

## Goosander *Mergus merganser*

International threshold: 2,700  
Great Britain threshold: 161<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: +

GB max: 2,553 Jan  
NI max: 1 Oct

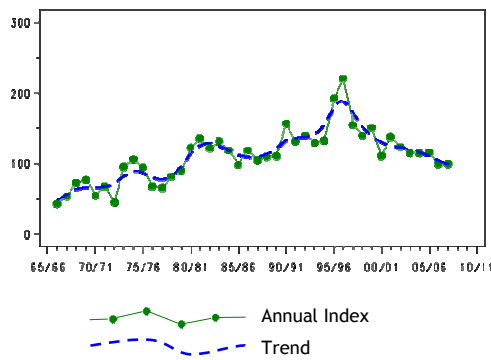


Figure 32.a, Annual indices & trend for Goosander for GB.

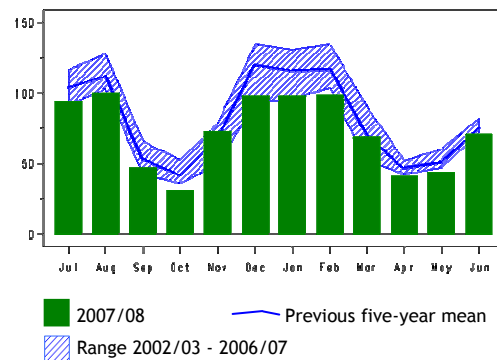


Figure 32.b, Monthly indices for Goosander for GB.

Goosanders that winter in Britain are considered to be mainly from the British breeding population, although some in the southeast may be derived from overseas populations which are frequently involved in influxes during cold weather on the continent. Favoured winter haunts in the UK generally include the Scottish estuaries and river valleys, as well as reservoirs and lakes through the Midlands northwards.

Wintering numbers have declined steadily since 1996/97, likely to represent a distributional shift associated with recent milder winters.

In 2007/08, several of the key sites held lower than their five-year averages, including the Tay Estuary, now the only site

of national importance in the UK, where the peak in August was approximately half of the previous year.

Considering how widespread Goosanders are through north and west Britain, they are remarkably scarce in Northern Ireland; one at Inner Larne Lough from October to January represented the only WeBS record of the year.

During the winter Goosanders frequently return to communal roosts late in the afternoon, having been more widely dispersed during the day. Submission of roost counts from key sites, in order to supplement Core counts, is therefore welcomed.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Loch Lomond	(23)	(15)	(19)	(261)	(12)	Nov	(261)
Tay Estuary	192 <sup>13</sup>	263	153	313	155	Aug	215
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 70 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Tynningham Estuary	177	189	69	157	107	Aug	140
Castle Loch Lochmaben	137	88		85	120	Nov	108
Eccup Reservoir	137	94	115	82	70	Nov	100
Forth Estuary	53	81	119	119	(108)	Jul	96
River Tweed - Kelso to Coldstream	61	112	113	74	90	Oct	90
Spittal to Cocklawburn	92	86	72	116	52	Aug	84
Windermere	(70)	48	127	76 <sup>13</sup>	57	Jan	77
Ashworth Moor Reservoir	35 <sup>12</sup>	110 <sup>12</sup>	90 <sup>12</sup>		59 <sup>12</sup>	Sep	74
Yetholm Loch	(16)	(54)	167	32	24	Jan	74
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Loch Leven	57	30	20	39	151	Nov	59
Hirsel Lake	6	15	240	4	72	Dec	67

<sup>†</sup> as few sites exceed the British and no Northern Ireland thresholds has been set, a qualifying level of 70 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Ruddy Duck

*Oxyura jamaicensis*

Naturalised introduction<sup>†</sup>  
Native Range: N & S America

GB max: 1,137 Nov  
NI max: 22 Oct

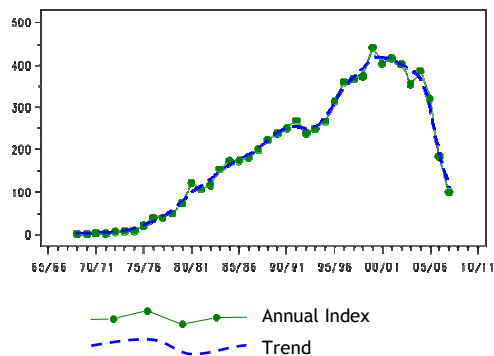


Figure 33.a, Annual indices & trend for Ruddy Duck for GB.

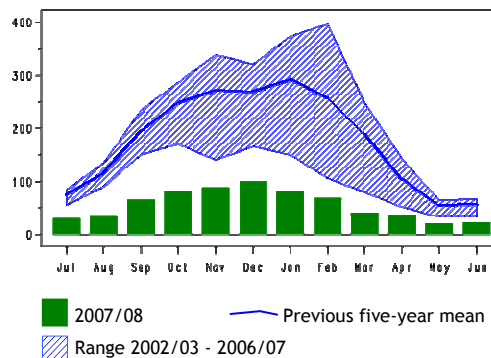


Figure 33.b, Monthly indices for Ruddy Duck for GB.

The decline of Ruddy Ducks in Britain since 2002/03 has been driven by a co-ordinated international programme to contain and eradicate this North American species in Europe, as part of the conservation of the White-headed Duck in Spain and other parts of southern Europe. Despite managing to maintain a widespread distribution, the British index now places the species at the same status as thirty years ago. In 2007/08, two counts of 100+ were reported (compared to nine sites with three-figure counts the previous year) and

30+ were recorded from 27 sites (compared to 34 sites during 2006/07). Interestingly, only two of the listed sites with counts in 2007-08 had no birds. Proportionally, declines appear to have been greatest at Staines Reservoir, Abberton Reservoir and Rutland Water, the latter down to a peak of just five birds.

In Northern Ireland, Loughs Neagh & Beg remains the principal site where a high of 22 constituted the lowest peak since 1989/90.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Staines Reservoirs	694	695 <sup>37</sup>	521 <sup>37</sup>	277	72	Jan	452
Abberton Reservoir	678	403	455	261 <sup>37</sup>	49	Dec	369
Hanningfield Reservoir	285 <sup>37</sup>	412 <sup>37</sup>	330	276	45	Jan	270
Chew Valley Lake	488 <sup>37</sup>	220 <sup>37</sup>	257 <sup>37</sup>	(130)	17	Oct	246
Dungeness and Rye Bay	230	287	257	193	73	Jan	208
Hilfield Park Reservoir	187	241 <sup>37</sup>	176	263	83	Nov	190
Blagdon Lake	249	151 <sup>37</sup>	172	85	103	Nov	152
Pitsford Reservoir	103	178	311 <sup>37</sup>	102	41	Oct	147
Blithfield Reservoir	180 <sup>37</sup>	401	59 <sup>37</sup>	23 <sup>37</sup>	51	Jan	143
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	115	189	202	106	38	Dec	130
Rutland Water	200	251	57	17	5	Jul	106
Anglers Country Park Lake	78	180 <sup>37</sup>	185	34	37	Jan	103
King George V Reservoirs	268	(23)	83	45	15	Jan	103
Tophill Low Reservoirs	110 <sup>37</sup>	124	131	85 <sup>37</sup>	63	Dec	103
Carsington Water	0	82 <sup>37</sup>	182	101	132	Jan	99
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	96	58 <sup>37</sup>	126 <sup>37</sup>	(16)	(38)	Nov	93
Humber Estuary	116	84	(27)	59 <sup>37</sup>	(31)	Apr	86
Mersey Estuary					85	Feb	85
Thames Estuary	82	85	85	79	(44)	Sep	83
Walthamstow Reservoirs	118	90	86 <sup>37</sup>	74	38	Jan	81
Stanford Reservoir	277 <sup>37</sup>	76	29	6 <sup>37</sup>	0		78

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Cotswold Water Park (West)	127	125	59	34	23	Mar	74
Brent Reservoir	25	133	77	85	46	Sep	73
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	16	33	215 <sup>37</sup>	99 <sup>37</sup>	4	Jun	73
Wigan Flashes	60	86		73 <sup>37</sup>	55	Sep	69
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	46	175	13	64	39	Feb	67
Colwick Country Park	88 <sup>37</sup>	100 <sup>37</sup>	51	37 <sup>37</sup>	27	Dec	61
Hollowell Reservoir	191	53	19	21	9	Nov	59
Tees Estuary	70	37	63	111	13	Sep	59
Llyn Traffwl	83	78	52	55	16	Oct	57
Clumber Park Lake	76	16 <sup>37</sup>	41	66	82	Dec	56
Thoresby Lake	69 <sup>37</sup>	46 <sup>37</sup>	42 <sup>37</sup>	52 <sup>37</sup>			52
Llyn Alaw	2	45	95	92	18	Dec	50
Edderthorpe Flash				17	78	Sep	48
Fairburn Ings	115	5 <sup>37</sup>	49	(30)	9	Jun	45
Blackwater Estuary	69	71	39	25 <sup>37</sup>	15	Sep	44
Bolton-on-Swale Gravel Pits	118 <sup>37</sup>	55 <sup>37</sup>	37	6	2	Sep	44
Knight and Bessborough Reservoirs	23	46	45	58	46	Feb	44
London Wetland Centre	43	59	49 <sup>37</sup>	(46)	20	Nov	43
Newsham Park	42 <sup>37</sup>						42
Llynnau Y Fali	57	70	39	16	11	Oct	39
Hornsea Mere	11	98	11	(18)	31	Nov	38
Hurworth Burn Reservoir		9	130	3 <sup>37</sup>	0		36
Swithland Reservoir	61	62	38	18	3	Oct	36
Hampton and Kempton Reservoirs	39	14	76	33	8	Feb	34
Pugneys Country Park Lakes	63	27	50 <sup>37</sup>	25	4	Jan	34
Old Moor	28	24	71	20	24	Jun	33
Skelton Lake	32	14	54	29	29	Feb	32
Attenborough Gravel Pits	4	22	43	40	44	Jan	31
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Northern Ireland<sup>†</sup></b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	56	33	36	42	22	Oct	38
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Durkar Sand Quarry	0	9	31	14	36	Aug	18
Lapwing Hall Pool				3	30	Feb	17

<sup>†</sup> as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 30 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Lake Duck

*Oxyura vittata*

Escape

Native Range: S America

GB max: 1 May  
NI max: 0

A single Lake Duck was seen at Netherfield Gravel Pits; now a regular site for this species.

