| Staines Reservoirs | 9 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 3 | Aug | 8 |
| Confidential Northumberland Site | 10 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 9 | Jun | 7 |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Fleet and Wey | 3 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 5 | Dec | 3 |
| Rutland Water | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 5 | Dec | 3 |
| Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | Oct | 2 |

† *a qualifying level of 5 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report.*

## Water Rail

***Rallus aquaticus***

**International threshold (Europe & N Africa): 10,000**
**Great Britain threshold: ?†**
**All-Ireland threshold: ?†**

**GB max: 575 Nov**
**NI max: 4 Oct**

Water Rails were recorded during WeBS Core counts at 337 sites across the UK in 2010/11, a decrease of 12% compared to the previous year. However, the monthly maximum of 575 in November was considerably more than the peak of the previous year. Favoured sites tend to be those with reedbeds and/or an extensive network of ditches. The species is inevitably under-recorded due to its secretive, generally unobtrusive, behaviour, and as a result any attempts to derive population estimates for this species are notoriously difficult (see Musgrove *et al.* 2011). However, the species can often become more conspicuous during periods of freezing weather such as that experienced in the UK in January 2011. WeBS maxima this year were 39 at Somerset Levels and 30 at Malltraeth RSPB, both in November, and presumably only represent a relatively small fraction of the total numbers present at both sites.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Somerset Levels | 58 | 62 | 38 | (33) | 40 | Nov | 50 |
| Thames Estuary | 19 | 8 | 47 | (25) | (25) | Nov | 25 |
| Grouville Marsh | (10) | | 15 | 20 | | | 18 |
| Severn Estuary | 13 | 23 | (26) | 19 | 11 | Nov | 18 |
| Malltraeth RSPB | 11 | 15 | 10 | 25 | 30 | Nov | 18 |
| Longueville Marsh | (10) | | 15 | 12 | | | 14 |
| Chew Valley Lake | 5 | 22 | 31 | 8 | 5 | Nov | 14 |
| Southampton Water | 10 | (20) | 19 | 9 | 14 | Dec | 14 |
| Rutland Water | 10 | 10 | 24 | 12 | 10 | Jul | 13 |
| Chichester Harbour | 15 | 10 | 12 | 7 | 16 | Dec | 12 |
| London Wetland Centre | 17 | 16 | 12 | 10 | 4 | Nov | 12 |
| Stanwick Gravel Pits Consolidated | | | (16) | (12) | 8 | Jul | 12 |
| Doxey Marshes SSSI | 2 | 14 | 10 | 17 | 15 | Nov | 12 |
| Dee Estuary (England and Wales) | 8 | (24) | 13 | 7 | 9 | Jan | 12 |
| Dungeness and Rye Bay | 10 | 7 | 8 | 14 | 14 | Nov | 11 |
| Lower Derwent Ings | 8 | 9 | 15 | 10 | 12 | Jan | 11 |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Kinnordy Loch | (0) | (0) | (0) | 5 | 12 | Dec | 9 |
| Langford Lowfields Gravel Pits | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 12 | Nov | 3 |
| Ingrebourne Valley | | | | 8 | 10 | Nov | 9 |
| Llangorse Lake | 6 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 10 | Nov | 7 |
| Lakenheath Fen | 6 | 4 | (1) | 2 | 10 | Nov | 6 |

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set, a qualifying level of 10 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report.*

## Spotted Crake

**Scarce**

***Porzana porzana***

Two were at Stodmarsh in August.

## Corncrake

**Scarce**

***Crex crex***

Corncrakes were noted at two sites on the Western Isles.

## Moorhen

***Gallinula chloropus***

**International threshold (Europe & N Africa): 20,000****
**Great Britain threshold: 3,200†**
**All-Ireland threshold: ?†**

