

WeBS



Newsletter

Number 8 Summer 1998

Five years and counting – the new structure of WeBS

It is now five years since WeBS was first launched, merging the former National Waterfowl Counts and the Birds of Estuaries Enquiry. Recently, the partner organisations conducted a review of how the scheme had operated during this period with a view to ensuring that all aspects of our work are carried out as effectively and efficiently as possible. Consequently, the structure of WeBS will be streamlined during 1998. The day-to-day administration of the counts will be the responsibility of a single body, the WeBS Secretariat. These changes will increase the efficiency of the scheme, thereby saving money, and simplify communications between volunteers and the WeBS staff. A centralised Secretariat will also facilitate the maintenance of common standards in the WeBS scheme and related survey work and will allow greater opportunity for developments and improvements.

The WeBS scheme, nevertheless, remains a four way partnership between BTO, WWT, RSPB and JNCC (the last on behalf of English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Countryside Council for Wales and the Environment and Heritage Service in Northern Ireland). All partners contribute financially to the scheme and the direction of the scheme remains the responsibility of a Steering Group consisting of members of all four partners.

The Secretariat will be responsible for such tasks as data processing, maintenance of databases, processing data requests, preparing and writing Newsletters and the annual report, mailings, liaison with the counter network and promotion of the count scheme. Most of the changes will take place behind the scenes and will have little impact on WeBS volunteers. However, the important changes which will affect counters and Local Organisers are listed below.

Contacts

The WeBS Secretariat will be based at WWT Slimbridge. Staff at WWT will be responsible for tasks related to the Core Counts. BTO staff at Thetford will be responsible for the equivalent tasks associated with Low Tide Counts.

Head of Secretariat:
Peter Cranswick, WWT

Core Counts Organiser:
Mark Pollitt, WWT

Low Tide Counts Organiser:
Andy Musgrove, BTO

WeBS Assistant Organiser:
Becky Hughes, WWT

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WeBS is the monitoring scheme for non-breeding waterfowl in the UK which aims to provide the principal data for the conservation of their populations and wetland habitats. The data collected are used to assess the size of waterfowl populations, assess trends in numbers and distribution, and identify and monitor important sites for waterfowl. A programme of research underpins these objectives. Continuing a tradition begun in 1947, around 3,000 volunteer counters participate in synchronised monthly counts at wetlands of all habitat types, mainly during the winter period. WeBS is a partnership between the British Trust for Ornithology, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the last on behalf of the Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Environment & Heritage Service in Northern Ireland).

Please contact Mark Pollitt (or other staff) at WWT for any aspects of WeBS related specifically to Core Counts (for count forms, returning count data, and any queries you may have) and Andy Musgrove at BTO for any of these aspects that relate to Low Tide Counts. Contact details are given on the back page of this Newsletter. General enquiries regarding other aspects of the WeBS scheme should be directed to the Secretariat at WWT.

Future developments

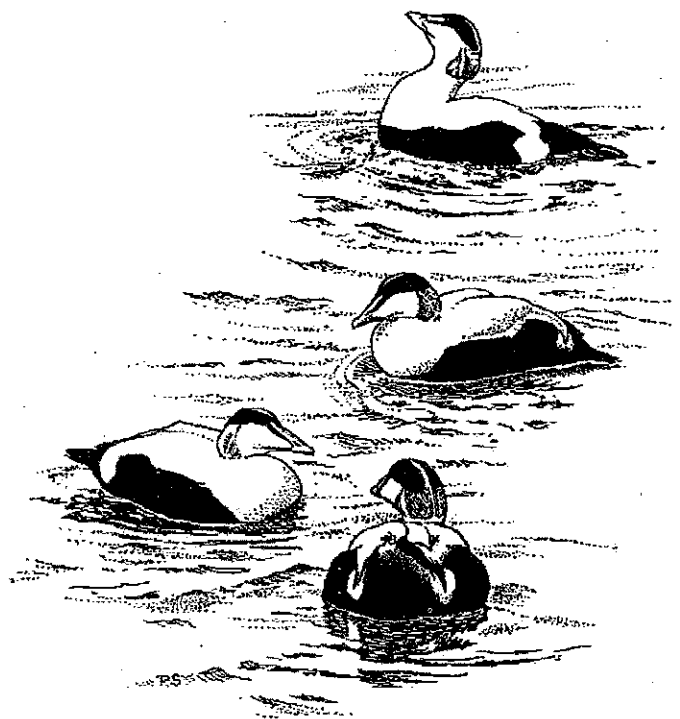
Each partner organisation will continue to play a part in WeBS, using their expertise to guide the scheme's development and future research. The new agreement, which will run for the next six years, specifically includes a number of new developments.

In particular, a system of 'alerts' will be designed and implemented by BTO which will identify declines in populations which are of sufficient magnitude to give cause for concern, triggering the relevant bodies to take appropriate action. BTO will also play a key role in the development of methods for WeBS and related research issues.

A programme of 'special surveys' (such as the recent Non-estuarine Coastal Waterfowl Survey) will complement the Core Counts to ensure that comprehensive data are available for all waterfowl species. Promotion of the scheme and feedback to counters will continue through annual counters conferences, organised by BTO, but also through training and promotion, at WWT Centres in particular. CUDI and counter codes have been specifically scheduled for implementation within the new agreement. A 'bumper' version of the annual report will be produced every three years to include revised population estimates and fuller interpretation of trends in numbers and distribution.

Further improvements, facilitated by the new centralised structure, are also planned, from enhancing recording forms to development of a world wide web site. These proposals will be circulated in advance to counters and others for feedback and so ensure that any changes made will be beneficial to all. As ever, feedback about any aspect of WeBS is always welcomed by the partners.

We are confident that this new structure and process for WeBS will provide a more efficient and effective monitoring scheme, and will ensure that WeBS delivers even better protection for the UK's waterfowl populations as we move into the 21st Century.



WeBS loses one of its founding staff, Ray Waters

The many WeBS counters who have dealt with Ray Waters over the years will be saddened to learn that he has left the BTO as a consequence of the reorganisation of WeBS. He was the public face of wader counts and was always available on the phone to assist and supply information to counters. His depth of knowledge will be sorely missed at the BTO as will his cheerful good humour. The WeBS partners are grateful for all the hard work he has put into WeBS and wish him the very best for the future.

Quantity and quality – a few facts and figures

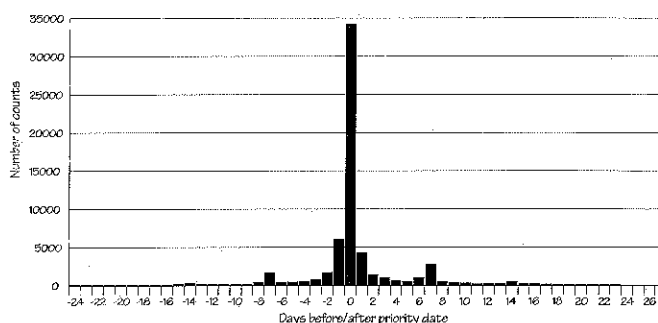
The launch of WeBS in 1993 saw the merging of two long-running waterfowl monitoring schemes, and correspondingly the introduction of a single count form to facilitate the collection of counts. But how successful has it been? Last year, the WeBS partners examined the information you submitted in a little more detail...

During the first three years, WeBS counters made almost 64,000 visits to their count areas and added well over half-a-million species counts to our databases! Over 50% of these were carried out on the WeBS priority date (with a further 25% within one day of this), representing excellent co-ordination for such a large scheme covering a diverse range of wetland habitats. Most counters carried out their counts in the morning and, on coastal sites, most often over the high tide period. The presence, or absence, of gulls and terns (both optional sections on the count form) was recorded on approximately two-thirds of visits. Ice was present on 2.5% of visits, with sites in Scotland and northern England, not surprisingly, recording the majority of these.