## Red-throated Diver

*Gavia stellata*

International threshold: 3,000

Great Britain threshold: 170

All-Ireland threshold: 20\*

GB max: 667 Feb  
NI max: 107 Nov

\*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

The Red-throated Diver is a scarce, localised breeder in northern Scotland. A national survey in 2006 estimated a population of 1,255 breeding pairs; 33% on Shetland and 26% on the Outer Hebrides - a 34% increase on the previous survey in 1984 (Dillon *et al.* 2009). The species is

widespread at coastal sites in the winter throughout the UK when numbers are boosted by arrivals from further north in Europe; an estimated 17,000 are present in British waters (O'Brien *et al.* 2008).

The numbers and distribution of Red-throated Divers recorded during WeBS Core

counts in 2007/08 were remarkably similar to those of the previous year. They were noted at 156 sites in Britain and a further seven in Northern Ireland. Following the increase in the 1% threshold for national importance from 49 to 170 birds, no regularly counted WeBS sites currently qualify. No counts of Aberdeen Bay were undertaken by JNCC this year, and just three sites registered counts that reached three-figures; Inner Firth of Clyde, Glyne Gap and Minsmere. Numbers at two other important Scottish sites, Moray Firth and

Forth Estuary, remained low and were both some two-thirds below numbers recorded just three years previously. The Northern Ireland peak count of 67 at Belfast Lough represented the highest ever there.

It should be stressed that this is not a species which is well-monitored by WeBS, the majority of individuals occurring well offshore and only seen in large numbers from the shore on rare occasions (exemplified by the count from South Holderness Coast in 2003/04).

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
S. Holderness coast: Mablethorpe to Easington	2,575 <sup>13</sup>						2,575 ▲
Aberdeen Bay offshore	225 <sup>27</sup>	423 <sup>51</sup>	352 <sup>51</sup>	175 <sup>51</sup>			294
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Inner Firth of Clyde	126	34	202	182	199	Feb	149
Moray Firth	166	117	81	46	53	Feb	93
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	49	61	163	(77)	70	Aug	86
Glyne Gap	35	6	103	126	(109)	Feb	76
Forth Estuary	61	132	87	53	48	Apr	76
Loch Ryan	89	81	49	83	43	Feb	69
North Norfolk Coast	11	30	18	226	27	Oct	62
Minsmere	57	3	2	56	143 <sup>13</sup>	Jan	52 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Lough Foyle	(147)	21	(98)	13	53	Nov	66
Belfast Lough	13	16 <sup>13</sup>	30	22	67	Dec	30
Outer Ards Shoreline	6	14	8	64	22	Jan	23 ▲
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008</b>							
Dengie Flats	50	15	(2)	(10)	34	Feb	33
Thames Estuary	(23)	32	66	32	10	Nov	35
Lavan Sands	59 <sup>13</sup>	22	8	43	7	Oct	28

<sup>†</sup> as few sites exceed the British threshold, a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Black-throated Diver

*Gavia arctica*

International threshold: 3,750  
Great Britain threshold: 7\*  
All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 109 Feb  
NI max: 3 Mar

\*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

The monthly maximum of Black-throated Divers again occurred in February, largely due to counts undertaken by the RAF Ornithological Society during their annual expedition to northwest Scotland. In total, the species was recorded at 59 sites across the UK, with eleven sites qualifying as being of national importance as a result of reaching the Great Britain threshold of seven birds (although for many statutory purposes, 50 is used as a minimum threshold; no sites support mean numbers in excess of this figure). All but one of these sites are in Scotland, where peak

counts were 16 at Little Loch Broom, 14 at Loch Gairloch and 13 at Applecross Bay.

In England, a relatively low maximum count was reported for the premier site of Gerrans Bay in Cornwall - but counts were received only for November and December, and traditionally peak numbers occur there during the late winter period. For the second successive year, nine were noted off Glyne Gap in February, representing a noteworthy aggregation for southeast England. Records away from the open sea included singles at Draycote Water in August and September, Abberton Reservoir

in December and January, and two Lade Pit, Dungeness in December.

Just two individuals were noted in Wales and four in Northern Ireland. Three of the

latter were at Outer Ards Shoreline in March, the most there since November 2000.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Gerrans Bay	37	47	70	60	17	Dec	46
Sound of Barra	31 <sup>44</sup>		35 <sup>44</sup>				33
Loch Slapin	21 <sup>40</sup>	26 <sup>40</sup>		28 <sup>12</sup>	13 <sup>12</sup>	Mar	22
Moray Firth	48	6	(19)	9	(4)	Jan	21
Broad Bay (Lewis)	21 <sup>44</sup>						21
Loch Gairloch		28	6	14	(14)	Feb	16
Loch Ewe		0	3	40	(11)	Feb	14
Little Loch Broom		3	(10)	13	(16)	Feb	11
Applecross Bay		5	14	2	13	Feb	9
Girvan to Turnberry	19	(9)	5	1	7	Jan	8
Red Point to Port Henderson		0	13 <sup>13</sup>	8	(1)	Feb	7
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of one or more birds in Northern Ireland<sup>†</sup></b>							
Belfast Lough	4 <sup>11</sup>	2 <sup>13</sup>	1	1 <sup>11</sup>	1	Feb	2
Outer Ards Shoreline	(0)	1	2	(0)	3	Mar	2
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain</b>							
Glyne Gap	(0)	0	8	(9)	(9)	Feb	5
Gruinard Bay		1 <sup>13</sup>	9	6	8	Feb	6

<sup>†</sup> as no All-Ireland thresholds has been set, a qualifying level of 2 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Pacific Diver

*Gavia pacifica*

Vagrant

Native Range: N America

GB max: 1 Jan  
NI max: 0

A Pacific Diver (the Nearctic equivalent of Black-throated Diver) was recorded during the January Core count at Llys-y-Fran Reservoir in Wales. This individual was a returnee, first seen at the site the

previous year (per [www.birdguides.com](http://www.birdguides.com)). This bird, along with others in North Yorkshire and Cornwall in early 2007, were the first records in the UK.

## Great Northern Diver

*Gavia immer*

International threshold: 50  
Great Britain threshold: 30\*<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 445 Feb  
NI max: 32 Mar

\*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Following WeBS year 2007/08, ten sites qualified as being internationally important for Great Northern Divers, largely based on supplementary data greater than two years old. The best areas for this species, namely the coastal waters of west Scotland and the northern isles, are traditionally poorly covered by WeBS as they are remote and often necessitate special voluntary effort. By way of example, the RAF Ornithological Society has carried out several expeditions to northwest Scotland in recent winters, and has contributed a high proportion of the counts for this species from this

important area. This work is typically carried out in February which explains the pronounced peak in monthly maxima for that month; indeed, only seven birds (six of them inland) were reported in England during the month of February.

In total, WeBS counters recorded Great Northern Divers at 134 sites throughout the UK including seven in Northern Ireland. The majority were recorded in Scotland, with records from 34 sites in England and nine in Wales. Small numbers were reported from sites around the entire British coast; the peak count in England being four at Gerrans

Bay in November. Typically, sporadic singles were seen inland, generally at frequently favoured sites. However 2007/08 was generally unproductive in that respect with,

for example, none seen at Rutland Water and just single records from Draycote Water and Pitsford Reservoir; all traditional haunts.

#### Aerial surveys employing distance sampling

Area	Date	Counted	Estimate (confidence intervals)	Ref
Luce Bay	Mar	87	not available	Söhle <i>et al.</i> 2009b
Sound of Gigha	Feb	85	not available	Söhle <i>et al.</i> 2009b
Coll and Tiree	Mar	60	not available	Söhle <i>et al.</i> 2009b
East Shetland Mainland	Mar	49	not available	Söhle <i>et al.</i> 2009b
North Orkney	Mar	30	not available	Söhle <i>et al.</i> 2009b

