

Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

GB max: 193,443 Dec
NI max: 18,019 Dec

International threshold: 10,200
Great Britain threshold: 3,200
All-Ireland threshold: 680

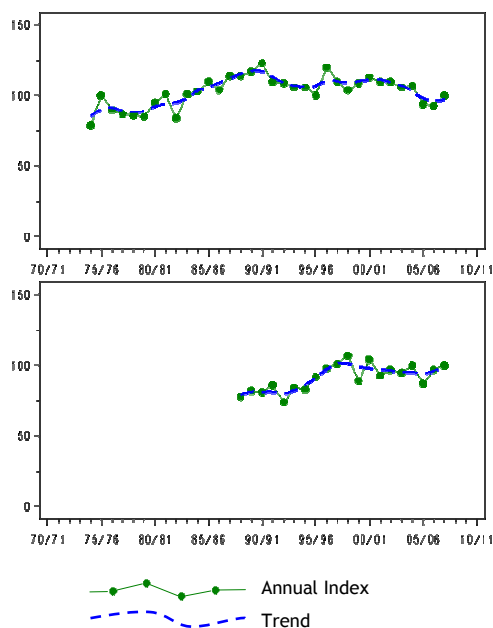


Figure 40.a, Annual indices & trend for Oystercatcher for GB (above) & NI (below).

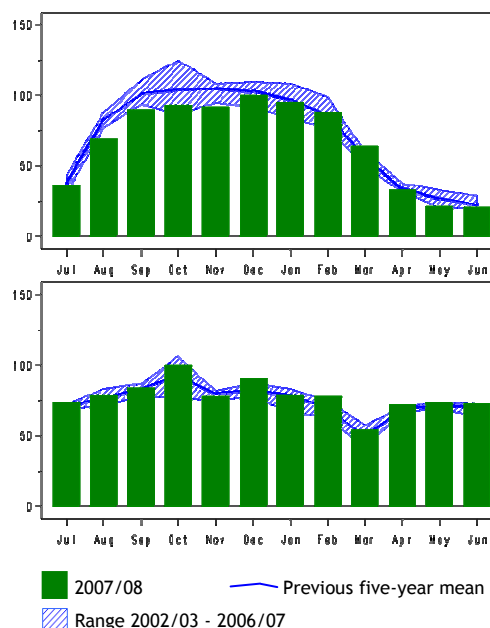


Figure 40.b, Monthly indices for Oystercatcher for GB (above) & NI (below).

Oystercatchers occurring outside the breeding season at coastal sites in the UK may have been either local breeders or birds arrived from Scandinavia or Iceland.

Following a decline in the British index for Oystercatcher in the last two years, 2007/08 witnessed a slight recovery but only returning to a level formerly exhibited by the index in the early 1980s.

The monthly indices show relatively low numbers in the period from August to November before average numbers present from December onwards. This might indicate that a greater proportion of birds utilised sites in the Netherlands in the early winter period prior to the onset of colder weather (e.g. Austin & Rehfish 2005). Recent studies have suggested that numbers in the Netherlands have been in steady decline (Hustings *et al.* 2007, in Delany *et al.* 2009), perhaps due to the disappearance of intertidal mussel beds in the Wadden Sea (Ens 2006, in Delany *et al.* 2009).

Incomplete counts from Britain's two most important sites, Morecambe Bay and Solway Estuary, contributed to a low counted monthly maximum of less than 200,000 birds. However numbers at the other five internationally important sites for Oystercatchers, as well as the additional ten sites of national importance, were close to the respective five-year site averages.



Oystercatchers (Tommy Holden)

In Northern Ireland, the index rose for the second year in succession, to a level consistent with the ten-year average. At the site level, no notable changes occurred.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Morecambe Bay	56,745	55,072	46,760	55,874	(34,492)	Nov	53,613
Solway Estuary	37,907	(30,961)	(34,542)	(35,571)	(31,091)	Sep	37,907
Thames Estuary	23,858	20,393	22,956	27,836	26,905	Nov	24,390
Dee Estuary (England & Wales)	23,906	25,956	22,847	15,808	20,922	Dec	21,888
The Wash	28,795	16,395	18,677	22,963	19,626	Dec	21,291
Ribble Estuary	19,915	14,095	(6,378)	10,872	13,148	Mar	14,508
Burry Inlet	13,831 ¹¹	16,219	11,728	15,110 ¹³	13,257	Jan	14,029
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Carmarthen Bay	(5,747)	6,736	7,754	10,154 ¹¹	10,911 ¹¹	Jan	8,889
Forth Estuary	8,930	(8,213)	6,598	8,235	7,230	Sep	7,841
Lavan Sands	6,796	5,718	5,926	9,587	5,783	Dec	6,762
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	9,644	5,376	4,930	5,099	8,003	Oct	6,610
Duddon Estuary	8,683	6,241	5,577	5,758	(4,251)	Nov	6,565
Inner Firth of Clyde	4,982	4,759	5,880	5,308	5,836	Feb	5,353
Swale Estuary	5,858	5,225	5,011	3,762	4,106	Jan	4,792
Swansea Bay	3,177	4,605	3,511	4,430 ¹³	3,150	Feb	3,775
North Norfolk Coast	3,858	3,778	3,707	3,238	3,954	Feb	3,707
Humber Estuary	3,305 ¹¹	(4,582)	(3,468)	2,942	(3,121)	Jan	3,574
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	7,459	9,018	6,861	(6,842)	8,689	Oct	8,007
Belfast Lough	4,321	5,299	4,756	(4,411)	3,580	Feb	4,489
Lough Foyle	(3,219)	(3,095)	(1,805)	(2,347)	2,837	Oct	3,050
Outer Ards Shoreline	1,822	1,740	1,747	1,825	1,515	Nov	1,730
Carlingford Lough	1,525	1,419	1,442	1,552	(1,446)	Jan	1,485
Dundrum Inner Bay	1,425	(1,252)	1,389	1,027	1,700	Jan	1,385
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain							
Cromarty Firth	3,195	1,998	2,400	2,919	3,321	Feb	2,767

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

International threshold: 730
Great Britain threshold: 35*

GB max: 6,678 Dec
NI max: 0

*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

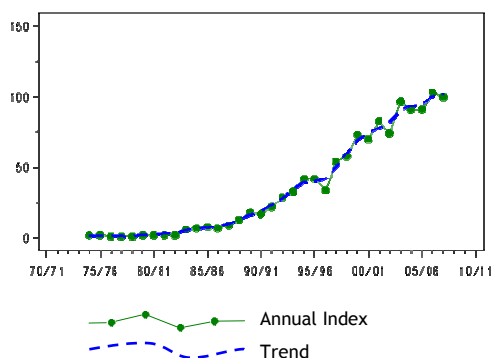


Figure 41.a, Annual indices & trend for Avocet for GB.

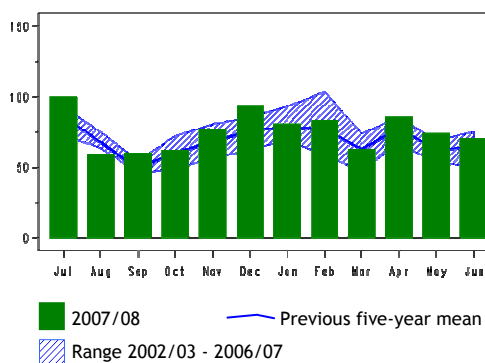


Figure 41.b, Monthly indices for Avocet for GB.