The information on the back page of the form helps the WeBS partners to interpret the count information properly, and in many respects is just as important as the counts themselves. Around three-quarters of visits provided this information in full, a figure the WeBS partners would like to see even higher. The recording of activities present during the counts is also optional, but was provided on over half of visits. Walkers, dogs and anglers were the most frequently encountered activity categories, though noisy or waterborne activities such as shooters and boats were more likely to cause a disturbance to the birds. Similarly, whilst

Kestrel and Sparrowhawk were the commonest raptors, the presence of a Peregrine on site caused more disturbance to the waterfowl.

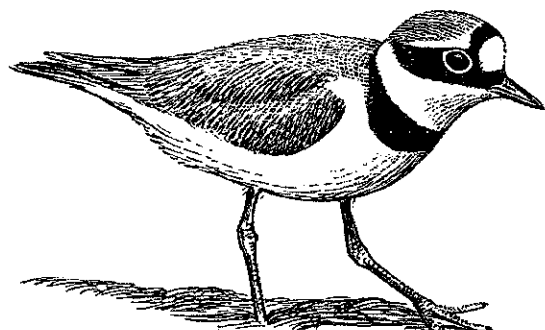
Whilst providing some interesting facts and figures, the project also served to highlight the sections of the form which counters were most likely to omit or complete incorrectly. We hope to be able to address these problems and to further improve the quality of the information collected through notes in future newsletters, clearer wording of some sections of the form and new initiatives such as a starter pack for new counters.



Co-ordination of WeBS counts with priority count dates

Recording cards

As well as the standard WeBS recording forms, small recording cards, designed for a single WeBS count, are also available to all WeBS counters. These have been used for many years by counters on complex estuarine sites to feed back monthly counts to their Local Organiser. Anyone wishing to obtain recording cards, including Local Organisers and counters of inland sites, should contact Mark Pollitt at WWT Slimbridge. Please note that we still prefer to receive completed *recording forms* rather than cards when submitting your counts to WWT at the end of the winter.



1997-98 WeBS counters' conference

More than forty WeBS and I-WeBS counters attended the WeBS Counters Conference held at the Oxford Island Visitor Centre, Lough Neagh in May 1998. The fine weather, the excellent food and the good company helped ensure that an enjoyable time was had by all.

Richard Weyl of the Environment & Heritage Service in Northern Ireland gave a very clear and high technology presentation of the Directives and Conventions that ensure that major waterfowl habitats are protected. After that, one had no excuse for confusing ASSIs, SSSIs, SACs and SPAs! Of course, facts collected systematically over a wide geographical front are needed to back up legislation and Oscar Merne kicked off the Conference with the exciting news that the protocol ensuring cooperation between WeBS and I-WeBS had been signed. This is a major step forward in helping to ensure the future of coordinated counts of waterfowl across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Andy Musgrove (BTO) gave practical examples of just what could be done with WeBS data using information largely gathered from Northern Ireland, while Kendrew Colhoun (BirdWatch Ireland) summarised the first three seasons of I-WeBS data collection. Both these talks highlighted the immense contribution made by the WeBS and I-WeBS counters to waterfowl conservation.

Once there are enough data to follow population trends in waterfowl it is vital to carry out the research which makes it possible to understand why changes in population occur, particularly when a species is declining. Ken Perry (BTO & University of Ulster) suggested that his research on Great Crested Grebes had given him an earthly taste of heaven. Apart from having discovered that there were some 3000 grebes on

Lough Neagh (twice the expected number), Ken was also looking at the possibility of managing reedbeds to lessen nest losses to weather. Alex Portig (Queen's University, Belfast) highlighted how without 35 years of monitoring he would not have been able to explain why a decrease in the amount of eel-grass was responsible for the decline in Wigeon numbers on Strangford Lough. Kerry MacKie (WWT), who heroically replaced a speaker unable to make it to the Conference, described how wildfowl ringing at Mahee Ringing Station made it possible to assess how the survival of overwintering ducks could be affected by such factors as shooting.

Dave Allen (RSPB) rounded up the story nicely by giving examples of how WeBS counts had been used to safeguard sites from developmental pressures. Dave finished by encouraging the audience to redouble their efforts and ensure that wetland monitoring in Northern Ireland moved smoothly on into the future. The Conference workshops were very well attended and allowed everyone to contribute their accumulated experience. It was widely felt that it was essential to encourage the continued participation of the present WeBS counters and to attract new counters to the scheme. This could be achieved by increasing the dissemination of information to the counters via regional bird reports, newsletters, WeBS slides and fliers, by holding regular counters' meetings, by advertising outings with experienced counters, and possibly running accreditation and training schemes to enhance counter skills and confidence.



WeBS Local Organisers

ENGLAND

BEDFORDSHIRE

Mr Kevin Sharpe, 22 Russett Close,
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BERKSHIRE

Mr Neil Bucknell, 10 Cleeve Court, Streatley,
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BRISTOL

Severn Estuary - Somerset & Bristol
Dr Harvey Rose, 12 Birbeck Road, Bristol
BS9 1BD

**Somerset (other sites) & South Avon
(inland)**

Mr Keith Fox, "Vernwood", 32 Ash Hayes
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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Mr Graeme Taylor, 54 Halton Lane,
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CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridgeshire Old County
Mr Bruce Martin, 178 Nuns Way, Cambridge
CB4 2NS

Huntingdonshire

Mr Graham Elliott, 3 Greenway, Buckden,
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Nene Washes

Mr Charlie Kitchin, RSPB Nene Washes, 21A
East Delph, Whittlesey, Peterborough,
Cambridgeshire PE7 1RH

Ouse Washes

Mr Cliff Carson, Limosa, Welches Dam,
Manea, Cambridgeshire PE15 0ND

**South Lincolnshire/Peterborough
(inland)**

Mr John Redshaw, 7 Fennell Road,
Pinchbeck, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 3RP

CHESHIRE

Cheshire (inland)

Mr Tony O'Neill, 742 Hyde Road, Gorton,
Manchester M18 7EF

Dee Estuary

Mr Colin Wells, RSPB, Burton Point Farm,
Station Road, Burton, South Wirral L64 5SB

Mersey Estuary

Mr Graham Thomason, 110 Coroners Lane,
Widnes, Cheshire WA8 9HZ

CORNWALL

Cornwall (excl. Tamar complex)

Mr Dave Conway, Tregenna, Cooksland,
Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 2AR

Tamar complex

Mr Simon Geary, 37 Endsleigh Park Road,
Peverell, Plymouth PL3 4NH

CUMBRIA

Cumbria (excl. estuaries)

Miss Kathleen Atkinson, 2 Langdale
Crescent, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 2HE

Duddon Estuary

Mr Bob Treen, 5 Rydal Close,
Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria LA15 8QU

Irt/Mite/Esk Estuary

Mr Gordon Steele, Irtside, Homrook,
Cumbria CA19 1UH

Morecambe Bay

Mrs Jean Roberts, 11 St. Pauls Drive,
Brookhouse, Nr Lancaster LA2 9PG

Solway Estuary - Inner South

Mr Norman Holton, North Plain Farm,
Bowness on Solway, Carlisle CA5 5AG

Solway Estuary - Outer South

Mr John Callion, The Cherries, Scawfield,
High Harrington, Cumbria CA14 4LZ

DERBYSHIRE

Mr Chris Burnett, 23 The Potlocks,
Willington, Derbyshire DE65 6YA

DEVON

Devon (other sites)

Mr Philip Stidwill, 80 Stuart Road,
Pennycomequick, Plymouth, Devon PL1 5LP

Tamar complex

Mr Simon Geary, 37 Endsleigh Park Road,
Peverell, Plymouth PL3 4NH

Taw/Torridge Estuary

Mr Tony Vickery, 4 Taw View, Bishops
Taunton, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 0AW

