



WeBS Local Organiser

What the role involves

There are currently over 3,000 WeBS counters and these are marshalled by around 160 volunteer Local Organisers (LOs) who each have responsibility for a region. Regions can be either counties (or similar) or large complex sites. Given the level of variation in the size and nature of LO regions, the role of a WeBS LO is similarly varied, with no two LOs having exactly the same job. However, there are a number of fundamental roles that need to be carried out to ensure the smooth running of WeBS. The extent to which the LO needs to be involved in each role is dependent on the counters involved, although ultimately it is the role of the LO to ensure that these are being carried out and to discuss any difficulties with the WeBS Office. All LOs should, of course, be familiar with the aims of WeBS, namely to monitor non-breeding waterbirds in the UK.

Key responsibilities:

- Act as the first point of contact between the WeBS Office and WeBS volunteers.
- Ensure coverage of key sites and ensure sites are synchronised where appropriate eg Large Estuaries / Coastal sites / Large Inland sites.
- Ideally maintain coverage at a wide range of sites within the region and where possible to expand the number of sites (including small sites) covered by WeBS.
- Ensure counters submit their data either online or on paper forms promptly or at least by the end of the WeBS year (June)
- Check online data submissions for obvious mistakes, contacting the appropriate counter with queries where necessary.
- Return any count forms to the WeBS Office promptly after the end of the WeBS year (June).
- Ensure counters receive count forms, newsletters and reports (either directly from the WeBS Office or via the LO) and maintain regular contact with counters to ensure that these are being received.
- Regularly inform the WeBS office of any changes to counters' details, retirements and new counters.
- Recruitment of new WeBS volunteers at local level.
- Promotion of WeBS and WeBS Online where possible.
- Ensure volunteer contact details are not passed on to third parties without permission.
- Ensure the WeBS Data Terms of Use are adhered to at all times (see section 6 of the WeBS Counter Handbook).

LOs must be willing to liaise with other nearby LOs (especially where several WeBS regions fall within a single county)/County Bird Recorders/Bird Clubs as necessary. Additionally, LOs are asked to promote and publicise WeBS wherever the opportunity arises. Many local bird clubs hold meetings that provide good opportunities to do this and to recruit new counters. The WeBS office can provide information leaflets, additional newsletters and reports to help the promotion of the scheme. Additionally, help can be given with preparation of talks, or WeBS staff can visit local clubs to give presentations.

Skills and knowledge required

- Knowledge of the local area.
- Good organisational ability and written communication skills.
- Ability to work to deadlines
- Enthusiasm for the Scheme.
- Some understanding of WeBS, its partners and the different parts of the scheme (Core and Low Tide Counts), some survey fieldwork experience preferable but not essential.
- Ability to interact well with WeBS volunteers and staff.
- Word Processing and e-mail skills. Other elementary computer skills are also preferable but not essential. In particular, familiarity with the BTO's online surveys, such as WeBS Online, would be valuable.

About LOAC:

The WeBS Local Organiser Advisory Committee (LOAC) has been set up to improve the opportunity for communication between the counter network and the staff in the WeBS Office at the BTO. The LOAC is an advisory committee, which is made up of around eight LOs and a number of WeBS staff, with at least one representative from each of the partner organisations. Although the LOAC has no remit to make decisions, such as concerning funding and spending issues (which is the role of the WeBS Steering Group), it is intended that the LOAC will instead be able to provide ideas, advice and feedback to and from all Local Organisers.

We are looking to hear from any LOs who may be interested in serving on the LOAC in the future. In general, there will be one meeting a year, usually held at the BTO in Thetford. If you are potentially interested in being involved with the LOAC then please ask for more details.

Appointment

The role of Local Organiser is voluntary, however, an initial review will be held after twelve months, which allows either side to withdraw should circumstances dictate. Please be advised that there may be instances when WeBS Partners feel that the best interests of WeBS would be served by an early retirement or by appointing a replacement.

If you have the necessary skills and would like to be considered for the position please contact the WeBS Office at your earliest convenience.

Heidi Mellan
WeBS Counter Network Organiser

