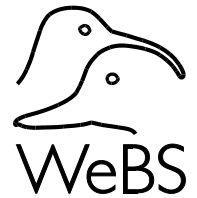


WeBS Core Counts



3 Guide to WeBS Online

After carrying out your counts, it is important to ensure that your records are transferred clearly either to WeBS Online or, if you don't have internet access, to a recording form (please see *3a Completing a recording form*). Accuracy at this stage is equally as important as during your counts. Whilst we will notice obvious mistakes, e.g. a large count listed for the wrong species, there is little chance that we will spot smaller-scale errors, so please follow the instructions below carefully and check against your notebook to ensure you have transcribed your counts correctly. WeBS Online allows any counter with access to the internet to enter their WeBS counts

themselves, removing the need for them to use the paper forms. Moreover, WeBS Online allows users access to past counts for their sites. Counters can also see their count section boundary map.

Use of WeBS Online is not compulsory. Whilst we are obviously keen that as many counters as possible benefit from the advantages of the system, we are fully aware that some counters do not have internet access and will be unable to use WeBS Online. In which case paper forms can be made available. Just let your Local Organiser know whether to expect paper or online returns from you.

Getting started

Registering for WeBS Online

Your way into WeBS Online is through the WeBS homepage at www.bto.org/webs. You have two options, depending upon whether or not you already use any of the BTO's other online surveys (such as BirdTrack, Breeding Bird Survey Online or Garden BirdWatch Online).

I have a BTO online account already

If you are an existing online user for one of BTO's other surveys, go to <https://app.bto.org/websonline> and select '**Existing BTO account- Sign up for WeBS Online**'. This will take you to your MyBTO page, where you can select '**Sign Up**' for WeBS. The WeBS Terms and Conditions will appear as a pop-up on screen; please read through and agree to the Terms and Conditions in order to complete your WeBS registration.

If you are not automatically redirected to the WeBS Data Home page, go to the WeBS homepage (www.bto.org/webs) and click on the orange '**Go to Data Entry**' button and log into WeBS online. You are now ready to start!

I don't have a BTO online account

If you are totally new to BTO online surveys, you will first need to create a MyBTO online account. Visit the BTO homepage (<https://www.bto.org/>) and select '**MyBTO**' in the top right hand corner. Press on '**Register an Account start using My BTO today**' where you will then be asked to create a username and password and fill in personal details. This password needs to be at least eight characters long, it

must contain both upper and lower-case letters, a number and a punctuation/special character. You will see prompts on the page if any of these are missing from your chosen password, but please don't use any passwords you already use for internet banking or similarly sensitive ones. You need to remember this username and password to be able to use WeBS Online. Once you have completed all the boxes and agreed to the Terms and Conditions, please click on '**Create New Account**'.

You will then be directed to your MyBTO homepage, where you will see a list of projects under '**Sign Up for Projects**'. Select '**Sign Up**' for WeBS. The WeBS Terms and Conditions will appear as a pop up on screen; please read through and agree to the Terms and Conditions in order to complete your WeBS registration. Once you have agreed to the Terms and Conditions, the WeBS project will appear under the '**My Current Projects**' header (you may need to refresh the screen). Please click on the orange "**Go To Project**" button below the WeBS logo and log into WeBS online. You are now ready to start!

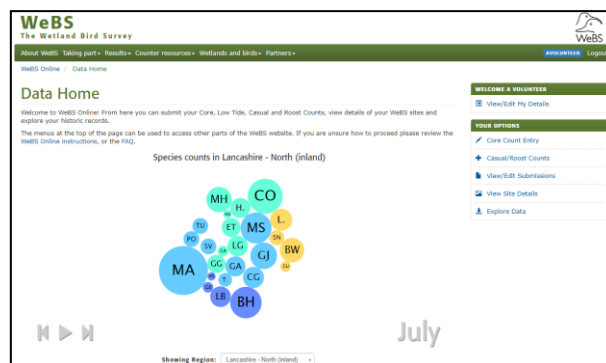
Once you're an active user

On subsequent visits simply go to the WeBS home page at www.bto.org/webs and click on the orange '**Go to Data Entry**' button from the options on the right-hand side of the page. You may need to enter your username and password to login to the system. You can also bookmark the data homepage itself: <https://app.bto.org/websonline/>

WeBS Data Home

When you go into WeBS Online, you will find yourself at a page called **WeBS Data Home**. From here, you can access all the different functions of WeBS Online that are available to you. You can also see a video visualisation of monthly species counts in your WeBS region (and other regions by selecting from the drop down). Hover over a circle to see the species name and count.

