

## SNIFE

*Gallinago gallinago*

International threshold: 20,000\*\*

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

All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 7,641 Nov

NI max: 262 Jan

The peak count in Great Britain was at similar to those of the previous two years. Peaks have generally occurred in December, and counts in 1999-2000 were noticeably lower at this time. The peak in Northern Ireland rose to its highest level since the exceptionally high numbers in 1995-96.

Peak counts for all sites in the table were below their five year mean except for the Lower

Derwent Valley. The Somerset Levels remains by far the most important wintering site for this species. The Exe Estuary returned to the table after not meeting qualifying levels in 1998-99 and the North Norfolk Coast entered the table for the first time. Exceptionally high numbers on the Severn Estuary in February produced the fourth highest count in 1999-2000.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Somerset Levels	(1,929)	1,041	1,975	2,196	1,578	Dec	1,744
Maer Marsh	650	480	550	610	490	Jan	556
Lower Derwent Valley	472	409	500	300	621	Nov	460
Newgale Beach	-	-	230	400	-		315
Morecambe Bay	198	188	260	268	213	Dec	225
Swale Estuary	335	(46)	38	333	171	Dec	219
North Norfolk Coast	69	55	<sup>37</sup> 611	135	188	Feb	212
Exe Estuary	315	42	(245)	232	-		209 ▲
Arun Valley	206	135	272	237	185	Feb	207

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Severn Estuary	396	Feb	Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	210	Dec
Ouse Washes	218	Feb	Marston Sewage Treatment Works	205	Feb
Southampton Water	215	Mar			

<sup>†</sup> as no British or all-Ireland thresholds have been set, a qualifying level of 200 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER

*Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Vagrant

Native range: NE Siberia and N America

Four sites held single birds during the year. The returning bird to the Swale Estuary was recorded in April, July, August and January. Elsewhere,

one at Belfast Lagoon was seen in September and February and singles were at Stodmarsh NNR & Collards Lagoon and Morecambe Bay in April.

## WOODCOCK

*Scolopax rusticola*

International threshold: 20,000\*\*

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

All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

This species is very under recorded by WeBS due to its secretive behaviour and favoured habitat of woodlands. However, the data suggests that 1999-2000 was not a particularly good year for

this species. Summed site maxima gave a total of 108 birds, well below the five year mean of 161 and also the lowest value in the last five years.

### Sites with 10 or more birds in 1999-2000

Grouville Marsh	10	Jan
Longueville Marsh	10	Dec
Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve	7	Nov
Hamford Water	5	Nov

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

## BLACK-TAILED GODWIT

*Limosa limosa*

GB max: 16,556 Oct

NI max: 412 Mar

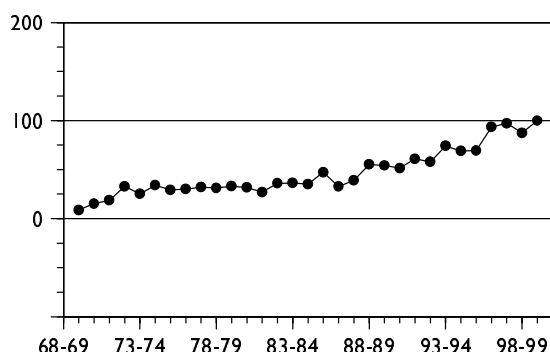


Figure 67. Annual indices for Black-tailed Godwit in UK

Numbers of wintering Black-tailed Godwits in Great Britain were slightly up on the previous year and were the third highest ever recorded under WeBS for both Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The annual index shows the continued good fortune of this species after a slightly poorer year in 1998-99, rising to its highest ever level.

Despite this increase, numbers at many sites in southern and eastern England continued to decline. In 1999-2000 the Medway Estuary, Thames Estuary, Chichester Harbour and Hamford Water all dropped from the list of sites

International threshold: 700

Great Britain threshold: 70

All-Ireland threshold: 90

of international importance for Black-tailed Godwit. None was recorded at Abberton Reservoir, a site which has previously held relatively high numbers. Other sites, notably the Dee Estuary (England/ Wales), Ribble Estuary, Ouse Washes, Swale Estuary, Humber Estuary and Breydon Water & Berney Marshes all supported numbers well above their five year means. Numbers at Belfast Lough returned to form after low counts in the two previous winters.

It is also worth noting that Southampton Water is of greater importance for this species than WeBS counts suggest. Titchfield Haven is the key area within the site, and held 1,030 birds in December 1999 (Hampshire Bird Report) but is not always counted for WeBS.

During passage periods, eleven sites exceeded the threshold for international importance, three of which, Medway and Thames Estuaries and North Killingholme Haven Pits, only qualify as sites of national importance based on winter counts.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Wash	(1,764)	5,738	3,104	1,104	1,844	Dec	2,948
Stour Estuary	3,848	<sup>37</sup> 2,514	1,724	2,105	1,862	Nov	2,411
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	1,862	2,203	1,642	1,602	2,543	Nov	1,970
Poole Harbour	1,194	1,771	1,895	1,596	2,051	Jan	1,701
Ribble Estuary	180	2,319	911	(1,216)	2,596	Dec	1,502
Mersey Estuary	494	1,703	<sup>37</sup> 2,655	1,573	976	Nov	1,480
Ouse Washes	509	1,019	994	1,715	2,130	Feb	1,273
Swale Estuary	637	(1,409)	1,010	1,514	1,495	Feb	1,213
Blackwater Estuary	920	(1,088)	(608)	(680)	(697)	Mar	1,004
Southampton Water	(594)	( <sup>37</sup> 174)	982	(685)	522	Dec	752
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Humber Estuary	57	544	924	<sup>37</sup> 866	1,030	Nov	684
Medway Estuary	902	<sup>37</sup> 417	653	(551)	(389)	Feb	657 ▼
Exe Estuary	520	226	1,132	667	-		636
Thames Estuary	(109)	637	241	(1,180)	365	Nov	606 ▼
Chichester Harbour	551	<sup>37</sup> 498	464	<sup>37</sup> 738	(511)	Dec	563 ▼
Orwell Estuary	<sup>37</sup> 946	458	<sup>37</sup> 352	622	<sup>37</sup> 395	Dec	555
Nene Washes	398	80	509	1,520	64	Mar	514
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	122	367	503	493	883	Dec	474
North Killingholme Haven Pits	-	1	190	830	655	Nov	419
Hamford Water	236	732	352	270	371	Dec	392 ▼
Alde Complex	201	254	701	168	308	Mar	326
North West Solent	200	265	<sup>37</sup> 378	251	(231)	Jan	274
Langstone Harbour	154	240	327	<sup>37</sup> 202	(304)	Nov	245
Abberton Reservoir	724	159	322	3	0	Nov	242

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Blyth Estuary (Suffolk)	266	200	215	-	-		227
Deben Estuary	267	354	154	112	209	Mar	219
Beaulieu Estuary	235	(246)	161	197	233	Feb	214
Colne Estuary	219	85	214	412	135	Feb	213
Crouch-Roach Estuary	68	87	416	236	252	Feb	212
Newtown Estuary	(365)	130	148	198	<sup>37</sup> 218	Nov	212
Portsmouth Harbour	62	204	<sup>37</sup> 358	(4)	(211)	Nov	209
Eden Estuary	128	176	183	233	182	Nov	180
Pagham Harbour	100	98	<sup>37</sup> 124	<sup>37</sup> 300	182	Feb	161
Tamar Complex	156	(127)	119	100	(44)	Jan	126
Fal Complex	77	131	146	135	112	Feb	120
Burry Inlet	87	<sup>37</sup> 116	233	45	99	Nov	116
Severn Estuary	49	97	230	166	35	Dec	115
Morecambe Bay	56	21	42	354	82	Nov	111
Solway Estuary	13	460	9	31	26	Dec	108
North Norfolk Coast	109	(21)	<sup>37</sup> 60	119	98	Dec	97
Forth Estuary	34	33	(87)	225	93	Dec	96

#### Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland

Belfast Lough	235	418	178	266	<sup>37</sup> 401	Nov	300
Strangford Lough	<sup>37</sup> 134	486	<sup>37</sup> 445	191	214	Mar	294

#### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Dengie Flats

#### Internationally or nationally important sites not counted in last five years

Christchurch Harbour

#### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Holland Marshes 95 Feb

#### Sites surpassing the international threshold during passage periods in 1999-2000

Wash	4,433	Sep	Blackwater Estuary	1,078	Apr
Stour Estuary	2,571	Apr	Thames Estuary	936	Jul
Ouse Washes	2,509	Apr	North Killingholme Haven Pits	921	Sep
Mersey Estuary	2,370	Aug	Poole Harbour	744	Sep
Ribble Estuary	2,189	Aug	Medway Estuary	721	Oct
Dee Estuary	1,159	Apr			

## BAR-TAILED GODWIT

*Limosa lapponica*

International threshold: 1,000

Great Britain threshold: 530

All-Ireland threshold: 175

GB max: 48,704 Jan

NI max: 1,554 Jan

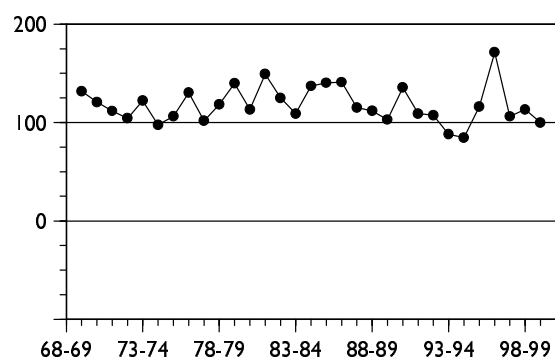


Figure 68. Annual indices for Bar-tailed Godwit in UK

In Britain the maximum count remained at a similar level to the previous two winters, whilst in Northern Ireland it was the lowest since 1991-92. After last year's slight increase, the annual index dropped to the lower end of the values.

All sites except for the Alt Estuary, Lindisfarne, Humber Estuary and Cromarty Firth held below average numbers. Counts were at least 50% lower than the sites' five year means at the Thames Estuary, Ribble Estuary, Dee Estuary (England/ Wales), Solway Estuary, Dengie Flats and Lough Foyle.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Wash	(15,227)	16,246	16,435	10,319	13,062	Jan	14,258
Thames Estuary	11,684	16,164	5,797	(4,416)	2,584	Dec	9,057
Ribble Estuary	(7,693)	15,885	<sup>37</sup> 10,431	4,093	4,346	Feb	8,689
Alt Estuary	5,488	9,015	9,424	6,883	8,001	Jan	7,762
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	(2,012)	<sup>37</sup> 8,460	<sup>37</sup> 5,464	<sup>37</sup> 3,359	232	Dec	4,379
Morecambe Bay	(2,985)	3,658	1,818	5,540	5,374	Jan	4,098
Lindisfarne	(2,769)	2,770	3,225	(3,086)	(3,993)	Feb	3,329
Humber Estuary	2,199	1,505	(2,970)	<sup>37</sup> 3,787	3,433	Jan	2,779
Solway Estuary	2,331	4,273	2,495	2,592	931	Dec	2,524
North Norfolk Coast	1,338	3,360	3,108	2,400	1,842	Jan	2,410
Dengie Flats	1,300	5,500	1,402	(1,050)	900	Feb	2,276
Lough Foyle	2,140	(2,120)	1,535	3,820	678	Nov	2,059
Forth Estuary	1,988	1,869	2,157	2,076	1,046	Nov	1,827
Inner Moray Firth	(2,649)	2,792	1,301	<sup>37</sup> 1,344	1,015	Feb	1,820
Cromarty Firth	(1,193)	(1,225)	1,654	1,779	<sup>37</sup> 1,852	Jan	1,762
Strangford Lough	<sup>37</sup> 1,682	<sup>37</sup> 1,671	2,433	1,299	1,360	Jan	1,689
Tay Estuary	(1,520)	2,305	1,315	1,160	(1,250)	Jan	1,593
Dornoch Firth	1,520	(2,125)	847	1,216	837	Feb	1,309
Chichester Harbour	1,250	1,100	820	(1,175)	(462)	Feb	1,086

#### Sites of national importance in Great Britain

East Sanday Coast	-	-	<sup>16</sup> 951	-	-		951
Hamford Water	657	1,380	548	381	506	Jan	694
North Uist (West Coast)	-	-	<sup>16</sup> 662	-	-		662
Swale Estuary	696	824	597	366	407	Jan	578
Eden Estuary	672	603	610	484	331	Feb	540

#### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Belfast Lough

## WHIMBREL

*Numenius phaeopus*

**GB max:** 1,337 **Mar**

**NI max:** 9 **Apr**

**International threshold:** 6,500

**Great Britain threshold:** +\*

**All-Ireland threshold:** +\*

\* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Following the previous year's record numbers, 1999-2000 was unremarkable for Whimbrel. Both the number of sites where birds were recorded

and the summed site maxima were slightly below average for the past five years, and only a few sites held 50 or more birds.

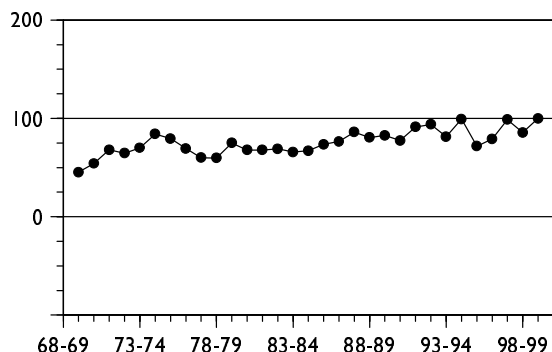
#### Sites with 50 or more birds in 1999-2000

Burry Inlet	334	May
Morecambe Bay	168	May
North Norfolk Coast	143	Aug
The Wash	137	Sep
Blackwater Estuary	121	Aug
Taw/Torridge Estuary	92	May
Chichester Harbour	86	Aug

# **CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

**International threshold: 3,500**  
**Great Britain threshold: 1,200**  
**All-Ireland threshold: 875**

**GB max: 99,787 Feb**  
**NI max: 7,369 Feb**



**Figure 69.** Annual indices for Curlew in UK

Following a marked fall in the previous winter, 1999-2000 saw the annual index rise to match the peak levels of 1994-95 and 1997-98. The

maximum count in Great Britain was the highest ever to be recorded by WeBS and, although not as high as in 1998-99, the Northern Ireland maximum was similar to those in recent years.

Numbers at individual sites were relatively similar to those in recent winters, with most sites supporting fractionally more birds than average, including, for the second year running Morecambe Bay, the most important site in the UK. Peak counts at the Solway Estuary, Wash, Ribble Estuary, Traeth Lafan and Outer Ards were also notable for above average numbers.