DORSET

Christchurch Harbour

LO position vacant

Dorset (excl. estuaries)

Mr John Jones, Blackbird Cottage, 14 Church
Lane, Sutton Waldron, Dorset DT11 8PA

Fleet/Wey

Mr George Male, 9 Conway Drive,
Broadmayne, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8EF

Poole Harbour

Mr Steve Smith, 7 South Road, Corfe Mullen,
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DURHAM

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Miss Mary Hudson, 22 Tunstall Avenue,
Hartlepool TS26 8NF

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NE38 8LE

Durham/Tyne & Wear South coast

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DH1 3LE

Tees Estuary

Mr Mike Leakey, English Nature, C/O EIC,
Nuclear Electric, Tees Road, Hartlepool
TS25 2BZ

EAST YORKSHIRE

East Yorkshire & Scarborough (excl. Humber)

Mrs Shirley Pashby, 10 Ambrey Close,
Hunmanby, Filey, North Yorkshire YO14 0LZ

Humber Estuary - North

Mr Nick Cutts, 1 Castle Mews, West End,
South Cave, East Yorkshire HU15 2EX

ESSEX

Essex (other sites)

Mr Jeremy Alderton, 367 Baddow Road,
Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7QF

Lee Valley

Mr Bill Rutherford, Pindar Cottage, Windmill
Lane, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN8 9AJ

Stour Estuary

Mr Russell Leavett, 24 Orchard Close, Great
Oakley, Harwich, Essex CO12 5AX

Thames Estuary - Foulness

Mr Maurice Adcock, 53 Victoria Drive, Great
Wakering, Southend on Sea SS3 0AT

Thames Estuary - inner

Mr Mike Dennis, 173 Collier Row Lane,
Romford, Essex RM5 3ED

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Gloucestershire (inland)

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Lane, Somerford Keynes, Cirencester GL7
6DS

North Avon (inland)

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GL11 4DQ

Severn Estuary - Gloucestershire

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Gloucestershire GL2 7BT

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Greater London (excl. Thames Estuary)

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Thames Estuary - inner

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GREATER MANCHESTER

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Denton, Manchester M34 2NY

HAMPSHIRE

Hampshire (estuaries/coastal)

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Hampshire (inland)

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HEREFORDSHIRE

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Lee Valley

Mr Bill Rutherford, Pindar Cottage, Windmill
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Isle of Wight (estuaries/coastal)

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Isle of Wight (inland)

Mr John Stafford, Westering, Moor Lane,
Brightstone, Newport, Isle of Wight
PO30 4DL

KENT

Dungeness area

Mr David Walker, Dungeness Bird
Observatory, Dungeness, Lydd, Kent
TN29 9NA

East Kent

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Birchington, Kent CT7 9PA

WEBS LOCAL ORGANISERS

Medway Estuary & North Kent Marshes

Mr Dave Jones, RSPB, Bromhey Farm, Eastborough, Cooling, Rochester, Kent MK3 8DS

Pegwell Bay

Mr Rab Morton, Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory, Old Downs Farm, Guildford Road, Sandwich, Kent CT13 9PF

Swale Estuary

Mr Bob Gomes, Kingshill Farm, Elmley, Isle of Sheppey, Kent ME12 3KW

West Kent

Mr Geoffrey Burton, 57 Horselees Road, Boughton, Faversham, Kent ME13 9TE

LANCASHIRE

East Lancashire

LO position vacant

Morecambe Bay

Mrs Jean Roberts, 11 St. Pauls Drive, Brookhouse, Nr Lancaster LA2 9PG

North Lancashire (inland)

Mr Dave Sharpe, 17 Greenwood Avenue, Bolton-Le-Sands, Carnforth, Lancashire LA5 8AN

Ribble Estuary

Mr Dick Lambert, 77 Riverview, Tarleton, Preston, Lancashire PR4 6ED

West Lancashire (inland)

Mr Chris Tomlinson, WWT Martin Mere, Burscough, Lancashire L40 0TA

LEICESTERSHIRE

Leicestershire & Rutland

(excl. Rutland Wtr)

Mr Andrew Harrop, 30 Dean Street, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 6AF

LINCOLNSHIRE

Humber Estuary - Inner South

Mr Keith Parker, 20 Westwinds Road, Winterton, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire DN15 9RX

Humber Estuary - Mid South

Mr Ian Shepherd, 38 Lindsey Road, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire DN35 8TN

Humber Estuary - Outer South

Mr John Walker, 3 Coastguard Cottage, Churchill Lane, Theddlethorpe, Lincolnshire LN12 1PQ

North Lincolnshire (inland)

Mr John Hollis, The Visitors Centre, Hartsholme Country Park, Skellingthorpe Road, Lincoln LN6 0EY

South Lincolnshire/Peterborough (inland)

Mr John Redshaw, 7 Fennell Road, Pinchbeck, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 3RP

Wash - Lincolnshire

Mr Paul Fisher, 13 Beach Road, Snettisham, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE31 7RA

MERSEYSIDE

Alt Estuary

Mr Dick Lambert, 77 Riverview, Tarleton, Preston, Lancashire PR4 6ED

Dee Estuary

Mr Colin Wells, RSPB, Burton Point Farm, Station Road, Burton, South Wirral L64 5SB

Mersey Estuary

Mr Graham Thomason, 110 Coroners Lane, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 9HZ

Merseyside (inland)

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Ribble Estuary

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NORFOLK

Breydon Water

Mr Peter Allard, 39 Mallard Way, Bradwell, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 8JY

Norfolk (excl. estuaries)

Mr Tim Strudwick, RSPB Strumpshaw Fen, Staithe Cottage, Low Road, Strumpshaw, Norfolk NR13 4HS

North Norfolk Marshes

Mr Michael Rooney, English Nature, The Old Chapel, Holkham, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk NR23 1RQ

Ouse Washes

Mr Cliff Carson, Limosa, Welches Dam, Manea, Cambridgeshire PE15 0ND

Wash - Norfolk

Mr James Cadbury, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Cleveland (excl. Tees Estuary)

Miss Mary Hudson, 22 Tunstall Avenue, Hartlepool TS26 8NF

East Yorkshire & Scarborough (excl. Humber)

Mr Shirley Pashby, 10 Ambrey Close, Hunmanby, Filey, North Yorkshire YO14 0LZ

Harrogate & Yorkshire Dales

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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Mr Phil Richardson, 10 Bedford Cottages, Great Brington, Northampton NN7 4JE

NORTHUMBERLAND

Lindisfarne

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Oxfordshire (North)

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Oxfordshire (South)

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RUTLAND

Leicestershire & Rutland

(excl. Rutland Wtr)

Mr Andrew Harrop, 30 Dean Street, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 6AF

Rutland Water

Mr Tim Appleton, Fishponds Cottage, Stamford Road, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AB

SHROPSHIRE

Mr Bill Edwards, Hopton Villa, Maesbury, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 8JA

SOMERSET

Severn Estuary - Somerset & Bristol

Dr Harvey Rose, 12 Birbeck Road, Bristol BS9 1BD

Somerset (other sites) & South Avon (inland)

Mr Keith Fox, "Vernwood", 32 Ash Hayes Road, Nailsea, Bristol BS19 2LW

Somerset Levels

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE

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Sheffield area

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STAFFORDSHIRE

West Midland counties

Mr Maurice Arnold, 58 Overwoods Road, Hockley, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 5LZ

SUFFOLK

Alde complex

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Blyth Estuary (Suffolk)

Mr Cliff Waller, Angel Cottage, Blythburgh, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 9LQ

Deben Estuary

Mr Nick Mason, Evening Hall, Hollesley, Nr Woodbridge, Ipswich, Suffolk IP12 3QU

Orwell Estuary

Mr Mick Wright, 15 Avondale Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9JT

