

# Inland Waders 1971-1974

## Title

Inland Wader Enquiry 1971-1974

## Description and Summary of Results

The Birds of Estuaries Enquiry started in the autumn and winter of 1969/70. However it was realised that some wader species were not going to be covered well by this survey and that unknown numbers of the species which did occur on estuaries also occurred inland. So, in the autumn of 1971 an enquiry was launched to investigate inland movements of waders in England and Wales.

In 1971 59 sites were covered weekly from July to the end of November. Sites ranged from discrete coastal marshes (eg Minsmere Bird Reserve in Suffolk) to reservoirs in the Pennines. Sewage farms and waterbodies associated with sugar beet factories were well represented.

In the event autumn 1971 proved to be one of the poorest on record for numbers of waders occurring inland. Nevertheless data were collected on 25 species. Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* were the most numerous with nearly 100000 counted in all, and a series of peaks in numbers suggested several waves of migrants. Nearly 23000 Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* in all were counted and numbers increased to early October and then stabilised. Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* increased to early September then declined, and other species showed migration peaks at various times through the autumn, some of which showed a clear difference between regions with numbers in the north peaking a week or two earlier than in the south.

In subsequent years 51 (in 1972), 40 (in 1973) and 39 (in 1974) sites were counted similarly. Total numbers of waders were found to be very dependent on water levels (high meaning fewer birds recorded) and on the apparent breeding success of the species in the Arctic breeding grounds, but the seasonal patterns found were similar to those found in 1971. Overall the results suggested that much of the same information could be gained from counts at about 20 sites strategically placed and counted regularly.

## Methods of Data Capture

Regular weekly counts from specific sites, chosen by observers, were requested and the recording forms noted the peak count of each species in each week.

## Purpose of Data Capture

To find how many of which species of wader were using inland sites through the autumn to compare with numbers already being counted on the main estuaries.

## Geographic Coverage

Inland sites in England and Wales, primarily wetlands of various kinds.

**Temporal Coverage**

The autumns of 1971-1974 with weekly counts requested from July to November.

**Other Interested parties**

The survey was organised and run by the BTO.

**Organiser(s)**

Chris Mason organised the counts in 1971, and handed over to Dave Smallshire for 1972-1974.

**Current Staff Contact**

archives@bto.org

**Publications**

*BTO News* 53 (September 1972) contains some results from autumn 1971. In each year a short typescript report was produced and circulated to counters. However nothing else was ever published.

**Available from NBN?**

No.

**Computer data -- location**

None.

**Computer data -- outline contents**

N/A.

**Computer data -- description of contents**

N/A.

**Information held in BTO Archives**

1 Transfer Case contains 2 folders containing summaries of the 1971 data, 1 folder with summaries of 1972 data, and 1 folder contains the data forms for each of 1973 and 1974.

**Notes on Access and Use**

**Other information**

**Notes on Survey Design**

**Specific Issues for Analysis**