

WeBS data for

Ebbw Mouth

Compiled on 02 October 2025



Introduction

This data request provides a tabulated five-year synopsis using WeBS Core Count data from five consecutive years for each species in each month. Also given are the winter peaks for each species, the mean peak counts, and the proportion of national/international populations present. WeBS Partners recommend that data are requested in this format when undertaking site assessments.

General Information about WeBS

The Wetland Bird Survey is a partnership jointly funded by the British Trust for Ornithology, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the last on behalf of the statutory nature conservation bodies: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, NatureScot and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland) with fieldwork conducted by volunteers and previous support from Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

WeBS aims to provide a scientific basis for the conservation of waterbird populations with the key objectives being to estimate UK population sizes, monitor trends in numbers and distribution, and identify nationally and internationally important sites.

WeBS Core Counts

Core Counts are conducted at a wide variety of wetlands throughout the UK, both coastal and inland. Around 3,000 sites are covered annually. Details of sites counted are available from [<https://app.bto.org/websonline/sites/data/sites-data.jsp>]. Counts are made once monthly, normally on pre-selected dates, concentrating on the winter period, although counts from all months are available for some sites. Counts on estuaries are usually made at high tide when birds are most easily counted at roosts.

Large sites that require more than one counter to cover the site in a reasonable time (3-4 hours) are divided into smaller counting areas or sectors. This allows a team of counters to make a synchronous count of all sectors. For many large sites, data are available for individual sectors. Sector data can be summed to provide site totals, although the completeness of the coverage must be taken into account when doing so.

WeBS Low Tide Counts

Low Tide Counts are conducted at most large estuaries in at least one winter every six years, with up to four counts being made through the period November - February. The exposed substrate at low tide is divided into small count areas (sectors) enabling the distribution birds to be determined in fine detail.

Low Tide Counts are designed to complement estuarine Core Counts, and are principally concerned with illustrating bird distributions. In this way it is possible to ascertain which parts of estuaries, inlets or bays are important for birds. Count data are usually averaged across the winter, to produce relative density maps. Data are provided at two spatial scales – the whole estuary level and the individual sector level. Peak and mean counts for each winter are then produced as part of a standard data request.

Interpretation of WeBS Data and contents of the Appendices.

Caution is necessary regarding the interpretation and application of waterbird counts and hence the interpretation of

the data presented in Tables 1 to 5. Data users are advised to consult the summary of interpretative considerations provided in Appendix 1. This summary is provided to prevent, as far as possible, incorrect inferences or inappropriate analyses which may occur due to misunderstanding of possible limitations of the data.

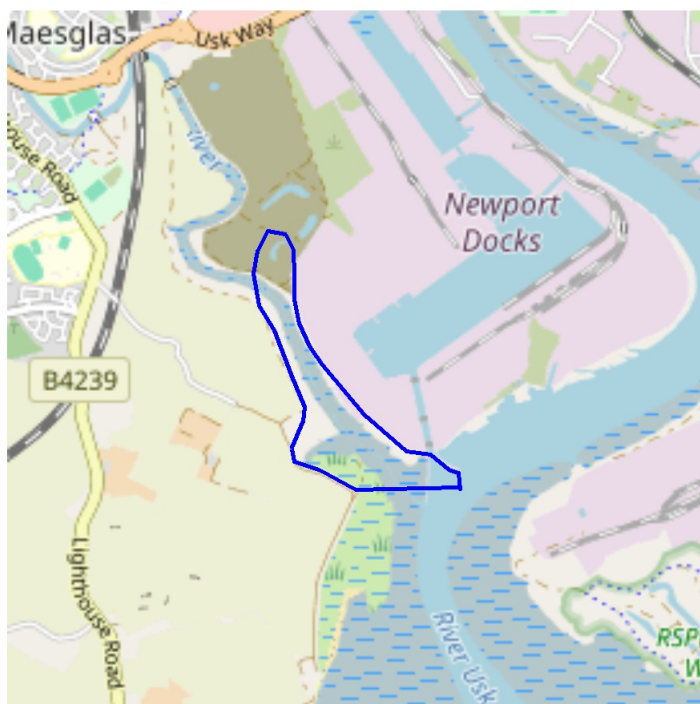
Appendix 2 provides further information relating to the format of the data and the methodology used to calculate the data presented in the tables.

Appendix 3 provides information about the classification of species of geese for which sub-populations cannot be reliably separated in the field by appearance.

Conditions of Use.