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Sound of Barra	96 <sup>44</sup>	94 <sup>44</sup>					95
Outer Loch Indaal		20	108				64
South Uist West Coast	(48) <sup>44</sup>	(63) <sup>44</sup>					(63)
Traigh Luskentyre	70 <sup>44</sup>	22		58	(6)	Nov	50
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Gruinard Bay		26	40	37	68	Feb	43
Loch Slapin	44 <sup>40</sup>	59 <sup>40</sup>		39 <sup>12</sup>	24 <sup>12</sup>	Feb	42 ▼
Loch Ewe		19	33	53	58	Feb	41
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	50 <sup>10</sup>	(2) <sup>10</sup>	37 <sup>10</sup>		33 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	40
Traigh Luskentyre	70 <sup>44</sup>	22		58	6	Nov	39
Moray Firth	(109)	37	14	2	4	Feb	33
Scousburgh to Maywick			32 <sup>10</sup>				32
Sound of Harris	20 <sup>44</sup>	42 <sup>44</sup>					31
Luce Bay offshore			29 <sup>27</sup>				29
Pontillyfni to Aberdesach	28 <sup>13</sup>						28
Loch Na Keal					27 <sup>13</sup>	Feb	27
Loch Eriboll		0	3	36	66	Feb	26
Quendale to Virkie	24 <sup>10</sup>	22 <sup>10</sup>	27 <sup>10</sup>		27 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	25
Broadford Bay	(43)	24	(20)	15	19	Jan	24
Gualan and Balgarva	23 <sup>44</sup>						23
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	30 <sup>10</sup>	4 <sup>10</sup>	17 <sup>10</sup>		36 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	22
West Mull offshore	16 <sup>27</sup>	27 <sup>27</sup>					22
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	27 <sup>10</sup>	30 <sup>10</sup>	11 <sup>10</sup>	14 <sup>10</sup>	23 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	21
Inner Loch Indaal	18						18
Uyea Sound	5	5	7	62	9	Oct	18
Lochs Beg and Scridain (East End)					17 <sup>13</sup>	Feb	17
Scalloway Islands	19 <sup>10</sup>	13 <sup>10</sup>	19 <sup>10</sup>		17 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	17
Island of Papa Westray	22	(1)	5				14
Red Point to Port Henderson		17	22 <sup>13</sup>	4	(13)	Feb	14
Gerrans Bay	15	14	16	15	7	Dec	13
Island of Egilsay	(0)	10	21	8			13
Little Loch Broom		8	(7)	16	(10)	Feb	12
Firth of Clyde and Loch Ryan offshore			11 <sup>27</sup>				11
Talmine					10	Feb	10
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Northern Ireland<sup>†</sup></b>							
Lough Foyle	24	5	60	17	29	Nov	27
Carlingford Lough	25	2	17	4	1 <sup>13</sup>	Nov	10

<sup>†</sup> as few sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 10 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## White-billed Diver

*Gavia adamsii*

Scarce

Native Range: N America, N Europe, N Siberia

GB max: 1 Jan  
NI max: 0

A White-billed Diver was at Uyea Sound on Shetland in January; the sixth WeBS record.

## Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

GB max: 5,311 Oct  
NI max: 617 Dec

International threshold: 4,000  
Great Britain threshold: 78  
All-Ireland threshold: 25

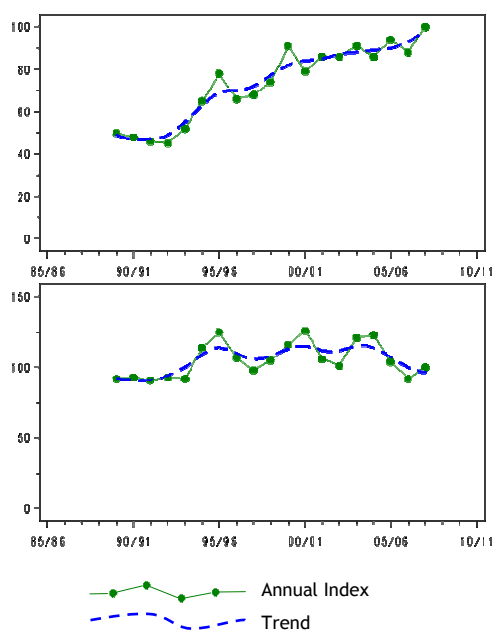


Figure 34.a, Annual indices & trend for Little Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

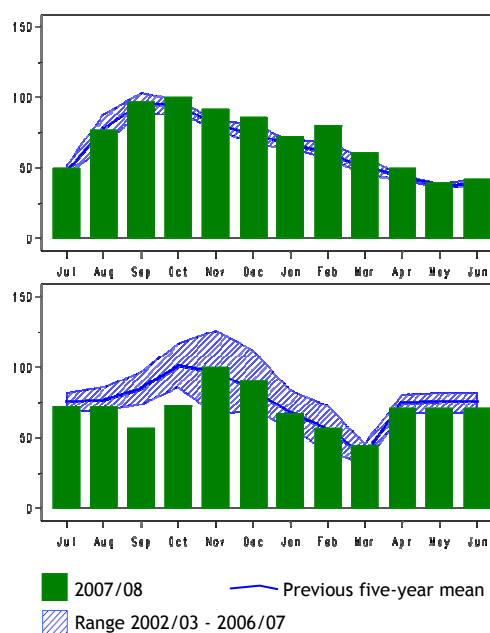


Figure 34.b, Monthly indices for Little Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

Little Grebes are widely dispersed on small water bodies, canals and riverine habitats throughout much of the UK. Consequently WeBS monitors a relatively small proportion of the population and care should be taken when interpreting national trends based on WeBS data alone.

Annual monitoring would therefore benefit from improved coverage of smaller, dispersed wetland habitats within the wider countryside. Even at larger established sites, the detectability of this species can vary depending on weather conditions, feeding behaviour and disturbance from other species.

The increasing trend noted during the course of the last twenty years continues; the British counted maximum was again high and the national index reached an all-time peak. This is despite the fact that maxima from several important sites including Dungeness & Rye Bay, Chichester

Harbour, Alde Complex, Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits and Deben Estuary, all decreased by at least 25% compared to just two years ago.

In contrast, Humber Estuary and Rutland Water have now both attained nationally important status following strong performances in November. Cameron Reservoir now also qualifies as a site of national importance; the first site in Scotland to do so for this species since the setting of the most recent thresholds.

In Northern Ireland, a count of 396 at Loughs Neagh & Beg was the largest of the year anywhere in the UK, and represented a 42% increase at the site compared to the previous year.

Elsewhere in the province, numbers were similar to recent years with the notable exception of Upper Lough Erne where the peak count was the lowest since 1992/93.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Thames Estuary	(198)	444	377	499	(286)	Sep	440
Dungeness and Rye Bay	131	113	125	97	90	Oct	111
Chichester Harbour	125	135	95 <sup>11</sup>	66	63	Jan	97
Chew Valley Lake	110	110	95	80	80	Sep	95
Hamford Water	(92)	89	114	87	84	Jan	94
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	83	102	77	126	82	Sep	94
Alde Complex	(47)	109	112	76	75	Dec	93
Humber Estuary	(58)	60	64	94	(150)	Nov	92 ▲
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	55	120	114	105	56	Oct	90
Rutland Water	87	70	96	67	93	Nov	83 ▲
Cameron Reservoir	47	47	60	133	122	Sep	82 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	433	466	330	278	396	Nov	381
Upper Lough Erne	131	104	78	106	53	Jan	94
Strangford Lough	83	76	75	80	79	Jan	79
Lower Lough Erne	57	53	54	78	50	Dec	58
Larne Lough	65	77	52	20	27	Nov	48
Lough Money	39	51	48	40	51	Oct	46
Lough Foyle	31	31	32	28	28	Sep	30
Upper Quoile River	28	35	33	20	15	Oct	27
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008</b>							
Tees Estuary	70	54	88	83	72	Sep	73
Deben Estuary	76	74	90	82	50	Dec	74
River Avon - Fordingbridge to Ringwood	83	(58)	(73)	77	43	Oct	69
Hillsborough Main Lake	27	28	21	28	17	Jan	24
Belfast Lough	30	28	23	12	13	Dec	21
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain</b>							
The Wash	53	48	70	88	113	Dec	74
Carsington Water	43	45	89	73	96	Nov	69
Severn Estuary	54	52	87	86	91	Sep	74
Crouch-Roach Estuary	60	72 <sup>11</sup>	(33)	44	81	Feb	64



*Little Grebe (Jill Pakenham)*



## Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

GB max: 7,938 Feb  
NI max: 2,919 Dec

International threshold: 3,600  
Great Britain threshold: 159  
All-Ireland threshold: 55

\*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

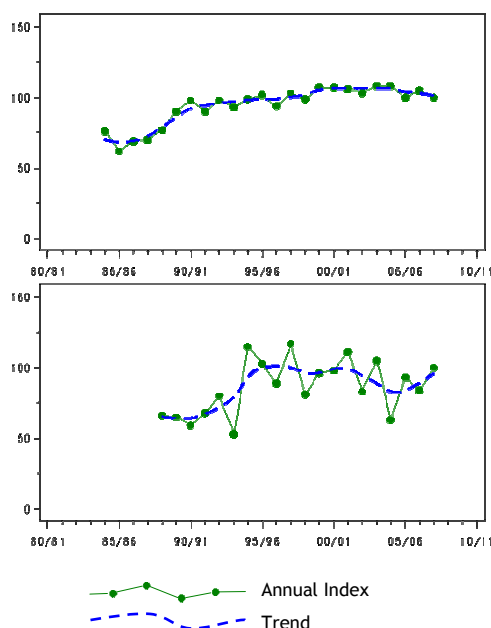


Figure 35.a, Annual indices & trend for Great Crested Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

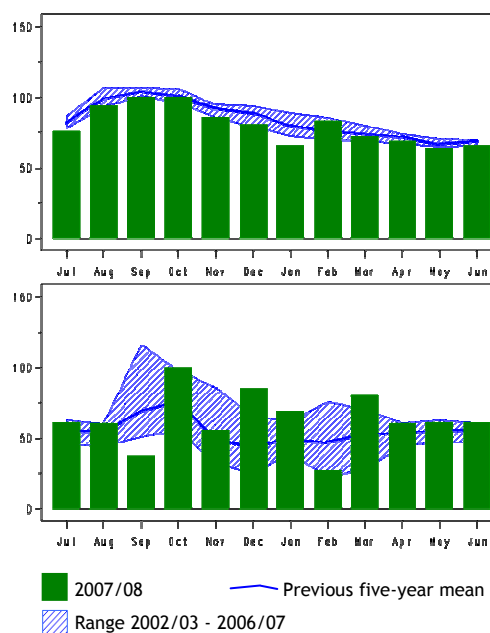


Figure 35.b, Monthly indices for Great Crested Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

The two most important wetland sites for Great Crested Grebe in the UK are both in Northern Ireland: Belfast Lough and Loughs Neagh & Beg. No sites have ever surpassed the current threshold for international importance of 3,600 birds; the count of 2,150 at Belfast Lough in December is the highest since an all-time record WeBS Core count of 2,403 there in November 1997. Similarly the October count from Loughs Neagh & Beg represents a welcome return to four-figure counts there, the first since September 2003.