Peak counts at the Dee Estuary (England/Wales) and Thames Estuary were at their lowest in the last five years. The Hamford Water numbers were notably low but numbers have fluctuated to low levels in previous winters.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Morecambe Bay	14,905	12,357	14,858	16,778	16,586	Feb	15,097
Solway Estuary	3,348	4,062	5,716	5,935	7,230	Feb	5,258
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	3,538	4,583	5,370	4,490	3,373	Dec	4,271
Wash	(3,945)	3,241	3,803	4,306	5,056	Feb	4,102
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Humber Estuary	(1,973)	1,406	(3,282)	(3,978)	3,532	Mar	3,050
Thames Estuary	3,016	3,873	2,590	2,343	2,151	Feb	2,795
Severn Estuary	2,682	2,001	(2,903)	1,784	2,086	Dec	2,291
Duddon Estuary	2,019	1,801	2,008	2,629	2,576	Nov	2,207
Forth Estuary	1,607	1,599	2,545	2,082	2,240	Jan	2,015
Inner Moray Firth	1,303	1,828	2,334	<sup>37</sup> 1,630	2,456	Feb	1,910
Ribble Estuary	1,020	1,593	2,507	880	2,631	Feb	1,726
Poole Harbour	1,428	1,652	1,783	1,508	1,712	Feb	1,617
Mersey Estuary	1,439	1,501	<sup>37</sup> 2,117	<sup>37</sup> 1,308	1,507	Jan	1,574
North Norfolk Coast	(592)	1,489	<sup>37</sup> 1,467	1,441	1,863	Jan	1,565
Blackwater Estuary	1,226	(1,533)	1,426	1,511	1,842	Feb	1,508
Medway Estuary	1,474	1,061	1,413	1,554	(1,648)	Feb	1,430
Lindisfarne	(601)	(577)	1,330	(1,420)	(1,483)	Jan	1,411 ▲
Clyde Estuary	1,135	(1,088)	1,543	1,423	1,497	Nov	1,400
Cleddau Estuary	1,436	1,283	1,330	1,448	(1,173)	Dec	1,374
Cromarty Firth	1,434	1,092	1,542	1,639	<sup>37</sup> 1,141	Feb	1,370
Chichester Harbour	1,296	1,135	1,433	1,452	(1,389)	Jan	1,341
Hamford Water	2,670	580	1,355	1,265	719	Jan	1,318
Swale Estuary	832	(1,124)	1,435	1,110	1,658	Feb	1,259
Traeth Lafan	(1,412)	1,446	1,044	522	(1,836)	Feb	1,252 ▲
Stour Estuary	912	(1,041)	(1,492)	1,316	1,174	Jan	1,224
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Lough Foyle	2,231	(2,187)	1,879	2,686	2,129	Dec	2,231
Strangford Lough	2,107	<sup>37</sup> 2,021	2,102	1,560	1,625	Feb	1,883
Outer Ards	774	1,025	758	1,669	2,113	Feb	1,268

## **Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels**

Wigtown Bay

## **Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000**

The Ouse & Lairo Water	2,170	Jan
Wigtown Bay	1,417	Feb
Burry Inlet	1,283	Nov

## SPOTTED REDSHANK

*Tringa erythropus*

**GB max:** 271 **Sep**  
**NI max:** 1 **several**

Despite the peak count being higher and birds being recorded at more sites than the previous two years, summed site maxima were the lowest for the last five years, exhibiting a steady decline each year since the high numbers in 1995-96.

### Sites with 10 or more birds in 1999-2000

Tamar Complex	36	Mar
Humber Estuary	35	Sep
Swale Estuary	33	Aug
The Wash	32	Sep
Abberton Reservoir	31	Sep
Benacre Broad	16	Oct

After two years of exceptionally high numbers during autumn passage on the Wash, counts returned to more normal levels in 1999-2000.

Crouch-Roach Estuary	15	Aug
Blackwater Estuary	15	Sep
Dee Estuary	11	Sep
Morecambe Bay	10	Sep
Caerlaverock WWT	10	Nov

**International threshold:** 1,200

**Great Britain threshold:** +\*

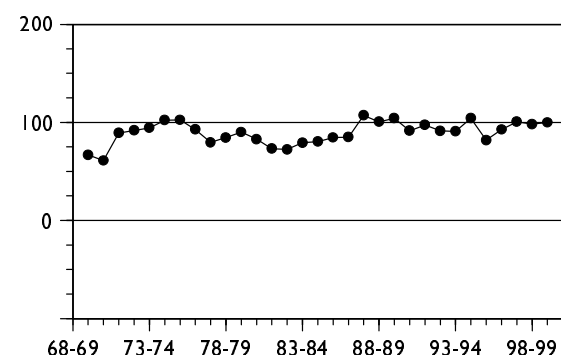
**All-Ireland threshold:** +\*

\* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

## REDSHANK

*Tringa totanus*

**GB max:** 98,007 **Oct**  
**NI max:** 8,389 **Oct**



**Figure 70.** Annual indices for Redshank in UK

Maximum Redshank counts in 1999-2000 were slightly lower than the previous year but were still at the higher end of values for the 1990s. Conversely, annual indices increased marginally,

**International threshold:** 1,500

**Great Britain winter threshold:** 1,100

**Great Britain passage threshold:** 1,200

**All-Ireland threshold:** 245

bringing them back to the 1997-98 level.

In keeping with the past few years peak counts at individual sites were mostly unremarkable, with little change to the table. Counts at many sites were lower than normal, although, with the exception of the North Norfolk Coast and Severn Estuary, not markedly different from average.

After a continued increase over the past five years, high numbers on the Ythan Estuary qualified this site as one of international importance. Morecambe Bay, Solway Estuary, Blackwater Estuary, Ribble Estuary, Colne Estuary, Cromarty Firth, Carlingford Lough and Larne Lough all supported their highest wintering numbers in the last five years.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Morecambe Bay	6,847	6,350	6,968	7,082	7,262	Jan	6,902
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	4,651	6,226	7,570	4,907	4,792	Mar	5,629
Mersey Estuary	4,710	5,212	<sup>37</sup> 6,973	<sup>37</sup> 5,087	4,476	Feb	5,292
Humber Estuary	4,085	1,919	4,575	(6,053)	5,272	Feb	4,381
Forth Estuary	5,205	3,602	4,768	4,450	3,532	Jan	4,311
Solway Estuary	(3,746)	2,512	3,196	3,958	4,135	Dec	3,509
Strangford Lough	3,281	2,832	2,713	4,157	2,827	Jan	3,162
Alde Complex	2,233	2,303	5,268	2,825	2,783	Nov	3,082
Wash	(2,726)	(3,056)	3,279	3,046	2,722	Mar	3,026
Medway Estuary	3,731	<sup>37</sup> 2,058	3,020	(1,599)	(1,896)	Feb	2,936
Thames Estuary	(2,560)	3,469	2,992	2,557	2,519	Feb	2,884
Stour Estuary	3,392	2,853	1,908	2,730	<sup>37</sup> 2,511	Nov	2,679
Clyde Estuary	2,532	(2,092)	1,768	2,538	<sup>37</sup> 2,956	Nov	2,449

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
Inner Moray Firth	2,580	2,177	2,373	<sup>37</sup> 2,494	2,360	Jan	2,397
Duddon Estuary	3,888	1,344	1,856	2,356	2,367	Nov	2,362
Blackwater Estuary	1,651	(1,930)	2,523	(2,158)	2,541	Feb	2,238
Belfast Lough	<sup>37</sup> 2,283	<sup>37</sup> 2,068	<sup>37</sup> 2,148	<sup>37</sup> 2,463	<sup>37</sup> 2,108	Nov	2,214
Deben Estuary	1,558	2,632	2,704	1,729	1,996	Nov	2,124
Montrose Basin	1,766	2,508	2,440	2,093	1,800	Nov	2,121
Orwell Estuary	2,485	<sup>37</sup> 1,978	<sup>37</sup> 2,256	<sup>37</sup> 1,575	<sup>37</sup> 2,197	Nov	2,098
Hamford Water	1,413	2,322	2,486	2,373	1,796	Feb	2,078
Ribble Estuary	2,129	2,208	1,901	1,253	2,622	Mar	2,023
North Norfolk Coast	(1,088)	1,356	<sup>37</sup> 3,542	1,639	1,473	Jan	2,003
Severn Estuary	2,526	2,072	1,790	(2,134)	1,149	Dec	1,934
Ythan Estuary	660	1,344	1,380	1,976	2,990	Dec	1,670 ▲
Colne Estuary	1,537	1,157	1,485	1,640	1,823	Feb	1,528

#### Sites of national importance in Great Britain

Alt Estuary	1,600	1,790	(1,000)	979	1,627	Feb	1,499 ▼
Swale Estuary	1,325	1,268	1,364	2,116	1,359	Feb	1,486 ▼
Chichester Harbour	1,287	1,442	1,391	1,691	(1,342)	Dec	1,453 ▼
Tees Estuary	1,824	1,079	1,408	1,386	1,282	Feb	1,396
Blyth Estuary (Suffolk)	1,000	1,426	1,761	-	-		1,396
Cromarty Firth	701	701	1,385	1,404	<sup>37</sup> 1,842	Nov	1,207
Poole Harbour	1,111	1,028	1,239	1,100	1,124	Dec	1,120

#### Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland

Outer Ards	773	1,035	(957)	1,428	1,308	Nov	1,136
Carlingford Lough	789	1,194	1,043	924	1,334	Feb	1,057
Lough Foyle	1,147	805	720	901	844	Jan	883
Dundrum Bay	608	831	853	826	494	Jan	722
Larne Lough	360	317	362	388	427	Mar	371
Bann Estuary	205	190	420	346	260	Jan	284

#### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Eden Estuary

#### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Dornoch Firth	1,191	Feb
Traeth Lafan	1,124	Dec

#### Sites surpassing passage threshold in Great Britain in 1999-2000

Humber Estuary	8,576	Sep	Alde Complex	2,474	Oct
Morecambe Bay	8,398	Oct	Deben Estuary	2,391	Oct
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	7,248	Oct	Ythan Estuary	2,088	Oct
Ribble Estuary	6,411	Sep	Solway Estuary	1,868	Sep
The Wash	5,855	Sep	North Norfolk Coast	1,659	Aug
Mersey Estuary	5,415	Oct	North Killingholme Haven Pits	1,650	Sep
Strangford Lough	4,506	Sep	Alt Estuary	1,627	Feb
Thames Estuary	4,263	Sep	Tees Estuary	1,590	Sep
Forth Estuary	3,727	Oct	Swale Estuary	1,585	Sep
Medway Estuary	3,664	Oct	Cromarty Firth	1,575	Oct
Stour Estuary	3,073	Sep	Belfast Lough	1,456	Oct
Clyde Estuary	2,899	Oct	Chichester Harbour	1,422	Sep
Inner Moray Firth	2,852	Oct	Lough Foyle	1,366	Oct
Blackwater Estuary	2,688	Oct	Eden Estuary	1,308	Sep
Montrose Basin	2,577	Sep	Severn Estuary	1,306	Sep

## MARSH SANDPIPER

*Tringa stagnatilis*

Vagrant

Native range: Africa, Asia and Australia

Singles on the Yar Estuary and Abberton Reservoir in August were the first and second records for WeBS of this species. July and August

1999 saw a record ten birds recorded in Great Britain (Nightingale & McGeehan 1999).

## GREENSHANK

*Tringa nebularia*

**GB max:** 2,580 **Sep**  
**NI max:** 127 **Oct**

**International threshold:** ?

**Great Britain threshold:** +<sup>†</sup>

**All-Ireland threshold:** 9\*

\* 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Peak numbers of Greenshank in the UK occur during autumn passage, particularly September. Counts in 1999-2000 increased yet further from the large numbers of the previous year, and were the highest ever recorded by WeBS. In Northern Ireland peak monthly totals were down slightly on last year.

Numbers dropped rapidly after autumn to typical wintering levels with most sites, in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland, holding numbers very similar to their five year means. A peak of 28 birds at Burry Inlet in February was the

second highest at an individual site in Great Britain during 1999-2000.

Thirteen sites held nine or more birds during passage with the peak counts at all sites occurring in the autumn. A remarkable count of 428 from the Wash in September was the highest ever recorded by WeBS, beating the 425 recorded there in September 1987. The peak count at Chichester Harbour was also notably high, being the fourth highest count recorded at any site by WeBS.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Kingsbridge Estuary	28	26	27	18	29	Nov	26
Tamar Complex	(39)	24	22	19	(25)	Mar	26
Exe Estuary	44	11	16	27	-		25
Chichester Harbour	15	10	36	20	(19)	Dec	20
Fal Complex	18	16	14	24	(23)	Feb	19
Taw-Torridge Estuary	16	11	28	(9)	16	Nov	18
Cleddau Estuary	17	12	11	22	(15)	Nov	16
Grouville Marsh	(2)	(6)	(15)	(2)	13	Mar	14
Foryd Bay	11	11	10	13	10	Nov	11
North West Solent	5	9	15	10	(10)	Dec	10
Yealm Estuary	15	8	7	13	7	Nov	10
Tynningham Estuary	8	10	17	10	7	Feb	10

### Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland

Strangford Lough	<sup>37</sup> 35	<sup>37</sup> 37	38	56	48	Jan	43
Lough Foyle	36	(17)	30	28	30	Dec	31
Dundrum Bay	22	<sup>37</sup> 10	10	16	12	Nov	14
Carlingford Lough	6	8	15	15	14	Nov	12
Larne Lough	17	8	10	11	8	Nov	11
Outer Ards	3	15	15	16	7	Nov	11

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Clyde Estuary  
 Traeth Lafan  
 Camel Estuary

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Burry Inlet	28	Feb
Helford Estuary	14	Nov
Auchendores Reservoir	10	Nov/Dec
Poole Harbour	10	Various

### Sites holding 50 or more birds on passage in 1999

Wash	428	Sep	Stour Estuary	85	Sep
Chichester Harbour	337	Sep	Dee Estuary	85	Sep
North Norfolk Coast	203	Aug	Burry Inlet	59	Sep
Blackwater Estuary	163	Sep	Langstone Harbour	50	Sep
Humber Estuary	129	Sep	Hamford Water	50	Sep
Thames Estuary	111	Sep			
Morecambe Bay	94	Sep			
Taw-Torridge Estuary	91	Sep			

<sup>†</sup> as no British threshold has been set, a qualifying level of nine has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report



## LESSER YELLOWLEGS

*Tringa flavipes*

Vagrant

Native range: North and South America

A single bird was present at Lough Foyle in October.

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## GREEN SANDPIPER

*Tringa ochropus*

International threshold: ?

Great Britain threshold: ?

All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 483 Aug

NI max: 2 Aug/Sep

The peak count was slightly below average for the last five years but the summed site maxima rose for the third consecutive year to its highest value. Whilst the number of sites where birds were recorded and peak counts during times of

passage remained similar to those of previous years, the number of birds recorded in winter has increased. In 1999-2000 numbers remained consistently high throughout the winter, with no decline noted until March

### Sites with 15 or more birds in 1999-2000

Swale Estuary	32	Aug
North Norfolk Coast	31	Aug
Blackwater Estuary	26	Aug
Rye Harbour and Pett Levels	22	Aug
Humber Estuary	19	Sep

Tophill Low Reservoir	17	Aug
Bardney Sugar Factor	16	Aug
Rutland Water	15	Aug
Thames Estuary	15	Aug

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## WOOD SANDPIPER

*Tringa glareola*

Scarce

The British peak of 50 birds in August was around average for recent years. Birds were recorded at 32 sites, and the summed site maxima of 66 was

in the upper range of typical variations. The double-figure count at Dungeness was particularly noteworthy.

### Sites with three or more birds in 1999-2000

Dungeness	10	Aug
Swale Estuary	6	Aug
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	6	Sep
Morecambe Bay	6	Aug
Rutland Water	3	Aug
Tees Estuary	3	Aug
Maer Marsh	3	Sep

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## COMMON SANDPIPER

*Actitis hypoleucos*

International threshold: ?

Great Britain threshold: ?

All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 1,603 Aug

NI max: 1 Oct

The British peak once again rose to record levels, continuing the steady rise in autumn passage numbers over the last decade. Birds were noted at 436 sites, slightly less than in 1998-99 though around average for recent years, whilst the summed site maxima of 2,443 showed a slight

increase. Winter numbers were typical, with around 30-40 birds present in most months. These came from 56 different sites, the highest count being of six birds on the Tamar Complex in February.