**GB max: 12,503 Nov**
**NI max: 274 Oct**

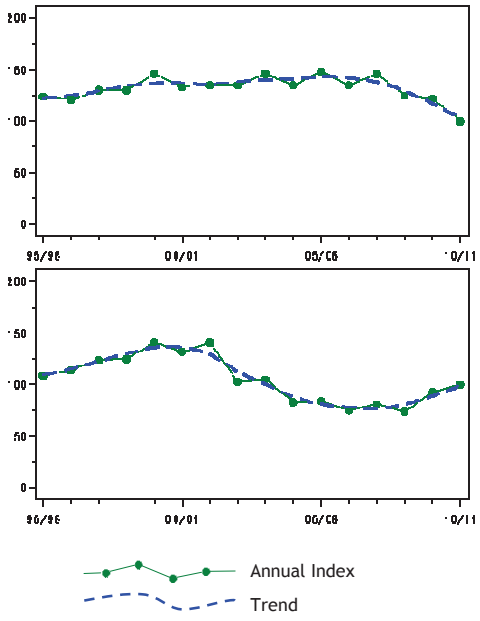


*Figure 40.a, Annual indices & trend for Moorhen in GB (above) & NI (below).*

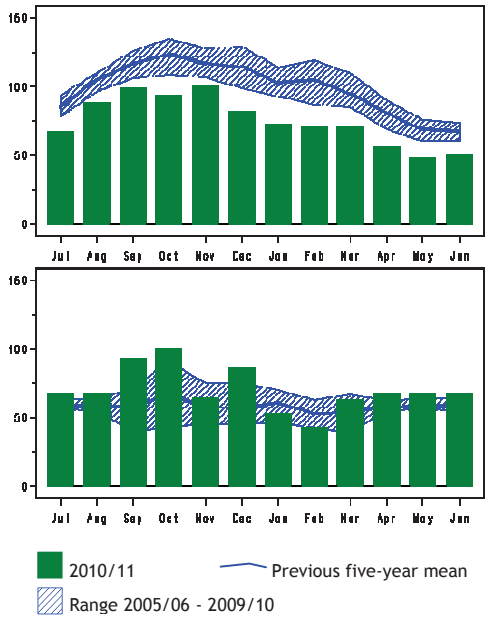


*Figure 40.b, Monthly indices for Moorhen in GB (above) & NI (below).*

Moorhens are widespread across the UK and occur in a wide variety of wetland habitats. The species is poorly monitored by WeBS, and it would require significantly improved coverage of habitats within the wider countryside to be able to evaluate it's status in winter more accurately.

The WeBS trend indicates that numbers at WeBS sites in Britain have dropped off in the last couple of years. This is presumably associated with two cold winters, and only time will tell if this apparent decline continues in the years ahead. However, it is indicative of an overall decline rather than mere displacement, and hence implies reduced survival.

Most of the site peaks in 2010/11 were in November, prior to the onset of the frozen conditions in December. Maxima were 322 at Severn Estuary (Oct) and 292 at North Norfolk Coast (Dec). Numbers at most of the main sites were below their respective five-year means, notable exceptions being the peaks at North Norfolk Coast and River Wandle.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 130 or more birds in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Severn Estuary | 546 | 1,003 | (473) | 359 | 322 | Oct | 558 |
| Thames Estuary | 367 | (300) | (406) | (355) | (205) | Dec | 387 |
| WWT Martin Mere | 438 | 485 | (375) | 330 | 172 | Jan | 360 |
| Lower Derwent Ings | 321 | 268 | 341 | 256 | 280 | Mar | 293 |
| Ouse Washes | 201 | 557 [12] | (420) | 163 | 115 [12] | Dec | 291 |
| Somerset Levels | 430 | 392 | 156 | (281) | 133 | Oct | 278 |
| Pitsford Reservoir | 389 | 241 | 126 | 304 | 213 | Aug | 255 |
| Lee Valley Gravel Pits | (300) | 296 | 244 | 180 | 203 | Sep | 245 |
| North Norfolk Coast | 223 | 230 | 203 | 253 | 292 | Dec | 240 |
| London Wetland Centre | 218 | 203 | 229 | 200 | 180 | Nov | 206 |
| Arun Valley | 246 | (195) | 164 | 190 | (165) | Nov | 200 |
| River Wandle: Carshalton to Wandsworth | 193 | 186 | 180 | 191 | 248 | Dec | 200 |
| Rutland Water | 157 | 219 | 152 | 285 | 186 | Sep | 200 |
| Dungeness and Rye Bay | 166 | 181 | 192 | 167 | 136 | Dec | 168 |
| Medway Estuary | 131 | 180 | 144 | 130 | (27)[12] | Dec | 146 |
| Grand Western Canal | 178 | 134 | 124 | 146 | 128 | Aug | 142 |
| Stanwick Gravel Pits Consolidated | | | (63) | (147) | 120 | Feb | 134 |
| Cotswold Water Park (West) | 117 | (144) | (116) | 151 | 115 | Nov | 132 |
| Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits | 158 | 128 | 141 | 105 | 130 | Nov | 132 |
| **Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Northern Ireland†** | | | | | | | |
| Loughs Neagh and Beg | 98 | 118 | 96 | 181 | 209 | Oct | 140 |
| Upper Lough Erne | 75 | 40 | 18 | 36 | 89 | Dec | 52 |
| Belfast Lough | 43 | 42 | 49 | 43 [10] | 39 | Dec | 43 |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain†** | | | | | | | |
| Southampton Water | 81 | (114) | 127 | (86) | 135 | Dec | 114 |