The British counted maximum fell slightly compared to the last two years, and the trend appears to have stabilised following a prolonged period of very shallow increase in the national index.

In England, the Dungeness & Rye Bay area again supported high numbers during the winter, the majority of which were

offshore. Whereas counts decreased again at Rutland Water, for the second year running numbers of Great Crested Grebes increased markedly at Chew Valley Lake where the monthly peak of 665 in September was twice the previous five-year average for the site. Disappointingly, counts were not submitted for the third of the most important inland sites, Grafham Water.

The propensity for large flocks of this species to winter off the English south and east coasts is illustrated by both the established importance of Dungeness & Rye Bay as well as the periodic exceptional counts on the Suffolk coast. The latter are presumably associated with the same foraging conditions that can attract large numbers of Red-throated Divers to the area.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Dungeness and Rye Bay	1,080 <sup>13</sup>	1,037	848	880 <sup>13</sup>	653	Jan	900
Rutland Water	619	815	771	655	441	Oct	660
Grafham Water	463	526	463				484
Chew Valley Lake	330	330	275	430	665	Sep	406
Minsmere	463	30	18	57	1,210 <sup>13</sup>	Jan	356 ▲
Cotswold Water Park (West)	(245)	283	354	284	309	Oct	308
Pitsford Reservoir	341	309	308	267	312	Aug	307
Lavan Sands	176 <sup>13</sup>	(446)	57	329	260	Feb	254
Queen Mary Reservoir	495	262	126	130	208	Mar	244
Bewl Water	190	330	204	188	183	Jul	219
Morecambe Bay	218	(91)	(138)	(62)	(80)	Jan	218
Forth Estuary	295	313	123	95	139	Oct	193
Blithfield Reservoir	202	151			(168)	Dec	177 ▲
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	204	147	175	(124)	(136)	Sep	175
Loch Ryan	210	299	193	77	80	Oct	172
Solway Firth	88	(333)	233	100	84	Oct	168
Loch Leven	204	127	150	198	141	Sep	164
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Belfast Lough	1,832	1,577	2,095	1,482	2,150	Dec	1,827
Loughs Neagh and Beg	1,695	518	449	959	1,191	Oct	962
Lough Foyle	1,030	50	169	116	116	Nov	296
Carlingford Lough	184	232	246	116	93	Jan	174
Upper Lough Erne	112	191	147	206	171	Feb	165
Strangford Lough	140	(64)	(82)	(65)	(137)	Oct	140
Larne Lough	115	50	56	84	105	Sep	82
Lower Lough Erne	66	117	48	123	55	Feb	82
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008</b>							
Pegwell Bay	20	233	38	48	110	Feb	90
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain</b>							
Stour Estuary	106	92	157	124	232	Feb	142
Draycote Water	151	98	122	57	222	Feb	130
Southampton Water	68	42	58	(47)	(215)	Jan	96
Glyne Gap	0	42	(116)	213	(206)	Feb	115

## Red-necked Grebe

*Podiceps grisegena*

International threshold: 510  
Great Britain threshold: 2\*†  
All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 19 Feb  
NI max: 0

\*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Red-necked Grebes were recorded at 21 sites, with records in all months apart from August and May. As was the case in 2006/07, numbers nationally were generally disappointing and it was one of the lowest annual totals ever to be recorded by WeBS. The five-year average for the Forth Estuary fell to just 18, albeit a figure still considerably higher than that for any other sites in the UK.

All other records in 2007/08 referred to one or two birds, with the exception of three at Glyne Gap in February. Counts of two at Carmarthen Bay and Jersey Shore in November and December respectively represented the first WeBS records of Red-necked Grebe for those sites; hinting at the likelihood of small numbers almost certainly wintering around the entire UK coastline.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Forth Estuary	16	24	32	4	12	Feb	18
North Norfolk Coast	2	1	6	4	2	Dec	3
Gerrans Bay	1	1	4	1	2	Oct	2
Lindisfarne	0	2	3 <sup>11</sup>	2	2	Jan	2
Hunterston Sands					(2) <sup>13</sup>	Sep	(2) ▲
Moray Firth	1	2	2	1	(1)	Dec	2 ▲

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008</b>							
Loch Ryan	3	0	2	1	0		1
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain</b>							
Glyne Gap	0	0	(1)	(2)	(3)	Feb	1
Carmarthen Bay	(0)	0	0	0	2	Nov	1
Jersey Shore				0	2	Dec	1
Par Sands Pools and St Andrews Road	0	0	2	0	2	Dec	1

## Slavonian Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*

International threshold: 55  
Great Britain threshold: 7\*  
All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 208 Oct  
NI max: 12 Nov

*\*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

2007/08 was an unremarkable year for counts of Slavonian Grebes. Records were received from a respectable 91 sites around Britain and a further three in Northern Ireland.

Numbers at the Forth Estuary were again low compared to the longer-term average for the site, and the Moray Firth dropped below the qualifying level for recognition as a site of international importance for the first time. Away from the coast, notable records from sites in England included two at Anglers Country Park Lake in October, two at Bassenthwaite Lake in November and three at Abberton Reservoir in April.

In Northern Ireland, Slavonian Grebes were noted at three sites, including the most traditional location in the country;

Lough Foyle, where a peak of 11 in November was more than the previous year but still low compared to the longer-term site average.



*Slavonian Grebe (Tommy Holden)*

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Forth Estuary	110	73	55	25 <sup>13</sup>	18	Apr	56
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	55 <sup>10</sup>	59 <sup>10</sup>	52 <sup>10</sup>				55
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Moray Firth	62	55	42	50	41	Feb	50 ▼
Inner Firth of Clyde	(20)	16	35	41	73 <sup>13</sup>	Mar	41
Loch of Harray	23	49	24	16	52	Oct	33
Loch Ryan	32	42	23	39	19	Oct	31
Inner Loch Indaal	30						30
Loch Na Keal	18 <sup>12</sup>				40 <sup>13</sup>	Feb	29
Sound of Gigha		20 <sup>12</sup>	30 <sup>12</sup>				25
Traigh Luskentyre	44 <sup>44</sup>	31		11	4	Oct	23
Lindisfarne	(2)	30 <sup>11</sup>	22 <sup>11</sup>	18	4	Feb	19
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	17 <sup>10</sup>	(16) <sup>10</sup>	20 <sup>10</sup>				19
Blackwater Estuary	41	11	2 <sup>11</sup>	(2)	4	Dec	15
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	6 <sup>10</sup>	18 <sup>10</sup>	22 <sup>10</sup>				15
Loch of Swannay	11	19	10	15	14	Dec	14
Pagham Harbour	28	8	8	3	13	Feb	12
Broadford Bay	6	10	(7)	13	17	Jan	12
Gualan and Balgarva		11 <sup>44</sup>					11
Loch Ewe		0	13	18	(7)	Feb	10
Hornish	10 <sup>44</sup>						10
Gerrans Bay	4	5	26	5	4	Oct	9
South Yell Sound	9 <sup>10</sup>						9
Sullom Voe	6 <sup>10</sup>	13 <sup>10</sup>	7 <sup>10</sup>				9

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sound of Harris	5 <sup>44</sup>	10 <sup>44</sup>					8
Jersey Shore				4	10	Jan	7 ▲
Goring	(0)	(7)					(7)
Lavan Sands	6	14 <sup>13</sup>	2	6	5	Feb	7
Upper Loch Torridon		0	17	0	9	Feb	7 ▲
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 4 or more birds in Northern Ireland<sup>†</sup></b>							
Lough Foyle	61	10	42	4	11	Nov	26
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain</b>							
Loch Eriboll		0	0	4	21	Feb	6
Loch Watten	1	3	2	10	12	Oct	6
Loch of Stenness	2	1	2	11	12	Nov	6
Seahouses to Budle Point	2	3	(0)	1	11	Oct	4
Water Sound	0	3	1	2	9	Jan	3
Glyne Gap	0	0	4	(8)	(7)	Feb	4
Loch of Boardhouse	5	3	3	3	7	Nov	4

## Black-necked Grebe

*Podiceps nigricollis*

International threshold: 2,200  
Great Britain threshold: 1\*<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 53 Apr  
NI max: 0

\*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

In 2007/08, Black-necked Grebes were recorded at 40 sites in England, four in Wales and three in Scotland. Two of the locations featured in the key sites table have been kept confidential following the advice of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel and/or local counters.



Black-necked Grebe (Ron Marshall)

William Girling Reservoir now qualifies as the most important site for this species in the UK; a count of 32 in February being the

largest ever there. Conversely, following a peak of 56 birds at the Fal Complex as recently as 2005/06, none were reported there for the first time since 1999/2000.

Away from the major sites, winter counts of four to five birds were received from Abberton Reservoir in October, Kingsbridge Estuary in November, Gerrans Bay in December, and Stour Estuary in February.

In England, Black-necked Grebe has the potential to appear at virtually any site, whereas in the rest of Britain it is much scarcer; there have only ever been two WeBS records from Northern Ireland.