#### Sites with 40 or more birds in 1999-2000

Severn Estuary	138	Aug	Hornsea Mere	62	Aug
The Wash	126	Aug	Rye Harbour and Pett Levels	66	Aug
Abberton Reservoir	107	Aug	Swale Estuary	47	Aug
North Norfolk Coast	95	Aug	Tamar Complex	42	Aug
Morecambe Bay	71	Jul	Montrose Basin	41	Jul

## TURNSTONE

*Arenaria interpres*

International threshold: 700

Great Britain threshold: 640

All-Ireland threshold: 225

GB max: 12,833 Oct

NI max: 1,789 Nov

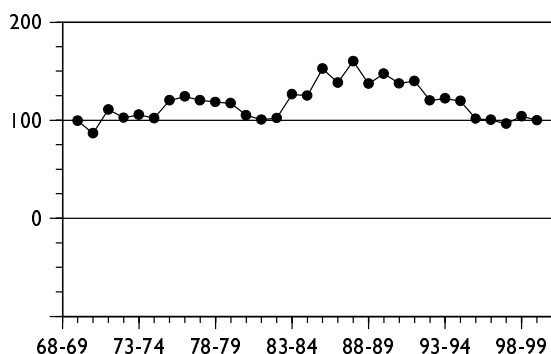


Figure 71. Annual indices for Turnstone in UK

Wintering Turnstone numbers in Great Britain were at their lowest since 1984-85, continuing the steady decline since the highs of the mid to late 1980s. In Northern Ireland, numbers were below average for the same period. The UK annual indices have remained stable in recent years, but at the low levels of the early 1980s.

Despite a lower than average count, the Mersey Estuary qualified as internationally important owing to the numbers recorded during WeBS Low Tide Counts. This case, however, highlights the problems of 'site' definition for mobile birds. The birds using the Mersey at low tide occur at Egremont, just inside the mouth of the estuary, and are thought to roost on the Alt and North Wirral, both just a few kilometres away. Egremont, however, is more than 10 km from the main mudflats (Stanlow, Ince and Dungeon Banks) which traditionally constitute the Mersey Estuary from a waterbird perspective.

Belfast Lough qualified for as a site of all-Ireland importance for the first time since 1992-93, despite a below average peak count. Numbers at the Dee Estuary (England/Wales) continued to decline and in 1999-2000 the peak count was less than half the five year mean.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Morecambe Bay	(1,020)	1,248	1,198	1,402	1,181	Dec	1,257
Outer Ards	(750)	1,040	(715)	1,136	1,102	Nov	1,093
Mersey Estuary	2	<sup>37</sup> 1,717	<sup>37</sup> 1,188	<sup>37</sup> 1,727	<sup>37</sup> 703	Dec	1,067 ▲
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	1,243	1,193	978	771	453	Dec	928
Tiree	-	-	<sup>16</sup> 905	-	858	Jan	882
Thanet	-	481	784	855	892	Dec	753
East Sanday Coast	-	-	<sup>16</sup> 734	-	-		734
Forth Estuary	(918)	636	700	776	512	Feb	708
Wash	(637)	(766)	444	965	641	Jan	704
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Belfast Lough	678	785	510	566	399	Mar	588 ▼
Strangford Lough	369	207	207	194	301	Jan	256

#### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

South Uist (West Coast)

Thames Estuary

#### Others sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Humber Estuary	785	Jan
Stour Estuary	716	Dec

## WILSON'S PHALAROPE

*Phalaropus tricolor*

Vagrant  
Native range: Americas

One was present on the Humber Estuary in October.

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## RED-NECKED PHALAROPE

*Phalaropus lobatus*

Scarce

One was present at Stodmarsh NNR & Collards Lagoon in August and another at Rutland Water in September.

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## GREY PHALAROPE

*Phalaropus fulicarius*

Scarce

Unusually for this species, the only record was of a spring bird on the Stour Estuary in April.

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## MEDITERRANEAN GULL

*Larus melanocephalus*

Scarce

GB max: 85 Sep  
NI max: 0

Whilst the British total was the highest recorded to date, the peak was only marginally above that of previous years. It was notable that above average numbers were present throughout the summer months. Birds were recorded from 71

sites and summing site maxima produced a total of 259 birds, both figures being well above normal. The Isle of Wight remains a major UK stronghold for the species with four sites regularly holding counts in double figures.

### Sites with five or more birds in 1999-2000

Brading Harbour and Marshes	51	Sep
Newtown Estuary	37	Apr
Tamar Complex	27	Jul
Ryde Pier To Puckpool Point	15	Sep
Foreland	10	Mar

Swansea Bay	6	Aug
North Norfolk Coast	5	May
Alt Estuary	5	Sep
Swan Pool (Falmouth)	5	Feb

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## LITTLE GULL

*Larus minutus*

Scarce

GB max: 174 Jul  
NI max: 0

The coincidence of passage movements with WeBS priority count dates is the primary determinant of peak counts of this species. The July peak was around average for recent years, this figure predominantly accounted for by large

numbers at Monikie Reservoirs, the largest single count from any inland waterbody. A typical scattering of records were received from each of the winter months, the count of 10 birds on the North Norfolk Coast in March being noteworthy.

### Sites with five or more birds in 1999-2000

Monikie Reservoirs	155	Jul
Alt Estuary	119	Apr
Hornsea Mere	46	Aug
North Norfolk Coast	41	Oct

Benacre Broad	15	Sep
Tees Estuary	12	Jun
Morecambe Bay	5	Feb

## BONAPARTE'S GULL

*Larus philadelphia*

Vagrant

Native range: Americas

Singles were present at Drift Reservoir in November and March and another was on the Severn Estuary in July.

## BLACK-HEADED GULL

*Larus ridibundus*

International threshold: 20,000\*\*

Great Britain threshold: 19,000<sup>†</sup>

All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 268,098 Jan

NI max: 16,747 Nov

Peak totals in Great Britain were the highest yet recorded by WeBS, an increase of 6% on the previous highest peak in 1997-98. Given that this species uses many non-wetland habitats and that counting of gulls remains optional, it is not surprising that this peak represents only 14% of the provisional British population estimate. The Northern Ireland peak count was also the highest ever recorded by WeBS, although numbers throughout Ireland remain relatively stable (Colhoun 2001).

Five-year means for both Hurleston Reservoir and Tring Reservoirs dropped below the threshold for national importance. A particularly large peak count at Portsmouth Harbour meant that this site now surpasses the threshold for national importance. Peak numbers at the Wash were notable, over double the five-year mean for this site, although this may reflect greater effort afforded to counting gulls rather than a genuine increase in numbers.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Tophill Low Reservoirs	21,710	15,000	43,800	17,000	18,000	Oct	23,102
Morecambe Bay	18,998	18,653	25,294	26,624	17,670	Aug	21,448
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain <sup>†</sup></b>							
Poole Harbour	24,887	(10,732)	15,842	8,813	10,629	Dec	15,043
Wash	12,380	(13,975)	5,780	8,191	31,332	Dec	14,421
Lower Derwent Valley	32,500	17,500	19,000	1,100	0	Oct	14,020
Chasewater	12,000	10,000	12,000	12,000	-		11,500
Portsmouth Harbour	8,403	(7,845)	12,642	9,388	(15,509)	Feb	11,486 ▲

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Hurleston Reservoir

Tring Reservoirs

<sup>†</sup> as no British sites are of national importance for Black-headed Gulls and as no all-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 10,000 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## RING-BILLED GULL

*Larus delawarensis*

Vagrant

Native range: North America

Nine sites held single birds during the year and as is usual with this species several were long staying birds. Birds were present throughout the winter at Par Sands Pools/ St Andrews Road and

the Hayle Estuary and the Taw-Torridge Estuary. One present at Loch Ryan was notable as Scottish records of this species are unusual.

## COMMON GULL

*Larus canus*

International threshold: 16,000

Great Britain threshold: 9,000<sup>†</sup>

All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 98,799 Feb

NI max: 4,609 Nov

Peak totals in Great Britain were the highest recorded under WeBS, an increase of 17% over the 1998-99 peak count. Although this increase is likely to be the product of increased effort at many important sites, there is some evidence to suggest that Mink control in the west of Scotland has increased breeding success at some large colonies which probably contribute significantly to winter numbers in southern Britain (Craik 2000). The peak count for Northern Ireland was similar to those recorded in previous years.