Please note that this summary report has been supplied as a WeBS data request and is subject to the Terms and Conditions agreed by the signatory of the Data Request Form. Full details of the WeBS data request terms and conditions of use can be viewed at https://app.bto.org/data-request/bto_datarequest_tc_webs.pdf

Site Map and List of WeBS sectors Ebbw Mouth



LOC LABEL	NAME	GRIDREF	Web Link
60404	Ebbw Mouth	ST310843	https://app.bto.org/websonline/sites/data/sites-data.jsp#locId=LOC670386

Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 1: Total Counts - All Species Combined

Peak monthly total = maximum of the sum of the counts of all species within each month

Seasonal peaks = sum of the maximum counts of each species within each Season

Year	Peak Monthly Total	Month	Autumn Peak	Winter Peak	Spring Peak
2019/20	352	JAN	327	528	19
2020/21	200	AUG	200	53	81
2021/22	213	DEC	209	308	59
2022/23	217	FEB	169	315	5
2023/24	414	MAR	76	433	49
MEAN	279		196	327	43

Data provided by the British Trust for Ornithology on behalf of The Wetland Bird Survey. These tabulations are based exclusively on data collected as part of the monthly

Core Counts. For some species (e.g. wintering geese) data collected by other surveys may be more appropriate for the purpose of site assessment.

Missing or unexpectedly low counts for gulls and terns should be treated with caution - counting these groups is optional and determination of count effort is not always possible.

Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 2: Five-year average monthly counts of each species

Figures in parentheses give the number of complete and incomplete counts upon which the average is based. Incomplete counts are excluded from calculations where, if included, they would depress the mean.

Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Canada Goose	0 (4,0)	2 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	2 (2,0)	7 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Greylag Goose (British/Irish)	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Mute Swan	0 (4,0)	2 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	4 (3,0)	6 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	3 (4,0)	4 (4,0)	4 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Shelduck	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	2 (4,0)	2 (4,0)	1 (4,0)
Mallard	2 (4,0)	6 (5,0)	10 (4,0)	1 (4,0)	7 (4,0)	7 (3,0)	10 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	4 (4,0)	4 (4,0)	2 (4,0)	4 (4,0)
Teal	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Grey Heron	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Little Egret	2 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	4 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Cormorant	0 (4,0)	1 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	2 (4,0)	3 (4,0)	5 (3,0)	2 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	2 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Oystercatcher	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (4,0)	1 (4,0)
Lapwing	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	2 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Curlew	2 (4,0)	4 (5,0)	3 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	2 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Turnstone	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Dunlin	0 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	50 (2,0)	25 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Redshank	25 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	8 (4,0)	71 (4,0)	50 (4,0)	150 (3,0)	8 (4,0)	50 (2,0)	122 (4,0)	11 (4,0)	2 (4,0)	2 (4,0)
Black-headed Gull	0 (4,0)	40 (5,0)	24 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	75 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Great Black-backed Gull	0 (4,0)	1 (5,0)	2 (4,0)	2 (4,0)	1 (4,0)	1 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	0 (4,0)	3 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)
Herring Gull	8 (4,0)	2 (5,0)	15 (4,0)	20 (4,0)	22 (4,0)	3 (3,0)	5 (4,0)	0 (2,0)	11 (4,0)	11 (3,0)	2 (4,0)	4 (4,0)
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2 (4,0)	0 (5,0)	1 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	0 (4,0)	4 (2,0)	1 (4,0)	1 (3,0)	0 (4,0)	1 (4,0)

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Missing or unexpectedly low counts for gulls and terns should be treated with caution - counting these groups is optional and determination of count effort is not always possible.

Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 3: Five-year peak monthly counts of each species

The value reported represents the highest count obtained over the five-year period during the month in question and the species in question.

Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Canada Goose	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	4	29	2	0	0
Greylag Goose (British/Irish)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Mute Swan	0	8	2	0	0	12	22	0	12	14	10	0
Shelduck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	6	4
Mallard	6	24	20	3	14	12	20	0	18	12	4	14
Teal	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grey Heron	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Little Egret	6	1	5	2	3	0	2	0	2	0	1	1
Cormorant	0	4	0	5	7	12	6	1	4	0	3	1
Oystercatcher	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2
Lapwing	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Curlew	10	20	10	1	2	0	1	2	1	6	0	0
Turnstone	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dunlin	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	100	100	0	0	0
Redshank	100	0	26	180	165	200	30	100	300	30	4	6
Black-headed Gull	0	200	50	1	0	0	300	0	0	0	0	0
Great Black-backed Gull	2	6	6	7	2	1	1	0	2	8	2	2
Herring Gull	32	12	38	78	65	8	12	0	43	33	9	9
Lesser Black-backed Gull	10	0	2	1	0	0	0	8	4	4	1	3

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Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 4a: Five-year autumn peak counts, and month in which this was recorded, of each species

The value reported represents the highest count obtained between July and October for the year in question and the species in question.