It is a relatively unusual diving species in that both freshwater and saline habitats have in the past tended to support equally important numbers of wintering individuals in Britain. It remains to be seen whether the changes recorded in 2007/08 relate to a genuine shift to inland wetland habitats.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
William Girling Reservoir	21	27	21	26	32	Feb	25
Woolston Eyes	23	35	13	(35)	17	Apr	25
Fal Complex	7	19	56	4	0		17
Langstone Harbour	11	16 <sup>11</sup>	20	24 <sup>13</sup>	5	Feb	15
Confidential Hertfordshire Site	17	12	10	9	12	Mar	12
Confidential Northumberland Site	10	11	16	10	8	Apr	11
Teignmouth to Berry Head	4	18					11
Lower Derwent Ings	1	47	0	2	0		10
Staines Reservoirs	1	6	11	9	9	Mar	7

<sup>†</sup> as the British threshold is so low and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of five has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Cormorant

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

GB max: 15,805 Oct  
NI max: 2,062 Nov

International threshold: 1,200  
Great Britain threshold: 230  
All-Ireland threshold: 140

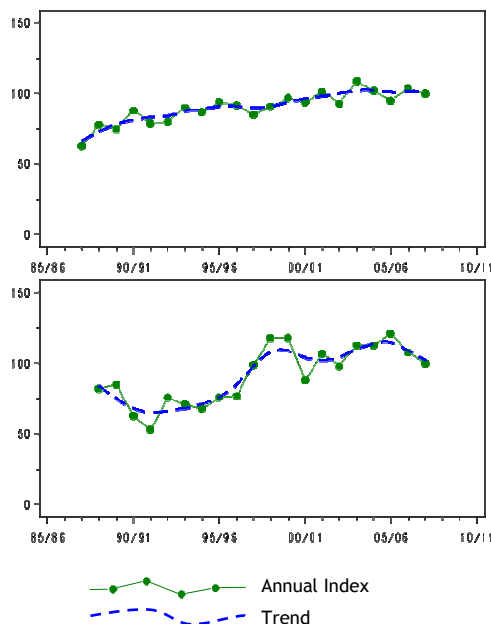


Figure 36.a, Annual indices & trend for Cormorant for GB (above) & NI (below).

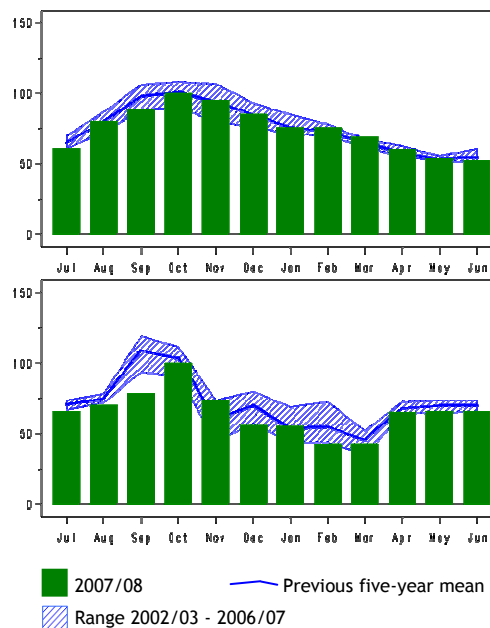


Figure 36.b, Monthly indices for Cormorant for GB (above) & NI (below).

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 more typically freshwater race *sinensis* from the continent, both as a breeder and non-breeder, which have supplemented the UK population of the native *carbo* race.

The most recent years however have indicated an apparent levelling off in Cormorant numbers in Britain and a slight decline in Northern Ireland, perhaps in

response to increased culling effort nationally.

Forty sites qualified as being of national importance for Cormorants in 2007/08. One of the largest of these is the Dee Estuary where the peak monthly count exceeded 1,000 for the second year in succession.

Conversely, in Northern Ireland, numbers at the UK's only site of international importance, Loughs Neagh & Beg, declined by 16% compared to the previous year, dropping to the level of five years ago having reached an all-time peak in 2006/07.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	1,468	1,591	1,490	1,665	1,396	Oct	1,522
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Alt Estuary	739	984	1,079	1,168	937	Jan	981
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	718	780	623	1,003	1,133	Nov	851
Dungeness and Rye Bay	513	1,111	929	717	684	Aug	791
Morecambe Bay	(539)	681	655	(641)	(907)	Sep	748
Rutland Water	788	697	825	918	396	Oct	725
Forth Estuary	(631)	669	713	653	477	Sep	629
Inner Firth of Clyde	425	452	(740) <sup>12</sup>	875 <sup>12</sup>	389	Sep	576
Thames Estuary	596	654	526	434	(211)	Sep	553

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Solway Estuary	(594)	(454)	(357)	530	497	Oct	540
Tees Estuary	773	471	511	329	378	Sep	492
Wraysbury Reservoir	899	83					491
Walthamstow Reservoirs	505	453	306	640	433	Jul	467
The Wash	449	538	371	467	453	Dec	456
Abberton Reservoir	480	450	324	342	639	Nov	447
Ribble Estuary	(456)	543	293	316	504	Feb	422
Poole Harbour	(412)	431	408	374	254	Sep	376
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	607	119	306	533	311	Dec	375
Grafham Water	193	344	531				356
Staines Reservoirs	773	21	436	49	432	Aug	342
Besthorpe and Girton Gravel Pits and Fleet	372	336	363	274	(253)	Feb	336
Hanningfield Reservoir	411	109	318	500	215	Mar	311
Ouse Washes	252 <sup>12</sup>	294	254 <sup>13</sup>	454 <sup>13</sup>	294	Mar	310
Medway Estuary	305	(68)	(93)	(30)	(60)	Oct	305
Queen Mother Reservoir	850	25	252	120	230	Feb	295
Blackwater Estuary	473	191	224	(46)	279	Oct	292
Ayr to North Troon	(110)	292	(97)	(51)			292
Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir	340	295	360	295	160	Nov	290
Rostherne Mere	306	256	273	273	328	Jan	287
King George VI Reservoir	8	104	93	872	309	Aug	277 ▲
North Norfolk Coast	276	242	272	265	300 <sup>12</sup>	Jul	271
Alde Complex	(106)	549	99	206	226	Feb	270
Ranworth and Cockshoot Broads	324 <sup>12</sup>	257 <sup>12</sup>	310 <sup>12</sup>	348 <sup>12</sup>	95	Oct	267
Drakelow Gravel Pit	253 <sup>12</sup>	230 <sup>12</sup>	303	212 <sup>13</sup>	310	Jun	262
Queen Mary Reservoir	768	44	85	88	295	Mar	256
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(168)	(256)	(93)	(48)	(32)	Aug	(256)
Fairburn Ings	187		265	241	313	May	252 ▲
Pagham Harbour	303	225	308	258	162	Sep	251
Tay Estuary	236	(243)	198	310	211	Oct	240
Durham Coast	(2)	(52)	236	(63)	(8)	Oct	236
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Strangford Lough	400	405	455	422	286	Oct	394
Outer Ards Shoreline	563	350	455	397	177	Jan	388
Belfast Lough	348	350 <sup>13</sup>	378	350	312	Dec	348
Carlingford Lough	154	221	238	230	142	Aug	197
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008</b>							
Lough Foyle	(210)	87	(47)	(93)	78	Nov	117
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain</b>							
South Yell Sound	201 <sup>10</sup>	108 <sup>10</sup>	136 <sup>10</sup>		464 <sup>10</sup>	Nov	227
Colne Estuary	423	297	81	47	248 <sup>11</sup>	Feb	220

## Shag

*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

International threshold: 2,000

Great Britain threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 3,262 Oct

NI max: 661 Nov

WeBS only monitors a small proportion of Shags occurring around the British coast, hence caution is needed when inferring changes to populations based on WeBS data.

The species was recorded at 217 sites in Britain and eight in Northern Ireland. Typically the majority of records and largest aggregations were seen around the coastline of Scotland, with a peak WeBS

Core Count during the year of 800 at Widewall Bay in October, the most ever counted there. Once again the table for this species was largely populated with counts carried out by SOTEAG (Shetland Oil Terminal Environmental Advisory Group).

South of the border, above average numbers were noted in south-west England, exemplified by notable counts from Gerrans Bay and Kingsbridge Estuary in November.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 100 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Forth Estuary	(1,664)	(760)	420	719	(384)	Oct	891
South Yell Sound	893 <sup>10</sup>	558 <sup>10</sup>	790 <sup>10</sup>		1,065 <sup>10</sup>	Nov	827
Moray Firth	413 <sup>1</sup>	995 <sup>1</sup>	308 <sup>1</sup>				572
Hacosay, Bluemull & Colgrave Sounds	709 <sup>10</sup>	232 <sup>10</sup>	625 <sup>10</sup>				522
North Bressay		728 <sup>10</sup>	128 <sup>10</sup>				428
Widewall Bay	580	140	150	390	800	Oct	412
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	778 <sup>10</sup>	(97) <sup>10</sup>	198 <sup>10</sup>		183 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	386
Burra and Trondra	476 <sup>10</sup>	441 <sup>10</sup>	287 <sup>10</sup>		332 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	384
Scalloway Islands	424 <sup>10</sup>	255 <sup>10</sup>	448 <sup>10</sup>		221 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	337
Scousburgh to Maywick			245 <sup>10</sup>				245
Inner Firth of Clyde	(159)	190	(115)	197	297	Feb	228
Quendale to Virkie	176 <sup>10</sup>	97 <sup>10</sup>	503 <sup>10</sup>		102 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	220
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	132 <sup>10</sup>	126 <sup>10</sup>	299 <sup>10</sup>		253 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	203
Moray Coast (Consolidated)	180	251	33	193	347	Oct	201
Gulberwick Area			189 <sup>10</sup>				189
Arran	(151)	131	304	123	(104)	Sep	186
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	108 <sup>1</sup>	663 <sup>1</sup>	31	22	45	Oct	174
South Unst	206 <sup>10</sup>	63 <sup>10</sup>	246 <sup>10</sup>				172
Easter Ross Coast	214 <sup>1</sup>	122 <sup>1</sup>					168
Loch Ewe		197	115	261	98	Feb	168
Bressay Sound	100 <sup>10</sup>	272 <sup>10</sup>	97 <sup>10</sup>				156
Red Point to Port Henderson		92	246	105	(68)	Feb	148
Island of Papa Westray	210	50	150				137
Broadford Bay	(100)	150	152	150	88	Jan	135
Sullom Voe	104 <sup>10</sup>	133 <sup>10</sup>	68 <sup>10</sup>		219 <sup>10</sup>	Nov	131
Loch Ryan	79	144	127	179	110	Oct	128
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	169 <sup>10</sup>	138 <sup>10</sup>	115 <sup>10</sup>	73 <sup>10</sup>	127 <sup>10</sup>	Feb	124
Gerrans Bay	18	25	101	86	328	Oct	112
Winterfield to Catcraig				120	98	Sep	109
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 100 or more birds in Northern Ireland<sup>†</sup></b>							
Outer Ards Shoreline	187	280	236	284	317	Nov	261
Strangford Lough	226	218	295	291	164 <sup>11</sup>	Dec	239
Belfast Lough	194 <sup>11</sup>	133 <sup>13</sup>	49	191 <sup>11</sup>	107	Nov	135
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Vasa Loch Shapinsay	13	1	1	16	130	Oct	32

<sup>†</sup> as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 105 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Bittern

*Botaurus stellaris*

International threshold: 65  
Great Britain threshold: ?  
All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 26 Jan  
NI max: 0

During 2007/08, Bitterns were recorded at 39 WeBS sites across England and a further two in Wales, while none were noted in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Birds were recorded in all months of the year with a peak of 26 in January. Several sites hosted two to three birds, while four were present at Titchfield Haven in December and Stodmarsh NNR in January.