† *as no sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 130 and 30, respectively, have been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report.*

## Common Coot

***Fulica atra***

**International threshold (NW Europe): 17,500**
**Great Britain threshold: 1,800**
**All-Ireland threshold: 330**

**GB max: 114,436 Nov**
**NI max: 3,182 Jan**

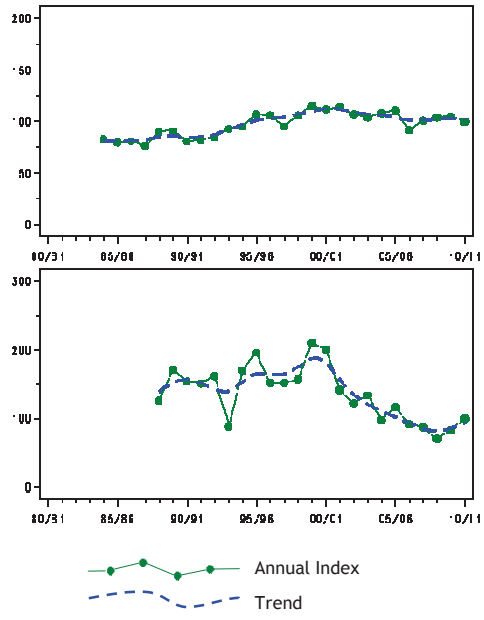


*Figure 41.a, Annual indices & trend for Coot in GB (above) & NI (below).*

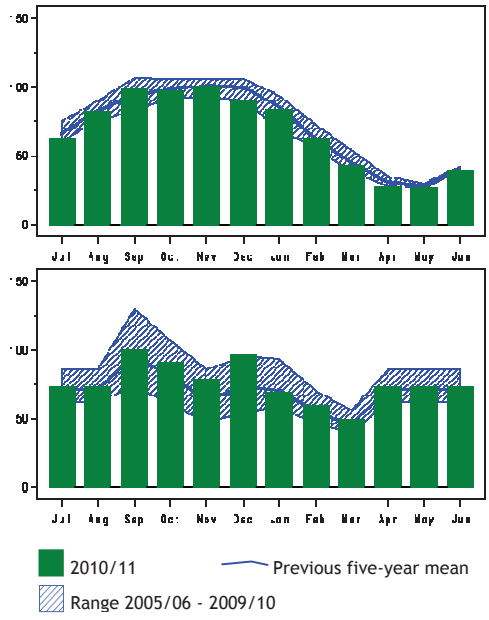


*Figure 41.b, Monthly indices for Coot in GB (above) & NI (below).*

Coots wintering in the UK comprise residents and immigrants from other parts of northwest Europe, forming a population of approximately 180,000 birds (Musgrove *et al.* 2011). 2010/11 provided further evidence of stability in this population, although there was a negative response to the frozen weather during the midwinter period. In contrast to the situation in Britain, numbers in Northern Ireland have declined markedly over the course of the last fifteen years.