Where a count is enclosed by parentheses this indicates that it was considered incomplete

i.e. those parts of the site not visited typically holds at least 25% of the species in question.

Incomplete counts are excluded from calculation where, if included, they would depress the mean. When all counts are considered to be incomplete the maximum replaces the mean.

Species	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean of Peaks
Canada Goose	1 (AUG)	0	11 (AUG)	0	0	2
Mute Swan	8 (AUG)	0	0	0	0	2
Mallard	24 (AUG)	0	20 (SEP)	8 (AUG)	3 (SEP)	11
Grey Heron	2 (SEP)	0	1 (SEP)	1 (SEP)	1 (JUL)	1
Little Egret	5 (SEP)	0	5 (SEP)	5 (SEP)	6 (JUL)	4
Cormorant	5 (OCT)	0	4 (OCT)	0	0	2
Oystercatcher	3 (SEP)	0	2 (JUL)	0	0	1
Curlew	10 (SEP)	0	10 (JUL)	3 (SEP)	20 (AUG)	9
Turnstone	0	0	1 (AUG)	0	0	0
Redshank	180 (OCT)	0	100 (OCT)	100 (JUL)	1 (OCT)	76
Black-headed Gull	6 (SEP)	200 (AUG)	0	50 (SEP)	40 (SEP)	59
Great Black-backed Gull	3 (OCT)	0	7 (OCT)	0	4 (SEP)	3
Herring Gull	78 (OCT)	0	38 (SEP)	2 (SEP)	0	24
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2 (SEP)	0	10 (JUL)	0	1 (SEP)	3

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Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 4b: Five-year winter peak counts, and month in which this was recorded, of each species

The value reported represents the highest count obtained between November and March for the year in question and the species in question.

Where a count is enclosed by parentheses this indicates that it was considered incomplete

i.e. those parts of the site not visited typically holds at least 25% of the species in question.

Incomplete counts are excluded from calculation where, if included, they would depress the mean. When all counts are considered to be incomplete the maximum replaces the mean.

Species	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean of Peaks
Canada Goose	0	0	0	29 (MAR)	0	7
Greylag Goose (British/Irish)	0	0	2 (FEB)	0	0	0
Mute Swan	22 (JAN)	0	2 (JAN)	0	12 (MAR)	7
Mallard	20 (JAN)	0	20 (JAN)	13 (NOV)	0	13
Teal	2 (NOV)	0	0	0	0	0
Grey Heron	1 (NOV)	0	0	1 (NOV)	0	0
Little Egret	0	0	1 (JAN)	3 (NOV)	2 (MAR)	1
Cormorant	7 (NOV)	4 (MAR)	12 (DEC)	1 (JAN)	6 (JAN)	6
Oystercatcher	0	0	2 (MAR)	2 (FEB)	0	1
Lapwing	0	0	0	6 (JAN)	0	2
Curlew	0	0	2 (NOV)	2 (FEB)	0	1
Dunlin	0	0	1 (NOV)	100 (FEB)	100 (MAR)	40
Redshank	165 (NOV)	0	200 (DEC)	150 (MAR)	300 (MAR)	163
Black-headed Gull	300 (JAN)	0	0	0	0	75
Great Black-backed Gull	2 (NOV)	2 (MAR)	1 (NOV)	0	1 (JAN)	1
Herring Gull	9 (NOV)	43 (MAR)	65 (NOV)	0	12 (JAN)	26
Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	4 (MAR)	0	8 (FEB)	0	3

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Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 4c: Five-year spring peak counts, and month in which this was recorded, of each species

The value reported represents the highest count obtained between April and June for the year in question and the species in question.

Where a count is enclosed by parentheses this indicates that it was considered incomplete

i.e. those parts of the site not visited typically holds at least 25% of the species in question.

Incomplete counts are excluded from calculation where, if included, they would depress the mean. When all counts are considered to be incomplete the maximum replaces the mean.