## Night Heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

Vagrant and Escape  
Native Range: Worldwide

GB max: 1 Aug  
NI max: 0

Three Night Herons were recorded in Jersey in July and December, and at Alexandra Park, Hastings in August.

## Cattle Egret

*Bubulcus ibis*

Vagrant and Escape  
Native Range: Worldwide

GB max: 9 Mar  
NI max: 0

An influx of Cattle Egrets into southern Britain during the latter part of 2007 resulted in 2007/08 being a record WeBS year for the species.

The species was seen at twelve sites, all for the first time ever during Core counts. Four at Siblyback Reservoir in December was the biggest group of the year, and represented the vanguard ahead of further winter records from Severn Estuary and Ouse Valley in January, and Tamar Complex in February. The Avon Valley held up to three birds from January to April, and two

remained at Chichester Gravel Pits from January to March. During spring, two were at Avon Estuary from March to May, three at Exe Estuary in March, singles at Fleet & Wey and Otter Estuary in April, and finally two at Kingsbridge Estuary in May. Following this influx breeding occurred in south-west England; the signs are there that this species will become an increasingly regular visitor to WeBS sites, particularly in the south, during the years ahead.

## Little Egret

*Egretta garzetta*

GB max: 3,917 Sep  
NI max: 34 Sep

International threshold: 1,300  
Great Britain threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

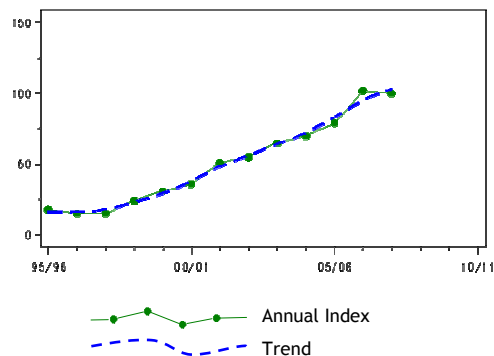


Figure 37.a, Annual indices & trend for Little Egret for GB.

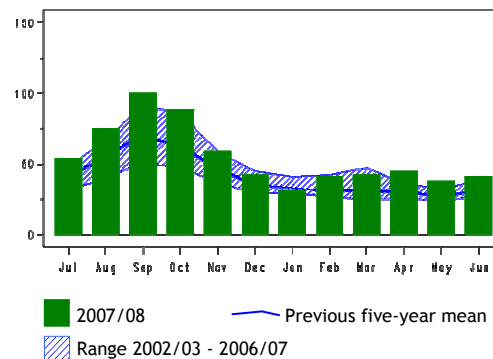


Figure 37.b, Monthly indices for Little Egret for GB.

The familiar increase in the number of Little Egrets in Britain shows no sign of abating, and the monthly maximum rose to record levels. There are some indications that the rate of increase may be slowing; 2007/08 saw no rise in the national index compared to the previous year, and a large proportion of the principal sites recorded their peaks during the period of August to October. Greater numbers during late summer and the autumn were presumably a result of the expanding breeding population which continues to go from strength to strength, but it should be remembered that

counts at that time of year are more likely to be affected by a greater variation in coverage.

The gradual expansion away from the English south coast continues, exemplified by all-time peaks noted at sites both in the west (e.g. Severn Estuary, Carmarthen Bay and Dyfi Estuary), in the east (e.g. Blackwater Estuary and Humber Estuary), and the north (e.g. Ribble Estuary and Morecambe Bay). In total, the species was recorded at a record 285 WeBS sites, nineteen of which held monthly maxima in excess of 100 birds. Several sites reached



that particular WeBS milestone for the first time, including perhaps most notably Cleddau Estuary and Carmarthen Bay in Wales. Little Egrets occurred at a record eleven sites in Scotland during 2007/08,

including four birds at Auchenreoch Loch in January. The Northern Ireland maximum again increased to an all-time high and included a peak count of 23 at Carlingford Lough in September.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Medway Estuary	413 <sup>11</sup>	(76)	(62)	(32)	(71)	Oct	413
Thames Estuary	(262)	295	260	316	277	Sep	287
The Wash	72	92	139	323	(319)	Oct	260
Chichester Harbour	228	129	(206)	192	264	Sep	204
North Norfolk Coast	149 <sup>11</sup>	228 <sup>11</sup>	170 <sup>11</sup>	193	272 <sup>11</sup>	Nov	203
Blackwater Estuary	(66)	(159)	133	(58)	245	Sep	189
Poole Harbour	(179)	(116)	(112)	(84)	(79)	Nov	(179)
Jersey Shore				98	156	Dec	127
Tamar Complex	143	120	(129)	97	(126)	Oct	123
Exe Estuary	131	93	107	116	135	Aug	116
Swale Estuary	131	95	(100)	(72)	(100)	Oct	113
Burry Inlet	(141)	103	108	86	87	Aug	105
Lavan Sands	67	71	107	133	131	Aug	102
Dee Estuary (England & Wales)	32 <sup>11</sup>	59 <sup>11</sup>	112 <sup>11</sup>	132 <sup>11</sup>	163	Dec	100
Stour Estuary	57	87	102	143	102	Oct	98
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(74)	(56)	93	78	(121)	Sep	97
Hamford Water	53	81	72	135	95	Sep	87
Kingsbridge Estuary	(99)	86	85	89	67	Mar	85
Langstone Harbour	90	87	91	77	76	Sep	84
Crouch-Roach Estuary	43	73 <sup>10</sup>	(35)	102	100	Oct	80
Southampton Water	(51)	(39)	(44)	(80)	(24)	Oct	(80)
Severn Estuary	47	66	104	74	105	Sep	79
Cleddau Estuary	36	71	83	(68)	120	Sep	78
Fal Complex	(52)	89	60	82	79	Sep	78
Pagham Harbour	63	(60)	94	90	63	Sep	78
Camel Estuary	65	71	96	80	74	Jul	77
Portsmouth Harbour	(34)	51	45	96	111	Oct	76
Longueville Marsh	105	102	60	12			70
Somerset Levels	(12)	24	(35)	64	73	Mar	57
Grouville Marsh	2	2	50	165			55
North West Solent	42	(51)	56	53	56	Sep	54
Alde Complex	(23)	45	44	56	66	Nov	53
Carmarthen Bay	23	35	41	57	106	Sep	53
Fleet and Wey	25	46	56	59	67	Aug	51
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Colne Estuary	35	46	47	34	64 <sup>11</sup>	Nov	46
Dengie Flats	(27)	31	45	51	58	Nov	46
Teign Estuary	15	25	59	49	69	Oct	43
Deben Estuary	15	24	30	42	56	Sep	33

<sup>†</sup> as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Great White Egret

*Ardea alba*

Vagrant  
Native Range: Worldwide

GB max: 4 Oct  
NI max: 1 Oct

Single Great White Egrets were reported from 17 sites in 2007/08; the most ever in a WeBS year and further evidence of the species' slow but steady expansion. All

were in England with the exception of birds at Loch Mor (Benbecula) in Scotland in November and at Loughs Neagh & Beg in Northern Ireland in October.

## Grey Heron

*Ardea cinerea*

International threshold: 2,700  
Great Britain threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: 30\*

GB max: 4,318 Oct  
NI max: 472 Oct

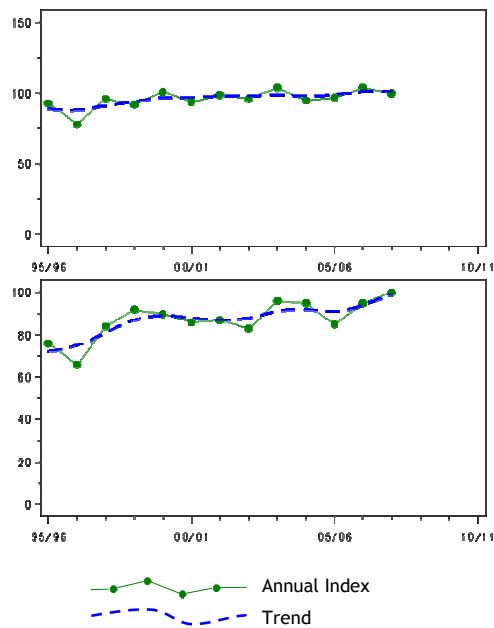


Figure 38.a, Annual indices & trend for Grey Heron for GB (above) & NI (below).