Although no increase was noted compared to the previous year the rise in the number of wintering Avocets in Britain shows no obvious signs of slowing. The wintering population is comprised of breeders remaining in Britain supplemented

by additional continental birds, from the Netherlands in particular.

Avocets were recorded at 56 sites in 2007/08, typically the majority on the south and east coasts of England, with above average numbers recorded in

virtually all months of the year. The five principal sites continue to be of international importance, and if the current trend continues, further sites such as Blyth Estuary and The Wash, may also surpass the qualifying threshold in the future. The two most 'peripheral' estuaries which regularly hold wintering birds, the Ribble Estuary and Severn Estuary, again showed increases in

monthly maxima compared to the previous year and in doing so also registered record numbers.

Away from the Severn Estuary, the only record from Wales was one at Cemlyn Bay in May, while in Scotland one resided at Montrose Basin from January to March - both records constituted 'site firsts'.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Poole Harbour	(1,493)	1,480 ¹¹	1,387	(1,303)	(1,068)	Sep	1,453
Thames Estuary	658	1,153	1,663	1,578	1,633	Sep	1,337
Alde Complex	1,073	1,058	1,392	1,383	1,465	Jan	1,274
Medway Estuary	(757)	(490)	(557)	(1,027)	(450)	Dec	(1,027)
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	1,069	1,012	1,044	706	896 ¹³	Aug	945
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Swale Estuary	731	1,290	320	(363)	447	Feb	697
North Norfolk Coast	591	712	617	645	556	May	624
Blyth Estuary (Suffolk)	(2)	(409)	208	660	889	Dec	586
The Wash	417	532	760	322	850	Jul	576
Hamford Water	461	663	488	(629)	537	Oct	556
Blackwater Estuary	295	428	622	(125)	585	Dec	483
Tamar Complex	394	438	494	465	620	Dec	482
Humber Estuary	334	425	(374)	652	509	Oct	480
Exe Estuary	353	297	(500)	380	358	Feb	378
Deben Estuary	353	323	236	315	224	Jan	290
Colne Estuary	205 ¹³	150 ¹³	(285)	41	586 ¹¹	Jan	246
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(17)	288 ¹¹	(26)	(22)	135 ¹³	Oct	212
Minsmere	139	203	171	190	205	May	182
Stour Estuary	0	26	(89)	428	159	Nov	153
Orwell Estuary	(63)	68	162	105 ¹¹	134 ¹¹	Dec	119
Ouse Washes	124	96 ¹³	11 ¹³	4 ¹³	32	Mar	53
Ribble Estuary	19	24	38	76	110	Jul	53 ▲
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain							
Severn Estuary	14	(26)	26	26	(76)	Nov	34
WWT Martin Mere	6	12	19	43	38	Jun	24



Avocets (Jill Pakenham)

Stone Curlew

Burhinus oedichnemus

Scarce

GB max: 12 Jul
NI max: 0

Stone Curlews were recorded at one site in eastern England, close to a known breeding location. Birds were present at

both ends of the WeBS year, with a peak of twelve in July.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

International threshold: 2,500
Great Britain threshold: ?[†]
All-Ireland threshold: ?[†]

GB max: 179 May 2007
NI max: 0

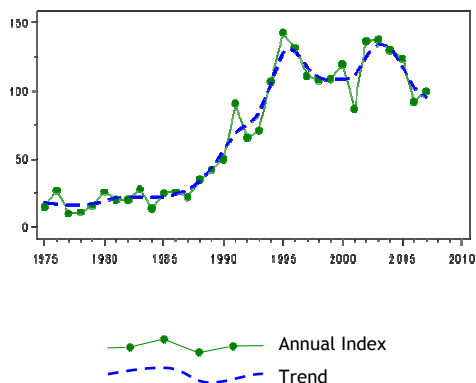


Figure 42. Annual indices & trend for Little Ringed Plover for GB.

During WeBS Core counts, Little Ringed Plovers were recorded at 126 sites in 2007. These included just one in Wales, however five sites in Scotland is the most ever in a year there. Typically, all records occurred during the period of March to October.

Traditionally one of the harbingers of the British spring, Little Ringed Plovers were recorded at sixteen sites in March, while in the autumn three sites still held birds in October.

For the second successive year the largest count was from Nosterfield Gravel Pits; however in 2007 this peak occurred in July (as opposed to May in 2006) which is perhaps indicative of a productive breeding season. On the coast, 17 at St Brides on the Severn Estuary in May followed by 11 at Tees Estuary in July represent the highest ever counts for those two estuary complexes.

A UK census of Little Ringed Plover in 2007 recorded a total of 746 pairs: 585 (78%) in England, 141 (19%) in Wales and 20 (3%) in Scotland - from which an estimate of 1,115 breeding pairs was derived (Conway & Burton 2009).

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain[†]							
Mersey Estuary	27	(3)	(2)	(0)	(2)	Apr	27
Nosterfield Gravel Pits	(6)	(18)	11	23	24	May	19
Old Moor	20	7	14	10	(18)	May	13
Rutland Water	18	10	14	8	9	Jun	12
Upton Warren Local Nature Reserve	11	12	6	11	16	May	11
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain[†]							
Severn Estuary	8	6	(6)	3	17	May	9
Tees Estuary	7	5	4	6	11	Jul	7
Barton Pits	6	10	5	4	10	Jun	7

[†] as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 10 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

GB max: 9,814 Sep

NI max: 638 Nov

International threshold: 730

Great Britain threshold: 330

All-Ireland threshold: 150

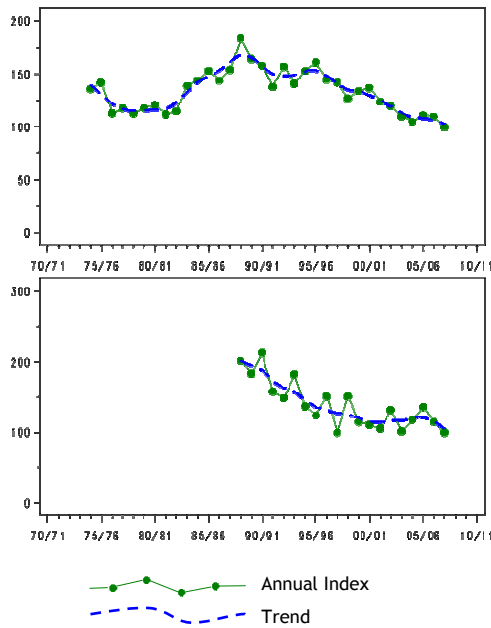


Figure 43.a, Annual indices & trend for Ringed Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

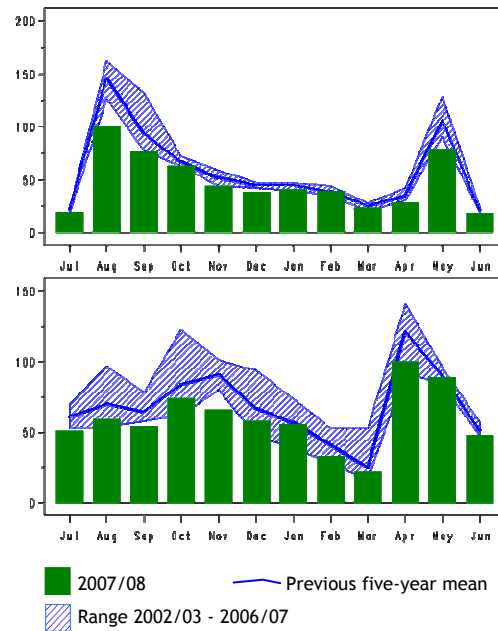


Figure 43.b, Monthly indices for Ringed Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

Because the numbers of passage Ringed Plovers using UK sites in spring and autumn are much greater than those which remain to overwinter, the main table of site counts presented is limited to data covering the period of November to March. Key counts from the other months, likely to relate to passage birds, are tabulated separately.