Species	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean of Peaks
Canada Goose	0	0	2 (APR)	0	0	0
Mute Swan	0	10 (MAY)	14 (APR)	0	0	5
Shelduck	0	4 (JUN)	8 (APR)	0	0	2
Mallard	0	14 (JUN)	12 (APR)	4 (APR)	0	6
Grey Heron	0	0	1 (JUN)	0	0	0
Little Egret	0	1 (JUN)	1 (JUN)	1 (MAY)	0	1
Cormorant	1 (JUN)	0	3 (MAY)	0	0	1
Oystercatcher	2 (JUN)	2 (MAY)	1 (MAY)	0	2 (APR)	1
Curlew	0	6 (APR)	1 (APR)	0	0	1
Redshank	6 (JUN)	30 (APR)	15 (APR)	0	2 (MAY)	11
Great Black-backed Gull	0	2 (JUN)	0	0	8 (APR)	2
Herring Gull	9 (JUN)	9 (MAY)	1 (JUN)	0	33 (APR)	10
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1 (JUN)	3 (JUN)	0	0	4 (APR)	2

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Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 4d: Five-year annual peak counts, and month in which this was recorded, of each species

The value reported represents the highest count obtained between July and June for the year in question and the species in question.

Where a count is enclosed by parentheses this indicates that it was considered incomplete

i.e. those parts of the site not visited typically holds at least 25% of the species in question.

Incomplete counts are excluded from calculation where, if included, they would depress the mean. When all counts are considered to be incomplete the maximum replaces the mean.

Species	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean of Peaks
Canada Goose	1 (AUG)	0	11 (AUG)	29 (MAR)	0	8
Greylag Goose (British/Irish)	0	0	2 (FEB)	0	0	0
Mute Swan	22 (JAN)	10 (MAY)	14 (APR)	0	12 (MAR)	12
Shelduck	0	4 (JUN)	8 (APR)	0	0	2
Mallard	24 (AUG)	14 (JUN)	20 (SEP)	13 (NOV)	3 (SEP)	15
Teal	2 (NOV)	0	0	0	0	0
Grey Heron	2 (SEP)	0	1 (SEP)	1 (SEP)	1 (JUL)	1
Little Egret	5 (SEP)	1 (JUN)	5 (SEP)	5 (SEP)	6 (JUL)	4
Cormorant	7 (NOV)	4 (MAR)	12 (DEC)	1 (JAN)	6 (JAN)	6
Oystercatcher	3 (SEP)	2 (MAY)	2 (JUL)	2 (FEB)	2 (APR)	2
Lapwing	0	0	0	6 (JAN)	0	1
Curlew	10 (SEP)	6 (APR)	10 (JUL)	3 (SEP)	20 (AUG)	10
Turnstone	0	0	1 (AUG)	0	0	0
Dunlin	0	0	1 (NOV)	100 (FEB)	100 (MAR)	40
Redshank	180 (OCT)	30 (APR)	200 (DEC)	150 (MAR)	300 (MAR)	172
Black-headed Gull	300 (JAN)	200 (AUG)	0	50 (SEP)	40 (SEP)	118
Great Black-backed Gull	3 (OCT)	2 (MAR)	7 (OCT)	0	8 (APR)	4
Herring Gull	78 (OCT)	43 (MAR)	65 (NOV)	2 (SEP)	33 (APR)	44
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2 (SEP)	4 (MAR)	10 (JUL)	8 (FEB)	4 (APR)	6

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Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 5a: National and International Importance (Annual Peak counts)

Figures given indicate the percentage of the relevant threshold level in operation during 2023 represented by the five-winter mean of peak counts for the species in question. Species are excluded if they did not have an importance threshold in 2023 (typically non-native or occasional species).

e.g. 50% would indicate that the five-winter mean of peak counts is half the threshold level. It follows that values of 100% or higher indicate nationally or internationally important numbers of a given species occur on the site. Species which have recorded nationally or internationally important numbers are highlighted in red

Where a count is enclosed by parentheses this indicates that it was considered incomplete

(i.e. those parts of the site not visited typically hold at least 25% of the species in question)

(an asterisk indicates that a 50-bird minimum (typically used for designation) has been used rather than 1% of National population)

Species	Annual 5yr mean of peaks	Percent of National Threshold	Percent of International Threshold
Mute Swan	12	2%	2%
Shelduck	2	0%	0%
Mallard	15	0%	0%
Grey Heron	1	0%	0%
Little Egret	4	4%	0%
Cormorant	6	1%	1%
Oystercatcher	2	0%	0%
Lapwing	1	0%	0%
Curlew	10	1%	0%
Dunlin	40	1%	0%
Redshank	172	18%	7%
Black-headed Gull	118	1%	1%
Great Black-backed Gull	4	1%	0%
Herring Gull	44	1%	1%
Lesser Black-backed Gull	6	0%	0%