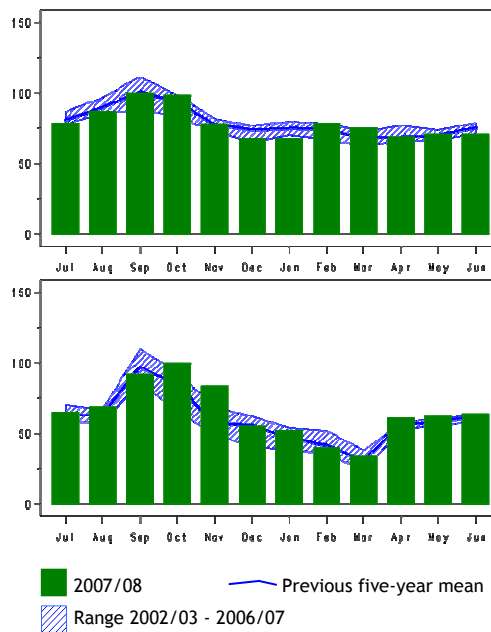


Figure 38.b, Monthly indices for Grey Heron for GB (above) & NI (below).

The national index for Grey Heron in Britain remained stable compared to recent years - a typical situation, this probably the species which has shown least in the way of fluctuations since WeBS trends were first produced. Typically for recent years the monthly peak occurred in October, when the resident British population tends to be supplemented by immigrants from other parts of Europe.

Six sites held monthly maxima in excess of 100 birds, two of which were in Northern Ireland where the national index rose to its

highest ever level. These included Loughs Neagh & Beg where 173 in October represented the peak WeBS Core count of the year. This is only the third year that the peak has dropped below 200 at this site since 1996/1997. Historically, the largest counts from Loughs Neagh & Beg were when Core counts were carried out in August, presumably therefore including a large proportion of locally-bred juveniles. Such counts include the highest ever monthly total for a single site; 359 in 1998.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	208	172	202	225	173	Oct	196
Strangford Lough	102	90	121 <sup>11</sup>	95 <sup>11</sup>	138 <sup>11</sup>	Oct	110
Lough Foyle	45	54	34	42	44	Sep	44
Carlingford Lough	23	30	41	51	62	Sep	41
Belfast Lough	29 <sup>11</sup>	36	36	(32)	43	Nov	36
Outer Ards Shoreline	22	52	16	35	24	Nov	30
Larne Lough	34	47	19	30	20	Nov	30
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Somerset Levels	(130)	151	119	143	135	Feb	137
Avon Valley - Salisbury to Fordingbridge	150	80	106	114	144	Mar	119
Coombe Country Park	159	105	120	107	70	Mar	112

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Forth Estuary	78 <sup>11</sup>	104	108	111	125	Oct	105
Thames Estuary	(94)	100	117	89	(91)	Aug	102
Besthorpe and Girton Gravel Pits and Fleet	(23)	(16)	(19)	(96)	(14)	Nov	(96)
Ouse Washes	78	163 <sup>13</sup>	36	55 <sup>13</sup>	143	Oct	95
Morecambe Bay	91	68	88	105	(38)	Aug	88
Inner Firth of Clyde	81	90	93	(100)	62	Oct	85
Humber Estuary	(39)	(37)	(29)	(33)	74	Oct	74
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	87	67	(48)	66	73	Aug	73
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	67	55	68	68	61	Oct	64
River Avon - Fordingbridge to Ringwood	28	56	73	83	82	Sep	64
Tees Estuary	64	56	62	83	56	Sep	64
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	76	56	62	36	78	Mar	62
Cromarty Firth	73	47	58	64	58	Oct	60
Severn Estuary	81	69	55	43	45	Sep	59
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	22	58	96	64	55	Feb	59
Walthamstow Reservoirs	64	60	16	75	76	Apr	58
Southampton Water	(57)	(23)	(30)	(40)	(17)	Jan	(57)
Solway Estuary	70	72	(28)	32	51	Oct	56
Taw-Torridge Estuary	77	30	29	72	(70)	Oct	56
The Wash	76	50	52	59	39	Oct	55
Tamar Complex	52	49	67	48	44	Dec	52
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Loch Leven	60	17	16	46	66	Aug	41
Dee Flood Meadows	8	(1)	21	3	57	Feb	22
North Norfolk Coast	38	33	37	38	56	Aug	40
Montrose Basin	54	(40)	32	55	54	Jul	49
Alde Complex	(27)	29	27	30	(51)	Oct	34
Tophill Low Reservoirs	4	3	8	4	51 <sup>13</sup>	Aug	14
Southill Lake	(52)	45	31	41	50	Mar	44
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Northern Ireland</b>							
Dundrum Inner Bay	14	12	37	36	41	Oct	28

<sup>†</sup> as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## Purple Heron

*Ardea purpurea*

Vagrant

Native Range: Europe, Africa, Asia

GB max: 2 Oct

NI max: 0

A juvenile Purple Heron was present at Nene Washes in October; the twelfth WeBS record and the first for both the site and month.

## White Stork

*Ciconia ciconia*

Vagrant and escape

Native Range: Europe, Africa, Asia

GB max: 2 Nov

NI max: 0

Up to two White Storks recorded throughout the year at Harewood Lake in Yorkshire were of captive origin, and have been reported from there in previous years.

## Glossy Ibis

*Plegadis falcinellus*

Vagrant

Native Range: Worldwide

GB max: 2 Oct

NI max: 0

Two Glossy Ibises were recorded in 2007/08. The individual first seen at Freckleton Marsh in June 2007 (Austin *et al.* 2008a) remained on the Ribble Estuary until June 2008 at least, and another was at Donna Nook on the Humber in July-August.

## Sacred Ibis

*Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Escape

Native Range: Europe, Africa, Asia

GB max: 1 Aug  
NI max: 0

A Sacred Ibis present at Holkham and Burnham Overy Fresh Marshes on the North Norfolk Coast from between August and

March is the first WeBS record of this species there.

## Spoonbill

*Platalea leucorodia*

International threshold: 110  
Great Britain threshold: ?  
All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 26 Jul  
NI max: 0

Spoonbills were recorded in every month in 2007/08 with the exception of October. All were in England apart from two birds in Wales, at Severn Estuary in January and Malltraeth RSPB in March and May. Recorded from a total of 25 sites, most

counts were of one or two birds, notable exceptions being 13 at Holkham Fresh Marsh on the North Norfolk Coast in July, 12 at Poole Harbour in September, seven on Taw-Torridge Estuary in January-February, and six at Tamar Estuary in November.

## Water Rail

*Rallus aquaticus*

International threshold: 10,000  
Great Britain threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>  
All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 589 Nov  
NI max: 5 Dec

A British maximum of 589 Water Rails in November was higher than the total for recent years and included the peak count of the year - 62 at Somerset Levels, the site in the UK where consistently most are recorded annually. This total has only been surpassed on one previous occasion, from the same locality in 2004/05. At such sites with areas of reedbed and extensive networks of ditches, the species is

inevitably under-recorded due to its secretive, often unobtrusive, behaviour. Other notable counts, both in November, included 40 at Heaton Park and 22 at Chew Valley Lake.

Typically, the monthly peak in Northern Ireland remained in single figures with the highest single counts being three; at Loughs Neagh & Beg in September and Upper Lough Erne in December.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Somerset Levels	45	63	50	58	62	Nov	56
Grouville Marsh	20	20	30	(10)			23
Longueville Marsh	15	20	20	(10)			18
Middle Yare Marshes	18	(4)	(5)	(5)	(3)	Sep	18
Burry Inlet	18	16	(0)	(0)	(0)		17
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	(5)	16	10	8	(24)	Mar	15
Kenfig Pool	27	17	12	14	7	Nov	15
Southampton Water	(7)	11	20	10	(20)	Dec	15
Severn Estuary	5	6	25	13	23	Nov	14
Stodmarsh NNR and Collards Lagoon	20	15	9	14	8	Dec	13
Thames Estuary	(8)	11	(10)	19	8	Aug	13
Chichester Harbour	6	13	14	15	10	Nov	12
London Wetland Centre	7	6	13	17	16	Mar	12
Poole Harbour	(10)	(12)	(6)	(6)	(4)	Nov	(12)

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
River Cam - Kingfishers Bridge	7	8	22	15	7	Apr	12
Dungeness and Rye Bay	19	12	8	10	7	Dec	11
North Norfolk Coast	10	7	15	7	16 <sup>11</sup>	Nov	11
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Heaton Park	0	0	0	0	40	Nov	8
Chew Valley Lake	0	3	5	5	22	Nov	7
Cotswold Water Park (West)	1	10	15 <sup>12</sup>	4	17 <sup>13</sup>	Dec	9
Llynau Y Fali	4	12	4	4	15	Apr	8
Doxey Marshes SSSI	7	12	8	2	14	Oct	9
Upton Warren Local Nature Reserve	4	8	8	8	12	Aug	8
Tongue End Nature Reserve (Baston Fen)	4	1	1	2	11	Feb	4
Humber Estuary	(4)	(5)	(5)	3	(10)	Dec	5
Rutland Water	8	8	9	10	10	Jan	9

<sup>†</sup> 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

## Corncrake

*Crex crex*

Scarce

GB max: 1 Jul  
NI max: 0

Only one Corncrake was noted during WeBS counts in 2007/08; on the Western Isles in July.

## Moorhen

*Gallinula chloropus*

International threshold: 20,000\*\*

Great Britain threshold: 7,500<sup>†</sup>

All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 14,459 Nov  
NI max: 221 Nov

Moorhens have a widespread distribution throughout the UK and occur in a wide variety of wetland habitats; consequently they tend to be relatively poorly monitored by WeBS.