The following instructions aim to cover the main features, but note that instructions are also accessible online from this page. Most counters will have the same set of options open to them. However WeBS Local Organisers have additional functions to manage their local teams of counters; review any



counts being submitted online; and input counts for any of the sections in their area. The **'View/Edit My Details'** option can be used to set your preferences.

Entering your counts into WeBS Online

Submitting Core & Low Tide Counts

For standard WeBS counts, click on **'Core & LT Count Entry'**.

First you will be asked to specify whether you are recording for a Core or Low Tide Count. Press the correct option. Record the visit details for the count in **'1. Visit Details'**. Select the count section at which you recorded the count. If you want to record a count for a site that does not appear on the drop-down list then please contact the WeBS Office.

The date of the count must also be recorded and, ideally, the approximate start and end time, as well as ice cover and (for coastal sites) tidal state. Importantly, if you feel that your count did not accurately represent the true number of birds present, please record a count accuracy of **'Low'** and tell us why this was. There is also a facility to record extra details (e.g. additional counters, flooding, etc). Once you have completed this page, please scroll down to **'2. Species Seen'**.

If you are entering the first/only count for a site for a month (which will usually be the case), then this count will be treated as the **"primary"** count for that month. However, if you wish to add subsequent counts within a given month, you will be given the opportunity to specify which should be treated as the primary count. You can then enter your species counts.

The number of species you see on the form may

vary depending upon your user preferences. To reduce the size of the form you have to look through, we have set WeBS Online to show you only those species previously recorded at that site. However, if there are less than 20 species recorded for a site, you will see the original full set of species from the paper recording form. However, you can change this by reducing the **'Preferred species list form size limiter'** in **'View/Edit My Details'**.

To record your count, simply enter the count of each species you saw in the relevant box. If you recorded a species but were unable to make a count for some reason (e.g. insufficient time, birds flushed before you could count them, etc.) then simply tick the **'Present'** box. Please make a count wherever possible.

You can use the tab key to move from one species to the next. When you type a number, the **'Present'** box is automatically ticked for you. If you accidentally enter a count next to a species that was not present, please delete the number **and** untick the **'Present'** box.

If you feel your count was a significant underestimate of the numbers you would have been able to count under ideal conditions then please use [square brackets] to show this. Note however that if you have recorded an approximate count (e.g. circa 1500 Dunlin) then this does not need any brackets or additional notation.

If you do want to record any specific comments about a particular species then there is a comments box to click on against each species.

Important: If you visit your section and see no herons, rails, wildfowl or waders then please tick the box at the top to say “No waterbirds were present”.

Gulls and terns are included as separate groups, with their own tabs at the top of this section. As has been the case with WeBS in the past, recording of these groups is optional, but we would encourage all WeBS counters to count gulls and terns unless they have a particularly good reason not to do so. The online system will automatically mark *‘Did you look for gulls/ terns during this visit?’* at the top of this section as *‘Yes’* unless you have changed your preferences in *‘View/Edit My Details’*. If you did not look for gulls/ terns, please change these to *‘No’* by clicking on the option. Approximate counts or even just a *‘Present’* tick are better than no counts at all. If you would have recorded gulls and terns but encountered none during your count, then please tick the box at the top of the gull tab and the terns tab to say *‘No gulls/terns were present’*.

Important: if you have recorded no gulls or terns, it is crucial that we can determine whether a) these birds were truly absent (No gulls/terns were present), or b) these birds may have been present but you weren’t recording them (‘No’ is selected for whether you looked for gulls/terns). The online system will therefore prompt you if you do not either enter a count, or select one of these, for both gulls and terns.

You can optionally record non-waterbird species commonly found at wetlands, such as Dipper, Reed Bunting or Marsh Harrier, in the *‘Other Common Species’* tab if you wish.

If you come across a species not on the main list, simply scroll down to *‘3. New Species Seen’* and on a new row, start typing or scroll through the list of additional species, and click on the species you want. It will then appear and you can enter the number present.

If there are not enough rows to cover all the additional species present, then click on the green *‘Add Row’* at the bottom. Alternately, if you wish to clear a species added by mistake, click on the corresponding red bin button to the right of the species count and comment.