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Five year summary for Ebbw Mouth

Table 5b: National and International Importance (Seasonal Peak counts)

Figures given indicate the percentage of the relevant threshold level in operation during 2023 represented by the five-winter mean of peak counts for the species and season in question. Species are excluded if they did not have an importance threshold in 2023 (typically non-native or occasional species).

e.g. 50% would indicate that the five-winter mean of peak counts is half the threshold level. It follows that values of 100% or higher indicate nationally or internationally important numbers of a given species occur on the site. Species which have recorded nationally or internationally important numbers in one or more seasons are highlighted in red

Where a count is enclosed by parentheses this indicates that it was considered incomplete

(i.e. those parts of the site not visited typically hold at least 25% of the species in question)

(an asterisk indicates that a 50-bird minimum (typically used for designation) has been used rather than 1% of National population)

Species	Autumn 5yr mean of peaks	Winter 5yr mean of peaks	Spring 5yr mean of peaks	Autumn Percent of National Threshold	Winter Percent of National Threshold	Spring Percent of National Threshold	Autumn Percent of International Threshold	Winter Percent of International Threshold	Spring Percent of International Threshold
Mute Swan	2	7	5	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Shelduck	0	0	2			0%			0%
Mallard	11	13	6	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grey Heron	1	0	0	0%			0%		
Little Egret	4	1	1	4%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Cormorant	2	6	1	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Oystercatcher	1	1	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Lapwing	0	2	0		0%			0%	
Curlew	9	1	1	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Dunlin	0	40	0		1%			0%	
Redshank	76	163	11	8%	17%	1%	3%	7%	0%
Black-headed Gull	59	75	0	0%	0%		0%	0%	
Great Black-backed Gull	3	1	2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Herring Gull	24	26	10	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Lesser Black-backed Gull	3	3	2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Data provided by the British Trust for Ornithology on behalf of The Wetland Bird Survey. These tabulations are based exclusively on data collected as part of the monthly Core Counts. For some species (e.g. wintering geese) data collected by other surveys may be more appropriate for the purpose of site assessment.

Missing or unexpectedly low counts for gulls and terns should be treated with caution - counting these groups is optional and determination of count effort is not always possible.

Appendix 1: WeBS Core Count Data Requests: Interpretative Considerations

The following notes are provided to aid in the use and interpretation of WeBS data and to provide guidelines for their presentation. Further notes on interpretation and a national overview of non-breeding waterbirds in the UK are provided in the annual report *Waterbirds in the UK*, which summarises the results from WeBS. The WeBS Report Online also includes national totals, long-term indices, species accounts with numbers at key sites and 1% levels for national and international populations (<https://app.bto.org/webs-reporting/numbers.jsp>). A summary report is available to download free from the [BTO website] (<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs/publications>), alternatively if you wish to receive a paper copy please contact BTO.

Interpretation

Caution is necessary regarding the interpretation and application of waterbird counts. The following notes are designed to prevent, as far as possible, incorrect inferences or inappropriate analyses due to ignorance or misunderstanding of possible limitations of the data. However, since general guidelines cannot cover every possible use of the data, please contact the WeBS Office at BTO should you have any further queries.

WeBS Partners cannot accept responsibility for any misuse or misinterpretation of WeBS data.

1% Levels for National and International importance

A wetland is considered important in a national (Great Britain or all-Ireland) context if it regularly holds 1% or more of one waterbird species, sub-species or population (in Great Britain or the island of Ireland respectively), and of international importance if it regularly supports the same proportion of the relevant international population. Normally this is measured by calculating the five-year peak mean for each species and expressing this as a percentage of the national/international population estimates. Where 1% of the national population is less than 50 birds, 50 is normally used as the minimum qualifying level for the designation of sites. 1% levels have not been derived for introduced or escaped species since these are not included in the legislation regarding site designation. Sites may also be of importance if, while not supporting important concentrations of individual species, they hold large numbers of total waterbirds, e.g. sites regularly holding 20,000 or more are considered internationally important by virtue of absolute numbers.

