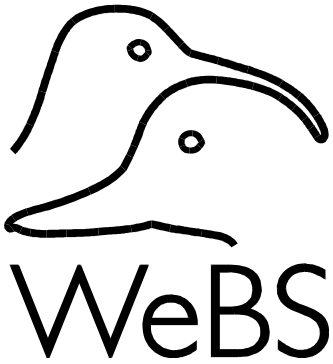
Waterbirds in the UK 2008/09
The Wetland Bird Survey

Neil Calbrade, Chas Holt, Graham Austin, Heidi Mellan, Richard Hearn, David Stroud, Simon Wotton & Andy Musgrove



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Jack is from Yorkshire and has been passionate about wildlife since an early age. Up to now, his work has been used in several local bird reports. A WeBS counter from Spurn, he has worked as an assistant warden at Fair Isle Bird Observatory, Shetland since 2009. To see more examples of Jack's artwork, see his blog: dunbirdin.blogspot.com

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This report is provided free to all WeBS counters and those who participate in the other national waterbird surveys, none of whom receive financial reward for their invaluable work. Further feedback is provided to counters through the annual WeBS Newsletter. For further information please contact the WeBS Office at the BTO.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book represents the twenty-eighth report of the Wetland Bird Survey and comprises information from WeBS and complementary national and local surveys, *e.g.* goose censuses. It is entirely dependent on the many thousands of dedicated volunteer ornithologists who supply the data and to whom we are extremely grateful. The Local Organisers who coordinate these counts deserve special thanks for their contribution.

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The WETLAND BIRD SURVEY

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OTHER NATIONAL WATERBIRD SURVEYS

Details of and contacts for many of the other waterbird surveys used in this report, and of forthcoming surveys, can be obtained via the web sites of the four WeBS partner organisations.

ERRATA TO 2007/08 REPORT

Please note the following corrections to data presented in the 2007/08 WeBS annual report:

P.112, Little Egret: Breydon Water & Berney Marshes was erroneously excluded from the table of sites exceeding the table qualifying threshold. The peak there in 2007/08 was a supplementary count of 126 birds.

P.117, Water Rail: Heaton Park was erroneousy included as a site exceeding the table qualifying threshold. No birds were recorded in 2007/08 (not 40 as stated).

CONTENTS

Details of WeBS Core Count survey methods, Analysis and Presentation of data, and Interpretation of Waterbird Counts, are now available via the WeBS website at ***www.bto.org/webs/websdownloads/methods***

Summary

WeBS AND 'WATERBIRDS IN THE UK'

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), in association with Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), to monitor non-breeding waterbirds in the UK.

The principal aims of the scheme are to identify population sizes, determine trends in numbers and distribution, and identify important sites for waterbirds.

WeBS Core Counts are made annually at approximately 2,000 wetland sites of all habitats; estuaries and large still waters predominate. Monthly coordinated counts are made mostly by volunteers, principally from September to March, with fewer observations during summer months. Data from other sources, *e.g.* roost counts of grey geese, are included in this report where relevant.

This report presents total numbers counted for all species in the most recent year in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Annual indices are provided for the more numerous species, as are monthly indices showing relative abundance during the winter.

2008/09 COVERAGE

This report summarises counts during 2008/09 and previous years (since 1960 for wildfowl, 1969 for waders and the early 1980s or 1990s for other species). During 2008/09, WeBS counters covered 4,002 count sectors at 2,212 count sites. During the core 'winter' period of September to March, 3,940 sectors were counted at least once and over 2,000 were covered in all twelve months.

This, once again, represents a fantastic effort by everyone involved, and a huge thank-you goes to all.

2008/09 HEADLINES

The following species reached historical peaks or lows in terms of WeBS index values in 2008/09.

Great Britain:
'Highs': Pink-footed Goose, Re-established Greylag Goose, Svalbard Barnacle Goose, Naturalised Barnacle Goose, Egyptian Goose, Mandarin, Little Egret, Avocet
'Lows': Mallard, Pochard, Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Ringed Plover, Dunlin

Northern Ireland:
'Highs': Greenshank
'Lows': Mute Swan, Wigeon, Gadwall, Pochard, Coot, Grey Plover, Dunlin

2008/09 SUMMARY

Swans & Geese: Continuing the theme of recent years, there was a strong contrast in the trends of **Bewick's Swan** and **Whooper Swan**. Numbers of Whoopers increased again, the British index reaching its highest level. Among geese, the number of **Pink-footed Geese** rose to a record high in 2008/09 with an exceptional 351,000 logged during the annual autumn censuses, including 90,455 in Southwest Lancashire alone. All-time peaks in national indices were also attained by several re-established or introduced goose populations; for example those of **Greylag**, **Barnacle** and **Egyptian Geese**. In contrast, however, **European White-fronted Geese** continue to winter in Britain in fewer numbers each year. More encouragingly, there are signs that the well-documented fall in numbers of **Greenland White-fronted Goose** may have bottomed out.

Ducks: Both in Britain and Northern Ireland there is typically high between year variation in the indices for ducks, but the trends for a number continue to show decline. These changes are likely to be due to subtle shifts in core wintering range in response to milder winters and long term declines in **Mallard**, **Pochard**, **Goldeneye** and **Red-breasted Merganser** are

particularly striking. Several species, such as **Wigeon, Gadwall, Shoveler** and **Tufted Duck** are declining in Northern Ireland but not, as yet, in Britain; further indication of "short stopping" and a general north/east shift in core wintering ranges. In contrast, **Mandarin Duck** reached an all-time high in Britain in 2008/09. In general, monitoring of seaduck using WeBS methods is notoriously difficult; species such as **Long-tailed Duck** and **Velvet Scoter** require more targeted surveys of favoured sites so it is difficult to draw conclusions about these species at the moment. Following results of genetic analysis of **Shetland Eiders**, that sub-population is documented here for the first time.

Divers, Grebes, Herons & Rails: Numbers of the regular divers and scarcer sea grebes were similar to recent years; the assessment of which relies heavily on submission of supplementary data from sites not counted routinely. **Little Grebes** in Britain continue to show evidence of a gradual increase, while **Great Crested Grebes** may now be in slight decline**. Little Egret** again expanded its range both north and westwards; a maximum count of 633 at The Wash in September is the highest site count ever. In contrast, a recent marked decline in **Coot** in Northern Ireland has hastened, another trend possibly driven by "short stopping".

Waders: In common with some ducks, trends for several species of wader indicate marked declines in UK wintering populations. The two most striking and long-term are for **Ringed Plover** and **Dunlin**, both of which have now reached all-time lows. Other species showing falls over the shorter-term include **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Curlew** and **Redshank**. In contrast, recent years have seen apparent upsurges in numbers of **Grey Plover** and **Sanderling;** bucking the longer-term trends for those species. Numbers of wintering **Black-tailed Godwits** appear to have stabilised, whereas **Avocet** has continued its long-term increase and the national index value is at an all-time high. Numbers of wintering **Golden Plover** and **Lapwing**, which typically fluctuate more than for other wader species, are currently showing signs of decline at UK sites.

Gulls & Terns: Numbers of gull and terns recorded by WeBS reflect coverage as much as abundance of birds *per se*. Notably, after 2008/09, several sites no longer qualify as being internationally/nationally important for gulls; roost counts not having been submitted since the last wintering gull survey in 2003/04.

As in all WeBS-years, there are a number of factors which could potentially have impacted upon the recorded numbers and distribution of waterbirds in 2008/09.

These include:

- subtle responses of birds to the effects of milder winters associated with climate change
- fluctutations in breeding success and survival rates
- effects of other anthropogenic pressures, such as habitat loss, degradation and disturbance.

In recent years, WeBS counts have detected changes in populations of some species which migrate from the Arctic tundra to winter on European estuaries. Milder winters have allowed a range of species to winter on estuaries further east and north; a phenomenon known as "short stopping". Climate change can also help to explain observed regional differences in trends within the UK (e.g. declines of Wigeon, Coot and Lapwing in Northern Ireland), as well as recent marked changes in distribution, or even colonisation, by some species (e.g. range expansion of Little Egret in Britain).

Results from waterbird monitoring schemes are best considered at the flyway population level. Hence, where possible in this report, interpretation of results from WeBS is placed in the context of trends derived from other countries within these flyways.

The UK is of outstanding international importance for waterbirds. Lying on some of the major flyways for Arctic-nesting species, large numbers of waterbirds are attracted, especially during winter, by the relatively mild climate and extensive areas of wetland, notably estuaries. The UK thus has both moral and legal obligations to conserve both these waterbirds and the wetlands upon which they depend.

As a signatory to a number of international conservation conventions, and as a member of the EU, the UK is bound by international law. In particular, the 'Ramsar' Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, the EU Birds Directive and the EU Habitats and Species Directive, between them, require the UK to identify important examples of wetland and other habitats and sites important for birds and designate them for protection. Implicit in these obligations is the need for regular monitoring to identify and manage such sites. These instruments also lay particular significance on the need to conserve migratory populations, and consequently most of the waterbird populations in the UK.

The UK has ratified the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) of the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. AEWA entered into force in 1999. It is a specific Agreement requiring nations to take coordinated measures to conserve migratory waterbirds given their particular vulnerability due to their migration over long distances and their dependence on networks that are decreasing in extent and becoming degraded through non-sustainable human activities. Article three of the Agreement requires, among other things, that sites and habitats for migratory waterbirds are identified, protected and managed appropriately, that parties initiate or support research into the ecology of these species, and exchange information and results. Explicit in this Agreement is that adequate monitoring programmes are set in place to fulfil these objectives and the Action Plan to the Agreement specifically requires that nations endeavour to monitor waterbird populations.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF WeBS

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) aims to monitor all non-breeding waterbirds in the UK in order to provide the principal data on which the conservation of their populations is based. To this end, WeBS has three main objectives:

- to assess the size of non-breeding waterbird populations in the UK;
- to assess trends in their numbers and distribution; and
- to assess the importance of individual sites for waterbirds.

These results also form the basis for informed decision-making by conservation bodies, planners and developers and contribute to the sustainable and wise use and management of wetlands and their dependent waterbirds. The data and the WeBS report also fulfil some of the objectives of the Conventions and Directives listed above. WeBS also provides UK data to Wetlands International to assist their function of coordinating and reporting upon waterbird status at an international flyway scale.

Structure and organisation of WeBS

WeBS is a partnership scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (on behalf of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside), the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Natural England (NE) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)), in association with Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

WeBS continues the traditions of two, long-running count schemes which formed the mainstay of UK waterbird monitoring since 1947 (Cranswick *et al*. 1997). WeBS Core Counts are carried out at a wide variety of wetlands throughout the UK. Synchronised counts are conducted once per month, particularly from September to March, to fulfil all three main objectives. In addition, WeBS Low Tide Counts are undertaken on selected estuaries with the

aim of identifying key areas used during the low tide period, principally by feeding birds; areas not otherwise noted for their importance by Core Counts which are normally conducted at high tide.

The success and growth of these count schemes accurately reflects the enthusiasm and dedication of the several thousands of volunteer ornithologists who participate. It is largely due to their efforts that waterbird monitoring in the UK is held in such high regard internationally.

Aim of this report

This report presents syntheses of data collected between July 2008 and June 2009 (see *The WeBS Year*), and in previous years, in line with the WeBS objectives. Data from other national and local waterbird monitoring schemes, notably the WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme, are included where WeBS data alone are insufficient to fulfil this aim, so that the report provides a single, comprehensive source of information on waterbird status and distribution in the UK.

Species accounts provide yearly maxima for all sites supporting internationally and nationally important numbers. Sites with changed status are highlighted and significant counts are discussed. Wherever possible, counts are placed in an international context and relevant research is summarised. Waterbird totals are provided for all sites meeting criteria for international importance and species occurring in internationally important numbers on each are identified.

WeBS Low Tide Counts are carried out on selected estuaries to determine the distribution of birds during low tide, and to identify important feeding areas that may not be recognised during Core Counts that are made mostly at high tide. A summary of results for these estuaries, and distribution maps for selected species, are provided.

Waterbird totals recorded by the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS), a similar scheme operating in the Republic of Ireland, are also included.

Details of WeBS methodologies, included within the Introduction in past reports, are available via the WeBS website at: ***www.bto.org/webs/websdownloads/methods***

WEATHER IN 2008/09

This summary of UK weather is drawn from the Meteorological Office web site at www.metoffice.gov.uk. Bracketed figures following the month refer to the Core Count priority date for the month in question. Arctic breeding conditions for birds that winter within the UK are summarised from information collated by Soloviev & Tomkovich at the web site www.arcticbirds.ru.

United Kingdom

July (20) saw mean temperatures close to average. However the majority of the month was unsettled across much of the UK, with a period of frequent thunderstorms late in the month. Sunshine values were close average across the UK.

August (17) proved to be an exceptionally wet and dull month thoughout the UK. Widespread flooding was reported in parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland. Average temperatures were slightly above the long-term historical average.

September (14) proved to be generally unsettled and wet through the first half of the month, but much drier and brighter through the second half. Above-average rainfall fell across the Midlands and northern England. Wales and Northern Ireland has their coolest September since 1994.

Daily temperatures in **October** (19) were below average across the UK. Rainfall was well above normal across the north-west, with some areas recording over double the average.

November (16) continued to be settled for the time of year. Mean temperatures were slightly above average across much of the UK. Parts of Scotland received less rainfall than normal, but were also lacking in typical amounts of sunshine.

It was the coldest **December** (14) for oven ten years in all parts of the UK; temperatures were down by as much as 2C in some western areas. It turned especially cold at the end of the year. Rainfall was below normal in most regions; approximately half of typical levels fell across most of England and Wales.

January (18) temperatures were below average across much of the UK, with some unusually prolonged and severe frosts. There were milder interludes during the

second half of the month, resulting in average rainfall across the month as a whole.

The first half of **February** (22) was very cold with some heavy snowfalls across the UK, particularly in eastern regions. Generally a dull month, conditions were milder during the second half. Northern Ireland, Wales and western Scotland all experienced the driest February since 1993.

March (15) proved to be largely unsettled thorough the first half of the month, and became drier from mid-month. Mean temperature across most regions was 1°C above normal, and it was the driest March for several years in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Most of the UK experienced a warm and dry **April** (19), with only Northern Ireland registering above average rainfall. In both England and Scotland, it was the third warmest April ever since 1914; temperatures in East Anglia, south-east England and northern Scotland were 2.3°C abover average.

May (10) proved to be another relatively warm month across UK, the fourth in a row. Temperatures were in the region of 1°C above the 1971-2000 average throughout. Although wet in Scotland and Northern Ireland, much of England, particularly eastern regions, received less rainfall than normal.

June (14) was warmer and sunnier than normal, particularly in more northern regions. Settled conditions at either end of the month were punctuated by a period of cooler, unsettled weather mid-month.

Dunlins (Alan Harris)

Arctic Breeding Conditions 2008

The following summarises information available via www.arcticbirds.ru (Soloviev & Tomkovich 2009).

Summer temperatures differed quite markedly across the Arctic region in 2008. In general, temperatures were close to or slightly below average throughout most of arctic Russia and eastern Siberia, both in the early and mid summer periods. However, in much of arctic Canada and Greenland, temperatures were up to 5°C higher than usual throughout the summer.

Rodent abundance was generally either average or low across most arctic regions, although high densities were recorded at several regularly monitored sites, notably at a cluster of stations in northern Scandinavia.

Indications from sites in eastern arctic Canada and Greenland were of mixed breeding success, following very poor seasons in 2006 and 2007. Results from much of arctic Russia suggested that 2008 was a reasonaly successful breeding season for the birds in Scandinavia and more western regions of arctic Russia, but indications of poorer seasons throughout more distant Siberian regions.

Table 1. The percentage of inland count units (lakes, reservoirs, gravel pits, rivers and canals) in the UK with any ice and with 75% or more of their surface covered by ice during WeBS counts in winter 2008/09 (England divided by a line drawn roughly between the Humber and the Mersey Estuaries).

Region	Ice	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Northern Ireland	>0%	0	0	0	<1	0	0	0
	>74%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	>0%	0	<1	4	28	17	30	0
	>74%	0	0	1	15	5	14	0
N England	>0%	0	0	<1	23	8	9	<1
	>74%	0	0	<1	8	1	4	0
S England	>0%	0	0	0	15	16	14	<1
	>74%	0	0	0	2	6	4	0
Wales	>0%	0	0	<1	10	2	2	0
	>74%	0	0	0	<1	0	2	0

COVERAGE

WeBS Core Counts

Coordinated, synchronous counts are advocated to prevent double counting or birds being missed. Consequently, priority dates are recommended nationally. Due to differences in tidal regimes around the country, counts at a few estuaries were made on other dates to match the most suitable conditions. Weather and counter availability also result in some counts being made on alternative dates.

Table 2. WeBS Core Count priority dates in 2008/09

20 July	18 January
17 August	22 February
14 September	15 March
19 October	19 April
16 November	10 May
14 December	14 June

Standard Core Counts were received from 2,212 sites for the period July 2008 to June 2009 (0.6% more than 2007/08), comprising 4,002 count sectors (the sub-divisions of large sites for which separate counts are provided).

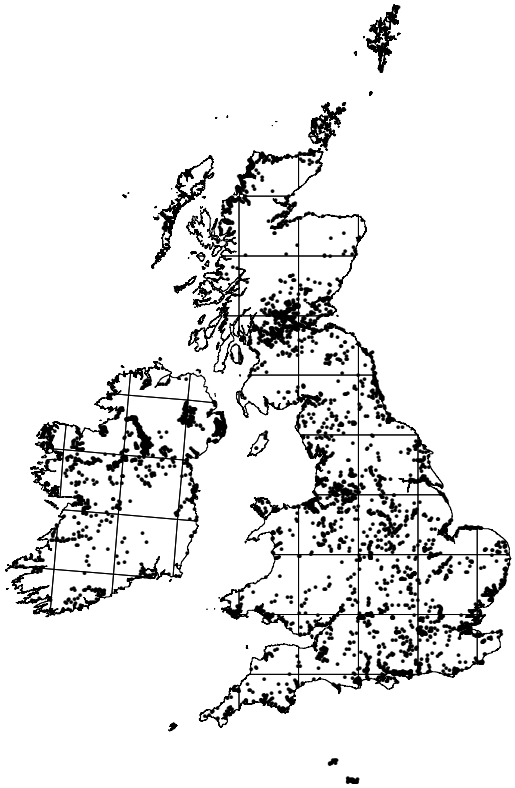


Figure 1. Position of all locations counted for standard WeBS and I-WeBS counts between July 2008 and June 2009.

WeBS and I-WeBS coverage in 2008/09 is shown in Figure 1. The location of each count sector is shown using only its central grid reference. The grid references of principal WeBS count sites mentioned in the Principal Sites table (Table 6.) are given in Table A2, Appendix 2 and are shown in Figure A1, Appendix 2.

As ever, areas with few wetlands (*e.g.* inland Essex/Suffolk) or small human populations (*e.g.* much of Scotland) are apparent on the map as areas with little coverage. Northwest Scotland is usually poorly covered compared to most areas, although in 2008/09 this was again covered by surveys by the RAF Ornithological Society. These data are presented in this report. Northern Ireland remains relatively poorly covered away from the major sites and further volunteers from there or indeed anywhere in the UK are always welcome.

Goose censuses

In 2008/09, supplementary counts of Bean Geese were submitted by the Bean Goose Action Group (Slamannan Plateau) and the RSPB (Middle Yare Marshes). National surveys of Pink-footed and Icelandic Greylag Geese (the Icelandic-breeding Goose Census) were undertaken at, primarily, roost sites in October, November and December 2008. A census of the Northwest Scotland Greylag Goose population on the Uists was made in August 2008 and February 2009 (Uist Greylag Goose Management Committee), and counts of this population at other key sites were also undertaken. Counts of Greenland White-fronted Geese were carried out in December 2008 and March 2009 by the Greenland White-fronted Goose Study. Greenland Barnacle Geese were counted regularly by SNH and others on Islay and other key locations whilst the Svalbard Barnacle Geese on the Solway were counted regularly by WWT staff and volunteers. Data were also provided by the International Light-bellied Brent Goose census.

Seaduck surveys

Monthly aerial and/or land-based counts of Common Scoter in Carmarthen Bay were carried out between January and March 2009 (WWT Consulting 2009). Other surveys were carried out in inshore waters by JNCC between December 2008 and March 2009.

TOTAL NUMBERS

The total numbers of waterbirds recorded by WeBS in 2008/09 are given in Tables 3 and 4 for Great Britain (including the Isle of Man, but excluding the Channel Islands) and Northern Ireland, respectively. Counts of waterbirds in the Republic of Ireland by I-WeBS are provided in Table 5.

Site coverage for gulls and terns is given separately since recording of these species was optional.

Introduced and escaped waterbirds

Many species of waterbird occur in the UK as a result of introductions, particularly through escapes from collections. Several have become established, such as Canada Goose and Ruddy Duck. The British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee categorises each species occurring in Britain according to its likely origin. The categories are explained more fully at www.bou.org.uk/reccats.html. Species that have been recorded as 'introductions, human-assisted transportees or escapes from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are not thought to be self-sustaining' are included in the BOURC's category E. WeBS records of these species are included in this report both for the sake of completeness and in order to assess their status and monitor any changes in numbers, a key requirement given the need, under the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement of the Bonn Convention '. . . to prevent the unintentional release of such species . . .' and once introduced, the need '. . . to prevent these species from becoming a threat to indigenous species' (Holmes *et al.* 1998).

Numbers of established populations (*e.g.* Canada Goose and Ruddy Duck, which are placed in category C) are excluded from Figure 2 below since the large numbers involved would swamp numbers of other species. Additionally, species that occur both naturally (category A) and as introductions or escapes (category E), *e.g.* Pink-footed Goose, are also excluded since separation of introduced and escaped birds from wild ones is not readily possible. However, Ruddy Shelduck (categories B/E) is included; the BOURC does not consider any recent records to have been of wild origin. Additionally, a small number of species not yet assigned to category by the BOURC (e.g. Coscoroba Swan) are also included.

A total of 24 category E species were recorded in 2008/09 at 196 sites. This represents a 10% increase in terms of sites compared to 2007/08 (perhaps at least partly due to WeBS coverage of several new, inland wetlands). However, the summed site maximum of 425 birds was the lowest in recent years, and 7% down on 2007/08.

Typically, the majority of this overall total (more than 60%) was attributable to Black Swan and Muscovy Duck. These were followed in abundance by Bar-headed Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Emperor Goose, Chiloe Wigeon, Chinese Goose, Wood Duck and White-cheeked Pintail; all of which were recorded in at least double-figures. Other species recorded were Australian Shoveler, Baikal Teal, Madagascar Teal, Cape Shelduck, Chestnut Teal, Falcated Duck, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Hooded Merganser, Lake Duck, Lesser Canada Goose, Lesser Whistling Duck, Paradise Shelduck, Ringed Teal, Ross's Goose and Silver Teal.

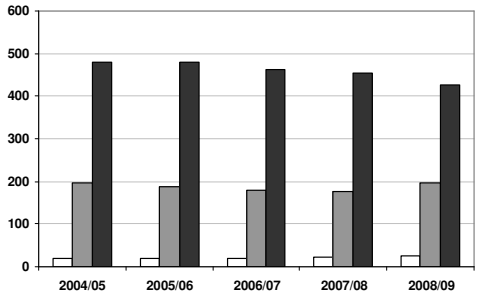


Figure 2. Number of species (white bars), number of sites at which birds were recorded (grey bars) and summed site maxima (black bars) for waterbirds in the BOURC's category E.

Table 3. Total numbers of waterbirds recorded by WeBS Core Counts in Great Britain in 2008/09. Census totals are indicated by '*'.

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*824*	*847*	*1,440*	*1,626*	*1,678*
YV	Fulvous Whistling Duck	0	0	1	0	1
YU	Lesser Whistling Duck	0	0	0	0	1
MS	Mute Swan	11,718	14,160	17,844	20,771	20,008
AS	Black Swan	32	50	54	50	51
BS	Bewick's Swan	0	0	0	4	706*
WS	Whooper Swan	36	36	44	3,115	8,805*
HN	Chinese Goose	2	4	3	5	5
XF	Taiga Bean Goose	0	0	0	0	401*
XR	Tundra Bean Goose	0	0	0	0	3
PG	Pink-footed Goose	21	24	17,773	350,186*	314,871*
WG	White-fronted Goose	0	2	0	1	36
EW	European White-fronted Goose	0	8	1	1	606
NW	Greenland White-fronted Goose	0	0	0	181	660
LC	Lesser White-fronted Goose	1	2	1	3	1
JI	Icelandic Greylag Goose	3,240	2,972	4,977	17,148	74,989*
JH	NW Scotland Greylag Goose	876	2,613	589	648	1007
JE	Re-established Greylag Goose	14,005	20,736	34,661	35,177	31,989
ZL	Greylag Goose (domestic)	572	159	838	618	721
HD	Bar-headed Goose	9	7	8	5	7
SJ	Snow Goose	1	0	5	6	9
RJ	Ross's Goose	0	1	2	1	0
EM	Emperor Goose	16	1	12	10	10
CG	Canada Goose	32,707	37,887	53,638	54,471	59,414
LQ	Lesser Canada Goose	2	2	0	2	0
YN	Nearctic Barnacle Goose	5	0	4	372	793
YS	Svalbard Barnacle Goose	0	0	0	31,195*	22,129*
YE	Naturalised Barnacle Goose	425	259	650	1,226	1,432
DB	Dark-bellied Brent Goose	32	65	2,222	24,929	65,075
QN	Nearctic Light-bellied Brent Goose	0	0	128	339	762
QS	Svalbard Light-bellied Brent Goose	1	2	1,774	2,033	3,523
BB	Black Brant	0	0	0	1	3
EB	Red-breasted Goose	0	1	0	2	5
EG	Egyptian Goose	451	391	726	436	346
UB	Paradise Shelduck	0	0	0	0	0
UE	Cape Shelduck	0	0	1	0	0
UD	Ruddy Shelduck	1	3	4	2	3
SU	Shelduck	11,564	20,767	30,881	40,719	43,834
MY	Muscovy Duck	14	28	38	46	63
DC	Wood Duck	0	4	4	4	4
MN	Mandarin	209	191	338	367	402
WN	Wigeon	190	711	85,256	185,077	322,870
AW	American Wigeon	0	0	0	1	0
HL	Chiloe Wigeon	1	7	1	1	0
FT	Falcated Duck	0	0	0	0	0
GA	Gadwall	3,016	5,653	9,685	13,530	16,138
IK	Baikal Teal	0	0	0	0	1
MK	Madagascar Teal	0	0	1	0	0
T.	Teal	1,357	10,476	53,582	92,882	113,556
TA	Green-winged Teal	0	0	1	1	2
AG	Silver Teal	0	0	2	0	0
MA	Mallard	46,319	64,349	91,230	110,189	117,937
ZF	Feral/hybrid mallard type	276	321	463	449	482
BD	Black Duck	0	0	0	0	0
QB	Chestnut Teal	0	1	0	0	0
PT	Pintail	12	42	5,314	15,381	22,611
PN	White-cheeked Pintail	1	1	3	4	3
GY	Garganey	11	35	27	5	0

Table 3. continued

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*1,675*	*1,757*	*1,856*	*1,659*	*992*	*872*	*851*
YV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
YU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MS	21,512	20,459	18,260	16,440	9,918	9,284	10,949
AS	42	44	36	35	19	18	20
BS	3,600*	4,153*	881*	34	0	0	0
WS	8,958*	10,678*	8,431*	3,134	167	44	21
HN	2	4	5	4	0	1	0
XF	21	31	2	0	1	0	0
XR	11	31	37	7	1	0	0
PG	292,557*	65,385	54,065	60,341	29,350	3,007	23
WG	23	95	10	12	0	2	0
EW	417	1,638	1,259	358	2	4	0
NW	12,159*	234	686	12,506*	43	0	1
LC	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
JI	83,677*	27,768	20,709	21,945	1,698	1,136	2,899
JH	1,065	622	771	540	300	543	781
JE	27,275	31,676	18,162	16,399	9,687	9,717	17,668
ZL	679	615	550	473	336	488	588
HD	10	8	4	7	8	14	13
SJ	7	4	2	5	2	3	1
RJ	1	1	2	1	0	0	0
EM	8	11	0	14	15	10	12
CG	56,558	53,813	36,122	28,599	13,876	12,549	32,286
LQ	0	4	3	1	0	0	0
YN	49,116*	274	326	53,695*	29	0	0
YS	19,245*	28,579*	20,537*	30,210*	29,410*	9,505*	0
YE	826	1516	796	859	643	354	570
DB	66,241	69,250	72,005	43,176	14,140	5,136	42
QN	818	868	789	954	149	10	0
QS	3,964	1644	872	61	4	1	2
BB	2	4	4	2	1	0	0
EB	5	3	1	2	0	0	0
EG	258	308	260	325	239	272	420
UB	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
UE	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
UD	0	3	4	3	1	1	2
SU	44,564	51,040	44,620	38,084	20,190	13,909	20,768
MY	55	64	42	30	27	13	22
DC	1	3	0	4	3	4	3
MN	293	418	344	339	191	150	228
WN	359,236	313,216	253,453	124,481	2,747	293	220
AW	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
HL	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
FT	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
GA	17,920	19,596	15,735	9,682	3,805	2,647	4,225
IK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T.	144,200	141,509	114,946	47,770	6,040	427	834
TA	3	4	6	6	2	0	1
AG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MA	120,879	110,462	77,654	53,543	27,190	25,301	36,501
ZF	507	512	470	391	244	206	250
BD	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
QB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PT	19,409	19,936	18,378	7,428	178	13	37
PN	4	1	0	1	2	4	0
GY	0	1	1	13	40	31	13

Table 3. continued

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*824*	*847*	*1,440*	*1,626*	*1,678*
TB	Blue-winged Teal	0	0	1	0	0
SV	Shoveler	573	2,248	8,277	13,000	13,539
VA	Australian Shoveler	0	0	0	0	1
IE	Ringed Teal	0	0	0	1	0
RQ	Red-crested Pochard	19	24	212	309	372
PO	Pochard	2,293	4,518	10,507	9,033	16,113
NG	Ring-necked Duck	1	1	0	1	3
FD	Ferruginous Duck	1	1	0	1	2
TU	Tufted Duck	25,217	34,109	47,730	50,253	54,069
SP	Scaup	6	11	16	669	692
AY	Lesser Scaup	1	1	0	0	2
EE	Eider (Except Shetland)	12,285	11,308	18,811	14,943	15,004
EF	Eider (Shetland)	20	7	12	1	0
KE	King Eider	0	0	0	2	0
LN	Long-tailed Duck	0	1	2	413	435
CX	Common Scoter	574	1,187	2,708	969	3,767
DX	Black Scoter	0	0	1	0	0
FS	Surf Scoter	0	0	0	0	2
VS	Velvet Scoter	64	163	408	119	288
GN	Goldeneye	102	202	268	1,111	6,627
HO	Hooded Merganser	0	0	0	1	1
SY	Smew	0	1	0	1	4
RM	Red-breasted Merganser	589	659	895	1,595	2,543
GD	Goosander	792	1,088	874	998	1,652
RY	Ruddy Duck	229	305	609	761	601
OI	Lake Duck	0	1	1	0	0
RH	Red-throated Diver	30	21	185	108	206
BV	Black-throated Diver	4	3	3	8	28
ND	Great Northern Diver	1	1	2	16	102
WV	White-billed Diver	0	0	0	1	1
LG	Little Grebe	1,664	2,697	5,081	5,153	4,401
GG	Great Crested Grebe	4,120	6,016	9,139	7,618	7,686
RX	Red-necked Grebe	1	0	10	2	6
SZ	Slavonian Grebe	1	1	16	90	81
BN	Black-necked Grebe	25	20	47	32	35
CA	Cormorant	6,524	8,914	17,149	16,589	15,482
SA	Shag	279	371	1,356	1,406	1,678
BI	Bittern	3	3	1	5	9
NT	Night Heron	0	0	0	0	0
EC	Cattle Egret	0	0	0	4	0
ET	Little Egret	2,028	2,891	4,478	4,345	3,124
HW	Great White Egret	0	0	2	2	1
H.	Grey Heron	2,148	2,350	4,041	3,779	3,742
UR	Purple Heron	0	0	0	0	0
OR	White Stork	2	2	0	0	1
IB	Glossy Ibis	0	1	0	0	0
NB	Spoonbill	19	9	15	26	30
WA	Water Rail	72	76	203	303	385
AK	Spotted Crake	0	0	1	1	0
CE	Corncrake	1	0	0	0	0
MH	Moorhen	4,860	6,389	10,354	11,812	12,239
CO	Coot	39,697	55,020	90,213	103,322	109,443
AN	Crane	0	0	2	3	2
KF	Kingfisher	184	265	528	468	425
	TOTAL WILDFOWL	**231,552**	**322,856**	**646,944**	**1,250,868**	**1,521,099**

Table 3. continued

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*1,675*	*1,757*	*1,856*	*1,659*	*992*	*872*	*851*
TB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SV	12,553	12,226	12,215	10,641	1,767	632	526
VA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RQ	385	237	290	285	38	40	37
PO	20,689	23,102	17,837	5,709	1,462	1,057	1,347
NG	6	6	3	3	4	0	0
FD	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
TU	58,950	55,680	52,928	45,508	22,526	10,138	10,017
SP	1,461	2,422	2,204	552	285	46	4
AY	2	1	2	1	1	0	0
EE	16,903	11,740	16,993	12,304	13,069	11,871	10,856
EF	6	1	0	0	8	35	9
KE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LN	1,171	718	842	435	210	28	2
CX	2,318	3,468	4,448	5,437	2,334	1,277	133
DX	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FS	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
VS	659	153	340	180	225	54	0
GN	10,096	10,241	12,000	8,777	1,400	159	141
HO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SY	26	111	92	29	0	0	1
RM	2,860	2,680	3,007	2,701	1,331	674	539
GD	2,849	3,213	2,720	1,895	450	345	479
RY	700	714	363	257	134	109	96
OI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RH	284	1,141	691	240	315	108	30
BV	65	84	114	67	64	13	9
ND	96	63	324	73	56	29	3
WV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
LG	4,565	4,097	3,595	2,954	1,334	1,086	926
GG	7,335	5,558	8,247	6,855	3,994	3,506	3,520
RX	8	1	5	0	0	0	0
SZ	151	132	192	85	23	1	1
BN	75	91	79	43	53	20	22
CA	14,211	14,468	13,162	10,369	6,106	5,770	5,161
SA	1,419	1,185	2,346	707	423	447	315
BI	15	37	34	33	9	4	8
NT	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
EC	0	4	4	1	0	0	1
ET	1,986	1,178	1,309	1,798	1,164	861	1,153
HW	2	4	1	1	2	2	0
H.	3,413	2,944	3,566	3,493	2,156	1,997	2,380
UR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NB	27	17	20	11	3	7	17
WA	524	367	301	242	64	37	36
AK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CE	0	0	0	2	0	0	1
MH	13,053	11,414	11,116	9,840	5,049	3,776	3,474
CO	111,699	104,277	66,531	45,400	18,849	16,650	25,104
AN	2	7	2	5	0	0	2
KF	364	259	230	234	97	93	112
	1,648,210	**1,250,533**	**1,019,400**	**749,385**	**255,706**	**155,973**	**195,865**

Table 3. continued

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*824*	*847*	*1,440*	*1,626*	*1,678*
OC	Oystercatcher	60,662	164,784	209,786	244,860	255,683
AV	Avocet	1,339	1,099	2,250	4,267	5,696
TN	Stone-curlew	4	0	0	0	0
LP	Little Ringed Plover	136	42	8	1	0
RP	Ringed Plover	1,332	20,632	10,950	8,509	7,344
KP	Kentish Plover	0	1	0	0	0
DO	Dotterel	0	1	2	0	0
ID	American Golden Plover	0	0	0	1	0
GP	Golden Plover	4,830	18,568	50,458	113,110	186,018
GV	Grey Plover	1,396	12,826	25,191	36,954	33,037
L.	Lapwing	28,715	60,894	87,579	119,438	258,754
KN	Knot	26,890	101,331	150,911	244,662	312,202
SS	Sanderling	3,259	9,712	7,818	10,175	8,690
LX	Little Stint	3	12	99	52	6
TK	Temminck's Stint	0	0	2	0	0
WU	White-rumped Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0
BP	Baird's Sandpiper	0	0	0	1	0
PP	Pectoral Sandpiper	0	1	4	2	0
CV	Curlew Sandpiper	3	79	150	37	2
PS	Purple Sandpiper	107	162	301	560	1,228
DN	Dunlin	39,183	90,332	53,349	106,663	251,404
BQ	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	0	0	1	0	0
RU	Ruff	86	288	441	294	469
JS	Jack Snipe	0	0	8	48	120
SN	Snipe	159	781	5,173	5,946	8,389
LD	Long-billed Dowitcher	0	0	0	0	0
WK	Woodcock	1	0	0	13	53
BW	Black-tailed Godwit	9,734	22,936	33,892	29,749	20,916
BA	Bar-tailed Godwit	3,011	9,793	36,289	26,552	25,299
WM	Whimbrel	900	980	132	35	15
CU	Curlew	40,426	55,844	72,751	72,124	68,067
TR	Terek Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	0
CS	Common Sandpiper	929	921	408	75	58
GE	Green Sandpiper	264	485	321	192	156
DR	Spotted Redshank	91	114	111	118	77
GK	Greenshank	729	1,475	1,034	675	401
OD	Wood Sandpiper	4	34	11	0	0
RK	Redshank	26,046	44,669	74,110	92,838	77,215
TT	Turnstone	2,068	6,257	9,965	10,689	12,645
WF	Wilson's Phalarope	0	1	0	0	0
NK	Red-necked Phalarope	0	0	2	0	0
PL	Grey Phalarope	0	0	6	0	1
	TOTAL WADERS	**252,308**	**625,084**	**833,513**	**1,128,700**	**1,533,945**

Table 3. continued

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*1,675*	*1,757*	*1,856*	*1,659*	*992*	*872*	*851*
OC	214,044	196,461	191,236	119,003	50,997	36,506	27,765
AV	6,496	5,961	7,177	4,266	2,323	2,106	1,554
TN	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
LP	0	0	0	26	225	223	207
RP	6,516	6,733	6,090	2,686	3,516	8,094	1,544
KP	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
DO	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
ID	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GP	138,200	111,633	105,029	17,578	3,682	784	113
GV	26,807	25,432	38,310	20,590	19,993	18,222	372
L.	287,223	225,555	192,090	22,715	5,834	4,798	7,586
KN	196,232	185,618	174,217	144,630	111,695	49,709	18,025
SS	9,297	11,309	6,942	8,550	7,760	9,555	456
LX	11	11	10	5	2	2	11
TK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WU	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PP	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
CV	0	1	1	0	2	6	3
PS	1,575	1,649	1,745	990	422	161	0
DN	274,263	262,964	252,502	58,749	72,584	113,359	3,305
BQ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RU	340	372	422	290	103	1	3
JS	95	129	144	116	13	1	0
SN	8,385	6,023	6,756	4,104	733	121	103
LD	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
WK	98	130	40	16	0	1	0
BW	21,248	15,086	25,137	25,040	7,075	3,939	2,117
BA	26,249	32,845	37,279	10,180	6,224	3,344	2,218
WM	13	14	14	23	1,008	1,551	169
CU	56,497	55,700	73,674	54,446	18,681	3,199	8,508
TR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CS	50	29	39	51	267	402	219
GE	102	113	115	133	61	4	50
DR	53	62	55	53	42	7	15
GK	311	243	266	275	233	90	39
OD	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
RK	60,627	56,819	64,836	56,592	21,573	3,178	3,382
TT	11,997	11,666	12,615	9,969	5,543	1,744	429
WF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PL	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
	1,346,731	**1,212,564**	**1,196,742**	**561,076**	**340,592**	**261,115**	**78,196**

Table 3. continued

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*722*	*733*	*1,208*	*1,336*	*1,370*
KI	Kittiwake	532	647	783	1,394	256
BH	Black-headed Gull	74,420	132,261	155,038	155,384	183,903
LU	Little Gull	33	37	160	18	0
MU	Mediterranean Gull	236	522	313	187	321
CM	Common Gull	4,975	12,408	14,345	32,872	38,438
IN	Ring-billed Gull	0	0	1	0	0
LB	Lesser Black-backed Gull	21,968	17,254	15,544	12,461	20,072
HG	Herring Gull	30,617	35,955	54,888	46,186	46,813
YG	Yellow-legged Gull	22	51	87	30	16
YC	Caspian Gull	0	0	1	3	4
IG	Iceland Gull	0	0	0	0	2
GZ	Glaucous Gull	0	0	0	1	5
GB	Great Black-backed Gull	3,148	4,896	8,334	7,815	9,056
	TOTAL GULLS	**135,951**	**204,031**	**249,494**	**256,351**	**298,886**

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*715*	*719*	*1,142*	*1,237*	*1,249*
AF	Little Tern	1,232	330	19	0	0
BJ	Black Tern	8	171	37	0	0
TE	Sandwich Tern	6,026	5,301	2,247	36	13
CN	Common Tern	5,586	6,998	747	11	0
RS	Roseate Tern	10	5	0	0	0
AE	Arctic Tern	2,506	551	55	5	0
UI	Common/Arctic Tern	132	282	0	0	0
	TOTAL TERNS	**15,500**	**13,638**	**3,105**	**52**	**13**

Table 3. continued

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*1,358*	*1,438*	*1,492*	*1,352*	*841*	*738*	*723*
KI	242	746	86	147	609	465	303
BH	163,399	181,658	195,454	145,315	53,920	41,099	41,583
LU	2	7	4	8	77	10	36
MU	168	319	276	351	231	45	129
CM	29,789	47,914	58,872	31,989	5,235	3727	3,452
IN	1	3	2	1	0	0	0
LB	10,953	12,133	11,061	13,216	16,806	29,089	23,936
HG	55,192	64,789	55,320	61,396	35,607	32,563	27,071
YG	21	42	29	10	1	3	25
YC	2	3	3	1	0	0	1
IG	5	7	17	9	6	2	0
GZ	8	7	27	8	4	0	0
GB	8,777	7,035	4,325	3,204	2,428	1,692	2,565
	268,559	**314,663**	**325,476**	**255,655**	**114,924**	**108,695**	**99,101**

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*1,231*	*1,264*	*1,293*	*1,229*	*797*	*736*	*710*
AF	0	0	0	0	80	519	711
BJ	0	0	0	0	1	27	2
TE	1	2	1	25	2,447	6,293	6,474
CN	0	0	0	0	1,013	3,302	4,964
RS	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
AE	0	0	0	0	170	308	805
UI	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	1	**2**	**1**	**25**	**3,711**	**10,454**	**12,959**

Table 4. Total numbers of waterbirds recorded by WeBS Core Counts in Northern Ireland in 2008/09. Census totals are indicated by '*'.

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*3*	*3*	*11*	*13*	*14*
MS	Mute Swan	12	2	173	886	811
AS	Black Swan	0	0	0	1	1
BS	Bewick's Swan	0	0	0	0	0
WS	Whooper Swan	0	0	1	660	2,521
PG	Pink-footed Goose	0	0	0	20	4
NW	Greenland White-fronted Goose	0	0	0	0	8
JE	Re-established Greylag Goose	0	0	145	242	519
CG	Canada Goose	0	0	103	1	0
YE	Naturalised Barnacle Goose	0	0	0	325	325
BG	Brent Goose	0	0	0	1	2
QN	Nearctic Light-bellied Brent Goose	0	0	7,503	23,948	11,379
SU	Shelduck	17	14	338	967	2,355
WN	Wigeon	0	0	1,523	4,769	3,584
GA	Gadwall	0	0	28	26	71
T.	Teal	1	5	1,170	2,055	3,935
TA	Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	1	1
MA	Mallard	90	107	3,985	5,047	5,314
PT	Pintail	0	0	20	114	597
SV	Shoveler	0	0	1	98	98
PO	Pochard	0	0	4	751	2,792
TU	Tufted Duck	0	0	163	3,224	5,033
SP	Scaup	0	0	4	431	3,811
E.	Eider	0	0	2,291	1,923	2,025
LN	Long-tailed Duck	0	0	0	0	8
CX	Common Scoter	0	0	3	2	0
GN	Goldeneye	0	0	0	97	1,457
SY	Smew	0	0	0	0	0
RM	Red-breasted Merganser	6	16	387	359	436
GD	Goosander	0	0	1	0	0
RY	Ruddy Duck	0	0	0	2	12
RH	Red-throated Diver	0	0	5	15	28
BV	Black-throated Diver	0	0	0	1	0
ND	Great Northern Diver	0	0	0	1	7
LG	Little Grebe	3	1	73	230	444
GG	Great Crested Grebe	0	1	976	1,784	1,570
SZ	Slavonian Grebe	0	0	1	0	0
BN	Black-necked Grebe	0	0	0	0	0
CA	Cormorant	20	111	1,138	1,165	1,611
SA	Shag	12	13	118	356	659
XU	Unidentified Cormorant/Shag	0	220	221	295	200
ET	Little Egret	4	10	37	62	55
H.	Grey Heron	22	44	239	297	283
WA	Water Rail	0	0	1	2	0
MH	Moorhen	2	0	62	82	120
CO	Coot	0	0	255	1,199	948
KF	Kingfisher	0	0	2	2	4
	TOTAL WILDFOWL	**189**	**544**	**20,971**	**51,441**	**53,028**

Table 4. continued

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*21*	*21*	*20*	*12*	*1*	*2*	*2*
MS	1,127	1,004	839	517	2	31	16
AS	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
BS	0	8	4	0	0	0	0
WS	2,613	2,155	2,459	1,196	0	0	0
PG	8	0	1	0	0	0	0
NW	67	65	63	0	0	0	0
JE	750	975	2,176	1,143	0	0	0
CG	233	431	338	108	0	0	0
YE	200	5	0	310	0	0	0
BG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QN	6,385	5,521	4,813	3,679	0	0	0
SU	3,570	5,193	3,615	2,458	54	130	89
WN	3,498	3,838	3,925	2,419	0	0	0
GA	29	56	116	182	0	0	0
T.	5,179	3,673	3,648	2,140	0	0	0
TA	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
MA	5,637	4,629	3,244	2,151	27	86	52
PT	273	396	342	130	0	0	0
SV	104	83	113	55	0	0	0
PO	5,710	6,028	4,798	921	0	0	0
TU	5,984	7,218	6,460	4,219	0	0	1
SP	4,288	6,586	4,625	4,077	0	0	0
E.	1,948	1,946	1,819	1,290	0	2	0
LN	12	11	2	2	0	0	0
CX	1,647	683	1,440	4	0	0	0
GN	2,584	3,470	4,233	2,806	0	0	0
SY	4	1	2	2	0	0	0
RM	441	225	410	440	0	1	0
GD	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
RY	7	13	21	2	0	0	0
RH	22	34	25	111	0	0	0
BV	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
ND	4	24	5	8	0	0	0
LG	433	379	285	154	0	0	0
GG	1,553	794	814	1,248	0	0	0
SZ	3	1	0	34	0	0	0
BN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CA	1,619	1,545	1,249	962	9	25	10
SA	174	336	136	274	0	0	0
XU	90	190	0	0	0	0	0
ET	37	16	23	42	0	4	0
H.	255	264	191	156	2	19	25
WA	3	1	4	1	0	0	0
MH	124	175	158	139	0	2	0
CO	2,207	2,551	1,999	918	0	0	0
KF	6	4	6	2	0	0	0
	58,829	**60,529**	**54,403**	**34,301**	**94**	**300**	**193**

Table 4. continued

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*3*	*3*	*11*	*13*	*14*
OC	Oystercatcher	908	2,421	16,839	16,823	16,057
RP	Ringed Plover	12	24	425	309	650
GP	Golden Plover	0	0	200	9,856	12,245
GV	Grey Plover	0	1	67	34	71
L.	Lapwing	93	232	585	3,947	10,748
KN	Knot	0	1	130	178	2,523
SS	Sanderling	0	1	925	423	261
LX	Little Stint	0	0	1	2	0
WU	White-rumped Sandpiper	0	0	1	0	0
PP	Pectoral Sandpiper	0	0	2	0	0
CV	Curlew Sandpiper	0	0	5	1	0
PS	Purple Sandpiper	0	0	0	3	64
DN	Dunlin	28	31	209	933	4,585
BQ	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	0	0	0	1	0
RU	Ruff	0	0	3	1	0
JS	Jack Snipe	0	0	0	0	0
SN	Snipe	0	0	2	14	167
BW	Black-tailed Godwit	0	25	915	460	1,077
BA	Bar-tailed Godwit	2	0	241	618	1,199
WM	Whimbrel	5	1	2	0	0
CU	Curlew	724	1,126	4,876	4,797	4,928
CS	Common Sandpiper	1	13	1	1	0
DR	Spotted Redshank	0	0	1	0	0
GK	Greenshank	0	45	115	118	150
RK	Redshank	1,079	1,346	9,399	8,725	7,306
TT	Turnstone	22	88	825	1,165	1,913
	TOTAL WADERS	**3,782**	**7,776**	**52,608**	**65,232**	**80,001**

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*3*	*3*	*11*	*13*	*14*
KI	Kittiwake	0	0	84	19	0
BH	Black-headed Gull	425	331	6,332	9,252	12,719
LU	Little Gull	1	1	0	1	1
MU	Mediterranean Gull	0	0	2	1	0
CM	Common Gull	41	133	2,380	3,805	6,636
IB	Ring-billed Gull	0	0	0	1	0
LB	Lesser Black-backed Gull	5	21	157	227	95
HG	Herring Gull	166	202	1,451	1,507	4,090
YG	Yellow-legged Gull	0	0	0	1	1
IG	Iceland Gull	0	0	0	0	0
GZ	Glaucous Gull	0	0	0	0	0
GB	Great Black-backed Gull	95	105	366	306	280
	TOTAL GULLS	**733**	**793**	**10,772**	**15,120**	**23,822**

	Species	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of sites visited		*3*	*3*	*10*	*10*	*11*
BJ	Black Tern	0	0	2	0	0
TE	Sandwich Tern	154	263	657	4	4
CN	Common Tern	6	4	46	0	0
AE	Arctic Tern	5	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL TERNS	**165**	**267**	**705**	**4**	**4**

Table 4. continued

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*21*	*21*	*20*	*12*	*1*	*2*	*2*
OC	13,106	14,475	14,094	8,053	57	153	234
RP	460	459	256	186	25	20	3
GP	7,168	13,103	16,652	5,443	20	0	0
GV	71	133	142	35	0	0	0
L.	11,776	16,719	10,999	386	0	0	99
KN	2,980	3,521	3,189	1,198	0	1	0
SS	378	278	607	522	108	90	0
LX	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PS	30	106	29	74	0	0	0
DN	6,806	9,554	9,214	931	22	17	0
BQ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
JS	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
SN	85	55	25	43	0	0	0
BW	283	634	759	736	0	3	5
BA	1,696	3,537	2,128	1,511	0	1	0
WM	0	0	0	0	0	7	0
CU	4,808	4,631	5,411	3,838	216	28	276
CS	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
DR	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
GK	152	80	112	86	0	0	9
RK	6,365	5,247	6,089	6,314	150	0	50
TT	1,196	1,430	835	1,161	0	0	1
	57,361	**73,963**	**70,542**	**30,520**	**598**	**320**	**677**

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*18*	*19*	*17*	*12*	*1*	*2*	*2*
KI	0	5	0	10	0	0	0
BH	7,882	10,700	8,908	12,489	130	33	314
LU	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
MU	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
CM	2,143	5,084	4,797	2,540	21	11	213
IB	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
LB	76	113	172	348	8	10	24
HG	1,691	2,043	1,780	1,704	17	40	88
YG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IG	0	2	2	4	0	0	0
GZ	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
GB	210	411	157	311	11	83	86
	12,003	**18,358**	**15,820**	**17,409**	**187**	**177**	**725**

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
sites	*16*	*13*	*13*	*8*	*1*	*2*	*2*
BJ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TE	0	0	0	0	10	10	195
CN	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
AE	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	0	**0**	**0**	**0**	**10**	**10**	**208**

Table 5. Total numbers of waterbirds recorded by I-WeBS in the Republic of Ireland in 2008/09.

Species	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**
Number of sites visited	*136*	*141*	*137*	*148*	*223*	*152*	*122*
Mute Swan	1,811	2,342	2,357	3,502	2,987	1,989	1,505
Bewick's Swan	2	0	3	17	29	39	2
Whooper Swan	20	1,409	3,320	4,150	3,870	2,682	1,167
Black Swan	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Pink-footed Goose	0	23	12	6	12	15	0
Greenland White-fronted Goose	0	5,997	1,313	1,734	9,313	2,186	1,607
Greylag Goose	1,642	387	3,370	2,962	2,284	1,240	1,024
Bar-headed Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Canada Goose	265	12	280	6	225	9	1
Barnacle Goose	0	764	1,330	1,440	2,458	925	501
Dark-Bellied Brent Goose	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Light-bellied Brent Goose	298	7,781	15,240	18,006	18,613	11,250	11,627
Black Brant	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Feral/hybrid Goose	48	137	202	274	131	323	39
Shelduck	105	980	3,421	4,347	4,894	3,699	2,270
Wigeon	3,379	16,796	23,485	32,860	34,023	24,546	9,807
American Wigeon	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Gadwall	54	201	288	359	303	184	175
Green-winged Teal	0	1	0	0	3	2	1
Teal	2,296	5,489	11,139	19,931	25,062	16,438	12,091
Mallard	5,617	6,254	6,702	8,446	9,550	5,147	2,716
Feral/hybrid Mallard type	0	0	51	53	43	42	0
Black Duck	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Pintail	8	161	449	461	859	1,651	622
Shoveler	136	621	1,995	1,337	2,434	2,611	1,471
Pochard	35	63	3,731	865	1,304	3,213	277
Ring-necked Duck	0	2	0	3	5	1	1
Tufted Duck	762	1,915	5,105	7,312	7,427	5,702	2,314
Scaup	4	39	359	60	278	175	45
Hybrid Aythya	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Long-tailed Duck	0	9	2	39	8	35	0
Lesser Scaup	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Eider	0	0	0	8	3	1	0
King Eider	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Common Scoter	923	639	829	1,633	642	1,775	151
Goldeneye	1	98	437	887	1,037	755	215
Smew	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Red-breasted Merganser	245	392	653	464	1,028	522	294
Goosander	0	10	1	108	2	1	0
Ruddy Duck	1	0	1	0	0	2	0
Unidentified Duck	0	200	30	500	0	0	0
Red-throated Diver	13	44	58	43	123	202	29
Black-throated Diver	0	2	0	2	28	1	1
Great Northern Diver	5	87	227	302	736	304	125
White-billed Diver	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Little Grebe	575	645	616	515	1,186	629	245
Great Crested Grebe	470	306	507	404	852	586	289
Red-necked Grebe	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Slavonian Grebe	0	1	7	4	7	25	0
Black-necked Grebe	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Cormorant	1,495	1,609	1,551	1,620	2,202	1,271	746
Shag	304	228	284	295	839	199	130
Little Egret	512	307	276	205	190	185	217
Cattle Egret	0	0	9	0	2	3	3
Grey Heron	550	362	689	446	458	268	212
Spoonbill	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
Water Rail	16	20	8	30	26	28	10
Moorhen	201	226	321	241	315	311	246
Coot	1,701	5,293	9,710	7,440	9,092	9,461	1,100
Kingfisher	15	7	7	8	13	3	3
TOTAL WILDFOWL	**23,512**	**61,862**	**100,377**	**123,331**	**144,904**	**100,640**	**53,283**

Table 5. continued

Species	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Oystercatcher	24,088	26,887	23,081	27,086	22,250	20,212	7,696
Ringed Plover	1,877	2,108	2,509	3,025	4,348	1,699	467
Golden Plover	1,449	46,993	55,253	51,318	50,863	46,523	13,347
Grey Plover	463	209	738	2,000	1,583	1,476	411
Lapwing	2,308	8,216	30,988	37,383	53,282	39,357	5,408
Knot	1,484	5,006	12,305	19,479	14,467	21,707	6,534
Sanderling	1,137	1,310	956	2,143	3,006	1,587	1,732
Little Stint	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
White-rumped Sandpiper	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pectoral Sandpiper	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Curlew Sandpiper	13	1	0	0	23	0	0
Purple Sandpiper	7	0	24	93	18	23	14
Dunlin	2,384	3,121	16,642	26,914	25,477	28,609	2,449
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ruff	21	7	7	11	17	16	7
Jack Snipe	0	1	2	5	0	10	8
Snipe	251	240	378	453	382	594	320
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Woodcock	0	0	5	2	1	0	0
Black-tailed Godwit	6,243	6,430	9,257	8,592	15,013	7,784	6,918
Bar-tailed Godwit	2,141	1,928	4,201	4,623	6,101	6,143	3,242
Whimbrel	39	3	2	13	1	2	7
Curlew	7,371	7,965	9,590	10,337	11,627	10,522	2,824
Common Sandpiper	18	1	1	6	9	2	2
Green Sandpiper	3	2	3	0	3	1	4
Spotted Redshank	2	5	2	5	4	0	2
Greenshank	447	285	522	360	455	361	232
Redshank	13,245	9,712	11,664	9,259	10,094	7,419	6,857
Turnstone	1,203	1,458	2,059	2,071	2,255	1,482	1,249
Grey Phalarope	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Unidentified wader sp.	0	0	35	0	0	0	0
TOTAL WADERS	**66,201**	**121,890**	**180,224**	**205,180**	**221,279**	**195,529**	**59,730**

Species	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Mediterranean Gull	76	29	37	85	77	33	27
Little Gull	0	2	0	0	4	0	1
Sabine's Gull	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Black-headed Gull	13,870	16,532	20,052	16,965	17,195	13,428	11,096
Ring-billed Gull	0	0	3	0	4	3	2
Common Gull	4,921	4,214	6,305	4,770	6,897	5,369	3,039
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1,178	8,015	3,064	5,560	372	658	515
Herring Gull	3,208	3,288	2,355	2,568	4,079	1,992	2,403
Yellow-legged Gull	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Iceland Gull	0	0	2	6	15	6	6
Glaucous Gull	0	0	0	6	17	17	7
Great Black-backed Gull	1,791	1,901	995	1,386	1,106	1,025	952
Unidentified gull	0	0	55	0	342	6	0
TOTAL GULLS	**25,044**	**33,982**	**32,868**	**31,348**	**30,108**	**22,537**	**18,048**

Species	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Sandwich Tern	413	86	0	0	6	0	2
Common Tern	259	0	0	0	0	1	0
Arctic Tern	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Forster's Tern	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL TERNS	**672**	**90**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**1**	**3**

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Key to symbols commonly used in the species accounts.

In headers and footnotes:

? population size not accurately known

\+ population too small for meaningful threshold

* where 1% of the national population is fewer than 50 birds, 50 is normally used as a minimum threshold for national importance

** a site regularly holding more than 20,000 waterbirds (excluding non-native species) qualifies as internationally important by virtue of absolute numbers

† denotes that a qualifying level different to the national threshold has been used for the purposes of presenting sites in this report

In tables of important sites:

\- no data available

( ) incomplete count

† same meaning as used for thresholds

▲ site was of a higher importance status in the previous five-year period

▼ site was of a lower importance status in the previous five-year period

[1,2] count obtained using different survey methodology from WeBS Core Counts (see table below)

Sources of additional information used in compiling tables of important sites are listed below. Non-WeBS counts are identified in the tables by the relevant number below given in superscript following the count.

1 RSPB/Talisman Energy studies, e.g. Stenning (1998)
2 M. Howe (in litt.)
3 WWT studies, e.g. Rees *et al.* (2000)
4 Bean Goose Action Group, e.g. Smith et al. (1994)
5 RSPB pers comm.
6 Lancashire Goose Report, e.g. Forshaw (1998)
7 SNH `adopted` counts
8 WWT data
9 Greenland White-fronted Goose Study, e.g. Fox *et al.* (2009)
10 SOTEAG reports, e.g. Heubeck (1998)
11 WeBS Low Tide Counts
12 Roost counts
13 Supplementary daytime counts
14 WWT/JNCC Icelandic Breeding Goose Census
15 Firth of Clyde Eider counts, e.g. Waltho (2008)
16 R. Godfrey (in litt.)
17 SNH Greenland Goose Census
18 R. MacDonald (in litt.)
19 Little Egret Roost counts
20 C Hartley (in litt.)
21 WWT unpublished data
22 Judith Smith, Gtr. Manchester County recorder
23 BTO/ Lucy Smith
24 Paul Daw, County recorder for Argyll
25 JNCC report of aerial surveys for seaducks, divers
26 WWT report to DTI. Aerial survey of Thames strategic area
27 WWT report to DTI. Aerial survey of Greater Wash strategic area
28 All Wales Common Scoter Survey. WWT reports to CCW
29 All-Ireland Light-bellied Brent Goose Census
30 Cormorant Roost Survey 2003
31 Worden *et al.* 2004
32 RSPB data
33 SNH data
34 WWT UK-breeding Greylag Goose Survey
35 Supplementary counts
36 Winter Gull Roost Survey
37 BTO/CCW Carmarthen Bay surveys
38 B McMillan (in litt.)
39 C Langton (in litt.)
40 B Yates (in litt.)
41 Tiree non-estuarine counts, per J Bowler
42 A Stevenson (in litt.)
43 D Tate (in litt.)
44 Uist Greylag Goose Management Committee
45 Uists SPA wader survey (Ecology UK Ltd 2005)
46 P Wilson / Lancs Bird Report
47 W Aspin (in litt.)
48 International Swan Census
49 JNCC shore-based count
50 RSPB Bean Goose counts
51 SNH Argyll goose counts
52 WWT Dark-bellied Brent supplementary counts
53 Maclean *et al.* 2008
54 Mitchell *et al.* 2008
55 Cley Black-tailed Godwit counts (D. & P.Wileman)
56 Norfolk Bird Report White-fronted Goose counts
57 S.J.Turner, West Midland Bird Club
58 N Elkins, Fife Bird Club

Fulvous Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna bicolor

Escape
Native Range: S America, Africa

A Fulvous Whistling Duck was at Vyne Floods in September and November. This species has now featured in seven of the last ten WeBS-years.

Lesser Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna javanica

Escape
Native Range: S and E Asia

A Lesser Whistling Duck at Poole Harbour in November may be the same individual reported there in 2006/07; one of three previous WeBS records.

Mute Swan

Cygnus olor

International threshold (British population):	320
International threshold (Irish population):	100
Great Britain threshold:	375
All-Ireland threshold:	110

GB max: 21,512 Dec
NI max: 1,127 Dec

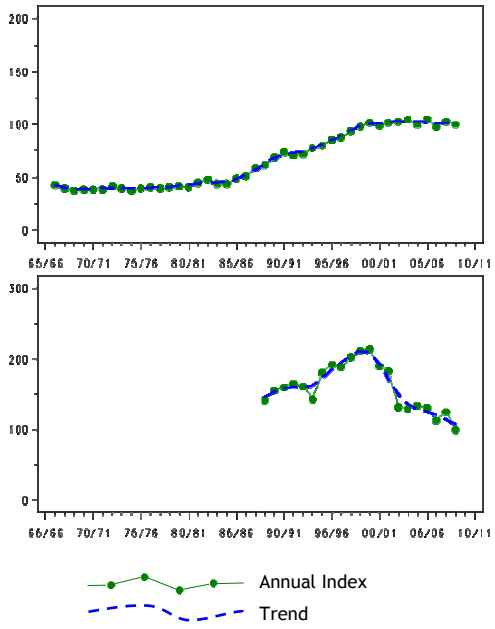


Figure 3.a, Annual indices & trend for Mute Swan for GB (above) & NI (below).