Once you’ve finished entering all the counts, click on *‘Submit Count’*. This will take you to a validation page, where a summary of your entered counts is shown for you to look at and make sure you haven’t typed in a count for the wrong species, or added an extra zero to a number by mistake. The same tab sections are used here, so you will need to select the *Waterbirds / Gulls / Terns / Other*

Common Species / New Species tabs to see all the species data that you entered.

If any essential information has been omitted, such as the date, ice cover or whether you recorded gulls, these will be **highlighted as an error in red** at the top of the page. **These must be addressed before the count can be submitted otherwise your count will not be saved.**

To try to help you spot inputting errors, you will sometimes be prompted by comments about the species, the numbers recorded or that you have only recorded a species as present and not given a count, with a **validation warning in amber** at the top of the page. **These warnings are an advisory check only and can often be disregarded.** However, they should hopefully reduce the number of midwinter Little Ringed Plover records that should have been entered in the Ringed Plover box!

From the Enter Count page, you can go back to make any corrections by pressing *‘View/Edit this Count’*. If you are satisfied you have recorded everything correctly, then the count has been submitted on the online database and you can close the page, or alternatively return to the WeBS *‘Data Home’* or *‘Enter new counts for the same site’* or *‘Enter new counts for the same date’* if you have more data to input.

Submitting Casual & Roost Counts

From the WeBS Data home, the option to submit *‘Casual/Roost counts’* is for incomplete counts when some species have been counted, but not necessarily all. Examples could be an evening gull roost count, or daily counts of Whimbrels at key passage sites. Such additional information can be of great use in supplementing the main counts. **NOTE** if you want to submit a second complete count (i.e. all species have been recorded) for a month, this should be done by clicking on *‘Core & LT Count Entry’*.

When submitting casual/roost counts, there are only two differences compared to the submission of standard counts. Firstly, you are asked to specify whether you are entering a casual daytime count, or a specifically targeted roost count (either dawn or dusk – enter the count times for us to know which). Secondly, you will see no pre-selected species names, but instead need to select any individual species

concerned from the dropdown box.

Viewing & editing past records

By clicking on **'View/Edit Submissions'** counters will be able to select the survey type and the site, which will then bring up a list of all the visits made to that site. By clicking on **'View/Edit'**, counters can view that count in more detail.

If you happen to carry out a core count of a section of a larger site, then you will also be able to view the consolidated total counts for the larger site. These totals are calculated annually, once data for all sections have been received (from online and paper form submissions), so you will not be able to see consolidated totals for the most recent year.

For individual count sections, you will be able to edit or delete a count only if a) you are the counter who made the count, and b) if the count has only been entered recently and has not been processed for annual reporting. If the record is editable, the relevant buttons are shown at the top of the page. If you can't edit a count, but notice an error, you can click on a link to send an email to the WeBS Team.

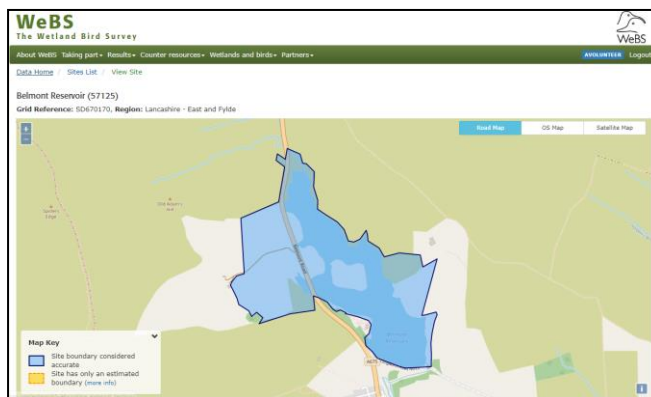
The BTO keeps a track of all edited or deleted data in case of mishaps.

Viewing your sites

Clicking on **'View Site Details'** brings up a list of all the sites you are connected with, either through counting or viewing those counts as part of 'complex sites'. You can view a UK map showing the position of your sites by using the **'View Sites Map'** button. More usefully, you can look at the boundaries of any of your count sites by clicking on the site name. This will show the boundary of the site, which can be viewed as a traditional 'road atlas' type map or a satellite map. The maps can be zoomed in and out of, and panned around using the onscreen arrows and zoom tools.