It is necessary to bear in mind the distinction between sites that *regularly* hold wintering numbers of national/international importance and those which may happen to exceed the appropriate qualifying levels only in occasional winters. This follows the recommendations of the Ramsar Convention, which states that key sites are identified because they support such numbers on a regular basis (usually calculated as the mean winter maximum from the last five winters). The proportion of national/international populations is thus given in the *Tabulated five-year synopses*, where the proportion exceeds 0.01% of the relevant biogeographical population. However, sites which only irregularly support nationally/internationally important numbers may be important at certain times, e.g. when numbers in the UK are high, during the main migratory periods or during cold weather, when they may act as refuges for birds away from traditionally used sites. Further, sites not of international or national importance may nevertheless be of regional importance, especially in areas with relatively small waterbird populations. Sites which support significant numbers of only one species may be of critical importance to that population and therefore of very high conservation value.

Coverage

Ideally, peak counts from several years should be used to assess the importance of a site, as counts in any one year may be unrepresentative due to gaps in coverage, disturbance or weather induced effects on numbers and distribution. The short-term movement of birds between closely adjacent sites may lead to altered assessments of a

site's apparent importance. This is particularly true when considering individual sectors within a large site, as considerable movement is likely to occur. It is not possible to estimate the total number of individuals frequenting a site in any one period of time from count data alone.

More frequent counts than the normal once-monthly WeBS visits are necessary to assess more accurately the rapid turnover of waterbirds that occurs during times of migration or cold weather movements.

WeBS sites can include any open water habitat within the UK. However, coverage varies considerably with respect to both region and habitat. Many of the more remote parts of the UK where human populations are small consequently suffer from a lack of coverage. Coverage of habitat is also uneven, with two habitats in particular, rivers and open coast, being poorly represented. Consequences of these biases include under-recording of certain species, such as Goosander, Red-breasted Merganser and Turnstone, when considering national or regional totals of waterbirds. Further, whilst most species of waterbirds are usually obvious and easily counted, secretive species, such as Snipe, will normally also be poorly represented in both site counts and national totals.

The timing of the count can also affect the numbers of birds present at a site. This is particularly true of estuaries where, in particular, the distribution of birds will vary according to the time of the tidal cycle. Most WeBS Core Counts at estuarine sites are conducted at high tide when birds are generally found at just a few locations. This usually represents the best opportunity for obtaining an accurate total of birds at the site. However, this underestimates the importance of other areas of the site used, for example, as feeding areas at other times in the tidal cycle. Low Tide Counts, therefore, are crucial in establishing key areas for waterbirds within tidal sites.

Several species of waterbirds, notably geese, often feed away from wetlands during the day, returning there to roost in the evening. Most WeBS counts are made during mid-morning, when the importance of the site for such species will not be recorded. Roost counts made at dawn or dusk are conducted at most UK goose roost sites. Roost counts are also effective for monitoring the numbers of other species also, e.g. Goosanders returning from rivers to roost on adjacent reservoirs.

Data Summation

Care is needed when consolidating data at different scales, especially that provided in a Tabulated five-year synopsis. It is first necessary to calculate the monthly totals by summing "raw" data, i.e. monthly counts, for the individual parts within the area being considered, whether it is sectors of a large site or sites within a country. It is important to take into account missing counts, which may not always be self-evident. Only from the summed "raw" data should peak counts and mean peaks be calculated. Summing the mean peaks for the constituent parts gives a falsely elevated total for the whole area for the reason that the peak counts used for calculating the means on the individual areas will almost inevitably have occurred on different dates as birds move between adjacent areas of large complexes.

For example, for two adjacent reservoirs A and B, if 1,100 Coot occur on Reservoir A between September and December, with none on adjacent Reservoir B, and then switch to use Reservoir B between January and March, both reservoirs, individually, will have a peak 1,100 (1% of the GB population). Adding the peaks will give a value of 2,200 (seemingly 2%), yet only 1,100 were ever present on the whole consolidated "site" at any one time. Individually, each area is as important as the 1% levels suggest, but the values for the whole site must be calculated from raw data for the whole site.

Data Presentation

WeBS Partners encourage the use of WeBS data for conservation and research. Where the use of WeBS data results in a publication, report, paper, display etc. that includes presentation of WeBS data, please bear in mind that others will then have access to these data. WeBS Partners are keen to see that the same data provided to the applicant cannot be gleaned directly from the reports etc. in which they are presented as it prevents WeBS from monitoring the use of data and also from imposing the terms and conditions of use. This may result in the use of data by other parties contrary to the terms and conditions of the release of WeBS data, particularly where large amounts of data are presented.

Please consider presenting data in summary format, or providing only the minimum data relevant to the use. The need to present data in such a way will vary according to the audience and in some cases, very few modifications will be necessary. WeBS Partners recognise, however, that there will be cases where presentation of a significant amount of data may be desirable or necessary. Please contact the WeBS Partners before sensitive datasets are published. It

is a condition of the use of WeBS data that Monthly counts are not given verbatim without prior written permission from WeBS Partners.