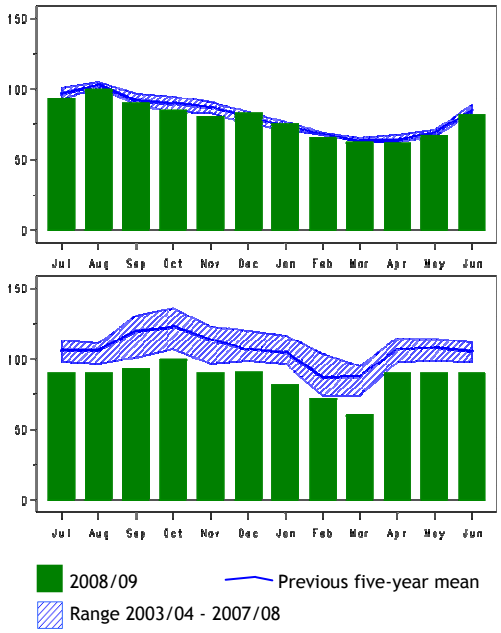


Figure 3.b, Monthly indices for Mute Swan for GB (above) & NI (below).

During the last ten years, the national indices for Mute Swan in Britain have remained very consistent, and the total population is unlikely to have changed significantly since the most recent census in 2002, which estimated 31,700 birds in the UK (Ward *et al*. 2007). Many of the habitats used by Mute Swans are poorly covered by WeBS; hence a relatively small proportion of the species' population is monitored through WeBS each year.

The peak WeBS count of Mute Swans during 2008/09 was 1,252 at Somerset Levels, recorded in both November and December. This represents the highest ever number there and consolidates its position at the top of the site table for this species. Somerset Levels is now ahead of Fleet & Wey, where the maximum during the year fell below 1,000 for the second year in succession; the first time this has occurred in twenty years of swan counting there.

Among the sixteen other sites of international importance, noteworthy increases were reported from Scotland, at Loch Leven and Loch Bee (South Uist), but below average peaks were noted at Hornsea Mere, Loughs Neagh & Beg and Strangford Lough. The declines at the latter two sites contributed to the continued decline exhibited by the species in Northern Ireland, where the index fell to its lowest value since WeBS indexing began there.

In recent years, a dramatic decline in Mute Swans appears to have taken place at Tring Reservoirs which held internationally important numbers as recently as 2006/07. Monthly maxima each year at the site between 2004/05 and 2008/09 have fallen in successive years by 14%, 15%, 67% and 19% respectively; reasons are unclear.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Somerset Levels	1,076	1,024	1,164	1,098	1,252	Nov	1,123	
Fleet and Wey	1,118	1,147	1,013	867	990	Oct	1,027	
Loughs Neagh and Beg	949	1,024	770	1,012	702	Oct	891	
Ouse Washes	806 [13]	427 [13]	508 [13]	1,151	(1,010)	Jan	780	
Rutland Water	593	510	588	499	562	Sep	550	
Tweed Estuary	614	460	583	364	410	Jul	486	
Loch Bee (South Uist)	630	267	401	399	605	Aug	460	
Loch Leven	202	319	542	520	544	Jul	425	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	393	315	410	476	489	Jan	417	
Severn Estuary	390	390	421	477	383	Jan	412	
Stour Estuary	232	288	347	544	512	Aug	385	
Upper Lough Erne	449	300	457	354	351	Dec	382	
Hornsea Mere	520 [13]	462	375	290	155	Sep	360	
Abberton Reservoir	318	373	(399)	311	348	Aug	350	
Morecambe Bay	(335)	320	(328)	(164)	(265)	Sep	328	▲
Lower Lough Erne	300	309	266	311	149	Dec	267	
Strangford Lough	94	133	(59)	252	111	Sep	148	
Upper Quoile River	108	134	121	144			127	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Loch of Harray	467	251	263	206	236	Jan	285	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Humber Estuary	269	178	350	266	377	Aug	288	

Black Swan

Cygnus atratus

Escape
Native Range: Australia

Black Swans were noted at 83 sites in 2008/09, with a peak of 54 birds in September; both figures being slightly lower than the previous year.

Sites included Roath Park Lake and Fendrod Pool in Wales, Inner Firth of Clyde and Loch of Harray in Scotland, and Loughs Neagh & Beg in Northern Ireland.

The majority of records were of singles or pairs, but maxima of nine were noted at Fairburn Ings in August and eight at Stour Estuary in August-September. Interestingly, just three were noted at Arnot Park Lake, where 7+ had been present for at least five years.

Sites with four or more birds in 2008/09[†]

Fairburn Ings	9	Aug	Fleet and Wey	4	Aug
Stour Estuary	8	Aug	R.Severn & R.Vrynwy confluence	4	Jan
Ramsbury Lake	5	Jul	Felton Butler Pool	4	Oct

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

Bewick's Swan

Cygnus columbianus

GB max:	**4,153**	**Jan**
NI max:	**8**	**Jan**
% young	6.4	
Brood size	1.5	

International threshold (*bewickii*): 200
Great Britain threshold: 81
All-Ireland threshold: 20*

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

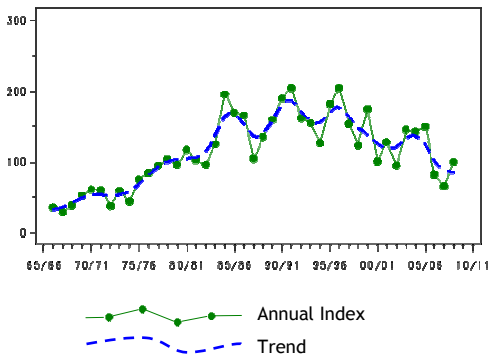


Figure 4.a, Annual indices & trend for Bewick's Swan for GB.

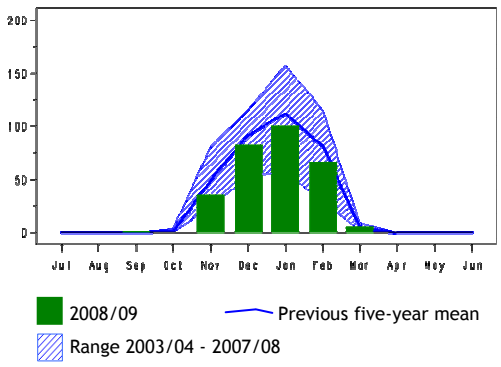


Figure 4.b, Monthly indices for Bewick's Swan for GB.

Bewick's Swans breed in the northern Russian tundra and winter primarily in Britain and The Netherlands.

In recent years, with notably fewer birds utilising traditional sites in the UK, there has been some evidence of a contraction of the wintering range in an easterly direction. However, the trend for The Netherlands since the mid 1970s has essentially mirrored that of the UK (e.g. Hustings *et al*. 2009), and recently compiled totals from the International Swan Censuses in 1995, 2000 and 2005 indicate that the population has declined overall from 29,500 birds in 1995 to 21,500 in 2005 (J. Beekman unpubl. data).

Therefore, it is now increasingly clear that the underlying cause of the observed changes in the UK is a decline in total population size rather than a shift in winter distribution. The most recent International Swan Census, organised in the UK by WWT, was carried out in January 201 – the results from which will further elucidate the extent to which this species has declined across its range.

In the UK in 2008/09, co-ordinated roost counts were again carried out at Ouse Washes and Nene Washes, the peak count being 3,468 at the former site in early January. This marks a slight improvement on the previous year, but is still notably down in comparison to the numbers which were using the site up until three years ago. Compared to 2007/08, increases were also noted at Nene Washes and Severn Estuary; all helping to contribute to a small rise in the national index in 2008/09. However, the overall trend over the course of the last twenty or so years remains downward, with occasional fluctuations. Furthermore, declines were again noted at a number of regularly used sites with smaller numbers; for example, the peak at Dungeness & Rye Bay fell below the 100 mark for only the third time.

Breeding success was assessed at three wintering sites in the UK during 2008/09; WWT Slimbridge, WWT Martin Mere/Ribble Estuary, and the Ouse Washes. Across these three sites the proportion of young birds was just 6.4%, well below the five-year mean of 10%, indicating another poor breeding season following the even lower value the previous year. Mean brood size was also low at 1.5 juveniles per pair.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Ouse Washes	7,491 [12]	5,449 [12]	3,407 [12]	3,128 [12]	3,468 [12]	Jan	4,589
Nene Washes	262 [12]	1,649 [12]	703 [12]	133 [12]	305 [12]	Dec	610
Hickling Broad	282 [42]						282
Severn Estuary	223 [8]	225	196	180	238	Jan	212
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	237	231	147 [12]	87 [13]	5	Nov	141
Dungeness and Rye Bay	140	135	130	127	83	Feb	123
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Martin Mere and Ribble Estuary	175	(132)	24	12	21	Jan	73
St Benet`s Levels					(37)[13]	Dec	(37)
Old Romney (no data for years shown in table)							

Whooper Swan

Cygnus cygnus

International threshold:	**210**	
Great Britain threshold:	**57**	
All-Ireland threshold:	**130**	

GB max:	**10,678**	**Jan**
NI max:	**2,613**	**Dec**
% young	16.8	
Brood size	2.1	

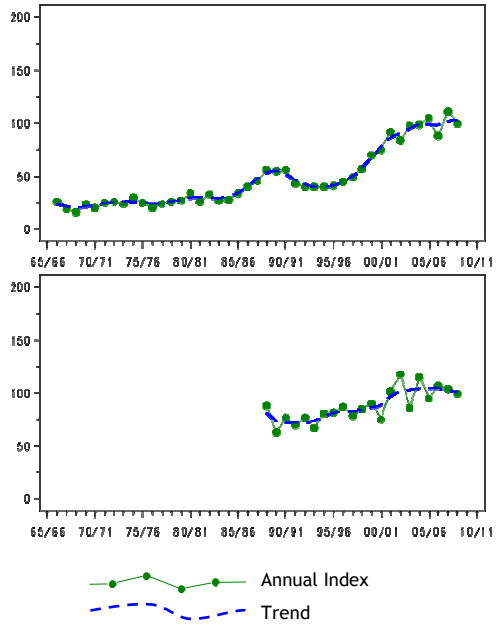


Figure 5.a, Annual indices & trend for Whooper Swan for GB (above) & NI (below).

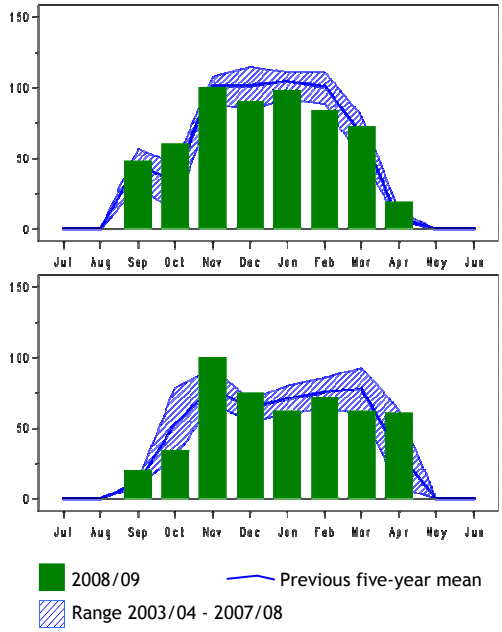


Figure 5.b, Monthly indices for Whooper Swan for GB (above) & NI (below).

In contrast to the decline experienced by Bewick's Swan in the UK and elsewhere in its range, numbers of Whooper Swans wintering in Britain and Ireland, the vast majority of which are from the Icelandic population, have increased. In Britain, the index fell very slightly compared to the previous year, but remains one of the highest on record. The overall trend remains one of gradual increase, following the steep rise experienced during the late 1990s in particular.

The maximum recorded at the Ouse Washes roost rose again, to its highest ever level, reaching a peak of 5,979 birds in January. Maxima at the other fifteen sites of international importance were largely similar to recent years. It will be intriguing to see how the numbers recorded through WeBS in 2009/10 compare with those

recorded during the sixth International Census of Whooper Swans (which took place in January 2010).

In 2008/09, breeding success was marginally above average (14.7%, 2004/05 – 2008/09) for all regions surveyed (WWT Martin Mere/Ribble Estuary, Ouse Washes and WWT Caerlaverock), with the exception of flocks using eastern England. Across all sites, flocks contained 16.8% cygnets, and the mean brood size of pairs with young was 2.1.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Ouse Washes	4,397 [12]	3,547 [12]	3,756 [12]	3,960 [12]	5,979 [13]	Jan	4,328	
Martin Mere and Ribble Estuary	2,081 [42]	1,666	1,451	1,819	1,703	Jan	1,744	
Loughs Neagh and Beg	1,543	1,268	1,731	1,734	(1,592)	Feb	1,574	
Lough Foyle	950 [42]	1,030	1,042	1,167	1,240	Nov	1,086	
Upper Lough Erne	1,123	822	956	680	636	Dec	843	
Loch of Strathbeg	355	680	285	92	252	Oct	333	
Loch Eye and Cromarty Firth	275	518	61	399 [14]	171	Oct	285	
Solway Estuary	508 [42]	150	194	(97)	(231)	Jan	284	
Strangford Lough	244	242	199	432	245	Dec	272	
Dalreoch			264				264	
Loans of Tullich	253 [42]						253	
Dornoch Firth	324	213	241	(86)	190	Dec	242	
Wigtown Bay	205	(165)	(164)	267	(195)	Mar	236	
Nene Washes	104 [12]	215 [12]	216 [12]	110 [12]	462 [12]	Feb	221	▲
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Norham West Mains	184 [42]	194 [13]	196				191	
East Fenton Farm Reservoir	89	156	143	340 [13]	182	Nov	182	
Loch Leven	66	17	220	242	350 [13]	Nov	179	
Loch Heilen	60	360	(197)	84	(59)	Feb	175	
River Tweed: Kelso to Coldstream	75	132	162	230	252	Nov	170	
R Clyde: Carstairs to Thankerton	110	220	188	173	109	Oct	160	
Loch a` Phuill (Tiree)	194	259 [13]	152 [13]	103	94	Jan	160	
Montrose Basin	28	181	147	(182)	103	Jan	128	
Black Cart Water (Gryfe-White Cart)	112	112	106 [13]	98 [13]	207 [13]	Dec	127	
Leven Cut	125 [42]						125	
Lindisfarne	71	119 [11]	(170)	(15)	90	Mar	113	
River Eden: Grinsdale to Sandsfield		98	59	186	108	Feb	113	
Strathearn South Kinkell	111 [42]						111	
Loch Insh and Spey Marshes	124	82	96	148	97	Jan	109	
Morecambe Bay	63	(100)	(84)	158	82	Jan	101	
Loch of Wester	128	56	70	134	118	Mar	101	
Rossie Bog				99	(78)	Jan	99	
River Nith: Keltonbank to Nunholm	(104)		(90)		91	Dec	98	
River Earn: Millands Marsh and Floods	15	63	12	168	228	Oct	97	
Lower Derwent Ings	102	74	104	88	93	Nov	92	
Folly Loch and Fairnington Fields	5	138 [13]	156	146	10	Dec	91	
Vasa Loch Shapinsay	119	12	147	85	40	Nov	81	
Lawers Pond		204 [13]	101	0	0		76	
River Earn: Lawhill Oxbows	113	193	49	7	8	Jan	74	
Tyninghame Estuary	31	53	128	51	83	Feb	69	
Loch Moraig	87	37	55	127	41	Oct	69	
Loch of Spiggie	69	77	94	76	30	Oct	69	
Kinnordy Loch	96	58	82	(76)	26	Nov	68	
Lower Teviot Valley	(58)	13	36	98	(129)	Jan	67	▲
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	27	166	36	73	26	Dec	66	
Delab Farm Monymusk	65 [42]						65	
Glaslyn Marshes	84			65	39	Nov	63	
Loch Tuamister (Lewis)	63 [42]						63	
Caistron Quarry	96	66	65	59	20	Nov	61	
Newmains Farm	61 [42]						61	
Loch of Lintrathen	69		54	56	(20)	Nov	60	
Loch Bailfinlay			(0)	115	0		58	
Humber Estuary	8	(115)	32	(44)	84	Mar	57	▲

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/2009							
Killimster Loch			51	90	9	Oct	50
St Benet`s Levels					0		0
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Wooden Loch	0	7	0	0	138	Jan	29
East Chevington Pools	14	4	1	1	127	Nov	29
St Johns Loch	10	80	26	25	110	Oct	50
White Cart Water (Netherton Farm)	0	0	8	0	92	Jan	20
North Loch (Sanday)			1	48	(80)	Nov	43
Loch Eaval & Loch Hosta (North Uist)	23	34	27	16	79	Nov	36
Loch Na Bo	6	19			71	Feb	32
Forth Estuary	19	7 [13]	(5)	8	65	Oct	25

Chinese Goose

Anser cygnoides

Escape
Native Range: E Asia

Chinese Geese (the domesticated strain of Swan Goose) were recorded at eight sites in Britain. All records involved one or two birds, including one which resided at Airthrey Loch until January, the only record outside England.

Taiga Bean Goose

Anser fabalis fabalis

International threshold: 800
Great Britain threshold: 4
All-Ireland threshold: +

GB max:	**401**	**Nov**
NI max:	**0**	**0**
% young	27.3	
Brood size	-	

There are two regular sites for wintering Taiga Bean Geese in the UK; Slamannan Plateau in central Scotland and Yare Valley in Norfolk. Birds are very faithful to these areas, where their numbers are monitored by the Bean Goose Working Group and RSPB, respectively. Unless specifically reported as being of the *fabalis* race, all other 'bean geese' are assumed to be of the race *rossicus* (known as Tundra Bean Goose). Similarly, all 'bean geese' reported from the Slamannan and Yare Valley areas are assumed to relate to Taiga Bean Geese. Though a scarce bird in the UK, Tundra Bean Geese are more likely to arrive as part of cold weather influxes and, consequently, are more likely to be recorded at other sites.

In 2008/09, a peak of 265 Taiga Bean Geese recorded at Slamannan Plateau in November represented a decrease of 35 birds compared to the maximum seen during the previous year, but was more in keeping with the average number recorded over the medium term. At Yare Valley, a peak of 133 in November was similar to the maximum noted in 2007/08, and hence once again represents one of the lowest peaks recorded at the site since the mid 1970s. Detailed monitoring of the Slamannan Plateau flock indicated that approximately 27% of the population were first-year birds in 2008/09, although no information was collected on average brood size.

Away from these two key areas, Taiga Bean Geese were recorded at five other sites during Core counts between November and February: Linton Pond, Uyea Sound (2), Hauxley Haven, Sutton & Lound Gravel Pits and Catcleugh Reservoir.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Slamannan Area	262 [4]	300 [4]	255 [4]	300 [4]	265 [4]	Nov	276
Middle Yare Marshes	156 [50]	169 [50]	111 [50]	136 [50]	133 [50]	Nov	141

Tundra Bean Goose

Anser fabalis rossicus

International threshold: **6,000**
Great Britain threshold: **+†**
All-Ireland threshold: **+**

GB max: **37** **Feb**
NI max: **0**

All records of 'bean geese' away from the two key wintering areas of Taiga Bean Goose *Anser f. fabalis* are assumed to relate to Tundra Bean Geese *Anser f. rossicus*, unless submitted as otherwise.

Very small, but regular, numbers of Tundra Bean Geese are noted during most winters in the UK, primarily at sites in the east. Most records tend to relate to ones or twos in with flocks of other geese, however, during periods of cold weather on the continent influxes of larger groups can occur. The most recent such influx was in the winter of 2004/05, when flocks of 80+ were noted at both Ouse Washes and Dungeness & Rye Bay. In that winter, a further 38 were at North Warren & Thorpeness Mere, a site which often attracts small numbers of Tundra Bean Geese each year, associating with a regular flock of European White-fronted Geese.

In 2008/09, Tundra Bean Geese were recorded at 17 sites during November to April, with the largest counts being 24 at Ouse Washes, seven at Nor Wick & Skaw (Shetland) and six at Severn Estuary. All other records were from central eastern England, with the exception one in the Avon Valley in December and March.

Sites with two or more birds in 2008/09†

Ouse Washes	24	Feb	Cainhoe Lakes	4	Dec
Nor Wick & Skaw	7	Feb	Southill Lake	4	Mar
Severn Estuary	6	Jan	R.Cam:Upware-Dimmocks Cote	3	Dec
Nene Washes	5	Jan	R.Cam: Kingfishers Bridge	3	Jan

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

Pink-footed Goose

Anser brachyrhynchus

International threshold: **2,700**
Great Britain threshold: **2,400**
All-Ireland threshold: **+**

GB max: **339,732** **Oct**
NI max: **20** **Oct**

% young 22.8
Brood size 2.1

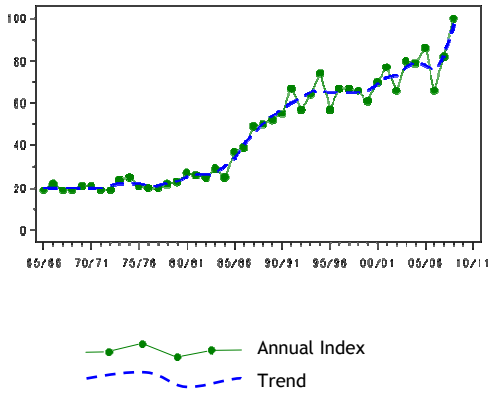


Figure 6.a, Annual indices & trend for Pink-footed Goose for GB.

The annual census of Pink-footed Geese is carried out through the Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme co-ordinated by WWT. The autumn of 2008 saw three counts take place (in October, November and December) representing the 49th consecutive Icelandic-breeding Goose Census.

The wintering population of Pinkfeet arrived relatively early in the autumn of 2008, with the estimated population (including counts from Faeroes and Iceland) rising to over 351,000, an exceptional 23.4% higher than the previous year. Despite recent fluctuations in numbers, partly due to variation in coverage, the long term population trend has been one of continued increase. The maximum for Britain was 339,732 birds in October.

Typically the distribution of birds in the UK changed during the course of the

winter. South-east Scotland and north-east England held the greatest number of birds in October, with notably lower concentrations in northern Scotland, south-west Scotland and north-west England. Particularly low numbers were at the Loch of Strathbeg, although more typical numbers for that region were present during November, by which time numbers had decreased in eastern central Scotland but increased substantially in eastern England. By December, over half of the population (53.8%) was present in eastern England.

Breeding success was assessed at several locations throughout Scotland and England. The proportion of birds aged as first-years within flocks was 22.8% and the mean brood size for pairs with young was 2.1, both very similar figures to the previous year.

As the number of Pink-footed Geese wintering in the UK has increased, interactions between foraging birds and agriculture have generated an increasing number of conflicts. It has been suggested that farming practice can be altered in order to include geese as an integral part of the local environment (Wisz et al. 2008). For example, because harvested sugar beet remains which are not used for livestock are of no commercial value, their use can be directed towards minimising numbers of geese using more vulnerable crops such as winter-sown cereals (Gill *et al*. 2006).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Holkham Marshes	58,000 [13]	70,000 [14]	69,100 [14]	56,000 [14]	22,145 [14]	Dec	55,049	
Loch of Strathbeg	65,000 [14]	68,000 [14]	37,396	39,370 [14]	53,454 [14]	Oct	52,644	
Southwest Lancashire	43,950 [6]	31,860 [14]	39,030 [14]	17,877	90,455 [14]	Nov	44,634	
Snettisham	35,360 [13]	49,610 [14]	33,485 [14]	47,530 [14]	51,950 [14]	Dec	43,587	
West Water Reservoir		28,240 [14]	43,252 [14]	27,960 [14]	47,361 [14]	Oct	36,703	
Scolt Head	66,000 [13]	55,000 [14]	17,200 [14]	7,870 [14]	23,000 [14]	Dec	33,814	
Montrose Basin	31,896 [14]	30,181 [14]	25,000 [14]	23,945 [14]	38,911 [14]	Oct	29,987	
Aberlady Bay	18,430 [14]	14,250 [14]		23,415 [14]	32,244 [14]	Oct	22,085	
Morecambe Bay	26,910 [6]	20,980 [14]	10,200 [14]	21,200 [14]	(7,255)	Oct	19,823	
Loch of Skene	12,000 [14]	17,730 [14]	(22,930) [14]	19,000 [14]	18,560 [14]	Nov	18,044	
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	12,784	11,213	17,800 [12]	22,785 [13]	5,770 [14]	Nov	14,070	
Loch Leven	14,750	22,175 [14]	14,600 [14]	1,000	17,618 [14]	Oct	14,029	
Loch Spynie	27,000 [14]	23,000 [14]	9,000 [14]	150 [14]	1,000 [14]	Nov	12,030	
Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs	8,770 [14]	11,130 [14]	12,600 [14]	11,200 [14]	15,200 [14]	Oct	11,780	
Findhorn Bay	18,000 [14]	9,400 [14]	(3,800) [14]	7,800 [14]	9,850 [14]	Nov	11,263	
Solway Estuary	2,612 [14]	(6,862)	23,313 [14]	(5,004)	5,751	Mar	10,559	
Easterton - Fort George		10,000 [14]					10,000	
Loch of Lintrathen	8,921 [14]	9,790 [14]	7,040 [14]	8,410 [14]	10,745 [14]	Nov	8,981	
Ythan Estuary and Slains Lochs	16,200	(1,800)	5,722	3,900	(750)	Apr	8,607	
Martham Broad					8,500 [14]	Jan	8,500	▲
Winter Loch, St Fergus Terminal			6,620 [14]				6,620	
Wigtown Bay	(7,219)	802	(6,695)	11,720 [14]	(4,943)	Mar	6,609	
Horsey Mere	7,231 [13]	6,240 [14]	5,430 [14]				6,300	
Lindisfarne	5,300 [14]	5,800 [14]	(6,132)	6,900 [14]	(2,502)	Feb	6,033	
Hule Moss	7,950 [14]	6,000	2,250 [14]	6,850 [14]	6,250 [14]	Oct	5,860	
Heigham Holmes		5,670 [14]					5,670	
Norton Marsh		4,500 [14]	6,650 [14]	4,850 [14]	2,720 [14]	Nov	4,680	
Humber Estuary	5,638	3,909	4,151	3,703	7,108	Nov	4,902	
Eden Estuary	973 [14]	100	9	430 [14]	20,520 [12]	Feb	4,406	▲
Holme and Thornham		5,000 [14]	4,000 [14]	3,865 [14]	4,170 [14]	Dec	4,259	
Middlemuir (New Pitsligo Moss)				4,500 [14]	3,500 [14]	Oct	4,000	
Loch Tullybelton	6,500 [14]		2,700 [14]	2,800 [14]	4,000 [14]	Oct	4,000	
R Clyde: Carstairs to Thankerton	(3,050)	4,500	1,540	(4,720)	4,530	Mar	3,823	
Rossie Bog	6,290 [14]	2,250 [14]		655 [14]	6,000 [12]	Feb	3,799	
Simonswood Peat Moss			3,000 [14]	4,500 [14]			3,750	
River Tay: Haughs of Kercock	4,000 [14]	3,500 [14]	3,702 [14]	3,165 [14]	2,704 [14]	Nov	3,414	
Floodwater South Of Braco			3,290 [14]				3,290	
Lochhill	0	3,525 [13]	760	5,000 [13]	7,100 [13]	Sep	3,277	▲
Forth (Skinflats)	2,530 [14]	3,980 [14]	2,950 [14]	2,176 [14]	4,463 [14]	Nov	3,220	
Biggar Moss	1,000	50	0	6,500	7,000	Mar	2,910	▲
Ravenstruther	350	850	1,300	1,800	9,500	Oct	2,760	▲

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Wedholme Flow			0	1,300	6,000 [13]	Feb	2,433 ▲
Lake of Menteith	5,357 [14]	11	5,129 [14]	329	1,229	Mar	2,411 ▼
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Tay-Isla Valley	4,000	3,500	3,702	86	654	Nov	2,388
Loch Connell				4,500 [13]	3	Sep	2,252
East Chevington Pools	2,540 [14]	1,953 [14]	2,000	4,000 [14]	400	Nov	2,179
Holburn Moss	2,300 [14]	2,950 [14]	2,400 [14]	2,300 [14]	95 [14]	Oct	2,019
Fala Flow	741 [14]		2,170 [14]	3,650 [14]	1,510 [14]	Oct	2,018
Folly Loch and Fairnington Fields	4	4,563 [14]	2,000	850	800 [14]	Dec	1,643
River Nith: Keltonbank to Nunholm	(950)		(2,525)		230	Dec	1,235
Dupplin Lochs	2 [14]		1,450 [14]	2,100 [14]			1,184
Cameron Reservoir	2,692 [14]	521	399	42	910	Jan	913
Orchardton and Auchencairn Bays	(300)	(200)	(800)	(300)	(500)	Dec	(800)
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Loch Eye and Cromarty Firth	900	3,226	1,116	575	4,305	Feb	2,024
Whitrig Bog	1,250 [14]	800 [14]		1,000	4,000	Nov	1,763
Cullerlie Ponds	142	25	210	4	3,500	Nov	776
South Medwin Pools	3,000	700	3,000	1,800	2,560	Apr	2,212
Caithness Lochs	1,359	(2,140)	2,182	1,686	(2,560)	Mar	1,985

European White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons albifrons

International threshold: 10,000
Great Britain threshold: 58
All-Ireland threshold: +

GB max: 1,638 Jan
NI max: 0 0

% young 13.2
Brood size -

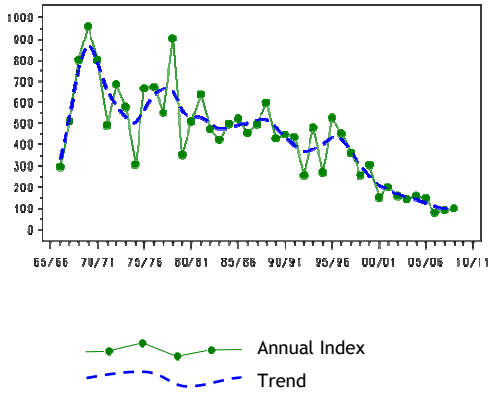


Figure 7.a, Annual indices & trend for European White-fronted Goose for GB.

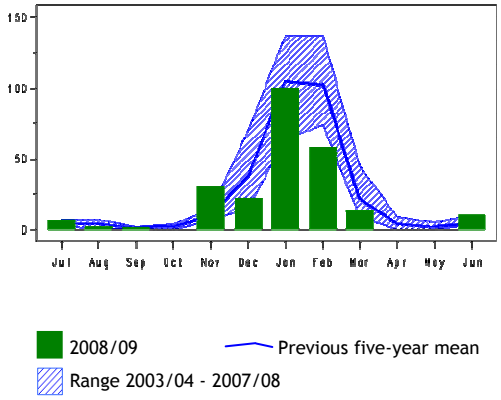


Figure 7.b, Monthly indices for European White-fronted Goose for GB.

Numbers of European White-fronted Goose in 2008/09 exhibited the typical pattern of recent winters by peaking in January and Febuary. The national index remained at the very low level that has increasingly characterised the last decade, and there remains no indication that the decline of this species at British sites will change in the near future. As documented in previous reports, the trend in Britain is associated with a distributional shift in core wintering range in response to milder winters – referred to as "short stopping". Concurrently, numbers of wintering European White-fronted Geese continue to increase in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009).

Predictably, peak counts from most of the traditional sites were below respective five-year averages. The highest count of the year was from Severn Estuary, albeit the lowest ever maximum there. Notably, Alde Complex on the Suffolk coast hosted nationally important numbers in November,

and joined other locations in East Anglia of recent national importance for the species.

Breeding success of geese breeding in the Russian tundra generally decreases in years of low lemming abundance as a result of predators switching from lemmings to birds. Reports from monitoring stations in the Arctic indicate that numbers of lemmings dropped dramatically during summer 2008 (Soloviev & Tomkovich 2009), while Arctic Foxes were common in some areas. European White-fronted Geese were aged at two localities during winter 2008/09 (WWT Slimbridge and North Warren, Suffolk). Overall, 13.2% of flocks were first-winter birds, almost half the figure estimated during the previous year. No brood size data were collected, however. As for Dark-bellied Brent Goose, this is therefore one of the least productive breeding seasons for several years.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Severn Estuary	745 [3]	750	542 [3]	520	507 [3]	Jan	613
Heigham Holmes	450 [55]	512 [55]	570 [55]	800 [55]	200 [55]	Dec	507
Swale Estuary	(398)	430	355	315	160	Feb	332
North Warren & Thorpeness Mere	302	330 [13]	180	452 [13]	245	Jan	302
North Norfolk Coast	340	404	200	275	226	Jan	289
Dungeness and Rye Bay	238	550	151	194	239	Feb	274
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	267	290	0	61 [13]	0		124
Middle Yare Marshes	109	76	66	193	72	Jan	103
Alde Complex	25	12	0	58	206	Nov	60

Greenland White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons flavirostris

International threshold: **270**
Great Britain threshold: **209**
All-Ireland threshold: **110**

GB max: **12,506** **Mar**
NI max: **67** **Dec**

% young 10.7
Brood size 2.8

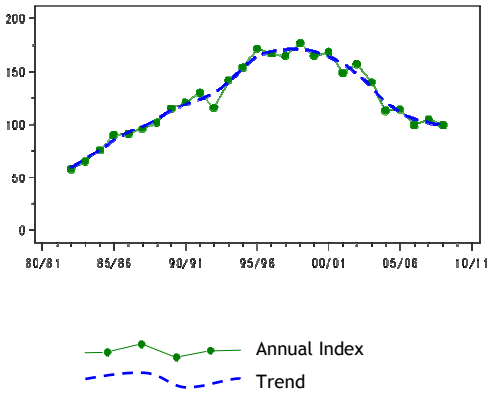


Figure 8.a, Annual indices & trend for Greenland White-fronted Goose for GB.

Greenland White-fronted Geese breed in the low arctic coastal fringe of west Greenland, and migrate southwards through south and west Iceland during September and October.

The population winters exclusively in Britain and Ireland, and is therefore is a high priority in terms of conservation objectives. The two most important sites in the British Isles, amongst several favoured locations, are Islay on the west coast of Scotland and Wexford Slobs in Ireland.

Numbers declined to their lowest levels in the late 1970s but, following bans on winter shooting, the wintering population recovered (to a peak in the UK of 22,117 birds in 1998). Since then numbers have again fallen, to their lowest point for over twenty years. Hence, as well as being Red-listed in the UK (Eaton *et al.* 2009), Greenland White-fronted Goose also qualifies as 'Endangered' under IUCN criteria (Boertmann 2007).

In recent decades, as well as a northward shift in wintering sites, which has left many sites in southern Ireland no longer used, they have shown a marked shift away from the use of bogland habitats to intensively managed farmland (Crowe 2008).

In 2008/09, the annual census, organised by the Greenland White-fronted Goose Study, was carried out in December 2008 and March 2009. The number of geese in

the UK, which peaked at 12,506 in the spring, represents a decrease of 4.6% compared to the maximum recorded during the previous year. Typically, approximately two-thirds of the Scottish population was recorded on Islay, the remainder mostly in western Scotland, with Machrihanish, Rhunahaorine, Tiree and Coll supporting the largest numbers. The peak count from the most southerly wintering site in Britain, the Dyfi Estuary, was slightly lower than recent years.

Despite the slight fall in total numbers in the UK, the very steep decline which has characterised recent years at least appears to have been halted. It would appear that the ban on hunting in Iceland, introduced in autumn 2006, has helped numbers to stabilise. Previously, hunting pressure had been an additional source of mortality during a long period of low breeding success (Fox *et al*. 2009). Breeding success again remained low, improving only slightly in comparison to 2007/08.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Island of Islay	8,350 [9]	7,456 [9]	7,902 [9]	7,980 [9]	8,590 [9]	Feb	8,056
Machrihanish	1,407 [9]	1,433 [9]	1,716 [9]	1,285 [12]	1,477 [9]	Dec	1,464
Rhunahaorine	894 [9]	955 [9]	940 [9]	1,451 [9]	879 [9]	Mar	1,024
Tiree	1,133 [20]	1,112 [8]	974 [9]	803 [9]	979 [9]	Mar	1,000
Isle of Coll	814 [9]	778	687 [9]	445 [9]	336 [9]	Oct	612
Isle of Colonsay	1,718 [7]	111 [35]	76 [21]	109 [9]	87 [9]	Dec	420
Keills Peninsula and Isle of Danna	338 [9]	344 [9]	300 [9]	202 [9]	239 [9]	Dec	285
Isle of Lismore	310 [9]	320 [9]	273 [9]	240 [9]	280 [9]	Apr	285
Stranraer Lochs	257 [9]	282 [9]	360 [9]	247 [9]	273 [9]	Jan	284
Caithness Lochs	(83)	(170)	(275)	(1)	(0)		(275)
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Loch Lomond	240 [9]	210 [9]	210 [9]	223 [12]	220 [9]	Mar	211
Bute	206 [9]	190 [9]	209 [9]	240 [9]	210 [9]	Dec	211
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Loch Ken	215 [9]	220 [9]	206 [9]	177 [9]	194 [9]	Jan	202
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Sound of Gigha	139 [9]	149 [9]	105 [9]	194 [9]	330	Feb	183
Loch of Mey	193 [9]	184 [9]	176 [9]	146 [9]	240 [9]	Feb	188

Greenland White-fronted Goose (Edmund Fellowes)

Lesser White-fronted Goose

Anser erythropus

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: SE Europe, Asia

Escapes were seen at four sites during 2008/09, including long-stayers throughout the year at Llyn Traffwll and Testbourne Estate.

Icelandic Greylag Goose

Anser anser

International threshold:	**870**
Great Britain threshold:	**819**
All-Ireland threshold:	**50**

GB max:	**83,677**	**Dec**
NI max:	****0**	
% young	25.0	
Brood size	2.3	

***although small numbers occur in Northern Ireland these remain difficult to distinguish from re-established birds*

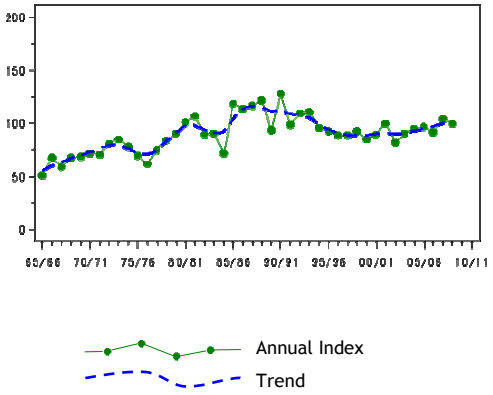


Figure 9.a, Annual indices & trend for Icelandic Greylag Goose for GB.

Counts of Icelandic Greylag Goose were undertaken in November and December as part of the 49th consecutive Icelandic-breeding Goose Census. This international census incorporates counts of sites across the flyway, in Britain, Ireland, the Faeroes, Norway and Iceland. Overall, the census yielded a population estimate of 98,291 birds, representing a 6.9% decrease compared to the previous year.

The increasing concentration of the population on Orkney continued, with a record count of 68,349 there in December 2008 (although around 10,000 of these are from the local population – a mixture of Re-established and Northwest Scotland birds – and not included in the above population estimate). Although national peaks have occurred in November in each of the last three years, coverage of sites in December is worthwhile owing to the varying arrival time from the breeding grounds.

During early November, Greylag Geese were aged at various localities throughout northern Scotland. Breeding success was deemed to be higher than average, with flocks containing 25.0% young, but the mean brood size of 2.3 goslings per successful pair was slightly lower than normal.

In summary, despite an annual harvest of approximately 30,000 to 40,000 birds annually in Iceland and an unknown number shot in other parts of the winter range, breeding success at over 20% in eight out of the last nine years has helped maintain numbers at an average of 98,300 individuals over the last five years (Mitchell *et al.* submitted).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Orkney	42,697 [14]	40,403 [14]	55,521 [14]	67,540 [14]	68,349 [14]	Dec	54,902	
Caithness Lochs	11,755 [14]	8,727 [14]	2,734	6,802 [14]			7,505	
Loch Eye and Cromarty Firth	8,313 [14]	13,269	2,463 [14]	7,112 [14]	818 [14]	Dec	6,395	
Easterton - Fort George		3,500 [14]					3,500	
Dornoch Firth	1,720	1,632 [14]	2,858	3,310 [14]	6,379	Dec	3,180	
Strathearn (West)			3,170 [14]	1,400 [14]			2,285	
Bute	1,780 [14]	2,110 [14]	1,670 [14]	1,960 [14]	3,800 [14]	Nov	2,264	
Loch of Skene	4,500 [14]	4,700 [14]	500 [14]	520 [14]	790 [14]	Nov	2,202	
Loch Fleet Complex	990 [14]	3,000	1,762	2,100 [14]	1,110 [14]	Nov	1,792	
Tay and Isla Valley	1,930	2,155	700	973 [14]	2,640 [14]	Dec	1,680	▲
Loch Garten	2,100 [14]	1,700 [14]	1,150 [14]	1,306 [14]	580 [14]	Nov	1,367	
Forth Estuary	(802)	2,107	(471)	875	936 [14]	Dec	1,306	
Loch Ussie	0	3,280 [14]	133	1,250	(0)		1,166	
Shetland Isles	586 [14]	1,126 [14]			1,724 [14]	Oct	1,145	▲
Gadloch	650	1,020 [14]	1,100 [14]	600	1,990	Dec	1,072	▲
Beauly Firth	600 [14]	1,380 [14]		987 [14]			989	▲
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Loch Spynie	1,000 [14]	2,600 [14]	500 [14]	30 [14]	60 [14]	Nov	838	▼

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/2009							
Kilconquhar Loch	1,200 [14]	1,500 [14]	5	375 [14]	200 [14]	Nov	656
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Inner Firth of Clyde	120	96	280	360	1,198	Nov	411
Loch Leven	274	395	620	700	1,195 [12]	Jun	637
Loch Insh and Spey Marshes	504 [14]	483 [14]	320 [14]	943 [14]	1,047	Nov	659
River Earn: Lawhill Oxbows	400	48	588	2	1,000	Jan	408
Marlee Loch	880 [14]	160 [14]	330 [14]	60 [14]	900 [14]	Dec	466

NW Scotland Greylag Goose

Anser anser

International threshold: 100
Great Britain threshold: 90

GB max:	**10,329**	**Aug**
NI max:	**0**	**0**
% young	40.3	
Brood	2.9	

The Northwest Scotland Greylag Goose population is monitored annually at key sites, typically both in late summer and late winter. The two most important areas are Tiree and North & South Uists. A total of 5,948 Greylag Geese was counted on the Uists in August, a decrease of 7.6% compared to the previous year. Likewise, six months later in February, a count of 4,661 was made – also a fall of 7.6% on the equivalent count from the previous year. On Tiree, 3,370 birds were recorded, representing a fall of 8.8% compared to 2007/08.

However, the percentage of young birds in the post-breeding August count on Tiree was 40.3%; well above the average for the previous five years (29.8%), and the mean brood size was also slightly above normal (2.9 goslings per successful pair). On the Uists, the overall proportion of young was 27.1% with a mean brood size of 2.62 goslings per pair. The reductions in numbers, despite high breeding successs, are a reflection of the increasing number shot under licence to reduce agricultural conflict.

Since the last full national census in 1997, the Northwest Scotland Greylag Goose population is considered to have increased both in number and range to the extent that in some parts of Scotland the re-established and Northwest Scotland populations overlap and are impossible to distinguish.

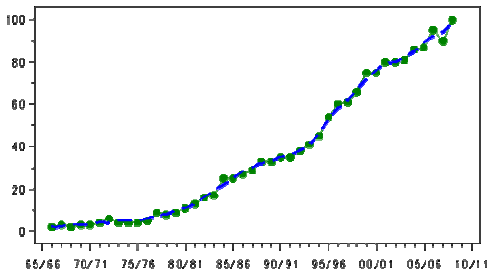
	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Tiree	4,005 [32]	3,892 [32]	4,005 [32]	3,694 [32]	3,370 [32]	Aug	3,793
North Uist	2,970 [16]	2,671 [34]	2,318 [34]	2,294 [34]	2,783 [34]	Aug	2,607
South Uist	2,111 [16]	2,119 [34]	1,719 [34]	1,141 [34]	1,971 [34]	Feb	1,812
Benbecula	414 [16]	473 [16]	221 [44]	539 [44]	2,611 [44]	Aug	852
Isle of Coll	960	980 [51]	856 [51]		510	Aug	827
Island of Islay		509	166 [51]	366	1,055	Aug	524
Machrihanish		272 [51]					272
Moine Mhor & Add Estuary		254 [51]					254
Tayinloan		141 [51]					141
Kentra Moss & Lower Loch Shiel	136	107	90	140	143	Oct	123
Melbost Sands (Lewis)	(86)	137	99	61	194	Nov	123
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Isle of Gunna							
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Loch Broom	0	(7)	40	137	91	Feb	67

Re-established Greylag Goose

Naturalised re-establishment†

Anser anser

GB max: 35,177 Oct
NI max: 2,176 Feb



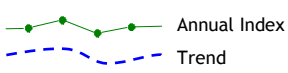
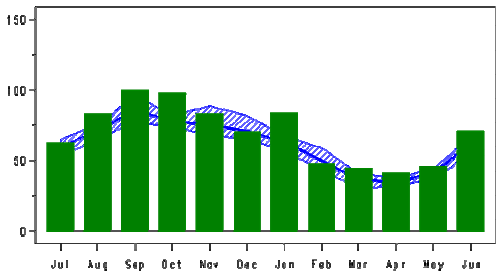


Figure 10.a, Annual indices & trend for Re-established Greylag Goose for GB.



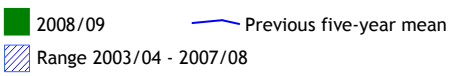


Figure 10.b, Monthly indices for Re-established Greylag Goose for GB.

Like elsewhere in Western Europe (for example in France (Fouque *et al*. 2009) and The Netherlands (Hustings *et al*. 2009)) the WeBS national index of the 're-established' Greylag Goose population in Britain rose again in 2008/09, to its highest ever level. A similar trend is shown by counts of this population made during the breeding season (Baillie *et al*. 2010). Numbers recorded on WeBS sites appear to have been particularly high during the autumn months, with an additional pronounced peak in January.

Because no counts were received from Nosterfield Gravel Pits, the accolade for the year's highest count of re-established Greylags goes to North Norfolk Coast, where 2,203 were logged in August. Seven other sites hosted peaks in excess of 1,000 birds, including Point of Ayr Gravel Pits and Ouse Washes, where maxima have approximately trebled and doubled, respectively, in the space of five years.

There are increasing difficulties with monitoring the status of the different Greylag Goose 'populations' in the UK because of rising levels of range overlap.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 500 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Nosterfield Gravel Pits	2,215	1,663	1,898	2,819			2,149
North Norfolk Coast	1,371	1,435	1,725	1,270	2,203	Aug	1,601
Lower Derwent Ings	927	1,401	1,228	1,056	1,472	Oct	1,217
The Wash	1,038	1,005	1,337	1,159	1,200	Jan	1,148
Tophill Low Reservoirs	867	1,400	1,190	1,230	1,000 [13]	Jan	1,137
Livermere and Ampton Water	1,176	879		1,285	784	Jan	1,031
Dungeness and Rye Bay	976	702	773	1,409	964	Aug	965
Point of Ayre Gravel Pit	550	530	900	1,165	1,630	Sep	955
Morecambe Bay	786	881	(617)	(290)	1,139	Jan	935
Ouse Washes	782	671	810	687 [13]	1,496	Oct	889
Bolton-on-Swale Gravel Pits	729	774	615	1,585	716	Aug	884
Humber Estuary	821	(525)	(785)	(906)	775	Jun	834
Swale Estuary	625	(1,062)	632	885	(681)	Jan	801
Orwell Estuary	744 [11]	967 [11]	671	(608)	(637)	Jan	794
Alton Water	419	612	1,056	1,068	613	Oct	754
Blackwater Estuary	(566)	(347)	598	790	774	Oct	721
Hay-a-Park Gravel Pits	472	132	825	1,503	606	Oct	708
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	950	424	494	563	1,095	Feb	705
Medway Estuary	589 [11]	520 [11]	449	1,076	(864)	Dec	700
Hickling Broad	831	909	529		530	Sep	700

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Hornsea Mere	785	1,145	615	145	558	Sep	650
Kirkby-on-Bain Gravel Pits	925	387	724	600	609	Sep	649
Windermere	32	488	985	767	843	Jun	623
Llyn Traffwll	341	395	941	589	789	Jul	611
Colne Fen Gravel Pits	537	637	590	770	493	Jun	605
King`s Dyke Pits, Whittlesey	68	366	1,338	(0)	(90)	Dec	591
Tees Estuary	(623)	(360)	430	590	640	Dec	571
Bellflask	567						567
Tattershall Pits	445	950	400	506	510	Dec	562
Eccup Reservoir	750	546	825	264	397	Oct	556
Clifford Hill Gravel Pits	422	367	634	479	851	Sep	551
Welbeck Estate	(418)	480	549	550	613	Sep	548
Scorton Quarry	800	196	590	730	404	Aug	544
Cranwich Gravel Pits					539	Oct	539
Messingham Sand Quarries	600	373			600	Jan	524
Paul`s Pond					520	Dec	520
Ouse Fen and Pits (Hanson/RSPB)	369	457	669	404	697	Sep	519
WWT Martin Mere	620	530	532	390	(485)	Dec	518
Southill Lake	360	430	620	483	650	Jan	509
Little Paxton Gravel Pits	518	511	672	257	577	Oct	507
Scaling Dam Reservoir	405	503	500	555	553	Aug	503
Middle Yare Marshes	396	444	772	591	302	Sep	501
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	1,005	(630)	662	1,284	(917)	Feb	984
Lough Foyle	1,291	1,129	974	716	750	Feb	972
Strangford Lough	307	355	277 [11]	431	513	Dec	377
Belfast Lough	125 [11]	147 [11]	196 [11]	134	86	Sep	138
Lower Lough Erne	137	140	140	38			114
Tullyratty Lake	29	0	213	5			62
Upper Lough Erne	52	62	73	64	21	Jan	54
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
North Cave Wetlands	244	850	191	356	700	Nov	468
Castle Lake	0	22	367	160	700	Nov	250
Derwent Reservoir	297	210	510 [13]	(387)	689	Jan	427
Llyn Alaw	273	765	409	147	629	Sep	445
Pulfin Bog & High Eske Nature Reserve	123	275	375	264	600	Sep	327
Stodmarsh	301	252	337	60	600	Sep	310
Rutland Water	440	489	481	480	586	Jun	495
River Cam: Upware to Dimmocks Cote	14		52	655	562	Dec	321
Thames Estuary	593	400	464	472	(544)	Nov	495
Ribble Estuary	(85)	240	229	307	531	Sep	327
Wanlip North Lakes				353	528	Nov	441
Dee Flood Meadows	590 [13]	(577)	440	382	508	Nov	499
Shropshire Farm Reservoir	58	168	165	12	505 [13]	Jan	182

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set qualifying levels of 500 and 50 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectivley, for presentation in this report*

Bar-headed Goose

Anser indicus

Escape
Native Range: S Asia

Bar-headed Geese were recorded at 40 sites in Britain, with a monthly peak of 14 birds in May. Sites where more than two individuals were seen included The Wash, Harewood Lake and Swillington Ings.

Snow Goose

Anser caerulescens

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: N America

Snow Geese were reported from 21 sites during the year, with a peak of nine birds in November. All records involved one or two birds, and typically the majority will refer to escapes. One with Pink-footed Geese at Loch of Strathbeg in January was probably the most likely to have been a genuine vagrant.

Ross's Goose

Anser rossii

Escape and possible vagrant
Native Range: N America

Five sites hosted presumed escaped Ross's Geese during 2008/09; The Wash, Colne Fen Gravel Pits, Lower Derwent Ings, and two stretches of the River Cam in Cambridgeshire. All records were of 1-2 birds.

Emperor Goose

Anser canagicus

Escape
Native Range: Alaska, NE Siberia

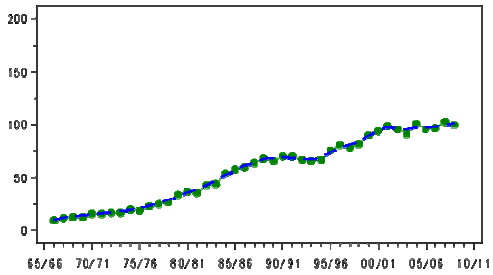
The resident flock of Emperor Geese was again present at South Walney Island in Morecambe Bay, peaking at 16 in July. The only other was one at Lackford Lakes Nature Reserve in November.

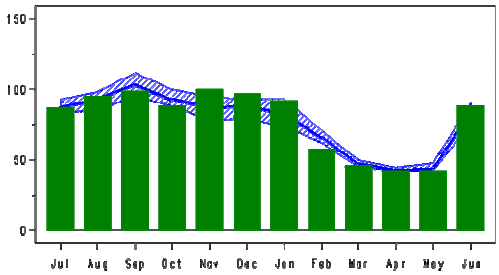
Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Naturalised introduction†
Native Range: N America

GB max: **59,414** **Nov**
NI max: **431** **Jan**





Canada Goose (Jill Pakenham)

Following a well-publicised rapid rise in the national index during the 1980s and latter part of the 1990s, the rate of increase in the Canada Goose population appears to have slowed slightly since 2000. That said, in common with all other re-established goose populations, each year since then an increasing number of sites have surpassed the current threshold for listing in the table below. In contrast, the adjacent population in The Netherlands is currently expanding rapidly, an increase which began as recently as the late 1990s (e.g Hustings *et al*. 2009). Unlike 2007/08, the monthly indices indicate that numbers were particularly high in the UK this year during the winter period of November to January.

In 2008/09, the same sites as in the previous year occupied the top four places. The first two of these, Dyfi Estuary and Mersey Estuary, both hosted peak numbers well in excess of 3,000 birds – a milestone surpassed only once before in WeBS history, six years previously at Dyfi Estuary. Away from these sites, arguably the most notable count was 1,625 at Ribble Estuary in January, the most Canada Geese ever reported there. In addition, three sites yielded counts greater than 1,000 birds for the first time: Ouse Washes, Lee Valley Gravel Pits and Severn Floodplain (Atcham Bridge to Wroxeter). Conversely, lower than normal numbers were seen at Colliford Reservoir, Taw-Torridge Estuary and Abberton Reservoir.

In Northern Ireland, a relatively marked decline was noted for the second year in succession. Upper Lough Erne and Strangford Lough both held significantly fewer birds than the recent five-year averages.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 600 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Dyfi Estuary	2,380	2,947	2,420	2,799	3,319	Dec	2,773
Mersey Estuary	2,088	2,188	1,923	2,706	3,500	Nov	2,481
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	2,316	1,987	2,087	2,536	1,531	Oct	2,091
Colliford Reservoir	1,477	841	2,439	1,637	632	Dec	1,405
Ribble Estuary	552	626	(1,245)	1,494	1,625	Jan	1,108
Rutland Water	1,244	1,070	1,118	1,009	1,063	Jul	1,101
Alde Complex	1,246	780	684	1,131	1,248	Nov	1,018
Fairburn Ings		2,509	609	436	421	Aug	994
Medway Estuary	365 [11]	935 [11]	824	1,413	(1,123)	Dec	932
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(912)	(1,109)	986	(565)	647	Oct	914
Arun Valley	1,236	742	1,076	570	939	Nov	913
Bewl Water	986	900	548	1,039	(669)	Dec	868
Harewood Lake	870	888		1,080	630	Jan	867
Doxey Marshes SSSI	893	(601)	802	726	987	Nov	852
Osberton		427	1,212	790	850	Oct	820
R.Severn: Atcham Bridge to Wroxeter			600	650	1,200	Dec	817
Dolydd Hafren	(500)	(800)	(500)				(800)
Ellesmere Lakes	1,348	668	873	491	576	Sep	791
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(171)	(89)	(322)	(748)	(309)	Dec	(748)
Ouse Washes	649	445	575	558	1,463 [13]	Nov	738
Abberton Reservoir	(616)	607	(213)	1,036	480	Sep	708
Cleddau Estuary	622	585 [11]	890	686	756	Dec	708
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	577	564	(488)	516	1,130	Sep	697
Doddington Pool	829	360	578	1,215	442	Oct	685
Pitsford Reservoir	441	682	832	587	877	Sep	684
Windermere	376	505 [13]	747 [13]	796	967	Jun	678
Stour Estuary	978	622	569	625	591	Jan	677
King`s Bromley Gravel Pits	721	586	542	848	653	Jun	670
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	(714)	345	556	965	(712)	Sep	658
Watermead Country Park South	723	648	668	597	594	Jul	646
Roadford Reservoir	763	650	552	593	594	Dec	630
Rostherne Mere	81	2,328	228	152	336	Sep	625
Exe Estuary	772	680	502	584	565	Aug	621
Dee Flood Meadows	510 [13]	580	515	725	720	Oct	610
Grimley New Workings	682	(420)	(600)	521	620	Dec	608
Severn Estuary	409	580	606	532	909	Sep	607
Walthamstow Reservoirs	784	278	636	695	636	Jun	606
Lower Derwent Ings	429	712	688	573	607	Nov	602
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Upper Lough Erne	384	484	665	390	301	Jan	445
Lower Lough Erne	217	532	365	286			350
Strangford Lough	229	260 [11]	247	161	166	Feb	213
Lough McNean Lower	40	147	44	148	27	Feb	81
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Barcraigs Reservoir	187	271	336	241	1,015	Nov	410
Camel Estuary	40	110 [13]	129	197	817	Aug	259
Southampton Water	(548)	(674)	384	(526)	(795)	Sep	585
Blithfield Reservoir	604			170	788 [13]	Feb	521
Charlecote Pools and Fields				334	778	Sep	556
Old Moor	120	420	450	(615)	733	Oct	468
Fisherwick and Elford Gravel Pits	301	349	119	250	701	Nov	344
Hallington Reservoir	663	748	427	302	664	Oct	561
The Wash	376	384	677	559	644	Dec	528
Carsington Water	500	490	546	621	607	Jul	553

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set qualifying levels of 600 and 50 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectivley, for presentation in this report*

Lesser Canada Goose

Branta hutchinsii

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: N America

Lesser Canada Geese were reported from ten sites, three of which were in Scotland. These included one at WWT Caerlaverock in October and February which may have been of wild origin.

Greenland Barnacle Goose

Branta leucopsis

International threshold:	**560**
Great Britain threshold:	**450**
All-Ireland threshold:	**90**

GB max:	**53,695**	**Mar**
NI max:	**0**	**0**
% young	8.1	
Brood size	1.8	

'Greenland' Barnacle Geese winter exclusively at sites in northwest Scotland and Ireland. Ringing studies have Greenland Barnacle Geese are faithful to specific wintering sites, with 70% of birds returning to the same site during the following winter. Key sites are surveyed by SNH, the Uists Greylag Goose Management Committee and Highland Council; overall totals in December and March were 49,116 and 53,695, respectively. The key site is Islay, where the total of 44,896 in March was very similar to the peak recorded in 2007/08.

Results from age counts undertaken in 2008/09 show that breeding success in 2008 was average; the proportion of young (8.1%) and mean brood size (2.2) were both close to their respective ten-year averages.

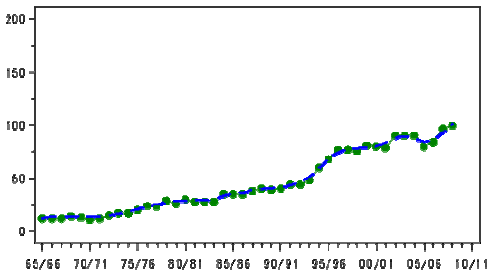
	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Island of Islay	44,186 [3]	47,303 [23]	52,709 [33]	44,961 [33]	44,896 [33]	Mar	46,811
Tiree	3,273 [13]	3,474 [13]	4,323 [33]	3,393 [24]	3,725 [24]	Mar	3,638
North Uist	2,836 [44]	4,648 [44]	2,119 [44]	3,630 [44]			3,308
South Walls (Hoy)	2,390 [33]	2,000 [33]	1,710 [33]	1,874 [33]	1,800 [33]	Dec	1,955
Isle of Coll	1,297	2,240 [23]	2,456 [33]	800 [24]	968 [24]	Mar	1,552
Colonsay/Oronsay	1,000 [3]	716 [35]	1,332 [35]	1,200 [24]	1,874 [24]	Mar	1,224
Balnakiel Bay / North Sutherland	1,000 [6]	970	130	1,037 [33]	755 [33]	Nov	778
Keills Peninsula & Isle of Danna	708 [3]	468 [23]	627 [33]	711 [33]	550 [33]	Dec	613
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
North Skye				521 [24]			521

Svalbard Barnacle Goose

Branta leucopsis

International threshold:	**270**
Great Britain threshold:	**220**

GB max:	**31,195**	**Oct**
NI max:	**0**	**0**
% young	8.7	
Brood size	2.0	



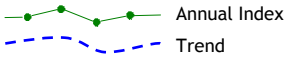


Figure 11.a, Annual indices & trend for Svalbard Barnacle Goose for GB.

The population of Svalbard-breeding Barnacle Geese continues to rise. Between October 2008 and May 2009, 18 coordinated

counts carried out across the Inner Solway Estuary were used to derive a population estimate of 29,900 birds (incorporating precautions against the possibility of any double-counting). This represents the highest ever estimate and a rise of 3% on the total for 2007/08.

The first significant arrival of birds was noted in Northumberland at the start of October, from where birds soon moved on to the Solway. Coordinated counts there increased from approximately 4,500 on the opening day of October to over 23,000 one week later. The entire population was considered to be present on the Solway Firth a further week after that. Breeding success was assessed at WWT Caerlaverock and other sites around the Solway Firth; the overall percentage of young present in flocks was 8.7% (ranging from 1.7% to 13.6% within individual flocks). As in 2006/07, this value is above the current ten-year mean, indicative of a relatively good breeding season. Mean brood size per successful pair was 2.0 goslings, slightly above the average for the current ten-year period of1.9.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Solway Firth	28,270 [8]	28,450 [8]	29,370 [8]	29,815 [8]	31,111 [8]	Oct	29,403
Loch of Strathbeg	1,100 [32]	2,168	181	121 [14]	62	Oct	726
Lindisfarne	160	300	1,202	(190)	70	Dec	433

Naturalised Barnacle Goose

Branta leucopsis

Naturalised establishment†

GB max: 1,516 Jan
NI max: 325 Oct

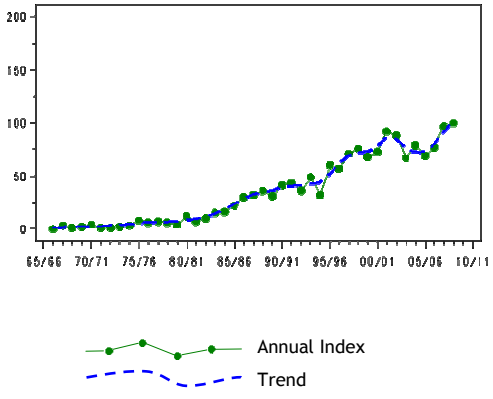


Figure 12.a, Annual indices & trend for Naturalised Barnacle Goose for GB.