Tophill Low Reservoirs continues to be the

only regularly counted site that qualifies as internationally important for this species. The peak count at this site in 1999-2000 was 11% higher than that in the previous year highlighting the increasing importance of this site. The Tees Estuary, Alt Estuary and the Wash now qualify provisionally as nationally important due largely to high peak counts in 1999-2000. The Inner Moray Firth no longer meets table qualifying levels, primarily because this species is not regularly counted at this site (40,000 recorded in 1994-95).

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Tophill Low Reservoirs	18,000	14,000	22,000	38,000	42,000	Feb	26,800
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Lower Derwent Valley	13,400	6,400	8,000	(320)	(0)	Oct	9,266
West Water Reservoir	-	4,500	12,500	(8,000)	(5,400)	Nov	8,500
Derwent Reservoir	8,769	9,465	9,590	10,800	968	Feb	7,918
Morecambe Bay	8,861	4,187	5,536	5,869	3,397	Aug	5,570
Pitsford Reservoir	4,000	2,500	4,000	5,500	6,000	Jan	4,400
Cromarty Firth	-	-	-	-	<sup>37</sup> 3,842	Dec	3,842 ▲
Thames Estuary	4,146	3,455	(828)	(3,086)	3,615	Feb	3,739
North Norfolk Coast	1,628	227	1,355	<sup>24</sup> 12,277	2,237	Dec	3,545
Rutland Water	1,000	6,000	8,000	2,000	500	Sep	3,500
Hule Moss	10,730	2,700	1,400	4	1,900	Sep	3,347
Eccup Reservoir	1,000	5,000	2,500	4,000	4,000	Nov	3,300
Alt Estuary	1,250	<sup>37</sup> 2,228	1,340	<sup>37</sup> 5,423	4,800	Jan	3,008 ▲
Tees Estuary	(1,971)	5,014	2,204	1,089	3,617	Nov	2,981
Wash	(2,636)	(1,321)	(887)	1,693	4,197	Dec	2,945 ▲

### Sites no longer meeting qualifying level

Irvine to Saltcoats

Doon Estuary

<sup>†</sup> as few British sites are of national importance for Common Gull and as no all-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 2,500 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

*Larus fuscus*

International threshold: 4,500

Great Britain threshold: 500

All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 52,896 Jun

NI max: 94 Mar

The peak count for Great Britain was similar to the previous five years. The Severn Estuary and Alde Complex now join Morecambe Bay in qualifying provisionally as internationally important for this species. The 1999-2000 maximum count at the Alde Complex was

notable, almost three times as high as the five-year mean for the site, although the variation between years is presumably a consequence of whether WeBS counts are made of birds associated with the breeding colony. Improved importance of the Severn Estuary has been the

result of regularly high counts made over the past four years. Relatively stable late-summer numbers at Morecambe Bay over the past three years mirrors stability in the numbers of breeding pairs at nearby Walney, which probably contributes large numbers of dispersing adults and juveniles at this time (Upton *et al.* 1999).

Crowdy and Colliford Reservoirs rose above

the threshold for national importance due largely to high counts in 1999-2000. Peak counts at most other nationally important sites were similar to their respective five-year means.

Absence of data for Loughs Neagh & Beg makes comparison of Northern Ireland totals with previous years impossible.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Morecambe Bay	29,915	30,880	51,829	43,590	41,945	Jul	39,632
Severn Estuary	57	7,017	6,085	7,102	7,224	Jun	5,497 ▲
Alde Complex	162	542	9,633	1,529	15,000	Apr	5,373 ▲
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Lllysyfran Reservoir	25	8,500	-	-	(12)	Feb	4,263
Chasewater	3,000	3,500	3,000	3,400	-		3,225
Great Pool (Westwood Park)	-	1,750	1,500	2,000	2,000	Nov	1,813
Alt Estuary	886	2,480	1,957	2,230	769	Oct	1,664
Rutland Water	1,000	(150)	3,000	1,000	1,500	Aug	1,625
Marden Gravel Pit	282	77	1,400	3,350	2,500	Oct	1,522
Chew Valley Lake	-	0	0	6,000	0	Jul	1,500
Hayle Estuary	1,800	735	1,095	690	1,750	Feb	1,214
Wash	331	(1,338)	239	1,506	2,206	May	1,124
Longnewton Reservoir	280	34	780	2,600	1,800	Sep	1,099
Portworthy Mica Dam	1,000	2,250	1,000	500	465	Aug	1,043
Llangorse Lake	850	820	860	1,280	1,060	Oct	974
Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits	57	589	1,714	865	1,339	Nov	913
Cleddau Estuary	336	2,073	458	414	(1,246)	Mar	905
Colliford Reservoir	206	296	600	43	3,040	Jan	837 ▲
Swindon Sewage Treatment Works	-	-	-	562	(1,100)	Dec	831
Heaton Park Reservoir	-	-	2,000	170	201	Oct	790
Pitsford Reservoir	300	550	1,200	(1,000)	700	Sep	750
Castron Quarry	730	-	-	-	-		730
Solway Estuary	837	517	1,143	262	725	Oct	697
Northeast Glamorgan Moorland	-	14	1,418	330	-		587
Crowdy Reservoir	400	400	650	410	1,000	Oct	572 ▲
Blackmoorfoot Reservoir	656	47	1,037	1,032	14	Aug	557
Camel Estuary	(1,252)	1,042	20	183	160	Mar	531
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland<sup>†</sup></b>							
Loughs Neagh & Beg	1,144	1,064	972	1,129	-		1,077
<b>Sites no longer meeting qualifying levels</b>							
R. Thames: Roding to Beam							
Sprotborough Flash							
Hurlestone Reservoir							

<sup>†</sup> as no all-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 500 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## HERRING GULL

*Larus argentatus*

**GB max: 70,595 Jan**  
**NI max: 4,342 Nov**

Morecambe Bay continues to host by far the highest number of Herring Gulls in Great Britain and, as usual, the 1999-2000 peak count coincided with the timing of post-fledging dispersal from nearby breeding colonies. The

**International threshold: 13,000**

**Great Britain threshold: 4,500<sup>†</sup>**

**All-Ireland threshold: ?**

peak total at this site was 7% higher than that in the previous year, mirroring a similar increase in the national total. Peak numbers in Northern Ireland continue to fluctuate between years with no clear trend apparent. Belfast Lough remains

the key site for this species in the province.

Maxima at key sites in 1999-2000 were similar to their respective five-year means. Interestingly, low counts at three sites along the Ayrshire coast over the same period means that

they no longer qualify as nationally important. As the recording of gulls remains optional under WeBS, it remains unclear whether this trend represents a biological decline.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of international importance in the UK</b>							
Morecambe Bay	19,144	17,260	18,165	19,168	20,553	Jul	18,858
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain <sup>†</sup></b>							
Ribble Estuary	27,500	430	<sup>37</sup> 2,559	1,250	7,287	Dec	7,805
Wash	5,142	5,147	12,649	4,430	5,589	Jan	6,591
Alt Estuary	4,500	5,300	5,500	<sup>37</sup> 9,070	6,800	Jan	6,234 ▲
Alde Complex	4,347	312	8,569	4,253	7,186	Jan	4,933 ▲
Solway Estuary	(9,397)	4,269	2,884	4,759	2,962	Sep	4,854 ▲
Gaddon Loch	-	-	-	3,414	3,500	Jan	3,457
North Norfolk Coast	3,506	2,845	802	4,923	4,196	Apr	3,254
Forth Estuary	3,900	3,747	1,893	2,311	3,289	Feb	3,028
Guernsey Shore	2,471	3,073	-	(1,409)	(1,850)	Nov	2,772
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland</b>							
Belfast Lough	<sup>37</sup> 6,935	<sup>37</sup> 9,381	2,378	5,291	3,637	Jan	5,524
<b>Sites no longer meeting qualifying levels</b>							
Irvine to Saltcoats							
Doon Estuary							

<sup>†</sup> as so few British sites are of national importance for Herring Gull, and as no all-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 2,500 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## YELLOW-LEGGED GULL

Scarce

*Larus argentatus cachinnans*

**GB max:** 128 Oct  
**NI max:** 0

The majority of birds recorded by WeBS were not specifically identified as either Western Yellow-legged Gulls or Caspian Gulls, though given the rarity value of the latter, it is likely that most, if not all, relate to Western Yellow-legged Gulls, particularly at sites where more than one bird is involved.