The counted British maximum for Moorhen was close to average when compared to the past five years. Severn Estuary and WWT Martin Mere both maintained their status as the sites with the highest counts in Britain, retaining five-year averages in excess of 450 birds. In general, counts at individual sites in 2007/08 were

unexceptional and in keeping with site averages - exceptions included all-time peaks noted at Rutland Water, Cotswold Water Park (West), Medway Estuary and Carsington Water, and in particular Ouse Washes where counts during the winter were almost four times greater than the previous five-year average for the site.

The Northern Ireland maximum was below that of recent years, the highest count being 118 at Loughs Neagh & Beg in March.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 100 or more birds in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Severn Estuary	465	409	465	546	435	Sep	464
WWT Martin Mere	440	420	490	438	485	Sep	455
Somerset Levels	276	327	410	430	392	Oct	367
Thames Estuary	324	371	383	367	(234)	Mar	361
Lower Derwent Ings	444	321	366	296	268	Nov	339
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	340	301	292	(300)	296	Oct	307
Pitsford Reservoir	326	133	266	389	241	Nov	271
North Norfolk Coast	280	192	281	223	230	Dec	241
Ouse Washes	95	102 <sup>13</sup>	111	201	557 <sup>13</sup>	Dec	213
Rutland Water	191	192	188	157	219	Oct	189
Arun Valley	176	146	175	246	(195)	Oct	188

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
London Wetland Centre	137	135	239	218	203	Sep	186
Dungeness and Rye Bay	195	165	213	166	181	Dec	184
Old Moor	116	45	(80)	(171)	(366)	Nov	175
Chichester Gravel Pits	161	167	228	139	174	Jan	174
Humber Estuary	224	170	142	136	166	Jan	168
Grand Western Canal	103	132	137	178	134	Dec	137
Bewl Water	215	165	61	100	100	Sep	128
Avon Valley - Salisbury to Fordingbridge	143	112	178	(92)	68	Sep	125
Grantham Canal - Cotgrave to Gamston			97	122	151	Jan	123
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	(121)	(86)	(97)	(78)	(105)	Nov	(121)
Fairburn Ings	154		134	116	81	Mar	121
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	112	94	108	158	128	Sep	120
Chew Valley Lake	245	125	80	90	55	Aug	119
Tring Reservoirs	115	135	110	138	93	Sep	118
Cotswold Water Park (West)	(89)	73	132	117	144	Oct	117
Tees Estuary	110	(103)	(102)	126	108	Dec	115
Micklemere					108 <sup>13</sup>	Aug	108
River Cam: Owlstone Rd to Baits Bite Lock	76	117	126	105	111	Jan	107
River Wye: Bakewell to Haddon	126	109	104	90			107
Orwell Estuary	164 <sup>11</sup>	109 <sup>11</sup>	90 <sup>11</sup>	55 <sup>11</sup>	(35)	Apr	105
Medway Estuary	(10)	19 <sup>11</sup>	84	131	180	Jan	104
Chichester Harbour	85	98	127	95	108	Mar	103
Southampton Water	125	83	114	81	(101)	Dec	101
<b>Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Northern Ireland<sup>†</sup></b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	177	124	143	98	118	Mar	132
Upper Lough Erne	32	46	60	75	40	Jan	51
Belfast Lough	27	65 <sup>13</sup>	54	43	42	Nov	46
Ballysaggart Lough	39						39
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Carsington Water	30	43	93	101	122	Oct	78
Welbeck Estate	(74)	52	86	126	108	Dec	93
Ribble Estuary	73	(88)	70	53	106	Dec	78
Langstone Harbour	73	45	104	83	104	Sep	82
Ditchford Gravel Pits	38	52	50	62	103	Sep	61

<sup>†</sup> as no sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 100 and 30 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectively, for presentation in this report



Moorhen (John Harding)

## Coot

*Fulica atra*

International threshold: 17,500  
Great Britain threshold: 1730  
All-Ireland threshold: 330

GB max: 106,046 Nov  
NI max: 3,092 Dec

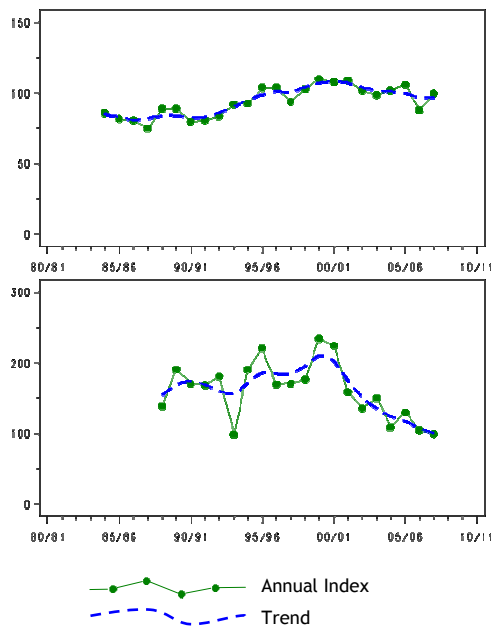


Figure 39.a, Annual indices & trend for Coot for GB (above) & NI (below).

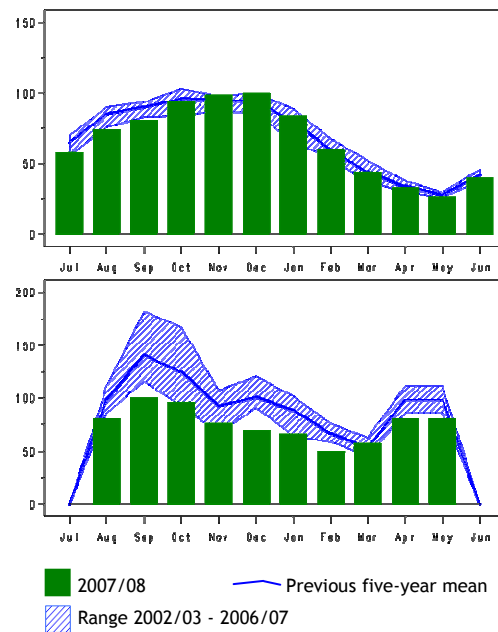


Figure 39.b, Monthly indices for Coot for GB (above) & NI (below).

The UK's resident population of Coots is augmented by birds from elsewhere in northwest Europe during the winter. The species is particularly sensitive to cold, icy weather which can lead to heavy mortality among wintering birds in Scandinavia (Nilsson 2008). Therefore, recent milder winters are likely to have somewhat reduced the magnitude of movements by such birds into Britain. Following the drop in the British index during the previous year, numbers in 2007/08 were back near levels similar to the five-year mean with notably high numbers nationally in November and December.

A return to full coverage of Abberton Reservoir yielded a peak count there of over 10,000 in November, thereby reaffirming the site's importance for the species. Fourteen other sites qualified as being of national importance in Great Britain, the majority of which recorded Coot numbers close to their respective five-year means. A notable exception was Ouse

Washes where a peak of 6,229 in January represented the second highest WeBS Core count ever to be recorded away from Abberton Reservoir (just four birds less than the 2006/07 peak from Rutland Water). Such high numbers at Ouse Washes were presumably in response to favourable water levels at the site, and it will be interesting to see how numbers of this species vary in future winters.

In Northern Ireland, there appears to be no halt to decline of the species that began in 2000/01, although the rate of the fall may be slowing. In 2007/08, numbers at the two most important sites, Loughs Neagh & Beg and Upper Lough Erne, were both some 30% below the most recent five-year site averages. Indeed the monthly maximum from Loughs Neagh & Beg was the lowest ever for the site; over the course of ten years, the five-year site average has declined by 62%, from 6,659 in 1997/98 to 2,541 in 2007/08.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Abberton Reservoir	6,166	9,697	10,965	(2,088)	10,046	Nov	9,219
Rutland Water	4,021	4,733	3,490	6,233	4,284	Nov	4,552
Cotswold Water Park (West)	4,042	4,077	4,548	4,001	4,013	Dec	4,136
Ouse Washes	2,039	4,229	4,354	1,834	6,229	Jan	3,737
Cheddar Reservoir	3,100	3,873	3,140	3,380	3,324	Jan	3,363
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	3,213	3,435	3,459	(2,417)	2,979	Dec	3,272
Fleet and Wey	(2,923)	3,275	2,699	2,650	2,337	Jan	2,777
Chew Valley Lake	3,285	3,335	2,205	2,360	2,095	Aug	2,656
Dungeness and Rye Bay	2,621	2,486	1,768	2,421	2,280	Oct	2,315
Pitsford Reservoir	1,823	2,354	2,212	2,287	2,828	Oct	2,301
Blagdon Lake	1,993	2,080	3,151	1,400	2,323	Aug	2,189
Loch Leven	2,650 <sup>13</sup>	2,375	1,610	2,820	1,317	Sep	2,154
Cotswold Water Park (East)	2,296	1,850	2,045	1,835	2,134	Dec	2,032
Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits	2,341	2,075	(1,338)	1,566	(1,327)	Sep	1,994
River Avon - Fordingbridge to Ringwood	1,494	1,841	1,861	2,012	1,607	Nov	1,763 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	4,124	1,890	2,506	2,371	1,813	Oct	2,541
Upper Lough Erne	2,062	1,462	2,023	1,696	1,072	Dec	1,663
Lower Lough Erne	197	308	411	326	406	Jan	330 ▲
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008</b>							
Hanningfield Reservoir	3,791	463	2,000	1,692	226	Jun	1,634
<b>Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain</b>							
Carsington Water	526	1,731	1,614	2,136	1,880	Jan	1,577
Aqualate Mere	125	161	506	1,065	1,823	Dec	736



*Coots (Jill Pakenham)*

## Crane

*Grus grus*

Scarce

GB max: 3 Oct  
NI max: 0

After several years with relatively few WeBS records, Cranes were recorded at four sites in 2007/08. Three were present at Widney Brooks in the Arun Valley in May,

two at Ouse Washes in October and February, and singles seen at Montrose Basin in August and Swale Estuary in October.