Ringed Plovers in the UK have been in long-term decline since the mid 1980s and the national indices for wintering birds in 2007/08 indicate further falls to their lowest ever levels in both Britain and Northern Ireland. This is considered most likely to be a climate related impact involving an eastward shift in wintering distribution. Even though numbers in north-west Europe as a whole are estimated to have decreased by 1.2 % per annum (Delany *et al.* 2007), a steady increase has been observed in the Wadden Sea in the Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2007).

In Britain in 2007/08, despite continued declines at a number of the traditionally most important sites, some more encouraging increases were noted,

particularly at Crouch-Roach Estuary and Firth Estuary. Wintering numbers in the UK and Ireland along non-estuarine coastlines are known to have shown particularly marked declines (Coulhoun & Newton 2001, in Delany *et al.* 2009; Rehfisch *et al.* 2003).

During autumn 2007 and spring 2008, a total of 16 sites supported counts in excess of at least the national importance threshold. These included the Ribble Estuary where 1,734 in May represented the highest count of the year in the UK. However this total compares poorly with an all-time maximum from there of 5,432, as recently as May 2000.

A UK census of breeding Ringed Plovers in 2007 recorded a total of 4,232 pairs: 2,656 (63%) in Scotland, 1,184 (28%) in England, 214 (5%) in Wales, 62 (2%) in Northern Ireland and 116 (3%) in the Isle of Man - from which an estimate of 5,585 breeding pairs was derived (Conway & Burton 2009). Changes on individual sites surveyed in 2007 and during the previous census in 1984 indicated declines of 47%, 6%, 41%, 66% and 9% in England, Wales,

Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man respectively, and that the largest decreases have occurred at inland sites.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK in winter 2007/08 (Nov-Mar)							
Thames Estuary	(654)	872	846	952	649	Feb	833
Sites of national importance in Great Britain in winter 2007/08 (Nov-Mar)							
Tiree			648 ⁴³				648
Hamford Water	(576)	(333)	(361)	(328)	(177)	Nov	576
Duddon Estuary	222	350 ¹¹	757 ¹¹	(495)	(200)	Feb	456
North Norfolk Coast	464	411	231	322	355 ¹¹	Feb	355
Morecambe Bay	303	357	587	212	204	Jan	333
Medway Estuary	(136)	332 ¹¹	(94)	(115)	(181)	Jan	332
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland in winter 2007/08 (Nov-Mar)							
Strangford Lough	277 ¹¹	342	449	278 ¹¹	227 ¹¹	Jan	315
Outer Ards Shoreline	(198)	142	308	338	(125)	Nov	263
Carlingford Lough	(161)	223	247	183	120	Nov	193
Belfast Lough	234 ¹¹	109 ¹¹	168 ¹¹	180	253	Nov	189
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in winter 2007/2008 (Nov-Mar)							
Solway Estuary	(286)	(305)	(162)	(180)	(328)	Nov	(328)
Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in winter 2007/2008 in Great Britain (Nov-Mar)							
Crouch-Roach Estuary	138	(52)	175	333	594	Jan	310
Forth Estuary	237	172	329	286	484	Nov	302
South Ford	250	400	250	340	400	Nov	328
Sites of international importance in Great Britain during autumn 2007 (Jul-Oct) and spring 2008 (Apr-Jun)							
Ribble Estuary	1,734	May	Dengie Flats		1,013	Sep	
Lindisfarne	1,195	May	Humber Estuary		860	May	
North Norfolk Coast	1,023	Sep	Thames Estuary		748	Oct	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain during autumn 2007 (Jul-Oct) and spring 2008 (Apr-Jun)							
Stour Estuary	582	Aug	Morecambe Bay		416	May	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	551	Aug	Solway Estuary		402	Apr	
Blackwater Estuary	531	Oct	Severn Estuary		361	May	
Alt Estuary	515	May	Forth Estuary		359	Aug	
North West Solent	438	Oct	Hamford Water		349	Oct	
Sites of national importance in Northern Ireland during autumn 2007 (Jul-Oct) and spring 2008 (Apr-Jun)							
Strangford Lough		177	Oct				
Carlingford Lough		154	Oct				

Killdeer

Charadrius vociferus

Vagrant

Native Range: America

GB max: 1 Oct
NI max: 0

One was recorded at Pool of Virkie in October. In 2007, this particular long-staying individual was noted there and at other sites on south mainland Shetland

between April and November (per www.birdguides.com). This represents the second record for WeBS, following the first at Upper Lough Erne in February 2005.

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Scarce

GB max: 2 Aug
NI max: 0

Kentish Plovers were recorded at two sites, a typical showing. Two at Pegwell Bay in August represented the first multiple WeBS record for this traditional site since four present there in May-June 1971. A

more unusual record in terms of location and date was provided by one which lingered at South Ford on South Uist from November through to March.

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

Scarce

GB max: 3 May
NI max: 0

Three Dotterels were recorded at Wainfleet in May; the second WeBS record for The Wash area following a very large 'trip' of 46 birds in May 2004. Dotterels are

a rare find for WeBS counters, the species having graced the pages of just four annual reports.

American Golden Plover

Pluvialis dominica

Vagrant
Native Range: America

GB max: 1 Oct
NI max: 0

A juvenile American Golden Plover was recorded at Loch Mor on Benbecula in October; the eleventh record for WeBS and

the first from Scotland. This species is a potential exciting discovery within flocks of Golden Plovers everywhere...

Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

International threshold: 9,300
Great Britain threshold: 4,000
All-Ireland threshold: 1,700

GB max: 179,119 Jan
NI max: 21,026 Feb

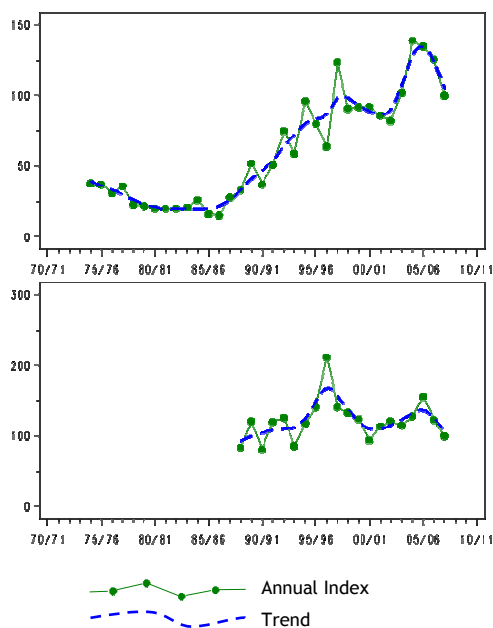


Figure 44.a, Annual indices & trend for Golden Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

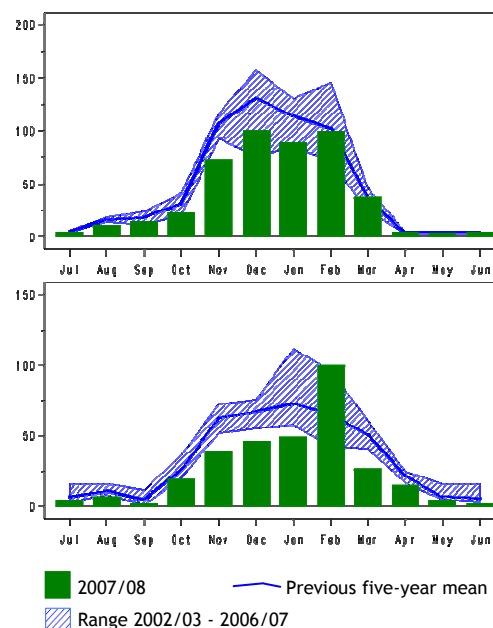


Figure 44.b, Monthly indices for Golden Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

Golden Plovers wintering in west Europe comprise a mix of three breeding populations: *altifrons* which breeds in

Iceland and the Faeroes, *altifrons* from Norway eastwards, and the more southerly *apricaria* from Britain, Ireland, southern

Scandinavia, Denmark, Germany and the Baltic States. It is a popular quarry species in parts of the wintering range, particularly France. Wintering numbers frequently fluctuate markedly from year to year.

In 2007/08 the counted British maximum of Golden Plover recorded by WeBS (179,119 in January) was similar to that of the previous year, though the national index having reached a peak in 2004/05-2005/06 fell to the level of four years ago.

Eighty percent of this maximum was at coastal sites, a typical proportion for the last decade. This still provides an indication of the potential for inland sites such as grazing marshes and agricultural fields to harbour important numbers during the winter, and as such the likelihood that a significant proportion of the wintering Golden Plover population is not monitored by WeBS.

This is illustrated in no better way than the results of a large-scale survey carried out in 2006/07 that incorporated counts from important wetlands (inland and coastal), other key terrestrial sites and a random sample of further locations. From the results, Gillings & Fuller (2009) estimated the wintering population of Golden Plover to be 400,000 of which sites classified as "wetlands" held only 44%.

Following this survey, the threshold for sites of national importance in Great Britain has been amended accordingly (to 4,000 birds).

The UK has five sites of international importance for this species, following the return of Swale Estuary above the qualifying threshold in 2007/08, but peak counts from several of the other top sites were below average compared to recent years. Of sites lying just below the threshold, both Somerset Levels and Hamford Water held record wintering numbers, whilst other notably high numbers were seen in East Anglia at Alde Complex, Colne Estuary and Middle Yare Marshes.

In Northern Ireland, a pronounced influx of Golden Plovers was noted at monitored sites in February. This resulted in a monthly maximum of 21,026, some 38% higher than for the previous year; during all other months there were at least 50% fewer birds present.

Maxima at the most important sites in the province were close to average, with the exception of Strangford Lough where the peak count was the lowest for over thirty years. This is particularly noteworthy considering that Strangford Lough qualified as a site of international importance for the species as recently as 2005/06.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Humber Estuary	(50,662)	43,473	47,118	47,088	23,526	Oct	42,373
The Wash	25,817	34,900	26,996	31,350	19,643	Jan	29,766
Breydon Water and Berney Marshes	10,464	30,940	28,220	24,930 ¹¹	15,790 ¹³	Jan	22,069
Swale Estuary	10,935	(6,560)	12,014	(10,520)	17,327	Jan	13,425 ▲
Blackwater Estuary	6,986	12,747	11,949	(5,020)	5,703	Dec	9,346
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Somerset Levels	8,609	8,136	5,018	12,054	12,422	Feb	9,248
Carmarthen Bay	9,832	7,661	4,047	12,700	10,420	Feb	8,932
Hamford Water	3,204	5,606	8,859	(5,362)	10,228	Jan	6,974
Nene Washes	650	13,000	4,500	8,500	5,650	Mar	6,460
Pegwell Bay	8,000	5,330	7,000	4,170	(5,500)	Dec	6,125
Morecambe Bay	(7,304)	4,431	5,768	(3,429)	(3,382)	Dec	5,834
Lower Derwent Ings	2,005	4,130	6,776	10,600	5,433	Jan	5,789
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(1,354)	4,771 ¹¹	(3,718)	(2,387)	(6,696)	Dec	5,734
Dengie Flats	2,275	3,660	12,678	5,520	4,520	Dec	5,731
Thames Estuary	(1,823)	6,440	7,401	4,817	4,267	Jan	5,731
Lynemouth Ash Lagoons	5,700						5,700
Old Moor	7,000	2,100	(6,200)	6,500	(3,800)	Oct	5,450
Dungeness and Rye Bay	3,200	6,600	3,600	5,000	7,210	Feb	5,122
Lindisfarne	3,822 ¹¹	3,920	7,081	(3,236)	(2,004)	Dec	4,941
Solway Estuary	5,063	6,145 ¹¹	3,991	5,746	3,761	Oct	4,941
Ouse Washes	2,844	5,450 ¹³	10,069	3,312 ¹³	2,427 ¹³	Feb	4,820
North Norfolk Coast	5,039	5,975	5,315	4,552	3,154	Dec	4,807
Forth Estuary	6,940 ¹¹	3,844	3,326	(1,497)	3,436	Oct	4,387
Camel Estuary	515	4,750 ¹¹	9,000	(3,000)	2,501	Dec	4,192
Ribble Estuary	(3,300)	1,998	3,829	(3,950)	6,610	Jan	4,146

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Middle Yare Marshes	(96)	4,400	2,597	3,500	6,000	Mar	4,124
Taw-Torridge Estuary	3,300	(6,000)	2,550	(4,360)	(1,765)	Feb	4,053
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	15,988 ¹¹	4,578	7,970	8,513 ¹¹	8,817 ¹¹	Nov	9,174
Lough Foyle	(7,647)	7,372	7,640	(9,534)	9,211	Feb	8,439
Loughs Neagh and Beg	7,091	3,447	6,537	6,475	7,712	Feb	6,252
Bann Estuary	2,265	2,100	2,610	2,100	1,350	Dec	2,085
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008							
Durham Coast	(0)	(2,000)	(3,704)	(2,800)	(3)	Aug	(3,704)
Alde Complex	(696)	3,346	2,765	1,660	6,873	Jan	3,661
Cleddau Estuary	(2,664)	4,273	8,630	200	1,340	Jan	3,611
Wigtown Bay	(3,604)	(2,500)	3,175	(3,200)	4,000	Dec	3,593
Loch of Strathbeg	(2,200)	3,623	1,176	3,500	4,500	Oct	3,200
Colne Estuary	1,480	1,450	2,840	1,563	(8,053)	Jan	3,077
Severn Estuary	2,060	3,100	4,370	2,642	2,301	Jan	2,895
Maer Lake	1,984	2,193	2,100	3,750	2,600	Dec	2,525
Chichester Harbour	(2,822)	3,048	(3,586)	824	1,572	Nov	2,370
Otmoor	(18)	1,120 ¹³	(1,200)	4,670 ¹³	1,080	Feb	2,290
Clifford Hill Gravel Pits	2,740	1,600	3,000	4,500	450	Jan	2,458
Bennerley Marsh				2,500	200	Jan	1,350