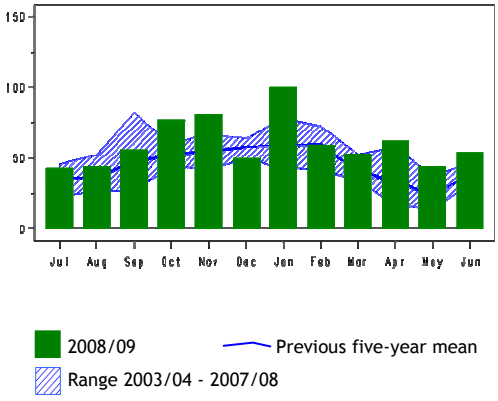


Figure 12.b, Monthly indices for Naturalised Barnacle Goose for GB.

It is standard procedure that Barnacle Geese in the UK outwith the ranges of the Svalbard and Greenland populations are assigned as being of naturalised origin. As a result, it should be borne in mind that is possible that some extra-limital birds from these, or the Russian, populations are incorrectly assigned. Nevertheless, detailed ringing studies show that such birds are few in number and do not influence the overall trends reported here.

In 2008/09, the national index was slightly up on the previous year, and as such rose to its highest ever level. The upward trend exhibited by naturalised Barnacle Geese has been almost continuous since 1980, with the exception of an apparent dip in the trend (for reasons unknown) during the period 2003/04 to 2006/07.

The peak count of the year was 650 at Minsmere, the most ever noted by WeBS, while maxima in excess of 200 birds were also recorded at Willington, Roxton Lake, Humber Estuary and North Warren & Thorpeness Mere. Presumably, birds at the latter site may potentially move between there and Minsmere. Since 2007/08, particularly notable increases appear to

have taken place at Morecambe Bay, Hamford Water and Bassenthwaite Lake.

In Northern Ireland, numbers present at Strangford Lough were the highest ever; consistent with the gradual increase witnessed in recent years.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Humber Estuary	(200)	88	318	631	(200)	Sep	346
Minsmere	4	249	17	240	650	Jan	232
Roxton Lake	120	195	128	170	246	Jul	172
Ullswater	110	143	186	230	82	Mar	150
Willington				5	287	Nov	146
Lound Waterworks		393	104	50	37	Mar	146
Derwent Water	98	105	137	184	160	Apr	137
Severn Estuary	101	111	126	126	150	Sep	123
Benacre Broad	130	52	359	52	0		119
North Warren and Thorpeness Mere	5	48 [13]	90	147	230	Oct	104
Frampton Pools	52	113	114	118	108	Jun	101
Dungeness and Rye Bay	54	136	44	92	79	Jan	81
Duddon Estuary	(0)	(88)	(10)	65	(0)		77
Hornsea Mere	73	71	72	73	67	Sep	71
The Hen Reedbeds	(0)	(68)	(0)	(1)	(0)		(68)
Middle Yare Marshes	82	74	70	57	35	Nov	64
Morecambe Bay	(4)	12	18 [13]	23	196	Oct	62
Eversley Cross and Yateley Gravel Pits	107	62	49	36	22	Sep	55
Barcombe Mills Reservoir	52	47	53	56	53	Dec	52
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Strangford Lough	248	251	279	275	325	Oct	276
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Hamford Water	30	0	19	0	146	Feb	39
Bassenthwaite Lake	16	13	1	12	140	Mar	36
River Avon: Stratford Sub Castle	0	0	0	0	61	Dec	12
Castle Lake		0	0		60	Nov	20
Osberton		4	68	71	51	Oct	49
Great Barford Lake				0	51	Aug	26

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Dark-bellied Brent Goose

Branta bernicla bernicla

International threshold: 2,000
Great Britain threshold: 981
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: 72,005 Feb
NI max: 0 0

% young 1.1
Brood size 1.7

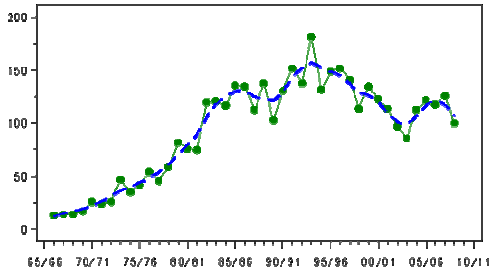
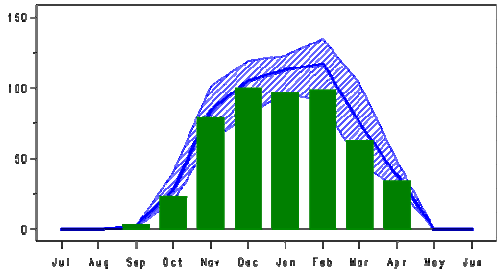


Figure 13.a, Annual indices & trend for Dark-bellied Brent Goose for GB.



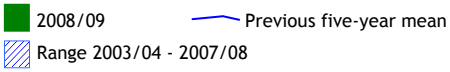


Figure 13.b, Monthly indices for Dark-bellied Brent Goose for GB.

The Dark-bellied Brent Goose winters along the coasts of Western Europe, the majority at sites on the Atlantic west coast of France, the south and east coasts of England, southwest Netherlands and the Wadden Sea. Since reaching a peak in 1993/94, there has been a downward trend in the fifteen years since.

Following four relatively stable years during the period of 2004/05 to 2007/08, the national index for Dark-bellied Brent Goose in the UK fell in 2008/09 to a level approaching the preceding slump. A total of fifteen sites qualified as being of international importance, all typically located between Humber Estuary on the east coast and the Hampshire estuaries on the south coast. The monthly indices indicate that numbers of geese were relatively low during the months of January and February; even though a number of the principal sites registered their monthly peaks during that period.

In 2008/09, peak numbers at every site of international importance listed in last year's report (Holt *et al*. 2009) were lower than their respective five-year averages. Generally these declines were relatively small, but an especially striking decrease was apparent at The Wash, where the maximum of 13,993 in February represents the lowest peak noted there since 1981/82. After the exceptional count during the autumn of 2007/08, the maximum at Thames Estuary was more in keeping with typical years. Among the ten nationally important locations for the species, numbers were well down for the second year in a row at Beaulieu Estuary.

Results from age assessments at wintering sites in the UK indicate that 2008 was a poor breeding season for Dark-bellied Brent Geese, thereby presumably contributing to the low counts at many sites. The overall proportion of young birds was 1.1% and mean brood size was 1.74 young per successful pair. This proportion of young is well below the most recent ten-year mean (10.1%). Furthermore, there was a marked decrease in the number of broods observed compared to 2007 and the mean brood size was also lower. Despite registering a particularly low monthly peak, The Wash held a proportion of young birds (1.2%) in keeping with the overall low national average.

As with a suite of other species nesting in the Arctic, breeding success tends to vary greatly from year to year and is greatly influenced by cycles of lemming and predator abundance, and subsequent predation pressure on birds, as well as other factors such as weather. Monitoring in breeding areas on the Taimyr Peninsula, Russia, indicated that lemmings were common in some places in 2008 (although numbers dropped dramatically as the summer progressed) but rare in others, and Arctic Foxes were common (Soloviev & Tomkovich 2009). The summer was also generally colder than the previous year. Together, these factors are likely to have negatively influenced the breeding success of geese, producing a somewhat poorer season than might otherwise be expected based on lemming abundance alone.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
The Wash	21,969	24,490	20,870	21,101	13,993	Feb	20,485
Thames Estuary	9,455	12,567	8,100	22,047	11,684	Nov	12,771
Chichester Harbour	7,436	9,018	9,605	12,171	8,757	Feb	9,397
North Norfolk Coast	6,607	8,831	7,091	7,824 [11]	6,614	Dec	7,393
Blackwater Estuary	7,178	5,946	7,293	8,278	6,692	Dec	7,077
Hamford Water	5,890	5,952	4,089	4,157	5,698 [11]	Jan	5,157
Langstone Harbour	5,069	5,496	4,906	5,263	4,165	Jan	4,980
Humber Estuary	(2,667)	(2,636)	(4,586)	(2,430)	(2,801)	Jan	(4,586)
Crouch-Roach Estuary	4,635 [11]	(3,520)	(4,471)	4,534	4,241	Feb	4,470
Dengie Flats	(1,538)	2,445	2,901	(3,560)	2,364	Feb	2,818
Pagham Harbour	2,654	2,819	2,744	2,341	2,522	Feb	2,616
Portsmouth Harbour	1,725	2,925	3,162	(2,500)	2,538 [11]	Feb	2,588
Colne Estuary	(2,538)	2,123	(1,296)	(2,536)	(2,076)	Feb	2,399
North West Solent	(2,208)	2,377	1,808	2,101	1,885	Jan	2,076
Swale Estuary	2,111	1,861	2,310	1,857	2,115	Jan	2,051

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Fleet and Wey	2,625	1,436	1,554	1,810	2,200	Dec	1,925
Stour Estuary	1,782	1,617	2,063	2,038	1,726	Jan	1,845
Newtown Estuary	(1,444)	2,033	1,662	2,115	1,469	Jan	1,820
Beaulieu Estuary	1,498	2,173	3,439	774	689	Jan	1,715
Exe Estuary	1,645	1,531	1,374	1,820	1,614	Feb	1,597
Orwell Estuary	(976)	(1,477)	1,500 [11]	1,601 [11]	1,266	Dec	1,456
Medway Estuary	1,834 [11]	(1,515)	(1,076)	(1,367)	959	Jan	1,436
Deben Estuary	984	(1,449)	1,759	(1,409)	1,038	Jan	1,328
Southampton Water	1,386	949	1,151	1,674	869	Mar	1,206
Poole Harbour	(772)	(1,160)	1,146	(721)	(812)	Jan	1,153
Jersey Shore			733	1,317			1,025

Canadian Light-bellied Brent Goose

Branta bernicla hrota

International threshold: **260**
Great Britain threshold: **+†**
All-Ireland threshold: **220**

GB max:	**954**	**Mar**
NI max:	**28,155**	**Oct**
% young	18.3	
Brood size	-	

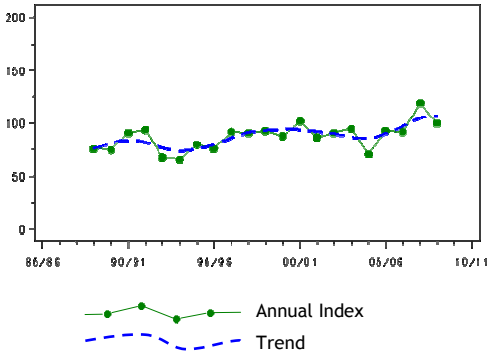


Figure 14.a, Annual indices & trend for Nearctic Light-bellied Brent Goose for GB.

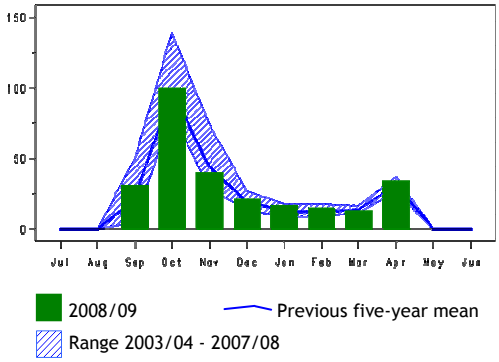


Figure 14.b, Monthly indices for Nearctic Light-bellied Brent Goose for GB.

Light-bellied Brent Geese which breed on the Arctic islands of north-east Canada migrate across Greenland and Iceland to winter mostly in Ireland. Strangford Lough typically hosts more than three-quarters of the population during the late autumn and is by far the most important site. Lough Foyle has also become increasingly important in recent years as an initial landfall site. As the winter progresses, some tend to move southwards and use sites in western Britain, the Channel Islands, and on the Atlantic coasts of France and Spain.

The International Census of this population of Light-bellied Brent Geese took place for the seventh consecutive year, involving counts in Iceland, Ireland and the UK. The total count across the range was 37,650 birds, the majority of which were in Northern Ireland; principally at Strangford Lough and Lough Foyle. Peaks at both sites fell in comparison to the previous year, leading to an associated drop in the national index following the all-time high reached in 2007/08.

In Wales, site maxima were noted at Traeth Melynog, Foryd Bay, Inland Sea & Alaw Estuary, and Cleddau Estuary, while 236 at Morecambe Bay also represented an all-time high there. Interestingly, two sites in southwest England (Fal Complex and Gerrans Bay) hosted noteworthy double-figure flocks for the first time.

Typically, annually breeding success tends to be either good or poor. In 2008, 18.3% of birds were considered to be young. This is indicative of a reasonably good year, this proportion being the fourth highest since 1996/97.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Strangford Lough	26,250 [29]	21,885 [29]	24,658	30,457	25,605	Oct	25,771
Lough Foyle	1,603 [29]	3,968	2,177	3,251	2,550	Oct	2,710
Dundrum Inner Bay	(302)	640	575	1,108	1,232	Jan	889
Outer Ards Shoreline	762	618	577	946	781	Mar	737
Carlingford Lough	538	508	542	483	(626)	Nov	539
Killough Harbour	434	516	282				411
Larne Lough	254	218	256	369	655	Nov	350
Sites with mean peak counts of 25 or more birds in Great Britain[†]							
Traeth Melynog	146	262			351	Dec	253
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	121	138	104	199	174	Jan	147
Foryd Bay	115	54	47	181	295	Mar	138
Inland Sea and Alaw Estuary			79		174	Nov	127
Morecambe Bay	31	22	65	(129)	236	Mar	97
Loch Gruinart	284	76	1	1	1	Apr	73
Loch Ryan	67	89	(37)	52	0		52
Broadford Bay	22	18	0	(0)	122	Oct	41
Derbyhaven Bay	39						39
Poole Harbour	35 [13]	(0)	(3)	(0)	(3)	Feb	35
Jersey Shore			23	(36)			30
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Cleddau Estuary	3	7	7	12	51	Feb	16
Fleet and Wey	1	3	8	4	42	Jan	12
Fal Complex	0	0	0	0	40	Sep	8
Gerrans Bay	0	0	0	0	37	Sep	7
Lavan Sands	24	11	15	24	28	Mar	20

[†] *as no British threshold has been set a qualifying level of 25 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Svalbard Light-bellied Brent Goose

Branta bernicla hrota

International threshold: 70
Great Britain threshold: 30*

GB max: 3,964 Dec
NI max: 0 0

% young 2.0
Brood size 1.7

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

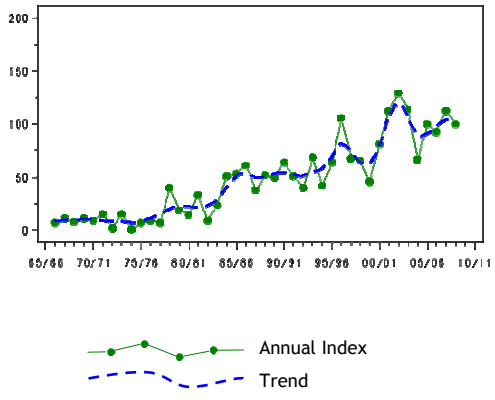


Figure 15.a, Annual indices & trend for Svalbard Light-bellied Brent Goose for GB.

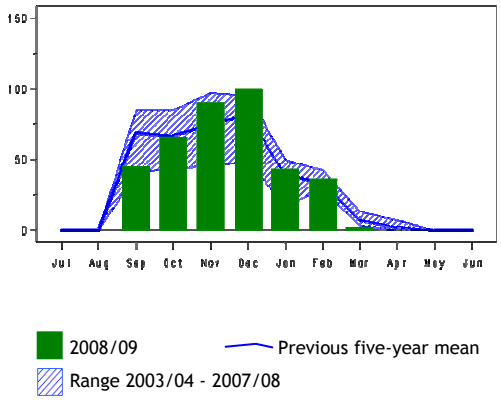


Figure 15.b, Monthly indices for Svalbard Light-bellied Brent Goose for GB.

The population of Light-bellied Brent Geese which breeds in Svalbard, north-east Greenland and Franz Josef Land has shown a trend of fluctuating increase over the last twenty or so years. The main wintering sites are in Denmark, while in Britain,

numbers at Lindisfarne have increased from around 200 birds in the 1950s to typically over 3,000 in the 2000s.

In 2008/09, the counted monthly maximum rose compared to recent years, as a result of an increased peak at Lindisfarne. The count of 3,879 there in December represents the highest since 2001/02. Elsewhere, the most noteworthy counts away from Lindisfarne relates to 99 at Inner Moray & Inverness Firth in February.

Breeding success was assessed at Lindisfarne, and at 2.0% young proved to be one of the lowest ever recorded. The percentage of young in wintering flocks has remained generally low over the past ten years, only exceeding 10% on four occasions since 1992/93.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Lindisfarne	2,505 [11]	3,688	(3,350)	(3,798)	3,879	Dec	3,468
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	18	81	43	14	99	Feb	51
Eden Estuary	9	27	18	69	27	Jan	30
St Andrews Bay	(0)	30					30

Black Brant

Branta bernicla nigricans

Vagrant
Native Range: N America and E Asia

Black Brants were recorded in wintering flocks of Dark-bellied Brent Geese at nine sites along the English coast between North Norfolk Coast and Fleet & Wey. All records related to singles apart from two at the latter site in February.

Red-breasted Goose

Branta ruficollis

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: SE Europe, Central Asia

Birds were seen at 11 sites in England, including five in Suffolk and Essex that probably relate to the same one or two individuals. The most likely to be a genuine vagrant was with Dark-bellied Brent Geese at North West Solent during November to January and then Chichester Harbour in February.

Egyptian Goose

Alopochen aegyptiaca

Naturalised introduction[†]
Native Range: Africa

GB max: **726** **Sep**
NI max: **0** **0**

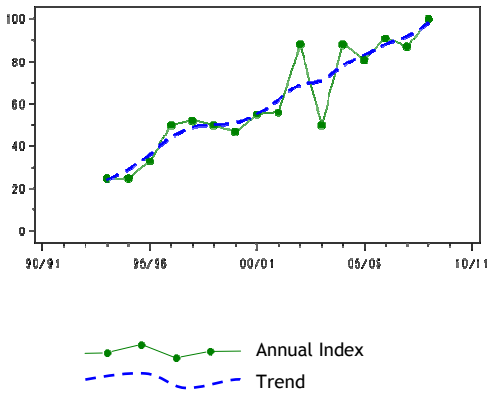


Figure 16.a, Annual indices & trend for Egyptian Goose for GB.

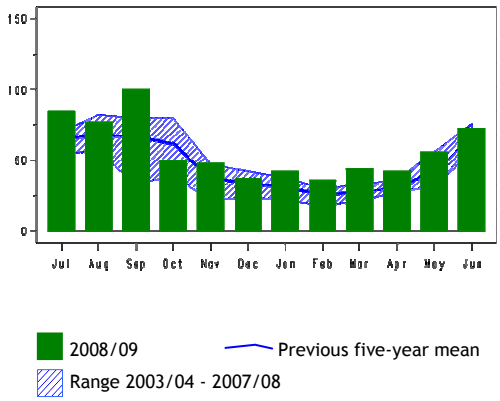


Figure 16.b, Monthly indices for Egyptian Goose for GB.

The winter 2008/09 proved to be the best on record for Egyptian Goose in the UK. The national trend rose to an all-time high; the counted monthly maximum of 726 in September was 11% greater than the previous highest count twelve months earlier. The range also continued to expand; Egyptian Geese were seen at a record 132 sites, all in England with the exception of a single bird in Wales.

Although the highest count was from the North Norfolk Coast, a striking feature of the year was the increase in numbers away from the core stronghold of Norfolk from where the expansion into other regions has originated. Whereas counts from individual Norfolk sites were similar (or even slightly lower) compared to recent years, counties towards the edge of the range featured prominently; exemplified by notable counts of 156 at Eversley Cross & Yateley Gravel Pits (Hampshire), 96 at Rutland Water (Leicestershire) and 62 at Summerleaze Gravel Pits (Buckinghamshire).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†							
North Norfolk Coast	(144)	(126)	211	125	(162)	Sep	168
Breydon Water and Berney Marshes	82	85	55	134 [13]	83 [13]	Sep	88
Middle Yare Marshes	(47)	(26)	65	(81)	(30)	Jun	73
Eversley Cross and Yateley Gravel Pits	6	24	69	96	156	Sep	70
Rutland Water	46	53	64	56	96	Sep	63
Yare Valley - Marlingford to Bawburgh			52 [13]	(61)	68 [13]	Jul	60
Cranwich Gravel Pits					59	Jul	59
Weybread Pits	41						41
Nunnery Lakes	36	31	36	36	26	Jun	33
Whitlingham Country Park	59	27	24	24	21	Mar	31
Spade Oak Gravel Pit (Little Marlow)	37	49	11	19	22	Sep	28
Trinity Broads	22	(7)	(8)	26	33	Aug	27
The Wash	21	10	39	(32)	32	Nov	27
Summerleaze Gravel Pits	0	8	2	60	62	Oct	26
Hickling Broad	21	42	5		26	Oct	24
Busbridge Lakes			17	17	25	Apr	20
Lound Waterworks		16	14	5	25	Oct	15
Barton Broad	13	16	8	13	18	Jun	14
Redgrave Lake			7	17	11	Sep	12
Livermere and Ampton Water	8	2		38	1	Dec	12
Lynford Gravel Pit			(21)	13	1	Nov	12
St Benet`s Levels					12	Jan	12
Barton Mere				19 [13]	2	Dec	11
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Petworth Park Lakes	3	7	10	8	19	Jun	9
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	1	(0)	4	6	14	Jul	6
London Wetland Centre	0	2	2	4	(14)	Nov	4
Colne Fen Gravel Pits	0	1	0	15	13	Aug	6
Earsham Gravel Pits	3	0	8	5	13	Jul	6
Wellington Country Park	2	0	9	9	12	Sep	6
Clapham Common	0	(2)			12	Oct	6
Kirkby-on-Bain Gravel Pits	2	5	4	1	11	Jan	5
Osterley Park Lakes	6	5	4	7	10	Jun	6
Attenborough Gravel Pits	6	4	5	4	10	Nov	6

† *as no British threshold has been set a qualifying level of 10 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Paradise Shelduck

Tadorna variegata

Escape
Native Range: New Zealand

One at Shakerley Mere from January to June is the first WeBS record since 2004/05.

Cape Shelduck

Tadorna cana

Escape
Native Range: S Africa

Singles were at Gnoll Ponds in September and Arun Valley in January.

Ruddy Shelduck

Tadorna ferruginea

Escape and possible vagrant
Native Range: Asia, N Africa, SE Europe

Ruddy Shelducks were noted at 14 sites during the course of 2008/09, with a monthly peak of four birds in September. Sightings included one at Barcraigs Reservoir in March and two at Montrose Basin in June; the first in Scotland since July 2005 and only the 6th-7th WeBS records there.

Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

International threshold: 3,000
Great Britain threshold: 782
All-Ireland threshold: 150

GB max: 51,040 Jan
NI max: 5,193 Jan

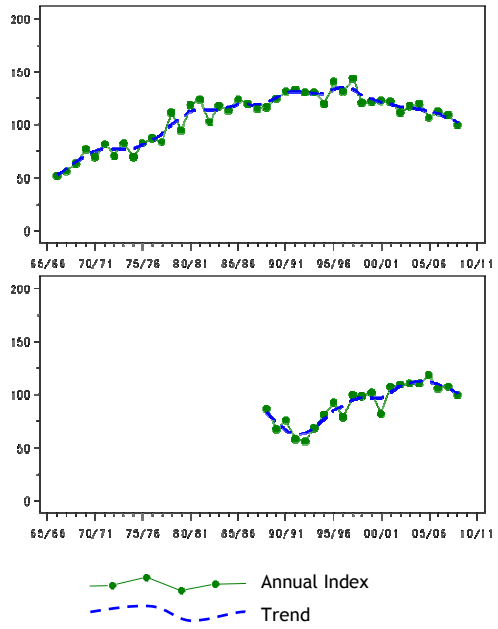


Figure 17.a, Annual indices & trend for Shelduck for GB (above) & NI (below).

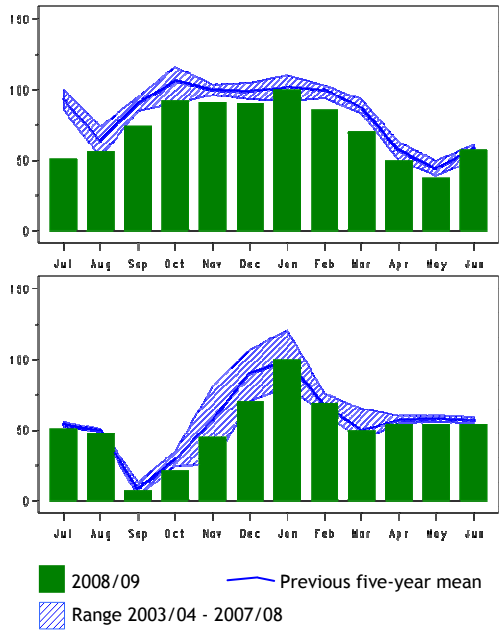


Figure 17.b, Monthly indices for Shelduck for GB (above) & NI (below).

Since reaching a peak in the mid 1990s, the annual indices for Shelduck in Britain have generally been in decline since. At the same time as this decrease, numbers in The Netherlands have increased (Hustings *et al.* 2009); whether the two are linked is not known.

The peak total during the year, 51,040 in January, was very similar to the maximum in 2007/08. However scrutiny of the monthly indices indicates that January was the only month in the winter period when numbers were near average compared to the previous five years. Consequently, 2008/09 saw a continuation of the downward trend, leaving the species at a comparable status to that of the late 1970s.

Shelducks (Jill Pakenham)

Nine sites in Britain are of international importance for Shelducks. These no longer include Ribble Estuary, where counts have been below the threshold for the past four

years. Continuing reduced coverage at Mersey Estuary, traditionally the most important site in the UK where large concentrations of Shelducks gather to moult in late summer, has now resulted in incomplete counts in the last three years. As a consequence, the peak site count in 2008/09 was 9,457 at Dee Estuary in October, itself below average for the site.

A further drop in numbers was noted at The Wash, where a high of 6,046 birds in January represents the lowest peak there since complete coverage of the site. This fall, as well as earlier declines of Oystercatcher and Knot, has been linked to the over-exploitation of the cockle and mussel fisheries there (Atkinson *et al.* 2010).

Peak counts of Shelducks were generally close to or slightly below average at most other important locations. The only site to report a notable rise in numbers was Wigtown Bay, where as a consequence the five-year mean rose above the threshold of national importance for the first time.

In Northern Ireland, site peaks were typical, although the maximum at Belfast Lough was the highest Core count since an unprecedented influx in early 1996 (when the highest ever count in Northern Ireland, of 1,062, was made), while the 931 birds at Larne Lough in January is the most ever there.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Mersey Estuary	13,420	15,605	(16,721)	(10,644)	(4,237)	Aug	15,249	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	13,334	(8,872)	10,869	9,425	9,457	Oct	10,771	
Morecambe Bay	7,728	(6,609)	8,880	4,755	(8,409)	Oct	7,443	
The Wash	7,451	6,904	6,855	6,656	6,046	Jan	6,782	
Humber Estuary	(4,188)	(5,223)	4,823	5,804	(2,892)	Sep	5,314	
Strangford Lough	3,801	4,451 [11]	3,413 [11]	6,084 [11]	5,583 [11]	Nov	4,666	
Severn Estuary	(3,460)	4,182	3,711	(5,414)	3,826	Nov	4,283	
Forth Estuary	3,164 [12]	3,063	(3,546)	3,283	2,774	Sep	3,166	
Solway Estuary	5,359	1,863	2,888	1,902	(708)	Nov	3,003	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Ribble Estuary	3,850	2,935	2,577	2,216	2,878	Jun	2,891	▼
Stour Estuary	(2,149)	(1,421)	1,641	2,402	3,499 [11]	Jan	2,514	
Blackwater Estuary	2,073	(1,828)	2,623	(2,369)	2,642	Dec	2,446	
Medway Estuary	2,360 [11]	1,949	(1,290)	(1,631)	(1,604)	Jan	2,155	
Thames Estuary	2,318	1,968	1,870	2,099	(1,759)	Jan	2,064	
Swale Estuary	2,207	2,140	1,406	2,003	1,926	Jan	1,936	
Hamford Water	1,951	1,493	(1,496)	2,450	1,838	Jan	1,933	
Lindisfarne	1,773 [11]	1,180 [11]	1,868	(1,406)	(2,302)	Jan	1,781	
Poole Harbour	1,547	(1,857)	(1,043)	(788)	(899)	Jan	1,702	
North Norfolk Coast	1,110	1,283	1,361	1,115	981	Mar	1,170	
WWT Martin Mere	1,510 [12]	965	1,075	780	1,290	Jan	1,124	
Alde Complex	1,025	925	1,181	1,120	1,041	Mar	1,058	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	1,661 [11]	(397)	577	823	1,029	Jan	1,023	
Montrose Basin	690	1,239 [11]	(1,106)	(1,098)	806	Dec	988	
Wigtown Bay	705	750	751	880	1,017	Nov	821	▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Larne Lough	808	880	832	486	931	Jan	787	
Carlingford Lough	452	560	(349)	477	434	Jan	481	
Belfast Lough	544 [13]	347 [11]	(378)	265	691	Feb	462	
Lough Foyle	250	392	264	322	364	Jan	318	
Dundrum Inner Bay	330	96	70	188	109	Feb	159	
Loughs Neagh and Beg	260	98	124	95	193	Mar	154	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Deben Estuary	883	707	837	754	554	Feb	747	
Colne Estuary	(701)	(471)	(326)	(698)	(406)	Mar	(701)	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Burry Inlet	804	637	690	780	(962)	Dec	775	
Duddon Estuary	767	737	363	498	790	Mar	631	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland								
Outer Ards Shoreline	30	42	42	35	171	Mar	64	

Muscovy Duck

Cairina moschata

Escape
Native Range: S America

Muscovys were recorded at 29 sites in 2008/09, five fewer than the previous year, with peak counts of 14 at Hesketh Park Lake and Brayford Pool, Lincoln. Just a single was noted at Fort Henry Ponds & Exton Park Lakes, where numbers appear to have crashed; the site consistently provided the highest counts up until 2007/08. Reasons for the decline are unclear.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Fort Henry Ponds and Exton Park Lakes	14	25	43	5	1	Sep	18
Brayford Pool Lincoln		0	26	17	14	Oct	14
Hesketh Park Lake				11	14	Jan	13
High Batts Recording Area	8						8
Dane Valley: Holmes Chapel to Swettenham			0	14	(0)		7
Nafferton Mere	6	5	5	5	9	Feb	6
Derwent Water	11	7	5	3	2	Nov	6
Wilderness Pond				3	8	Aug	6
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Ladyburn Lake (Druridge Bay CP)	0	0	0	0	7	Nov	1

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

Wood Duck

Aix sponsa

Escape
Native Range: N America

Wood Ducks were seen at nine sites in 2008/09, including the regular site of Stanton Lake where up to three were present throughout. All other records were of singles, including a drake at Loch of Brow (Shetland) in April-May.

Mandarin Duck

Aix galericulata

Naturalised introduction
Native Range: E Asia

GB max: 418 Jan
NI max: 0 0

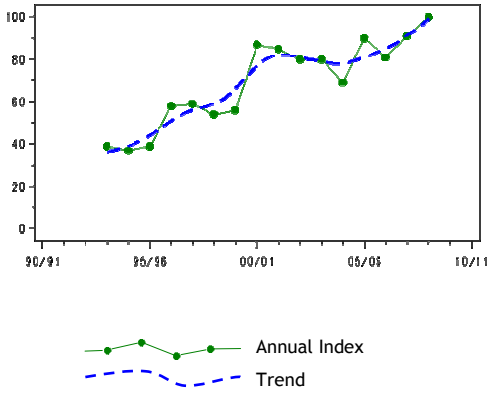


Figure 18.a, Annual indices & trend for Mandarin Duck for GB.

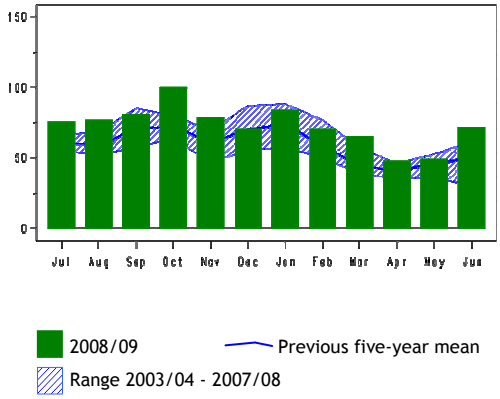


Figure 18.b, Monthly indices for Mandarin Duck for GB.

Records of Mandarin Ducks were received from 161 sites in 2008/09, 22% more than the previous year, and generated a mid-winter peak of 418 birds in January. However, annual variation in distribution and numbers tends to result from year-to-year changes in coverage of the species' favoured habitats, namely small wooded

lakes and ponds. Furthermore, this species can be particularly unobtrusive, and counts can vary depending on birds' behaviour.

Outside England, Mandarin Ducks were seen at three sites in Wales, three on the Channel Islands and two in Scotland; the latter involving long-staying birds at Ugie Estuary and Culzean Pond.

In 2008/09, counts exceeding 50 birds were received from five sites. These included Forest of Dean Ponds, the UK's traditional stronghold for the species, and Stockgrove Country Park and Brookleys Lake, both sites where numbers have risen sharply in recent years at least partly as a result of improved coverage.

Supplementary data from sites not routinely counted each month through WeBS (as was the case with Brookleys Lake prior to 2009/10) are welcomed in order to help populate the table below, and thereby derive an improved picture of the species' distribution and abundance in the UK.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Forest of Dean Ponds	221 [16]	66 [16]	236 [13]		232 [13]	Nov	189
Bradley Pools	65	144					105
Headley Mill Pond	23	132	15	64	28	Feb	52
Bough Beech Reservoir	60 [33]	45 [33]	60 [13]	42	48	Dec	51
Wraysbury Pond	51	48	51 [13]	53			51
Dee Flood Meadows	42	36	83	48	35	Oct	49
Arun Valley	37	47	25	53	71	Aug	47
Darwell Reservoir	13	58	74	33	41	Oct	44
Busbridge Lakes			41	31	52	Oct	41
Brookleys Lake		4 [56]	11 [56]	98 [56]	51 [56]	Dec	41
Connaught Water (Epping Forest)	32	35	44	40	38	Jul	38
Cuttmill Ponds	61	66	27	22	8	Jun	37
Stockgrove Country Park				3	67	Nov	35
Harewood Lake	31	15		25	44	Oct	29
Strawberry Hill Ponds	15	32	44	33	17	Jan	28
Linacre Reservoirs	23	23	25	35	23	Sep	26
Osterley Park Lakes	31	18	14	21	37	Jun	24
Passfield Pond	16	15	30	18	18	Sep	19
Kedleston Park Lake	14	24					19
Allestree Park Lakes	5	37	16				19
Fonthill Lake	38	22	4	10	4	Jan	16
Panshanger Estate	11	16	8	19	19	Jan	15
Blatherwyke Lake	2	0	3	21	48	Nov	15
Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve			9	23	11	Oct	14
Hampstead and Highgate Ponds	8	13	13	19	16	Jan	14
Woburn Park Lakes	6	18	11	11	20	Jul	13
Eversley Cross & Yateley Gravel Pits	25	4	8	21	4	Dec	12
Powdermill Reservoir	6	7	18	22	6	Oct	12
Sutton Place	20	4					12
Stibbington GP	12						12
River Test: Broadlands Estate	9	15	13	10	10 [13]	Jan	11
Pen Ponds			17	11	5	Jun	11
Blackbrook Reservoir	2	17	16	13	8	Feb	11
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Grimsthorpe Lake	0	0	10	3	25	Feb	8
Warnham Mill Pond	0	1	8	2	22	Dec	7
Ardingly Reservoir	0	2	12	9	20	Jan	9
Gatton Park	4	5	4	18	15	Sep	9
Weirwood Reservoir	0	0	0	18	15	Oct	7
Chatsworth Park Lakes	4	0	0	5	14	Oct	5
R.Kennet: Ramsbury to Chilton Foliat	0	(0)	0	8	13	Oct	5
Plym Estuary	0	0	2	2	13	Sep	3
Bewl Water	0	0	2	1	13	Jan	3
Aldenham Reservoir	5	11	12	3	11	Nov	8
Stratfield Saye	7	5	6	13	10	Dec	8
Drakelow Gravel Pit	0	1	8	3	10	Oct	4

† *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*

Wigeon

Anas penelope

International threshold: 15,000
Great Britain threshold: 4,060
All-Ireland threshold: 1,250

GB max: 359,236 Dec
NI max: 4,769 Oct

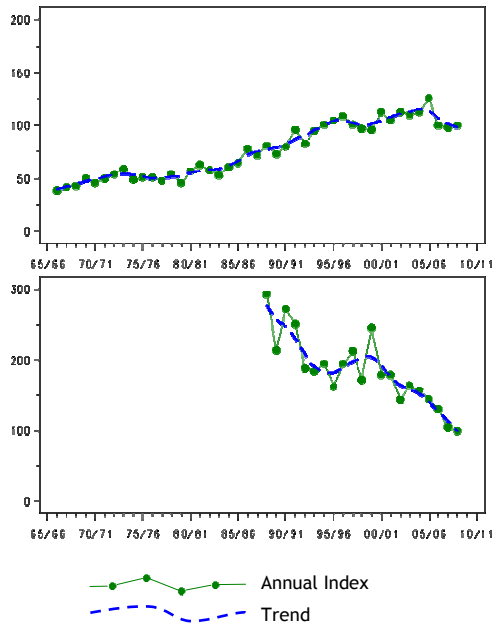


Figure 19.a, Annual indices & trend for Wigeon for GB (above) & NI (below).

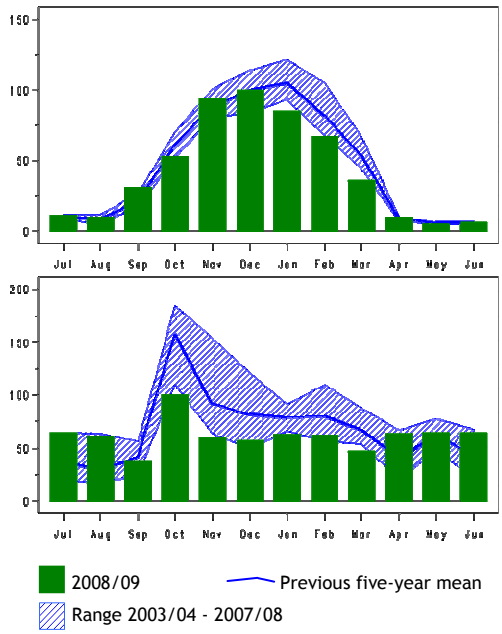


Figure 19.b, Monthly indices for Wigeon for GB (above) & NI (below).

Following the record high reached in 2005/06, the annual index for Wigeon has been nearly 10% lower during the last three years – placing the species at the same level of abundance as in the mid 1990s, when on its upward trend. In Northern Ireland, where the Wigeon population continues to be in freefall, the annual index fell for the sixth year in succession. Not only did the index there its lowest ever value, but below average numbers were present throughout the winter period and monthly maxima at all four sites of All-Ireland importance were significantly below five-year averages.

Wigeon wintering in Great Britain largely comprise birds breeding in Scandinavia, northern Europe and eastern Russia. It would therefore be expected that this species may have responded to recent mild winters by showing a shift in winter distribution towards the core of the breeding range, as illustrated for waders by Maclean *et al.* (2008). This may be supported by the steep decline in Northern Ireland as well as the apparent marked drop in Britain during the second part of the winter, where numbers were well below average in January, February and March. However, indications from The Netherlands are that wintering numbers may have also fallen there in the last three to four years (Hustings *et al.* 2009). Therefore, any short-stopping is presumably leaving birds further north and east than there too; perhaps, although not necessarily, linked to this, record numbers have recently been recorded in Switzerland (Keller & Burkhardt 2010) and the Czech Republic (Musilova *et al.* 2009).

In an historical context however, the wintering population of Wigeon in the UK remains high. The key site, Ribble Estuary, continues to support exceptionally high numbers; the monthly maximum of 101,594 noted in November is the only the third time that a single WeBS count of Wigeon has reached six figures. Unsurprisingly, the previous two such counts emanate from the same site, the highest of which was 110,278 in December 1994. Maxima at three other sites of international importance (Ouse

Washes, Somerset Levels and Breydon Water & Berney Marshes) were close to recent averages in 2008/09. However, a drop in the peak count from North Norfolk Coast, for a second successive year, brought that site's five-year mean below the international threshold of 15,000 birds for the first time. This follows a similar fall in status experienced by Swale Estuary and Lindisfarne in 2007/08. Among the other sites of national importance, there were relatively low peaks, all approximately half of what would be expected at Lower Derwent Ings, Thames Estuary and Dungeness & Rye Bay.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Ribble Estuary	86,157	79,659	(57,385)	85,964	101,594	Nov	88,344
Ouse Washes	34,853 [13]	55,816	26,984	19,800	(29,658)	Jan	34,363
Somerset Levels	15,346	18,142	27,391	28,882	21,186	Feb	22,189
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	19,019	22,134	18,184 [13]	21,400 [13]	21,074 [13]	Dec	20,362
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
North Norfolk Coast	17,444	18,426	16,750	11,998	10,304	Jan	14,984
Lindisfarne	15,960	13,614	10,840	(12,000)	10,194	Sep	12,652
Dornoch Firth	14,861	13,811	9,763	11,115	(12,303)	Oct	12,388
Swale Estuary	13,832	16,651	7,041	11,560	12,134	Jan	12,244
Cromarty Firth	13,487	12,652	8,510	10,510	(9,109)	Oct	11,290
Lower Derwent Ings	10,215	14,320	11,710	11,600	5,075	Nov	10,584
Severn Estuary	8,058	6,249	9,343	10,008	8,672 [11]	Jan	8,466
Cleddau Estuary	8,468	9,441	7,643	7,130	7,429	Nov	8,022
Morecambe Bay	8,095	8,929	(6,201)	5,654	9,110	Dec	7,947
Nene Washes	4,998	5,380	8,180	10,497	9,096	Mar	7,630
Alde Complex	7,274	7,182	8,280	6,337	5,345	Jan	6,884
Blackwater Estuary	7,385	6,708	6,580	5,667	5,836	Nov	6,435
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	5,595	6,078	5,863	(7,666)	6,555	Jan	6,351
Middle Yare Marshes	7,846	6,291	3,890	6,507	5,511	Dec	6,009
The Wash	3,444	5,887	6,612	8,961	5,124	Dec	6,006
Abberton Reservoir	573	13,954	654	6,572	5,815	Oct	5,514
Thames Estuary	4,343	6,449	3,566	9,293	3,218	Feb	5,374
Dungeness and Rye Bay	4,937	6,285	5,193	4,010	2,711	Jan	4,627
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	2,464	6,695	5,797	(2,461)	1,776	Dec	4,183
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Lough Foyle	4,589	6,559	5,406	2,835	3,118	Oct	4,501
Strangford Lough	3,281	2,636	3,476	1,582	1,540	Nov	2,503
Loughs Neagh and Beg	3,611	2,701	1,878	1,614	1,427	Jan	2,246
Upper Lough Erne	1,284	631	1,229	981	369	Feb	899
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Stour Estuary	2,564	2,418	2,949	2,366	4,329 [11]	Feb	2,925
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Montrose Basin	(4,147)	5,065	3,047	3,608	3,851	Nov	3,944
Fleet and Wey	4,469	6,122	3,087	2,285	3,089	Dec	3,810
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland							
Larne Lough	352	642	390	437	1,088	Dec	582

American Wigeon

Anas americana

Vagrant
Native Range: N & C America

Drakes were recorded at three sites in Scotland; St Johns Loch in October, Loch Bee in December, and Loch of Tankerness in March.

Chiloe Wigeon

Anas sibilatrix

Escape
Native Range: S America

Chiloe Wigeons were noted at eight sites; all were singles with the exception of five at Hereford Quarry in August and two at Gnoll Ponds in December.

Falcated Duck

Anas falcata

Escape and possible vagrant
Native Range: Asia

A presumed escaped Falcated Duck was at Clifford Hill Gravel Pits in March and April, the third year in a row that this species has been recorded through WeBS.

Gadwall

Anas strepera

International threshold: 600
Great Britain threshold: 171
All-Ireland threshold: 20*

GB max: 19,596 Jan
NI max: 182 Mar

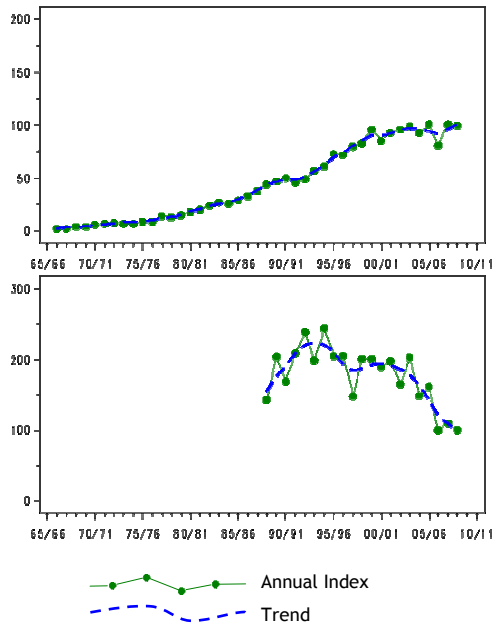


Figure 20.a, Annual indices & trend for Gadwall for GB (above) & NI (below).

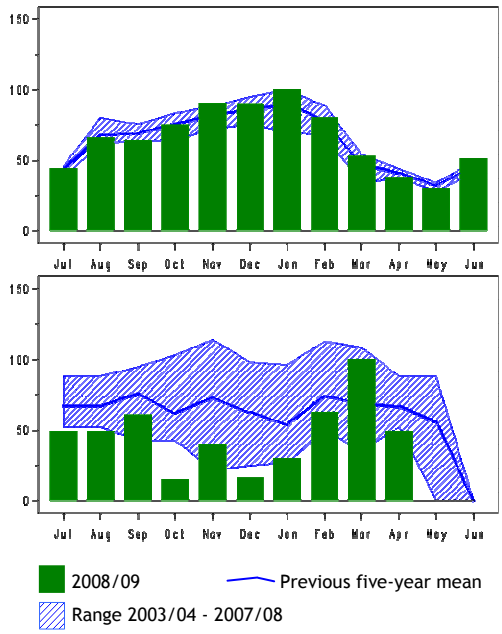


Figure 20.b, Monthly indices for Gadwall for GB (above) & NI (below).

Numbers of Gadwall have risen considerably across the central belt of Europe in the last twenty to thirty years, with an especially marked rise experienced in Britain during the 1980s and 1990s. Other European countries also experiencing notable increases include France (Fouque *et al*. 2009), The Netherlands (Hustings *et al*. 2009), Switzerland (Keller & Burkhardt 2010) and Slovakia (Slabeyova *et al*. 2009) (although the latter two countries support birds from the separate Central European population).

Following 2008/09, six sites in the UK continued to be of international importance for Gadwall. The top two sites, Ouse Washes and Rutland Water, both hosted peak numbers in excess of 1,500 birds. The count from Rutland is the highest since September 1999, a time which marked the end of a period of several years during which annual peaks in excess of 1,000 were the norm for the site. Such counts included the highest ever recorded through WeBS; 2,181 individuals in November 1997. Maxima were typical of recent years at the four other sites of international importance; River Avon (Fordingbridge to Ringwood), Lee Valley Gravel Pits, Somerset Levels and Abberton Reservoir.

A further 38 sites are currently classified as nationally important, virtually all of which held peak numbers in 2008/09 that were close to their respective five-year average. In eastern England, above average counts included all-time highs at Ouse Fen & Pits in February and North Norfolk Coast in June, the latter reflecting the increasing

breeding population there (Holling *et al.* 2009). Of sites faring less well, the sharp falls noted at Blagdon Lake and Fairburn Ings during the previous year were not repeated in 2008/09, although Tring Reservoirs appears to have hosted far fewer Gadwalls than normal (as was the case with most wildfowl at the site).

The relatively small population of Gadwall in Northern Ireland, most of which are found at Loughs Neagh & Beg and Strangford Lough, was similar to the past few years, but longer term is another example of a duck species showing a sharp decline over the past decade.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Ouse Washes	1,799 [13]	2,289 [13]	220	970	1,508	Mar	1,357	
Rutland Water	491	670	904	992	1,520	Oct	915	
R.Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood	708	678	755	725	653	Feb	704	
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	622	878	518	703	706	Jan	685	
Somerset Levels	729	704	424	706	614	Nov	635	
Abberton Reservoir	425	1,024	(535)	483	493	Sep	606	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Thames Estuary	471	377	451	(320)	(453)	Jan	438	
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	400	378	553	387	442	Nov	432	
Minsmere	309	398	410	468	388	Jul	395	
Tees Estuary	289	(332)	433	464	342	Oct	382	
Orwell Estuary	234 [11]	347 [11]	340 [11]	268	722 [11]	Jan	382	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	340	268	362	485	417	Dec	374	
Cotswold Water Park (West)	327	427	330	(217)	(395)	Jan	370	
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	307	(304)	425	437	282	Aug	363	
Loch Leven	360	392	309	284	345 [13]	Sep	338	
Pitsford Reservoir	124	482	444	264	352	Aug	333	
Woolston Eyes	470	196	(84)	397	192	Jan	314	
North Norfolk Coast	231	262	186	314	388	Jun	276	
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(69)	(74)	(131)	(108)	275	Nov	275	
Little Paxton Gravel Pits	225	315	215	324	280	Feb	272	
Eversley Cross & Yateley Gravel Pits	256	315	226	216	243	Jan	251	
Hickling Broad	216	340	356		76	Nov	247	
Severn Estuary	194	297	241	240	(197)	Dec	243	
Alton Water	182	495	166	109	226	Jan	236	
Fairburn Ings		278	266	63	337	Jun	236	
Burghfield Gravel Pits	255	156	261	206	290	Dec	234	
North Warren and Thorpeness Mere	353	170 [13]	220	218	178	Dec	228	
Chew Valley Lake	315	200	150	245	210	Jun	224	
Ouse Fen and Pits (Hanson/RSPB)	(104)	152	(49)	203	317	Feb	224	
Hornsea Mere	235	315	162	215	190	Oct	223	
Alde Complex	352	172	171	221	157	Dec	215	
Stodmarsh	217	252	136	250	183	Dec	208	
Theale Gravel Pits	(86)	(169)	(207)	205	181	Dec	198	
Potteric Carr	(36)	(216)	182	176	209	Oct	196	
Blackwater Estuary	126	66	231	395	154	Feb	194	
Ditchford Gravel Pits	180	178	184	176	253	Feb	194	
Leighton Moss	186	155	205	246	146	Feb	188	▲
Buckden and Stirtloe Pits					187	Oct	187	▲
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	706	21	2	0			182	
Redgrave Lake			253	75	214	Dec	181	▲
Humber Estuary	(82)	(112)	(179)	(144)	178	Jan	179	▲
Earls Barton Gravel Pits	(146)	73	281	226	128	Dec	177	
Edderthorpe Flash			237	81	200	Sep	173	▲
Lower Derwent Ings	147	108	319	171	114	Oct	172	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Loughs Neagh and Beg	130	172	143	132	164	Mar	148	
Strangford Lough	48	113 [11]	68 [11]	86 [11]	60 [11]	Nov	75	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	144	160	130	176	239	Jan	170	
Welbeck Estate	(98)	186	215	(183)	94	Dec	170	
Meadow Lane Gravel Pits	153	354	165		2 [13]	Mar	169	
Chichester Gravel Pits	176	149	148	186	(4)	Mar	165	

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Tring Reservoirs	252	107	238	151	41	Feb	158
Blagdon Lake	204	287	52	73	(119)	Jul	154
Lakenheath Fen	139	113	189	151	108	Sep	140
Thrapston Gravel Pits					102	Oct	102
Hoveton Great Broad		49	13	117			60
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Grafham Water	64	109	125		383	Jan	170
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	144	160	130	176	239	Jan	170
Whitlingham Country Park	72	149	111	114	230 [13]	Jan	135
Tattershall Pits	30	95	112	160	220	Oct	123
Old Moor	36	168	165	239	208	Aug	163
Swale Estuary	98	86	(82)	(65)	(198)	Jan	127
Bewl Water	225 [13]	61	89	158	183	Jan	143
Fort Henry Ponds & Exton Park Lakes	133	84	79	95	171	Jan	112

Baikal Teal

Anas formosa

Escape and possible vagrant
Native Range: E Asia

A drake, or possible hybrid (*per* www.birdguides.com), was reported at Ditchford Gravel Pits in November. There have been two previous WeBS records of this species, including one at Minsmere in 2001; considered to be a genuine vagrant .

Madagascar Teal

Anas bernieri

Escape
Native Range: Madagascar

The first WeBS record of this species was at Beddington Sewage Farm in September.

Eurasian Teal

Anas crecca

International threshold: 5,000
Great Britain threshold: 1,920
All-Ireland threshold: 450

GB max: 144,200 Dec
NI max: 5,179 Dec

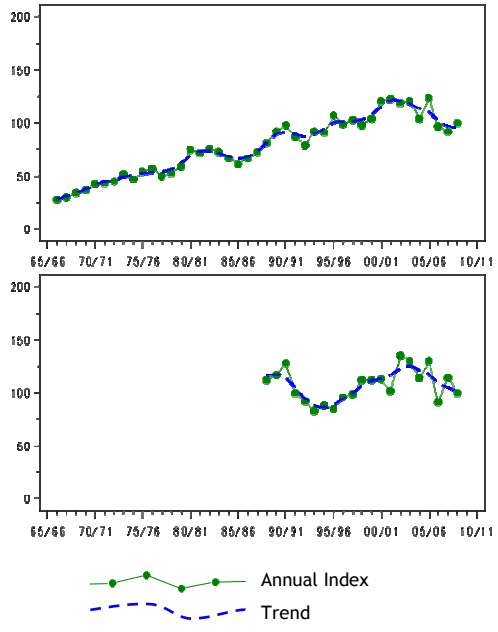


Figure 21.a, Annual indices & trend for Teal for GB (above) & NI (below).

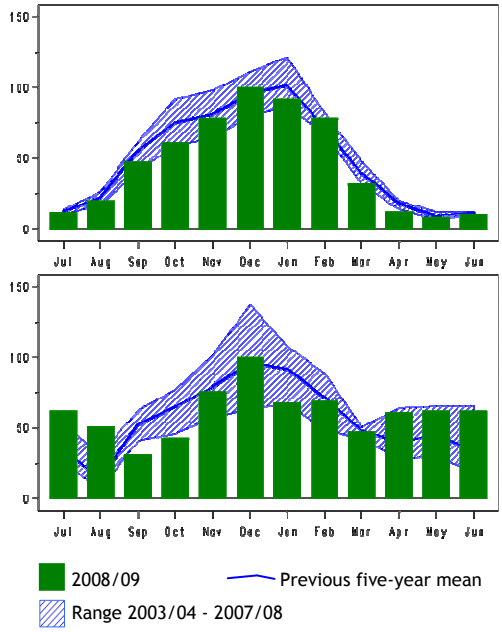


Figure 21.b, Monthly indices for Teal for GB (above) & NI (below).

The index for Teal in Britain in 2008/09 showed a slight improvement on the most recent two years, but is still below the values reached during the high point in the early 2000s.

Six sites in the UK held internationally important numbers of Teal in 2008/09 and 24 surpassed the national importance threshold. The principal site is Somerset Levels where the peak of more than 24,000 birds in February has only ever been surpassed on three previous occasions in WeBS history. These include the all-time record of 33,390 there in January 2003. At the other major sites where complete coverage was attained, peak numbers during Core counts were generally close to or slightly below average.

Among the nationally important sites, a notable increase in numbers was reported from Morecambe Bay, where the counts during November (4,767) and December (7,317) were very high compared to normal for the site. The previous highest monthly maximum there was 3,699 in November 2004. Similarly, the peak Core count from Hamford Water of 5,933 was the highest for five years and significantly greater than the longer term average for the site. Moreover, Low Tide counts at the site in January yielded a very high total of 10,684 birds; considered to be attributable to a cold weather influx (J. Novorol, pers. comm.). In contrast, declines in peak totals were noted at a small number of locations, most strikingly at Abberton Reservoir where a peak of just 872 birds represents the lowest since 2002/03.

The current trend in Northern Ireland suggests a decline in numbers. At the three most important sites, peak numbers fell at both Strangford Lough and Loughs Neagh & Beg (c.f. Mallard), but were somewhat higher at Lough Foyle.

Radio-tracking studies in France have shown that wintering Teal are more prone to leave nocturnal roosts for foraging than other dabbling species, and as a result tend to have patchier home ranges and travel further distances while at a particular site (Legagneux *et al*. 2009). Theoretically, this could have associated implications on the expected variation between visits in numbers of birds counted at adjacent sites.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Somerset Levels	7,161	8,719	21,581	17,663	24,029	Feb	15,831	
Ribble Estuary	8,688	9,571	(6,959)	8,045	6,072	Nov	8,094	
Ouse Washes	7,014 [13]	9,772	4,333 [13]	3,135	5,351	Jan	5,921	
Mersey Estuary	6,023	9,200 [11]	2,249	(2,072)	(2,000)	Dec	5,824	
Loch Leven	6,060	4,840	2,527	4,920	7,580 [13]	Sep	5,185	▲
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Swale Estuary	4,187	(5,783)	(3,728)	4,470	5,485	Jan	4,981	
Severn Estuary	(3,466)	5,293	4,233	5,428	4,710	Jan	4,916	
Thames Estuary	5,433	5,361	3,940	(3,041)	(3,496)	Jan	4,911	▼
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	4,733	2,372	3,620 [13]	5,612 [13]	3,216 [13]	Dec	3,911	
Hamford Water	2,164	3,276	(1,969)	3,255	10,684 [11]	Jan	4,845	
North Norfolk Coast	3,730	4,994	3,638	3,278 [11]	3,524	Dec	3,833	
Morecambe Bay	(3,699)	2,538	2,338	2,716	7,327	Dec	3,730	
Lower Derwent Ings	3,476	4,479	4,221	3,714	2,505	Oct	3,679	
Alde Complex	3,028	3,913	3,560	3,334	3,961	Dec	3,559	
WWT Martin Mere	8,300	3,800	1,430	1,200	2,005	Oct	3,347	
Abberton Reservoir	1,224	7,741	2,662	3,410	872	Oct	3,182	
Blackwater Estuary	(2,064)	2,751	(2,786)	(2,207)	(4,002)	Feb	3,180	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	2,752	2,854	4,429	2,144	3,129 [11]	Nov	3,062	
Hickling Broad	2,400	4,550	2,000		3,150	Oct	3,025	
Holburn Moss	3,000						3,000	
Humber Estuary	2,349	(3,739)	(2,009)	2,137	3,234	Nov	2,865	
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	3,397	2,995	(1,890)	(2,208)	1,944	Jan	2,779	
The Wash	2,590	4,107	2,138	2,537	2,308	Dec	2,736	
Mersehead RSPB Reserve	2,900		3,900	1,045			2,615	
Solway Estuary	1,941	3,152	(2,265)	(839)	(1,648)	Jan	2,547	
Stodmarsh	2,500	3,633	831	2,508	1,100	Nov	2,114	
Forth Estuary	1,880	2,130	2,531	1,877	2,130	Dec	2,110	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	2,981 [11]	(1,926)	1,455	(1,900)	1,754	Nov	2,063	
Arun Valley	1,229	2,390	2,129	(2,343)	1,985	Nov	2,015	

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	2,015	2,573	1,724	1,752	1,347	Dec	1,882
Lough Foyle	1,038	1,405	915	1,562	2,000	Dec	1,384
Loughs Neagh and Beg	2,019	1,427	1,049	1,297	889	Feb	1,336
Carlingford Lough	647	710	440	565	571	Jan	587
Belfast Lough	544	573 [11]	488	640	479	Dec	545
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/2009							
Dornoch Firth	2,571	2,174	(1,312)	1,055	1,844	Jan	1,911
Cleddau Estuary	2,269	2,435	1,389	1,991	1,171	Jan	1,851
Loch Gruinart Floods	2,549	2,058	1,467	1,373	1,421	Nov	1,774
Minsmere	1,984	1,796	1,252	1,155	924	Oct	1,422
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland							
Larne Lough	221	371	189	168	543	Dec	298

Green-winged Teal

Anas carolinensis

Vagrant
Native Range: N America

Drakes were recorded at 15 sites in Britain and one in Northern Ireland. Typically at a number of these, birds proved to be long-stayers; including at Belfast Lough, Dee Estuary, Eyebrook Reservoir, Forth Estuary, Loch Bee (South Uist), Loch of Tankerness, Morecambe Bay, North Cave Wetlands and Tees Estuary (where two were present in March).

Silver Teal

Anas versicolor

Escape
Native Range: S America

Two were at Hollowell Reservoir in September; the sixth WeBS record.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: 3,520†
All-Ireland threshold: 380

GB max: 120,879 Dec
NI max: 5,637 Dec

The decline in the wintering population of Mallards in the UK continued in 2008/09. Despite an increasing breeding population (Baillie *et al*. 2010), the monthly indices indicate that below average numbers were present on WeBS sites throughout the year. As a result, for the third successive year, Britain had no sites of national importance for its most familiar duck. Northern Ireland currently has one site of All-Ireland importance (Loughs Neagh & Beg) where numbers are now showing signs of a sharp decline. However, this year's peak from Strangford Lough was the highest since October 2001.

The falls in the WeBS indices for both Britain and Northern Ireland have been ongoing since the late 1980s, and are generally considered to be linked to a decrease in continental immigration. This theory can be contextualised by considering the trend in Mallard numbers on the opposite side of the North Sea. Up until 2003/04, numbers in The Netherlands during the preceding twenty years had varied little, however since 2003/04 they have shown a marked decline there too. This is perhaps indicative of a continuation in a northward/eastward shift of core wintering range, as described for waders by Maclean *et al*. (2008). Further east in Europe, wintering populations currently appear to be either stable e.g. Slovakia (Slabeyova *et al*. 2009) or increasing e.g. Czech Republic (Musilova *et al*. 2009).

Research on wetlands in France indicates that wintering Mallards are more faithful to chosen sites within an individual winter than other dabbling species (Legagneux *et al*. 2009), but that the combined loss of grasslands and pressure from shooting has impacted negatively on them at some important sites (Duncan *et al*. 1999).

The five-year average declined at most of the principal sites, most markedly at Loughs Neagh & Beg in Northern Ireland (where the peak count in 2008/09 was the lowest ever and approximately 50% lower than the peak in the previous year), as well as at WWT Martin Mere and Humber Estuary in England. Elsewhere, sites showing increases included Dungeness & Rye Bay (where 1,306 in August represented the highest monthly count for five years), but declines included a further drop at Tring Reservoirs (see Mute Swan and Gadwall).

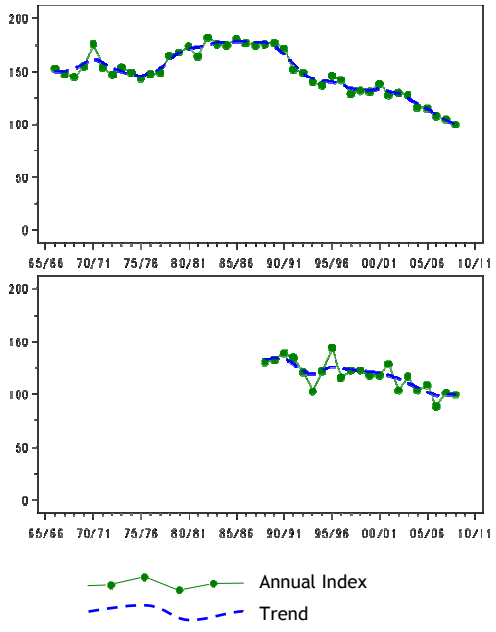


Figure 22.a, Annual indices & trend for Mallard for GB (above) & NI (below).