When to submit your counts

We recommend that you submit your counts as soon as possible after each count so that any queries can be dealt with whilst the count is still fresh in your memory. Failing this, as the WeBS **recording year** runs from July to June, all counts up to and including the June count should be submitted



Boundaries of sites shown in blue indicate that the map is based on information received from WeBS counters. For some sites, boundaries have not yet been provided by counters and in many of these instances an approximate 'best guess' boundary has been provided; such approximate site boundaries are displayed in yellow.

If you have a site with a yellow or missing boundary then please send a map of the correct boundary to the WeBS office.

Summaries

Two facilities for summarising WeBS data are available for counters. The first, **'Site Summary'**, provides the ability to compare the counts for a site across a range of years, or months within a particular year.

The second option, **'Explore Data'**, allows counters to interrogate their data in any way they wish by downloading a dataset. You can select one or all sites, one or all species, and a variety of dates or date ranges. You will be given a summary of the data available to download and the option to download the result as a separate file in csv or xlsx format (e.g. for use in Excel or other packages). Further help is available for this facility within WeBS Online.

promptly after the June count **but before the end of September of each year.** Thus, counts from July 2018 to June 2019 need to be submitted by the end of September 2019, and so on. We cannot guarantee that any data submitted after the end of September will be included in the annual report.

FAQs

- **I already have a BTO username and password why can't I log into WeBS?**

Before you can log-in you need to activate your WeBS access. Sign into 'My BTO' at www.bto.org/my-bto and scroll down to 'Sign Up for Projects'. Please read through and agree to the WeBS terms and conditions to complete your registration. You can find WeBS under "My Current Projects" header, please click on the "Go To Project" button to log into WeBS online. If you do not yet have a site assigned to you, please contact either your WeBS Local Organiser or the WeBS Office at webs@bto.org who can assist you.

- **I've forgotten / lost my 'Log In' details - can you help?**

Please contact us at webs@bto.org with your name and address and we will be able to help.

- **I didn't complete my count on the Priority Core Date, should I enter the data as a Core Count or a Casual Count?**

Please enter your data as a Core Count. All complete counts (i.e. where you have recorded all WeBS species present during your count) should be submitted as Core Counts regardless of whether they were on the Priority Count Date or not. Casual Counts should only be used for rarities or counts of large flocks of a single species seen outside of the main Core Count.

- **I have observed a few species that I can't find in the New Species section when entering my data – why not?**

Unfortunately you cannot enter data for all species into WeBS online. The full list of WeBS species is in section 5 (Species and Codes). In addition to this list we do allow records for some other wetland species and raptors to be added into WeBS Online although we do not report on these species in our annual report. We recommend submitting records for non-WeBS species into BirdTrack (www.birdtrack.net) where the data will be readily available for other BTO projects.

- **I've entered my counts but one or more of the species have been flagged in amber - does this mean I've done something wrong?**

Not necessarily. Counts can be flagged in amber for a number of reasons: A) unusually high bird count; B) rarer species; or C) this species has been seen out of season. These may be genuinely very interesting records that we would like to receive or they may be data entry errors. Please check the whole list carefully. Review the records marked in amber and do not submit them if you are doubtful about the

reliability of your observations. If you have made a mistake just click on **View/Edit Count** and then **Edit Count** and correct it.

- **I've input data incorrectly - can this be rectified?**

Yes. Please use the "View/Edit Submissions" button on the WeBS Data Home page. This is only available for counts entered within the current WeBS year; if you spot an older mistake please contact us at webs@bto.org with the details.

- **The boundary outline of my site is incorrect / missing, how can I change this?**

Please send us or your Local Organiser a map with the correct outline clearly marked and we will correct it for you.

- **I have just signed up to WeBS Online but the data I returned recently on paper forms are not there - do I need to enter the data?**

No. Data submitted on paper forms takes longer to process and therefore will not appear online for several months. If you input data that have previously been returned on a form you will be creating a duplicate count.

- **Am I able to access counts for different sites / areas etc.?**

We are able to give you access to different sites/areas but only under certain circumstances. Please contact us at webs@bto.org with your request giving details of why you need access. Alternatively if you require data for commercial use these are only available as a data request (www.bto.org/webs-data).

- **I have entered my count into WeBS Online but can I add the count as a complete list to BirdTrack or will that be duplicating data?**

WeBS Online and BirdTrack are currently unable to share data therefore you can enter your count as a complete list to BirdTrack without causing any problems.

- **I am experiencing problems with WeBS Online and cannot submit my counts?**

Please make a note of any messages that appear and at which point they occur then send us an email at webs@bto.org with these details and we will look into the problem for you.