Grey Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

International threshold: 2,500
Great Britain threshold: 530
All-Ireland threshold: 65

GB max: 37,506 Mar
NI max: 217 Mar

*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

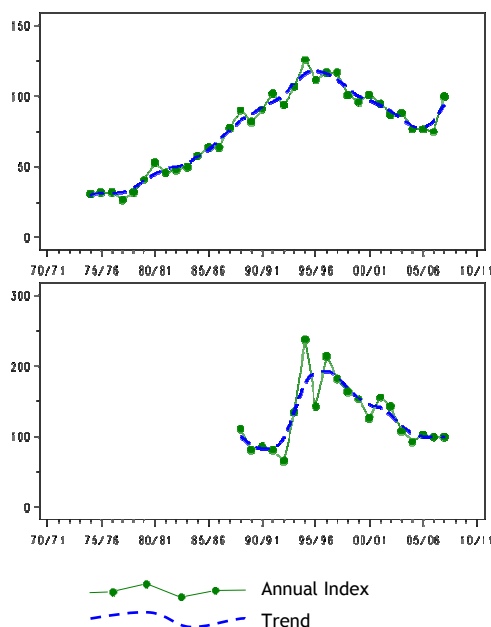


Figure 45.a, Annual indices & trend for Grey Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

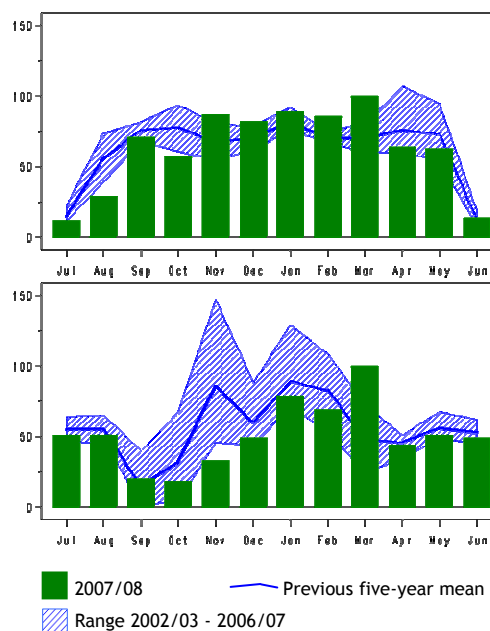


Figure 45.b, Monthly indices for Grey Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

Following a steady increase in the index until reaching a maximum in 1994/95, the number of Grey Plovers using British coastal sites had shown a consistent decline since, slowing in the last three years suggesting a

degree of stability. In 2007/08 however, an unexpectedly large increase in the index occurred (similar in magnitude to a rise experienced in 1994/95 when the species reached its historic peak).

The monthly indices indicate above-average numbers present throughout the winter, from November to March. Could this be evidence of a sudden marked redistribution of birds from further south in the wintering range, in response to climate change (e.g. Austin & Rehfish 2005, Maclean *et al.* 2008)?

The UK has eight sites that are internationally important for the species, one less than the previous year following the relegation of Alt Estuary after the lowest monthly maximum there since 1994/95. At The Wash, where there had been a marked rise in Grey Plovers in 2003/04 and 2004/05, peak numbers have since returned to their previous levels.

Numbers using the other two most important sites contrast with each other strongly: the peak number counted at Dengie Flats has almost tripled in two years, while those using Thames Estuary have declined by over 75% in the same period. However it is probable that these neighbouring locations may support the same population of birds, effectively using the 'outer' Thames Estuary, and as such

there may be considerable interchange between the two sites both within years and from one year to the next.



Grey Plover (Jill Pakenham)

Elsewhere, counts from most of the other important sites were largely unexceptional, perhaps the most notable of other declines occurring at Dee Estuary where the peak monthly count for the year fell below four-figures for the first time since 2002/03.

In Northern Ireland, counts were close to average at Strangford Lough but higher than normal at Outer Ards Shoreline.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
The Wash	12,442	13,480	8,604	9,750	7,455	May	10,346
Dengie Flats	2,943	2,912	4,909	7,239	11,940	Mar	5,989
Thames Estuary	3,812	3,975	13,028	5,700	2,877	Jan	5,878
Ribble Estuary	5,568	3,529	(3,813)	3,518	3,902	May	4,129
Blackwater Estuary	2,415	4,043	2,650	(2,248)	(5,766)	Jan	3,719
Hamford Water	(1,746)	(2,915)	(2,198)	(2,685)	(2,658)	Dec	(2,915)
Humber Estuary	2,285 ¹¹	(1,901)	(2,792)	(1,923)	(3,417)	May	2,831
Stour Estuary	2,975	2,507	3,263	2,355	2,329 ¹¹	Feb	2,686
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Alt Estuary	3,098	2,234	2,837	1,244	1,206	May	2,124 ▼
Swale Estuary	1,953	(1,451)	(1,244)	(1,415)	1,631	Feb	1,792
Chichester Harbour	1,515	2,140	2,017	1,592	1,604	Mar	1,774
Lindisfarne	(1,786)	(962)	1,361	2,171	(894)	Nov	1,773
North Norfolk Coast	1,421	1,386	1,483	1,626	1,339 ¹¹	Dec	1,451
Medway Estuary	1,544	(762)	989	(467)	(1,586)	Jan	1,373
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	1,851	1,214	1,091	1,214	762	Jan	1,226
Pagham Harbour	1,348	873	1,067	902	1,269	Feb	1,092
Morecambe Bay	778	1,001	1,074	1,065	747	Feb	933
Langstone Harbour	1,119	782	(879)	702	848	Nov	866
Colne Estuary	(705)	(623)	(800)	(840)	(720)	Oct	(840)
Deben Estuary	656	1,037	(719)	342	(574)	Jan	689
Jersey Shore				939	373	Feb	656
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	137	114	249 ¹¹	141	118	Jan	152
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain							
Eden Estuary	410	450	(356)	400	590	Mar	463
Beaulieu Estuary	46	560	381	640	545	Jan	434
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Northern Ireland							
Outer Ards Shoreline	17	39	38	25	81	Mar	40

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: 6,200
All-Ireland threshold: 2100

GB max: 401,598 Jan
NI max: 16,215 Jan

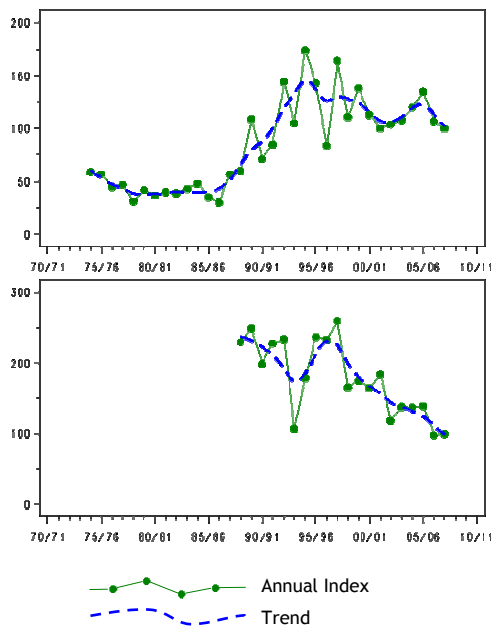


Figure 46.a, Annual indices & trend for Lapwing for GB (above) & NI (below).