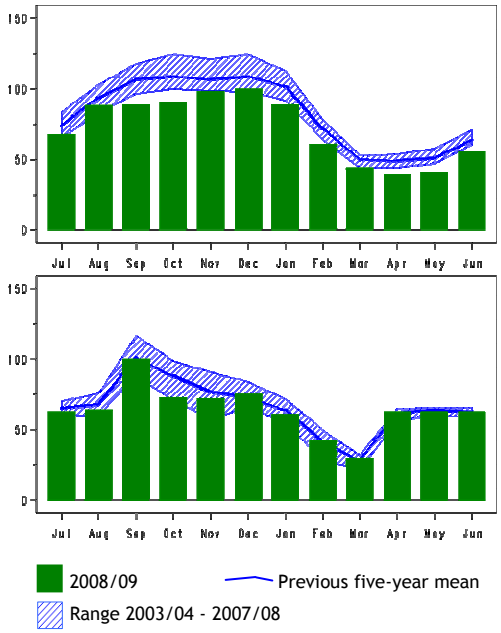


Figure 22.b, Monthly indices for Mallard for GB (above) & NI (below).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	4,027	4,612	4,351	3,767	1,911	Nov	3,734
Strangford Lough	1,621	1,586	(1,010)	1,950	2,177	Sep	1,834
Lough Foyle	1,025	1,133	1,036	830	965	Oct	998
Lower Lough Erne	754	556	551	702	(295)	Nov	641
Belfast Lough	371 [11]	346	(344)	457	447	Dec	405
Sites with mean peak counts of 2,000 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Severn Estuary	3,353	(3,884)	3,661	2,954	3,073	Nov	3,385
Ouse Washes	3,595 [13]	2,454	2,606 [13]	2,918 [13]	(3,024)	Jan	2,919
The Wash	2,453	2,534	2,417	2,316	(2,586)	Dec	2,461
Swale Estuary	2,010	2,247	(1,301)	2,972	(1,981)	Oct	2,410
WWT Martin Mere	2,930	3,150	2,211	2,000	1,665	Nov	2,391
Humber Estuary	2,455	2,155	(1,911)	2,166	1,607	Jan	2,096
Livermere and Ampton Water	2,517	1,106		2,279	2,376	Oct	2,070
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs	692	1,680	1,223	709	2,455	Dec	1,352
Clifford Hill Gravel Pits	2,143	1,686	2,027	1,733	2,048	Aug	1,927

† *as no sites exceed the British threshold a qualifying level of 2,000 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Black Duck

Anas rubripes

Vagrant
Native Range: N America

Two at Loch of Hillwell in May represents the first WeBS record since October 2002.

Chestnut Teal

Anas castanea

Escape
Native Range: S Australia

An escape was at Belvide Reservoir in August; the first record for three years.

Pintail

Anas acuta

International threshold: 600
Great Britain threshold: 279
All-Ireland threshold: 20*

GB max: 22,611 Nov
NI max: 597 Nov

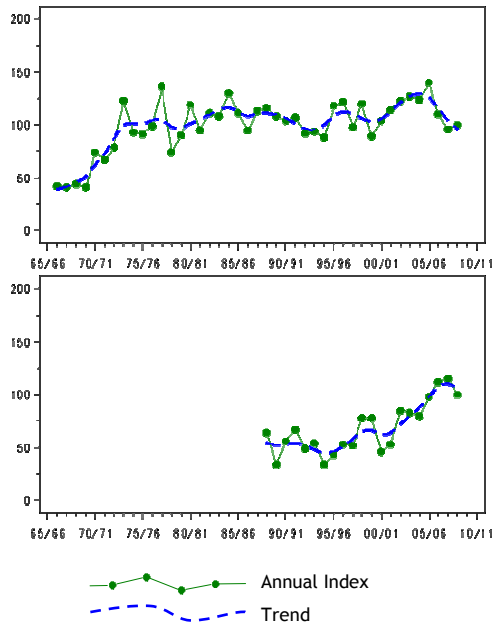


Figure 23.a, Annual indices & trend for Pintail for GB (above) & NI (below).

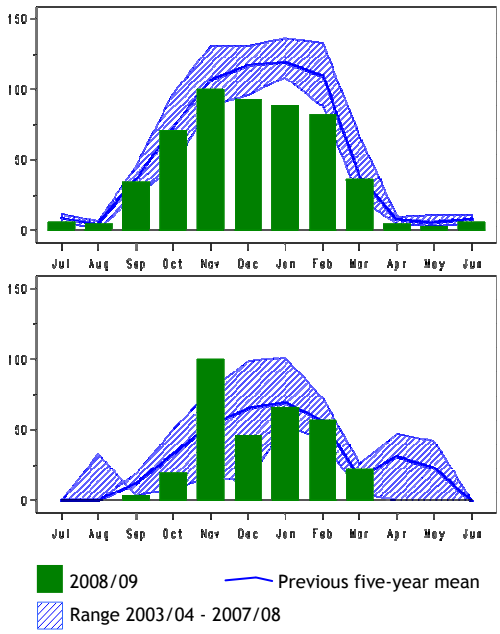


Figure 23.b, Monthly indices for Pintail for GB (above) & NI (below).

Although the annual indices for Pintail tend to show a high level of variation between years, the overall trend for the species in Britain has changed little over the course of the last thirty-five years and numbers have essentially remained reasonably stable. That said, the index values for the last three years have been relatively poor, at least compared to the preceding decade, and it remains to be seen whether this species' status quo will be maintained in the years ahead.

It is interesting to note that the apparent recent drop after a period of stability/increase is mirrored to varying degrees by the trends exhibited by Wigeon, Golden Plover, Lapwing and Ruff; a suite of species which tends to favour both intertidal zones of estuaries as well as more freshwater riparian habitats.

Pintail (Jill Pakenham)

The monthly indices indicate that numbers of Pintail were as to be expected during the autumn months, but were particularly depressed from December to

January, typically the peak period at sites in Britain.

Fifteen sites in the UK are currently of international importance for Pintail. In general, peak numbers at these principal sites in 2008/09 were disappointing and only two sites (Duddon Estuary and Nene Washes) registered maxima in excess of the respective five-year average. Peaks were especially down at the two sites at the top of the table below, Dee Estuary and Burry Inlet, where the lowest totals since 1999/2000 and 2001/02, respectively, were logged. Eighteen further sites are of national importance, including Wigtown Bay and Somerset Levels, which based on peaks recorded in the last two and three years, respectively, may well be the next sites to surpass the threshold for international importance. Numbers in Northern Ireland were again high, continuing the species' recent strong showing there.

Away from UK sites, in a novel study at wetlands in France, Pintail was one of three species of wintering dabbling duck studied through the use of radio-tracking. In an investigation of home-range sizes and movements of individual birds, foraging distances, generally 1-2 km from roosts, increased with temperature and time over the winter season (Legagneux *et al.* 2009).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	4,312	6,330	6,172	(4,334)	3,932	Oct	5,187
Burry Inlet	2,745	4,837	4,692	6,244	2,209	Nov	4,145
Ribble Estuary	(3,058)	3,579	(1,094)	3,639	2,178	Nov	3,132
Morecambe Bay	3,620	3,045	2,609	2,112	2,593	Oct	2,796
Solway Estuary	4,352	(1,575)	(2,429)	1,047	(888)	Nov	2,700
Ouse Washes	3,557 [13]	3,343 [13]	1,823 [13]	1,713 [13]	(1,697)	Jan	2,609
Duddon Estuary	1,626 [11]	2,210 [11]	(2,317)	(1,153)	2,481	Mar	2,159
Nene Washes	327	281	1,931	1,267	1,951	Feb	1,151
Mersehead RSPB Reserve	970		1,010	1,445			1,142
The Wash	917	(567)	1,215	652	560	Nov	836
Severn Estuary	(784)	905	(1,161)	668	655 [11]	Feb	835
Pagham Harbour	834	893	566	(464)	(447)	Jan	764
Medway Estuary	812 [11]	(809)	(582)	663	(351)	Dec	761
North Norfolk Coast	712	657	753	697 [11]	421	Nov	648
Swale Estuary	672	579	731	597	630	Feb	642
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Somerset Levels	261	333	530	985	682	Jan	558
Blackwater Estuary	555	(387)	(401)	(201)	(488)	Dec	555
Dee Flood Meadows	300 [13]	(329)	916	750	196	Jan	541 ▼
Wigtown Bay	(654)	349	166	834	642	Dec	529
WWT Martin Mere	710 [12]	(535)	580	380	380	Nov	517
North West Solent	412	670	484	407	320	Jan	459
Stour Estuary	289	473	467	303	486 [11]	Feb	404
Lindisfarne	301	536	445	327	(272)	Oct	402
Lower Derwent Ings	296	167	656	674	85	Nov	376
Alde Complex	313	307	441	447	276	Jan	357
Arun Valley	293	290	574	(322)	227	Jan	346
Poole Harbour	338	(208)	(140)	(155)	(110)	Dec	338
Blyth Estuary	425 [13]	(209)	394	185	(264)	Dec	335
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	518	281	314	232	236	Dec	316
Malltraeth Cob and Pools	421	397	287	146	266	Jan	303
Orwell Estuary	165 [11]	308 [11]	753 [11]	158	125 [11]	Dec	302
Fleet and Wey	420	360	188	360	100	Oct	286
Foryd Bay	136	449	330	152	360 [13]	Dec	285 ▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	349	643 [11]	496	395	449	Nov	466
Lough Foyle	52	94	123	157	185	Dec	122
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Traeth Bach	80	65	325	341	403	Nov	243
Dornoch Firth	291	263	293	84	(400)	Oct	266
Carmarthen Bay	161	137	99	192	(396)	Dec	197
Cromarty Firth	229	76	205	(171)	287	Feb	199

White-cheeked Pintail

Anas bahamensis

Escape
Native Range: S America

During the course of 2008/09, White-cheeked Pintails were recorded at Birnie Loch (2), Mount Castle Quarry (2), Thames Estuary, Fleet & Wey, Aldenham Reservoir, Medway Estuary and the regular site of Stanton Lake.

Garganey

Anas querquedula

International threshold: 20,000
Great Britain threshold: +†
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max:	**40**	**Apr**
NI max:	**0**	**0**

Being summer visitors, Garganey are reported for the calendar year; here 2008. Records were received from 64 sites, a similar number to the previous year. Away from England, these included eight sites in Scotland and four in Wales, while a pair at Point of Ayr Gravel Pit in May represents the first WeBS record ever on the Isle of Man. Conversely, following records at Loughs Neagh & Beg in 2006 and 2007, none were seen in Northern Ireland in 2008.

One at Cotswold Water Park in February, which may have either been an early migrant or perhaps related to an over-wintering bird, was followed by more typical first spring migrants in March involving singles at six sites. Across all sites, slightly higher numbers were seen in spring than autumn with the monthly peak noted in April.

Garganey (Tim Sykes)

The highest individual counts during 2008 were eight at Dungeness & Rye Bay in September, six at Thames Estuary in July-August, five at Loch of Strathbeg in May and five at Fen Drayton Gravel Pits in August. Towards the end of the year, the last birds were recorded in October at Hayle Estuary (2), Severn Estuary, Chew Valley Lake and Chichester Harbour.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 4 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Dungeness and Rye Bay	4	8	9	9	8	Sep	8
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	14	12	6	2 [10]	0		7
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in 2008 in Great Britain†							
Loch of Strathbeg	1	6	2	1	5	May	3
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	0	0	0	1	5	Aug	1
Severn Estuary	1	(2)	4	1	4	Sep	3
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	4	0	3	0	4	Aug	2
Druridge Pool		0	0		4	May	1

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

Blue-winged Teal

Anas discors

Vagrant
Native Range: N America

One was at Wigtown Bay in September. Since the first in 1988, this is the 25th record for WeBS, but only the second in Scotland.

Shoveler

Anas clypeata

International threshold:	400	
Great Britain threshold:	148	
All-Ireland threshold:	20*	

GB max:	13,539	Nov
NI max:	113	Feb

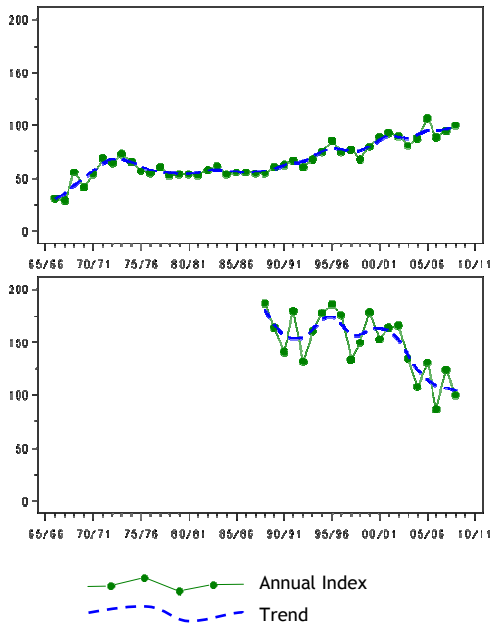


Figure 24.a, Annual indices & trend for Shoveler for GB (above) & NI (below).

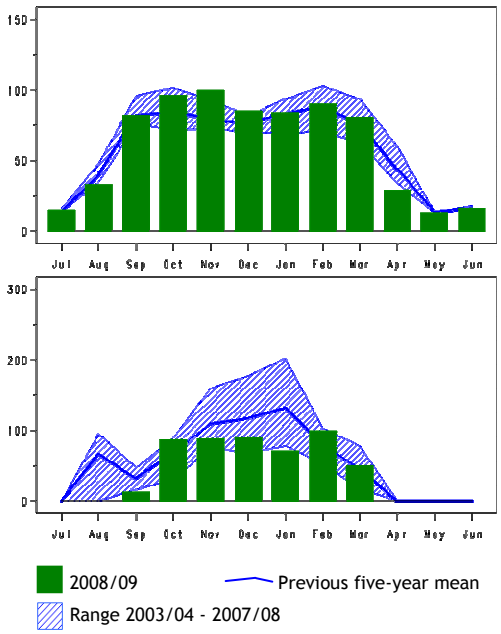


Figure 24.b, Monthly indices for Shoveler for GB (above) & NI (below).

The trend for Shoveler in Britain continues to illustrate a rising population, an increase which began in the 1990s, and is similar to that in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009). The peak monthly count of 13,539 birds in November was particularly high, providing an indication of the tendency for this particular species to peak in the UK during late autumn, en route to wintering areas in France and Spain. However the difference between numbers in autumn and winter has reduced in recent years; perhaps as a result of a greater proportion of birds wintering at sites in more northern latitudes in response to recent milder winters.

Eight sites now hold internationally important numbers of Shoveler, the two most important of which are Ouse Washes and Somerset Levels. Maxima at the other six sites of international importance were fairly typical, including Abberton Reservoir where a large-scale project is underway to increase the volume of the reservoir. The enhancement proposals also incorporate new areas of shallow water as feeding habitat for waterfowl; hence it is hoped that dabbling species for which the site is of particular importance, such as Shoveler and Gadwall, will not be negatively affected by any changes.

The count from Ouse Washes was the second highest Core count ever there, surpassed only by 2,414 in April 2005. In contrast, this year's peak at Somerset Levels was the lowest there for three years, following particularly high peaks in 2006/07 and 2007/08. The degree of inter-annual exchange between these sites is unknown as few Shovelers are ringed in the UK, but it seems possible at least that there is some connection. Chew Valley Lake no longer qualifies as internationally important, following a further decline in numbers there. It now joins 37 other nationally important sites whose five-year averages surpass the lower threshold of 148 birds. The drop in numbers at Chew Valley Lake is of interest when one considers that nearby Blagdon Lake has also experienced a

decline in the last two years, the peak in 2008/09 being the lowest for six years. Five sites have been promoted to the list of nationally important sites since 2007/08; these include Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits, where highest ever numbers were noted, and Morecambe Bay, where this year's monthly maximum has only been surpassed on one previous occasion.

The trend for Northern Ireland shows a continued fall in numbers, epitomised by peak counts at Strangford Lough which during the last two years have been half those of the five-year mean.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Ouse Washes	2,725 [13]	1,548 [13]	696 [13]	1,071	2,039	Mar	1,616	
Somerset Levels	(902)	845	1,520	1,806	971	Feb	1,286	
Rutland Water	663	680	495	620	525	Sep	597	
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	468	333	540 [13]	754	570 [13]	Jan	579	
Severn Estuary	266	603	600	796	526	Nov	561	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	451	626	553	581	588	Feb	560	
Abberton Reservoir	355	(674)	(152)	604	606	Oct	560	
Thames Estuary	402	357	524	(113)	(276)	Jan	428	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Chew Valley Lake	395	660	300	180	270 [13]	Jan	361	▼
Middle Yare Marshes	(111)	(170)	(84)	(174)	(352)	Sep	(352)	
Ribble Estuary	219	286	532	188	478	Nov	341	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(51)	(32)	(78)	(259)	330	Dec	330	
Nene Washes	177	213	448	384	272	Mar	299	
Burry Inlet	344	437	101	309	(283)	Dec	298	
Stodmarsh	272	384	400	147	284	Mar	297	
North Norfolk Coast	234	278	380	258	297	Dec	289	
Alde Complex	175	253	441	295	260	Nov	285	
Lower Derwent Ings	314	107	301	341	333	Oct	279	
Swale Estuary	292	199	(144)	331	(216)	Mar	274	
Medway Estuary	19 [11]	248	(509)	(68)	298	Nov	269	
Loch Leven	386	204	279	205	192	Sep	253	
Staines Reservoirs	308	469	149	65	232	Oct	245	
Blagdon Lake	160	(220)	542	137	64	Dec	226	
Fairburn Ings		288	226	54	304	Nov	218	
Tees Estuary	(145)	145	309	170	225	Sep	212	
R. Avon: Fordingbridge-Ringwood	149	195	153	312	245	Feb	211	
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	275	282	164	184	149	Mar	211	
Llynnau Y Fali	232	210	135	59	419	Feb	211	
Pitsford Reservoir	70	347	329	148	148	Sep	208	
London Wetland Centre	160	176	185	327	158	Sep	201	
Trinity Broads	304	(0)	(27)	338	162	Jan	201	
Arun Valley	175	98	278	217	215	Nov	197	
Tring Reservoirs	99	225	130	256	250	Dec	192	
Grafham Water	266	357	24		121	Feb	192	
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(43)	(39)	(68)	111	270	Nov	191	▲
Cotswold Water Park (West)	126	163	222	(133)	251	Nov	188	
Minsmere	227	183	218	138	157	Dec	185	
Malltraeth RSPB	173	147	250	156	148	Dec	175	
Morecambe Bay	167	159	174	22	326	Nov	170	▲
Woolston Eyes	157	317	(109)	91	102	Oct	167	
Swillington Ings	135	68	62	184	332	Oct	156	▲
Wicken Fen		143	148	145	175	Oct	153	▲
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	150	(68)	152	148	150	Jan	150	▲
Otmoor	(150)	95	(224)	(175)	102 [13]	Feb	149	
Edderthorpe Flash			210	68	170	Sep	149	
Walthamstow Reservoirs	265	142	155	64	114	Oct	148	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Strangford Lough	119	147	139 [10]	73	69 [11]	Dec	109	
Loughs Neagh and Beg	51	55	34	90	57	Oct	57	
Belfast Lough	22	17 [11]	15	28	49	Feb	26	▲
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/2009								
WWT Martin Mere	198	217	35	150	100	Oct	140	
Chichester Gravel Pits	173	165	67	78	(185)	Jan	134	

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Chetwynd Pool	220	57	150	33	275	Oct	147
Solway Estuary	66	132	126	137	222	Nov	137
Hampton & Kempton Reservoirs	(134)	144	77	85	201	Nov	128
Lower Windrush Valley GPs	37	53	169	106	193	Jan	112
Chichester Gravel Pits	173	165	67	78	(185)	Jan	134
Cotswold Water Park (East)	25	147	65	177	180	Jan	119
Clumber Park Lake		45	44	18	174	Oct	70
Eversley Cross & Yateley GPs	61	110	74	189	166	Feb	120
Hornsea Mere	120	140	115	142	155	Sep	134
Fleet and Wey	106	(101)	137	193	152	Dec	147
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	135	80	106	100	150	Feb	114

Australasian Shoveler

Anas rhynchotis

Escape
Native Range: S Australasia

One was at Dee Estuary in November; the second ever noted during WeBS counts.

Ringed Teal

Callonetta leucophrys

Escape
Native Range: S America

A single Ringed Teal was present at Kirkby-on-Bain Gravel Pits in October.

Red-crested Pochard

Netta rufina

International threshold: 500

?†

?†

GB max: 385 Dec
NI max: 0 0

Red-crested Pochard is patchily distributed throughout central and southern Europe. Formally considered to be largely sedentary, it has shown a marked change in winter distribution in recent decades, involving the use of more sites and a northward shift in core range from the western Mediterranean to, in particular, the region north of the Alps (Keller 2000). Numbers have increased in France since the late 1980s (Fouque *et al*. 2009), while those in Switzerland had risen to a record 28,000 by January 2009 (Keller & Burkhardt 2010).

The majority of British records, including those pertaining to the ancestors of the core of the UK population at Cotswold Water Park, are generally considered to relate to escapes. However, given the range shift, it seems plausible that the probability of wild birds occurring in the UK is now greater than ever before.

Numbers at Cotswold Water Park rose to record levels in 2008/09; counts in the Western section peaked at 327 in December and the Eastern section yielded a three-figure peak for only the second time. As a consequence, the five-year mean peak across the whole gravel-pit complex rose by 30% compared to the previous year.

Red-crested Pochard (Neil Calbrade)

The species was recorded at a further 57 sites in England, six of which registered double-figure counts. These included November counts of 22 at St James's Park (where WeBS counts were carried out for the first time) and 28 at Abberton Reservoir. In Scotland, singles were at Lochwinnoch and Loch Leven in August and November, respectively.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Cotswold Water Park (West)	81	119	207	170 [13]	327	Dec	181
Cotswold Water Park (East)	48	70	106	72	104	Mar	80
Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits	19	41	26	(26)	(36)	Nov	31
St James`s Park					22	Nov	22
Arnot Park Lake	19	18	16	14	9	Nov	15
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	16	12	22	13	10	Jun	15
Hanningfield Reservoir	2	21	17	10	11	Mar	12
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Abberton Reservoir	1	9	2	4	28	Nov	9
Pen Ponds			3	4	15	Nov	7
Rutland Water	3	1	10	8	13	Jan	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*

Pochard

Aythya ferina

International threshold: 3,500
Great Britain threshold: 595
All-Ireland threshold: 380

GB max: 23,102 Jan
NI max: 6,028 Jan

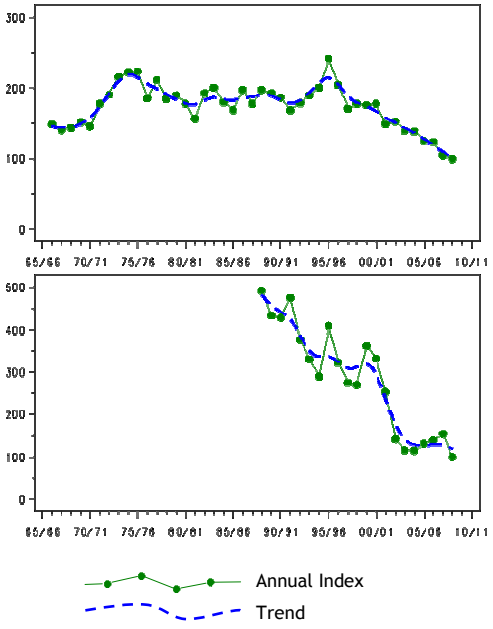


Figure 25.a, Annual indices & trend for Pochard for GB (above) & NI (below).

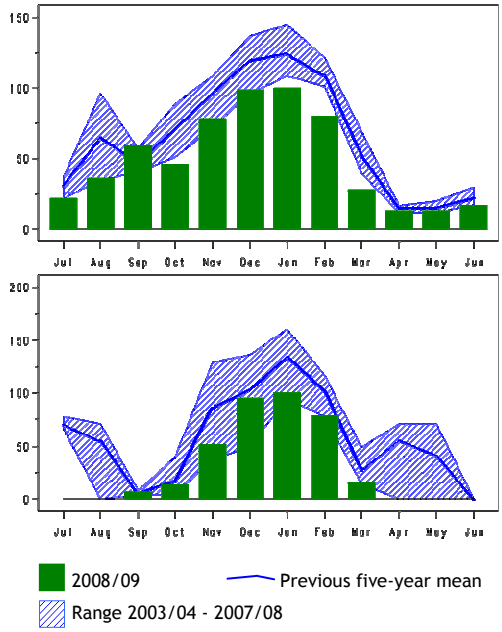


Figure 25.b, Monthly indices for Pochard for GB (above) & NI (below).

The British population of Pochard is declining at a very fast rate, a downward trend that began in 1996/97, following a historic peak in the national index during the previous year. In 2008/09, the annual index fell to its lowest ever point; numbers were approaching 20% lower than average in all months during the winter period. The species has effectively gone from 'boom to bust' in Britain in the space of thirteen years, and for the second year in a row no sites qualified as internationally important. A similar decline is being experienced in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009), however, numbers have been stable in Switzerland for ten years following a steady increase there during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (Keller & Burkhardt 2010) and are considered to be increasing in the Czech Republic (Musilova *et al.* 2009).

There was some positive news concerning Pochards in the UK; at Loch Leven, where

numbers tend to peak in the autumn, the count of 4,326 in September was the highest ever recorded. Similarly, a count of 1,042 at Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits in December represents an all-time high for that site. In contrast, the monthly maximum at Abberton Reservoir was one of the lowest ever at the site, and peak numbers at the other eleven sites of national importance were generally slightly below average.

In Northern Ireland, the species is arguably faring even more poorly than in Britain. Following three years of improving peak counts at Loughs Neagh & Beg, the maxima there fell again to its lowest level since 1985 at least. It is worth re-stressing the magnitude of the decline experienced at this site, the UK's sole remaining site of international importance; the peak there in 2008/09 of 5,799 birds in January represents a drop of some 85% compared to the record 40,930 in December 1990. The decreases noted at this site are likely to be attributable to a shift in wintering range towards the north and east in response to milder winters, combined with the effects of eutrophication which may have impacted upon invertebrates fed upon by this and other diving species (Maclean *et al.* 2006).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Loughs Neagh and Beg	6,764	8,256	8,884	9,023	5,799	Jan	7,745	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Loch Leven	2,193	1,715	3,666	1,650	4,326	Sep	2,710	
Ouse Washes	2,134 [13]	1,227	4,197	2,987	2,367 [13]	Feb	2,582	
Abberton Reservoir	3,188	2,852	3,167	2,355	850	Nov	2,482	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	789	1,053	1,049	728	1,019	Aug	928	
Chew Valley Lake	635	1,580	1,220	600	530	Dec	913	
Hornsea Mere	1,150	1,150	710	650	560	Sep	844	
Fleet and Wey	746	682	879	980	718	Feb	801	
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(56)	(12)	296	783	1,042	Dec	707	▲
Cotswold Water Park (East)	410	524	993	884	685	Oct	699	
Severn Estuary	652	760	786	583	617	Feb	680	
Loch of Boardhouse	770	709	623	441	665	Dec	642	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Upper Lough Erne	473	329	503	422	459	Feb	437	

Ring-necked Duck

Aythya collaris

Vagrant
Native Range: N America

Ring-necked Ducks were recorded at a bumper 17 sites during WeBS Core counts; six sites in England and eleven in Scotland. The latter included four different sites on Tiree (Lochs Bhasapoll, Riaghain, a` Phuill and An Eilein) and hence may have involved some duplication of what was likely to have been at least three individuals. Other long-staying birds were at Loch Gelly (July-August), Foxcote Reservoir (November-March), Martnaham Loch (December-January) and North Ronaldsay (February-March). Further records were from Loch Calder, Bassenthwaite Lake, Passfield Pond, River Eden, Kirk Loch (Yell), Loch of Brow, Loch Kinord (2), Whitlingham Country Park, and presumably the same bird at Hoveton Little Broad.

Ferruginous Duck

Aythya nyroca

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: S & E Europe, Africa, Asia

The species was seen at six sites. Chew Valley Lake again hosted a drake at both ends of the WeBS-year, while October to March saw others reported from Lee Valley Gravel Pits, Groby Pool, Lynford Gravel Pit, Blackwater Estuary and Petworth Park Lakes. As ever, at least some are likely to refer to escapes from captivity.

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

International threshold: 12,000
Great Britain threshold: 901
All-Ireland threshold: 370

GB max: 58,950 Dec
NI max: 7,218 Jan

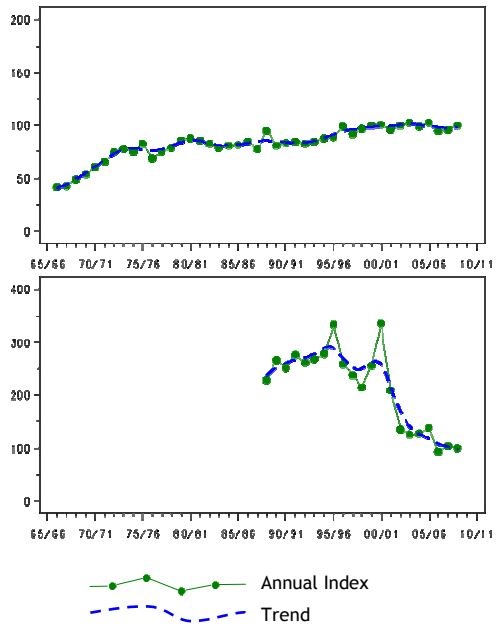


Figure 26.a, Annual indices & trend for Tufted Duck for GB (above) & NI (below).

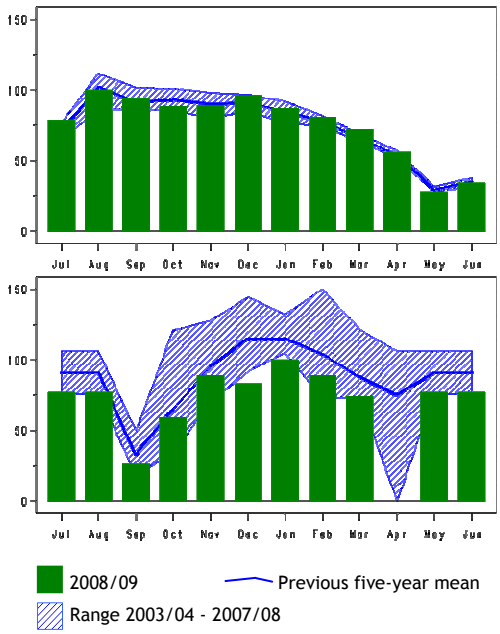


Figure 26.b, Monthly indices for Tufted Duck for GB (above) & NI (below).

Annual maxima and indices for Tufted Duck in Great Britain have exhibited a very shallow increase over the course of the WeBS indexing period, and the index in 2008/09 remained consistent with the species' status during the preceding decade.

Tufted Duck (John Harding)

Britain's most important site for the species, Rutland Water, fared relatively poorly in 2008/09; the peak there being the lowest since 2000/01. Most other sites of national importance supported peaks that were reasonably close to average, exceptions including Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits and Hanningfield Reservoir where record totals were logged. The rise at the latter site is particularly noteworthy considering the marked drop there in the previous year. Following the resumption of WeBS counting at Grafham Water, the site now also surpassed the threshold for national importance.

There are no sites of international importance for Tufted Duck in the UK; indeed, nowhere currently comes close to reaching the threshold of 12,000 birds. Historically, Loughs Neagh & Beg did, but in common with other species of diving duck, the site experienced a crash in Tufted Duck numbers from 2001/02 onwards. A record WeBS aggregation there of 29,393 Tufted Ducks dates back to December 1989.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Rutland Water	6,488	8,487	9,758	5,134	3,678	Sep	6,709
Loch Leven	3,826	3,802	3,553	4,140	3,610	Sep	3,786
Abberton Reservoir	5,112	(4,857)	1,187	3,796	3,928	Oct	3,776
Ouse Washes	2,251 [13]	1,140 [13]	2,057	3,328	(2,978)	Feb	2,351
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	(129)	(64)	1,243	1,766	3,372	Sep	2,127
Pitsford Reservoir	2,506	2,066	1,374	774	1,654	Dec	1,675
Walthamstow Reservoirs	1,771	1,828	1,516	900	2,103	Aug	1,624
Hanningfield Reservoir	400	1,573	2,194	486	3,269	Jul	1,584
Staines Reservoirs	792	2,844	1,865	1,074	1,097	Aug	1,534
Chew Valley Lake	1,235	2,115	1,325	1,480	1,350	Sep	1,501
Cotswold Water Park (West)	960	1,199	1,372	1,343	1,354	Mar	1,246
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	1,222	985	1,215	1,231	1,532	Jan	1,237
Grafham Water	824	1,337	521		1,591	Dec	1,068
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	9,277	7,871	6,441	6,076	5,126	Jan	6,958
Upper Lough Erne	1,295	1,457	1,478	1,772	1,895	Feb	1,579
Lower Lough Erne	674	575	705	638	(183)	Dec	648
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Alton Water	644	1,063	1,008	664	421	Aug	760
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
King George VI Reservoir	666	858	291	615	1,161	Aug	718
Blagdon Lake	462	547	(1,131)	750	1,005	Aug	779
Dungeness and Rye Bay	712	621	863	777	1,000	Aug	795
Tophill Low Reservoirs	915	817	780	344	970	Aug	765

Greater Scaup

Aythya marila

International threshold: 3,100
Great Britain threshold: 76
All-Ireland threshold: 45

GB max: 2,422 Jan
NI max: 6,586 Jan

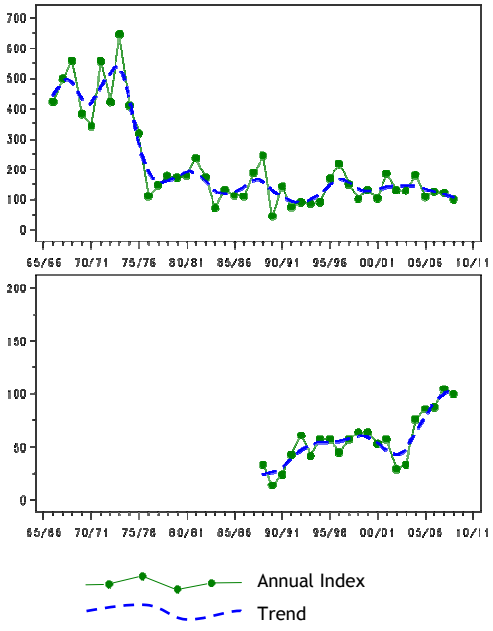


Figure 27.a, Annual indices & trend for Scaup for GB (above) & NI (below).

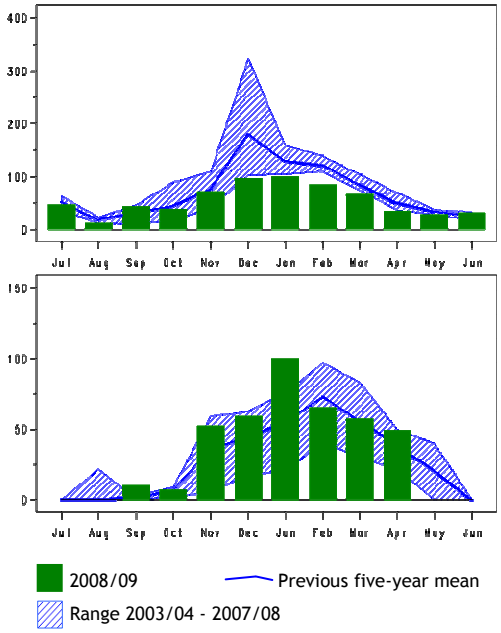


Figure 27.b, Monthly indices for Scaup for GB (above) & NI (below).

Since the mid 1970s, the national indices for Scaup in Great Britain have remained reasonably consistent from year to year, with just small periodic fluctuations. In 2008/09, the counted monthly maximum was at a similarly low level to that of the previous year, and approximately 20% lower than two years previously. Seaduck counts are often susceptible to the effects of bad weather and consequent poor counting conditions.

In Northern Ireland, the wintering population of Scaup is faring well, and in 2008/09 the national index remained near to the record high level reached the previous year. The majority of these birds winter at Loughs Neagh & Beg, the premier location in the UK for the species. In 2008/09, numbers there reached their highest levels, with a record maximum of 6,335 noted in January, resulting in Scaup being the most abundant *Aythya* at Loughs Neagh & Beg during the winter. Numbers at the second important site, Belfast Lough, were closer to the recent average.

Scaup count totals from several sites in Britain were down compared to recent averages; these included Solway Estuary, Loch Ryan and Inverness & Moray Firth. The five-year average for Forth Estuary in Scotland is now just 38 birds; a staggering decline considering that the site formerly held 25,000 birds up to the mid 1970s. The disappearance of that aggregation was largely responsible for the plunge in the national index at the time, occurring in isolation from the stable trend elsewhere in the country.

Away from the principal sites listed below, the highest count was 120 at Montrose Basin in December, while peaks at freshwater sites were 12 at Eglwys Nunnyd Reservoir and six at Rutland Water in February, and six at Blagdon Lake in November.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	5,144	5,826	4,349	5,587	6,335	Jan	5,448
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Solway Estuary	(4,610)	(575)	1,060	(499)	(257)	Jan	2,835
Loch Ryan	1,577	1,020	1,047	1,654	705	Feb	1,201
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	2,641 [1]	576	690	148	493	Jan	910
Inner Loch Indaal	800 [24]	960 [24]	810 [24]	870 [24]			860
Cromarty Firth	47	400	401	(516)	363	Dec	345
Loch of Stenness	315	306	429	259	276	Dec	317
Loch of Harray	490	360	306	67	(67)	Oct	306
Dornoch Firth	150 [13]	77	222	280	108	Jan	167
Firth of Clyde and Loch Ryan offshore		161 [24]					161
Auchenharvie Golf Course	107	97	98	120	105	Jan	105
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Belfast Lough	1,224 [11]	833	849 [11]	1,895	1,334 [11]	Dec	1,227
Carlingford Lough	233	222	225	177	85	Dec	188
Strangford Lough	3	0	70	90	103 [11]	Feb	53 ▲
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Rough Firth	204 [11]			3	7	Dec	71
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Montrose Basin	30	44 [11]	28	35	120	Dec	51

Lesser Scaup

Aythya affinis

Vagrant

Native Range: N America

Long-staying drakes were present at four sites; Balgray Reservoir (July-August), Hogganfield Loch (November-December), Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits (November-March) and Severn Estuary (February-April).

Common Eider (outside Shetland)

Somateria mollissima mollissima

International threshold: 12,850
Great Britain threshold: 730
All-Ireland threshold: 30*

GB max: 18,823 Sep
NI max: 2,291 Sep

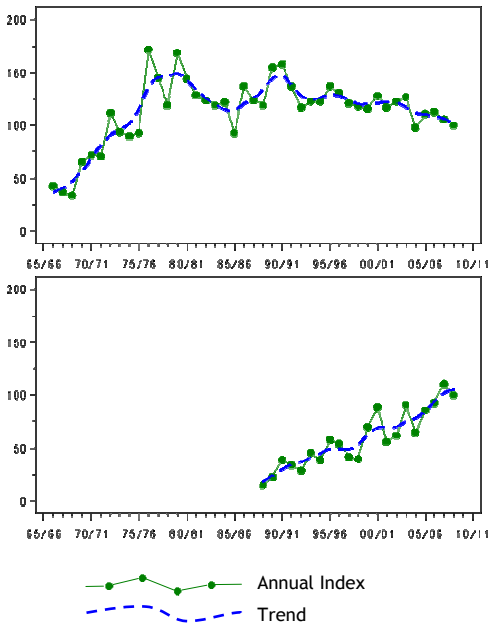


Figure 28.a, Annual indices & trend for Eider for GB (above) & NI (below).

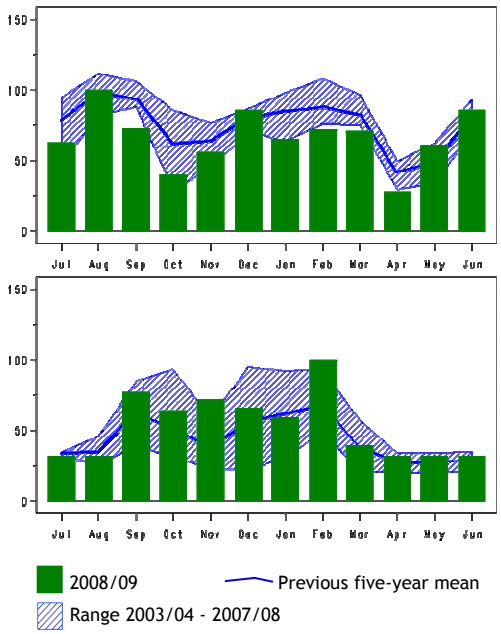


Figure 28.b, Monthly indices for Eider for GB (above) & NI (below).

Furness *et al.* (in press) have confirmed that Eiders from Shetland form a closely related group with those from the Faroes and southern Iceland (subspecies *faeroeensis*). As a result, WeBS now reports the two discrete populations present in the UK separately. Shetland sites (supporting birds of the *faeroeensis* race) are listed in the next account, whereas numbers at other sites in Britain and Northern Ireland are documented here.

The trends for Eider in Britain and Northern Ireland differ. For the last twenty years, Eiders in Britain have exhibited a consistent, shallow decline, whereas the population of birds in Northern Ireland continues to generally increase from year to year.

Unfortunately peak numbers recorded in the Firth of Clyde were not received in time for use in this report. The area has shown a downward trend in recent years, losing its status of international importance. Just nine years ago, the location held a peak of over 17,500 birds. For the second year in a row, no offshore surveys of Aberdeen Bay were carried out (which in conjunction with the adjacent Ythan Estuary potentially supports significant numbers of this species). More encouraging were relatively high counts from Forth Estuary and Morecambe Bay; the highest since 2003/04 and 1999/2000, respectively.

A long-term study in Northumberland suggests that food shortage appears to be the main factor affecting long-term changes in a population of Eider abundance (Coulson 2010). The author considers that identification of why Eider duckling survival rates tend to be low, and whether these can be increased, offers the most likely means of conservation for this species. Pertinently, in view of this, it is anticipated that ducking survival, and hence productivity, will increase in conjunction with milder winters as female Eiders tend to be in better breeding condition (Lehikoinen *et al.* 2006).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Tay Estuary	(5,636)	11,500	(9,164)	(7,500)	(4,000)	Sep	11,500
Firth of Clyde	13,042 [15]	8,055 [15]	9,590 [15]	9,521 [15]			10,229
Aberdeen Bay offshore	6,003 [43]	5,302 [43]	6,269 [43]				5,858
Forth Estuary	4,750	5,047	5,646	4,571	(5,925)	Sep	5,188
Morecambe Bay	5,300 [15]	3,815	3,374	(2,127)	5,534	Feb	4,506
Outer Tay & St Andrews Bay offshore	4,378 [24]						4,378
Inner Firth of Clyde	4,152	3,837	4,881	3,960	3,262	Sep	4,018
Ythan Estuary	(4,212)	3,580	(3,607)	(3,140)	3,351	May	3,688
Killantringan Bay	3,600 [15]						3,600
Gare Loch	2,713 [15]	2,582 [15]	2,782 [15]				2,692
Montrose Basin	1,754	4,322	2,584	2,321	1,099	Jun	2,416
Irvine Bay	1,547 [15]						1,547
Moray Firth	1,673	1,390					1,532
Loch Long and Loch Goil	1,614 [15]	1,458 [15]	796 [15]				1,289
Holy Loch to Toward Point	2,225 [15]	766 [15]	634 [15]				1,208
Dee Estuary (Scotland)	865	1,673	1,229	1,411	539	Apr	1,143
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	(1,117)	(270)	(538)	(111)	(132)	Jun	(1,117)
Girvan to Turnberry	1,500 [15]	(415)	370 [15]	(233)	(125)	Dec	935
Lower Loch Long	914 [15]						914
Sound of Barra (Barra)	886 [36]						886
Lindisfarne	1,202 [11]	1,097 [11]	(469)	619	501	Jun	855
Inner Loch Fyne	868 [15]	759 [15]	817 [15]				815
Scarp to Vatersay offshore	621 [24]	948 [24]					785
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Belfast Lough	1,490 [11]	1,839 [11]	1,482	2,675	1,713	Dec	1,840
Outer Ards Shoreline	271	335	976	1,255	491	Mar	666
Strangford Lough	282	480	728	463	784	Oct	547
Lough Foyle	431	164	528	37	407	Sep	313
Larne Lough	69	67	76	48	106	Mar	73
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Loch Ryan	1,150 [15]	539	(385)	772	429	Jan	723
Gourock to Largs	614 [15]	370 [15]	755 [15]				580
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
The Wash	91	557	491	125	1,438	Feb	540

Common Eider (Shetland)

Somateria mollissima faeroeensis

International threshold: +†
Great Britain threshold: +†
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: **35** **May**
NI max: **0** **0**

Female Eiders are highly faithful to their nesting areas and so are likely to show a high degree of genetic variation. Exploration of birds by mitochondrial DNA analysis has enabled assessment of genetic links between birds from northern Scotland and those from elsewhere in Europe, thereby advising on limits of biogeographical populations. Furness *et al*. (in press) have confirmed that Eiders from Shetland form a closely related group with those from the Faroes and southern Iceland; subspecies *faeroeensis*. Birds in northern Iceland of the race *borealis* are distinct from this group, as are all other populations of the subspecies *mollissima* across Northwest Europe, including the rest of Scotland. Furthermore, as well as genetic variation, there appear to be morphological differences between Eiders from different parts of the range; Shetland birds are intermediate in size between the Faroes and the rest of the UK.

As a result, WeBS now reports for the two discrete populations present in the UK; the Shetland population (comprising birds of the *faroeensis* race) is documented here. Eiders on Orkney may also be of the subspecies *faeroeensis*, however, here we only consider Shetland because Orkney was not considered by Furness *et al*. (in press). The population of Eiders in Orkney and Shetland combined is estimated to be 12,000-13,500 birds (Wetlands International 2006), with approximately half of that total on Shetland (SOTEAG 2010). The population

on the Faroes is estimated to be 6,000-12,000 birds (Wetlands International 2006).

The relatively low numbers of Eiders reported from sites in Shetland during monthly WeBS Core counts do not provide a true picture of the species' status; the peak count in 2008/09 being just 16 at Harold's Wick in May. The counts in the table below derive largely from the counts carried out by SOTEAG during the winter months (but few were undertaken during WeBS-year 2008/09).

Numbers on Shetland fell dramatically thirty years ago, as a result of an oil spill in 1978 and an unknown cause, perhaps disease or parasitic infection, in 1979-1980. Declines have since continued; overall, falling from an estimated 17,000 in the mid 1970s to less than 6,000 in 2002 – a decrease of some 65%. More recently however, the population seems to have stabilised (Okill 2004).

The biogeographical importance of the Shetland population reinforces the need to raise awareness of the importance of minimising disturbance to nesting females, as well as for continued liaison with the aquaculture industry over potential conflict arising from mussel predation by Eiders. Research into parameters affecting the breeding population would also be beneficial; there is evidence from Denmark that global climate warming is expected to increase future breeding success of Eiders (Lehikoinen *et al.* 2006), however, food shortages may lead to a further decline in population (Coulson 2010).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 60 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Hacosay, Bluemull & Colgrave Sounds	955 [10]	992 [10]	558 [10]	791 [10]			824
Burra and Trondra	458 [10]	522 [10]		565 [10]			515
Scalloway Islands	279 [10]	237 [10]		449 [10]			322
Bressay Sound	310 [10]	265 [10]					288
South Unst	44 [10]	9 [10]	601 [10]	450 [10]			276
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	160 [10]	142 [10]	179 [10]	178 [10]			165
North Bressay		144 [10]					144
Gulberwick area		119 [10]					119
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	36 [10]	216 [10]		53 [10]			102
Rova Head to Kirkabister	132 [10]	115 [10]	65 [10]	83 [10]	92 [10]	Feb	97
South Yell Sound	80 [10]	121 [10]	54 [10]	35 [10]	68 [10]	Dec	72

†*as no thresholds have been set, a qualifying level of 60 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

King Eider

Somateria spectabilis

Vagrant
Native Range: Arctic

A second-winter drake returned to Taw-Torridge Estuary in October, having been seen there initially (as a first-winter) in March-April 2008 (Holt *et al.* 2009).

Long-tailed Duck

Clangula hyemalis

International threshold: 20,000
Great Britain threshold: 160†
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: 1,171 Dec
NI max: 12 Dec

Long-tailed Ducks were recorded at 105 sites around the UK in 2008/09, one more than during the previous year. This species usually remains some distance from the coast, making ground-based counts difficult and accurate monitoring problematic. For both this species and Velvet Scoter, the British maxima were considerably lower than those of recent years in a large part as a result of low totals reported from Moray Firth where, even allowing for reduced counting effort, seaduck numbers have shown notable declines in recent years (R. Swann pers. comm.). There have also been marked changes in the distribution of species across the site, probably in response to reduced food supplies attributed to improvements to sewage and distillery discharges (K. Chisholm, pers. comm.).

The fluctuating and somewhat sporadic nature of much of the Core count data

available for this report highlights the need for regular comprehensive surveys of wintering seaducks, divers and grebes in order to both determine accurate population estimates as well as be able to identify the spatial and temporal distribution around the coastline of the UK.

Dedicated boat-based surveys of seaducks do provide data in most years for some remote parts of Scotland, particularly in Shetland. This is reflected in the table below, with data such as the count of 160 at South Yell Sound in December, comprising a growing proportion of the counts used. Only three other sites registered three-figure counts during standard Core counts; Moray Firth, Forth Estuary and Lunan Bay, with 50-100 also noted at Loch of Stenness, Burghead Bay and The Ouse & Lairo Water.

Away from Scotland, the highest winter count was 16 on the North Norfolk Coast in December, followed in the spring by 19 at Lindisfarne in April. Typically a small number of scattered singles were seen at inland sites, most early in the winter.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Moray Firth	6,402	11,565	10,878	1,904	690	Dec	6,288
Sound of Harris	500 [36]						500
Scapa Flow, Shapinsay & Deer Sounds		300 [24]					300
Loch Branahuie (Lewis)	272						272
Hacosay, Bluemull & Colgrave Sounds	303 [10]	160 [10]					232
Forth Estuary	240	237	220	163	(134)	Feb	215
St Andrews Bay	232	17	126 [58]	315 [58]	320 [58]	Dec	204
Branahuie Banks (Lewis)	196						196
South Uist West Coast	185 [36]						185
Scapa Flow	146 [24]						146
South Yell Sound	91 [10]	169 [10]		100 [10]	164 [10]	Dec	131
Quendale to Virkie	100 [10]	57 [10]		201 [10]			119
Burra and Trondra	117 [10]	99 [10]		126 [10]			114
Loch of Stenness	89	96	107	130	89	Mar	102
Sound of Barra (Barra)	80 [36]						80
Thurso Bay	(40)	30	200	30	26	Jan	72
Allasdale Bay to Borve (Barra)	68 [36]						68
Bressay Sound	90 [10]	44 [10]					67
Scarp to Vatersay offshore	54 [24]	75 [24]					65
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	(4) [10]	78 [10]		50 [10]			64
Dee Mouth to Don Mouth	84	37	(2)	(8)	(12)	Apr	61
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	21 [10]	87 [10]		69 [10]			59
Melbost Sands (Lewis)	0	11	121	144	1	Feb	55
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Lunan Bay	25	24	19	8	(140)	Nov	43
The Ouse and Lairo Water	14	12	5	32	78	Feb	28
Burghead Bay: Burghead to Findhorn				15	70	Dec	43

†*as few sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 50 and 30 respectively, have been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Common Scoter

Melanitta nigra

International threshold: 16,000
Great Britain threshold: 500
All-Ireland threshold: 230

GB max: 5,437 Mar
NI max: 1,647 Dec

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Common Scoters tend to occur well offshore, often in large flocks, and as a result are generally poorly monitored by WeBS. However, in addition to aggregations recorded through Core counts, this report also attempts to collate as much supplementary data as possible. In recent years, this has often been collected during aerial surveys specifically aimed at monitoring this species, either at key protected areas or for impact assessments at proposed offshore wind farm sites.

Carmarthen Bay, classified as a marine SPA, maintained its status as the only site of international importance in the UK (largely because comprehensive non-WeBS

data from a number of other potential sites are not collected). Following two relatively low peak counts, the total of 22,930 in February 2009 was more typical of maxima recorded there since 1998/99.

Numbers recorded specifically during Core counts tend to be highly dependent on weather and the associated viewing conditions at the key sites. For the third year running, the highest Core count was from North Norfolk Coast, albeit the lowest peak during winter since 2003/04. The historic peak there is of 8,008 in January 2002. Numbers reported during Core counts were generally low at the other principal sites, although away from the nine sites of national importance, higher than usual maxima were noted at Morecambe Bay and Ribble Estuary.

A count of 1,637 at Dundrum Bay in December represents the highest there since November 1991. It is the site in Northern Ireland that most regularly hosts significant numbers of this species, and is the only one to have ever qualified as being of All-Ireland importance.

Aerial surveys employing distance sampling

Area	Date	Counted	Estimate (confidence intervals)	Ref
Liverpool Bay	Feb	4,452	not available	WWT Consulting 2010

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in Great Britain								
Carmarthen Bay	24,460 [31]	20,287 [31]	14,412 [31]	6,189 [47]	22,930 [31]	Feb	17,656	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
North Norfolk Coast	4,866	6,830	4,960	3,530	2,040	Feb	4,445	
Moray Firth	4,265	6,842	1,908	2,494	683	Dec	3,238	
Alt Estuary	3,000	4,300	3,288	850	310	Nov	2,350	
Towyn to Llanddulas	(252)	(1,680)	1,800	1,600	(23)	Sep	1,700	
Forth Estuary	(1,224)	1,495	623	936	(656)	Mar	1,070	
St Andrews Bay	2,660	447	380 [58]	700 [58]	1,000 [58]	Sep	1,037	
The Wash	372	100	1,810	207	641	May	626	
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	810	603	(36)	500	300	Jul	553	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	17	40	2,009	297	141	Nov	501	▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Dundrum Bay (sea)					1,637	Dec	1,637	▲
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Ribble Estuary	32	(40)	1	20	(514)	Nov	121	

Surf Scoter

Melanitta perspicillata

Vagrant
Native Range: N America

Forth Estuary hosted up to two individuals throughout November to March, with the only other record from Loch Fleet Complex in February.

Velvet Scoter

Melanitta fusca

International threshold: 10,000
Great Britain threshold: 30*
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: 659 Dec
NI max: 0 0

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

WeBS counts in recent years indicate that the wintering population of Velvet Scoters in the UK is in decline. However, as is the case with most seaducks, grebes and divers, one should be aware it can be a difficult species to monitor using WeBS methodology and numbers recorded are dependent on sea conditions. Moreover, monitoring of this species undoubtedly suffers from poor coverage around parts of the Scottish coastline, particularly Orkney.

During 2008/09, Velvet Scoters were noted at 21 sites; 11 in England, eight in Scotland and two in Wales. The monthly peak of 659 in December represented an increase compared to the previous year, but was still disappointing, largely due to a very low total reported from Moray Firth, where as recently as 2002/03 over 4,000

were counted. Even though counting effort has somewhat reduced since, the numbers of seaduck at both Moray Firth (R. Swann pers. comm.) and St Andrews Bay (N. Elkins pers. comm.) are considered to have declined significantly in recent years. The highest count of the year was from Forth Estuary, the other of the three principal sites for this species in Scotland, but this too was still significantly lower than the run of peaks counts of 1,000+ in the early 2000s.

Very few were seen away from the Scottish coast; English and Welsh peaks being six from Seahouses to Budle Point in November and five at Camarthen Bay in December, respectively. Inland, one was at Cray Reservoir in Wales in January.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Moray Firth	1,169	1,261	743	(74)	17	Dec	798
Forth Estuary	1,007	775	928	372	575	Dec	731
St Andrews Bay	1,050	8	(0)	176 [58]	70 [58]	Mar	326
Lunan Bay	125	120	2	100	(240)	Nov	117
Aberdeen Bay offshore	50 [43]	89 [43]	28 [43]				56

Goldeneye

Bucephala clangula

International threshold: 11,500
Great Britain threshold: 249
All-Ireland threshold: 95

GB max: 12,000 Feb
NI max: 4,233 Feb

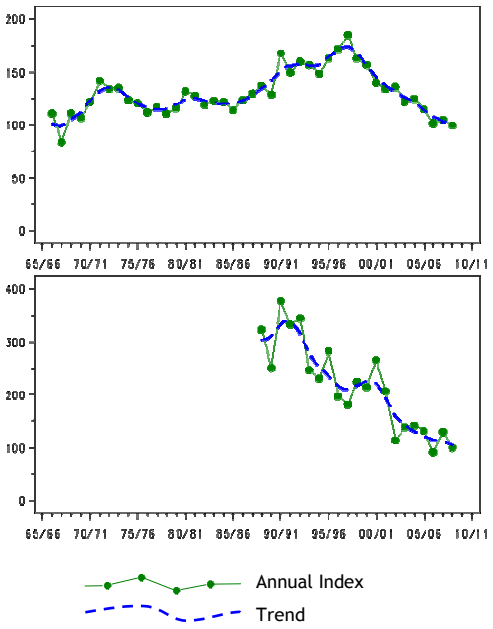


Figure 29.a, Annual indices & trend for Goldeneye for GB (above) & NI (below).

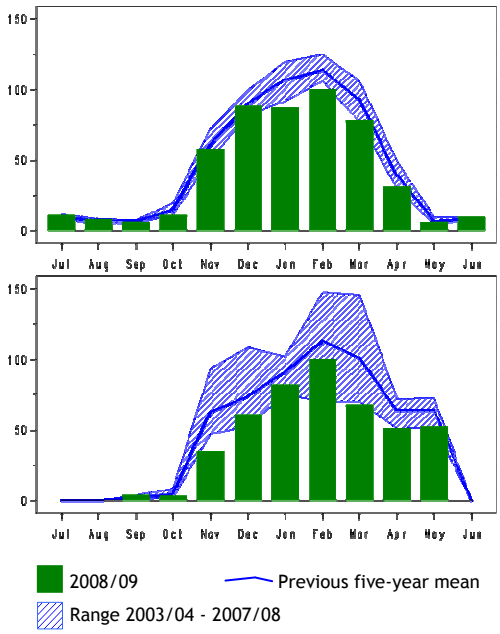


Figure 29.b, Monthly indices for Goldeneye for GB (above) & NI (below).

The number of Goldeneyes present on UK wetlands in winter has been in steady decline for over ten years in Britain, and somewhat longer in Northern Ireland. Trends for both indicate that the indices have now almost reached their lowest ever points. Notably, the marked fall in Britain followed what had been a period of consistent increase in the index from the 1970s through to the mid 1990s.

Numbers at the most important site in the UK, Loughs Neagh & Beg in Northern Ireland, were below average with the monthly maximum of 3,684 in February representing the third lowest annual peak of the last ten years. The site was formerly

recognised as being internationally important for this species, but a long term decline is evidenced by annual peaks of more than 13,500 birds in the early 1990s compared to the recent five-year mean of just over 4,500.

Arrival of wintering birds, which are mostly of Scandinavian origin, is generally later than for most of the regular wintering duck species, with relatively few seen before November. The monthly indices for Britain indicate that, although numbers during November to December were typical, those present during January, February and March were well below normal. Like other Scandinavian breeding species, it is likely that recent milder winters have generated something of a north-east directional shift of core wintering range; for example, in Sweden the estimated wintering population tripled between 1971 and 2004 (Nilsson 2008).

In Britain, counts from most of the principal sites, both coastal and inland, were generally as to be expected based on recent years. Exceptions included disappointingly low maxima from two traditionally favoured coastal sites; the monthly peak at Humber Estuary was the lowest there for five years, while just 92 birds at Inner Moray & Inverness Firth represents the lowest peak count of Goldeneyes received from there since 1984/85. More encouragingly, the total of 683 noted at Loch Leven in December (only surpassed twice previously, in 1969 and 1971) was the highest count of 2008/09 away from Loughs Neagh and Beg. The number of Goldeneyes using Loch Leven has increased markedly in recent years; the site's five-year mean only surpassed the qualifying threshold for national importance in 2006/07.

Ballysaggart Lough, in Northern Ireland, was not counted for a fifth successive year, and hence no longer features among the sites of all-Ireland importance for this species.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Forth Estuary	879	(379)	331	533	(429)	Dec	581
Inner Firth of Clyde	159	636	688	452 [13]	(215)	Feb	484
Humber Estuary	595	449	401	577	302	Feb	465
Loch Leven	385	289	517	302	683	Dec	435
Abberton Reservoir	394	588	478	332	299	Feb	418
Rutland Water	420	521	356	349	442	Feb	418
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	1,165 [1]	186	221	137	92	Dec	360
Morecambe Bay	297	249	(191)	(121)	290	Jan	279
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	5,787	5,688	2,780	4,648	3,684	Feb	4,517
Lower Lough Erne	319	254	169	267	(134)	Dec	252
Belfast Lough	164 [11]	103	(108)	226	233	Dec	182
Strangford Lough	161	187	83 [11]	237	181	Feb	170
Larne Lough	73	155	97	89	84	Mar	100

Goldeneye (Edmund Fellowes)

Hooded Merganser

Lophodytes cucullatus

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: N America

A female/first-winter, of unknown origin, was present at Tay Estuary in October and November.

Smew

Mergellus albellus

International threshold:	**400**	
Great Britain threshold:	**4***	
All-Ireland threshold:	**+†**	

GB max:	**111**	**Jan**
NI max:	**4**	**Dec**

2008/09 was a poor winter for Smew in the UK, with the counted maximum one of the lowest ever. Admittedly, this was not helped by poor coverage at Wraysbury Gravel Pits, but was largely due to a low number of Smew present in UK as a whole during the winter.

As evident in the sites table, numbers at all the traditionally favoured locations were well below average. At Dungeness & Rye Bay for example, the peak of 11 in February represents the lowest there since 1989/90 and the third lowest in thirty years. Lower numbers during the recent run of relatively mild winters are associated with a shift in distribution towards the north-east of the wintering range. For example, in Sweden wintering numbers increased from 400 in 1971 to 3,800 in 2004 (Nilsson 2008) and an increasing trend has also been noted in the Czech Republic (Musilova *et al*. 2009).