Stour Estuary

Mr Russell Leavett, 24 Orchard Close, Great Oakley, Harwich, Essex CO12 5AX

Suffolk (excl. estuaries)

Mr Rodney West, Farnham Barn, Farnham, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1LD

SURREY

Mr Seth Gibson, 47 Bramble Walk, Epsom, Surrey KT18 7TB

SUSSEX

Chichester Harbour

Ms Anne de Potier, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Itchenor, West Sussex PO20 7AW

Pagham Harbour

Mr Steve Knapp, Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve, Selsey Road, Sidlesham, West Sussex PO20 7NE

Sussex (other sites)

Mr Chris Lowmass, 33 Barn Close, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 3EW

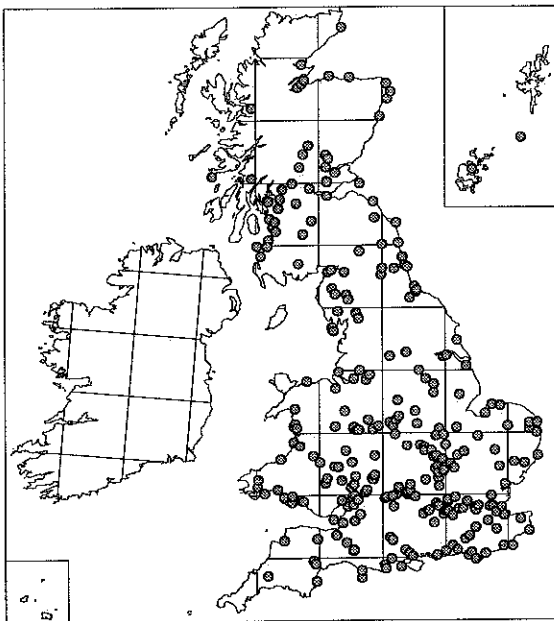
INVENTORY OF CORMORANT ROOSTS AND INLAND BREEDING SITES IN BRITAIN

During the 1970s and 1980s, the number of Cormorants wintering inland in Great Britain increased, bringing them into conflict with fishery interests. New overnight roosts and breeding sites have been formed, a sound knowledge of which is essential in assessing the impact of Cormorants on inland fisheries. Early in 1997, we carried out a survey, under contract to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, to determine the numbers and location of night roosts and inland breeding attempts. Questionnaires were circulated to all county bird recorders and information sought from other sources, such as bird reports, county avifaunas and the records of the Christmas Week Cormorant Survey, which currently monitors numbers at around 70 inland roosts in Great Britain. The following is a brief summary of the main findings of that work.

Night-time Roosts

A total of 276 roosts was identified of which 72% (201) were in England, 18% in Scotland and 9% in Wales. Strathclyde held the most roosts (18) followed by Cumbria (11), Gloucestershire (10) and Oxfordshire (10); most regions, however, held only a handful (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Locations of Cormorant roosts in Great Britain (total = 276).



Overall, 73% of roosts were inland, more so in England (84%) than Scotland (45%) and Wales (46%). England held 168 inland roosts, almost eight times the Scottish total (22) and 14 times the Welsh total (12). Most inland roosts were situated on lakes in southern and central England, with notable concentrations along the Thames and Severn Valleys, and on the Midlands gravel pits and reservoirs. Oxfordshire held the most inland roosts with ten, while Gloucestershire, Greater London, Norfolk and Tayside held nine each. Information on the numbers of birds using each roost was available for 209 roosts (45 coastal and 164 inland). Of the coastal roosts, seven (16%) held typically <10 birds, 19 (42%) 11-50 birds, 12 (27%) held 51-100, and seven (16%) >100 birds. The size of inland roosts showed a similar frequency distribution to coastal roosts, with most holding 11-50 birds. England, however, held many more large roosts than Scotland or Wales with 40 holding >100 birds compared to only one in Scotland (Loch Leven) and none in Wales.

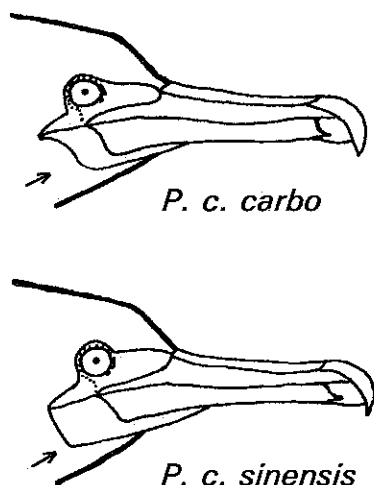
The largest recorded roost count was 1,200 Cormorants at Paxton Pits Nature Reserve in Cambridgeshire, following cold weather in January 1997. It is now likely that a minimum of 10,000 Cormorants winter inland in England, with fewer in Scotland and Wales.

Inland Breeding

The survey identified a total of 51 sites at which inland breeding has been attempted, 39 in England, eight in Scotland and four in Wales. Ten of these are historical records (that is involve breeding before 1950). Of the remainder, display only took place at seven sites, nest-building/incubation at 11, chick-rearing without breeding colony formation at 12, and breeding colony formation at 11. We have since learned of a further colony recently established at Wheidrake lngs in Yorkshire. With the exception of the long-established breeding colony at Craig-yr-Aderyn, Gwynedd, there are no inland breeding colonies in Wales and the two colonies in Scotland (Mochrum/Castle Lochs and Loch an Tomain) are both within 5km of the coast. All breeding attempts in Scotland have been within 30km of the coast, while 49% of those in England have occurred at sites more than 30km inland. Sites with breeding attempts in England were, on average, 34km inland compared with 10km in Scotland and 9km in Wales. Most inland breeding attempts have taken place in south-east England and most established colonies are located here.

Inland colonies are well spaced, forming, on average, 75km from the nearest colony, and separated by an average of 44km in 1996. Although there were only 11 established inland colonies in England in 1996, without man's interference colonies would probably have also been established at three other sites. Colony formation appears to be imminent at a further seven. The number of Cormorants breeding inland increased at 28% per year between 1991 and 1995, and by 17% between 1995 and 1996. This is likely to continue until there is a large inland breeding population in Great Britain. Recent research has shown that this is being fuelled mainly by the rapidly expanding population of the continental subspecies *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*. Most of the inland colonies in south-eastern England are comprised mainly of this subspecies, while coastal colonies and the inland colonies at Craig-yr-Aderyn and Haweswater in Cumbria are largely our own North Atlantic subspecies *P. carbo carbo*. Although many field guides suggest that *P. c. sinensis* can be recognised by its whiter head, this is now known not to be the case, as many *P. c. carbo* also show completely white head during the breeding season. The only characteristic which can be used reliably to separate the two subspecies is the angle of the gular pouch at the base of the bill, which is square in *P. c. sinensis* and acute in *P. c. carbo* (Figure 2). Anyone requiring further details please contact Baz Hughes at Slimbridge.

FIGURE 2. Gular pouch shape of Atlantic *P. carbo carbo* and Continental Cormorants *P. c. sinensis*.



The future - how you can help

We strongly suspect that there are more roosts than our survey has located and we are anxious to learn of any new ones that come to light. The following table lists all known roosts in your county. Please send details of the locations of any roosts which we have missed to Baz Hughes at Slimbridge. Finding new roosts is rather hit and miss. Those on stillwaters tend to be fairly well known if the site is regularly visited by birdwatchers. Private sites are more problematic and require special searches - a particularly good technique is to watch which direction Cormorants go when they leave feeding areas and day loafs; usually these lead directly to night roosts. Roosts on rivers can be very difficult to locate if they are in isolated places. Again watching flight lines is a useful approach. We would welcome attempts to carry out systematic surveys of counties and are more than happy to offer advice and/or assist in any other way, as best we can.