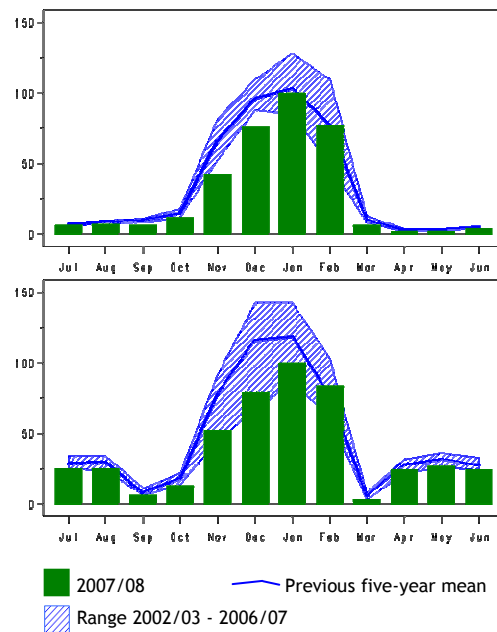


Figure 46.b, Monthly indices for Lapwing for GB (above) & NI (below).

The Lapwing population wintering in the UK is comprised of that part of the breeding population that does not move south to continental Europe, supplemented by birds from Scandinavia, eastern Europe and Russia. Prolonged periods of cold weather tend to result in additional movements, as well as forcing British birds south and west and at the local scale towards the coast.

The counted British maximum of Lapwing was 401,598 in January; 23% higher than that of the previous year and as such returned to a level similar to the average of the last five years. The national index remained at the low level exhibited last year thereby continuing the slightly downward, albeit fluctuating, trend shown since the mid 1990s.

It is always important to note that owing to the regular use of agricultural fields by this species a large proportion of its wintering population is inevitably not monitored by WeBS. However, that said, the proportion overlooked by WeBS is perhaps not as great as traditionally

considered: results from a large-scale survey of wintering Lapwing carried out in 2006/07, incorporating counts from important wetlands (both coastal and inland), key terrestrial sites and a random sample of other locations, derived an estimate of 620,000 wintering in Great Britain, of which sites classified as "wetlands" held 54% (Gillings & Fuller 2009). Following this survey, the threshold for sites of national importance in Great Britain has been amended accordingly (to 6,200 birds).

Following 2007/08, there are five sites of international importance in the UK after the return of Breydon Water & Berney Marshes above the qualifying threshold. Somerset Levels overtook The Wash as the site with the highest five-year site average following the lowest peak count at the latter site since 1996/97. The second-highest count of the year was received from Swale Estuary where the five-year average is now verging on surpassing the threshold for international importance.

In Northern Ireland, there was little recovery in the index following the all-time low of the previous year. Low numbers

were present at Strangford Lough and Lough Foyle, but the peak at Dundrum Inner Bay was the highest there since 2001/02.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Somerset Levels	23,641	60,834	48,116	38,388	44,457	Jan	43,087
The Wash	29,350	43,822	36,327	36,998	19,186	Feb	33,137
Humber Estuary	(39,865)	(16,856)	27,421	(17,481)	16,500	Jan	27,929
Breydon Water and Berney Marshes	15,890	29,136	25,140	17,620 ¹³	19,700 ¹³	Dec	21,497
Ribble Estuary	(15,374)	25,991	24,265	13,821	18,066	Feb	20,536
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Swale Estuary	16,523	(13,270)	14,913	(10,840)	23,479	Jan	18,305
Ouse Washes	13,577	26,072 ¹³	25,835	13,026	11,222	Dec	17,946
Morecambe Bay	(20,750)	16,701	19,192	13,484	(6,191)	Dec	17,532
Thames Estuary	10,229	14,657	18,662	17,270	(7,781)	Jan	15,205
Severn Estuary	(6,889)	11,312	19,434	9,895	11,035	Jan	12,919
Dungeness and Rye Bay	11,024	14,726	9,320	9,936	12,758	Jan	11,553
Pegwell Bay	10,000	5,420	(8,100)	17,000	12,000	Jan	11,105
North Norfolk Coast	7,358	7,833	13,305	11,560	11,185	Jan	10,248
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(5,386)	11,288 ¹¹	(8,464)	8,438	(9,255)	Dec	9,863
Solway Estuary	8,218	(5,989)	(9,381)	(7,622)	(5,128)	Oct	8,800
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	7,853	(7,512)	8,800	6,775	9,526	Jan	8,239
Mersey Estuary	12,150	9,370	10,098 ¹¹	2,280	7,154	Feb	8,210
Blackwater Estuary	7,472	6,785	6,766	(2,800)	8,503	Dec	7,382
Lower Derwent Ings	5,119	7,920	7,520	4,610	7,406	Feb	6,515
Alde Complex	(3,841)	5,472	7,843	5,406	7,322	Jan	6,511
Nene Washes	3,870	7,050	6,070	4,720	10,575	Feb	6,457
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	6,282	7,584	6,684	5,421	(7,720)	Jan	6,738
Strangford Lough	8,884 ¹¹	5,792	6,635	5,154 ¹¹	3,906 ¹¹	Nov	6,075
Lough Foyle	4,240	3,606	4,745	2,543	1,816	Jan	3,390
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/08							
Fiddlers Ferry Power Stn. Lagoons	3,500	6,000	4,000	4,000	10,000	Jan	5,500
Medway Estuary	(661)	3,442 ¹¹	(3,019)	5,184	6,805	Jan	5,144
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Northern Ireland							
Dundrum Inner Bay	789	1,204	1,749	905	2,250	Jan	1,379



Lapwing (Neil Calbrade)

Knot

Calidris canutus

GB max: 238,852 Oct
NI max: 6,261 Jan

International threshold: 4,500
Great Britain threshold: 2,800
All-Ireland threshold: 190

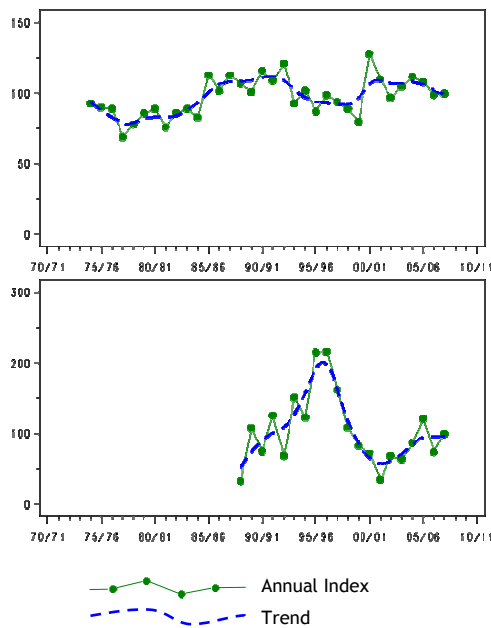


Figure 47.a, Annual indices & trend for Knot for GB (above) & NI (below).