Despite the generally low maxima, the species was seen at a respectable 65 sites with, typically, the majority in south-east or central England. Elsewhere, counts of one to four birds were received from nine lochs in Scotland, Cleddau Estuary in Wales, and Loughs Neagh and Beg in Northern Ireland. Four at the latter site in December equals the previous highest count from the country; only surpassed by five at Lower Lough Erne in February 2004 and the national maximum of 14 at Dundrum Inner Bay in February 1987.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	68	38	19	16	(10) [13]	Feb	33
Cotswold Water Park (West)	(18)	33	13	19	16 [13]	Jan	20
Dungeness and Rye Bay	24	20	18	21	11	Feb	19
Thorpe Water Park	10	20	3	3			9
Ouse Fen and Pits (Hanson/RSPB)	10	10	0	12	14	Jan	9
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	8	9	7	7	4	Feb	7
Little Paxton Gravel Pits	12	5	4	12	2	Feb	7
Rutland Water	4	14	5	2	12	Jan	7
Seaton Gravel Pits and River	8	11	1	6	3	Jan	6
Pitsford Reservoir	3	11	4	(2)	5	Jan	6
Tophill Low Reservoirs	7	9 [13]	5 [13]	6 [13]	3 [13]	Jan	6
Abberton Reservoir	9	2	2	5	8	Jan	5
Grange Waters Complex	5	5					5
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	7	6	8	4	1	Jan	5
Sonning Eye and Henley Road GPs	9		2		4	Jan	5
Eyebrook Reservoir	3	7	4	6	7	Jan	5
Marsh Lane Gravel Pits	9	5	2	2	0		4
Deeping St James	2	8	2				4
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Bedfont and Ashford Gravel Pits			1	6	1	Dec	3
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	4	5	3	2	1	Dec	3
Thrapston Gravel Pits					0		0

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

GB max:	3,007	Feb
NI max:	441	Dec

International threshold:	1,700
Great Britain threshold:	98
All-Ireland threshold:	35*

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

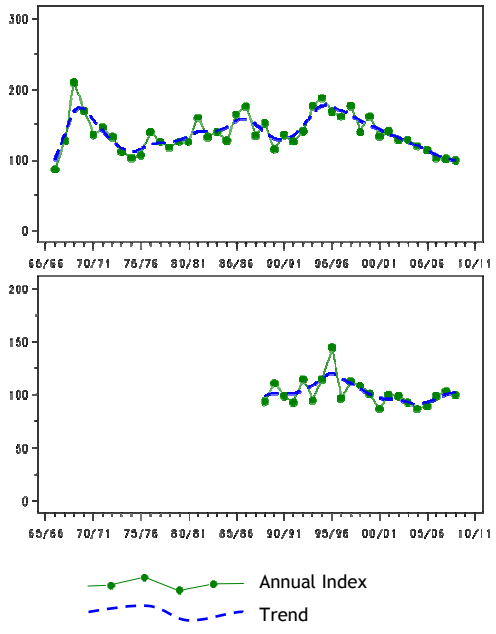


Figure 30.a, Annual indices & trend for Red-breasted Merganser for GB (above) & NI (below).

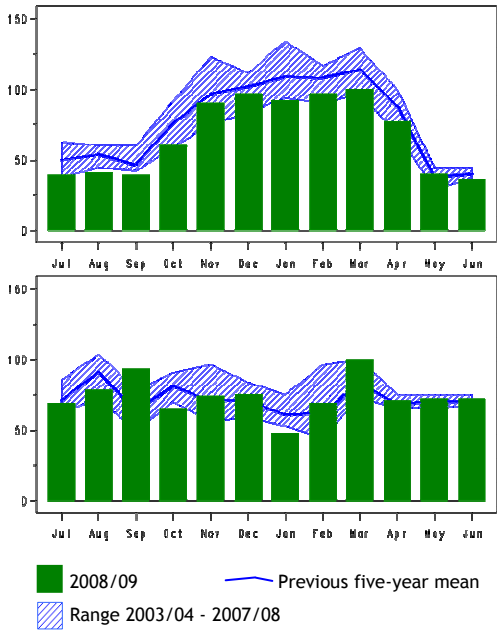


Figure 30.b, Monthly indices for Red-breasted Merganser for GB (above) & NI (below).

Over the course of the last thirty to forty years, the number of Red-breasted Mergansers wintering in parts of the range to the east of the UK has increased steadily (e.g. Nilsson 2008, Hustings *et al*. 2009). In complete contrast, the trend in Britain over the course of the last fifteen or so years has been one of steady decline, albeit with very little change noted since 2006/07, inclusive. The last twenty years have also seen the species in steep decline in France (Fouque *et al*. 2009).

As is considered to be the case with many other wildfowl, these changes are suggestive of a shift in wintering distribution, probably due to more suitable conditions further north and east. However, as very little is known about the movements of British Red-breasted Mergansers the precise extent to which this is affecting the observed trend in Britain is unknown.

The monthly maximum at Forth Estuary of 260 in December represents another very low peak for what is traditionally the most important site. The five-year average there has fallen by 40% over the course of the last ten years. To place this year's maximum into context, 1,053 birds (the largest ever WeBS count) were noted there as recently as October 1994. In addition, the sites table below indicates that a suite of other sites have also experienced falling peak numbers.

More typical numbers compared to recent years were recorded at the principal sites in Northern Ireland, however, where the overall trend remains largely stable. The peak of 252 birds at Larne Lough in September represents the highest site count in Northern Ireland since 285 noted at Strangford Lough in 1998/99.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Forth Estuary	544	489	347	(261)	260	Dec	410
Fleet and Wey	413	438	284	307	341	Feb	357
Poole Harbour	315	(250)	(213)	(117)	(241)	Jan	315
Moray Firth	300	254	211	366	(195)	Oct	283
Morecambe Bay	167	263	(118)	(233)	188	Nov	213
Chichester Harbour	194	212	217	211	157	Mar	198
Inner Firth of Clyde	107	252	195	168	202	Apr	185
Langstone Harbour	128	187	159	169	114	Mar	151
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	68 [10]	145 [10]	134 [10]	192 [10]			135
Lavan Sands	(211)	196	81	110	68	Mar	133
Loch Ryan	179	180	106	100	101	Feb	133
Montrose Basin	(39)	163	135	99	113	Jul	128
Duddon Estuary	152	(121)	106	123	92	Jan	119
North Norfolk Coast	126	132	92	131	94	Dec	115
Jersey Shore			126	90			108
Loch Lomond	(4)	129	8	54	240	Apr	108
Exe Estuary	82	78	139	79	140	Mar	104
Goring	(102)						(102)
Tay Estuary	60	172	57 [11]	103	(47)	Dec	98
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	189	263	390 [11]	(282)	(198)	Dec	281
Larne Lough	211	151	196	142	252	Sep	190
Carlingford Lough	154	118	171	106	(29)	Dec	137
Lough Foyle	(52)	169	(35)	99	125	Mar	131
Belfast Lough	91 [13]	104	110	183	160	Nov	130
Outer Ards Shoreline	54	31	108	38	45	Mar	55
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Arran	90	113	(129)	59	43	Jan	87
Loch of Tankerness	222	1			6	Mar	76
Inner Loch Indaal (no data for years shown in table)							
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	54 [10]	59 [10]		72 [10]	157 [10]	Feb	86
The Wash	46	54	70	53	136	Feb	72

Goosander

Mergus merganser

International threshold: 2,700
Great Britain threshold: 161†
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: 3,213 Jan
NI max: 2 Feb

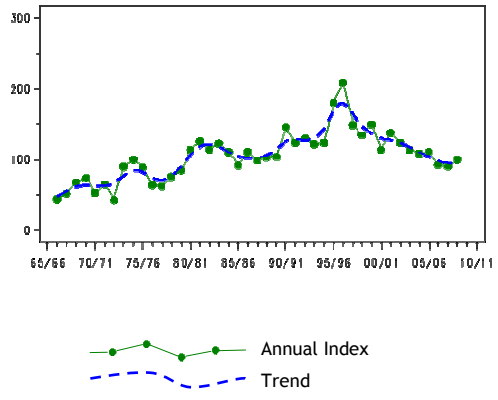


Figure 31.a, Annual indices & trend for Goosander for GB.

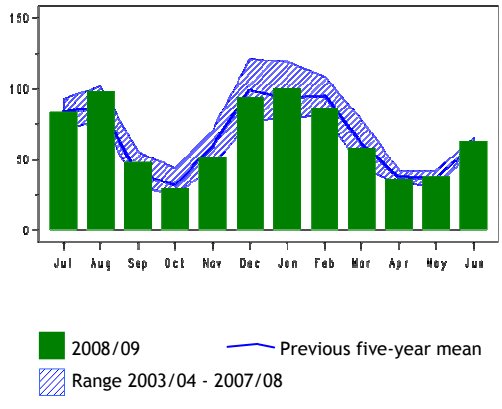


Figure 31.b, Monthly indices for Goosander for GB.

Goosanders that winter in Britain are considered to be largely derived from the British breeding population, although some in the southeast may originate from overseas populations which can be involved in influxes that typically take place during cold weather on the continent.

Similar to the pattern shown by Goldeneye and Red-breasted Merganser, numbers of Goosanders wintering in Britain have declined steadily since the peak in the index was reached in the mid 1990s. Furthermore, in many years the monthly indices imply below average numbers present during the core winter period, although this was not so much the case in 2008/09. Numbers noted during late summer, and therefore relating to post-breeding aggregations, showed no such signs of decline; evidence of the rising breeding population (Baillie *et al*. 2010).

Three-figure counts in 2008/09 comprised August peaks of 232 at Tay Estuary and 217 at Loch Lomond, as well as 116 at both Montrose Basin and Castle Loch, Lochmaben. Further south, in England where winter counts are likely to relate to continental immigrants, numbers were close to or slightly above the recent average. Notable counts in that respect were logged at River Avon (Fordingbridge to Ringwood), Old Moor and Lee Valley Gravel Pits, all of which held above average numbers.

Although widespread through north and west Britain, Goosanders are scarce in Northern Ireland; singles at Inner Larne Lough in September and January, followed by two at Loughs Neagh and Beg in February, being the only records of the year.

Goosander (Jill Pakenham)

WeBS counters should be aware that numbers of Goosanders encountered at favoured sites can vary according to the time day when the site is visited. During the winter, Goosanders frequently return to communal roosts late in the afternoon, having been more widely dispersed during the day. Submission of roost counts from key sites, in order to supplement core counts, is therefore welcomed.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 70 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Tay Estuary	263	153	313	(155)	232	Aug	240
Loch Lomond	(15)	19	261	36	217	Aug	133
Tyninghame Estuary	189	69	157	107	68	Jun	118
Forth Estuary	81	119	119	(108)	(68)	Aug	107
River Tweed: Kelso to Coldstream	112	113	74	90	49	Nov	88
Ashworth Moor Reservoir	110 [12]	90 [12]		59 [12]			86
Eccup Reservoir	94	115	82	70	60	Jan	84
Solway Estuary	84	(47)	(29)	(25)	(50)	Aug	84
Castle Loch Lochmaben	88	0	85	120	116	Dec	82
Spittal to Cocklawburn	86	72	116	52	54	Jul	76
Tweed Estuary	65	64	123	42	85	Jul	76
Windermere	48	127	76 [13]	57	68 [13]	Oct	75
Blithfield Reservoir	72			51	96 [12]	Dec	73
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Montrose Basin	22	60	57	59	116	Aug	63
River Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood	36	57	53	43	92	Jan	56
Lochs Davan and Kinord	12	19	26	31	70	Oct	32

† *as few sites exceed the British and no Northern Ireland thresholds has been set, a qualifying level of 70 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Ruddy Duck

Oxyura jamaicensis

Naturalised introduction
Native Range: America

GB max: **761** **Oct**
NI max: **21** **Feb**

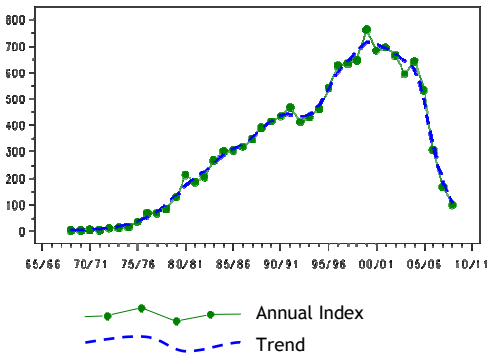


Figure 32.a, Annual indices & trend for Ruddy Duck for GB.

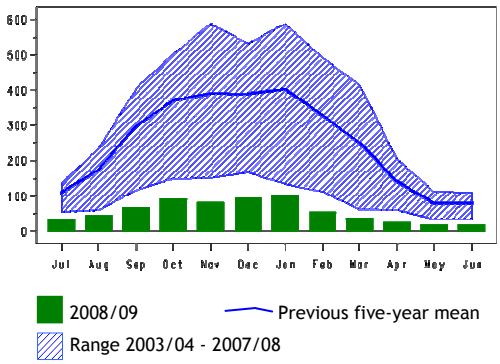


Figure 32.b, Monthly indices for Ruddy Duck for GB.

The Ruddy Duck has been the focus of a co-ordinated international programme to contain and eradicate this North American species in Europe, as part of the conservation effort to save the White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* in Spain and other parts of Europe.

Despite managing to maintain a widespread distribution, the British index has inevitably dropped further and now places the species at the same level of abundance as thirty-five years ago.

In 2008/09, no sites registered more than 100 Ruddy Ducks for the first time since standardised monitoring of the species by volunteers has taken place. Counts of 30+ were received from 17 sites, compared to 27 during 2007/08, and 34 during 2006/07. The largest counts during the year were in mid-winter; from Abberton Reservoir, Staines Reservoirs and Chew Valley Lake. In Northern Ireland, Loughs Neagh and Beg remained the principal site where a high of 21 birds constituted a similar peak as in the previous year.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Great Britain[†]							
Staines Reservoirs	695 [29]	521 [29]	277	72	69	Jan	327
Abberton Reservoir	403	455	261 [29]	49	96	Jan	253
Hanningfield Reservoir	412 [29]	330	276	45	36	Oct	220
Dungeness and Rye Bay	287	257	193	73	31	Sep	168
Hilfield Park Reservoir	241 [29]	176	263	83	31	Dec	159
Chew Valley Lake	220 [29]	257 [29]	(130)	17	65	Dec	140
Pitsford Reservoir	178	311 [29]	102	41	40	Jan	134
Blithfield Reservoir	401	59 [29]	23 [29]	51	(38)	Oct	134
Blagdon Lake	151 [29]	172	85	103	36	Nov	109
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	189	202	106	38	8	Nov	109
Carsington Water	82 [29]	182	101	132	17	Jan	103
Anglers Country Park Lake	180 [29]	185	34	37	24	Oct	92
Tophill Low Reservoirs	124	131	85 [29]	63	38	Dec	88
Thames Estuary	85	85	79	73	(6)	Oct	81
Brent Reservoir	133	77	85	46	30	Sep	74
Humber Estuary	84	(27)	59 [29]	(31)	(14)	Apr	72
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	33	215 [29]	99 [29]	4	4	Sep	71
Rutland Water	251	57	17	5	25	Jan	71
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	58 [29]	126 [29]	(16)	(38)	17	Oct	67
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	175	13	64	39	18	Aug	62
Walthamstow Reservoirs	90	86 [29]	74	38	7	Dec	59
Wigan Flashes	86		73 [29]	55	22	Sep	59

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Tees Estuary	37	63	111	13	36	Oct	52
Llyn Alaw	45	95	92	18	10	Dec	52
Colwick Country Park	100 [29]	51	37 [29]	27	38	Nov	51
Cotswold Water Park (West)	125	59	34	23	11	Dec	50
Thoresby Lake	46 [29]	42 [29]	52 [29]				47
King George V Reservoirs	(23)	83	45	15	42	Jan	46
Mersey Estuary				85	6	Jul	46
Clumber Park Lake	16 [29]	41	66	82	22	Nov	45
Knight and Bessborough Reservoirs	46	45	58	46	22	Jan	43
Attenborough Gravel Pits	22	43	40	44	(56)	Jan	41
Llyn Traffwll	78	52	55	16	4	Dec	41
Blackwater Estuary	71	39	56	15	17	Sep	40
Hornsea Mere	98	11	(18)	31	7	Nov	37
London Wetland Centre	59	49 [29]	(46)	20	8	Sep	36
Edderthorpe Flash			17	78	8	Sep	34
Gailey Pools	18	49	31	(8)			33
Old Moor	24	71	20	24	22	Aug	32
Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	33	36	42	22	21	Feb	31
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Lapwing Hall Pool			3	30	50	Oct	28
Swillington Ings	32	22	23	8	34	Oct	24

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 30 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Lake Duck

Oxyura vittata

Escape
Native Range: S America

A single was seen at Netherfield Gravel Pits in August-September; a regular site for the species in recent years.

Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

International threshold: 3,000
Great Britain threshold: 170
All-Ireland threshold: 20*

GB max: 1,141 Jan
NI max: 111 Mar

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Although only a localised breeder in northern Scotland, with strongholds on Shetland and Outer Hebrides (Dillon *et al*. 2009), Red-throated Divers are widespread at coastal sites throughout the UK during the winter. An estimated 17,000 individuals spend the winter in British waters (O'Brien *et al*. 2008).

In 2008/09, the species was noted at 135 sites in Britain and a further nine in Northern Ireland; a slight reduction compared to the last two years. No regularly counted WeBS sites currently qualify as internationally important, although large numbers can be recorded during offshore surveys of favoured areas. However, no such data collected during 2008/09 were available for inclusion in this report, and for the second year in a row there were no counts of Aberdeen Bay undertaken by JNCC.

Significant concentrations were reported from southern Britain in January and February, including 517 at Pegwell Bay, 343 at Glyne Gap and 85 at Dungeness & Rye Bay, providing an indication of the true numbers which are likely to be present along the south and east coastlines of England as a whole. In winter, Red-throated Divers are known to concentrate in areas with suitable foraging, and these shallow waters off the East Sussex and Kent coasts are clearly important in this regard.

Further north, numbers at two traditionally important Scottish sites, Moray Firth and Forth Estuary, were down on the previous year, but 97 at Loch Ryan in February represents the most ever reported

from there. Numbers were close to average across all sites in Northern Ireland.

Relative to overall abundance, Red-throated Divers tend to be noted less at inland sites in southern Britain than their Great Northern, and even Black-throated, cousins. In 2008/09, there were just two such inland records.

Red-throated Diver (Edmund Fellowes)

Aerial surveys employing distance sampling

Area	Date	Counted	Estimate (confidence intervals)	Ref
S.Norfolk/N.Suffolk offshore	Mar	161	not available	WWT Consulting 2010
Liverpool Bay	Feb	47	not available	WWT Consulting 2010

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain†								
Aberdeen Bay offshore	423 [43]	352 [43]	175 [43]				317	
Inner Firth of Clyde	34	202	182	199	139	Apr	151	
Glyne Gap	6	103	126	(109)	(343)	Jan	137	
Pegwell Bay	10	5	12	11	517	Jan	111	▲
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	61	163	(77)	70	(32)	Mar	98	
Forth Estuary	132	87	53	48	82	Sep	80	
North Norfolk Coast	30	18	226	27	62	Jan	73	
Loch Ryan	81	49	83	43	97	Feb	71	
Moray Firth	117	81	46	53	18	Jan	63	
Cardigan Bay	30	67	(46)	(0)	(0)		49	▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Lough Foyle	21	98	13	53	81	Mar	53	
Belfast Lough	16 [13]	30	22	67	20	Dec	31	
Outer Ards Shoreline	14	8	64	22	12	Mar	24	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09†								
Minsmere	3	2	56	143 [13]	10	Mar	43	
Outer Tay and St Andrews Bay offshore	33 [24]						33	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†								
Dungeness and Rye Bay	6	4	(1)	2	85	Feb	24	

† *as few sites exceed the British threshold, a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Black-throated Diver

Gavia arctica

GB max:	**114**	**Feb**
NI max:	**1**	**Oct**

International threshold:	**3,750**
Great Britain threshold:	**7***
All-Ireland threshold:	**?†**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Black-throated Divers were recorded at 60 sites in the UK during WeBS Core counts, with thirteen of these qualifying as being nationally important. Typically most sightings were in Scotland, the majority of English records were from favoured areas on the south coast, and just two individuals were noted in Wales and Northern Ireland.

One can only assume that improved coverage along the coastline of northwest Scotland, such as that undertaken each February by the RAF Ornithological Society, would inevitably derive a truer picture of this species' winter status.

The premier site for wintering Black-throated Divers in the UK is Gerrans Bay in Cornwall. Numbers there have been very consistent in recent years, averaging 57 over the course of the last five years. Further east on the English south coast, Glyne Gap consolidated its importance for the region's scarcest diver. Notable numbers of other marine species (e.g. see Red-throated Diver and Red-necked Grebe) have been reported from Glyne Gap in recent years; presumably an indication of the foraging conditions offshore.

All the remaining sites were in Scotland where the peak Core count was 16 along the stretch of coast from Girvan to Turnberry in December, and where a further 19 were reported in Sound of Gigha in November. There were no records from southern Britain away from the open sea.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Gerrans Bay	47	70	60	53	55	Jan	57	
Sound of Barra (Barra)		35 [36]					35	
Loch Ewe	0	(3)	40	(11)	(11)	Feb	20	
Sound of Gigha					19 [13]	Nov	19	▲
Loch Slapin	26 [32]		28 [12]	13 [12]	1	Nov	17	
Loch Gairloch	28	6	14	(14)	(10)	Feb	16	
Moray Firth	6	19	9	(4)	(1)	Oct	11	
Little Loch Broom	3	(10)	13	(16)	5	Feb	9	
Applecross Bay	5	14	2	13	9	Feb	9	
Girvan to Turnberry	(9)	5	1	7	16	Dec	8	
Kilfinan Bay				11	5	Dec	8	
Glyne Gap	0	8	(9)	(9)	(10)	Jan	7	▲
Red Point to Port Henderson	0	13 [13]	8	(1)	6	Feb	7	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in Winter 2008/2009								
Broad Bay (Lewis)								
Sites with mean peak counts of 2 or more birds in Northern Ireland†								
Strangford Lough	4	0	3 [13]	0	4 [13]	Nov	2	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Dunnet Bay			0	0	(8)	Feb	3	

† *as no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 2 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

GB max:	**324**	**Feb**
NI max:	**24**	**Jan**

International threshold:	**50**
Great Britain threshold:	**30*†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**?†**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Following WeBS-year 2008/09, eight counted areas on the Scottish west coast now support internationally important numbers of Great Northern Divers. Further count data from sites along this stronghold of the Scottish coast would be highly beneficial in order to illustrate the true status of this species within UK waters.

Away from Scotland, records were received from 41 sites in England, seven in Wales and six in Northern Ireland. The peak count in England was 17 at Gerrans Bay in March, the most noted there since the same total was logged in February 2003.

In a typical WeBS year, sporadic singles are noted at inland wetlands. However 2008/09 was above average in that not only was the species recorded at ten sites, but five of those sites had more than one individual. The sites supporting multiple birds (with maxima) were King George VI Reservoir (2), Rutland Water (2), Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits (4), Carsington Water (5) and Draycote Water (5). The counts for Middle Tame Valley and Carsington are the highest ever recorded by WeBS at those sites, however, that for Draycote is eclipsed by the all-time inland WeBS peak of twelve there in November 2005!

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Sound of Gigha	104 [24]	203 [24]			217 [13]	Nov	175
Coll and Tiree offshore	131 [24]						131
Scarp to Vatersay offshore	57 [24]	188 [24]					123
Sound of Barra (Barra)	94 [36]						94
Scapa Flow, Shapinsay and Deer Sounds		85 [24]					85
Outer Loch Indaal	20	108					64
South Uist West Coast	(63) [36]						(63)
Coll and Tiree and west Mull offshore		51 [24]					51
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in Winter 2008/2009							
Scapa Flow	33 [24]						33
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Sound of Harris	42 [36]						42
Gruinard Bay	26	40	37	68	29	Feb	40
Loch Ewe	19	33	53	58	28	Feb	38
Loch Slapin	59 [32]		39 [12]	24 [12]	27	Nov	37
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	(2) [10]	37 [10]		33 [10]			35
Scapa Flow	33 [24]						33
Luce Bay offshore		29 [24]					29
Traigh Luskentyre	22		58	6			29
Loch Na Keal				27 [13]			27
West Mull offshore	27 [24]						27
Quendale to Virkie	22 [10]	27 [10]		27 [10]			25
Loch Eriboll	0	3	36	66	16	Feb	24
Dinas Dinlle to Afon Llifon		25 [13]		34 [13]	8 [13]	Jan	22
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	30 [10]	11 [10]	14 [10]	23 [10]			20
Broadford Bay	24	(20)	15	19	16	Dec	19
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	4 [10]	17 [10]		36 [10]			19
Uyea Sound	5	7	62	9	5	Nov	18
Scalloway Islands	13 [10]	19 [10]		17 [10]			16
Gerrans Bay	14	16	15	13	17	Mar	15
Little Loch Broom	8	(7)	16	(10)	22	Feb	15
Moray Firth	37	14	2	4	(1)	Oct	14
Pontllyfni to Aberdesach	30 [13]	11 [13]		2 [13]	8 [13]	Jan	13
Red Point to Port Henderson	17	22 [13]	4	(13)	6	Feb	12
Talmine				10	13	Feb	12
Burra and Trondra	7 [10]	8 [10]		21 [10]			12
Fort Belan to Dinas Dinlle		6 [13]		15 [13]	8 [13]	Jan	10
Afon Llifon to Pontllyfni		13 [13]		11 [13]	5 [13]	Feb	10
Dunnet Bay			6	6	(18)	Feb	10
Island of Egilsay	10	21	8		1	Mar	10
Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Lough Foyle	5	60	17	29	7	Mar	24
Carlingford Lough	2	17	4	1 [13]	(15)	Jan	8
Belfast Lough	1 [13]	19 [11]	7	1	(3)	Nov	7
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Badentarbat Bay (Achiltibuie)	0	2	2	0	11	Feb	3

† *as few sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 10 and 5 respectively, have been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

White-billed Diver

Gavia adamsii

Vagrant

Native Range: N America, N Europe, N Siberia

One was recorded at Water Sound from October to December; the seventh WeBS record, four of which have been in Shetland.

Little Grebe

Tachybaptus ruficollis

International threshold: 4,000
Great Britain threshold: 78
All-Ireland threshold: 25

GB max: 5,153 Oct
NI max: 444 Nov

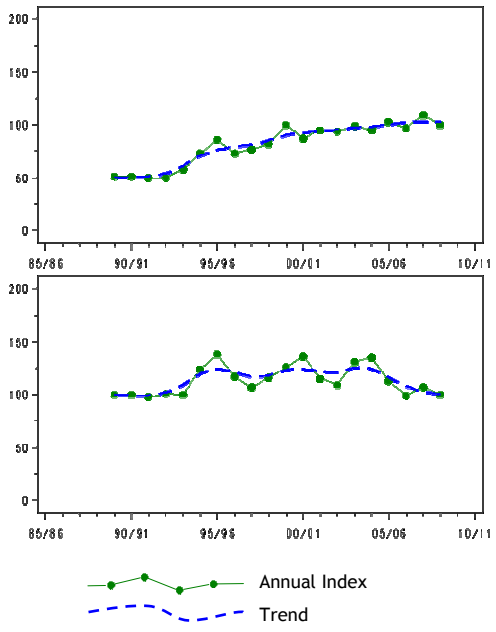


Figure 33.a, Annual indices & trend for Little Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

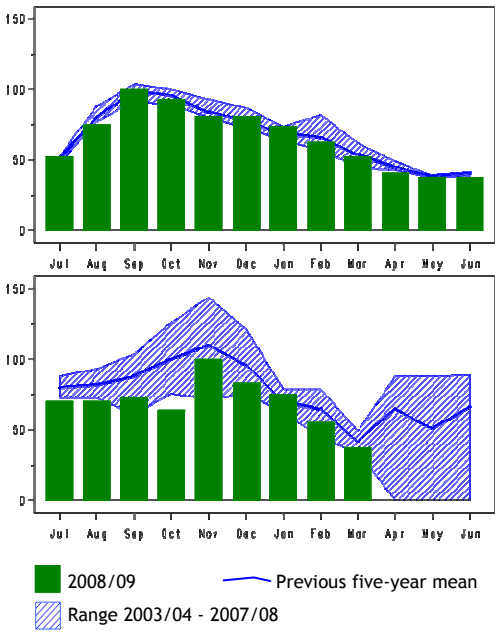


Figure 33.b, Monthly indices for Little Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

Little Grebes are widely dispersed on small water bodies, canals and riverine habitats throughout much of the UK. Thus, WeBS tends to monitor a relatively small proportion of the total population and care should be taken if attempting to interpret national trends based on WeBS data alone. Consequently, monitoring of Little Grebes would benefit from long-term, improved coverage of smaller, dispersed wetlands within the wider countryside.

The slow but steady increase in Little Grebes that appeared to begin in the early 1990s soon after the species was first routinely monitored, has continued in recent years; a period during which numbers have risen concurrently in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al*. 2009).

In Britain during 2008/09, the counted maximum was at a similarly high level to the previous three years. Three new sites qualified as being nationally important; Crouch-Roach Estuary, Portsmouth Harbour and Severn Estuary (where counts have remained remarkably consistent over the last four years). Numbers at the other principal sites were mixed; the most notable feature was a marked drop at Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits where the monthly peak was lower than recent years.

In Northern Ireland, a count of 318 at Loughs Neagh & Beg in November was the largest of the year anywhere in the UK. Elsewhere, numbers were in keeping with recent site averages. No sites with Little Grebes in Northern Ireland were counted between April and June.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Thames Estuary	444	377	499	292	(165)	Dec	403	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	113	125	97	90	124	Sep	110	
Hamford Water	89	114	87	84	119	Dec	99	
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	102	77	126	82	80	Sep	93	
Humber Estuary	60	64	94	(150)	(91)	Oct	92	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	72 [11]	(33)	(44)	81	115	Oct	89	▲
Chichester Harbour	135	95 [11]	66	63	79	Nov	88	
Alde Complex	109	112	76	75	70	Oct	88	
Rutland Water	70	96	67	93	116	Sep	88	
Chew Valley Lake	110	95	80	80	70	Sep	87	
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	120	114	105	56	35	Oct	86	
Cameron Reservoir	47	60	133	122	56	Aug	84	
Severn Estuary	52	87	86	91	87	Jul	81	▲
Portsmouth Harbour	57	(65)	(69)	(69)	104	Jan	81	▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Loughs Neagh and Beg	466	330	278	396	318	Nov	358	
Upper Lough Erne	104	78	106	53	78	Jan	84	
Strangford Lough	76	75	80	79	76 [11]	Feb	77	
Lower Lough Erne	53	54	78	50	(23)	Nov	59	
Lough Money	51	48	40	51			48	
Larne Lough	77	52	20	27	16	Dec	38	
Lough Foyle	31	32	28	28	26	Oct	29	
Upper Quoile River	35	33	20	15			26	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Blackwater Estuary	60	67	54	74	94	Oct	70	
Old Moor	30	55	45	(60)	91	Aug	56	
Tees Estuary	54	88	83	72	82	Oct	76	
Carsington Water	45	89	73	96	80	Nov	77	
Pitsford Reservoir	50	86	96	72	78	Jan	76	

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

International threshold: 3,600
Great Britain threshold: 159
All-Ireland threshold: 55

GB max: 9,139 Sep
NI max: 1,784 Oct

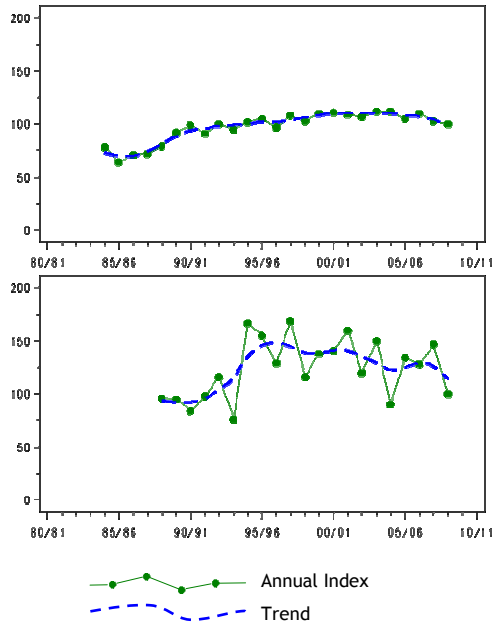


Figure 34.a, Annual indices & trend for Great Crested Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

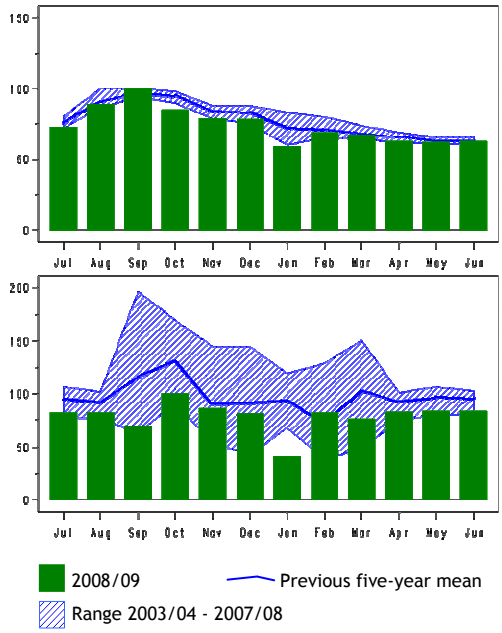


Figure 34.b, Monthly indices for Great Crested Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

During the winter months, Great Crested Grebes are found at inland and coastal wetlands. At the latter, however, birds are often difficult to monitor accurately when frequenting open sea and/or in unsuitable weather conditions.

In 2008/09, the largest count was from Dungeness & Rye Bay where 1,492 were seen in February; a combination of birds offshore and on the site's complex of gravel pits. This represents the highest count ever recorded by WeBS there, and along with the high count from Glyne Gap is an indication of the rich foraging conditions in the shallow waters at the eastern end of the English Channel.

The two most important individual wetland sites for Great Crested Grebes in the UK are both in Northern Ireland, namely Belfast Lough and Loughs Neagh & Beg. Both these sites fared relatively poorly in 2008/09 compared to the high maxima reported during the previous year. The peak of 1,156 at Belfast Lough in October was the lowest monthly maximum there since 1991/92. However, the peak at Loughs Neagh & Beg was largely consistent with the recent five-year mean peak. Among other important sites, maxima were close to average at Rutland Water, Grafham Water and Cotswold Water Park, up again compared to the preceding year at Chew Valley Lake, but down at Pitsford Reservoir.

This species has experienced a very slow and shallow increase over the course of the WeBS reporting period. However, the most recent indices and associated trend suggest the possibility of a slight decline, perhaps mirroring the current situation in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009), but only further years of data will allow us to ascertain if this is genuinely the case.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Dungeness and Rye Bay	1,037	848	880 [13]	653	1,492	Feb	982	
Rutland Water	815	771	655	441	584	Sep	653	
Grafham Water	526	463	471		471	Dec	483	
Chew Valley Lake	330	275	430	665	690	Aug	478	
Cotswold Water Park (West)	283	354	284	309	317	Sep	309	
Pitsford Reservoir	309	308	267	312	186	Oct	276	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	61	33	378 [13]	458 [13]	435 [13]	Dec	273	
Minsmere	30	18	57	1,210 [13]	5	Aug	264	
Stour Estuary	92	157	124	232	708 [11]	Feb	263	▲
Glyne Gap	42	(116)	213	(206)	515	Feb	257	▲
Lavan Sands	(446)	57	329	260	124	Nov	243	
Bewl Water	330	204	188	183	224	Aug	226	
Southampton Water	42	(58)	(47)	(216)	375	Dec	211	▲
Solway Firth	(333)	233	100	84	(27)	Jan	188	
Queen Mary Reservoir	262	126	130	208	98	Aug	165	
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	147	175	(124)	(136)	167	Nov	163	
Inner Firth of Clyde	161	153	148	141	208	Sep	162	▲
Blithfield Reservoir	151			(168)	163	Aug	161	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Belfast Lough	1,577	2,095	1,482	2,150	1,156	Oct	1,692	
Loughs Neagh and Beg	518	449	959	1,191	752	Mar	774	
Upper Lough Erne	191	147	206	171	197	Feb	182	
Carlingford Lough	232	246	116	93	146	Nov	167	
Strangford Lough	(64)	(82)	(65)	(137)	145	Feb	145	
Lough Foyle	50	169	116	116	49	Oct	100	
Lower Lough Erne	117	48	123	55	(23)	Feb	86	
Larne Lough	50	56	84	105	81	Nov	75	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Forth Estuary	313	123	95	139	109	Dec	156	
Loch Leven	127	150	198	141	157 [13]	Nov	155	
Loch Ryan	299	193	77	80	34	Feb	137	
Morecambe Bay	(91)	(138)	(62)	(80)	99	Dec	119	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Swansea Bay	26	205	84	102	327	Dec	149	
Colne Estuary	15	27	14	15	323	Feb	79	
Pegwell Bay	233	38	48	110	300	Mar	146	
Swale Estuary	63	(52)	51	(41)	(191)	Mar	102	
Alton Water	97	86	113	105	169	Dec	114	

Red-necked Grebe

Podiceps grisegena

GB max:	**10**	**Sep**
NI max:	**0**	**0**

International threshold:	**510**
Great Britain threshold:	**2***
All-Ireland threshold:	**?**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Red-necked Grebes were recorded at just 15 sites in Britain during 2008/09; evidence that this enigmatic species shows no signs of halting its apparent decline. The fall in numbers noted annually by WeBS is largely attributable to a steady long-term decline on the Forth Estuary, Britain's most regular site for the species. The peak at Forth Estuary this year was ten in September; a far cry from an historical maximum of 89 logged there in December 1994. As is the case with many ducks and waders, it is possible that a shift in distribution is also driving this decline in the UK.

All other records of Red-necked Grebes during Core counts in 2008/09 related to singles at a scattering of coastal and inland sites, including long-staying individuals at Grafham Water and Swithland Reservoir. Outside the priority Core dates, four were noted at Glyne Gap in December; an indication of the small, but regular, numbers wintering off southern and eastern coasts of Britain.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Forth Estuary	24	32	4	12	10	Sep	16
North Norfolk Coast	1	6	4	2	1	Nov	3
Gerrans Bay	1	4	1	2	1	Nov	2
Glyne Gap	0	(1)	(2)	(3)	4 [13]	Dec	2
Lindisfarne	2	3 [11]	2	2	0		2
Hunterston Sands				(2) [13]			(2)
Moray Firth	2	2	1	(1)	(0)		2

Slavonian Grebe

Podiceps auritus

GB max:	**192**	**Feb**
NI max:	**34**	**Mar**

International threshold:	**55**
Great Britain threshold:	**7***
All-Ireland threshold:	**?†**

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Slavonian Grebes were recorded at 77 sites in the UK, including three in Northern Ireland. As always, this is a species for which improved coverage of the coastline generally, away from the priority wetlands, would be beneficial.

Numbers at the Forth Estuary were again low compared to the longer-term average there, and as a consequence, the site did not surpass the qualifying threshold of international importance. The fact that this follows the similar relegation of Moray Firth in 2007/08, as well as below-average numbers also on Inner Firth of Clyde this year, provides cause for concern.

Away from mainland Scotland, the west coast appeared to fare slightly better; the peak count of the year was 40 at Loch Ryan in February. Furthermore, in Northern Ireland, winter maxima at Lough Foyle (31) and Strangford Lough (22) were both above recent averages for those sites.

Inland, Slavonian Grebes typically turned up at several reservoirs during the course of the year. All were singles with the exception of two at King George VI Reservoir in February.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	59 [10]	52 [10]					56
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Moray Firth	55	42	50	41	(23)	Oct	47
Sound of Gigha	20 [12]	30 [12]			89 [13]	Nov	46
Loch Na Keal				40 [13]			40
Forth Estuary	73	55	25 [13]	18	27	Feb	40

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Inner Firth of Clyde	16	35	41	73 [13]	20	Dec	37
Loch Ryan	42	23	39	19	40	Feb	33
Loch of Harray	49	24	16	52	23	Dec	33
Ulva					26 [10]	Dec	26
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	18 [10]	22 [10]			36 [10]	Feb	25
Lindisfarne	30 [11]	22 [11]	18	4	9	Jan	17
Traigh Luskentyre	31		11	4			15
Loch of Swannay	19	10	15	14	11	Feb	14
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	(16) [10]	20 [10]			7 [10]	Feb	14
Broadford Bay	10	(7)	13	17	7	Dec	12
Gerrans Bay	5	26	5	4	13	Jan	11
Gualan and Balgarva	11 [36]						11
Loch Ewe	0	13	18	(7)	(5)	Feb	10
Sound of Harris	10 [36]						10
Sullom Voe	13 [10]	7 [10]					10
Pagham Harbour	8	8	3	13	11	Dec	9
Jersey Shore			4	10			7
Goring	(7)						(7)
Upper Loch Torridon	0	17	0	9	(2)	Feb	7
Loch of Stenness	1	2	11	12	7	Nov	7 ▲
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Blackwater Estuary	11	2 [11]	7	4	(8)	Feb	6
Lavan Sands	14 [13]	2	6	5	4	Nov	6
Inner Loch Indaal							
Sites with mean peak counts of 4 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Lough Foyle	10	42	4	11	31	Mar	20
Strangford Lough	4	5	0	(0)	22 [13]	Feb	8
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Glyne Gap	0	4	(8)	(7)	13	Feb	6
Colne Estuary	0	0	1	0	9	Feb	2
Blackwater Estuary	11	2 [11]	7	4	(8)	Feb	6
Loch of Skaill	1	5	3	4	8	Mar	4

† *as no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 4 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Black-necked Grebe

Podiceps nigricollis

International threshold: 2,200
Great Britain threshold: 1*†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 91 Jan
NI max: 0 0

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

During 2008/09, Black-necked Grebes were seen at 65 sites in England, two in Scotland, one in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. The records from England denote a large increase in sites, probably as a result of improved coverage outside the main winter period; both spring and autumn passage can see birds appear at a variety of coastal and inland wetlands. Two of the locations featured in the key sites table below have been kept confidential following the advice of the Rare Breeding Birds Panel and/or local counters.

William Girling Reservoir and Fal Complex were once again the most important sites for wintering Black-necked Grebes in Britain, and double figures were also reported from a traditional part of Langstone Harbour. Counts at the two south coast estuaries represent a welcome return to typical numbers at those sites, following disappointing returns in 2007/08. In general, numbers at the favoured coastal locations vary little from year to year; contrary to the situation in The Netherlands where a marked increase has occurred since the 1990s (Hustings *et al.* 2009). Away from the main locations listed below, other notable winter counts included six at Poole Harbour in January and five at Gerrans Bay in March.

A record from Belfast Lough in September represents only the third ever for WeBS in Northern Ireland.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Great Britain†							
William Girling Reservoir	27	21	26	32	26	Dec	26
Woolston Eyes	35	13	(35)	17	26	Apr	25
Fal Complex	19	56	4	5	32	Feb	23
Teignmouth to Berry Head	18						18
Langstone Harbour	16 [11]	20	24 [13]	5	16	Jan	16
Confidential Hertfordshire Site	12	10	9	12	18	Feb	12
Lower Derwent Ings	47	0	2	0	0		10
Confidential Northumberland Site	11	16	10	8	6	Jul	10
Staines Reservoirs	6	11	9	9	7	Feb	8
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Poole Harbour	2 [11]	4 [13]	3	(2)	(6)	Jan	4
Gerrans Bay	2	4	1	5	5	Mar	3
Confidential Lincolnshire Site	0	0	0	0	5	Jun	1

† *as the British threshold is so low and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of five has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

International threshold: 1,200
Great Britain threshold: 230
All-Ireland threshold: 140

GB max: 17,149 Sep
NI max: 1,619 Dec

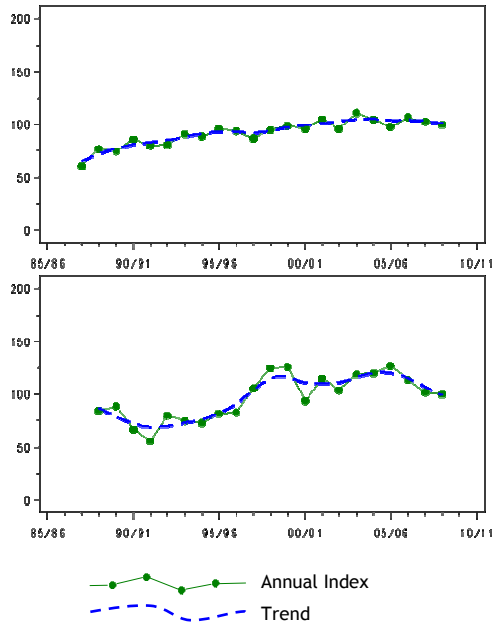


Figure 35.a, Annual indices & trend for Cormorant for GB (above) & NI (below).

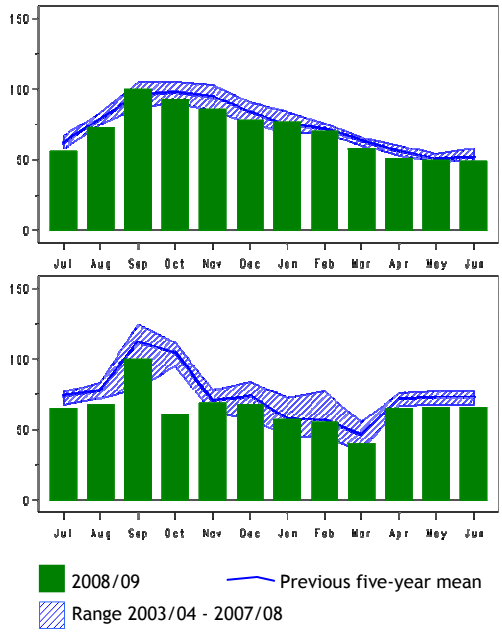


Figure 35.b, Monthly indices for Cormorant for GB (above) & NI (below).

Cormorants have increased steadily in Britain and Northern Ireland over the past twenty years. This has been in part due to the expansion of the more typically freshwater race *sinensis* from the continent, both as a breeder and non-breeder, supplementing the UK population of the native *carbo* race.

The most recent years, however, have indicated an apparent levelling off in the Cormorant index for Britain, perhaps in response to increased culling effort nationally. Similarly in Northern Ireland, the index fell again, albeit just fractionally, for the third year in a row. This was at least partly attributable to the lowest monthly maxima since 2001/02 at Loughs Neagh & Beg, the UK's only site of international importance for Cormorants, where the peak count was 29% lower than that in 2007/08.

Thirty-four further sites qualified as being nationally important for Cormorants

in 2008/09, three of which hosted monthly maxima in excess of 1,000 birds; Alt Estuary, Dee Estuary and Abberton Reservoir. At the latter site, the peak of 1,157 counted in September (presumably including a large proportion of locally-bred juveniles) represented the highest number ever reported from there for WeBS. Only time will tell whether a large-scale project that is underway to increase the volume of the reservoir will in any way impact on Cormorants at this site.

Three coastal sites surpassed the national importance threshold for the first time; South Yell Sound, Hornsea Mere and Colne Estuary, while inland the same is now true of Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Loughs Neagh and Beg	1,591	1,490	1,665	1,396	990	Dec	1,426	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Alt Estuary	984	1,079	1,168	937	1,142	Sep	1,062	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	780	623	1,003	1,133	1,160	Jan	940	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	1,111	929	717	684	616	Jul	811	
Morecambe Bay	681	655	(641)	907	(669)	Sep	748	
Rutland Water	697	825	918	396	326	Sep	632	
Forth Estuary	669	713	653	477	(507)	Sep	628	
Inner Firth of Clyde	452	(740) [12]	875 [12]	389	555	Sep	602	
Abberton Reservoir	450	324	342	639	1,157	Sep	582	
Thames Estuary	654	526	434	(211)	(325)	Jan	538	
Solway Estuary	(454)	(357)	530	497	(406)	Nov	514	
The Wash	538	371	467	453	495	Oct	465	
Ribble Estuary	543	293	316	504	600	Nov	451	
Walthamstow Reservoirs	453	306	640	433	395	Oct	445	
Poole Harbour	431	408	374	(254)	(349)	Sep	404	
Tees Estuary	471	511	329	378	306	Aug	399	
Ranworth and Cockshoot Broads	257 [12]	310 [12]	348 [12]	287 [12]	582 [12]	Feb	357	
Hanningfield Reservoir	109	318	500	215	600	Oct	348	
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	119	306	533	311			317	
Besthorpe and Girton Gravel Pits	336	363	274	(253)	296	May	317	
Blackwater Estuary	191	224	200	279	(674)	Jan	314	
Alde Complex	549	99	206	226	421	Feb	300	
Ouse Washes	294	254 [13]	454 [13]	294	189 [13]	Feb	297	
Rostherne Mere	256	273	273	328	317	Jun	289	
King George VI Reservoir	104	93	872	309	38	Aug	283	
North Norfolk Coast	242	272	265	300 [12]	298	Aug	275	
Drakelow Gravel Pit	230 [12]	303	212 [13]	310	280	Jun	267	
Fairburn Ings		265	241	313	231	Jun	263	
South Yell Sound	108 [10]	136 [10]		464 [10]	335 [10]	Dec	261	▲
Grafham Water	344	531	67		92	Dec	259	
Queen Elizabeth II Reservoir	295	360	295	160	130	Feb	248	
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	256	(93)	(48)	153	304	Jan	238	▲
Hornsea Mere	311 [12]	148	83	78	561	Sep	236	▲
Durham Coast	(52)	236	(63)	(8)	(17)	Feb	236	
Colne Estuary	297	81	47	157	582	Feb	233	▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Strangford Lough	405	455	422	(286)	(443)	Sep	431	
Belfast Lough	350 [13]	378	350	312	267	Sep	331	
Outer Ards Shoreline	350	455	397	177	153	Nov	306	
Carlingford Lough	221	238	230	142	98	Sep	186	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Pagham Harbour	225	308	258	162	188	Nov	228	
Tay Estuary	(243)	198	310	211	160	Sep	224	
Staines Reservoirs	21	436	49	432	124	Aug	212	
Ayr to North Troon	292	(97)	(51)	(65)	87	Sep	190	
Queen Mary Reservoir	44	85	88	295	211	Feb	145	
Queen Mother Reservoir	25	252	120	230	32	Nov	132	
Medway Estuary	(68)	(93)	(30)	(60)	(97)	Jan	(97)	
Wraysbury Reservoir	83						83	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Duddon Estuary	176	58	162	(71)	235	Sep	158	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland								
Upper Lough Erne	125	107	106	114	150	Jan	120	

Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

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

GB max: 2,346 Feb
NI max: 659 Nov

As is the case with other species with a more northerly distribution within the UK, the monitoring of wintering Shags would benefit from improved coverage of the Scottish coastline. Currently, most years sees the counts table below largely populated with data collected by SOTEAG in Shetland. Breeding trends are well monitored by the JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme, results of which have shown marked declines in recent years (JNCC 2009).

Shags were recorded during WeBS Core counts at 226 sites across the UK. The largest aggregations noted during the year in Scotland were 456 at Forth Estuary in September and 268 on Egilsay in November; the most ever reported from there. In Northern Ireland, a count of 437 at Outer Ards Shoreline in November represents the most at that site since WeBS monitoring began in 2002/03. In England, numbers at coastal sites were close to average.

Inland, six at Draycote Water in November was the most noteworthy of a small number of scattered records.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 100 or more birds in Great Britain†							
South Yell Sound	558 [10]	790 [10]		1,065 [10]	886 [10]	Dec	825
Moray Firth	995 [1]	308 [1]					652
Forth Estuary	(760)	420	719	(384)	(456)	Sep	633
Hacosay, Bluemull & Colgrave Sounds	232 [10]	625 [10]					429
North Bressay	728 [10]	128 [10]					428
Burra and Trondra	441 [10]	287 [10]		332 [10]			353
Widewall Bay	140	150	390	800	70	Nov	310
Scalloway Islands	255 [10]	448 [10]		221 [10]			308
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	126 [10]	299 [10]		253 [10]	377 [10]	Feb	264
Quendale to Virkie	97 [10]	503 [10]		102 [10]			234
Moray Coast (Consolidated)	251	33	193	347	(132)	Oct	206
Inner Firth of Clyde	190	115	197	297	223	Sep	204
Bressay Sound	272 [10]	97 [10]					185
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	(97) [10]	198 [10]		183 [10]	166 [10]	Feb	182
Arran	131	304	123	(104)	120	Sep	170
Island of Egilsay	67	47	230		286	Nov	158
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	663 [1]	31	22	45	12	Dec	155
South Unst	63 [10]	246 [10]					155
Loch Slapin					150	Nov	150
Loch Ewe	197	115	261	98	76	Feb	149
Sullom Voe	133 [10]	68 [10]		219 [10]	145 [10]	Dec	141
Gerrans Bay	25	101	86	328	128	Jan	134
Broadford Bay	150	152	150	88	93	Dec	127
Red Point to Port Henderson	92	246	105	(68)	52	Feb	124
Easter Ross Coast	122 [1]						122
Thurso Bay	80	20	170	70	262 [13]	Feb	120
Loch Ryan	144	127	179	110	19	Feb	116
Winterfield to Catcraig			120	98	128	Sep	115
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	138 [10]	115 [10]	73 [10]	127 [10]			113
Island of Papa Westray	50	150		92	146	Nov	110
Helmsdale to Lothbeg	103 [1]						103
Sites with mean peak counts of 100 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Outer Ards Shoreline	280	236	284	317	437	Nov	311
Strangford Lough	(218)	(295)	(291)	(156)	247	Oct	278
Belfast Lough	133 [13]	49	191 [11]	107	90 [11]	Dec	114
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Melbost Sands (Lewis)	5	22	9	14	134 [13]	Nov	37

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 100 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Bittern

Botaurus stellaris

International threshold: 65
Great Britain threshold: ?

In 2008/09, Bitterns were recorded at 57 WeBS sites, including eight sites in Wales which is the most ever there in a year. None were noted in Scotland or Northern Ireland. Birds were recorded in all months of the year with a peak of 37 in January. Singles were widespread during the winter when several sites hosted two to three birds. The site maximum was four at Somerset Levels in February, representing the most ever there and testimony to successful wetland creation in that area.

Bittern (Ron Marshall)

Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: Worldwide

Singles, of unknown origin, were reported from Morecambe Bay in January and May.

Cattle Egret

Bubulcus ibis

Vagrant and Escape
Native Range: Worldwide

Following the record influx during the previous year, Cattle Egrets were reported from seven WeBS sites in 2008/09. A group of four at Dungeness & Rye Bay in October was followed by January-March records of three at both Exe Estuary and Somerset Levels, and singles at Solway Estuary, Grouville Marsh and Nevern Estuary. In June, one was at Brading Harbour.

Little Egret

Egretta garzetta

GB max:	**4,478**	**Sep**
NI max:	**62**	**Oct**

International threshold:	**1,300**
Great Britain threshold:	**?†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**?†**

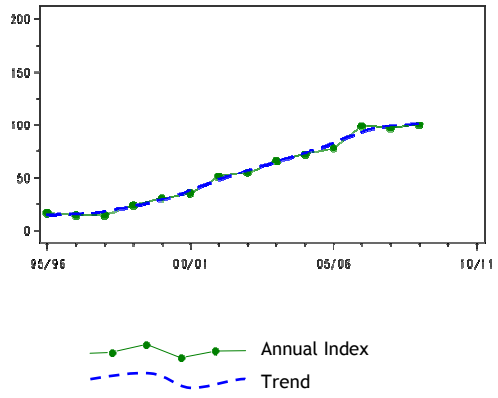


Figure 36.a, Annual indices & trend for Little Egret for GB.

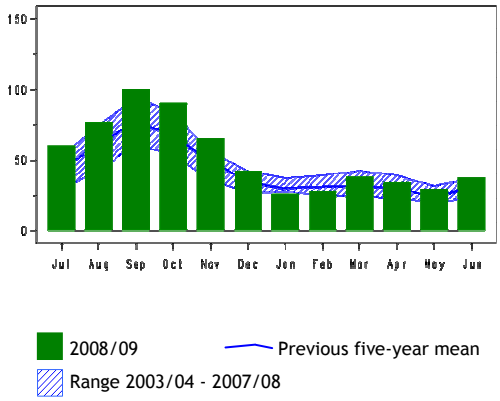


Figure 36.b, Monthly indices for Little Egret for GB.

Little Egrets have become a familiar sight at wetlands, both coastal and inland, throughout the southern half of Britain in recent years as the species has expanded its population and range. The species was logged at 356 WeBS sites, and a record monthly maximum of 4,478 birds noted in September, infers that the well-documented increase continues. However, scrutiny of the annual indices reveals that the national index has changed little in the two years since 2006/07, and hence the associated trend appears to have stabilised (at least at the sample of sites monitored by WeBS).

Results from Bird Atlas 2007-11 (*www.bto.org/birdatlas*) will show the extent of the distributional change that has taken place in Little Egrets, and also provide an indication of the increases at more minor sites not traditionally covered by WeBS.

As in the previous year, slightly lower numbers were recorded during the core winter period; for example, all 24 sites with five-year means of greater than 80 birds recorded their peaks in 2008/09 during the period of August to October. As suggested in last year's report, such numbers during late summer and autumn are presumably a result of the expanding breeding population, but typically counts at that time of year are more likely to be affected by variation in coverage.

Little Egrets (Richard Vaughan)

The gradual expansion away from the traditional stronghold of the English south coast continues. This is exemplified by all-time site peaks noted at coastal locations in the west, e.g. Burry Inlet (156, September); in the east, e.g. The Wash (633, September) and Humber Estuary (97, September); and in the north, e.g. Ribble Estuary (50, September) and Morecambe Bay (59, December). Furthermore, significant peaks were reported from several inland sites, e.g. Somerset Levels (90, November). Unsurprisingly, the exceptional count of 633 birds at The Wash represents the highest count from an individual WeBS site ever. While marked increases have occurred on the edge of the range, in comparison numbers on the south coast estuaries have remained relatively stable in the last few years.

Outside England, Little Egrets were seen at just five WeBS sites in Scotland during 2008/09, as well as 37 sites in Wales, and seven in each of Channel Islands and Northern Ireland. In the latter, the maximum aggregation was 38 at Strangford Lough in October, the most ever noted there by a considerable margin.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain†							
The Wash	92	139	323	(319)	633	Sep	365
Thames Estuary	295	260	316	277	368	Sep	303
North Norfolk Coast	228 [12]	170 [12]	193	272 [12]	258	Sep	224
Chichester Harbour	129	(206)	192	264	267	Oct	213
Blackwater Estuary	(159)	133	(58)	245	221	Oct	173
Dee Estuary (England & Wales)	59 [12]	112 [12]	132 [12]	163	258 [12]	Aug	162
Poole Harbour	(116)	(112)	(84)	(79)	(136)	Oct	(136)
Jersey Shore			98	156			127
Tamar Complex	120	(129)	97	(126)	125	Sep	119
Exe Estuary	93	107	116	135	103	Aug	111
Lavan Sands	71	107	133	131	107	Sep	110
Burry Inlet	103	108	86	87	156	Sep	108
Stour Estuary	87	102	143	102	102	Oct	107
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(56)	93	78	(121)	92	Oct	102
Swale Estuary	95	(100)	(72)	(100)	(109)	Oct	100
Cleddau Estuary	71	83	(68)	120	(104)	Sep	95
Severn Estuary	66	104	74	105	103	Sep	91
Hamford Water	81	72	135	95	70	Sep	91
Crouch-Roach Estuary	73 [11]	(35)	102	100	83	Oct	90
Langstone Harbour	87	91	77	76	112	Oct	89
Kingsbridge Estuary	86	85	89	67	91	Aug	84
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	42	61	71 [12]	126 [13]	114 [12]	Aug	83
Camel Estuary	71	96	80	74	88	Aug	82
Southampton Water	(39)	(44)	(80)	(24)	(40)	Oct	(80)
Fal Complex	89	60	82	79	84	Sep	79
Pagham Harbour	(60)	94	90	63	67	Jul	79
Medway Estuary	(76)	(62)	(32)	(71)	(75)	Oct	(76)
Portsmouth Harbour	51	45	96	111	49 [11]	Nov	70
Somerset Levels	24	(35)	64	73	90	Nov	66
Carmarthen Bay	35	41	57	106	64	Sep	61
Pegwell Bay	(48)	56	71	33	79	Aug	60
Fleet and Wey	46	56	59	67	66	Oct	59
North West Solent	(51)	56	53	56	61	Aug	59
Grouville Marsh	2	50	165		4	Dec	55
Colne Estuary	46	47	34	64 [11]	(53)	Nov	(53)
Alde Complex	45	44	56	66	50	Oct	52
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Humber Estuary	3	14	36	41	95	Sep	38
Dungeness & Rye Bay	28	21	45	28	91 [12]	Aug	43
Morecambe Bay	7	10	28	22	56	Nov	25
Ouse Washes	11 [13]	4 [13]	5 [13]	29 [13]	55	Mar	21
Dart Estuary	34	(39)	52	(37)	51	Jul	46
Avon Estuary (Devon)	20	25	29	32	50	Jul	31
Ribble Estuary	4	5	(21)	31	50	Sep	23

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Great White Egret

Ardea alba

Vagrant

Native Range: S Europe, Africa, Asia, N & C America

Great White Egrets were reported from ten WeBS sites; a productive year albeit fewer sites than the previous year. During the course of 2008/09, long-stayers were present in England at River Avon (September to January) and Somerset Levels (December to February), while in Scotland one favoured Gilmourton Ponds (March to May). Elsewhere, two were at Ouse Washes in January, with singles at Blackwater Estuary, Minsmere, Dingle Marshes & Walberswick NNR, Thames Estuary, Tees Estuary and Dyfi Estuary. The latter represents the first WeBS record in Wales since October 2004.

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

International threshold:	2,700
Great Britain threshold:	?†
All-Ireland threshold:	30

GB max:	4,041	Sep
NI max:	297	Oct

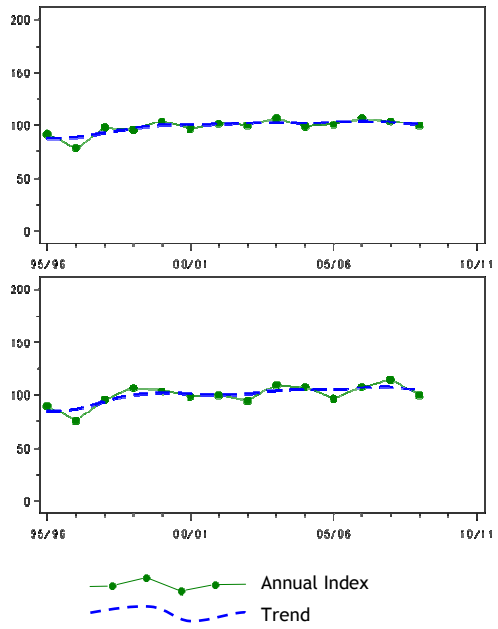


Figure 37.a, Annual indices & trend for Grey Heron for GB (above) & NI (below).

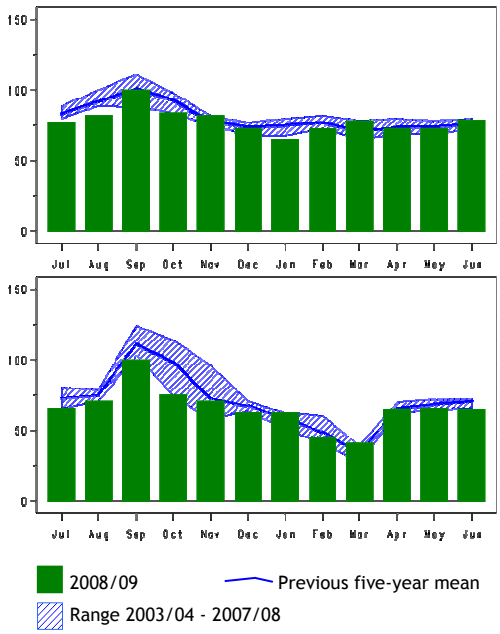


Figure 37.b, Monthly indices for Grey Heron for GB (above) & NI (below).