Hence, when evaluated together, these trends are suggestive of a possible shift in distribution in response to climate, but this requires further study. In The Netherlands, the trend for Coot, although prone to fluctuations, has essentially been stable for thirty years (Hornman *et al.* 2012). Moreover, numbers have been increasing in other parts of northern Europe (e.g. Nilsson 2008), often in response to ice-free conditions during winter (e.g. Lehikoinen *et al.* in prep.). Such changes in the distribution of diving waterfowl in north-west Europe are probably linked to climate change which has led to ice-free conditions in parts

In Britain, several sites held above-average peaks in 2010/11. These included Loch Leven, Lee Valley Gravel Pits, Pitsford Reservoir and Grafham Water, the latter now surpassing the threshold for national importance. The traditional autumn peak at Abberton Reservoir reached 9,911 birds, which is slightly lower than the five-year site average and represents a drop of 19% compared to the maximum recorded in 2009/10.

In Northern Ireland, the monthly maximum at Loughs Neagh & Beg was the most since 2006/07, but still considerably less than the historical peak count of 8,848 birds in December 1992. In common with most other diving waterfowl at the site, numbers of Coot have dropped steeply at the site in recent winters. Similarly, the peak at Upper Lough Erne (the other site of All-Ireland importance) was higher than in recent years; a further indication that this year's increases were probably associated with the frozen condition further east in Europe, and therefore evidence of the species' potential to respond to climatic variation.

| | 06/07 | 07/08 | 08/09 | 09/10 | 10/11 | Mon | Mean | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sites of national importance in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| Abberton Reservoir | (2,088) | 10,046 | 9,270 | 12,188 | 9,911 | Oct | 10,354 | |
| Rutland Water | 6,233 | 4,284 | 4,792 | 6,277 | 5,570 | Dec | 5,431 | |
| Cotswold Water Park (West) | 4,001 | 4,013 | 4,803 | 5,330 | 5,074 | Nov | 4,644 | |
| Ouse Washes | 1,834 | 6,229 | 5,865 [12] | 4,053 | 3,810 | Feb | 4,358 | |
| Cheddar Reservoir | 3,380 | 3,324 | 2,222 | 2,977 | 4,178 | Dec | 3,216 | |
| Loch Leven | 2,820 | 1,317 | 3,350 | 3,560 | 4,642 | Nov | 3,138 | |
| Lee Valley Gravel Pits | 2,417 | 2,979 | 3,331 | 3,318 | 3,507 | Nov | 3,110 | |
| Fleet and Wey | 2,650 | 2,337 | 2,291 | 2,397 | 3,680 | Jan | 2,671 | |
| Dungeness and Rye Bay | 2,421 | 2,280 | 2,162 | 3,123 | 2,964 | Sep | 2,590 | |
| Pitsford Reservoir | 2,287 | 2,828 | 1,957 | 2,480 | 3,048 | Sep | 2,520 | |
| Chew Valley Lake | 2,360 | 2,095 | 2,020 | 3,050 | 2,880 | Aug | 2,481 | |
| Cotswold Water Park (East) | 1,835 | 2,134 | 2,248 | 2,050 | 1,820 | Jan | 2,017 | |
| Carsington Water | 2,136 | 1,880 | 2,175 | 1,770 | 1,783 | Dec | 1,949 | |
| Grafham Water | 1,454 | 1,628 | 1,796 | 2,252 | 2,006 | Sep | 1,827 | ▲ |
| **Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland** | | | | | | | | |
| Loughs Neagh and Beg | 2,371 | 1,813 | 1,236 | 1,546 | 2,281 | Sep | 1,849 | |
| Upper Lough Erne | 1,696 | 1,072 | 1,093 | 1,051 | 2,077 | Dec | 1,398 | |
| **Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2010/2011** | | | | | | | | |
| Blagdon Lake | 1,400 | 2,323 | 1,403 | 970 | 678 | Jul | 1,355 | |
| **Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain** | | | | | | | | |
| Chichester Gravel Pits | 601 | 1,016 | (624) | 1,288 | 2,177 | Jan | 1,271 | |
| River Avon - Fordingbridge to Ringwood | 2,012 | 1,607 | 1,453 | 1,757 | 2,051 | Dec | 1,776 | |
| Stodmarsh | 904 | 1,369 | 1,350 | 2,310 | 1,969 | Oct | 1,580 | |
| **Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in Winter 2010/2011 in Northern Ireland** | | | | | | | | |
| Lower Lough Erne | 326 | 406 | 3 | (34) | (415) | Jan | 288 | |