We are fairly confident that we have located the majority of the recent inland breeding attempts, but the position is developing so rapidly that it is certain that our list will quickly get out of date. We would be very grateful to receive details of any new attempts. These should include not just successful attempts, but also failed attempts, and signs of "incipient" breeding - that is wing waving, displaying, stick carrying and nest building, no matter how halfhearted. We would also welcome details of any further historical (pre-1950) breeding attempts. Finally we would like to increase birdwatchers' awareness of all things Cormorant, not least to encourage more and better recording - remember that Cormorant numbers are still increasing, especially at inland breeding sites. Things are undoubtedly going to get more interesting for Cormorants and for those people who care about Cormorants.

Thank you once again for your assistance with the roost and inland colony inventory - it would not have been possible without you.

Baz Hughes and Robin Sellers
February 1998

CORMORANT ROOSTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

ENGLAND

AVON

Chew Valley Lake ST5659
 Keynsham Hams ST651699
 Oldbury Power Station ST6192
 Severn Beach ST5484
 Steepholm ST2260

BEDFORDSHIRE

Brogborough Clay Pit SP975396
 Harrold/odell GP SP9557
 Priory CP TL0850
 Southill Lake TL1443

BERKSHIRE

Horton GP TQ0175
 Summerleaze GP SU8982
 Theale GP SU6570
 Wraysbury GP I TQ005735
 Wraysbury GP II TQ010738

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Caldecotte Lake SP8935
 Calvert Jubilee NR SP6824
 Chelmscote SP8927
 Dovecot Lake SP8442
 Marlow GP SU8686
 Newport Pagnall GP SP8845

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Marsh Lane GP TL3069
 Paxton Pits NR TL197632

CHESHIRE

Fiddlers Ferry SJ554858
 Rostherne Mere SJ745845

CLEVELAND

Bassleton Woods NZ4415
 Bran Sands NZ550270
 Hartlepool Fish Quay NZ524339
 Pab Holme Gut NZ548243
 Phillips Jetty NZ540260

CORNWALL

Colliford Reservoir SX1871

CUMBRIA

Campfield Marsh NY26
 Carlisle NY4056
 Cavendish Dock SD2168
 Fir Island, Coniston SD3094
 Grune Point NY1456
 Haweswater NY4712
 Derwentwater NY2621
 Killington Lake SD5991
 Bassenthwaite NY213304
 Ullswater NY4420
 Walney Island SD2362

DERBYSHIRE

Carsington Reservoir SK247515
 Clay Mills SK2626
 Drakelow SK227207

DEVON

Countess Wear SX9490
 Cowley Bridge SX9195

DEVON (cont.)

Ore Stone Rock SX9562
 Roadford Reservoir SS4427

DORSET

Ballard Point SZ0582
 Brownsea Island SZ030880
 Portland Bill SY6768
 Radipole Lake SY6779
 Sutton Bingham - South ST5410

EAST SUSSEX

Manxey Level TQ6406
 Rye Harbour TQ9318
 Seaford Head TV4997
 Southerham Lewes TQ427087

ESSEX

Abberton Reservoir TL9617
 Becton Gas Works TQ8145
 Fishers Green GP TQ3703
 Hanningfield Reservoir TQ7398
 Hole Haven TQ765817
 Thames Platforms TQ98
 Shellhaven TQ7181

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Berkeley Power Station ST5699
 Frampton Pools SO7507
 Haw Bridge SO8427
 Lechlade SP2201
 Lower Lode SO8731
 Slimbridge WWT SO7204
 South Cerney SU0696
 Symonds Yat SO5516
 Wainlode Hill SO8525
 Whelford Pools SU1698

GREATER LONDON

Battersea Power Station TQ2878
 Bexley, R. Cray TQ4975
 Broadwater GP TQ0489
 Leg of Mutton Lake TQ218775
 Rainham, R. Thames TQ5282
 Staines Reservoir TQ0573
 Thamesmead TQ4780
 Walthamstow Reservoir TQ3589
 Wraysbury Reservoir TQ0274

GREATER MANCHESTER

Pennington Flash SJ6499
 Sale WP SJ8092

HAMPSHIRE

R. Avon SZ147988
 Eling Great Marsh SU3612
 Fleet Pond SU8255
 Marine Terminal, Fawley SU4702
 RFA Hythe SU4207

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Carey Island SO577308
 Clifford SO2446
 Crifftin Ford Bridge SO421718
 Hampton Court SO525533
 Holme Lacy SO351239
 Lion's Den (Clock Mills) SO300456
 Twyford SN398588

HEREFORD & WORCESTER (cont.)

Westwood Park SO877631

HERTFORDSHIRE

Hilfield Park Reservoir TQ1596
 Stockers Lake TQ048935
 Wilstone Reservoir SP905132

HUMBERSIDE

Barton Light Ships TA0223
 Hornsea Mere TA1947
 Read's Island SE9721

ISLE OF WIGHT

The Needles SZ2985

KENT

Bee Ness Jetty TQ810720
 Bough Beech Reservoir TQ4948
 Dungeness TR070180
 Elmley TQ9467
 Leybourne TQ6858
 Langdon Cliffs TR345424
 Stodmarsh TR2061

LANCASHIRE

Balderstone SD6382
 Stocks Reservoir SD7255
 Stubbins Wood SD620342
 Jackson's Bank SD620327

LEICESTERSHIRE

Rutland Water SK9006
 Swithland Reservoir SK5514

LINCOLNSHIRE

Deeping St. James TF1808
 Haile Sand Fort TA348062
 Kirkby-on-bain TF235615

MERSEYSIDE

Seaforth NR SJ3197

NORFOLK

Fritton Lake TG4600
 Holkham Lake TF8843
 Ormesby Little Broad TG4716
 Ranworth Broad TG357155
 Snettisham TF649309
 Strumpshaw Fen TG340065
 Titchwell TF7544
 Welney WWT TL529941
 Wensum Valley TG01

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Billing GP SP817613
 Blatherwycke Lake SP975963
 Earls Barton GP SP865623
 Naseby Reservoir SP667774
 Pitsford Reservoir SP782712
 Ravensthorpe Reservoir SP673713
 Stanford Reservoir SP603805
 Thrapston GP TL004800

NORTHUMBERLAND

Amble NU268049
 Blyth NZ324813
 Castron NU002013

NORTHUMBERLAND (cont.)

Corbridge NZ003633
 Derwent Reservoir NY990520
 Farne Islands NU2336
 Kielder Water NY643907

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Attenborough GP SK5234
 Besthorpe GP SK817638
 Church Laneham SK820776
 Lound GP SK6985

OXFORDSHIRE

Blenheim SP4416
 Brighthampton SP3803
 Burford Priory SP2512
 Dix Pit SP409050
 Farnoor Reservoir SP4406
 Henley Road GP SU7374
 Linch Hill SP4002
 Newbridge SP4001
 Radley GP SU5297
 Sonning GP SU7475

SHROPSHIRE

Atcham, R. Severn SJ5509
 Brompton, R. Severn SJ5407
 Buidwas, R. Severn SJ6304
 Cressage, R. Severn SJ5904
 Ellesmere SJ405350
 Venus Pool SJ5506

SOMERSET

Durleigh Reservoir ST270364
 Loxton ST3755
 Muchelney ST4324
 Sutton Bingham - North ST5512
 Wimbleball Lake SS975305

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Potteric Carr SK5899

STAFFORDSHIRE

Aqualate Mere SJ770205
 Branston WP SK215208
 Chillington Pool SJ8505
 Elford North Pit SK178118
 Gailey Lower Pool SJ936105
 Manor Park Quarry SK110169

SUFFOLK

Lackford TL797712
 Long Melford TL8645
 Melton TM2751
 Pipp's Ford TM1053
 Sizewell TM480630