Despite the breeding population increasing slowly (Baillie *et al.* 2010), national WeBS indices for Grey Heron in both Britain and Northern Ireland show very little in the way of variation from year to year. Although this is consistent with trends from further east in Europe (e.g. Slabeyova *et al.* 2009), the species has undergone a marked increase in The Netherlands in the last twenty years (Hustings *et al.* 2009).

In 2008/09, the monthly peaks in Britain and Northern Ireland occurred during the months of September and October, respectively, somewhat typical of recent years. As in 2007/08, six sites held monthly maxima in excess of 100 birds, including both River Avon (Fordingbridge to Ringwood) and Ouse Washes, where all-time WeBS highs were recorded.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	172	202	225	173	147	Jan	184
Strangford Lough	90	121 [11]	95 [11]	138 [11]	92	Oct	107
Carlingford Lough	30	41	51	62	(34)	Oct	46
Lough Foyle	54	34	42	44	42	Sep	43
Belfast Lough	36	36	(32)	43	35	Sep	38
Dundrum Inner Bay	(12)	37	36	41	27	Sep	35
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Outer Ards Shoreline	52	16	35	24	18	Jan	29
Larne Lough	47	19	30	20	22	Nov	28
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Somerset Levels	151	119	143	135	161	Feb	142
Ouse Washes	163 [13]	36	55 [13]	143	199	Mar	119
Avon Valley - Salisbury to Fordingbridge	80	106	114	144	(92)	Mar	111
Forth Estuary	104	108	111	125	102	Sep	110
Coombe Country Park	105	120	107	106	81	May	104

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Thames Estuary	100	117	89	(91)	(63)	Sep	102
Morecambe Bay	68	88	105	(38)	107	Sep	92
River Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood	56	73	83	82	109	Nov	81
Inner Firth of Clyde	90	93	100	62	62	Sep	81
Humber Estuary	(37)	(29)	(33)	74	(48)	Sep	74
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	67	(48)	(66)	73	67	Nov	69
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	58	96	64	55			68
Severn Estuary	(69)	55	(43)	(47)	78	Sep	67
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(30)	(29)	72	(70)	47	Sep	63
Tees Estuary	56	62	83	56	56	Sep	63
Walthamstow Reservoirs	60	16	75	76	62	Feb	58
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	55	68	68	61	38	Dec	58
Cromarty Firth	47	58	64	58	(62)	Oct	58
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	56	62	36	78	48	Apr	56
Montrose Basin	(40)	32	55	54	82	Aug	56
Kingsbridge Estuary	50	27	17	26	147	Dec	53
Solway Estuary	72	(28)	32	51	(40)	Sep	52
Swale Estuary	51	(43)	(23)	(33)	(24)	Jan	51
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain[†]							
Durham Coast	42	42	55	46	59	May	49
Ribble Estuary	(23)	45	(46)	37	59	Sep	47
Beddington Sewage Farm	25	29	35	35	55	Jun	36
Radnor Mere	42	35	60	48	54	Apr	48
Bough Beech Reservoir	25	13	54	(18)	54	Apr	37
Dungeness and Rye Bay	46	30	33	36	50	Oct	39

[†] *as no British threshold has been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Purple Heron

Ardea purpurea

Vagrant
Native Range: Europe, Africa, Asia

One was present at Fen Drayton Gravel Pits in August; the second there, following one in August 1989. There have now been 13 Purple Herons recorded by WeBS, six of which have been in August.

White Stork

Ciconia ciconia

Vagrant and escape
Native Range: Europe, Africa, Asia

The two regular free-flying White Storks were again present at Harewood Lake in July-August, and a further bird was noted at Glascoe Dub (Isle of Man) in November.

Glossy Ibis

Plegadis falcinellus

Vagrant
Native Range: S Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, N & C America

For the second year in succession, two were recorded by WeBS counters. A single was at Allerton Bywater in August followed by one at Ouse Washes in October.

Spoonbill

Platalea leucorodia

International threshold: 110

Spoonbills were recorded at 29 sites during Core counts, and featured in every month with a maximum of 30 noted in November. All were in England with the exception of Welsh records from Malltraeth RSPB and Llyn Traffwll. Most counts were of one or two birds, notable exceptions being peaks of 15 at Poole Harbour, 14 at Taw-Torridge Estuary, and 10 at Alde Complex (all in September to November period). Inland records comprised birds at Old Moor in July, Rutland Water in August, and two at Grafham Water in September.

Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

International threshold: 10,000
Great Britain threshold: ?†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 524 Dec
NI max: 4 Feb

Recorded at 352 WeBS sites across the UK in 2008/09 (including four in Northern Ireland), numbers of Water Rails noted were largely unremarkable.

Favoured sites tend to be those with reedbeds and/or an extensive network of ditches, where the species is inevitably under-recorded due to its secretive behaviour.

Maxima this year were 38 at Somerset Levels in February and 31 at Chew Valley Lake in December; the highest count there for ten years. Twenty-four noted at Rutland Water in March represents the highest WeBS count ever there, and may be a result of the suitable habitat management of the expanding nature reserve.

Water Rail (R. Plummer)

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 12 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Somerset Levels	63	50	58	62	38	Feb	54
Grouville Marsh	20	30	(10)		15	Dec	22
Severn Estuary	6	25	13	23	(26)	Dec	19
Longueville Marsh	20	20	(10)		15	Dec	18
Southampton Water	11	20	10	(20)	19	Jan	16
Burry Inlet	16	(0)	(0)	(0)			16
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	16	10	8	(24)	13	Dec	14
Poole Harbour	(12)	(6)	(6)	(4)	(13)	Sep	(13)
Chew Valley Lake	3	5	5	22	31	Dec	13
Chichester Harbour	13	14	15	10	12	Jan	13
London Wetland Centre	6	13	17	16	12	Oct	13
Thames Estuary	11	(10)	19	8	(13)	Jan	13
Stanwick Gravel Pits Consolidated		7			(16)	Jan	12
River Cam: Kingfishers Bridge	8	22	15	7	7	Sep	12
Rutland Water	8	9	10	10	24	Mar	12
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Lower Derwent Ings	4	9	5	9	15	Oct	8
Old Moor	1	(3)	2	(4)	12	Jul	5

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 12 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Spotted Crake

Scarce

Porzana porzana

Following a blank year in 2007/08, Spotted Crakes were noted at Dunstable Wetland in September and Chew Valley Lake in October.

Corn Crake

Scarce

Crex crex

The species was noted either end of the WeBS-year at two sites on Western Isles.

Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: 7,500†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 13,053 Dec
NI max: 175 Jan

Moorhens have a widespread distribution throughout the UK and occur in a wide variety of wetland habitats. As a result, the species tends to be relatively poorly monitored by WeBS, and it would require significantly improved coverage of habitats within the wider countryside in order to be able to evaluate its status more accurately.

The counted British maximum was similar to that of recent years, with the two highest site counts during the year, both of 400+, derived from incomplete coverage of Severn Estuary and Ouse Washes respectively.

Numbers at virtually all of the principal sites were close to their respective five-year means, one exception being Somerset Levels where the peak of 156 in March was, for whatever reason, well below average.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 100 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Severn Estuary	409	465	546	1,003	(473)	Dec	606
WWT Martin Mere	420	490	438	485	(375)	Dec	458
Thames Estuary	371	383	367	(234)	(152)	Jan	374
Somerset Levels	327	410	430	392	156	Mar	343
Lower Derwent Ings	321	366	296	268	341	Sep	318
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	301	292	(300)	296	228	Sep	283
Ouse Washes	102 [13]	111	201	557 [13]	(420)	Dec	278
Pitsford Reservoir	133	266	389	241	126	Aug	231
North Norfolk Coast	192	281	223	230	203	Nov	226
London Wetland Centre	135	239	218	203	229	Dec	205
Arun Valley	146	175	246	(195)	164	Jan	185
Dungeness and Rye Bay	165	213	166	181	192	Sep	183
River Wandle: Carshalton to Wandsworth	179	178	193	186	180	Dec	183
Rutland Water	192	188	157	219	152	Sep	182
Old Moor	45	(80)	(171)	(366)	136	Nov	180
Chichester Gravel Pits	167	228	139	174	(5)	Oct	177
Humber Estuary	(170)	(142)	136	166	114	Feb	146
Grand Western Canal	132	137	178	134	124	Aug	141
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	94	108	158	128	141	Dec	126
Tring Reservoirs	135	110	138	93	117	Sep	119
Grantham Canal: Cotgrave to Gamston		97	122	151	102	Jan	118
Cotswold Water Park (West)	73	132	117	144	(116)	Oct	117
Medway Estuary	19 [11]	84	131	180	144	Jan	112
R.Cam: Owlstone Rd to Baits Bite Lock	117	126	105	111	92	Dec	110
Bewl Water	165	61	100	100	121	Oct	109
Chichester Harbour	98	127	95	108	106	Feb	107
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	(86)	(97)	(78)	(105)	(102)	Dec	(105)
Avon Valley: Salisbury to Fordingbridge	112	178	(92)	68	57	Dec	104
Southampton Water	83	114	81	(114)	127	Jan	104
Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	124	143	98	118	96	Jan	116
Belfast Lough	65 [13]	54	43	42	49	Feb	51
Upper Lough Erne	46	60	75	40	18	Jan	48
Lower Lough Erne	(30)	(10)	43	25	(6)	Nov	34
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Ditchford Gravel Pits	52	50	62	103	102	Oct	74
Hanningfield Reservoir	42	33	26	54	100	Sep	51

† *as no sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 100 and 30 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectively, for presentation in this report*

Coot

Fulica atra

International threshold: 17,500
Great Britain threshold: 1,730
All-Ireland threshold: 330

GB max: 111,699 Dec
NI max: 2,551 Jan

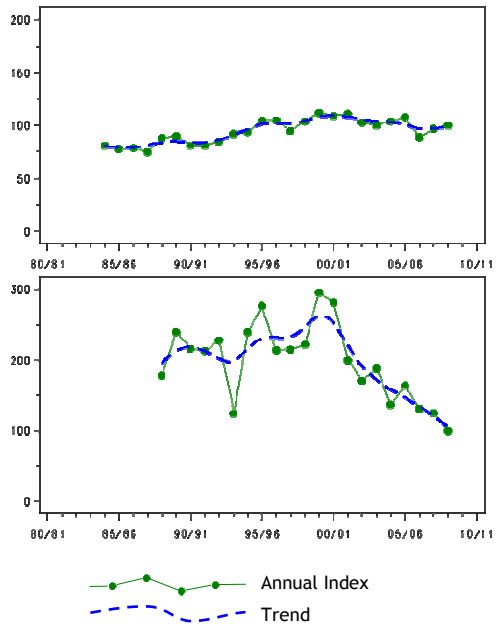


Figure 38.a, Annual indices & trend for Coot for GB (above) & NI (below).

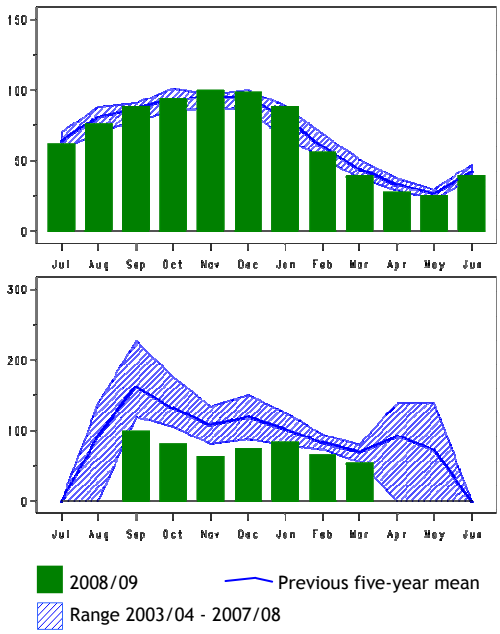


Figure 38.b, Monthly indices for Coot for GB (above) & NI (below).

Within the UK, Coots favour large bodies of fresh water, but have a widespread distribution on smaller ponds and rivers.

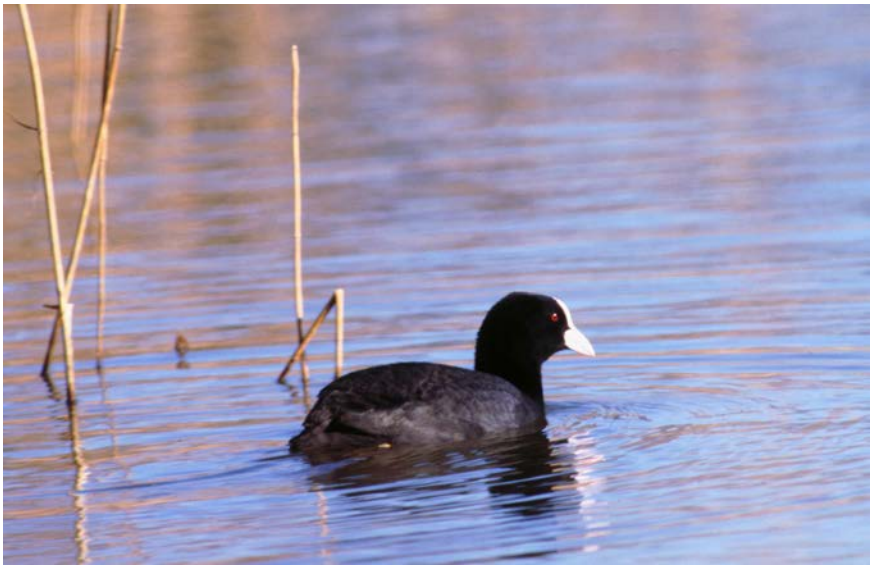
The breeding population appears to be on the rise, with the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (*www.bto.org/bbs*) reporting a 39% increase from 1995 to 2007 (Risely *et al.* 2009). Coots gather to moult during the early autumn period, reflected in the increase in the monthly indices for those months prior to the winter, when the UK's resident population is augmented by birds from other parts of northwest Europe.

The index for Britain in 2008/09 was consistent with the average for the last fifteen or so years, while the situation in Northern Ireland continues to be a marked decline (in keeping with the trends for other diving species such as Pochard and Goldeneye). It is difficult to interpret these results with certainty, but they are suggestive of a shift in distribution in response to climatic amelioration. This is supported by evidence from elsewhere in Europe. In The Netherlands, the trend for Coot, although prone to fluctuations, has essentially been stable for thirty years (Hustings *et al.* 2009), whereas further east in Europe numbers have been increasing, for example in Slovakia (Slabeyova *et al.* 2009). Similarly, in Scandinavia, numbers have been higher in recent winters in response to milder conditions (Nilsson 2008).

In Britain, most of the sites of national importance supported totals close to their recent averages in 2008/09, including Abberton Reservoir where the year's largest individual aggregation of 9,270 was logged in November. Exceptions included below-par peaks at both Cheddar Reservoir and Pitsford Reservoir.

In Northern Ireland, the monthly maximum at Loughs Neagh & Beg, of 1,236 in January, was the lowest since monitoring began. The historical peak count, of 8,848 birds in December 1992, shows how significant the decline there has been.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Abberton Reservoir	9,697	10,965	(2,088)	10,046	9,270	Nov	9,995	
Rutland Water	4,733	3,490	6,233	4,284	4,792	Dec	4,706	
Ouse Washes	4,229	4,354	1,834	6,229	5,865 [13]	Feb	4,502	
Cotswold Water Park (West)	4,077	4,548	4,001	4,013	4,803	Jan	4,288	
Cheddar Reservoir	3,873	3,140	3,380	3,324	2,222	Jan	3,188	
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	3,435	3,459	2,417	2,979	3,336	Jan	3,125	
Fleet and Wey	3,275	2,699	2,650	2,337	2,291	Dec	2,650	
Chew Valley Lake	3,335	2,205	2,360	2,095	2,020	Jul	2,403	
Pitsford Reservoir	2,354	2,212	2,287	2,828	1,957	Oct	2,328	
Loch Leven	2,375	1,610	2,820	1,317	3,350	Sep	2,294	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	2,486	1,768	2,421	2,280	2,162	Sep	2,223	
Blagdon Lake	2,080	3,151	1,400	2,323	1,403	Aug	2,071	
Cotswold Water Park (East)	1,850	2,045	1,835	2,134	2,248	Dec	2,022	
Carsington Water	1,731	1,614	2,136	1,880	2,175	Nov	1,907	▲
Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits	2,075	(1,338)	1,566	(1,327)	(366)	Sep	1,821	
River Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood	1,841	1,861	2,012	1,607	1,453	Jan	1,755	
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	1,626	(1,718)	1,903	1,609	1,865	Aug	1,751	▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Loughs Neagh and Beg	1,890	2,506	2,371	1,813	1,236	Jan	1,963	
Upper Lough Erne	1,462	2,023	1,696	1,072	1,093	Jan	1,469	
Lower Lough Erne	308	411	326	406			363	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Burry Inlet	174	(137)	90	(108)	(3,321)	Dec	931	
Grafham Water	341	1,234	1,454		1,796	Dec	1,206	
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	1,525	1,362	1,460	1,228	1,772	Oct	1,469	



Coot (Tommy Holden)

Crane

Scarce

Grus grus

In 2008/09, Cranes were recorded at seven sites – the most ever in a WeBS-year. All records were of either two or three birds, and so perhaps may have involved some duplication of roaming individuals. Following records at sites in Kent and Essex towards the end of 2008, two were reported from three locations in the Fens in the first half of 2009. Elsewhere, two were at Arun Valley in June.

Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

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

GB max: 255,683 Nov
NI max: 16,839 Sep

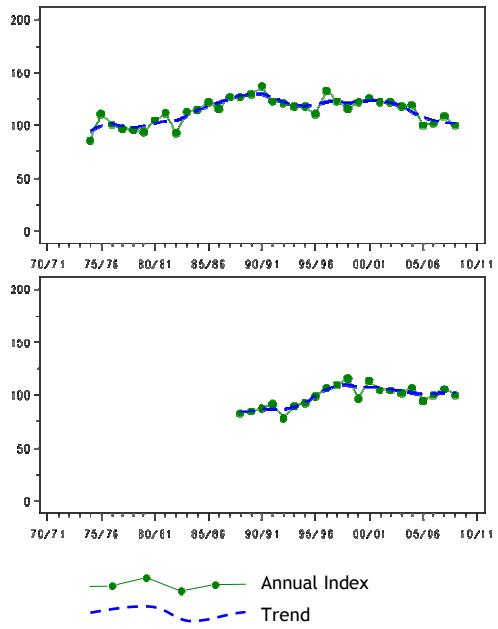


Figure 39.a, Annual indices & trend for Oystercatcher for GB (above) & NI (below).

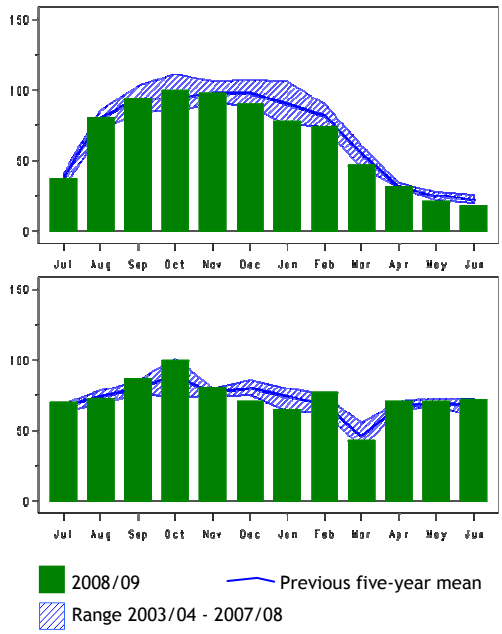


Figure 39.b, Monthly indices for Oystercatcher for GB (above) & NI (below).

Oystercatchers in the UK are from the nominate *ostralegus* population, which breeds in north and west Europe and winters in west Europe and south to west Africa. The number counted in 2008/09 was relatively high as a result of excellent WeBS coverage, with, for example, the maximum from Morecambe Bay in October representing the highest count since the WeBS record peak of 72,653 there in October 2002. Similarly, the peak number at Thames Estuary in 2008/09 was several thousand birds greater than that noted in recent years; 33,959 representing the highest ever total there. The other five sites of international importance hosted totals of a similar magnitude to their recent averages. These include The Wash, where numbers of Oystercatchers, as well as those of other species such as Shelduck and Knot, appear to have now recovered following declines brought about by human over-exploitation of the shellfishery (Atkinson *et al*. 2010). Of other sites supporting large concentrations, Carmarthen Bay notably yielded a Core count of more than 10,000 birds for the first time ever. This site would appear to be the most likely candidate to be the next to surpass the current qualifying threshold for international importance for this species.

Feeding specialisations, both in Oystercatchers and other shorebird species, vary between males and females, as well as by age. In general, female Oystercatchers show a greater tendency to be worm/clam feeders and mussel-stabbers (feeding specializations previously associated with lower survival rates) as opposed to mussel-hammerers (Durrell 2003). These specialized feeding methods may have become more profitable during the longer periods of milder winter temperatures experienced in the UK in recent years, thereby leading to a reduction in mortality and increased annual survival, potentially boosting the total population (Durrell 2007). However, despite this theory, for the last four years the index for Oystercatchers in Britain has been at a lower level than

during the previous twenty-five years, concurrent with an on-going decline in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al*. 2009).

In complete contrast to the previous year, when the counts during late autumn had been below par, 2008/09 saw monthly maxima in October and November prior to below-average numbers present during the core winter period of December to February.

In Northern Ireland, the index was consistent with the longer-term average. No notable changes occurred at the individual site level, although the peaks from Loughs Foyle and Strangford both represented the second highest ever for those sites.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Morecambe Bay	55,072	46,760	55,874	(34,492)	60,323	Oct	54,507
Solway Estuary	(30,961)	(34,542)	(35,571)	(31,091)	(25,417)	Oct	(35,571)
Thames Estuary	20,393	22,956	27,836	26,905	33,659	Nov	26,350
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	25,956	22,847	15,808	20,922	32,820 [11]	Jan	23,671
The Wash	16,395	18,677	22,963	19,626	17,788	Sep	19,090
Burry Inlet	16,219	11,728	15,110 [13]	13,257	13,980	Nov	14,059
Ribble Estuary	14,095	(6,378)	10,872	13,148	(9,524)	Nov	12,705
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Carmarthen Bay	6,736	7,754	10,154 [11]	10,911 [11]	10,562	Sep	9,223
Forth Estuary	(8,213)	6,598	8,235	7,230	7,915	Sep	7,638
Lavan Sands	5,718	5,926	9,587	5,783	5,611	Dec	6,525
Duddon Estuary	6,241	5,577	5,758	(4,251)	(7,296)	Oct	6,218
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	5,376	4,930	5,099	8,003	3,883	Jan	5,458
Inner Firth of Clyde	4,759	5,880	5,308	5,836	4,101	Aug	5,177
Swale Estuary	5,225	5,011	3,762	4,106	3,293	Nov	4,279
North Norfolk Coast	3,778	3,707	3,238	3,954	5,111	Sep	3,958
Swansea Bay	4,605	3,511	4,430 [13]	3,150	3,743	Jan	3,888
Humber Estuary	(4,582)	(3,468)	2,942	(3,121)	(2,746)	Oct	3,528
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	9,018	6,861	(6,842)	8,689	9,575	Oct	8,536
Belfast Lough	5,299	4,756	(4,411)	3,580	3,624	Sep	4,334
Lough Foyle	(3,095)	(1,805)	(2,347)	2,837	3,629	Feb	3,233
Outer Ards Shoreline	1,740	1,747	1,825	1,515	1,622	Jan	1,690
Carlingford Lough	1,419	1,442	1,552	(1,446)	1,529	Sep	1,486
Dundrum Inner Bay	(1,252)	1,389	1,027	1,700	1,497	Aug	1,403
Newcastle Shore					1,331	Jan	1,331
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Dengie Flats	1,865	1,595	2,925	1,871	4,489 [11]	Dec	2,549
Medway Estuary	(1,467)	2,115	(1,005)	(2,535)	(4,160)	Dec	2,937
Wigtown Bay	(1,606)	2,565	2,058	2,363	(3,335)	Jan	2,580

Oystercatchers (Steve Carter)

Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

International threshold: 730
Great Britain threshold: 35*

GB max: 7,177 Feb
NI max: 0 0

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

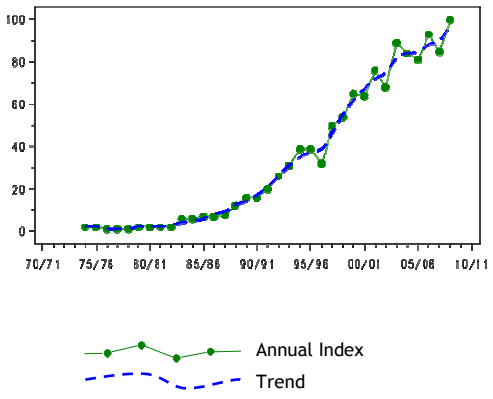


Figure 40.a, Annual indices & trend for Avocet for GB.

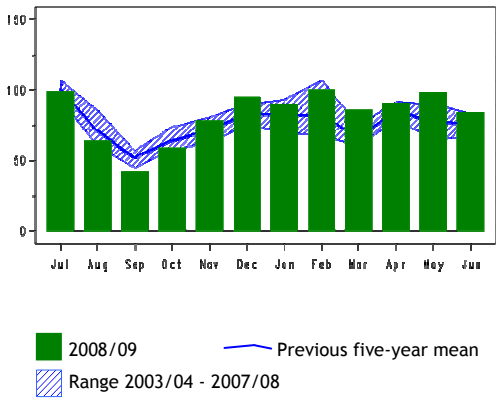


Figure 40.b, Monthly indices for Avocet for GB.

Stroud *et al.* (2004) estimated there to be a wintering population of 72,850 Avocets in Western Europe during the 1990s, with wintering birds in the UK considered to comprise an increasing proportion of resident breeders and additional birds from the nearby Low Countries. Since that estimate, the annual indices show that numbers in UK have increased considerably and the index reached its highest ever point in 2008/09, indicating that the increase continues and wintering numbers have not yet levelled off.

Avocets (Dawn Balmer)

Avocets were recorded at 67 sites in 2008/09, all in England apart from the cross-border sites of Severn Estuary and Dee Estuary. Compared to recent years, the winter appears to have been unexceptional in terms of counts at the favoured coastal sites.

The five principal sites continued to surpass the threshold of international importance, however, only the total from Alde Complex was above the respective five-year site average. The count from Thames Estuary was particularly down, approximately 40% lower than the totals noted there during the last three years and the lowest there since 2003/04. In southwest England, 557 Avocets at Exe Estuary in February represents the highest ever WeBS count received from there, however, numbers on Tamar Complex were the lowest since 2002/03.

Unrelated to population trends or distributions, but perhaps of interest to the casual observer, an investigation of the roosting behaviour of waterbirds discovered that Avocet was one of three species of wader (along with Oystercatcher and Curlew) which showed a preference for roosting on the right foot (Randolph 2007)!

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Thames Estuary	1,153	1,663	1,578	1,633	947	Feb	1,395	
Alde Complex	1,058	1,392	1,383	1,465	1,419	Jan	1,343	
Poole Harbour	1,480 [11]	1,387	(1,303)	1,068	(1,131)	Nov	1,312	
Medway Estuary	(490)	(557)	(1,027)	(453)	(791)	Feb	(1,027)	
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	1,012	1,044	706	896 [13]	897 [13]	Sep	911	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Swale Estuary	1,290	320	(363)	447	(586)	Mar	686	
North Norfolk Coast	712	617	645	556	674	Apr	641	
Hamford Water	663	488	(629)	537	729 [11]	Dec	609	
The Wash	532	760	322	850	541	May	601	
Blyth Estuary	(409)	208	660	889	369	Nov	532	
Blackwater Estuary	428	622	367	585	(508)	Feb	502	
Humber Estuary	425	374	652	529	486	Mar	493	
Tamar Complex	438	494	465	620	380	Dec	479	
Exe Estuary	297	(500)	380	358	557	Feb	418	
Deben Estuary	323	236	315	224	342	Nov	288	
Colne Estuary	150 [13]	(285)	41	586 [11]	(298)	Dec	272	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	288 [11]	(26)	(22)	135 [13]	213	Jan	212	
Minsmere	203	171	190	205	164	Mar	187	
Stour Estuary	26	(89)	428	159	112	Oct	181	
Orwell Estuary	68	162	105 [11]	134 [11]	161	Nov	126	
Ribble Estuary	24	38	76	110	71	Jul	64	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	(25)	(47)	(59)	(64)	60	May	62	
WWT Martin Mere	12	19	43	38	88	Apr	40	▲
Severn Estuary	(26)	26	26	(76)	27	May	39	▲
Ouse Washes	96 [13]	11 [13]	4 [13]	32	42	Mar	37	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Chichester Harbour	12	29	17	(24)	(41)	Dec	25	
Morecambe Bay	13	25	31	6	36	May	22	

Stone Curlew

Scarce

Burhinus oedicnemus

Stone Curlews were present at both ends of the WeBS-year at a site in eastern England, close to a known breeding location.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

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

GB max: 225 Apr
NI max: 0 0

In 2008, Little Ringed Plovers were recorded at 123 sites during WeBS Core counts. These sites included just one in Wales and one in Scotland.

Early in the season they were seen at just five sites in March, suggesting an average to relatively late arrival compared to recent years when arrival dates have generally been getting earlier (e.g. Sparks & Mason 2001).

The highest counts during the summer were from two regularly used sites; Old Moor and Dungeness & Rye Bay. A light autumn passage concluded with a late individual at Whitemoor Reservoir in October.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Nosterfield Gravel Pits	(18)	11	23	24	(8)	May	19
Old Moor		14	10	(18)	19	Jun	15
Dungeness and Rye Bay	13	11	9	9	12	Jul	11

† *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

International threshold:	730
Great Britain winter threshold:	330
All-Ireland threshold:	150

GB max: 20,632 Aug
NI max: 650 Nov

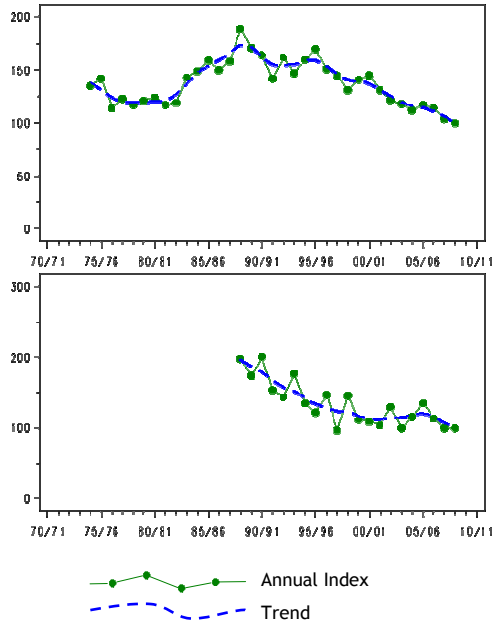


Figure 41.a, Annual indices & trend for Ringed Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

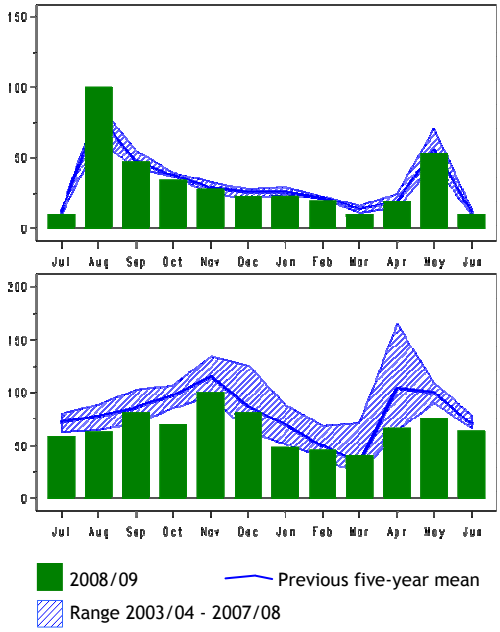


Figure 41.b, Monthly indices for Ringed Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

Britain and Ireland are of considerable importance for Ringed Plovers, providing wintering refuges for British and continental breeders, and passage sites for longer distance migrants. Three subspecies are generally recognised; *hiaticula*, *psammadroma* and *tundrae*. The UK's breeding population is comprised of *hiaticula*, while the bulk of birds on passage are considered to be of *psammadroma* race. *Tundrae* are considered to be found further east – both in terms of Arctic breeding range and wintering sites in southwest Asia and eastern Africa (Delany *et al*. 2009).

The indices for both Great Britain and Northern Ireland both reached their lowest ever levels, and pertinently there appears to be little realistic hope for an immediate recovery. This decline has coincided with a consistent increase in numbers recorded during monitoring of wetlands in The Netherlands over the course of the last thirty years (Hustings *et al*. 2009), and is therefore considered attributable to an eastward shift of the core wintering range (Maclean *et al*. 2008).

The main table of site counts presented here now includes data covering the whole WeBS-year of July to June, having previously been limited to the period of November to March. The numbers of passage Ringed Plovers using UK sites in spring and autumn are much greater than those which remain to overwinter, hence the majority of peak monthly counts from the principal sites of international and national importance relate to passage periods, especially August. As inferred from the monthly indices, in Britain this is probably the case for Ringed Plover more than for any other species of wader.

The peak count of the year was from Ribble Estuary, where 2,931 in August was the most ever from there outside the spring period of April and May, and the highest in any month since 2002/03. Although the table indicates a pronounced decline in recent years at Thames Estuary in terms of peaks across the whole year, numbers there

during the core winter period have in fact remained largely stable.

Overall, Ringed Plovers in Britain have been in long-term decline since the mid 1980s – not only in terms of wintering numbers but also breeding population (Conway & Burton 2009). Human disturbance at nest sites has contributed to the latter's decline; Liley & Sutherland (2007) predicted that preventing nest loss from human activity, for example by fencing nests, would lead to an 8% increase in the Ringed Plover population, while a complete absence of human disturbance would cause a population increase of 85%. Moreover, it is suggested that if numbers of people were to double, the Ringed Plover breeding population would decrease by a further 23%.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Humber Estuary	(1,277)	(2,168)	(783)	(860)	(781)	Aug	(2,168)	
Ribble Estuary	1,459	1,950	(1,016)	1,734	2,931	Aug	2,019	
North Norfolk Coast	1,301	2,310	2,046	1,023	1,814	Aug	1,699	
Severn Estuary	1,111	(662)	1,453	(363)	1,457	Aug	1,340	
The Wash	1,223	1,416	1,127	400	1,831	Aug	1,199	
Thames Estuary	1,998	1,262	1,197	748	726	Oct	1,186	
Solway Estuary	970	(665)	(644)	(402)	(936)	Aug	970	
Morecambe Bay	944	1,000	355	(416)	936	May	809	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Tiree		648 [41]					648	
Swale Estuary	(343)	(392)	(465)	(294)	(605)	Aug	(605)	
Blackwater Estuary	(297)	367	418	531	767	Sep	521	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	(756)	392	127	(551)	744	Aug	514	
Duddon Estuary	567	757 [11]	(495)	200	525	Aug	512	
Dengie Flats	116	331	(127)	1,013	577	Oct	509	
Stour Estuary	496	610	390	428	582	Aug	501	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	193 [11]	(270)	816	594	349	Jan	488	
Forth Estuary	342	348	290	502	(875)	Aug	471	
South Ford	466	300	743	400	300	Jan	442	
Tay Estuary	568	212	235	(170)	658	Aug	418	▲
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(286)	(395)	(223)	(176)	(298)	Aug	(395)	
Lindisfarne	152	415	581	(139)	(224)	Feb	383	
Alt Estuary	153	404	257	515	515	Aug	369	
Chichester Harbour	288	400	365	233	395	Nov	336	▲
Medway Estuary	332 [11]	(94)	(147)	(181)	(109)	Dec	332	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Strangford Lough	342	449	278 [11]	227 [11]	277 [11]	Dec	315	
Outer Ards Shoreline	302	308	338	125	308	Nov	276	
Carlingford Lough	(251)	247	247	154	(105)	Oct	225	
Belfast Lough	206	168 [11]	180	253	147 [11]	Dec	191	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Colne Estuary	466	322	307	249	288	Nov	326	
Hamford Water	(333)	(361)	(328)	349	261	Dec	326	
Swansea Bay	431	453	124	(116)	170	Sep	295	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Mersey Estuary	(211)	(400)	(53)	107	(435)	Aug	288	
Pegwell Bay	(640)	190	50	114	420 [13]	May	283	

Kentish Plover

Scarce

Charadrius alexandrinus

Kentish Plovers were recorded at Pegwell Bay in both passage periods; singles in August and April. This is the tenth WeBS-year in which the species has been recorded at this favoured site.

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

Scarce

Four records of Dotterel represents the most ever in a WeBS-year. Autumn singles at North Norfolk Coast, Pegwell Bay and The Wash in August-September were followed by two at Humber Estuary in May.

American Golden Plover

Pluvialis dominica

Vagrant
Native Range: America

An American Golden Plover was recorded at Bena Water (Shetland) in October; the 12th WeBS record and the second from Scotland following the first just last year.

Eurasian Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

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

GB max: 186,018 Nov
NI max: 16,652 Feb

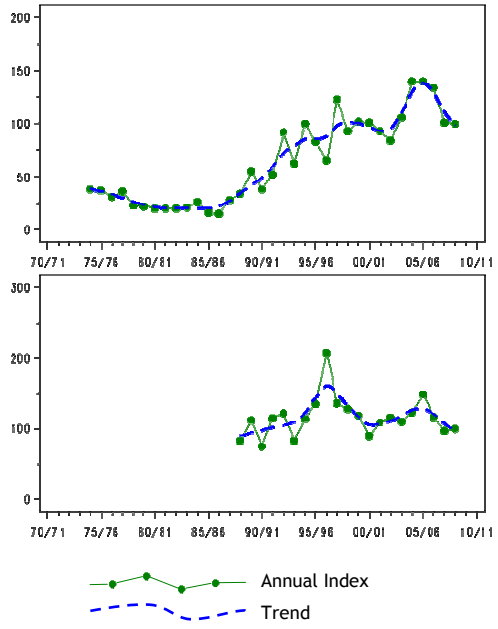


Figure 42.a, Annual indices & trend for Golden Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

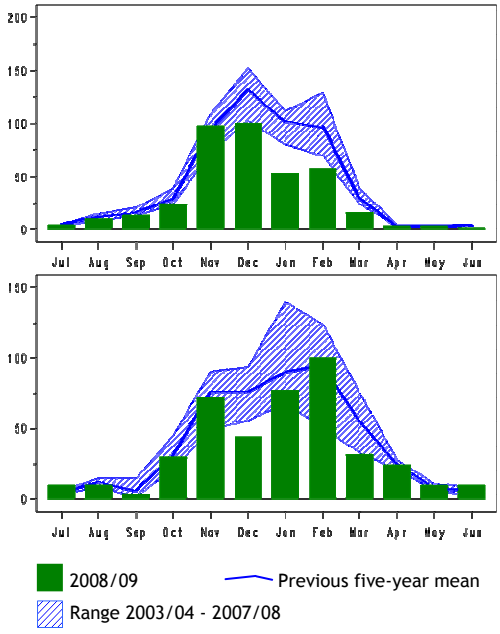


Figure 42.b, Monthly indices for Golden Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

The British national index remained at the same level as the previous year, and hence notably down on the peak attained during the preceding three-year period (2004/05 to 2006/07). In 2008/09, the monthly indices suggest that numbers were particularly low during the second half of the winter period, with the index values for January and February approximately 50% of the average for those months based on the previous five years. Numbers of wintering Golden Plover in The Netherlands have been slowly increasing since the 1990s, so the lower numbers using UK sites may represent a shift in distribution in response to milder winters (Maclean *et al.* 2008). Such theories will be tested by the results of monitoring during the next severe winter on the continent, when one would expect the UK to show evidence of a significant boost in numbers of this species, as well as others such as Lapwing.

This species is incompletely monitored by WeBS. A large-scale survey carried out in

2006/07 estimated the wintering population of Golden Plover to be 400,000 (Gillings & Fuller 2009). Sites classified as wetlands during the survey held 44%, an indication that a significant proportion of the wintering Golden Plovers use grazing marshes and more agricultural habitats, and are therefore not counted routinely during Core counts.

After the inclusion of data collected in 2008/09, the UK now has six sites of international importance for Golden Plovers. This follows the promotion of Somerset Levels, with the site hosting its highest number ever in January following a steady increase in peak counts in recent years. Of other principal sites, the major story relates to The Wash where the peak count of 40,588 in November represents the second highest monthly maximum ever there; second only to 42,671 nine years before. Nineteen other sites in Britain are of national importance, and these now include Severn Estuary where the peak in November was the second highest WeBS count ever from the site, but for the first year ever Morecambe Bay does not feature.

In Northern Ireland, maxima at the most important sites were close to average, with the exception of Bann Estuary where the peak count was the lowest since 2000/01.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Humber Estuary	43,473	47,118	50,188	(23,526)	(29,172)	Feb	46,926	
The Wash	(34,900)	(26,996)	31,350	19,643	40,588	Nov	31,620	
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	30,940	28,220	24,930 [11]	15,790 [13]	30,800 [13]	Dec	26,136	
Swale Estuary	(6,560)	12,014	(10,520)	17,327	(7,407)	Jan	14,671	
Blackwater Estuary	12,747	11,949	(15,810)	5,703	(13,173)	Nov	11,876	
Somerset Levels	8,136	5,018	12,054	12,422	18,467	Jan	11,219	▲
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Hamford Water	5,606	8,859	(5,362)	10,228	7,234 [11]	Nov	7,982	
Carmarthen Bay	7,661	4,047	12,700	10,420	4,244	Jan	7,814	
Dengie Flats	3,660	12,678	5,520	4,520	11,070	Nov	7,490	
Nene Washes	13,000	4,500	8,500	5,650	3,500	Dec	7,030	
Lower Derwent Ings	4,130	6,776	10,600	5,433	2,500	Nov	5,888	
Camel Estuary	4,750 [11]	9,000	(3,000)	2,501	6,000 [13]	Dec	5,563	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	6,600	3,600	5,000	7,210	3,772	Nov	5,236	
Pegwell Bay	5,330	7,000	4,170	(5,500)	3,500	Dec	5,100	
Lindisfarne	3,920	7,081	(3,236)	(2,324)	4,228	Nov	5,076	
Thames Estuary	6,440	7,401	4,817	4,267	2,096	Oct	5,004	
North Norfolk Coast	5,975	5,315	4,552	3,154	5,914	Sep	4,982	
Old Moor	2,100	(6,200)	6,500	(3,800)	5,000	Oct	4,950	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	4,771 [11]	(3,718)	(2,387)	(6,696)	3,298	Dec	4,922	
Severn Estuary	(3,100)	(4,370)	(2,642)	(2,301)	4,745	Nov	4,745	▲
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(6,000)	(2,550)	(4,360)	(1,765)	3,827	Dec	4,729	
Solway Estuary	6,145 [11]	3,991	5,746	3,761	3,223	Nov	4,573	
Ouse Washes	5,450 [13]	10,069	3,312 [13]	2,427 [13]	485	Oct	4,349	
Overcote Marina			6,000 [13]		2,500	Feb	4,250	
Ribble Estuary	1,998	3,829	(3,950)	6,610	4,307	Dec	4,186	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Lough Foyle	7,372	7,640	9,534	9,211	8,486	Feb	8,449	
Strangford Lough	4,578	7,970	8,513 [11]	8,817 [11]	11,328 [11]	Nov	8,241	
Loughs Neagh and Beg	3,447	6,537	6,475	7,712	7,337	Jan	6,302	
Bann Estuary	2,100	2,610	2,100	1,350	900	Dec	1,812	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Morecambe Bay	4,431	5,768	(3,429)	(3,382)	1,716	Feb	3,972	
Middle Yare Marshes	4,400	2,597	3,500	6,000	2,414	Feb	3,782	
Lynemouth Ash Lagoons								
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Colne Fen Gravel Pits	600	30	1	40	4,800	Dec	1,094	
Ouse Fen and Pits (Hanson/RSPB)	1,500	3,034	5,011	930	4,600	Nov	3,015	
Colne Estuary	1,450	2,840	1,563	(8,053)	4,385	Dec	3,658	
Rutland Water	903	2,700	430	1,800	4,000	Nov	1,967	

Grey Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

GB max:	**38,310**	**Feb**
NI max:	**142**	**Feb**

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

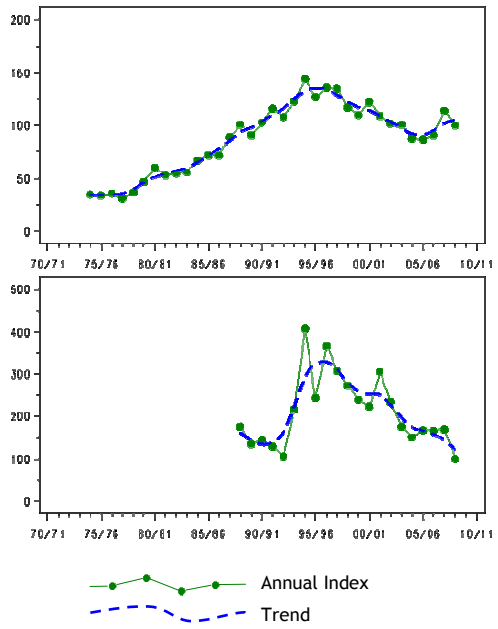


Figure 43.a, Annual indices & trend for Grey Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

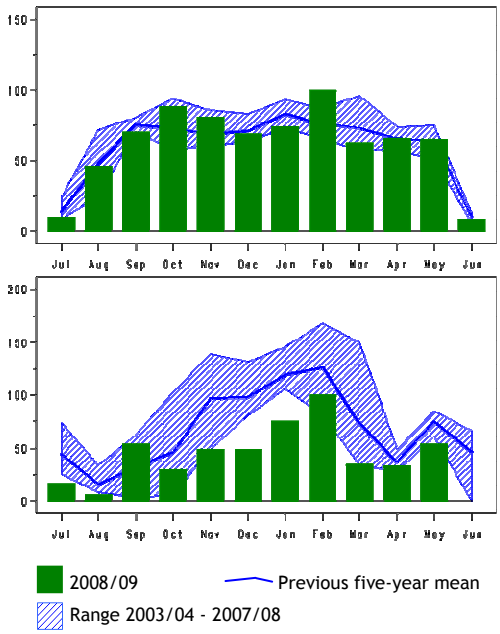


Figure 43.b, Monthly indices for Grey Plover for GB (above) & NI (below).

The Grey Plover breeds in the tundra zones of Eurasia and North America, with the most important wintering areas in Europe being the southern North Sea coasts (including the Wadden Sea), British estuaries and the Atlantic coast of France, plus additional scattered sites in the Mediterranean basin, along the Atlantic coast of Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Africa (Delany *et al*. 2009).

Between the mid 1990s and the mid 2000s, Grey Plovers declined steadily at sites in Britain (having increased at an equally steady rate during the decade up to the mid 1990s). This fall occurred at the same time as a continuation in the long-term increase at sites in The Netherlands, primarily the Wadden Sea (Hustings *et al*. 2009), and was thus attributed to a north eastward shift in wintering distribution by the species (Maclean *et al*. 2008). However, the decline has now bottomed out and there are signs of an apparent recovery, with the indices for both 2007/08 and 2008/09 bucking the preceding decade's downward trend. The counted monthly maximum has also risen, peaking at 38,310 birds in February; an increase of 13% compared to the peak total of two years previously in 2006/07. Whether this rise relates to a genuine increase in population, or a redistribution of birds from further south in the wintering range has not yet been determined. The monthly indices imply higher than normal numbers present at both the start and end of the core wintering period.

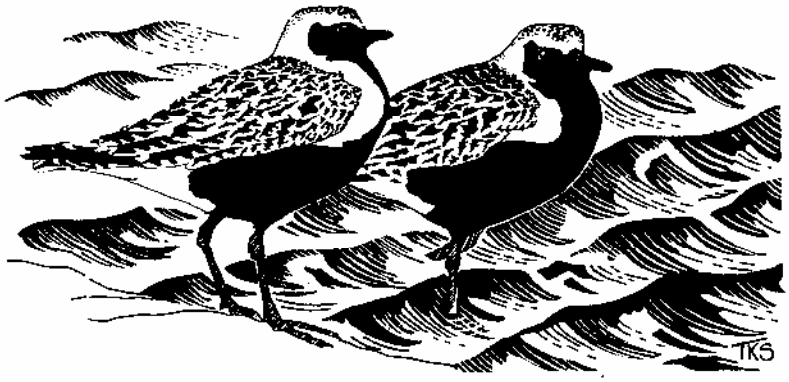
Based on the monthly maxima generated through the last three years of WeBS monitoring, an estimated half of all Grey Plovers in Britain now occur at just two principal sites; The Wash and Dengie Flats. In addition to these locations, the UK now has five other sites of international importance for the species, one less than the previous year following the fall of Stour Estuary after the lowest annual peak count there for over twenty years. Whether the relegation of that site is associated in any way with the declining numbers at Thames

Estuary is unclear. However at the same time as these decreases, numbers of Grey Plovers at The Wash and Dengie Flats have increased markedly, thereby raising the possibility of either a redistribution of birds or a high degree of exchange between sites. Alternatively, it may reflect changes in the distribution or density of crabs; their availability as prey having a strong effect on habitat use by Grey Plovers (Ribeiro *et al*. 2004).

As well as the internationally important locations, a further sixteen sites are of national importance. These include Crouch-Roach Estuary and Beaulieu Estuary, both new additions to the list since the previous year.

In Northern Ireland, the peak count from Strangford Lough was the lowest since 1992/93.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
The Wash	13,480	8,604	9,750	7,455	11,734	Apr	10,205	
Dengie Flats	2,912	4,909	7,239	11,940	10,669	Oct	7,534	
Thames Estuary	3,975	13,028	5,700	2,970	2,694	Sep	5,673	
Blackwater Estuary	4,043	2,650	(4,819)	(5,766)	(2,083)	Nov	4,320	
Ribble Estuary	3,529	(3,813)	3,518	3,902	2,315	Sep	3,415	
Humber Estuary	(1,901)	(2,792)	1,923	(3,417)	(3,530)	May	2,916	
Hamford Water	(2,915)	(2,198)	(2,685)	(2,658)	(2,394)	Nov	(2,915)	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Stour Estuary	2,507	3,263	2,355	2,329 [11]	2,003 [11]	Feb	2,491	▼
Lindisfarne	(962)	1,361	2,171	(989)	2,058	Feb	1,863	
Alt Estuary	2,234	2,837	1,244	1,206	1,731	May	1,850	
Chichester Harbour	2,140	2,017	1,592	1,604	1,416	Nov	1,754	
Swale Estuary	(1,451)	(1,244)	(1,415)	1,631	(1,322)	Mar	1,631	
North Norfolk Coast	1,386	1,483	1,626	1,339 [11]	1,693	Sep	1,505	
Medway Estuary	(762)	989	(467)	(1,586)	(1,331)	Nov	1,302	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	1,214	1,091	1,214	762	2,033 [11]	Jan	1,263	
Pagham Harbour	873	1,067	902	1,269	1,059	Dec	1,034	
Morecambe Bay	1,001	1,074	1,065	747	994	Jan	976	
Langstone Harbour	782	(879)	702	848	989	Dec	840	
Colne Estuary	(623)	(800)	(840)	(720)	(740)	Oct	(840)	
Jersey Shore			939	373			656	
Deben Estuary	1,037	(719)	342	(574)	509	Feb	652	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(518)	(595)	(816)	292	526	Mar	549	▲
Beaulieu Estuary	560	381	640	545	526	Nov	530	▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Strangford Lough	114	249 [11]	141	118	84	Feb	141	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Severn Estuary	287	561	207	428	595	Nov	416	
Eden Estuary	450	(356)	400	590	558	Feb	500	



Grey Plovers (Tim Sykes)

Northern Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: 6,200
All-Ireland threshold: 2,100

GB max: 287,223 Dec
NI max: 16,719 Jan

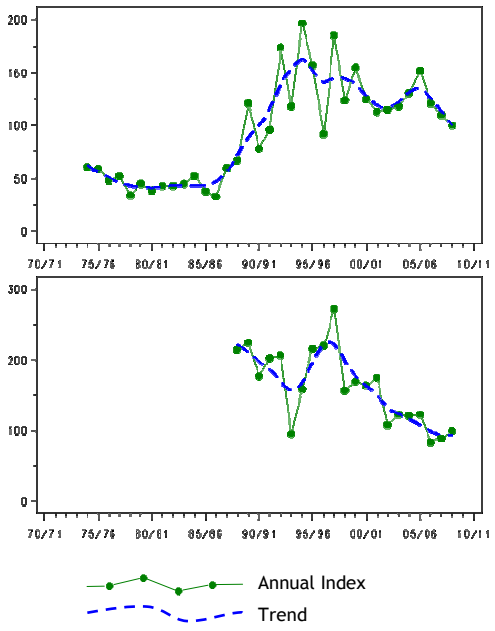


Figure 44.a, Annual indices & trend for Lapwing for GB (above) & NI (below).

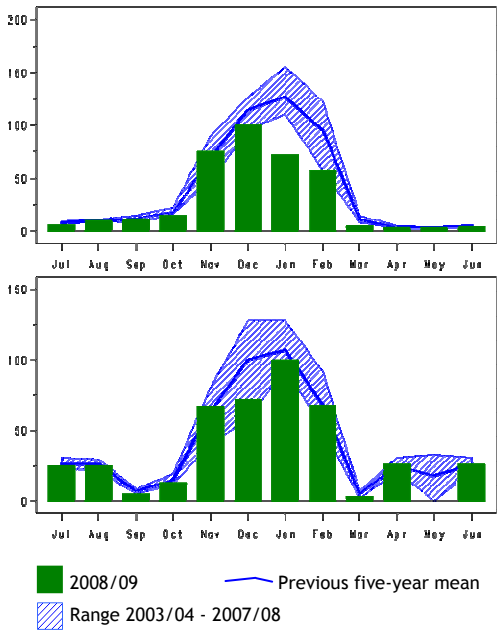


Figure 44.b, Monthly indices for Lapwing for GB (above) & NI (below).

The Lapwing population wintering in the UK comprises the part of the breeding population that does not move southwards to continental Europe, supplemented by birds from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia. Prolonged periods of frozen conditions can lead to additional cold weather movements, as well as forcing British birds south and west, and at the local scale from inland sites towards the coast. Numbers wintering in the UK are known to vary in response to temperatures in continental Europe.

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, updated the estimated number of Lapwings wintering in Great Britain to 620,000, of which sites classified as wetlands held 54% (Gillings & Fuller 2009). Following 2008/09, there are three sites of international importance in the UK, after Ribble Estuary and Ouse Washes fell below the qualifying threshold of 20,000 birds. The two long-standing sites of greatest importance, The Wash and Somerset Levels, both returned peak counts some 25% lower than their respective five-year means. In general, numbers of Lapwings at the key sites in both Britain and Northern Ireland were disappointing and as a result the national indices fell for a third year in a row. The British index is now at a level comparable to that of twenty years ago, when the Lapwing population was in the ascendancy.

Considering that Lapwing populations appear to be stable in adjacent North Sea countries (e.g. Hustings *et al.* 2009), only time will tell if the current downward trend exhibited by the species in both Britain and Northern Ireland continues. Furthermore, one assumes that the close similarity with the trend exhibited by Golden Plover will be maintained, and that the fortunes of the two species will continue to follow a similar path.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Somerset Levels	60,834	48,116	38,388	44,457	31,928	Jan	44,745
The Wash	43,822	36,327	36,998	11,186	24,543	Nov	30,575
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	29,136	25,140	17,620 [13]	19,700 [13]	38,700 [13]	Dec	26,059
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Ribble Estuary	25,991	24,265	13,821	18,066	16,777	Nov	19,784
Ouse Washes	26,072 [13]	25,835	13,026	11,222	(7,343)	Dec	19,039
Humber Estuary	(16,856)	27,421	(19,403)	16,500	11,700 [13]	Dec	18,756
Thames Estuary	14,657	18,662	17,270	(7,783)	(6,147)	Dec	16,863
Morecambe Bay	16,701	19,192	13,484	(6,191)	(17,535)	Nov	16,728
Swale Estuary	(13,270)	14,913	(10,840)	23,479	9,996	Jan	16,129
Severn Estuary	(11,312)	19,434	(9,895)	(11,035)	11,951	Feb	15,693
North Norfolk Coast	7,833	13,305	11,560	11,185	10,419	Dec	10,860
Pegwell Bay	5,420	(8,100)	17,000	12,000	8,260 [11]	Feb	10,670
Dungeness and Rye Bay	14,726	9,320	9,936	12,758	5,320	Dec	10,412
Solway Estuary	(5,989)	9,381	(7,622)	(5,128)	(5,023)	Nov	9,381
Crouch-Roach Estuary	11,288 [11]	(8,464)	8,438	(9,255)	8,002	Nov	9,246
Blackwater Estuary	6,785	6,766	(8,160)	8,503	10,129	Dec	8,069
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	(7,512)	8,800	6,775	9,526	4,402	Feb	7,403
Nene Washes	7,050	6,070	4,720	10,575	6,353	Jan	6,954
Alde Complex	5,472	7,843	5,406	7,322	(5,462)	Dec	6,511
Mersey Estuary	9,370	10,098 [11]	2,280	7,154	3,500	Dec	6,480
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	7,584	6,684	5,421	(7,720)	6,263	Jan	6,734
Strangford Lough	5,792	6,635	5,154 [11]	3,906 [11]	5,198 [11]	Feb	5,337
Lough Foyle	3,606	4,745	2,543	1,816	2,945	Jan	3,131
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Lower Derwent Ings	7,920	7,520	4,610	7,406	2,202	Sep	5,932

Knot

Calidris canutus

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

GB max: 312,202 Nov
NI max: 3,521 Jan

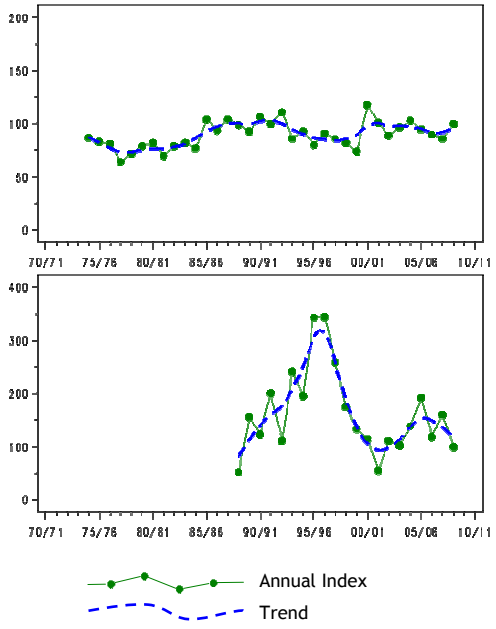


Figure 45.a, Annual indices & trend for Knot for GB (above) & NI (below).

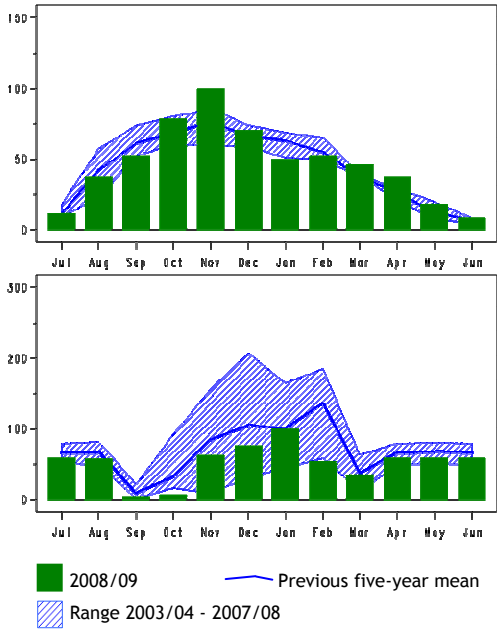


Figure 45.b, Monthly indices for Knot for GB (above) & NI (below).

It is assumed that all Knots wintering in Western Europe are from the sub-population *islandica* (breeding in northeast Canada and Greenland), while the nominate race *canutus* (breeding in Taimyr) winters in Africa. Typically, numbers in Britain are highest between October and December, when many move west having staged at the principal moult site of the Wadden Sea, which supports approximately 75% of staging birds (Davidson 2002). WeBS-year 2008/09 was no exception in that respect, with the monthly indices illustrating a pronounced peak in numbers in November.

Knot numbers in eastern England in late 2008 provided further evidence of the importance of both The Wash and North Norfolk Coast, and indicate that these sites are perhaps best not considered separately with respect to site use by this species. The peak count from The Wash, 93,957 in November, was noticeably lower than the peak of the last three years. It is apparent that during both October and November, an unusually large proportion of Knots on that stretch of the British coastline were roosting at nearby Holme on the North Norfolk Coast, where in excess of 80,000 were present in both months. The combined counts of Knot from the two sites in October and November were 167,334 and 175,419, respectively; similar to the maximum of 165,042 in October of the previous year.

The Knot is one of the most faithful waders in terms of use of roost sites (Peters & Otis 2007), so whether this change represents merely a temporary displacement from The Wash, or a genuine shift of favoured roost site, remains to be seen. Furthermore, the influence of tide height and the possible effects of the increased likelihood of disturbance at Holme are also likely to play a significant role in roost site selection. Interestingly, the large increase in numbers noted on North Norfolk Coast follows a monthly peak in 2007/08 which had been the lowest there for twelve years, and occurred at the same time as record numbers were noted on The Wash. The recent recovery in Knot numbers on The Wash follows a period of steady decline and overall change in the waterbird assemblage that resulted from over-exploitation of the shellfishery stock and increased nutrient input (Atkinson *et al.* 2010).

Among the other 13 sites of international importance, below average numbers were noted in southeast England at Thames Estuary and Dengie Flats, but further north the peak total at Morecambe Bay was the highest for five years and the typical early spring peak of northbound birds at Ribble Estuary was the highest ever reported there. The continued improved coverage of Severn Estuary has now derived a five-year mean over the threshold for international importance, however, the peak total from Forth Estuary was the lowest ever and that site fell below the qualifying level for the first time.