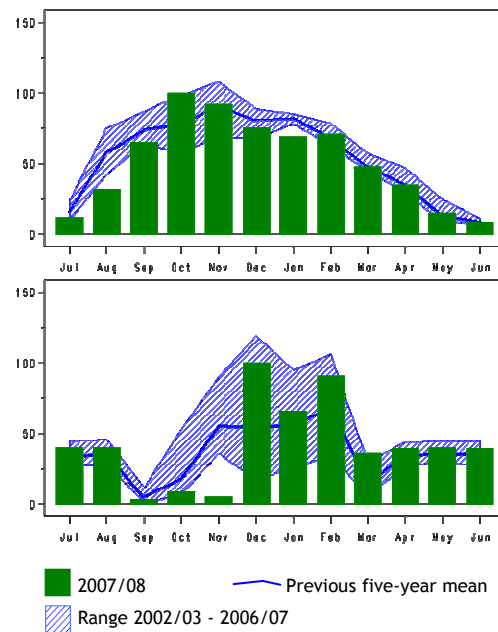


Figure 47.b, Monthly indices for Knot for GB (above) & NI (below).

The vast flocks of Knot that typify many British estuaries in winter are comprised of birds of the *islandica* race, which breeds in northeast Canada and Greenland and moults in autumn on the Wadden Sea in the Netherlands and the large British estuaries. Numbers in the Wadden Sea have declined in recent years (e.g. Hustings *et al.* 2007), attributed to decreased survival resulting from prey depletion caused by industrial shellfisheries (van Gils *et al.* 2006, in Delany *et al.* 2009).

After the promotion within the table of the Severn Estuary, the UK has 16 sites of international importance for the species - following a year when the overall national index was very similar to the average of the past decade. Although a high count was noted at the Severn Estuary in February, it is possible that part of this aggregation may have been recorded independently in adjacent count sectors thereby inflating the overall site total.

Numbers of Knot at The Wash rose again to a peak of 162,724 birds in October, a level not recorded at the site since October and November 1990. Over the course of the last five years, the peak monthly count there has risen by 160%, although sizeable year-to-year fluctuations often occur for this mobile species.

Numbers at other principal sites were generally close to the respective five-year site averages, the exception being the North Norfolk Coast where the monthly peak was the lowest since 1995/96. The declining numbers noted there in recent years may be linked to the concurrent increases recorded nearby at The Wash, perhaps representing a redistribution of birds.

In Northern Ireland, where the index typically fluctuates markedly between years, the January count of 2,560 at Dundrum Inner Bay was the highest Core count ever away from Strangford Lough.

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
The Wash	76,346	105,912	139,270	135,889	162,724	Oct	124,028
Thames Estuary	43,873	33,024	24,254	83,716	45,162	Feb	46,006
Humber Estuary	50,557 ¹¹	(37,015)	35,004	(33,529)	(41,772)	Sep	42,781
Ribble Estuary	44,947	(36,200)	(26,106)	(41,681)	30,136	Apr	38,921
Morecambe Bay	67,959	29,596	31,245	19,635	(21,421)	Dec	37,109
North Norfolk Coast	37,124	38,714	25,551	22,928	11,239	Nov	27,111
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	38,070	10,243	24,505	12,937	11,212	Jan	19,393
Dengie Flats	8,000	22,700	15,650	30,500	17,375	Oct	18,845
Alt Estuary	30,000	19,006	12,454	15,011	12,900	Feb	17,874
Solway Estuary	8,725	(13,142)	(7,662)	8,910	(14,385)	Dec	11,291
Blackwater Estuary	(5,982)	6,273	(5,326)	(2,055)	(3,492)	Nov	6,273
Stour Estuary	(4,964)	8,454	6,701	3,028	6,660	Nov	6,211
Strangford Lough	4,058	5,730	8,014 ¹¹	5,380 ¹¹	7,360 ¹¹	Dec	6,109
Severn Estuary	(1,273)	(1,061)	(2,642)	(966)	5,510	Feb	5,510 ▲
Burry Inlet	3,500	8,259	4,301	4,300	7,100	Jan	5,492
Forth Estuary	6,907 ¹¹	5,077	4,685	(3,542)	3,278	Feb	4,987
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Lindisfarne	(6,751)	4,197	(4,172)	1,475	(3,990)	Jan	4,117
Swale Estuary	4,050	2,538	4,060	4,506	5,002	Nov	4,031
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	3,663	3,446	5,146	2,762	2,485	Jan	3,500
Cromarty Firth	4,932	5,000	3,132	1,104	2,290	Feb	3,292
Hamford Water	4,160	2,481	3,185	3,550	2,200	Jan	3,115
Orwell Estuary	4,021	2,115 ¹¹	3,569 ¹¹	1,825	3,552 ¹¹	Feb	3,017
Medway Estuary	1,817	3,024 ¹¹	3,574	(550)	2,940	Jan	2,839
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Dundrum Inner Bay	320	(475)	270	100	2,560	Jan	813
Lough Foyle	942	470	470	225	501	Jan	522
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2007/2008							
Montrose Basin	(2,562)	1,990	3,360	505	3,182	Jan	2,320
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2007/08 in Great Britain							
Carmarthen Bay	135	5,475	680	550	6,486 ¹¹	Jan	2,666
Montrose Basin	(2,562)	1,990	3,360	505	3,182	Jan	2,320

Sanderling

Calidris alba

International threshold: 1,200
Great Britain winter threshold: 210
All-Ireland threshold: 65

GB max: 11,327 Nov

NI max: 904 Mar

Sanderling breed in the high Arctic, and birds from both the Siberian and Greenland populations migrate southwards through northwest Europe. The numbers of passage birds using UK sites in spring and autumn are much greater than those which remain to over-winter, hence the main table of site counts presented is limited to data covering the period of November to March. Key counts from the other months, likely to relate to passage birds, are tabulated separately.

Since the early 1990s, numbers of wintering Sanderling have increased in Britain and neighbouring North Sea countries (e.g. van Roomen *et al.* 2007), presumably representing a redistribution of birds from the wintering range further south in Europe.

The indices for both Britain and Northern Ireland show that the number reached record levels in 2007/08. In Britain, above average numbers were present throughout the winter and included a record peak of 4,116 at Ribble Estuary in December. Most of the other major sites held numbers close to or slightly above average. Two new sites surpassed the five-year threshold to qualify as of national importance; Scuthvie Bay and Dungeness & Rye Bay. Many of the same principal sites supported large numbers during the passage months; the peak May count of 4,700 on the Ribble Estuary was slightly higher than the equivalent for recent years.

In Northern Ireland, the rather staggering appearance of the trend is

largely an artefact of the relatively small sample of monitored sites, where nevertheless numbers have increased markedly. This is especially the case at Lough Foyle and to a lesser extent Dundrum Inner Bay, both sites where

large increases have been reported in recent years. In 2007/08, Lough Foyle hosted 100+ birds throughout October to March, with in excess of 800 present at both ends of that period.