Numbers increased from July to peak at 128 birds in October and then fell to ten or fewer during the winter. Eighteen out of 29 sites held more than one bird but the summed site maxima of 186 was well below the previous years value of 246.

### Sites with five or more birds in 1999-2000

Poole Harbour	72	Oct
Southampton Water	41	Oct
Rutland Water	13	Jul
Portworthy Mica Dam	6	Aug
R. Avon: F'bridge to Ringwood	5	Nov

Single birds of the *cachinnans* race 'Caspian Gull' were recorded at Chew Valley Lake in December, River Thames: Lea to Roding & Royal Docks from November to January and Foremark Reservoir in February.

Birds identified as *michahellis* or 'Western

Yellow-legged Gulls' were recorded at twelve sites with peaks of six at Swindon Sewage Treatment Works, Pitsford Reservoir and Ditchford Gravel Pits, five on River Thames: Lea to Roding & Royal Docks and four at Barking Park.

## ICELAND GULL

*Larus glaucooides*

Scarce

Mostly single birds were recorded at 29 sites, with a notable increase in numbers during January and peaking at sixteen in February. In Northern Ireland singles were seen at Lough Foyle in

January and Larne Lough in February.

Only four sites in Scotland held more than one bird. Two birds were at Hogganfield Loch, Loch Indaal, Loch Fleet and Uyea Sound.

## GLAUCOUS GULL

*Larus hyperboreus*

Scarce

In Great Britain numbers peaked at thirteen in January whilst in Northern Ireland the peak was not until March when three were at Belfast Lough and one was at Larne Lough.

Most of the 27 sites in Great Britain at which

Glaucous Gulls were observed involved records of singles but three were on the Burra Firth in January and March and two were at each of St Mary's Island, Loch A'phuill and Uyea Sound.

## GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

*Larus marinus*

International threshold: 4,800

Great Britain threshold: 400

All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 11,199 Oct

NI max: 588 Nov

The peak count in 1999-2000 was similar to that recorded in the previous year and the 15 sites which qualify as nationally important for this species remain unchanged. A notably high peak count at the Wash and consistently high counts at Tophill Low Reservoirs over the past five years continue to demonstrate the importance of these two sites for this species although maxima at all other key sites in 1999-2000 were lower than their respective five-year means.

In Northern Ireland, although Belfast Lough fell below the threshold of 400 birds, peak counts were similar to those recorded in the previous

five years.

The results of a study conducted on the River Tyne suggest that reductions in the amount of untreated sewage entering the river has been followed by a corresponding decline in the numbers of Great Black-backed Gulls using the river to feed (Raven & Coulson 2001). This decline is presumed to be related to a reduction in available food. Even in rough weather, when feeding conditions at sea were unfavourable, very few birds entered the river to feed after the introduction of improved sewage treatment.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain</b>							
Tophill Low Reservoirs	1,000	835	1,040	2,600	2,200	Nov	1,535
Wash	1,150	(1,087)	630	745	3,025	Oct	1,388
Cresswell To Chevington Burn	500	685	2,000	1,700	612	Oct	1,099
Tees Estuary	1,313	1,068	1,152	482	463	Dec	896
Portsmouth Harbour	437	(216)	(420)	1,329	872	Dec	879
Dungeness Gravel Pits	2,070	1,600	90	18	0	Apr	756
Loch of Strathbeg	1,000	(1,200)	670	(153)	134	Sep	751
Lower Derwent Valley	617	1,750	1,105	271	0	Oct	749
Lossie Estuary	700	1,053	847	251	414	Oct	653
Morecambe Bay	554	621	668	907	451	Jan	640
Pegwell Bay	600	750	1,000	186	364	Oct	580
Thames Estuary	474	789	(492)	444	265	Oct	493
Chasewater	570	300	500	460	-		458
Fleet/Wey	136	234	307	1,195	312	Nov	437
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	1,591	111	25	61	340	Sep	426



### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Durham Coast  
Fairburn Ings  
Humber Estuary  
Rutland Water  
Belfast Lough

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

North Norfolk Coast 548 Sep

† as no all-Ireland importance threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 400 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

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## ROSS'S GULL

*Rhodostethia rosea*

**Vagrant**

**Native range: Arctic**

One was present at Lunda Wick in January.

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## KITTIWAKE

*Rissa tridactyla*

**International threshold: ?**

**Great Britain threshold: ?**

**All-Ireland threshold: ?**

**GB max: 6,354 Sep**

**NI max: 38 Sep**

Following a low count in 1998-99, the British peak returned to more normal levels in 1999-2000 with more than 3,000 birds recorded in August and October also. That the September peak includes counts from just 10 sites illustrates the importance of a few key concentrations, usually around breeding colonies, and two of these accounting for over 95% of the total. Counts

throughout the winter months were above average in Great Britain, though the maritime nature of the species at this time of year means counts at all sites fluctuate considerably. Belfast Lough and Dundrum Bay are the only sites in Northern Ireland regularly to record the species during WeBS counts.

### Sites with 200 or more birds in 1999-2000

Dee Estuary (Scotland)	3,220	Sep
Arran	3,000	Sep/Oct
Tweed Estuary	1,500	Aug
Beadnell To Seahouses	550	May
Tees Estuary	401	Aug
Durham Coast	386	Aug
Forth Estuary	220	Feb
Don Mouth To Ythan Mouth	200	Aug

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## IVORY GULL

*Pagophila eburnea*

**Vagrant**

**Native range: Arctic**

A single at North Warren and Thorpeness Mere in December was noteworthy considering the southern location of this high Arctic species.

## SANDWICH TERN

*Sterna sandvicensis*

International threshold: 1,500

Great Britain threshold: ?†

All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 8,484 Aug

NI max: 290 Sep

A large peak count at the Forth Estuary in 1999-2000 means that this site regains internationally important status for Sandwich Tern. Although WeBS data alone do not identify its qualification, inclusion of data from regular low water counts on the Tees Estuary indicates that an average of 1,835 Sandwich Terns occurred there on autumn passage during the period 1990-1997, surpassing

the threshold for international importance (Ward 2000).

Peak counts in Great Britain were notably high in 1999-2000 and, as usual, occurred during the late summer when substantial numbers of Baltic-bred birds join UK birds on southwards migration. The peak count in Northern Ireland was similar to that recorded in previous years.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain †</b>							
Forth Estuary	1,774	1,352	(1,278)	831	3,606	Aug	1,891 ▲
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland †</b>							
Tees Estuary	3,774	489	227	1,386	1,238	Aug	1,423
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	446	2,090	636	1,256	629	Jul	1,011
North Norfolk Coast	266	472	311	1,165	1,574	Jul	758
Duddon Estuary	470	650	808	656	1,204	Jul	758
Loch of Strathbeg	220	(750)	710	(1,000)	0	Apr	536
Cemlyn Bay & Lagoon	-	1,450	-	0	0	Apr	483
Wash	178	186	586	674	420	Jul	409
Ythan Estuary	300	380	488	-	-		389
Lindisfarne	224	316	(160)	(355)	350	Aug	311
Pegwell Bay	31	140	45	750	432	Jul	280
Tay Estuary	361	401	25	225	300	Aug	262
Exe Estuary	255	134	224	286	-		225
<b>Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland†</b>							
Dundrum Bay	202	212	592	353	219	Jul	316
<b>Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels</b>							
Foryd Bay							
Eden Estuary							
Morecambe Bay							
<b>Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000</b>							
Filey Bay	320	Aug					
Clyde Estuary	301	Sep					
North Berwick Shore	262	Aug					
Tynningham Estuary	226	Aug					

† as no British or all-Ireland thresholds have been set, a qualifying level of 200 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## ROSEATE TERN

*Sterna dougallii*

Scarce

One was in Pegwell Bay in July and singles were seen at Langstone Harbour and the Tamar Complex during October, a late date for this species.