SURREY

QE II Reservoir TQ120670
 Virginia Water SU9769

TYNE & WEAR

Marsden Rock NZ400650
 North Shields Fish Quay NZ3668
 Shibdon Pond NZ194627

WARWICKSHIRE

Coombe Abbey GP SP3979

WEST MIDLANDS

Kingsbury WP SP2097

WEST SUSSEX

Adur Levels TQ1912
 Ardingly Reservoir TQ3229
 Chichester GP SU872034
 South Stoke TQ017102
 Steyning TQ125192
 Weirwood Reservoir TQ3934

WEST YORKSHIRE

Swillington Ings SE385280
 Elland GP SE1222

WILTSHIRE

Pit 29, Cotswold WP SU035947
 Avon Bridge SU129328
 Britford Water Meadows SU169280
 Coate Water SU180818
 Stratford-sub-castle SU128326

SCOTLAND**BORDERS**

Drepper Island NT881446
 Fast Castle Head NT8670

CENTRAL

Lake of Menteith NS583996
 South Alloa NS862914

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Loch Ken NX6870

FIFE

Isle of May NT6599
 Lindores Loch NO2616

GRAMPIAN

Boddam Ness NK1345
 Covesea NJ167706
 Greg Ness NJ9605
 Loch of Strathbeg NK0758
 Portknockie NJ495688
 Whinnyfold NK0833

HIGHLAND

Eathie NH7763
 Loch Duich NG9319
 Loch Skibo NH7388
 Munlochay Bay NH6752
 Rosemarkie NH7357
 Stack o' brough ND368483

LOTHIAN

Inch Garvie NT1379

ORKNEY

Boray Holm HY4421

SHETLAND

Fair Isle HZ2271
 Little Holm HU403861
 High Holm HU357210
 Clett Stack HU292413
 Muckle Roe (West) HU303669
 Hoggs of Hoy HU372451

STRATHCLYDE

Abber Isle, Loch Lomond NS4289
 Ailsa Craig NX0199
 Ardrossan NS2342
 Ayr NS3422
 Ballantrae NX0882
 Bogside Flats, R. Irvine NS3039
 Captyannis NS27
 Castle Semple Loch NS365590
 Girvan NX1999
 Hogganfield Loch NS6467
 Inverkip NS1971
 Lady Isle NS2729
 Lanark NS8939
 Langbank NS3873
 Loch Awe NM9307
 Loch Lomond - North NM31
 Maidens NS212085
 Strathclyde CP NS7518

TAYSIDE

Castle Island, L. Leven NO139018
 Reed Bower, L. Leven NO139015
 Scart Island, L. Leven NO135025
 Kinclaven Bridge NO158382
 Loch Clunie NO113440
 Loch Earn NN691243
 Loch Tay NN760451
 Loch Tummel NN844597
 R. Tay at Perth NO118253

WALES**CLWYD**

Oakenholt Marsh SJ2671

DYFED

Cwm Rheidol Reservoir SN6979
 Llys-y-fran Reservoir SN037256
 Loughor SS5798
 Slebech SN027137
 Wallog SN5985
 Waterwynch SN1302
 Wharley Point SN3409

GWENT

Bulmore ST3591
 Monmouth SO5012
 Piercefield Cliff ST5295
 The Denny ST4581

GWYNEDD

Cerrig y Gorllwyn SH6214
 Craig-yr-aderyn SH644070
 Friog SH597108
 Little Ormes Head SH813826
 Pont Briwet SH614383

POWYS

Caban Coch Reservoir SN9163
 Llangorse Lake SO128269
 Pool Quay SJ254107
 Rhosferig SO0152
 Talybont Reservoir SO103193

WEST GLAMORGAN

R. Neath mouth SS717911
 Pennard SS5688
 Port Talbot Harbour SS7589
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Cefni/Braint Estuaries

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Conwy Estuary

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Lavan Sands

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Merioneth (other sites)

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Traeth Dulas (Dulas Bay)

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CENTRAL

Central (excl. Forth Estuary)

Mr Neil Bielby, 56 Ochiltree, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0DF

Forth Estuary (Inner)

Dr David Bryant, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of Stirling, Stirling, Central FK9 4LA

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Auchencairn & Orchardton Bays

Mr Brian Nelson, Mine House, Auchencairn, Castle Douglas DG7 1RL

Dumfries & Galloway (other sites)

Mr David Patterson, WWT Caerlaverock, Eastpark Farm, Caerlaverock, Dumfries & Galloway DG1 4RS

Fleet Bay

Mr David Hawker, Windywalls, Upper Drumwall, Gatehouse of Fleet, Castle Douglas DG7 2DE

Kircudbright Bay

Mr Geoff Shaw, Kirriereoch, Bargrennan, Newton Stewart, Dumfries & Galloway DG8 6TB

Rough Firth

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Wigtown Bay

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FIFE

Eden Estuary

Mr Les Hatton, Department of Recreation, Craigtoun Country Park, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8NX

Fife (excl. estuaries)

Mr Allan Brown, 61 Watt's Gardens, Cupar, Fife KY15 4UG

Forth Estuary - North

Mrs Bertha Govan, 12 McKane Place, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 7XD

Tay Estuary

Mr Norman Elkins, 18 Scotstarvit View, Cupar, Fife KY15 5DX

WEBS LOCAL ORGANISERS

GRAMPIAN

Aberdeenshire

Mr Alistair Duncan, 12 Cairncry Avenue, Aberdeen, Grampian AB2 5DS

Badenoch & Strathspey

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Lossie Estuary

Mr Bob Proctor, 94 Reid Street, Bishopmill, Elgin IV30 2HH

HIGHLAND

Badenoch & Strathspey

Mr Keith Duncan, SNH, Achantoul, Aviemore, Invernesshire PH22 1QD

Caithness

Mr Stan Laybourne, Old Schoolhouse, Harpsdale, Halkirk, Caithness KW12 6UN

East Inverness/Easter Ross/Nairn (inland)

Mr Colin Crooke, RSPB, Eive House, Beechwood, Inverness IV2 2BW

Lochaber

Mr John Dye, Toad Hall, Dalnabreac, Acharacle, Argyll PH36 4JX

Moray (other sites)

Mr Martin Cook, Rowanbrae, Clochan, Buckie, Banffshire AB56 2EQ

Moray Basin Coast

Mr Bob Swann, 14 St. Vincent Road, Tain, Ross-shire IV19

Skye

Mr Andrew Currie, Glaiseilean, Iyarracool, Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9AQ

Sutherland (excl. Moray Basin)

LO position vacant

West Inverness/Lochalsh/Wester Ross

LO position vacant

LOTHIAN

Forth Estuary (Outer South)

Mr Harry Dott, 114 Comiston Road, Edinburgh EH10 5QL

Lothian (excl. estuaries)

Miss Joan Wilcox, 18 Howdenhall Gardens, Edinburgh, Midlothian EH16 6UN

Tynninghame Estuary

Mr Bobby Anderson, John Muir Country Park, Town House, Dunbar, East Lothian EH42 1ER

ORKNEY

Orkney (open coast sites)

Mr Colin Corse, Garrisdale, Lynn Park, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1SL

Orkney (other sites)

Mr Eric Meek, RSPB, Smyril, Stenness, Orkney KW16 3JX

SHETLAND

Mr David Eva, 6 Westerloch Brae, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0RP

STRATHCLYDE

Argyll & Islands

Dr Malcolm Ogilvie, Glencairn, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay PA49 7UN

Arran

Mr Peter Tupman, The Cottage, Porta Lealach, Kildonan, Isle of Arran KA27 8SD

Ayrshire

Mr Brian Orr, 14 Monach Gardens, Dreghorn, Irvine, Ayrshire KA11 4EB

Bute

Mr Ian Hopkins, 2 Eden Place, Rothesay, Bute, Strathclyde PA20 9BS

Clyde Estuary

Mr Roger Broad, 6 Birch Road, Killearn, Glasgow G63 9SQ

Glasgow/Renfrewshire/Lanarkshire

Mr & Mrs Jim & Valerie Wilson, 76 Laigh Road, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 5EQ

