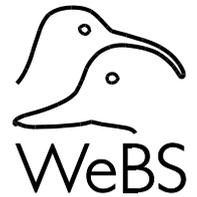


WeBS Core Counts

3a Completing a recording form



After carrying out your counts, it is important to ensure that your records are transferred clearly either to WeBS Online (please see *Guide to WeBS Online*) or, if you don't have internet access, to 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 on the form carefully and check against your notebook to

The recording form

Your forms

Please use a separate form for each *count unit (site/sector)* covered. Whilst long-standing counters will recall that the recording forms previously accommodated counts for more than one area, the current forms are designed to record counts from one area only. If you record more than one count site, please fill in a separate form for each.

Each form has a list of instructions on the front. The instructions will give you guidance on how to complete each section of the form correctly. Please read these carefully before completing the form.

Your *Local Organiser (LO)* will provide you with the appropriate forms. Most counters use the WeBS Core Count Form, on which up to seven visits can be recorded for a single count unit. Some LOs may request that count forms are returned directly after each count. The WeBS Core Count Single Visit Form is designed for this purpose. They are the same as the standard form, but with space for counts from just one visit and should be completed in the same manner.

Personal details

We request the details of the person (or people) who carried out each count so that, should we ever have any queries, we know whom to contact. This information is stored on computer and used solely for the purpose of co-ordinating and operating waterbird surveys and will not be passed to third parties for any other uses. Each counter is issued with a unique 'username' to use on the recording form. Write your name and address on the forms only if you have not been allocated a username (e.g. new counters), if you change address or if you forget your username. If you do not know your username, your Local Organiser should have a list of all relevant usernames or you can contact the WeBS Office at the BTO in Thetford.

ensure you have transcribed your counts correctly.

It is also worth bearing in mind that the data from the recording forms are entered on computer by an external company whose staff have no knowledge about waterbirds. Please make sure that the forms are clear and unambiguous, since although all forms are checked by WeBS staff, any information which is not easily legible is more likely to be misread or misinterpreted.

Count unit details

For each count, we need to know the name and location of the area you counted. Often this information will already be completed (using an adhesive label) on the form provided by your Local Organiser. If no label has been used and the count unit details are empty, please complete the boxes using the standard names for the count unit and provide a central grid reference. Using names and grid references consistently is vital to ensure we can assign the counts correctly in our database.

Visit details

Please ensure you provide full dates and times for your counts. We hold counts covering more than 60 years and may be dealing with data from several years at any one time, so please include the year in your dates.

Bird counts

On most occasions, transcribing your counts to the form is no more than entering numbers in appropriate boxes. On some occasions (e.g. where a species was present but no count was made or where your count was a gross underestimate) you may have to record information other than purely numbers; please consult the instructions or the examples overleaf to find the correct notation.



Photo by John Harding

Conditions and coverage information

We ask for information on count conditions and coverage for each visit you make. This provides vital information for the interpretation of your counts. It ensures, for example, that where you have had difficulty getting accurate counts due to poor weather conditions or restricted access, such counts need not adversely affect site assessments.

Additional information

A box is provided for any additional comments you may have. Comments on likely causes of abnormally high or low counts (e.g. if you suspect these may be due to unusually low water levels) can be useful in interpreting such fluctuations.

Some DOs and DON'Ts when filling in your forms

DO Always use your username (counter code).

DO Provide your name and address when you move or if you forget your username

DO Fill in the date in full. Use 24-hour clock for times

DO Bracket counts that you consider to be a gross underestimate.

DO Mark species that were present but not counted using 'NC'

DO Write in counts of additional waterbirds in the lines provided at the end of the species list

DO Fill in the full name and Count Unit Code of your count unit if no label has been provided

DON'T tick the box if waterbirds were present on your count

DON'T write in zeros where birds were not present

DON'T mark undercounts using a '+'; use brackets instead

DON'T separate counts of adults and young and **DON'T** include young birds until they are 2/3 grown

DON'T use prefixes such as 'c' or '>' before counts as these can be misread

DON'T write comments in the count boxes.

DON'T split counts into males and females

1 COUNTER CODE: AVOLUNTEER1		2 COUNT UNIT: Nunnery Lakes	
If you have changed address or do not know your counter code, please provide your full name and address below		Central Grid Ref.	Count unit code
Mr A Volunteer The Nunnery Thetford IP24 2PU		TL 8 7 0 8	
		If you are unsure how to complete any part of this numbered section are given on the front page.	
3 DATE (e.g. 13/10/12)	17/01/16	21/02/16	/ /
TIME (use 24 hour clock) Start (e.g. 0900)	08:00	08:00	
Finish (e.g. 1400)	14:00	14:00	
Please <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> box if NO waterbirds were present	XX <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mute Swan	MS 5	0	
	BS		
	AS		
	WS		
	XF		
	XR		
	PG		
European White-fronted Goose	EW		
Greenland White-fronted Goose	NW		
Greylag Goose	GR	[150]	70+
Canada Goose	CG		274ad+43juv
Lesser Canada Goose	BY		c. 50
Goose	DB		
Goose	PB		
	FC	NC	Present
	SU	2	
Mandarin Duck	MN		
Wigeon	WN		
Gadwall	GA		
	T.		
	MA	12	7m+3f
	PT		
	GY		
	SV		
	RQ		
Pochard	PO		
Tufted Duck	TU		
Scaup	SP		

Returning your completed forms

Completed recording forms should be returned to your Local Organiser who in turn will forward them to the WeBS Office. As the WeBS recording year runs from July to June, all forms up to and including the June count should be returned promptly to the LO

after the June count. Some LOs may request that forms are returned more frequently (e.g. after each monthly count) to tie in with local recording requirements.