Appendix 2: WeBS Core Count Data Requests: Format and Interpretation of Provided Data

Standard Tabulated five-year synopsis

General Information

Period covered by tabulations

Tabulated five-year synopses are produced using WeBS count data for one site or amalgamation of several sites for a five-year period. The WeBS counting year runs from July to June (so year 22/23 includes data from July 2022 to June 2023 inclusive). The year is divided into three functional counting seasons: Autumn (July to October inclusive to describe autumn passage); Winter (November to March inclusive to describe the wintering population) and Spring (April to June inclusive to describe spring passage).

Count quality

Complete counts are regarded as reliable estimates of the numbers present whereas incomplete counts are treated as under-estimates and are used selectively throughout these tabulations. Whether or not a count is complete is based both on whether or not all parts of the site were counted (large sites are routinely counted section by section) and whether or not the observer considered that factors such as weather conditions or disturbance may have affected the counts. This is assessed separately for each species to allow for different parts of a site being important to different species.

A completeness flag is assigned when counts are added together to give a species count for a complex site (made up of two or more count sectors). It must be borne in mind that for some large sites (such as the Forth, Severn, Thames) these counts might have been done under very different conditions and even on different days of the same weekend, by unconnected counters. Consequently the visit qualities assigned to the various counted sectors contributing to a consolidation may be quite different. Additionally a variable amount of the overall site may well have gone uncounted.

Thus in order to construct the species tables for the annual report, and summary statistics produced for data requests, it is necessary to compute completeness of coverage taking into account the confidence attached to individual counts contributing to the consolidation of a complex site and whether or not any parts of the complex were uncounted. The importance of the contribution of each count sector within a complex is assessed based on its average species-specific contribution to the consolidated total. Counts for individual count sectors will have been assigned as good, poor or flagged as uncounted. When these are added together the overall total is assigned a completeness of coverage flag as

good: count sections counted with high confidence typically hold $\geq 75\%$ of overall total for the species in question;

poor: count sections counted with high confidence typically hold $< 75\%$ of overall total for the species in question;

The contribution of each count sector to a complex is estimated by looking at the average count for that count sector as a proportion of the sum of the average counts for all count sectors for the complex. These proportions are calculated on a species-specific basis to control for the situation where different count sectors are important for different species. The estimate of numbers usually found on a specific sector is based on typical numbers at the same time of year and in recent years. Consequently, in order to control for long-term trends at sites the average count for each count sector on a given date is based on the 15 counts, nearest in time to the date in question, while controlling for seasonal trends by restricting those counts to the previous, current and following calendar months. For example, the importance of a part of a site during February will be assessed by considering the proportion of the population it has held on average during January, February and March. This controls for both long term trends and seasonal variation when assessing count completeness.

Incorporating incomplete counts

In order to make maximum use of count data, the following procedure is adopted throughout the *Tabulated five-year synopsis*. Averages are initially calculated using only complete counts. Averages are then recalculated with incomplete counts that exceed the previously calculated average also included. This ensures that while low incomplete counts do not depress the average high incomplete counts are allowed to increase the average (as in fact the true average would be even higher if complete counts had been available in these cases). If all counts were incomplete the highest incomplete count is used as an estimate of the average.

Tabulations

Table 1 This table provides information on the total waterbird community (all species combined) in each of the years summarised. Summing the counts of all species from each month and selecting the highest provides the “peak monthly total”. The month of the peak is indicated; and an average of the peaks over five years is provided. Where the peaks from all years are incomplete, the maximum peak is used.

For each included year, the “seasonal peak species totals” are calculated by listing the highest count for each species in each season and then summing these counts. Averages of the peak species totals for each season are provided. Where the peak counts from all years are incomplete, the maximum peak count is used. ‘NC’ indicates that no counts were made during the particular season in any of the included years.

Table 2 Average counts calculated across the included years are provided for each species. The number of complete/incomplete counts during the five years are given in parentheses. The latter are species specific. Where a particular species only occurs very rarely on a site and there are insufficient data to assess the quality of a visit, these counts are also treated as if incomplete.

Table 3 The highest counts made over the included years are given for each month for each species. The number of complete/incomplete counts can be found from Table 2.