Isle of Cumbrae

Prof. John Allen, Drialstone, 21 Clyde Street, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae, Strathclyde KA28 0EG

Loch Ryan

Mr Geoff Sheppard, The Roddens, Leswalt, Stranraer, Dumfries & Galloway DG9 0QR

TAYSIDE

Angus (excl. Montrose Basin)

Mr Toby Green, Herdhill Cottage, Westmuir Road, Kirriemuir Angus DD8 5LG

Montrose Basin

Mr Rick Goater, Montrose Basin Wildlife Centre, Rosie Braes, Montrose, Angus DD10 9TJ

Perth & Kinross (excl. Tay Estuary)

Mr Euan Cameron, 3 Stormont Place, Scone, Perth, Perthshire PH2 6SR

Tay Estuary

Mr Norman Elkins, 18 Scotstarvit View, Cupar, Fife KY15 5DX

WESTERN ISLES

Harris & Lewis

Mr Peter Cunningham, 10 Barony Square, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, Western Isles PA87 2TQ

Uists & Benbecula

Mr Paul Boyer, 96 Carnan, Eochar, Lochboisdale, South Uist HS8 5QX

NORTHERN IRELAND

ANTRIM

Belfast Lough

Mr Ian Enlander, Environment & Heritage Service, Commonwealth House, 35 Castle Street, Belfast BT1 1GU

Co. Antrim (other sites)

Mr Jim Wells, 16 Bridge Road, Lurgan, Co. Armagh BT67 9LA

Larne Lough

Mr Billy Hilditch, 18 McCrea's Brae, Whitehead, Carrickfergus, Antrim BT38 9NZ

Loughs Neagh & Beg

Mr Mark Wright, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT66 6NJ

ARMAGH

Co. Armagh (excl. Loughs Neagh & Beg)

LO position vacant

Loughs Neagh & Beg

Mr Mark Wright, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT66 6NJ

DOWN

Belfast Lough

Mr Ian Enlander, Environment & Heritage Service, Commonwealth House, 35 Castle Street, Belfast BT1 1GU

Carlingford Lough

Mr Frank Carroll, 292 Barcroft Park, Newry, Co. Down BT35 8ET

Co. Down (other sites)

LO position vacant

Dundrum Bay

Mr Hugh Thurgate, The Stableyard, Murlough NNR, Keel Point, Dundrum, Co. Down BT33 0NQ

Loughs Neagh & Beg

Mr Mark Wright, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT66 6NJ

Outer Ards

LO position vacant

South Down coast

LO position vacant

Strangford Lough

Mr Paddy Mackie, Mahee Island Centre, Comber, Co. Down BT23 6EP

FERMANAGH

Mr Ian Enlander, Environment & Heritage Service, Commonwealth House, 35 Castle Street, Belfast BT1 1GU

LONDONDERRY

Bann Estuary

Mr Hill Dick, 33 Hopefield Avenue, Portrush, Co. Antrim BT56 8HB

Co. Londonderry (other sites)

LO position vacant

Lough Foyle

Mr Dave Allen, RSPB, Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast, Co. Down BT18 4QT

Loughs Neagh & Beg

Mr Mark Wright, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT66 6NJ

TYRONE

Co. Tyrone (excl. Loughs Neagh & Beg)

LO position vacant

Loughs Neagh & Beg

Mr Mark Wright, Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island, Craigavon, Co. Armagh BT66 6NJ

ISLANDS

CHANNEL ISLANDS

Channel Islands (inland)

Mr Glyn Young, Societe Jersiaise, 9 Pier Road, St Helier, Jersey JE3 5BF

Guernsey coast

Mr Tony Grange, 3/4 Market Street, St. Peter Port, Guernsey, Channel Islands GY1 1GQ

Jersey coast

Mr Ian Buxton, Le Petit Huquet, La Rue du Hucquet, St Martin, Jersey, Channel Islands

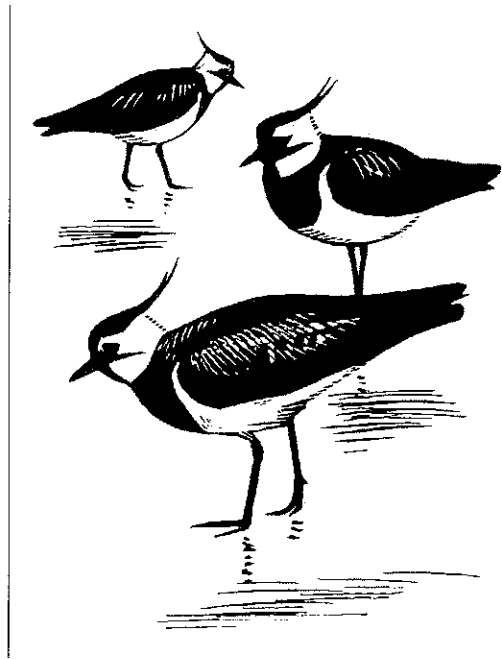
ISLE OF MAN

Dr Pat Cullen, Troutbeck, Cronkbourne, Braddan, Isle of Man

I-WeBS and UK-WeBS co-operation: a major step forward in waterfowl conservation

As we all know, waterfowl treat our national boundaries with complete disdain: your average, well-educated bird prefers the concept of biogeographical zones! At the WeBS Counters Conference in May, partners from UK-WeBS and I-WeBS signed a protocol for Wetland Bird Surveys in the UK and Republic of Ireland which formalised the co-operative relationship between the two schemes.

The new agreement will ensure that collection and dissemination of waterfowl data from the two countries are undertaken in a more holistic manner. Thus, it is aimed to improve co-ordination of counts at cross border sites, more data will be shared for presentation in the schemes' respective annual reports, and special surveys will, where possible, be co-ordinated throughout Britain and Ireland. Further, such co-operation may enable us to shed some light on movements of species to the Republic of Ireland during cold weather periods, especially Lapwing and Golden Plover. Common standards will enable future research projects to



analyse data at an all-Ireland or Britain and Ireland level, and enable all partners in the schemes to improve their understanding of the movements and ecology of waterfowl.

Publicising WeBS

Would you like one of the WeBS staff to give a talk on WeBS to your local bird club, naturalists society or local RSPB group? Perhaps it will help you to attract a few extra volunteers to cover those waters in your area not currently monitored by the scheme. Alternatively, if you are giving a talk yourself, we can supply background information on the history and development of WeBS, details of how the data are used on a day to day basis and a summary of WeBS counts in your area. Also, we are shortly to produce a 'publicity flier', aimed to attract new counters to WeBS. These can be provided to Local Organisers or counters for distribution at local bird club meetings, conferences etc. Please contact Mark Pollitt at WWT for further information.

Better Late than Never

If you have some counts from last winter (or any previous winter for that matter!) that have not been submitted to WeBS for one reason or another, please do fill in a form and send them, via your Local Organiser, to us. The counts will be used in future analyses, for site assessments, for research into long term trends (including the indices of populations presented in the annual report) and many other uses. The less gaps we have in the data, the more confident we can be about our findings.

Wanted! Breeding records of introduced and non-native breeding species

Malcolm Ogilvie, Secretary, Rare Breeding Birds Panel

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel, sponsored by JNCC, BTO, RSPB and *British Birds*, would like to request those WeBS counters who continue counting through the summer months to contribute records to its files. Records of introduced and non-native species would be particularly welcome. The Panel was founded in 1972 to act as a safe archive of information on Britain's rare breeding species, mainly those with fewer than 300 pairs. Some species have increased beyond that level, but they have normally been kept on the list as a precaution in case of future declines. The great bulk of the records received come from county bird recorders, though a number are submitted each year by individuals.