Across Britain as a whole, following three years of small declines the national index rose to a level fractionally above the long-term average. In Northern Ireland, where the index typically fluctuates markedly between years owing to the relatively small number of sites where the species is recorded, the peak count was once again from Dundrum Inner Bay where more than 1,000 were noted for the second year in succession.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
The Wash	105,912	139,270	135,889	162,724	93,957	Nov	127,550
Thames Estuary	33,024	24,254	83,716	45,162	28,201	Dec	42,871
Humber Estuary	(37,015)	(35,004)	(33,529)	41,772	(17,552)	Dec	41,772
Ribble Estuary	36,200	(26,106)	(41,681)	30,136	(45,400)	Apr	38,354
North Norfolk Coast	38,714	25,551	22,928	11,239	84,812	Oct	36,649
Morecambe Bay	29,596	31,245	19,635	(21,421)	42,671	Nov	30,787
Dengie Flats	22,700	15,650	30,500	17,375	10,200	Oct	19,285
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	10,243	24,505	12,937	11,212	20,850 [11]	Nov	15,949
Alt Estuary	19,006	12,454	15,011	12,900	19,602	Jan	15,795
Solway Estuary	13,142	(7,662)	8,910	(14,385)	(13,364)	Dec	12,450
Strangford Lough	5,730	8,014 [11]	5,380 [11]	7,360 [11]	6,376 [11]	Dec	6,572
Stour Estuary	8,454	6,701	3,028	6,660	4,357 [11]	Oct	5,840
Blackwater Estuary	6,273	(5,326)	2,610	(3,492)	(8,630)	Jan	5,710

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Burry Inlet	8,259	4,301	4,300	7,100	2,830	Jan	5,358	
Severn Estuary	(1,061)	(2,642)	(966)	5,510	4,081	Dec	4,796	▲
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	3,446	5,146	2,762	2,485	5,952	Feb	3,958	
Swale Estuary	2,538	4,060	4,506	5,002	3,528	Jan	3,927	
Forth Estuary	5,077	4,685	(3,542)	3,298	2,183	Feb	3,811	▼
Lindisfarne	4,197	(4,172)	1,475	(4,111)	(4,150)	Jan	3,621	
Medway Estuary	3,024 [11]	3,574	(550)	2,940	4,304	Jan	3,461	
Carmarthen Bay	5,475	680	1,722 [11]	6,486 [11]	1,470 [11]	Jan	3,167	
Hamford Water	2,481	3,185	3,550	2,200	4,263 [11]	Nov	3,136	
Orwell Estuary	2,115 [11]	3,569 [11]	1,825	3,552 [11]	3,375 [11]	Jan	2,884	
Cromarty Firth	5,000	3,132	1,104	2,290	(660)	Oct	2,882	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Dundrum Inner Bay	(475)	270	100	2,560	1,023	Feb	988	
Tyrella					(495)	Feb	(495)	▲
Lough Foyle	470	470	225	501	400	Jan	413	

Sanderling

Calidris alba

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

GB max: 11,309 Jan
NI max: 925 Sep

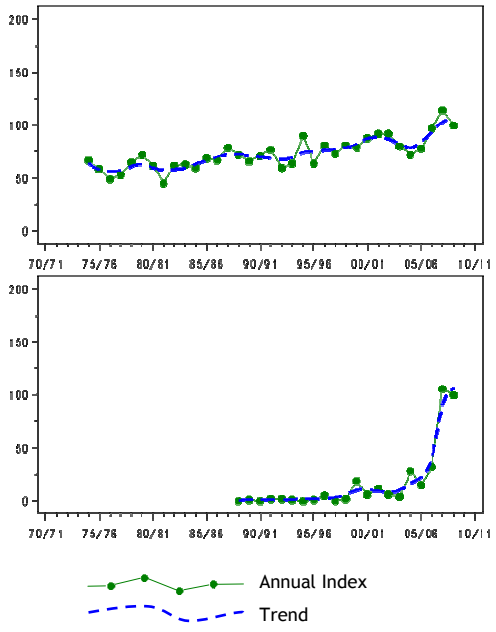


Figure 46.a, Annual indices & trend for Sanderling for GB (above) & NI (below).

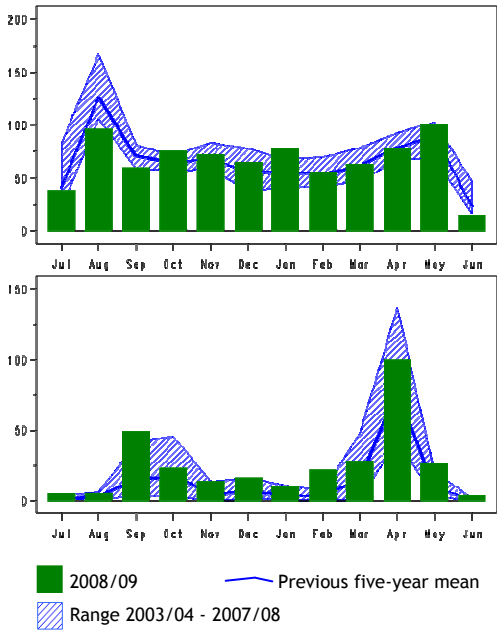


Figure 46.b, Monthly indices for Sanderling for GB (above) & NI (below).

Sanderling breed in the high Arctic and birds from both the Siberian and Greenland populations migrate south into northwest Europe utilising a network of key sites, recently reviewed by Reneerkens *et al.* (2009). In previous years, separate tables have been presented for Sanderling for winter and passage periods, but for the purposes of consistency these are now combined in the same manner as for other species.

There is indication from the national trend that the slow increase in numbers observed since the early 1990s may have quickened; the three years in which the national index has reached its highest value have all been since 2006/07. This increase is similar to that experienced in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009), and

both trends may represent a redistribution of birds from the part of the wintering range further south in Europe. Similarly, the index for Northern Ireland remained at the very high level attained in the previous year, primarily due to a large number again present at Lough Foyle. Changing climate can also influence the breeding phenology of high Arctic-breeding waders due to the effects of altered food abundance (Meltofte *et al*. 2007), but is it unclear whether such effects are yet being seen at the flyway population level.

Four sites surpassed the threshold for international importance based on the use of monthly maxima from throughout the WeBS-year. Generally, Ribble Estuary is the site that tends to support the largest numbers, peaking during passage periods, and the maximum noted there in April was slightly above average compared to the most recent years – which in a historical context have failed to match the all-time spring and autumn peaks of 8,737 (May 1992) and 9,450 (July 1972). Whereas the count of 1,812 birds at Carmarthen Bay in December represented the highest ever Core observation from there, this year's maxima at Alt Estuary and The Wash were the lowest at those sites for ten and eleven years, respectively.

Twenty-three further sites in Britain and five in Northern Ireland are now of national importance, including Severn Estuary where more Sanderlings were noted than ever before, no doubt assisted by the complete coverage of the site, surpassing the previous maximum dating back to July 1973.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Ribble Estuary	4,830	3,491	(4,690)	4,700	(4,800)	Apr	4,502	
Alt Estuary	2,278	2,317	3,090	2,171	1,833	May	2,338	
The Wash	2,386	3,291	1,504	1,430	1,420	Aug	2,006	
Carmarthen Bay	769	(800)	2,370 [11]	1,955 [11]	1,812	Dec	1,727	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
North Norfolk Coast	1,021	1,241	973	1,200 [11]	927	May	1,072	
Thames Estuary	1,269	1,072	870	689	951	Oct	970	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	1,026	1,020	370	762	778	Nov	791	
Jersey Shore			831	739			785	
Scuthvie Bay			(110)	705	810	Nov	758	
Humber Estuary	(589)	(576)	(362)	(706)	(662)	May	(706)	
Morecambe Bay	765	925	332	477	532	Sep	606	
North Bay (South Uist)	340	300	318	650	780	Jan	478	
Tiree		468 [41]					468	
Duddon Estuary	361	332	623 [13]	(450) [12]	(241)	Nov	442	
Lindisfarne	388 [11]	294	509	467	480	Nov	428	
Solway Estuary	416	(524)	501	(455)	189	Aug	417	
Ardivachar Point (South Uist)	550	500	350	267	372	Sep	408	
Swansea Bay	234	467	440 [11]	(279)	327	Feb	367	
Thanet Coast	418	307	322	431	282	Oct	352	
South Ford	430	172	218	300	400	Dec	304	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	389	330	183 [13]	300 [13]	234	Mar	287	
Tay Estuary	186	635	303	103	160	Mar	277	
Tees Estuary	307	253	191	(193)	(351)	May	276	
Severn Estuary	(213)	222	(140)	(29)	324	Mar	273	▲
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(221)	(269)	(183)	(150)	(176)	Aug	(269)	
Forth Estuary	226	290	168	387	(224)	Aug	268	
Ryde Pier to Puckpool Point	143	305	200	310			240	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Lough Foyle	(0)	(0)	(190)	879	925	Sep	902	
Bann Estuary	282	268	251	69	108	Apr	196	
Dundrum Inner Bay	(48)	5	180	200	155	Jan	135	
Tyrella					(73)	Feb	(73)	▲
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Pegwell Bay	180	41	120	110	280 [13]	May	146	
Chichester Harbour	77	109	324	245	242	Nov	199	
Afan Estuary and Port Talbot Harbour	161	8	0	12	240	Apr	84	
Climping	20	131	166	(184)	211	Jan	142	

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

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

GB max:	**99**	**Sep**
NI max:	**2**	**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 40 WeBS sites in 2008/09, one-third fewer than in the previous year. These included three sites in Scotland, three in Wales and two in Northern Ireland.

A protracted autumn passage built up slowly, peaked in September (with a relatively low counted maximum of 99 birds) and continued into October. Overall, passage occurred slightly earlier than noted by WeBS during the previous year. However, drawing inferences from such monthly totals is probably not recommended as they may merely represent an artefact of the timing of the WeBS Core count priority dates. The bulk of birds were noted at just three sites; North Norfolk Coast, The Wash and Severn Estuary. Numbers elsewhere were relatively poor, with generally just ones and twos scattered across primarily coastal wetland sites.

Small numbers of wintering birds were noted at seven sites in December to February. These were mostly on major estuaries with the exception of up to five at Port Meadow, and one inland at Rutland Water in December where small numbers of winterering birds have been regular since the late 1990s. In spring, singles were noted at six coastal sites; a series of records which culminated with eight at The Wash in June.

Sites with five or more birds in 2008/09†

North Norfolk Coast	23	Sep	Dungeness & Rye Bay	5	Sep
The Wash	20	Sep	Humber Estuary	5	Dec
Severn Estuary	12	Oct	Port Meadow	5	Jan

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

Little Stint (Tommy Holden)

Temminck's Stint

Scarce

Calidris temminckii

Two Temminck's Stints were at Camel Estuary in September; the second WeBS record there, following one in May 2005.

White-rumped Sandpiper

Calidris fuscicollis

Vagrant
Native Range: America

Singles were recorded at Lough Foyle in September and Tamar Complex in December. The only previous December WeBS record relates to the first ever, at Ribble Estuary in 1970.

Baird's Sandpiper

Calidris bairdii

Vagrant
Native Range: America

One was present at Brue Estuary in October. This represents the 16th WeBS record, the first two of which were also on the Severn, in 1974 and 1977.

Pectoral Sandpiper

Calidris melanotos

Vagrant
Native Range: America, N Siberia, Australia

During the autumn, Pectoral Sandpipers were noted at six sites in England and two in Northern Ireland. Records were from The Wash in August and September, with the latter month also yielding birds at Camel Estuary (2), Colne Fen Gravel Pits, Cresswell Pond, Lough Foyle and Belfast Lough. One at North West Solent in May provided a notable spring record.

Curlew Sandpiper

Calidris ferruginea

International threshold:	**10,000**
Great Britain threshold:	**?†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**?†**

GB max:	**150**	**Sep**
NI max:	**5**	**Sep**

Curlew Sandpipers are passage migrants to the UK, breeding in central Siberia and predominantly wintering in central and southern Africa. In the UK they are scarce in spring, and numbers seen in autumn are highly dependent on the summer's breeding success. Numbers in the UK are small compared to those using staging sites across the North Sea; for example up to 27,000 have been noted on the German part of the Wadden Sea (Delany *et al*. 2009).

In 2008/09, the species was recorded at 53 WeBS sites, including four in Northern Ireland. Autumn passage spanned July to October and the peak count from an individual site was in August (43 at The Wash; of which 37 were at Gibraltar Point). However, in general the species was restricted in its distribution until September when it became more widespread. Then, a monthly maximum of 177 included peaks of 17 at Cresswell Pond, nine at Breydon Water & Berney Marshes and six at Taw-Torridge Estuary. Inland, five were at Rutland Water and three at Ouse Fen & Pits. In Northern Ireland, September-October records comprised 1-2 at Lough Foyle, Dundrum Inner Bay and Bann Estuary.

Following two November records from Thames Estuary and Fal Complex, the only definite wintering individual was at Crouch-Roach Estuary in January and February. In spring, 1-2 were seen at seven coastal sites.

Sites with eight or more birds in 2008/09†

The Wash	43 Aug	Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	9 Sep
Cresswell Pond	17 Sep	Ribble Estuary	8 Oct
Severn Estuary	13 Aug		

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

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

GB max:	**1,745**	**Feb**
NI max:	**106**	**Jan**

International threshold:	**750**
Great Britain threshold:	**180†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**35***

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

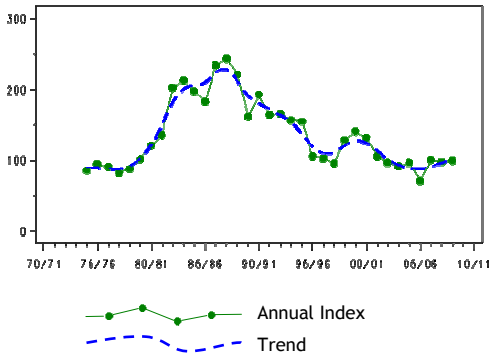


Figure 47.a, Annual indices & trend for Purple Sandpiper for GB.

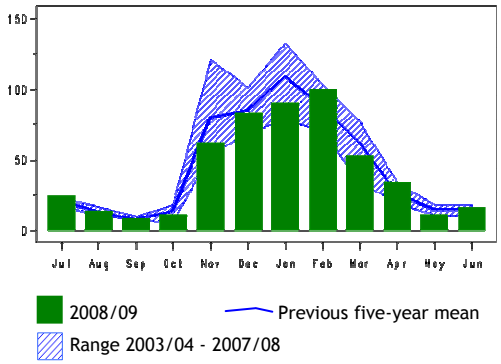


Figure 47.b, Monthly indices for Purple Sandpiper for GB.

The wintering population of Purple Sandpipers in the UK comprises birds which breed in eastern Canada, Scandinavia and Svalbard. Birds breeding in Iceland and much of Greenland are considered more likely to be resident. The majority are to be found on relatively poorly monitored rocky shores along the Scottish coastline. Such habitats are covered more effectively by the occasional NEWS (Non-Estuarine Waterbird survey), last carried out in 2007 (Austin *et al.* 2008). Typically, sizeable gatherings also concentrate at favoured sites during passage periods at either end of the migration to and from the breeding areas.

Purple Sandpipers (Tommy Holden)

Following a marked decline during the 1980s and 1990s, the national indices since the turn of the 2000s have been largely stable at their current low level. There is a suggestion of a change in the winter distribution of this species in recent years, with the proportion of birds now found in the north-western parts of the UK considered to have increased, indicating a shift towards the Canadian breeding grounds (Rehfisch *et al.* 2004).

The largest WeBS counts in 2008/09 related to 324 on Papa Westray in November and 348+ on Farne Islands in October; the two regularly counted sites of national importance for this species. Counts of more than 130 were also received from six other sites in Scotland: Ardivachar Point (South Uist), Moray Coast, Scuthvie Bay, Dee Estuary, Thurso Bay and Dornoch Firth. Away from northern Britain, much smaller groups tend to frequent anthropogenic sites such as harbour entrances and sea defence structures, as well as the relatively limited stretches of rocky shore. In 2008/09, the highest counts from sites in England were 49 at Scarborough and 43 at Morecambe Bay, both in January, and 41 at Thanet Coast in February.

In Northern Ireland, numbers at Outer Ards Shoreline, the most important site for the species in the country, were close to average. Notable peaks from the six other sites where Purple Sandpipers were recorded included 21 at Belfast Lough in November and 17 at Newcastle Shore in February.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Island of Papa Westray	385	431		413	324	Nov	388
Tiree		368 [35]					368
Farne Islands	375	116	(184)	(171)	(348)	Oct	280
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Outer Ards Shoreline	84	60	122	66	85	Jan	83
Sites with mean peak counts of 100 or more birds in Great Britain							
Ardivachar Point (South Uist)	144	200	139	108	233	Feb	165
Moray Coast	134	118	67	229	199	Dec	149
Scuthvie Bay			(35)	164	130	Feb	147
Dee Estuary (Scotland)	185	157	140	88	145	Dec	143
Forth Estuary	(93)	112	98	145	(114)	Nov	118
Thurso Bay	120	28	50 [13]	160	170	Jan	106
Island of Egilsay	81	130	(90)		99	Jan	103
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Dornoch Firth	19	32	20	123	136	Jan	66
The Houb (Whalsay)	29	82	146	74	107	Apr	88
Beadnell to Seahouses	72	74	110	78	100	Dec	87

† *as few sites exceed the British threshold a qualifying level of 100 has been chosen to select sites for presentation*

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

International threshold: 13,300
Great Britain threshold: 5,600
All-Ireland threshold: 880

GB max: 274,263 Dec
NI max: 9,554 Jan

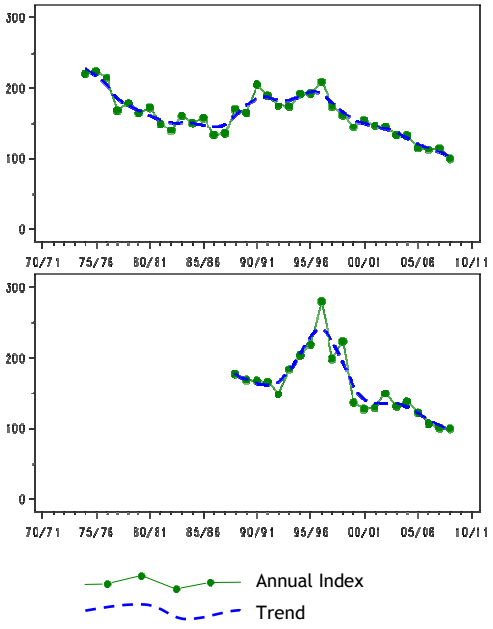


Figure 48.a, Annual indices & trend for Dunlin for GB (above) & NI (below).

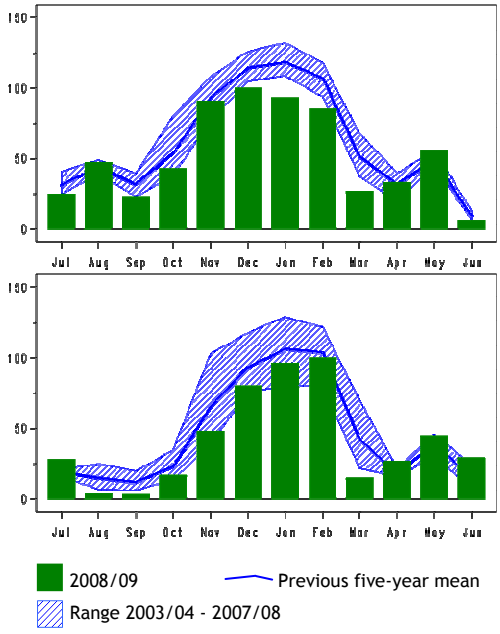


Figure 48.b, Monthly indices for Dunlin for GB (above) & NI (below).

The British index for Dunlin reached its lowest ever point in 2008/09; this species is experiencing a strong decline in the UK with no signs of any change of fortune. This fall, particularly in Britain, is strongly mirrored by increasing numbers in the Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009) indicating that a larger proportion of birds migrating from northern breeding populations are now wintering on the Wadden Sea, probably as a result of milder conditions. Declines in wintering numbers of other wader species in UK, including Bar-tailed Godwit and Curlew, have also been attributed to similar shifts in wintering distribution (Maclean *et al.* 2008). Conversely, numbers of Dunlin

recorded on the Wadden Sea on passage, significantly declined during the 1990s (*www.waddensea-secretariat.org/TMAP/9-birds.html*).

Of the 23 sites in the UK of international or national importance for Dunlin, only six recorded a winter peak in 2008/09 that was higher than the respective recent five-year site average. At Chichester Harbour, counts suggest there may have been some displacement of birds from the adjacent Langstone Harbour which may explain the apparently large increase at the former site. In contrast, the most marked declines were at Mersey Estuary, The Wash and Langstone Harbour where peak counts in 2008/09 were all at least 25% lower than the respective five-year site averages.

The highest individual site counts in the last two WeBS-years have been noted at Ribble Estuary during spring passage, when birds of the nominate race (which breeds from Scandinavia north and westwards) are joined by the *arctica* and *schinzii* races. Recent research into the phenology of spring and autumn migration at inland sites in central Europe has shown that the Dunlin is one of three species (along with Wood Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper) which has significantly advanced its spring passage (Adamík & Pietruszková 2008), presumably in response to climatic amelioration.

In Northern Ireland, the overall trend has also been one of steady decline in the past twelve years. In 2008/09, counts were variable at individual sites, seven of which are of national importance. As far as the two most important sites are concerned, the count from Lough Foyle was the highest for five years whereas that at Strangford Lough was the lowest since 1992/93.

Beale *et al*. (2006) found there to be significant annual variation in recruitment in Dunlins, which was strongly correlated with summer temperature (but not rainfall) on breeding grounds. Furthermore, the same study found that years with high recruitment were correlated with increases in the national winter population estimate.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Ribble Estuary	(27,847)	29,305	33,506	52,551	(45,662)	May	40,256
Thames Estuary	40,838	39,889	33,335	34,941	(26,842)	Dec	37,251
Mersey Estuary	43,020	34,731 [11]	34,600	41,270	23,115	Jan	35,347
The Wash	42,361	35,468	25,913	24,523	24,444	Apr	30,542
Morecambe Bay	17,848	(27,110)	38,248	21,743	20,289	Dec	25,048
Humber Estuary	(14,733)	(26,305)	(14,951)	16,730	(15,444)	Jan	21,518
Severn Estuary	(16,069)	(19,561)	16,625	(16,072)	25,993	Nov	21,309
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	16,878	19,867	35,834	12,094	16,855 [11]	Jan	20,306
Langstone Harbour	28,239	22,356	12,950	15,007	8,126	Feb	17,336
Chichester Harbour	12,651	12,989	14,152	(18,759)	26,311	Nov	16,972
Blackwater Estuary	(16,007)	15,178	9,581	15,015	17,966	Dec	14,749
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Stour Estuary	(8,156)	7,019	7,231	8,150	18,338 [11]	Feb	10,185
Solway Estuary	(14,628)	9,396	6,512	(7,194)	7,836	Dec	9,593
Dengie Flats	8,254	13,018	(7,340)	6,116	10,650	Nov	9,510
Medway Estuary	9,373 [11]	7,367	(5,222)	(9,132)	(10,633)	Dec	9,126
Duddon Estuary	6,970 [11]	8,741 [11]	6,542	14,523	8,000 [13]	Jan	8,955
Swale Estuary	9,181	7,830	5,706	(7,692)	6,419	Jan	7,366
Alt Estuary	8,540	5,184	7,630	7,652	7,819	May	7,365
Poole Harbour	(7,026)	(2,182)	(2,196)	(2,350)	(3,271)	Jan	(7,026)
Portsmouth Harbour	3,933	(9,228)	(6,592)	(7,002)	(6,842)	Feb	6,719
Colne Estuary	(3,359)	(5,323)	(3,756)	6,716 [11]	(4,970)	Dec	6,716
Burry Inlet	6,318	6,965	6,218 [11]	6,903	5,703	Jan	6,421
Forth Estuary	9,132	6,422	5,488	4,937	5,855	Dec	6,367
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	4,387	8,072 [11]	5,755 [11]	5,310 [13]	4,720 [13]	Jan	5,649
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	4,934	7,669 [11]	3,151 [11]	4,115 [11]	4,455 [11]	Dec	4,865
Lough Foyle	1,688	3,334	1,592	2,028	3,750	Feb	2,478
Carlingford Lough	2,238	1,573	(2,185)	2,621	1,552	Jan	2,034
Outer Ards Shoreline	742	1,119	2,810	739	605	Jan	1,203
Dundrum Inner Bay	(497)	1,202	1,047	1,186	1,277	Feb	1,178
Belfast Lough	1,136 [11]	920	(1,712)	742	699	Dec	1,042
Bann Estuary	1,100	1,090	1,030	900	671	Jan	958
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Lindisfarne	5,885	(5,540)	6,951	(5,315)	3,755	Feb	5,533

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Tryngites subruficollis

Vagrant
Native Range: America

After none the previous year, two were seen in 2008/09; the 18th-19th WeBS records. Singles were at Cresswell Pond in September and Lough Foyle in October.

Ruff

Philomachus pugnax

International threshold: 12,500
Great Britain threshold: 7*
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: 469 Nov
NI max: 3 Sep

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

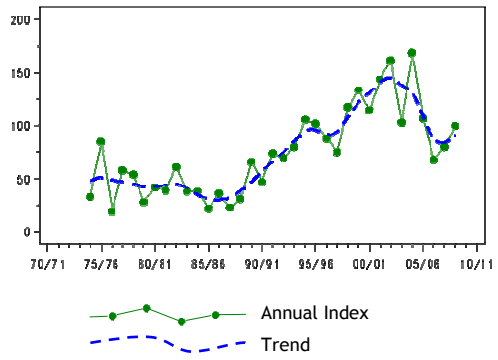


Figure 49.a, Annual indices & trend for Ruff for GB.

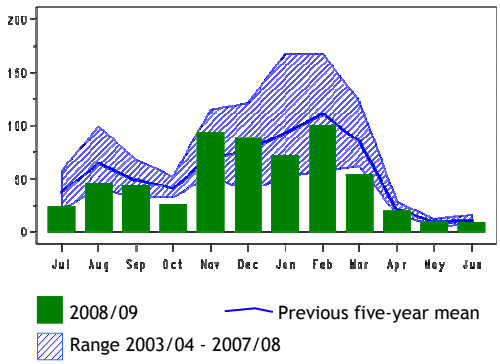


Figure 49.b, Monthly indices for Ruff for GB.

There was a small recovery in the national index for Ruff, although the monthly British maximum was lower than that of the previous year. Reasons for this apparent recent drop in wintering numbers, following a marked increase during the 1990s and early 2000s, are unclear. However, it is associated with a concurrent fall in numbers at both Ouse Washes and Nene Washes, where counts of 300+ and 100+ respectively were regular when the index was rising towards its peak. The similar appearance of recent trends for this species and those for Lapwing, Golden Plover, and to a lesser extent Wigeon, suggest that observed changes for this suite of wetland species may be habitat related. Alternatively, they may have been driven by changes in numbers or habitat use at a small number of sites, either in the UK or neighbouring areas in the international range.

In 2008/09, peak counts from the two sites at the top of the table, Ouse Washes and North Norfolk Coast, were similar to those of the last two to three years. Fortunes elsewhere were more mixed.

Fewer Ruffs compared to recent years were noted at several traditionally favoured sites including Lower Derwent Ings, Swale Estuary and Middle Yare Marshes. However, a site maximum was recorded at Hickling Broad and the counts at Somerset Levels in the last two years represent the highest since WeBS monitoring began there in 1991.

There were just two records of Ruffs in Northern Ireland; from Belfast Lough and Dundrum Inner Bay, both of which were in September. The former site and Loughs Neagh & Beg have both hosted 30+ in recent years; therefore 2008/09 was very poor.

One percent of male Ruffs are 'female look-alikes'; referred to as fæders. These individuals attempt to reproduce by acting as sneakers at leks, but do not take part in normal lekking activities like 'normal' males. Recent research has found such individuals associate with other males outside the breeding season, both wintering and migrating with the larger-sized normal males. The survival costs to fæders linked to the use of sub-optimal habitats as a result of competition from their larger counterparts may be compensated by higher breeding success. In terms of overall numbers, the fraction of fæders in flocks of

Ruff varies from 0.3% in autumn in the UK, up to 0.9% in Senegal during winter and 1.1% in The Netherlands in spring (Verkuil *et al*. 2008).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Ouse Washes	(431)	357 [13]	82 [13]	135 [13]	115	Jan	224	
North Norfolk Coast	270	193	121	90	189	Dec	173	
Lower Derwent Ings	73	50	148	129	45	Nov	89	
Overcote Marina			112 [13]		58	Feb	85	
WWT Martin Mere	83	(50)	76	67	48	Oct	69	
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	86	72	55 [12]	89 [13]	20	Aug	64	
Humber Estuary	35	84	61	62	79	Oct	64	
Swale Estuary	128	37	49	40	14	Feb	54	
Somerset Levels	10	12	29	96	48	Feb	39	
Morecambe Bay	(3)	4	92	(1)	2	Aug	33	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	30	56	34	16	22	Jan	32	
Middle Yare Marshes	53	40	27	21	18	Nov	32	
Ribble Estuary	29	17	32	37	40	Oct	31	
Nene Washes	16	2	4	38	76	Mar	27	
Rutland Water	20	32	29	15	20	Sep	23	
Tees Estuary	8	(29)	33	15	19	Sep	21	
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	0	1	33	60	8	Feb	20	
Severn Estuary	13	16	33	14	18	Jan	19	
Abberton Reservoir	6	36	(9)	21	5	Sep	17	
Thames Estuary	28	38	3	4	11	Dec	17	
Blackwater Estuary	24	18	10	15	18	Sep	17	
Hickling Broad	0	0	3		55	Sep	15	▲
Tophill Low Reservoirs	4	4	0	62 [13]	1	Sep	14	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	29	10	9	11	13	Sep	14	
Stour Estuary	3	55	1	1	1	Apr	12	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	42 [11]	4	2	6	5 [13]	Feb	12	
Hamford Water	17	18	5	14	7	Mar	12	
Minsmere	9	12	20	10	9	Mar	12	
Sandbach Flashes	13	13	14	12	8	Feb	12	
Nosterfield Gravel Pits	11	3	23	9			12	
Arun Valley	24	7	10	(10)	3	Sep	11	
The Wash	5	14	11	(2)	12	Sep	11	
Loch of Strathbeg	7	21	8	6	11	Aug	11	
Holland Marshes	14	10	17	7	3	Sep	10	
Buckden and Stirtloe Pits					10	Nov	10	▲
Cresswell Pond	6	6	10	2	24	Sep	10	
East Chevington Pools	12	28	6	1	0		9	
Stodmarsh	2	14	5	8	10	Oct	8	
Otmoor	4	0	31 [13]	3 [13]	3 [13]	Mar	8	
Hurworth Burn Reservoir		10	0	3	17	Sep	8	▲
Forth Estuary	5	(9)	14	4	6	Sep	8	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Orwell Estuary	(3)	5	9	6	2	Oct	6	
Hardley Flood	0	0	0	16	8	Jan	5	
Solway Estuary	2	8	3	1	5	Sep	4	
Sites with mean peak counts of 8 or more birds in Northern Ireland[†]								
Belfast Lough	3 [11]	4 [11]	1 [11]	39	2	Sep	10	
Loughs Neagh and Beg	5	7	34	6	0		10	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Pulfin Bog and High Eske NR	0	1	1	0	14	Apr	3	
Newton Pool	0	0	0		10	Sep	3	
Montrose Basin	(1)	2	1	9	9	Sep	5	
Loch of Hillwell	1	0	0	0	9	Aug	2	
Alde Complex	1	1	20	0	8	Nov	6	
Hardley Flood	0	0	0	16	8	Jan	5	
Ouse Fen and Pits (Hanson/RSPB)	2	2	(4)	0	8	Nov	3	
Severn Hams	0	0	0	1	8 [13]	Sep	2	

[†] *as no All-Ireland threshold has been set a qualifying level of eight has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Jack Snipe

Lymnocryptes minimus

GB max:	**144**	**Feb**
NI max:	**3**	**Mar**

International threshold:	**?**
Great Britain threshold:	**?†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**250†**

Jack Snipe is very difficult to census and is probably the most poorly monitored of all European waders on both breeding and wintering areas (Delany *et al*. 2009).

Jack Snipe (Tommy Holden)

Therefore, few reliable inferences can be drawn from analysis of each year's counts. The species' low detectability and its preference for habitats poorly covered by WeBS means the scheme cannot provide a true reflection of abundance or trend. However, as emphasised in previous reports, standardised searches at regular sites are valuable in assessing trends at the local level at least.

The species was recorded at 134 WeBS sites during Core counts in 2008/09. Peak numbers were 17 at Loch Leven in March, 13 at Foryd Bay in November and 11 at Cainhoe Lakes in February. Additionally, double-figure supplementary counts were received from Chat Moss and Bickershaw Colliery areas, both of which are reliable locations for the species. Single figures were again reported from Doxey Marshes SSSI where 60+ were present in 2001/02 and 2004/05.

The species was seen at three sites in Northern Ireland; Carlingford Lough in January, followed by Outer Ards Shoreline and Belfast Lough in March.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Doxey Marshes SSSI	61	18	9	6	6	Feb	20
Chichester Harbour	6	18	37	21	8	Dec	18
Bickershaw Colliery Area	14 [22]	18 [22]	32 [22]	4 [22]	21 [22]	Nov	18
Windlaw Marsh	18	22	25	12	6	Nov	17
Craigmarloch	2 [13]		15	35			17
Chat Moss	34 [22]	14 [22]	7 [22]	6 [22]	11 [22]	Jan	14
Lower Derwent Ings	27	24	5	4	7	Nov	13
Severn Estuary	10	19	6	12	7	Jan	11
Cainhoe Lakes					11	Feb	11
Rumworth Lodge Reservoir			21 [22]	1 [22]			11
Langstone Harbour	12	9	0	13	0		7
Kinsham Pool	1	8	7	16	4	Dec	7
Fiddlers Ferry Power Station Lagoons	0	16	5	5			7
Somerset Levels	2	3	9	9	9	Jan	6
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	3	1	2	18	(8)	Jan	6
Boat of Garten Pools	6						6
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Loch Leven	0	0	0	0	17	Mar	3
Foryd Bay	4	3	1	1	13	Nov	4
St David's Airfield Heath SSSI	1	2		5	8	Nov	4
Walmore Common	2	2	2	(1)	7	Mar	3
Severn Hams	5	2	0	0	7	Mar	3
Frisby Gravel Pits	1	1	1	2	7	Feb	2
Lacock GP	1	1	2	7	6	Dec	3
Henfield Brooks	5	0	2	0	5	Jan	2
Holmethorpe Complex	2	(0)	0	2	5	Nov	2

† *as few sites exceed the All-Ireland threshold and no British threshold has been set, a qualifying level of five has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: ?†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 8,389 Nov
NI max: 167 Nov

The wintering population of Snipe is found in a range of habitats, both inland and coastal, and is considered to comprise residents as well as immigrants from northwest Europe including Iceland. Many favoured habitats are not well covered by WeBS, and due to the difficulties in obtaining accurate estimates of numbers due to their secretive habits, interpretation of national figures for this species is notoriously difficult.

Despite marked declines historically, there are indications that the number of breeding Snipe in the UK is increasing (Baillie *et al*. 2010). This, in combination with wetland creation schemes, may positively influence the wintering population.

The largest counts were from Somerset Levels (1,240) and Lower Derwent Ings (1,396), both sites where in excess of 1,000 have been noted on several occasions in recent years. Numbers at both these sites were in keeping with the respective recent five-year averages. In general, counts at most of the other major sites were as to be expected, with no obvious indication of any cold weather movements. In Northern Ireland, the maximum count during the year was 75 at Outer Ards Shoreline in November; the most recorded there for thirteen years.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 200 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Somerset Levels	1,513	713	1,012	1,794	1,240	Nov	1,254
Lower Derwent Ings	3,125	1,182	193	302	1,396	Sep	1,240
Doxey Marshes SSSI	716	455	224	278	495	Sep	434
Malltraeth RSPB	570	251	261	573	328	Nov	397
North Norfolk Coast	81	155	96	1,225 [11]	135	Dec	338
Severn Estuary	349	337	113	(402)	170	Dec	274
Morecambe Bay	(265)	304	(140)	107	378	Dec	264
Middle Yare Marshes	(210)	(237)	(34)	(159)	(26)	Dec	(237)
Maer Lake	378	280	105	248	164	Nov	235
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	168	126	95	401	238	Nov	206
Adur Estuary	273	52	(291)	198	(155)	Feb	204
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Belfast Lough	45 [11]	170	33	57	35	Mar	68
Strangford Lough	56	68 [11]	38 [11]	(27)	(27)	Nov	54
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
St David`s Airfield Heath SSSI	44	99		81	259	Dec	121
Wedholme Flow			0	71	257	Nov	109
Dee Flood Meadows	109	36	(106)	20	214	Sep	97
Arun Valley	153	130	171	197	210	Nov	172
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland†							
Outer Ards Shoreline	9	6	68	13	75	Nov	34

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set qualifying levels of 200 and 50 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectivley, for presentation in this report*

Long-billed Dowitcher

Limnodromus scolopaceus

Vagrant
Native Range: America

A Long-billed Dowitcher was present on South Uist during the winter; recorded at North Bay in December and Loch Bee in February. This is the third WeBS record for Scotland.

Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

GB max:	**130**	**Jan**
NI max:	**0**	**0**

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: ?
All-Ireland threshold: ?

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Due to its secretive habits and preference for habitats not typically monitored by WeBS, drawing inferences from counts of Woodcock is always difficult.

Records were received from 115 WeBS sites, with a maximum of 130 birds noted in January. The majority of records were of singletons but there were several counts of more than five birds, including 35 at Kingfishers Bridge (River Cam) in December, followed by 23 at Cors Caron and 22 at Thames Estuary in January. For the third year in a row, there were no reports of this species from Northern Ireland.

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

GB max:	**33,892**	**Sep**
NI max:	**1,077**	**Nov**

International threshold: 470
Great Britain threshold: 150
All-Ireland threshold: 140

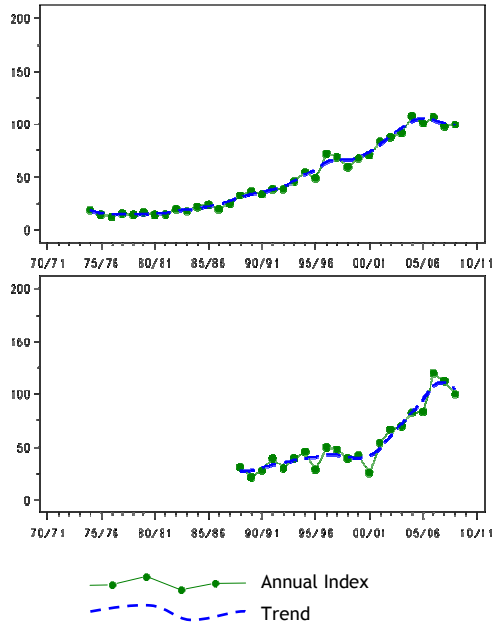


Figure 50.a, Annual indices & trend for Black-tailed Godwit for GB (above) & NI (below).

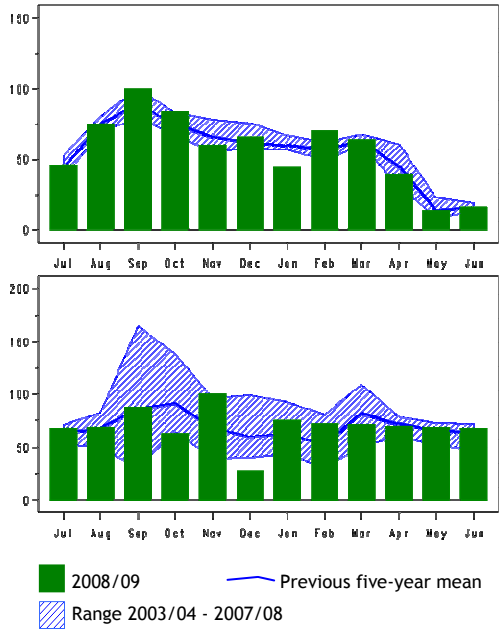


Figure 50.b, Monthly indices for Black-tailed Godwit for GB (above) & NI (below).

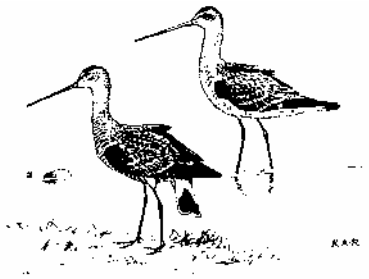
Most of the non-breeding Black-tailed Godwits that occur in Britain and Northern Ireland are of Icelandic origin, arriving in July and August and forming large moulting flocks at coastal sites that tend to peak in September. In addition, a small proportion of passage birds are of the nominate race which are mainly to be found in the south and east of England where a very small number breed.

Up until 2004/05, wintering numbers in Britain had been increasing in line with the flyway population, a rise considered partly attributable to higher productivity achieved on the Icelandic breeding grounds, combined with the high quality of stopover sites in Portugal where godwits feed primarily on buried rice kernels in flooded ploughed fields (Lourenco & Piersma 2008). However, the trend over the last four years indicates that the marked annual increases

of this species in Britain have now come to an end and numbers may have stabilised.

Thity-one sites surpassed the threshold of international importance in 2008/09, following the inclusion of Strangford Lough and Fen Drayton Gravel Pits. The latter is one of a suite sites in central eastern England, including Ouse Washes, Nene Washes and Overcote Marina, where peak numbers stage during February and March. The rise in numbers recorded in that area in recent years is likely to be partly due to the increased availability of suitable wetland habitats arising from nature reserve management. In addition, a further 15 sites in the UK have held an average peak monthly count of over 150 birds during the last five years, and are hence classified as being nationally important for the species.

Of the most important sites, the peak count of the year was 10,839 in September at The Wash, the highest monthly maximum ever there. Elsewhere, peak counts from most of the other principal sites were close to the five-year averages. One exception was Morecambe Bay where more than 1,000 were counted in February, March and April, culminating in a peak of 1,844 in the latter month. This is particularly notable considering that a four-figure count had never before been logged at the site; the previous highest was 928 in February 2007.



Black-tailed Godwits (Richard Richardson)

In Northern Ireland, away from Strangford Lough, the species is only regularly recorded at Lough Foyle. However, very low numbers were seen at that site for the third year in a row.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
The Wash	5,546	8,205	8,090	(6,961)	10,839	Sep	8,170	
Thames Estuary	3,757	5,221	4,893	8,081	4,603	Sep	5,311	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	6,452	5,379	3,713	5,278	3,923	Oct	4,949	
Humber Estuary	2,435	3,296	5,323	4,554	3,828	Sep	3,887	
Ribble Estuary	2,936	(2,921)	5,095	3,913	3,088	Mar	3,758	
Ouse Washes	3,424	4,154 [13]	1,790 [13]	761	2,067 [13]	Feb	2,439	
Poole Harbour	1,732	(1,431)	1,907	(1,413)	(2,371)	Oct	2,003	
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	1,612	1,675	1,421 [11]	2,469 [13]	2,712 [11]	Feb	1,978	
Mersey Estuary	2,950	2,510	418	(339)	(54)	Jul	1,959	
Blackwater Estuary	2,356	1,243	2,201	2,387	1,572	Mar	1,952	
Nene Washes	770	156	1,120	3,800	3,530	Mar	1,875	
Stour Estuary	1,972	1,507	1,215	2,148	1,939	Oct	1,756	
Swale Estuary	1,782	(1,389)	1,396	(1,186)	(1,545)	Nov	1,589	
River Avon: Ringwood to Christchurch	26	1	(3,000)	2,000	650	Mar	1,135	
Overcote Marina			850 [13]		1,400	Feb	1,125	
Medway Estuary	(518)	(190)	(1,120)	(490)	(603)	Sep	(1,120)	
North Norfolk Coast	1,577	940	645	1,139	804	Aug	1,021	
Exe Estuary	1,054	1,090	999	913	943	Dec	1,000	
Alde Complex	298	1,181	1,385	774	(840)	Oct	910	
Morecambe Bay	722	747	928	290	1,844	Apr	906	
River Avon: Ford'bridge to Ringwood	(1)	0	(1,750)	888	(920)	Mar	890	
Orwell Estuary	(277)	975	523	845 [11]	813 [11]	Nov	789	
Warton Floods				600	950	Nov	775	
Pagham Harbour	664	340	(764)	1,100	960	Dec	766	
Belfast Lough	857	642	(586)	708	690 [11]	Feb	724	
Chichester Harbour	545	(995)	685	775	613	Jan	723	
Crouch-Roach Estuary	729 [11]	(265)	(554)	754	627	Jan	703	
Deben Estuary	305	575	622	707	948	Oct	631	
Langstone Harbour	758	665	562	674	422	Oct	616	
Orwell Estuary	(277)	975	523	845 [11]	813 [11]	Nov	789	
Strangford Lough	176	717 [11]	535 [11]	645	707	Nov	556	▲
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	31	0	571	31	1,800	Feb	487	▲
Burry Inlet	845	994	300 [11]	40	200 [11]	Dec	476	
Portsmouth Harbour	360	(494)	(398)	371	666 [11]	Jan	473	▲

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Hamford Water	314	625	372	441	521 [11]	Feb	455
Colne Estuary	(472)	171	(477)	617 [11]	(261)	Oct	434
North West Solent	311	474	353	469	525	Dec	426
Severn Estuary	(450)	(435)	297	221	646 [11]	Feb	410
Forth Estuary	348	380	348	280	601	Sep	391
Southampton Water	291	489	295	(374)	(490)	Aug	388
Blyth Estuary	(76)	194	121	319	538	Sep	293
Eden Estuary	374	181	294	318	195	Nov	272
Beaulieu Estuary	326	190	317	238	(220)	Feb	268
Leighton Moss	290	25	280	260	300	May	231
Newtown Estuary	(113)	374	(223)	89	155	Jan	210
Ouse Fen and Pits (Hanson/RSPB)	1	0	187	450	358	Feb	199
Carmarthen Bay	307	237	101 [11]	(28)	131	Jan	194
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Lough Foyle	983	397	60	52	25	Sep	303
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Christchurch Harbour	169	93	32	300	89	Jan	137
Solway Estuary	(275)	94	81	(43)	46	Dec	124
Sandbach Flashes	151	254	92	35	62	Apr	119
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Minsmere	53	43	177	217	190	Jul	136
Arun Valley	4	2	31	162	162	Jan	72
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	39	178	104	75	143	Mar	108

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

International threshold: 1,200
Great Britain threshold: 620
All-Ireland threshold: 160

GB max: 37,279 Feb
NI max: 3,537 Jan

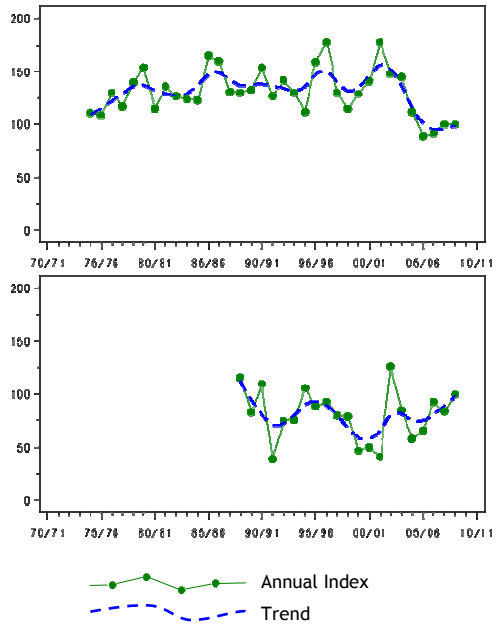


Figure 51.a, Annual indices & trend for Bar-tailed Godwit for GB (above) & NI (below).

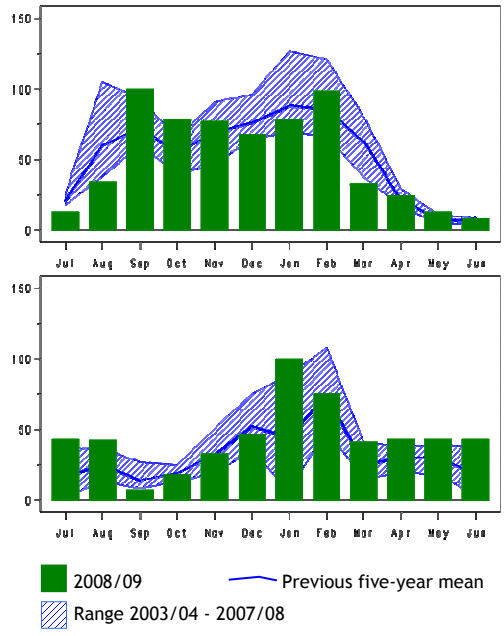


Figure 51.b, Monthly indices for Bar-tailed Godwit for GB (above) & NI (below).

Bar-tailed Godwits seen in Britain during winter are of the nominate race *lapponica* whose breeding range extends from northeast Europe to western Siberia, while

many passage birds are of the central Siberian race *taymyrensis*.

Recent mild winters have led to an eastward shift of the wintering population in west Europe (Maclean *et al*. 2008). Hence, there has been an associated rise in numbers in the Netherlands (Hustings *et al*. 2009), but a marked drop in the UK index since 2001/02. In 2008/09, this trend changed little. Although the table of principal sites shows increases in terms of the magnitude of peak counts recorded at UK east coast sites, most of the peaks occurred in September.

The race *taymyrensis* migrates from central Siberia to winter on the coast of western Africa, where approximately 30% of the total East Atlantic Flyway population of all shorebirds winter on the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania (Delany *et al*. 2009). A recent study by Van den Hout *et al*. (2008) showed that not only were all shorebirds there less vulnerable to predation by falcons when in larger flocks, but Bar-tailed Godwit was one of three species in which juveniles were shown to be more vulnerable than adults.

In 2008/09, the September counts from The Wash and Alt Estuary were significantly greater than the annual peaks normally recorded at the sites. The total from The Wash is the highest ever monthly WeBS count for a site since the 21,086 there in August 2003 (surpassed only by the all-time maximum of 23,751 in March 2002). Alt Estuary's impressive showing in 2008/09 follows the lowest total from there since 1991/92 just one year before. Furthermore, godwits roosting on the Alt Estuary are believed to feed in the outer reaches of the Dee Estuary (C. Wells & N. Friswell, pers. comm.) evidenced by a very high peak of 4,213 noted there during Low Tide counts in December, which elevated that site to one of national importance. This provides an excellent example of the potential exchange of birds, of any species, between sites, and hence the value of local knowledge to assist in the interpretation of data.

In Northern Ireland, the particularly high level of annual variation shown by the index is typical. Notably, following a low peak monthly count, Strangford Lough failed to qualify to be a site of international importance.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
The Wash	11,268	9,849	11,900	10,755	15,381	Sep	11,831	
Humber Estuary	(2,460)	(2,227)	(1,871)	(1,490)	(5,926)	Sep	(5,926)	
Thames Estuary	6,595	6,613	8,629	3,711	3,804	Dec	5,870	
Alt Estuary	4,138	4,221	4,100	2,939	8,171	Sep	4,714	
Ribble Estuary	4,657	(3,510)	4,628	5,162	2,762	Oct	4,302	
Lindisfarne	2,900	1,787 [11]	2,535	(2,170)	2,333	Dec	2,389	
Lough Foyle	(630)	1,133	(2,672)	2,300	2,789	Jan	2,224	
North Norfolk Coast	1,360	3,273	2,990	1,783	1,382	Dec	2,158	
Morecambe Bay	1,752	2,158	(2,157)	(407)	(1,331)	Feb	2,022	
Dengie Flats	1,250	1,550	1,062	(1,500)	4,170	Feb	2,008	
Forth Estuary	1,599	1,188	1,502	(921)	933	Sep	1,306	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Cromarty Firth	2,311	651	803	(707)	717	Jan	1,121	▼
Hamford Water	(647)	(657)	(1,239)	1,255	655	Feb	1,050	
Tay Estuary	(1,680)	1,050	1,002 [11]	(1,000)	482	Nov	1,043	▼
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	132	328	187	215	4,213 [11]	Dec	1,015	▲
Dornoch Firth	1,495	1,681	541	301	871	Feb	978	
Chichester Harbour	863	(1,200)	630	(1,228)	802	Feb	945	
Solway Estuary	1,050	958	529	473	(860)	Jan	774	
Swale Estuary	922	481	585	750	842	Feb	716	
South Ford	1,040	422	782	454	574	Feb	654	
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	901	770	785	390	311	Dec	631	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Strangford Lough	(1,422)	(1,378)	529	1,305	969 [11]	Jan	1,121	▼
Belfast Lough	180 [13]	139	(159)	212	167	Feb	175	
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Loch Bee SSSI Coast								
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Eden Estuary	324	(470)	555	605	682	Feb	542	

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

International threshold:	**6,800**
Great Britain threshold:	**+†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**+†**

GB max: **1,551** **May**
NI max: **7** **May**

The majority of Whimbrels seen in Britain are en route to and from breeding sites in Iceland, Scandinavia and western Siberia, and the main wintering areas in West Africa. Largest gatherings tend to be noted in spring, often at roost sites close to rich feeding areas (Swartz 1990), during the short period of passage which generally peaks during a short a period in late April and early May. This timing, outside the mid-month Core count priority dates, tends to result in the species being poorly monitored by WeBS. Therefore, any additional counts for use in the table below of birds at wetland sites are particularly welcomed. It is estimated that as many as 800,000 to 1,100,000 Whimbrels pass through Western Europe each autumn and spring; however very few major staging areas have been located so it is likely that many birds migrate to West Africa in single non-stop flights (Delany *et al*. 2009). Preliminary satellite tracking has been carried out on this species (*www.whimbrel.info/Wally%202005.htm*), but further work would no doubt generate a greater understanding of the species' migration strategies.

During 2008/09, Whimbrels were recorded at 144 across the UK, including five in Northern Ireland. Typically, numbers peaked in spring, with a monthly maximum of 1,551 noted in May. Spring passage of Whimbrels has a more westerly distribution that autumn passage (Grant 2002). This is illustrated by the sites where the highest numbers were seen in May; Severn Estuary (241), Morecambe Bay (103) and Taw-Torridge Estuary (93), while the highest numbers in July were seen at The Wash (151) and North Norfolk Coast (123).

A very small number of individuals winter on favoured British estuaries. In 2008/09, twelve sites held birds during the core winter period of December to February, involving a maximum of 20 birds. The majority were at coastal sites, including the winter's peak count of four at Chichester Harbour in February. Elsewhere, two inland at Somerset Levels in February were noteworthy, while birds were also seen further north at Forth Estuary, Solway Firth and Cambois to Newbiggin. None were seen during the winter in Northern Ireland.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Barnacre Reservoir and Grizedale Lea	553 [46]	270 [47]	477 [46]	417 [46]			429
The Wash	(414)	292	233	324	(151)	Jul	316
Brockholes Quarry	289 [47]	154 [47]	210 [13]	304 [13]			239
Dungeness and Rye Bay	373 [40]	222 [47]	246 [13]	287 [13]	18	Apr	229
Severn Estuary	(197)	101	(186)	(85)	241	May	171
North Norfolk Coast	166	129	70	257	123	Jul	149
Burry Inlet	175	111	223	40	94	Aug	129
Morecambe Bay	(182)	60	(53)	(16)	103	May	115
Chichester Harbour	143	78	31	209	83	Aug	109
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(45)	(89)	(42)	(17)	93	May	93
Langstone Harbour	78	96	58	84	73	May	78
Humber Estuary	(82)	107	78	36	57	Jul	72
Exe Estuary	42	(48)	109	60	51	Apr	66
Southampton Water	(29)	63	(27)	(7)	(46)	May	63
Lower Derwent Ings	139 [43]	95 [47]	0	1			59
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Camel Estuary	26	26	12	40	83 [12]	May	37
Ribble Estuary	15	0	9	7	58	Apr	18
Gerrans Bay	1	3	4	4	52	Apr	13
Pegwell Bay	26	27	76	19	51	Apr	40

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Curlew

Numenius arquata

International threshold: 8,500
Great Britain threshold: 1,500
All-Ireland threshold: 550

GB max: 73,674 Feb
NI max: 5,411 Feb

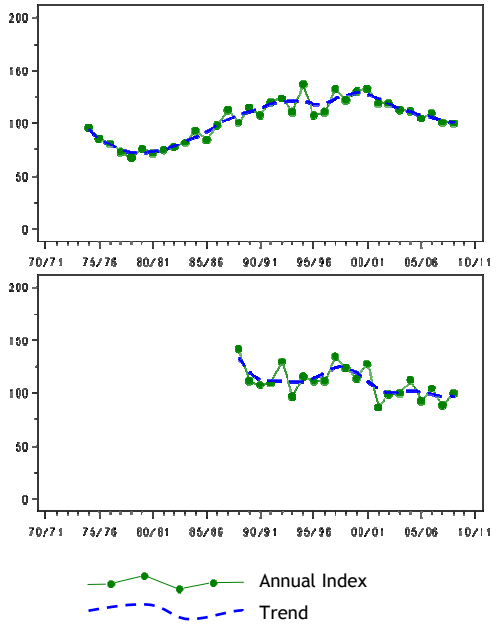


Figure 52.a, Annual indices & trend for Curlew for GB (above) & NI (below).

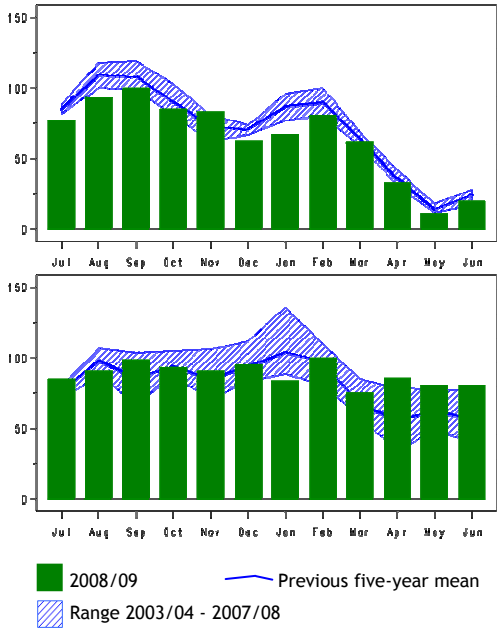


Figure 52.b, Monthly indices for Curlew for GB (above) & NI (below).

The wintering population of Curlews in the UK comprises both British and Scandinavian breeding birds. While the British breeding population has declined in recent years (Baillie *et al.* 2010), numbers in Scandinavia appear to have stabilised, in contrast to those of other common waders such as Lapwing, Snipe and Redshank (e.g. Heldbjerg & Eskildsen 2009). In the UK, studies in response to this decline in breeding numbers have focussed on factors affecting productivity, particularly with respect to predation. Amar *et al.* (2010) found a weak link between increasing Raven abundance and the breeding decline of Curlews in the uplands of UK. Furthermore, Fletcher *et al.* (2010) showed that predator control of predators (Red foxes and crows) led to subsequent increases in numbers and breeding success of Lapwing, Curlew and Golden Plover, all of which declined in the absence of predator control.

Numbers of wintering Curlew increased from the mid 1970s until the start of the 2000s, since when the trend has been one of a steady decline. This fall continued in 2008/09, and the index is now at its lowest level for over twenty years. Reasons for this decline are likely to be associated with shifts in wintering distribution (Maclean *et al.* 2008) as much as an artefact of the overall decline in breeding numbers however; supported by evidence from The Netherlands where numbers of wintering birds continue to increase steadily (Hustings *et al.* 2009).

In 2008/09, Morecambe Bay became the UK's sole site of international importance for Curlew. This follows the relegation of The Wash (which, in recent years, had been surviving above the qualifying threshold largely due to the site's maximum count of 15,336 there in 2003/04). On a more positive note, the maximum monthly count of 13,136 from Morecambe Bay in November represents the second highest there in the last six years. However, this is still some way short of the all-time record count for this species of 22,300 there in August 1973 – the likes of which may never be seen again

if the recent downward trend for this species in the UK continues. Counts at most of the other major sites were largely similar to recent years. Exceptions were the lowest number reported from Dee Estuary since 1993/94 and the highest total recorded at Severn Estuary since 1994/95.

The trend for Northern Ireland indicates a slow decline in recent years, with numbers in 2008/09 at the four principal sites largely in keeping with the respective five-year means for each site. Outer Ards Shoreline re-qualified as a site of national importance (the lowest ever peak monthly count having been noted there in the previous year).

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Morecambe Bay	8,328	9,515	14,027	9,402	13,136	Nov	10,882	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
The Wash	6,978	5,140	9,710	7,664	7,548	Sep	7,408	▼
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	6,933	4,666	5,565	5,346	3,608	Oct	5,224	
Thames Estuary	3,352	(3,611)	6,993	3,722	4,130	Sep	4,549	
Humber Estuary	3,768	(4,818)	5,180	3,993	(3,071)	Feb	4,440	
Solway Estuary	(3,328)	(3,456)	4,007	(3,185)	(2,691)	Oct	4,007	
Forth Estuary	(2,827)	3,599	4,567	3,568	4,023	Sep	3,939	
Severn Estuary	(2,613)	2,514	(3,230)	(2,560)	3,396	Sep	3,047	
Poole Harbour	(2,472)	(1,013)	(1,135)	(908)	(866)	Dec	(2,472)	
North Norfolk Coast	1,835	2,284	2,190	2,884	2,318	Jul	2,302	
Lavan Sands	2,413	1,955	3,243	1,091	1,839	Oct	2,108	
Duddon Estuary	1,883	1,816	2,113	2,145	(2,315)	Feb	2,054	
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	2,137	1,838	(1,939)	1,687	1,840	Jan	1,888	
Burry Inlet	1,831	2,587	1,413	1,370	1,689	Sep	1,778	
Chichester Harbour	1,628	1,889	2,052	1,760	1,481	Aug	1,762	
Blackwater Estuary	1,848	1,914	1,296	(1,267)	1,481	Oct	1,635	
Inner Firth of Clyde	1,301	1,417	2,017	1,673	1,716	Sep	1,625	
Mersey Estuary	1,830	1,792	1,379	(982)	1,038	Nov	1,510	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Lough Foyle	3,115	2,038	2,681	2,510	2,588	Feb	2,586	
Strangford Lough	1,594	1,523	1,918 [11]	1,552	1,571	Oct	1,632	
Belfast Lough	730 [13]	494 [11]	779 [11]	821	567	Sep	678	
Carlingford Lough	732	576	754	(759)	470	Nov	658	
Outer Ards Shoreline	838	632	519	238	601	Nov	566	▲
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Cleddau Estuary	(789)	1,246	(1,869)	1,832	967	Sep	1,479	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Montrose Basin	604	1,536	1,115	1,734	1,822	Aug	1,362	

Curlew (John Harding)

Terek Sandpiper

Xenus cinereus

Vagrant
Native Range: Europe, Africa, Asia, Australasia

One was at Tees Estuary in July; the seventh WeBS record and first since November 1994.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

International threshold: 17,500
Great Britain threshold: ?†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 929 Jul
NI max: 13 Aug

Away from upland breeding areas, Common Sandpipers are seen at a range of wetland habitats thoughout Britain during passage periods. A study of the migration strategies within the breeding range in northern England demonstrated that breeding birds did not join passage birds of more northern origin that were using sites nearby for refuelling (Holland 2009).

Common Sandpiper (Jill Pakenham)

At most sites, the highest numbers of passage birds in 2008/09 were noted in August, when Pegwell Bay again hosted over 100 birds. Other favoured sites also held relatively high numbers; the counts from both Dungeness & Rye Bay and Severn Estuary were the highest at both of those sites since August 1999.

A small, but increasing, number of birds have over-wintered in the UK in recent years. During the period December to February, approximately 60 birds were recorded at WeBS sites, with, typically, the majority relating to singles at coastal sites primarily in the south. Maxima during that mid-winter period involved four at Roadford Reservoir, Avon Estuary and Pegwell Bay, while in November there were six at Pegwell Bay and Camel Estuary, and in March there were five at Cleddau Estuary. Aside from those at Roadford Reservoir, the only other inland site to hold multiple birds was Walthamstow Reservoirs where two were seen in February.

In Northern Ireland, one was at Loughs Neagh & Beg in February, the first winter record there.

Sites with 30 or more birds in 2008/09†

Pegwell Bay	122	Aug	Severn Estuary	40	Jul
Dungeness & Rye Bay	72	Aug	North Norfolk Coast	35	Aug
Abberton Reservoir	46	Aug	Ribble Estuary	33	Aug

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 30 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

International threshold: 17,000
Great Britain threshold: ?†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 485 Aug
NI max: 0 0

Green Sandpipers were recorded during WeBS Core counts at 258 sites in 2008/09, but there were none in Northern Ireland. Typically, the species was widely distributed, particularly across England, during the autumn passage period with a monthly maximum of 485 recorded in August. The peak count of 32 noted at

North Norfolk Coast in August was the highest WeBS count there since 49 during the same month in 1995. The historical maximum is 82 at Thames Estuary in August 1973. Peak counts from Scotland and Wales were five at Loch of Strathbeg and four at Malltraeth RSPB, respectively.