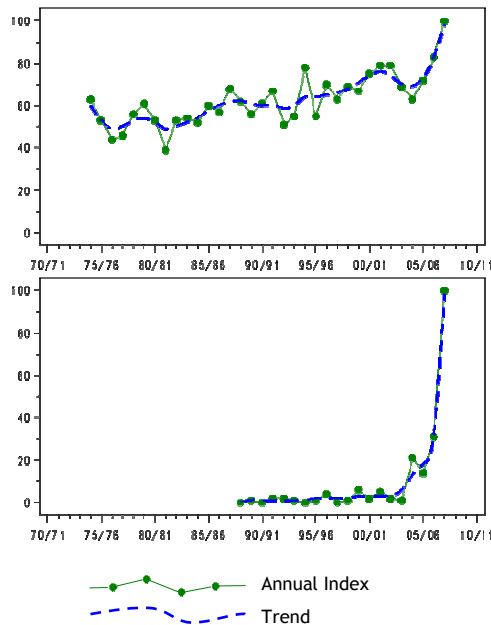


Figure 48.a, Annual indices & trend for Sanderling for GB (above) & NI (below).

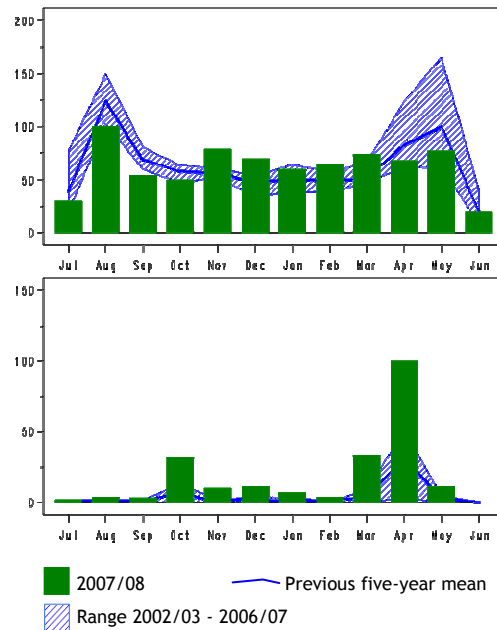


Figure 48.b, Monthly indices for Sanderling for GB (above) & NI (below).

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK in winter 2007/08 (Nov-Mar)							
Ribble Estuary	2,400	(1,453)	(2,155)	3,250	4,116	Dec	3,256
Carmarthen Bay	(833)	769	(800)	2,370 ¹⁰	1,955 ¹¹	Jan	1,698
Sites of national importance in Great Britain in winter 2007/08 (Nov-Mar)							
Alt Estuary	913	815	624	1,007	1,243	Mar	921
North Norfolk Coast	601	889	506	873	1,200 ¹¹	Nov	814
Jersey Shore				831	739	Mar	786
Dee Estuary (England & Wales)	(379)	274	1,020	370	762	Feb	607
Thames Estuary	385	562	457	870	689	Nov	593
The Wash	317	395	1,091	490	285	Dec	516
Tiree			468 ⁴⁴				468
Scuthvie Bay				(110)	390	Jan	390 ▲
Duddon Estuary	(585)	361	192	623 ¹³	371	Feb	387
Morecambe Bay	306	225	652	332	(204)	Jan	379
Lindisfarne	221	388 ¹⁰	294	446	410	Jan	352
Humber Estuary	370 ¹⁰	(96)	(159)	(362)	(225)	Nov	370
North Bay (South Uist)	235	340	300	318	650	Feb	369
Thanet Coast	342	418	307	322	431	Feb	364
Ardvachar Point (South Uist)	460	400	350	320	267	Nov	360
Howmore Estuary SSSI Coast	312 ⁴⁸						312
Swansea Bay	200	234	467	440 ¹⁰	210	Jan	311
Solway Estuary	(370)	(302)	165	(167)	400	Feb	283
South Ford	250	430	150	200	300	Dec	266
Forth Estuary	269 ¹⁰	181	256	152	387	Jan	249
Dungeness and Rye Bay	131	389	190	183 ¹³	300 ¹³	Feb	239 ▲
Tees Estuary	240	199	253	191	(193)	Mar	221
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying standards in winter 2007/08							
Tay Estuary	65	88	635	115	103	Nov	202

	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	Mon	Mean
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Lough Foyle	(0)	(0)	(0)	(4)	879	Mar	879 ▲
Dundrum Inner Bay	0	(48)	5	180	200	Feb	97 ▲
Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in winter 2007/2008 (Nov-Mar) in Great Britain							
Ryde Pier to Puckpool Point	133	143	240	200	310	Nov	206
Chichester Harbour	74	77	109	324	245	Jan	166
Sites of international importance in the UK during autumn 2007 (Jul-Oct) and spring 2008 (Apr-Jun)							
Ribble Estuary	4,700	May	The Wash		1,430	May	
Alt Estuary	2,171	Aug					
Sites of national importance in Great Britain during autumn 2007 (Jul-Oct) and spring 2008 (Apr-Jun)							
North Norfolk Coast	892	Aug	Carmarthen Bay		340	Oct	
Humber Estuary	706	May	North Bay (South Uist)		340	Apr	
Thames Estuary	688	Oct	Duddon Estuary		305	Apr	
Morecambe Bay	477	Oct	Inner Moray and Inverness Firth		243	Oct	
Solway Estuary	462	May					
Sites of national importance in Northern Ireland during autumn 2007 (Jul-Oct) and spring 2008 (Apr-Jun)							
Lough Foyle	865	Oct	Bann Estuary		69	Apr	

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

International threshold: 2,000
Great Britain threshold: ?[†]
All-Ireland threshold: ?[†]

GB max: 184 Oct
NI max: 3 Oct

Little Stints breed through Siberia and west into the northern extremes of Scandinavia, typically wintering around the Mediterranean and throughout Africa. They were recorded at 60 WeBS sites in 2007/08, including five sites in Scotland, five in Wales and two in Northern Ireland.

A pronounced period of passage in October resulted in the peak autumn numbers being a month later than typical. The reason for this is not obvious, especially considering the September peak shown by Curlew Sandpipers in 2007/08, a species with an essentially similar migration

pattern. It may indicate a relatively high proportion of juveniles (which tend to migrate later than post-breeding adults) and hence imply good breeding productivity in 2007/08. Alternatively of course it may merely represent an artefact of the timing of the WeBS Core count priority dates.

Wintering birds were noted at ten sites, mostly one and twos on the major estuaries with the notable exception of three at Rutland Water in December and January. In spring, up to two were recorded at Minsmere, The Wash and the Humber Estuary.

Sites with ten or more birds in 2007/08[†]

Dungeness and Rye Bay	15	Oct	Rutland Water	11	Oct
Swale Estuary	12	Oct	Humber Estuary	10	Oct
Minsmere	13	Oct			

[†] as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of ten has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

Temminck's Stint

Calidris temminckii

Scarce

GB max: 2 May
NI max: 0

Two spring Temminck's Stints were recorded, typically both in May, at Frodsham Marsh and Pegwell Bay. A grand total of 82 WeBS records are now split

evenly between spring and autumn, although recent years has seen a slight shift with 18 of the 24 records since 2000 occurring in spring.