Table 4a-4d Tables 4a, 4b and 4c give the peak seasonal count of each species in each of the included years, for Autumn, Winter and Spring respectively, and Table 4d gives the annual peak count for each WeBS year. The month of the peak is given in each case. Where tabulated values are enclosed in parentheses this indicates they are based on incomplete counts. Where a particular species only occurs very rarely on a site and there are insufficient data to assess the quality of a visit, these counts are also treated as if incomplete. ‘NC’ indicates that no counts were made during the particular season for which it is shown.

Table 5a-5b Average peak season counts as tabulated in 4a-4d are compared to qualifying levels used to assess whether or not a site holds nationally or internationally important numbers of a given species. Table 5a makes the assessment using the annual peak counts as tabulated in 4d and Table 5b uses the seasonal peak counts (4a-4c). The qualifying levels are published in the Wetland Bird Survey / Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme - *Waterbirds in the UK* - published by BTO, RSPB, JNCC and NatureScot. Qualifying levels are updated at approximately six-year intervals. The latest qualifying levels are used for all data requests even if count data refer to earlier years. The tabulated value is the percent of the relevant qualifying level that the mean peak count for the site represents. For some species separate national qualifying levels are defined for Britain and Northern Ireland (i.e. all-Ireland for the latter). In such cases the appropriate national qualifying level is used. Note that for some species (e.g. Ringed Plover), different qualifying levels are used for assessment of wintering and passage (spring & autumn) populations. For some species (e.g. Common Sandpiper), qualifying levels have not been set. When this is the case N/A replaces the estimate of importance in the table. Where tabulated values are enclosed in parentheses this indicates that 1% of the British wintering population (the normal qualifying level criterion for British National importance) is less than 50 birds. In such cases 50 is used as the minimum qualifying level for British national importance. Species rows are highlighted in red if the site reaches the national threshold during one or more season (i.e. if the percent of national threshold is equal to or greater than 100%)

Report tables in Excel format

The data provided in the standard five-year synopsis are also available in an excel file which can be provided on request. This file includes sheets for each of the tables included in the synopsis which contain data matching the format of the synopsis.

To enable easier reformatting of the data and use of the data in analyses, Table 2 and Tables 4a-4d are also provided in ‘long’ format, with the values in each cell in the table being split across multiple rows (‘Table 2 split’, ‘Table 4a split’ etc). Note that Tables 4a-4d include an additional column in the Excel file which does not appear in the five-year synopsis report ‘Completeness’. This variable indicates whether or not the count is considered complete (1=complete; 2=incomplete). Hence, records with a completeness value of 2 are equivalent to values shown in parentheses in the synopsis report.

Historic Site Data in csv format

Where more than five years worth of data have been requested, the full data for the period requested will be provided

in csv format. The csv file will contain seven variables: Site; Species; Year; Month; Count; Completeness; WeBS_Sort_Order. The Year and Month variables in this file refer to the calendar year and calendar month (rather than the WeBS year and month). The Completeness variable indicates whether the count quality is considered 'Good' or 'Poor' (see the 'Count quality' section under 'Standard Tabulated five-year synopsis' above for further details about this assessment).

Appendix 3: Classification of Goose Populations

Within the WeBS database several goose populations are identified according to location (and totals derived by summing counts from particular WeBS regions) where they cannot be separated in the field by appearance. The following goose populations are defined according to location as detailed below. Details about specific surveys covering goose populations can be found at <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/goose-and-swan-monitoring-programme> and further information about the classification of goose populations can be found in chapter 3.6 of the WeBS Methods document (www.bto.org/sites/default/files/webs_methods.pdf)

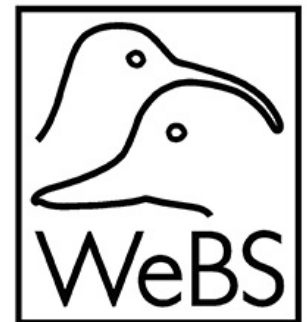


Images: Wigeon, Redshank and Grey Heron: Edmund Fellowes/BTO; Great Crested Grebe: Tom Streeter/BTO; Black-tailed Godwit: Liz Cutting/BTO

The UK hosts internationally important numbers of wintering waterbirds. One of the principal aims of WeBS is to provide data to facilitate their conservation. As part of the WeBS Core Count scheme over 3,000 wetlands are counted annually, many on a monthly basis.

Tabulated five-year synopses provide the average count from five consecutive years for each species in each month on a given site, or sector of a large site. Also given are the winter peaks for each species, the mean peak counts, and the proportion of national/international populations present. These data will take into account any variation of coverage of each of the sectors.

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