## COMMON TERN

*Sterna hirundo*

International threshold: **6,000**

Great Britain threshold: ?†

All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: **5,975** Aug

NI max: **2** Sep

Maxima for Great Britain and Northern Ireland were broadly similar to those recorded in previous years and occurred, as expected, during the period of autumn migration. Counts at many of the key sites during the late summer were generally higher than their five year means.

There is some evidence from ringing recoveries that Common Terns undertake a

trans-Pennine migration between Teesmouth and Merseyside (Ward 2000). Furthermore, visible migration, retrap data, arrival dates of different populations and the progression of primary moult, suggest rapid turnover at this site during late summer and that much larger numbers stage at Teesmouth than are recorded by WeBS (Ward 2000).

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain†</b>							
Alt Estuary	1,500	596	1,038	1,004	1,156	Aug	1,059
Tees Estuary	1,575	453	841	620	1,038	Aug	905
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	315	641	225	567	348	Aug	419
North Norfolk Coast	226	344	107	620	599	Jun	379
Tay Estuary	450	320	230	150	600	Sep	350
Wash	262	310	215	300	370	Aug	291
Forth Estuary	276	390	(343)	98	195	Aug	260
Loch of Strathbeg	325	277	300	(210)	18	Aug	230
Ythan Estuary	200	150	270	-	-		207
R. Thames: Roding to Beam	-	-	-	410	0	Oct	205

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Langstone Harbour

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Tyne Estuary 211 Aug

† as no British or all-Ireland thresholds have been set, a qualifying level of 200 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

## ARCTIC TERN

*Sterna paradisaea*

International threshold: ?

Great Britain threshold: ?†

All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: **846** Aug

NI max: **0**

The maximum count for Great Britain in 1999-2000 occurred during the period of autumn passage; lower numbers were recorded earlier in the spring and summer. Peak counts of Arctic Terns at key sites fluctuate markedly between years at this time. It is probable that actual peak

numbers at these sites probably only rarely coincide with WeBS Core Count dates, primarily because autumn staging is brief. The majority of the 10 sites surpassing table qualifying levels are located in eastern Scotland.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain†</b>							
Loch of Strathbeg	1,600	3	8	0	0	Apr	322
Tay Estuary	130	40	1,000	55	150	Aug	275
North Ronaldsay	563	(210)	0	138	-		234
Eden Estuary	129	90	190	115	361	Aug	177
Ythan Estuary	80	100	204	-	-		128
Morecambe Bay	44	105	124	144	80	May	99
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	0	0	66	18	207	Jul	97 ▲
Forth Estuary	76	15	(58)	137	92	Aug	80
Balranald RSPB Reserve	-	-	80	-	-		80
Loch Indaal	(202)	51	29	41	30	Jun	71

† 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

## FORSTER'S TERN

*Sterna forsteri*

Vagrant

Native range: N America

A bird which spent most of the year off the Essex coast was recorded during WeBS counts at the

Blackwater Estuary in June, November, December and March.

## LITTLE TERN

*Sterna albifrons*

International threshold: 340

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

All-Ireland threshold: ?<sup>†</sup>

GB max: 963 Aug

NI max: 0

As with Arctic Tern, this species stages only briefly during the autumn resulting in highly fluctuating WeBS counts at key sites. The Great Britain total occurred during the late summer and was similar to those recorded in previous years, considering these fluctuations. The species was

not recorded by WeBS in Northern Ireland in 1999-2000. Notably high counts were recorded at the North Norfolk Coast and the Blackwater Estuary during the breeding season and at the Stour and Swale Estuaries during the late summer.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Dee Estuary (Eng/Wal)	700	145	160	150	200	Jul	271
Thames Estuary	71	467	5	(422)	296	Aug	252
Langstone Harbour	210	200	-	0	0	Sep	137
Wash	43	330	30	114	148	Aug	133
North Norfolk Coast	97	15	3	209	300	Jun	125
Fleet/Wey	1	27	50	203	154	May	87
Blackwater Estuary	43	42	(23)	(36)	(120)	May	68 ▲
Pagham Harbour	114	0	-	-	0	Sep	57
Hamford Water	17	6	10	142	102	Sep	55 ▲
Tees Estuary	107	47	27	8	75	Jul	53

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

St Andrews Bay

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Stour Estuary	106	Aug
Swale Estuary	63	Jul
Duddon Estuary	56	Jun

<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

## BLACK TERN

*Chlidonias niger*

International threshold: 2,000

Great Britain threshold: ?

All-Ireland threshold: ?

GB max: 89 Sep

NI max: 0

Following the previous year's record peak number, WeBS counts of Black Terns in 1999-2000 were unremarkable. Both the number of

sites and the summed site maxima were below average for the last five years. Birds were recorded from July through to October.

### Sites with more than three birds in 1999-2000

The Wash	22	Sep	Rostherne Mere	6	Sep
Swale Estuary	10	Sep	Forth Estuary	6	Sep
Boddington (Byfield)	7	Sep	Chew Valley Lake	5	Sep
Rutland Water	7	Sep	Tees Estuary	4	Sep
Blithfield Reservoir	7	Sep			

## WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN

*Chlidonias leucopterus*

Vagrant

Native range: E Europe, S Asia and Africa

One was present on the Severn Estuary in July.

## KINGFISHER

*Alcedo atthis*

**GB max: 418 Sep**

**NI max: 6 Oct**

The peak British count was the highest recorded by WeBS to date, also reflected in the large number of sites (565) from which a count was received. As a result several new sites were added to the table of important sites, though, perhaps surprisingly, four others now cease to

qualify. Barring the exceptional count of 26 birds in the Lee Valley Gravel Pit complex in September 1996, the counts of 14 on the Somerset Levels and at Wraysbury Gravel Pits are the highest site counts recorded by WeBS.

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	Mon	Mean
<b>Sites of national importance in Great Britain<sup>†</sup></b>							
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	9	26	14	12	8	Nov	14
Somerset Levels	(12)	10	5	(12)	14	Oct	11
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	5	-	-	-	14	Aug	10
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	5	10	7	9	9	Sep	8 ▲
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	8	4	7	8	11	Jul	8
River Irwell	-	-	-	8	6	Oct	7 ▲
Southampton Water	7	(4)	5	7	7	Oct	7
Tamar Complex	10	9	3	4	4	Sep/Oct/Dec	6
Colwick Country Park	4	-	-	7	6	Mar	6 ▲
Cleddau Estuary	7	5	6	6	4	Dec	6
Eversley Cross & Yateley Gravel Pits	4	6	9	5	3	Various	5
Old Moor Wetlands	6	6	4	3	6	Sep	5 ▲
Stodmarsh & Collards Lagoon	6	4	3	8	4	Oct	5
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	4	8	6	3	4	Jul/Sep/Oct	5
Hoveringham Gravel Pits	-	-	-	-	5	Feb	5 ▲

### Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels

Thames Estuary

Deben Estuary

Ditchford Gravel Pits

R. Usk: Pencelli

### Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in 1999-2000

Poole Harbour	11	Sep	R. Usk: Pencelli	6	Sep
North Norfolk Coast	11	Sep	Avon Valley: Salisbury to F'bridge	5	Nov
Ditchford Gravel Pits	8	Aug	Ouse Washes	5	Nov
Fleet/Wey	7	Sep	Blackwater Estuary	5	Sep
Fairburn Ings	6	Jun	Chew Valley Lake	5	Aug
Stour Estuary	6	Dec	Chichester Gravel Pits	5	Sep
Earls Barton Gravel Pits	6	Sep			

<sup>†</sup> as no British or all-Ireland thresholds have been set, a qualifying level of 5 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report