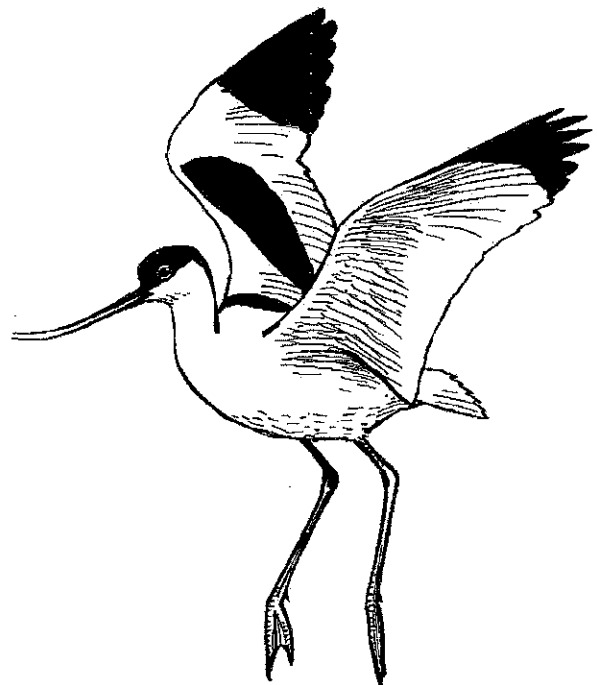
The Panel has recently been revising the basis of its list and has decided to expand it in two ways. Firstly, it seemed anomalous to include only some of the species on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. From now on, everything listed in that Schedule will be covered, though with reduced information requested for the commoner species, e.g. Barn Owl and Kingfisher. Secondly, the Panel felt that it was in an excellent position to record the breeding of introduced and escaped non-native species.

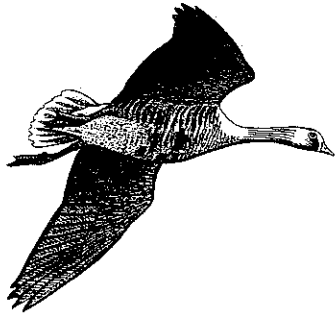
As these include a number of wildfowl species, WeBS data is of obvious value in recording their occurrence and (presumed) spread. In particular, the Panel wants to monitor the much less common species, e.g. Barnacle Goose and Red-crested Pochard (see the full list below), though not Canada Goose, Mandarin or Ruddy Duck. To assist the Panel, the WeBS Secretariat will forward all relevant counts from its databases. Please ensure, therefore, that you continue to record all fully-winged birds of any waterfowl species encountered during WeBS counts, regardless of their origins.

However, WeBS recording forms only provide space for total numbers of birds seen (and young birds less than three-quarters fully grown should be excluded from the counts). If you continue to visit your count site during summer months and wish to forward additional details to the Panel,

please send these to your county recorder (details can be found in the *Bird Watchers Year Book*, or obtained from the WeBS Secretariat). The Panel uses the standard recording methods of breeding bird atlases, with the lowest level of evidence being birds present in suitable breeding habitat. Clearly, any species of wildfowl seen on water is very close to suitable breeding habitat! Also, unfortunately, it is difficult to be certain that the sighting of a single bird, whether male or female, is definitely non-breeding. So, please report all occurrences, unless you can be certain that a single male doesn't have an unseen mate on a nest or that a single female has not just slipped off a nest. This is the basis on which county recorders report, for example, Garganey records to the Panel, though obvious short-stay migrants are normally excluded.

The following information should be recorded (and sent on recording cards that can be obtained from your county recorder): site; date; species; number of adults (male and females separately, and any in pairs); and number of young or other evidence of breeding.





Introduced and non-native species of interest to the Panel

Black Swan, Whooper Swan (escapes), Bean Goose, Pink-footed Goose, White-fronted Goose, Lesser White-fronted Goose, Bar-headed Goose, Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Barnacle Goose, Brent Goose, Red-breasted Goose, Egyptian Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Muscovy Duck, Wood Duck, Red-crested Pochard, plus any other rarer, introduced or non-native species.

Schedule I and rarer native wetland species of interest to the Panel

Whooper Swan (presumed wild), Bewick's Swan, Wigeon, Gadwall, Pintail, Black Duck, Garganey, Blue-winged Teal, Pochard, Ring-necked Duck, Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter, Velvet Scoter, Goldeneye, Smew, Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, Stone Curlew, Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Sanderling, Temminck's Stint, Pectoral Sandpiper, Purple Sandpiper, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Ruff, Jack Snipe, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, Greenshank, Green Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Turnstone, Red-necked Phalarope, Mediterranean Gull, Little Gull, Yellow-legged Gull, Glaucous Gull, Lesser Crested Tern, Roseate Tern, Least Tern, Little Tern and Black Tern.

New contact for WWT Goose Censuses

Carl Mitchell, for many years the coordinator of the WWT/JNCC goose censuses which supplement information collected through WeBS, has migrated to pastures new! Congratulations to Carl, who has recently become the Centre Manager at the WWT Welney Centre on the Ouse Washes, where, amongst other things, he will be helping to count the thousands of waterfowl wintering on the flood lands for WeBS. The new contact for all goose census related issues is Richard Hearn, WWT, Slimbridge.



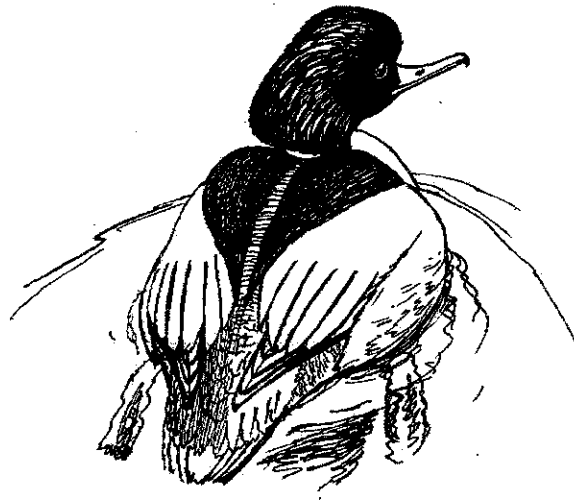
WeBS regions

Enclosed is a current list of contact details for WeBS Local Organisers. Most regions have been in use for a number of years (a combination of county and district boundaries, or specific site(s) where these are large or complex, such as many estuaries) and are designed to simplify co-ordination of the counts at a local level. However, they are not fixed, and, for example, county boundaries are only used for convenience. If Local Organisers wish to change or merge their regions (obviously, in agreement with adjoining LOs who would be affected by the change) we are more than happy to change our databases also to accommodate this. Thus, for example, if LOs wish to change their regions to match the recent changes to local government and counties, please let us know. Conversely, we are more than happy to retain the existing definitions if this suits your purposes.

WeBS count dates

1998	1999	2000	2000	2000
12 July	3 January	18 July	16 January	23 July
9 August	21 February	15 August	13 February	20 August
6 September	21 March	12 September	12 March	17 September
11 October	18 April	10 October	9 April	22 October
8 November	16 May	28 November	7 May	19 November
6 December	13 June	26 December*	25 June	17 December

*Please note that this is the best date with respect to tidal conditions though any Local Organiser who wishes to can select an alternative date.



MANY THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP

The great strength of WeBS, arguably the biggest count scheme of its kind in the world and the envy of many other countries, lies in the tremendous volunteer input from you, the counters. We hope that you will continue to support WeBS, and through it, the conservation of waterfowl and wetlands throughout the UK and abroad.

WeBS Secretariat, WWT, Slimbridge: 01453 980333
 Peter Cranswick: extension 280
 Mark Pollitt: extension 255
 Becky Hughes: extension 255
 Fax: 01453 890827

BTO, Thetford: 01842 750050
 Andy Musgrove (Low Tide Counts)
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