



THE WETLAND BIRD SURVEY (WeBS)

My name is Phil Hampson and I am the WeBS BTO Local Organiser for Derbyshire.

WeBS counters monitor the UK's internationally important non-breeding waterbirds, sites are counted once a month, providing data for population and trends. Waterbirds includes wildfowl (ducks, geese and swans), waders, rails, divers, grebes, cormorants and herons. Gulls and terns are optionally included. In a typical year over 220 waterbird species, races or populations are counted in WeBS, including non-native, feral and vagrant species. National trends are produced for the most numerous 110 of these.

Over 3,000 volunteer counters currently contribute to the survey, making over 40,000 visits each year to 2,800 sites. Each counter adopts a place to count monthly. Non-breeding waterbird numbers peak in different numbers for different species, so counting is done year-round and reported on WeBS years running from July to June. As non-breeding waterbirds can be very mobile, the counts are nationally synchronised, with counters requested to visit during the day on priority Core Count dates (Sundays) if at all possible. At coastal locations, counting is done at high tide. At large sites, several counters will be working as a team. Each counter surveys the whole of their defined count area, known as a WeBS sector, identifying all the waterbird species present and counting the number of individuals of each species. Counters can also add supplementary data, such as evening roost counts of gulls, or casual counts of notable numbers of passage species that are higher than those present on their Core Count visits.

You do not need to be a member of the BTO to participate.

Volunteers become part of a huge network of people regularly submitting counts that are important to the BTO and conservation in general. If you can give the time to carry out a count once a month and are interested in taking part as a counter, please let me know and we can discuss it if you wish - my contact details are at the end or a site can be allocated and away you go. As stated above you neither have to be a BTO member or an ornithological expert, as long as you can identify the birds on the water then that suffices.

In Derbyshire there are over 180 sites of which 52 have counters, 2 of these may be inactive and I am trying to verify this. The list of vacant sites is available on the DOS website. Maybe one of these is within your local patch and you already cover and count it, if so and you would be happy to do the WeBS count on specific dates then please do contact me (see the bottom of the page).

Core Count Priority Dates

To aid coordination, counts should be made on the priority dates listed below, all SUNDays, ideally during the morning. If a count cannot be carried out at this time, then the nearest suitable alternative date in that week, before or after can be used.

2020

15th November 13th December

2021

17th January	14th February	14th March
11th April	23rd May	13th June
25th July	22nd August	12th September
10th October	7th November	19th December

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