During the core winter period, when sites with flowing freshwater such as streams and watercress beds, tend to be favoured, the species was noted at 134 WeBS sites. Typifying recent years, the two premier sites were River Avon (Salisbury to Fordingbridge) and Beddington Sewage Farm, which held up to ten and 15 individuals, respectively, during the course of the winter. Away from England, counts of more than one wintering bird were received from just one site in Scotland and two in Wales.

Sites with 15 or more birds in 2008/09†

North Norfolk Coast	32	Aug	Colne Estuary	17	Aug
Arun Valley	24	Aug	Pegwell Bay	17	Aug
R.Cam:Upware-Dimmocks Cote	24	Jul	Beddington Sewage Farm	16	Jul

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 15 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Spotted Redshank

Tringa erythropus

International threshold: 900
Great Britain threshold: +†
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: 118 Oct
NI max: 1 Sep

Spotted Redshanks breed from Scandinavia through sub-Arctic Russia, most wintering in equatorial Africa, with a small proportion remaining in Western Europe. In general, very little is known about population trends in the species, although there are considered to be no major threats to breeding populations and numbers appear to be stable (Delany *et al*. 2009).

In the UK in 2008/09, typically the majority were recorded in autumn and winter, with a smaller number in spring. It proved to be a typical year for the species; noted at the same number of sites (75) as in 2007/08, and peak counts at the three main sites were all very similar to the five-year averages. There appears to be temporal variation in the selection of these sites by this species; The Wash tends to be favoured during the main autumn passage period, while counts on North Norfolk Coast often peak later in the autumn and those at Blackwater Estuary during early winter.

The British peak monthly count of Spotted Redshanks was 118 in October. This peak count was 40% lower than the monthly maximum for the previous year, and included a count of 26 at North Norfolk Coast. During the subsequent winter months the largest counts were 26 at Blackwater Estuary in November, nine at North Norfolk Coast in December, and 10 at Dee Estuary in January.

A single at Dundrum Inner Bay in December was one of just two records in Northern Ireland during the WeBS-year.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†							
The Wash	39	39	86	40	48	Aug	50
North Norfolk Coast	34	35	42	29	26	Oct	33
Blackwater Estuary	42	24	8	32	26	Nov	26
Humber Estuary	21	10	25	13	13	Aug	16
Minsmere	3	14	3	6	47	Jul	15
Abberton Reservoir	0	26	(0)	14	4	Oct	11
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	12	8	7	12	14	Jul	11

† *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*

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

GB max:	**1,475**	**Aug**
NI max:	**152**	**Dec**

International threshold:	**2,300**
Great Britain threshold:	**6***
All-Ireland threshold:	**20***

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

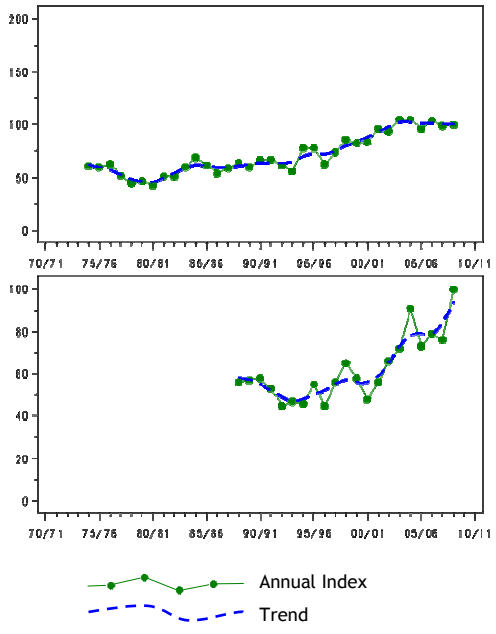


Figure 53.a, Annual indices & trend for Greenshank for GB (above) & NI (below).

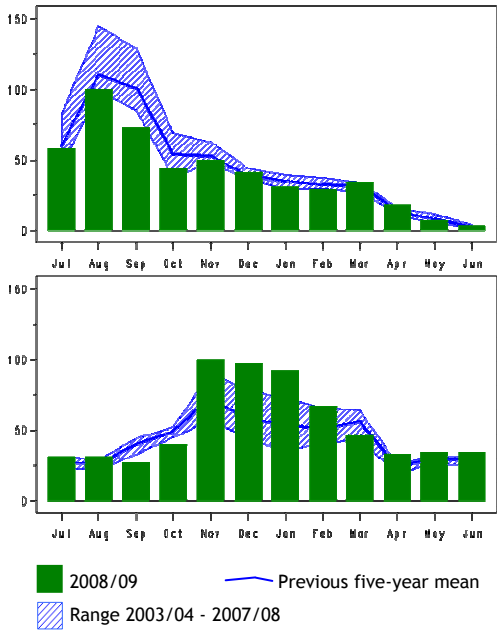


Figure 53.b, Monthly indices for Greenshank for GB (above) & NI (below).

Greenshanks were recorded at 207 WeBS sites during Core counts throughout 2008/09. Typically, peak counts occurred during autumn passage when birds migrate from breeding grounds in northern Europe (including sites in Scotland) to wintering areas in south-west Europe, and north and western Africa. The record of 301 at The Wash in August represents the most noted at the site for five years.

The number over-wintering in Britain has increased over the last twenty-five or so years, probably as a result of milder climatic conditions (Austin & Rehfisch 2005, Maclean *et al*. 2008). In Britain, the winter peak was 25 at Chichester Harbour in November; a site where wintering numbers have increased at a slow but steady rate in recent years – epitomising the national situation. The trend for the last five years suggests that the British population has now stabilised.

However, wetlands in Northern Ireland typically host the majority of Greenshanks recorded in winter in the UK and in 2008/09 the index there rose to its highest point. Maxima were 95 at Strangford Lough in December and 48 at Lough Foyle in February.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 20 or more birds in Great Britain†							
The Wash	204	258	201	252	301	Aug	243
Thames Estuary	259	144	196	132	(125)	Aug	183
Blackwater Estuary	147	(84)	(73)	(119)	(86)	Aug	147
North Norfolk Coast	118	147	118	87	71	Jul	108
Stour Estuary	88	78	106	103	110	Aug	97
Chichester Harbour	80	91	132	77	82	Aug	92
Hamford Water	69	104	79	86	31	Sep	74
Fal Complex	52	58	59	66	52	Oct	57

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Morecambe Bay	94	33	59	(28)	44	Sep	52
Exe Estuary	56	38	71	41	34	Oct	48
Pegwell Bay	(6)	36	42 [12]	40	64 [13]	Aug	46
Dee Estuary (England & Wales)	36	(16)	32	50	67	Sep	46
Kingsbridge Estuary	50	35	27	45	48	Sep	41
Langstone Harbour	44	38	51	37	26	Aug	39
Humber Estuary	(34)	33	21	(47)	(52)	Sep	37
Medway Estuary	(35)	(4)	(10)	(9)	(4)	Jul	(35)
Tamar Complex	42	36	29	32	31	Sep	34
Taw-Torridge Estuary	11	29	22	34	39	Nov	31
Cleddau Estuary	26	42 [11]	25	25	39	Sep	31
North West Solent	(16)	(17)	29	31	24	Aug	28
Jersey Shore			26	28			27
Swale Estuary	(24)	(55)	(15)	(7)	9	Nov	26
Solway Estuary	(24)	(4)	(6)	(5)	(6)	Aug	(24)
Camel Estuary	32	(21)	(20)	16	19	Oct	22
Poole Harbour	17	(9)	(19)	(24)	11	Nov	20
Tophill Low Reservoirs	10	(2)	4	62 [13]	3	Aug	20
Montrose Basin	(6)	5	19	(19)	36	Aug	20
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	117	84	85	65	95	Dec	89
Lough Foyle	37	74	34	65	48	Feb	52
Carlingford Lough	26	39	40	66	(17)	Aug	43
Dundrum Inner Bay	18	22	24	20	28	Aug	22
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Ribble Estuary	(11)	17	10	14	26	Aug	17
Forth Estuary	(18)	17	9	11	24	Sep	16
Yealm Estuary	16	21	6	11	20	Oct	15
R.Eden: Grinsdale to Sandsfield			0	8	20	Aug	9

† *as the British threshold is low a qualifying level of 20 has been used to select sites for presentation in this report*

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

International threshold: 10,500
Great Britain threshold: +†
All-Ireland threshold: +†

GB max: 34 Aug
NI max: 0 0

During the course of 2008/09, Wood Sandpipers were seen at 21 WeBS sites in England and four in Wales.

Autumn records involved four birds in July, 34 in August and 11 in September – as ever, such totals will have been highly dependent on Core count dates coinciding with fluxes of passage. There were three spring records, all in May, at Loch of Hillwell, Camel Estuary (2) and Tees Estuary (2).

Wood Sandpiper (Ben Green)

Sites with 3 or more birds in 2008/09†

Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	Aug	Arun Valley	Aug
Abberton Reservoir	Aug	Thames Estuary	Aug

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 3 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Redshank

Tringa totanus

International threshold:	2,800	
Great Britain threshold:	1,200	
All-Ireland threshold:	310	

GB max:	92,838	Oct
NI max:	9,399	Sep

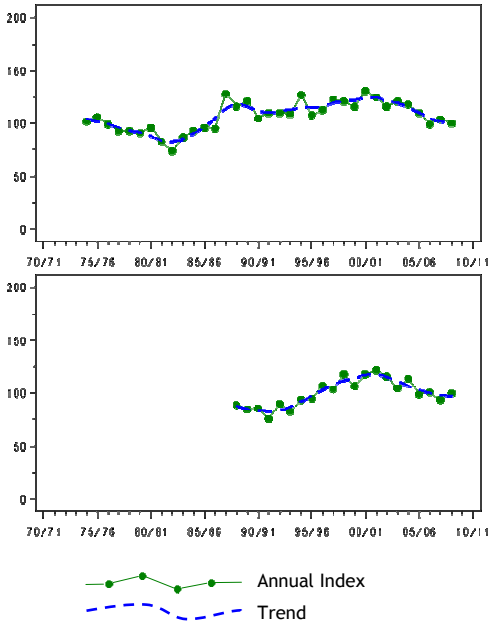


Figure 54.a, Annual indices & trend for Redshank for GB (above) & NI (below).

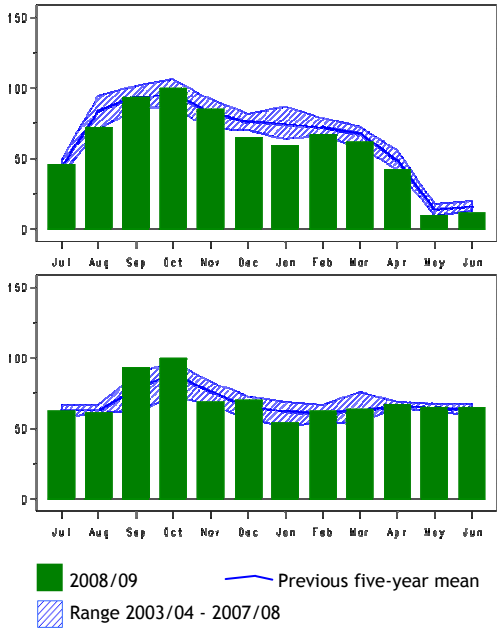


Figure 54.b, Monthly indices for Redshank for GB (above) & NI (below).

Predominantly found on the coast in the UK, the non-breeding population of Redshanks is considered to comprise local breeders and birds from Iceland and nearby European populations. In 2008/09, twelve sites qualified as internationally important for the species in Britain, and a further 21 as nationally important. The majority of monthly maxima at the sites of international importance were in the late autumn period, spanning September to November, typical for this species. Scrutiny of the monthly indices indicate that numbers in the passage periods were close to average, but wintering totals, particularly those in December and January, were markedly down compared to recent years. This is suggestive of a geographical shift in wintering distribution of the nominate *totanus* population, supported by the fact that numbers of Redshanks in The Netherlands have slowly increased since the mid 1990s (Hustings *et al*. 2009). Consequently, the downward trend in the British index continues; a similar pattern to that shown by other species considered to have undergone an eastward shift in core wintering range.

No obvious marked reductions in peak numbers were noted at most of the principal sites compared to the previous year, although there were contrasting fortunes for the two most important. At Dee Estuary, numbers have been slowly declining since 1990, and the peak Core count of 9,203 in September was the lowest autumn count for nine years. In contrast, the 10,000+ birds at Morecambe Bay in October and November represents the first time that particular threshold had been passed at the site since an exceptional peak of 21,158 recorded in September 1989.

In Northern Ireland, numbers at most sites were similar to those of recent years and the trend has shown a slight fall in the last ten years. Further years of data will show whether the numbers in Northern Ireland continue to drop in the same way as those in Britain.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	10,208	12,367	9,384	12,994	9,576 [11]	Nov	10,906
Morecambe Bay	7,106	7,283	(8,254)	(4,805)	10,302	Nov	8,236
The Wash	6,760	6,052	5,605	4,407	5,367	Oct	5,638
Humber Estuary	(8,494)	4,682	3,886	(4,059)	4,716	Oct	5,445
Forth Estuary	5,501	6,039	4,689	4,374	4,950	Sep	5,111
Thames Estuary	5,081	4,811	4,134	3,512	4,025	Oct	4,313
Strangford Lough	4,505	4,099	3,632	4,028	4,969	Oct	4,247
Solway Estuary	3,617	(1,595)	(1,822)	(3,213)	(2,739)	Nov	3,617
Blackwater Estuary	3,034	(2,472)	2,514	(3,586)	3,752	Oct	3,222
Ribble Estuary	2,211	4,078	1,491	3,559	3,414	Sep	2,951
Mersey Estuary	3,618	3,622	1,535	(2,069)	(1,228)	Oct	2,925
Duddon Estuary	1,956	3,698	3,122	2,562	3,213	Feb	2,910
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Severn Estuary	(2,516)	1,930	(2,362)	(1,962)	2,970	Nov	2,472
Ythan Estuary	(1,797)	(5,274)	1,481	1,497	(2,308)	Sep	2,471
Crouch-Roach Estuary	3,299 [11]	(556)	(1,202)	1,361	2,403	Oct	2,354
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	2,846	1,910	(1,658)	2,040	1,988	Jan	2,196
Deben Estuary	1,707	2,037	2,710	2,080	1,856	Oct	2,078
North Norfolk Coast	1,845	1,608	1,786	2,899 [11]	2,109	Sep	2,049
Chichester Harbour	1,695	1,754	(2,535)	2,403	1,810	Nov	2,039
Montrose Basin	1,641	2,237	1,794	(1,860)	2,198	Sep	1,968
Inner Firth of Clyde	1,977	1,984	1,915	1,901	1,965	Nov	1,948
Stour Estuary	1,431	1,814	1,988	1,948	2,176 [11]	Feb	1,871
Cromarty Firth	2,094	2,266	1,491	1,514	(1,402)	Oct	1,841
Orwell Estuary	1,799	1,813 [11]	2,075 [11]	1,375 [11]	1,908	Nov	1,794
Tees Estuary	1,723	1,731	1,865	1,383	1,471	Sep	1,635
Swale Estuary	1,715	(1,727)	1,139	(1,384)	(1,049)	Nov	1,527
Alde Complex	1,957	1,608	1,673	1,139	1,213	Jan	1,518
Hamford Water	1,699	1,695	1,266	1,538	1,366	Nov	1,513
Lavan Sands	(1,947)	1,644	1,016	1,794	1,058	Nov	1,492
Lindisfarne	1,737	1,104	(1,267)	(1,746)	1,367	Sep	1,489
Colne Estuary	(797)	(1,013)	(742)	1,442 [11]	(730)	Feb	1,442
Blyth Estuary	(483)	1,134	1,031	2,002	(1,012)	Oct	1,389
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	1,406	1,663 [11]	1,310	1,405	1,117 [13]	Mar	1,380
Medway Estuary	1,068 [11]	(1,405)	(307)	(639)	(874)	Oct	1,237
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Belfast Lough	1,667	1,754	(1,698)	1,303	1,432	Mar	1,571
Carlingford Lough	1,471	1,554	1,128	1,174	1,818	Nov	1,429
Lough Foyle	1,404	1,314	1,177	905	1,239	Mar	1,208
Outer Ards Shoreline	1,121	1,307	1,160	1,124	1,145	Mar	1,171
Dundrum Inner Bay	(594)	723	759	1,284	1,105	Sep	968
Larne Lough	462	737	379	383	397	Dec	472
Bann Estuary	290	400	261	392	230	Feb	315
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Tay Estuary	(1,347)	(1,950) [13]	849	979	683	Sep	1,162
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Eden Estuary	1,238	600	415	1,500	1,401 [11]	Nov	1,031

Turnstones (Laurel Tucker)

Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

GB max:	**12,645**	**Nov**
NI max:	**1,913**	**Nov**

International threshold:	**1,500**
Great Britain threshold:	**500**
All-Ireland threshold:	**120**

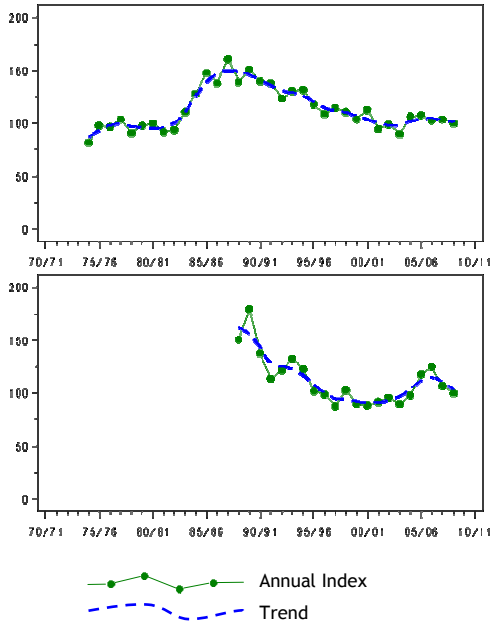


Figure 55.a, Annual indices & trend for Turnstone for GB (above) & NI (below).

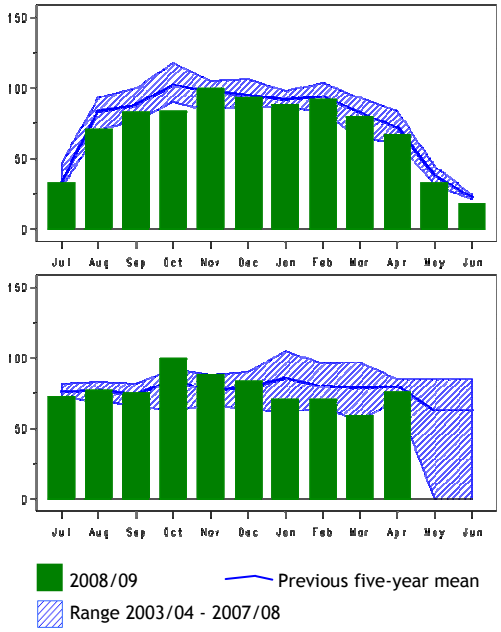


Figure 55.b, Monthly indices for Turnstone for GB (above) & NI (below).

Turnstones from two distinct breeding populations occur in the UK. The majority of those which winter originate from Greenland and east Canada, while Siberian and Scandinavian breeders pass through in spring and autumn en route to and from wintering sites in western Africa.

The peak monthly total of 12,645 in November was similar to recent years, which have seen an apparent levelling-off of the decline in numbers exhibited from the mid 1980s through to the early 2000s. This has produced a trend similar to that of Purple Sandpiper, with which it frequently shares favoured habitats. Rocky shores and associated specialists have been identified as being especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, both due to loss of habitat *per se* as a result of rising sea levels as well as changes to invertebrate communities (Kendall *et al*. 2004, Rehfisch *et al*. 2004). The UK holds over 50% of the North-east Canada and Greenland population during the winter (Delany *et al*. 2009), and the non-estuarine coast is of considerable importance, with the sites covered by WeBS accounting for approximately only 20% of the current UK population estimate. This emphasises the need for more regular coverage and effective protection of the relatively poorly monitored non-estuarine habitats, the most recent survey of which took place in 2007 (Austin *et al*. 2008).

Five of the current thirteen sites of national importance for Turnstone are located in the south-east corner of England, and at two of these, Thames Estuary and Blackwater Estuary, peak counts have been especially high in recent years. In 2008/09, the count of 1,103 at Blackwater Estuary in September represented the highest ever there, while the 1,000+ threshold surpassed at Thames Estuary in each of the last two years had been reached only twice previously during WeBS monitoring there. At the other major sites, fortunes appear to be more mixed. In particular, the recent declines noted at Thanet Coast and The Wash perhaps provide the greatest causes

for concern. However, it is not known the extent to which Turnstones on Thanet Coast may also utilise other sites adjacent to the Outer Thames area, and hence it remains to be seen whether the declines noted may merely represent redistribution of birds elsewhere. Compared to some other waders, Turnstones tend to be diffusely distributed among wader roosts and not concentrated in exceptionally high numbers at individual roost sites (Peters & Otis 2007). As a consequence, they may be able to utilise alternative sites more readily (Burton *et al*. 1996).

The peak monthly count at Outer Ards Shoreline, consistently the most important site in Northern Ireland, was at a similar level to that in 2007/08, thereby representing a decline compared to the previous years. In contrast, the highest number ever was reported from Strangford Lough, which perhaps indicates local redistribution between these adjacent sites.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Tiree		1,191 [41]					1,191	
Morecambe Bay	1,054	1,269	1,163	(683)	973	Nov	1,115	
Thanet Coast	1,130	949	1,477	(783)	722	Nov	1,070	
North Norfolk Coast	1,028	928	678	913	774	Oct	864	
Forth Estuary	778	847	(778)	(934)	(776)	Oct	853	
The Wash	1,244	1,169	657	478	685	Sep	847	
Thames Estuary	711	680	680	1,090	1,060	Nov	844	
Blackwater Estuary	380	498	527	676	1,102	Sep	637	▲
Stour Estuary	705	655	569	617	525	Jan	614	
Humber Estuary	(570)	(183)	(542)	(344)	(447)	Nov	(570)	
Farne Islands	438	606	(445)	556	580	Aug	545	▲
Langstone Harbour	459	742	450	488	550	Sep	538	▲
Swale Estuary	(515)	(480)	(456)	(432)	(268)	Mar	(515)	
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland								
Outer Ards Shoreline	1,035	1,203	1,292	930	937	Nov	1,079	
Belfast Lough	508	418	436	419	503	Nov	457	
Strangford Lough	235	435	382	344	589	Oct	397	
Carlingford Lough	624	356	480	315	155	Sep	386	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain								
Severn Estuary	272	461	274	(256)	629 [11]	Nov	409	

Wilson's Phalarope

Phalaropus tricolor

Vagrant
Native Range: America

An adult was at Grindon Lough in August; the 21st WeBS record, of which seven have now been in north-east England.

Red-necked Phalarope

Phalaropus lobatus

Scarce

Two passage Red-necked Phalaropes brightened up Core counts at The Wash and North Norfolk Coast in September.

Grey Phalarope

Phalaropus fulicarius

Scarce

Grey Phalaropes were recorded at twelve sites. Six were seen in September; at Carmarthen Bay, Dyfi Estuary, Fleet & Wey, Gannel Estuary, Guernsey Shore and Traeth Bach (2), followed by a single at Colne Estuary in November. A small influx in January comprised records from Cheddar Reservoir, Cleddau Estuary, Filey Bay, Newgale Marsh and Gerrans Bay (2).

Kittiwake

Rissa tridactyla

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: ?†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 1,394 Oct
NI max: 84 Sep

During WeBS counts, Kittiwakes were recorded at most of the traditional sites during 2008/09. The peak monthly total of 1,394 birds in October is very low compared to recent years. The highest counts received were from Arran (800, October) and Dungeness & Rye Bay (500, January) but, relatively, few were reported from Loch Strathbeg where the largest numbers have frequently been seen in the past.

It is important to note that because a few key WeBS sites are near breeding colonies it is likely that breeding success may significantly affect WeBS counts at these sites. Nevertheless, low numbers recorded through WeBS may be associated with both the declining UK breeding population and recent abysmal productivity (JNCC 2009). All records in Northern Ireland were from Belfast Lough.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 200 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Loch of Strathbeg	152	1,130	3,282	785	37	Jul	1,077
Arran	340	701	400	1,000	800	Oct	648
Tay Estuary	(690)	(740)	(190)	300	(17)	Aug	577
Dungeness and Rye Bay					500	Jan	500
Beadnell to Seahouses	140	512	850	(460)	200	Apr	432
Durham Coast	279	250	(363)	(71)	(225)	Apr	297
Forth Estuary	170	(276)	(379)	(127)	(334)	Oct	290
Otter Estuary to Kingsbridge Estuary				250			250
Winterfield to Catcraig			285	430	3	Sep	239
Glyne Gap		19	457	(233)	(78)	Dec	238
Dee Estuary (Scotland)	161	191	175	458	183	Sep	234
Tweed Estuary	114	340	410	132	126	Jul	224
Nigg Bay to Cove Bay	846	0	0	(0)	0		212
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Loch Fleet Complex	0	0	(0)	(2)	200	Oct	67

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 200 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: 19,000†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 195,454 Feb
NI max: 12,719 Nov

Numbers of Black-headed Gulls recorded by WeBS in 2008/09 were similar to those in the previous year, with February again proving to be the peak month.

Black-headed Gull (Neil Calbrade)

Given that the species uses many non-wetland habitats and that counting of gulls remains optional, WeBS totals represent a relatively small proportion of the British population estimate (Banks *et al*. 2009).

Several sites no longer feature among those internationally or nationally important, owing to the fact that complete counts of gulls have not taken place in the last five years – since the last wintering gulls survey (WinGS) in 2003/04. However, The Wash has now crept over the qualifying threshold. Submission of counts from the former two sites, as well as from gull roosts at all sites, is encouraged wherever possible.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Bewl Water	69,000 [36]	55,600 [12]	67,840 [12]	48,400 [12]	35,340 [12]	Jan	55,236
Thames Estuary	40,048	13,848	10,712	(12,901)	(14,183)	Aug	21,536
The Wash	11,093	(15,595)	30,097	(18,679)	(20,878)	Aug	20,689
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Humber Estuary	(1,028)	(2,298)	(819)	(6,689)	(7,865)	Sep	(7,865)
Chew Valley Lake (no data for years shown in this table)							
Sites with mean peak counts of 10,000 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Morecambe Bay	16,757	16,695	(15,232)	(9,435)	13,758	Aug	15,737
Stewartby Lake	14,000 [36]						14,000
Eccup Reservoir	6,000			20,000			13,000
Tophill Low Reservoirs	8,385	15,000 [12]	3,835 [12]	12,000 [12]	21,000 [12]	Oct	12,044
Severn Estuary	9,656 [36]	8,278 [36]	(3,589)	(4,851)	16,121 [11]	Dec	11,352
Doddington Pool	11,000 [36]	12,000	11,000	11,000	8,500 [12]	Nov	10,700
Blyth Estuary	(3,500)	4,203	23,700	3,971	(5,312)	Feb	10,625
Ribble Estuary	9,750 [36]	10,228	15,261	10,055	6,389	May	10,337
Wintersett & Cold Hiendley Reservoirs			5,000	20,000	6,000	Jan	10,333
Sites with mean peak counts of 1,000 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Belfast Lough	7,515 [11]	9,936 [11]	(6,823)	4,971	2,168 [11]	Nov	6,283
Strangford Lough	3,111	4,011 [11]	3,889 [11]	4,109 [11]	5,656 [11]	Feb	4,155
Loughs Neagh and Beg	(2,267)	(3,472)	(3,978)	(2,610)	(2,989)	Mar	(3,978)
Outer Ards Shoreline	2,419	4,566	3,800	2,893	3,614	Nov	3,458
Lough Foyle	1,057	2,565	2,091	3,237	3,324	Oct	2,455
Larne Lough	1,396	591	2,245	1,989	2,453	Feb	1,735

† *as few sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set qualifying levels of 10,000 and 1,000 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectively, for presentation in this report*

Little Gull

Hydrocoloeus minutus

International threshold: 1,230
Great Britain threshold: ?†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 160 Sep
NI max: 1 Jul

In 2008/09, Little Gulls were noted at 57 sites across Britain and at a further two in Northern Ireland. Although this represents a more widespread distribution during WeBS Core counts than the previous year, the totals recorded were unimpressive. The peak Core count noted during autumn passage was 134 at Hornsea Mere in September, while that during spring was 32 at Staines Reservoir in April. The latter count presumably coincided with a flux of weather-dependent spring passage, as birds were seen at several other inland localities on the same date.

Hornsea Mere remains the UK's only site of international importance for this species. It traditionally supports exceptionally large numbers of passage birds in autumn, although the peak count there during autumn 2008 was considerably lower than most recent years. Numbers present there are presumably at least partly dependent on feeding (and roosting) conditions offshore in the North Sea.

In Northern Ireland, singles were seen at Bann Estuary in July and August, and Loughs Neagh & Beg in October, November and February.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Hornsea Mere	7,000	160	(16,000) [12]	21,500 [12]	1,200 [12]	Sep	7,465
Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Alt Estuary	201 [12]	530 [12]	162 [13]	97 [13]	75 [13]	Apr	213
Tophill Low Reservoirs	90 [13]	375 [12]	26 [12]	250 [12]	125 [13]	Sep	173
Forth Estuary	321	(0)	25	9	3	Sep	90
Tay Estuary	28	26	206	(3)	(0)		87
North Norfolk Coast	8	32	176	30	10	Jul	51
Monikie Reservoirs	38	(0)					38
Humber Estuary	(0)	(3)	(0)	(33)	(2)	May	(33)
Alde Complex	(0)	49	0	0	0		12
East Chevington Pools	18	3	14	7	18	Jun	12
Anstruther Bay	0	0	0	55	0		11
Tees Estuary	3	4	6	11	21	Aug	9

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Moray Firth	8 [13]	9 [13]					9
Staines Reservoirs	1	1	6	1	32	Apr	8
Morecambe Bay	7	3	14	(0)	3	Aug	7
Yetholm Pond			20	0	0		7
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	3	1	(5)	(0)	(6)	Mar	4
Dungeness and Rye Bay	(2)	0	0	4	(5)	Oct	2

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

Mediterranean Gull

Larus melanocephalus

International threshold: 6,600
Great Britain threshold: ?†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 522 Aug
NI max: 2 Sep

Mediterranean Gulls were recorded at 103 sites in Britain and three in Northern Ireland in 2008/09, a similar number to the previous year. The peak monthly British total of 552 in August represents the highest recorded by WeBS, promptly surpassing the previous maximum registered in April 2007.

WeBS counts at five sites were in excess of 100 birds, and 32 other sites held at least five birds. These include a WeBS record Core count of 341 at Brading Harbour in August. Several other south coast locations, some of which are not currently monitored through WeBS (including Copt Point in Kent) also hold up to several hundred birds on a regular basis. Therefore, supplementary count data from sites not appearing in the table below is sought in order to provide a more complete picture of the status of this expanding species in southern Britain.

The most notable feature of concentrations away from the south coast stronghold was a further increase in numbers in Breydon Water & Berney Marshes area. Elsewhere, 34 at Swansea Bay in July represents the highest count ever from Wales and, similarly, 45 at Minsmere in April is a site peak. Mediterranean Gulls were seen at four sites in Scotland, including three at Loch Ryan in January and February. Records from Northern Ireland included two at Lough Foyle in September.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 12 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Southampton Water	(0)	(2)	(112)	(309)	(5)	Jul	(309)
Folkestone: Copt Point/East Wear Bay	157 [36]				270 [35]	Oct	214
Brading Harbour	92	148	91	64	461 [13]	Jul	171
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes		27 [36]		131 [13]	118 [12]	Aug	92
Pagham Harbour	2	60	71	(124)	(118)	Mar	75
Fleet and Wey	8	23	39	61	140	Nov	54
Newtown Estuary	(42)	57	56	19	53	Apr	46
Ryde Pier to Puckpool Point	47	45	22	45			40
Thames Estuary	27	30	71	34	40	Sep	40
Tamar Complex	(26)	39	34	37	45	Jul	39
Foreland	4	50	20	50			31
Camel Estuary	26	18	11	6	78	Aug	28
North West Solent	1 [11]	0	8	29	101	Jan	28
Wootton Creek	3	12	102	16	6	Dec	28
Swansea Bay	12 [36]	28	33	12	34	Jul	24
Chichester Harbour	(8)	(22)	12	(31)	28	Jul	23
Minsmere	12	10	10	11	45	Apr	18
Beaulieu Estuary	0	9	6	1	65	Feb	16
Portsmouth Harbour	(6)	7	11	(12)	29	Mar	16
The Wash	15	7	16	(10)	(12)	May	13
Medway Estuary	2	(1)	(18)	(13)	(14)	Mar	12

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 12 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Common Gull

Larus canus

International threshold: 20,000**
Great Britain threshold: 9,000†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 58,872 Feb
NI max: 6,636 Nov

The peak monthly total of Common Gulls was lower than the previous two years. However as the counting of gulls remains optional, numbers counted often reflect variation in coverage as much as a fluctuation in actual numbers. Two sites continued to qualify as internationally important; Bewl Water and Derwent Reservoir. However, several sites no longer reach international or national importance thresholds because no roost count data have been collected in the past five years – since the last wintering gulls survey (WinGS) in 2003/04. Therefore, submission of count data from these sites in particular, as well as from gull roosts more generally, is positively encouraged.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Bewl Water	75,000 [36]	90,000 [12]	75,500 [12]	59,650 [12]	34,200 [12]	Mar	66,870
Derwent Reservoir	80,000 [12]	40,000 [12]	18,500 [12]	5,000	512	Jan	28,802
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Haweswater Reservoir	22,000 [12]	12,535 [12]	17,185 [12]	17,560 [12]	23,565 [12]	Mar	18,569
Tophill Low Reservoirs	6,500	21,600 [12]	8,000 [12]	25,000 [12]	19,000 [12]	Oct	16,020
Hallington Reservoir	13,300 [12]	34,000 [12]	700 [12]				16,000
Rutland Water	14,500	10,000	10,000	13,500	4,000	Jan	10,400
Colt Crag Reservoir	9,900 [12]						9,900
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Solway Estuary	(2,275)	(1,692)	(2,463)	(2,504)	(1,092)	Jul	(2,504)
Humber Estuary	2,005	(120)	(74)	(298)	(415)	Feb	2,005
Eyebrook Reservoir, Ullswater, West Water Reservoir (no data for years shown in this table)							
Sites with mean peak counts of 3,000 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Ribble Estuary	9,817	(253)	(1,973)	5,020	1,758	Mar	5,532
Eccup Reservoir	1,200			8,000			4,600
Forth Estuary	2,500 [36]	2,100 [36]	(603)	(7,831)	(1,114)	Nov	4,144
Loch of Lintrathen	10,000		2,250	154			4,135
Severn Estuary	4,259 [36]	5,110 [36]	(1,076)	(65)	2,430 [11]	Jan	3,933
St Mary`s Island to N.Shields Quay		3,900 [12]					3,900
Longnewton Reservoir	1,300	2,700	3,400	5,400	5,400	Jan	3,640
Adur Estuary			3,440 [11]				3,440
Thames Estuary	(3,669)	3,768	2,622	(1,552)	(781)	Feb	3,353
Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs	340	6,250 [12]	3,000 [12]	320 [13]	6,700 [12]	Mar	3,322
Chichester Harbour	3,778	2,379	3,225	2,289	4,862	Mar	3,307
Inner Firth of Clyde	2,304	2,463	6,234	3,610 [11]	1,778	Aug	3,278
Blyth Estuary	(822)	4,914	6,300	228	1,600	Jan	3,261
Sites with mean peak counts of 1,000 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Lough Foyle	2,322	4,354	2,836	3,952	4,771	Nov	3,647
Belfast Lough	1,937 [11]	2,156	1,405 [11]	687	571 [11]	Feb	1,351
Outer Ards Shoreline	1,171	1,328	984	1,022	1,075	Mar	1,116
Larne Lough	(644)	84	1,194	645	2,236	Feb	1,040
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland†							
Strangford Lough	366	503 [11]	539 [11]	525	1,317 [11]	Feb	650
Dundrum Inner Bay	208	128	301	724	1,190	Jan	510

† *as few sites exceed the British threhold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 3,000 and 1,000 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectively, for presentation in this report*

Ring-billed Gull

Larus delawarensis

Vagrant
Native Range: N America

Ring-billed Gulls were seen at eight sites, with a monthly maximum of four in February. In England, birds were noted at Thames Estuary, Helston Park Lake, Portsmouth Harbour, Beaulieu Estuary, Hillsborough Main Lake and Camel Estuary, while in Northern Ireland the species featured at Bann Estuary and Belfast Lough.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

International threshold:	5,500
Great Britain threshold:	500
All-Ireland threshold:	?[†]

GB max: **29,089** **May**
NI max: **348** **Mar**

The monthly maximum of Lesser Black-backed Gulls was significantly lower than recent years. However, as always, because the counting of gulls and terns remains optional during WeBS, summed national maxima are likely to reflect changes in effort as much as actual numbers.

A number of sites no longer feature among those of international or national importance owing to the fact that counts have not been carried out at them in the last five years – since the last wintering gulls survey (WinGS) in 2003/04. These include Chew Valley Lake and Queen Mary Reservoir, which were previously internationally important, and Burghfield Gravel Pits, Hollowell Reservoir, Bartley Reservoir and Heathfield Gravel Pits which were previously nationally important. Therefore, the submission of roost count data from these sites in particular, as well as from gull roosts generally, is positively encouraged.

For this species, coverage of roosts outside the typical winter months is also especially welcomed. The continued submission of counts from Cotswold Water Park is to be applauded in that regard. Peak numbers from there, Morecambe Bay and Ribble Estuary were all slightly lower than in 2007/08, but the five-year average at all surpassed the threshold of international importance.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Morecambe Bay	33,004	21,932	29,576	41,312	17,097	May	28,584	
Cotswold Water Park (West)	(44)	(141)	6,500 [12]	9,500 [12]	4,500 [12]	Dec	6,833	
Ribble Estuary	(113)	3,011	5,525	9,005	6,045	May	5,897	
Severn Estuary	(10,036)	4,696 [36]	(115)	(130)	2,899 [11]	Nov	5,877	
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Solway Estuary	(154)	(363)	4,701	(202)	(384)	Jul	4,701	
River Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood	3,500	5,100	3,160	500	1,507	Jan	2,753	
Great Pool Westwood Park	2,500	2,500	2,000	3,500	3,000	Dec	2,700	
Longnewton Reservoir	2,930	3,310	2,740	1,320	1,810	Sep	2,422	
R.Severn and R.Vyrnwy confluence	(0)	120	(144)	(401)	4,636	Nov	2,378	▲
Calvert Brick Works				2,500	1,200	Nov	1,850	
Alde Complex	1,833	1,162	2,990	453	2,775	Mar	1,843	
Hule Moss	2,900 [13]	2,500	550	1,750	450	Oct	1,630	
Llys-y-fran Reservoir	650	600	(4,000)	700	2,000	Jan	1,590	
Lower Windrush Valley Gravel Pits	1,343	1,071	2,922	(750)	852	Nov	1,547	
Thames Estuary	2,966	775	273	(343)	(1,101)	Sep	1,338	
Cleddau Estuary	1,537	552	786	1,614	1,236	Nov	1,145	
The Wash	1,039	1,075	1,027	1,184	(1,081)	Nov	1,081	
Blithfield Reservoir	2,620 [36]			20	550 [12]	Dec	1,063	
Alt Estuary	556	809	1,980	1,063	703	Feb	1,022	
Belvide Reservoir	(0)				1,000	Feb	1,000	
Heaton Park Reservoir	870 [36]						870	
Inner Firth of Clyde	509	769	1,253	1,233	533	Aug	859	
Pitsford Reservoir	550 [12]	1,500 [12]	1,000 [12]	700 [12]	500 [12]	Aug	850	
Rutland Water	200	1,200	50	2,500	100	Oct	810	
Teifi Estuary					800	Dec	800	▲
Haweswater Reservoir	1,796 [12]	337 [12]	775 [12]	700 [12]	344 [12]	Sep	790	
Hurleston Reservoir	3,500 [36]	84	35	50	50	Jul	744	
Carsington Water	97	68	1,450	1,200 [12]	500	Jan	663	
Fernworthy Reservoir	663	548	664 [12]	744	411	Nov	606	
Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs	1	245 [12]	606 [12]	1,070 [13]	990 [12]	Sep	582	▲
Hayle Estuary	980	(552)	566	441	258	Feb	561	
Ditchford Gravel Pits	534	367	662	190	1,000	Sep	551	▲
Lakenheath Fen		1,500	358	27	268	Mar	538	
Portworthy Mica Dam	960 [36]	469	475	654	92	Oct	530	

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Duddon Estuary	490	(205)	333	628	670	Jul	530 ▲
Ouse Washes	256	2,305	44	5 [13]	1	Jan	522
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Llangorse Lake	1,400 [12]	28	74	520	205	Nov	445
Theale Gravel Pits	1,152 [36]	(74)	1	8	41	Nov	301
Roadford Reservoir	110	71	56	188	100	Nov	105
Chelmarsh Reservoir	83	56	47				62
Kennington Park	50						50
Chew Valley Lake, Queen Mary Reservoir, Burghfield Gravel Pits, Hollowell Reservoir, Bartley Reservoir, Heathfield Gravel Pits (no data for years shown in this table)							
Sites with mean peak counts of 500 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	(434)	997	1,136	387	(214)	Mar	840
Belfast Lough	246	792	(935)	90	474 [11]	Nov	507
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Wellington Gravel Pits	100		400 [13]	300	1,000	Sep	450
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	42	31	71	243	993	Jun	276
Cotswold Water Park (East)	700	404	48	500 [12]	641	Oct	459
Glyne Gap		(5)	26	320 [12]	560 [12]	Mar	302

† *as no All-Ireland threshold have been set a qualifying level of 500 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Mixed gulls (Tommy Holden)

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

International threshold: 5,900
Great Britain threshold: 4,500†
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 64,789 Jan
NI max: 4,090 Nov

The counted British maximum of Herring Gulls was slightly lower than the total for 2007/08. However, as counting of gulls remains optional during WeBS, any summed national maxima reflect changes in effort as much as actual numbers.

A number of sites no longer feature among the sites of international or national importance owing to the fact counts have not been carried out at them in the last five years – since the last wintering gulls survey (WinGS) in 2003/04. If data for the intervening period do exist, their submission is encouraged. Queen Mary Reservoir, a former site of international importance, is now not listed, while five-year average numbers at Belfast Lough, The Wash and Dungeness & Rye Bay have fallen below the qualifying threshold. Previously listed sites of national importance now not featuring include Hastings to Bexhill and Hamilton Low & Strathclyde Parks.

Submission of count data from all these sites, as well as from gull roosts more generally, is positively encouraged. The submission of such data from Glyne Gap, for example, has elevated the site to one of international importance; now listed alongside three historic strongholds of Ribble Estuary, Morecambe Bay and Forth Estuary.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Ribble Estuary	(31,090)	2,060	25,336	(11,086)	(19,024)	Mar	19,378	
Forth Estuary	15,434	1,780	(2,814)	(2,764)	(1,864)	Sep	8,607	
Morecambe Bay	8,311	7,545	8,553	10,239	6,820	May	8,294	
Glyne Gap		1,486	(2,700)	6,800 [12]	11,500 [12]	Mar	6,595	▲
Severn Estuary	(3,164)	(2,666)	(279)	(437)	6,332 [11]	Dec	6,332	▲
Sites of national importance in Great Britain								
Thames Estuary	8,504	3,680	4,456	6,655	4,427	Sep	5,544	
Isle of May		5,220 [36]					5,220	
The Wash	3,258	(3,527)	6,212	5,960	(3,455)	Jul	5,143	▼
Guernsey Shore	3,744	2,362	5,704	4,432	7,360	Jan	4,720	▲
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09								
Belfast Lough	7,903 [11]	10,296 [11]	6,655 [11]	2,511	649	Dec	5,603	
Dungeness and Rye Bay	6,000 [13]	7,000 [13]	1,500 [13]	5,000 [13]	1,700	Jan	4,240	
Hastings to Bexhill, Queen Mary Reservoir, Hamilton Low Parks & Strathclyde Park (no data for years shown in table)								
Sites with mean peak counts of 2,500 or more birds in Great Britain†								
Dungeness and Rye Bay	6,000 [13]	7,000 [13]	1,500 [13]	5,000 [13]	1,700	Jan	4,240	
North Norfolk Coast	(5,307)	2,340	2,474	5,351	(3,113)	Apr	3,868	
Heaton Park Reservoir	3,400 [36]						3,400	
Pegwell Bay	5,450	440	3,200	4,500	2,614 [11]	Dec	3,241	
Alt Estuary	7,155	2,150	1,005	2,000	3,076	Feb	3,077	
Durham Coast	(618)	1,501	3,949	(300)	(629)	Apr	2,725	
Burry Inlet	1,089	3,007	2,407	3,037 [11]	3,648	Sep	2,638	
Exe Estuary	2,074 [12]	2,574 [12]	2,357 [12]	2,849 [12]	2,689 [13]	Jan	2,509	
Sites with mean peak counts of 1,000 or more birds in Northern Ireland†								
Belfast Lough	7,903 [11]	10,296 [11]	6,655 [11]	2,511	649	Dec	5,603	
Outer Ards Shoreline	1,179	1,304	1,602	1,053	1,520	Nov	1,332	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†								
Bewl Water	106 [36]	280 [12]	130 [12]	1,250 [12]	3,209 [12]	Mar	995	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	4,244	1,210	(2,613)	1,360	2,736 [11]	Jan	2,433	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Northern Ireland†								
Lough Foyle	151	1,480	443	535	1,350	Nov	792	
Strangford Lough	518	670 [11]	(569)	(658)	1,167 [11]	Jan	785	

† *as few sites exceed the British threhold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 2,500 and 1,000 have been chosen to select sites, in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectively, for presentation in this report*

Yellow-legged Gull

Larus michahellis

International threshold: **7,000**
Great Britain threshold: **?**†
All-Ireland threshold: **?**†

GB max: **87** **Sep**
NI max: **1** **Oct**

'Western' Yellow-legged Gulls were recorded at 59 sites in England, three in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. Birds were noted in every month with a peak of 87 in September; a similarly low monthly maximum to that recorded in the previous year.

Currently, WeBS coverage at several important localities for Yellow-legged Gulls on the south coast of England does not appear to be deriving a true picture of their numbers, which traditionally peak in late summer.

Sites with 10 or more birds in 2008/09†

King George VI Reservoir	24	Oct	Pagham Harbour	15	Sep
Poole Harbour	19	Sep	Glyne Gap	12	Jan
Rutland Water	16	Aug	Ibsley Wtr & Mockbeggar Lake	10	Jan

† *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*

Caspian Gull
Larus cachinnans

International threshold: 7,000
Great Britain threshold: ?

Caspian Gulls were noted at ten sites in 2008/09. Typically, all records related to singles in south-east or central England. Most were during the period of October to March, the two exceptions being individuals at Queen Mary Reservoir in September and June.

Iceland Gull
Larus glaucoides

International threshold: 2,000
Great Britain threshold: ?

Iceland Gulls were seen during WeBS Core counts at 40 sites in 2008/09; 21 in Scotland, 15 in England, two in Wales and two in Northern Ireland. Records were spread from November through to May, and peaked in February when 19 were noted across all WeBS sites. This year, all were single birds with the exception of two at Blyth Estuary (Northumberland) in February and two at Belfast Lough in March.

Glaucous Gull
Larus hyperboreus

International threshold: 10,000
Great Britain threshold: ?

Glaucous Gulls were reported during the period of October to April from 30 sites; 17 in Scotland, nine in England, two in Wales and two in Northern Ireland. Typically the majority were on northern coasts of Scotland, despite the relatively poor WeBS coverage there.

The monthly peak was in February, when a total of 28 were logged, including four at Burrafirth (Unst) and an exceptional count of 16 at South Ford on Outer Hebrides. This represents the most ever recorded during a WeBS Core count; the previous highest was 11 at Belfast Lough in February 2005. The only site away from Shetland or Outer Hebrides to hold more than one Glaucous Gull in 2008/09 was Dee Estuary where two were noted in April.

The two singles reported in Northern Ireland were at Larne Lough and Lough Foyle during February and March, respectively.

Great Black-backed Gull
Larus marinus

International threshold: 4,400
Great Britain threshold: 400
All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max:	**9,056**	**Nov**
NI max:	**411**	**Jan**

The counted maximum was less than three-quarters of that recorded during the previous year, owing to relatively low peaks at most of the principal sites.

A number of sites no longer feature among the sites of national importance owing to the fact that no counts have been carried out (or at least submitted through WeBS) in the last five years – since the last wintering gulls survey (WinGS) in 2003/04. Previously nationally important sites that now do not feature in the table below include Lynmouth Ash Lagoons, Grafham Water, Brogborough Clay Pit, Ogston Reservoir, Southfield Reservoir and Coquet Island. Submission of count data from these sites, as well as from gull roosts more generally, is therefore particularly encouraged.

Great Black-backed Gull

In Northern Ireland, the recent decline in numbers reported from Belfast Lough continued, with a peak of a mere 52 noted in December; as recently as three years ago over 1,000 were reported there.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Thames Estuary	1,648	1,972	1,096	(2,107)	(1,145)	Dec	1,706
The Wash	(1,480)	1,773	1,186	(2,131)	(1,011)	Jul	1,643
Tees Estuary	1,657	(366)	1,028	668	971	Sep	1,081
Dungeness and Rye Bay	1,500 [13]	1,000 [13]	700 [13]	1,200 [13]	305	Nov	941
Pegwell Bay	610	1,190	700	850	821 [11]	Nov	834
Durham Coast	(684)	776	(659)	(35)	(99)	Jun	776
Glyne Gap		355	655	(800) [12]	1,100 [12]	Mar	728
East Chevington Pools	(80)	230	400	2,000	190	Oct	705
Lower Derwent Ings		500	1,030	870	390	Nov	698
Fleet and Wey	142	873	111	897	711	Oct	547
Guernsey Shore	404	477	619	424	633	Oct	511
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	(169)	(58)	(176)	(152)	(465)	Dec	(465)
Tyne Estuary	(221)	367	358	719	318	Sep	441
Linton Pond Ellington	18	14	1,900	52	30	Dec	403
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Loch of Strathbeg	191	795	525	171	51	Oct	347
Heaton Park Reservoir	340 [36]						340
North Norfolk Coast	327	471	262	251	383	Sep	339
Moray Firth	336 [1]						336
Humber Estuary	(226)	(66)	(20)	(165)	(176)	Nov	(226)
Poole Harbour	(66)	(43)	(26)	(40)	32	Oct	45
Hastings to Bexhill, Brogborough Clay Pit, Grafham Water, Southfield Reservoir, Ogston Reservoir, Lynmouth Ash Lagoons, Coquet Island (no data for years shown in table)							
Sites with mean peak counts of 500 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Belfast Lough	1,008	1,281	(827)	333	52	Dec	700
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
River Cam: Kingfishers Bridge	41	120	70	260	459	Dec	190
Morecambe Bay	296	(313)	466	280	411	Oct	363

† *as no All-Ireland threshold have been set a qualifying level of 500 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Little Tern

Sternula albifrons

International threshold:	**490**
Great Britain threshold:	**?**†
All-Ireland threshold:	**?**†

GB max:	**1,232**	**Jul**
NI max:	**0**	**0**

Little Terns were recorded at 40 sites in 2008, exactly the same as the previous year. Most were in England, although records were received from eight sites in Scotland represented an increase on typical years.

Typically, all records were in the period April to September. High counts were again received from North Norfolk Coast, which has now consolidated its position as the WeBS site of greatest importance for this species. Counts at Dee Estuary were consistent with the longer term average, while the very high number at Morecambe Bay in July is presumably indicative of a successful breeding season at the main colony in the area. Inland, two at Bough Beech Reservoir in June were noteworthy.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain†							
North Norfolk Coast	233	246	284	496	593	Jul	370
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	300	411	250	251	309	Jul	304
The Wash	108	(182)	83	255	(80)	Aug	157
Morecambe Bay	(3)	(1)	(4)	42	156	Jul	99
Thames Estuary	33	74	154	101	57	Aug	84
Duddon Estuary	84	92	52	56	25	Jun	62
Durham Coast	(0)	67	39	49			52
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in 2008 in Great Britain†							
Pagham Harbour	(0)	12	0	37	(71)	May	30
Minsmere	14	(20)	48	21	(67)	Jul	38

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Black Tern

Chlidonias niger

GB max:	**171**	**Aug**
NI max:	**2**	**Sep**

International threshold:	**7,500**
Great Britain threshold:	**?**
All-Ireland threshold:	**?**

In 2008, the Black Terns were seen at 54 sites, a marked increase on the last three years. Similar to Little Gull, numbers recorded by WeBS, particularly in spring, tend to be dependent on Core count dates coinciding with fluxes of passage. Birds were seen at 17 sites during April to June, with maxima of ten at Alt Estuary and six at Guernsey Shore in May.

A productive return passage included peak counts in August of 34 at Belvide Reservoir, 28 at Bewl Water, 22 at The Wash and 13 at Kirkby-on-Bain Gravel Pits. Smaller numbers in September included a locally notable five at Roadford Reservoir (Devon), plus records from Wales and Northern Ireland at Bosherston Lakes and Bann Estuary, respectively.

Sandwich Tern

Sterna sandvicensis

GB max:	**6,474**	**Jun**
NI max:	**657**	**Sep**

International threshold:	**1,700**
Great Britain threshold:	**?†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**?†**

The species was noted at 125 sites in 2008, seven of which were in Northern Ireland. The majority of records were for April to October, although typically a small number of wintering birds remained.

As was the case in 2007, both Pegwell Bay and Guernsey Shore hosted wintering birds in January and December, while in Northern Ireland one was at Outer Ards at the onset of the year. It is assumed that several of these winter records at re-occurring sites relate to returning adults.

The British maximum rose in comparison to 2007, largely due to a higher count from the North Norfolk Coast, which was at a level similar to the longer term average for the last ten years. For the third successive year, the breeding colony at Cemlyn Bay and Lagoon was not counted, resulting in a low count for that site. Elsewhere, the high count from Pegwell Bay was the first time numbers of Sandwich Terns had surpassed 1,000 there during WeBS core counts.

Peak counts from the two principal sites in Northern Ireland (Dundrum Inner Bay and Belfast Lough) were both relatively high compared to recent years.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
North Norfolk Coast	5,533	3,228	8,062	2,873	5,729	May	5,085
Sites with mean peak counts of 200 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Forth Estuary	1,526	(1,243)	(1,037)	680	(448)	Sep	1,150
Cemlyn Bay and Lagoon	2,700	2,000	12	208	22	Apr	988
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	759	829	(530)	1,334	953	Aug	969
Humber Estuary	(324)	(325)	(957)	(805)	(383)	Jul	(957)
Duddon Estuary	1,144	604	843	460	886	May	787
Pegwell Bay	(680)	824	650 [13]	520	1,060	Jul	764
The Wash	(208)	(307)	(164)	(338)	(498)	Jul	(498)
Tay Estuary	(96)	126	(377)	545	373	Aug	355
Solway Estuary	(282)	(209)	(339)	(162)	(227)	Aug	(339)
Tees Estuary	(333)	221	(490)	438	108	Jun	318
Eden Estuary	139	33	766	460	90	Jul	298
Morecambe Bay	500	110	190	201	216	Jun	243
Lindisfarne	(80)	(7)	300	(30)	126	Jun	213
Sites with mean peak counts of 200 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Dundrum Inner Bay	173	133	311	233	276	Sep	225
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in 2008 in Northern Ireland†							
Belfast Lough	99	255	92	158	240	Sep	169

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 200 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

International threshold:	1,900
Great Britain threshold:	?†
All-Ireland threshold:	?†

GB max:	6,998	Aug
NI max:	46	Sep

The counted maximum of Common Terns in Britain in 2008 was the highest since 2003. Birds were recorded at 305 sites between April and October, with records from eight sites in the latter month.

Following an exceptionally high count of Common Terns at Breydon Water & Berney Marshes in 2007, a similarly high aggregation was noted at Humber Estuary in 2008. On the basis of these two counts, both sites are now listed as internationally importanct. One assumes that these two aggregations must have represented a significant proportion of the entire North Sea coast post-breeding populations in these years.

Elsewhere, peak counts were largely similar to recent years. The August peak at Alt Estuary was the third highest ever from there, maintaining the site's five-year average at the same level as in 2007. Numbers derived from complete coverage of Tees Estuary fell for the fifth year in succession, while disappointingly low numbers were reported from the two most important sites in Scotland – Tay Estuary and Loch of Strathbeg. In Northern Ireland, typically most records were from Dundrum Inner Bay.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mon	Mean	
Sites of international importance in the UK								
Humber Estuary	(160)	(61)	(19)	(330)	7,000 [12]	Aug	7,000	▲
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes				8,720 [13]	2,520 [12]	Jul	5,620	
Sites with mean peak counts of 200 or more birds in Great Britain†								
Alt Estuary	1,135	2,010	1,503	1,074	1,655	Aug	1,475	
The Wash	(199)	(129)	1,092	(342)	(688)	Jul	1,092	
Tees Estuary	1,251	(521)	869	618	558	Jun	824	
North Norfolk Coast	476	450	606	894	782	Aug	642	
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	(180)	(109)	454	579	(327)	Jun	517	
Thames Estuary	(553)	219	206	(198)	512	Aug	373	
Tay Estuary	(40)	(123)	(100)	600	105	Jul	353	
Loch of Strathbeg	151	449	326	554	174	May	331	
Southampton Water	(63)	(62)	(133)	(2)	(310)	Jul	(310)	
Forth Estuary	183	287	(216)	207	(169)	May	226	
Blackwater Estuary	(223)	(110)	(27)	(63)	(73)	May	(223)	
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in 2008 in Great Britain†								
Pegwell Bay	(50)	26	5	173	474	Jul	170	
Lunan Bay	90	38	1	5	(300)	Jul	87	

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 200 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Roseate Tern

Sterna dougallii

Scarce

Roseate Terns were reported from seven sites during July and August in 2008, including maxima of four at Pegwell Bay and three at Southampton Water in July.

Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisaea

International threshold:	?
Great Britain threshold:	?†
All-Ireland threshold:	?†

GB max:	2,506	Jul
NI max:	5	Jul

Counting of terns remains optional during WeBS therefore any summed national maxima may reflect changes in effort as much as actual numbers.

The British maximum of 2,506 in July was the second highest ever; some 45% lower than the unprecedented total recorded during the same month in 2007. Typically, the largest counts were from sites in Scotland, particularly the traditionally important Tay Estuary and Loch of Strathbeg.

In total, birds were reported from 82 sites across the UK, 20% fewer than the previous year but a similar number to 2006.

Typically, the majority were seen between May and September, with a very small number in April and October. Early spring records included a notable inland group of 60 at Rutland Water in April, while stragglers later in the year comprised October records from three sites in Scotland.

In Northern Ireland, the only records received were from Dundrum Inner Bay.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 50 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Tay Estuary	(0)	(10)	(50)	1,841	1,100	Jul	1,471
Loch of Strathbeg	40	2,100	164	1,210	883	Jun	879
Loch of Beith		1,000	45	250	200	Jul	374
Loch An Duin (Aird Point) (Lewis)		300					300
The Houb (Whalsay)	300	3	200	275	80	Jul	172
Eden Estuary	4	0	209	617	25	Aug	171
St Andrews Bay	192	70	110	(0)	(0)		124
Morecambe Bay	(59)	(16)	(11)	(30)	123	Jul	123
Ness of Sound			90	80	100	Jul	90
Hamna Voe and Galtagarth		50	50	100	150	Jul	88
Loch a` Phuill (Tiree)	120	58	37	77	101	Jun	79
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	146	(8)	33	88	16	Jul	71
Nor Wick and Skaw	(10)	9	214	23	10	May	64
Loch of Tankerness	121	0			55	Jul	59
Forth Estuary	(186)	7	32	28	10	Jul	53
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in 2008 in Great Britain†							
Peterhead Bay and Sandford Bay	0	0			130	Aug	43
Lossie Estuary	0	8	0	0	125	Aug	27
Montrose Basin	5	12	21	2	90	Jul	26
Loch Inver	0	0	18	0	80	Jul	20
Lunan Bay	20	27	2	34	(64)	Jul	29
Dee Estuary (Scotland)	31	10	0	68	60	Jul	34
Rutland Water	0	1	0	1	60	Apr	12

† *as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report*

Arctic Tern (Jill Pakenham)

Kingfisher

Alcedo atthis

International threshold:	**?**
Great Britain threshold:	**?†**
All-Ireland threshold:	**?†**

GB max: **528** **Sep**
NI max: **6** **Dec**

The Kingfisher is a difficult species to monitor accurately using WeBS methodology, owing to its widespread distribution and preference for linear waterways; a habitat which is relatively poorly covered for WeBS. Having declined in breeding numbers up to the mid 1980s, the species seems to have made a complete recovery since (Baillie *et al*. 2010).

In 2008/09, the British counted maximum of 528 in September was slightly higher than normal, despite representing a slight drop compared to the previous year. Recorded at a total of 638 sites during Core counts, maxima during the year were 17 at Ditchford Gravel Pits in August and 14 at Somerset Levels in November; both traditionally favoured locations.

Outside Britain, Kingfishers were noted at six WeBS sites in Northern Ireland and two on the Channel Islands.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 7 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Somerset Levels	20	(18)	17	22	14	Nov	18
Wraysbury Gravel Pits	18	16	17	14			16
Ditchford Gravel Pits	12	13	12	19	17	Aug	15
North Norfolk Coast	8	10	14	20 [11]	5	Sep	11
Southampton Water	9	(11)	(8)	(8)	(6)	Aug	10
Chichester Gravel Pits	9	11	7	9	(0)		9
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	6	9	(13)	(9)	7	Sep	9
The Wash	(0)	(0)	(0)	9	8	Oct	9
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	5	9	9	7	10	Sep	8
Grand Wsternn Canal: Basin-G'way	4	6	9	6	8	Aug	7
Avon Valley: Salisbury-Fordingbridge	(5)	(7)	(4)	(3)	(2)	Oct	(7)
Avon Valley: Fordingbridge-Ringwood	(2)	(10)	5	8	(5)	Sep	7
Stour Estuary	(6)	6	4	12	5	Sep	7
Hamford Water	(5)	7	6	7	6	Sep	7
Orwell Estuary	(5)	7	(3)	(5)	(6)	Nov	7
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Burghfield Gravel Pits	0	0	1	1	9	Sep	2
Skelton Lake	1	2	1	0	7	Jun	2

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

Kingfisher (G. Giddens)

PRINCIPAL SITES

Table 6 below lists the principal sites for non-breeding waterbirds in the UK as monitored by WeBS. All sites supporting more than 10,000 waterbirds are listed, as are all sites supporting internationally important numbers of one or more waterbird species. Naturalised species (*e.g.* Canada Goose and Ruddy Duck) and non-native species presumed to have escaped from captive collections have been excluded from the totals, as have gulls and terns since the recording of these species is optional (see *Analysis*). Table 7 lists other sites holding internationally important numbers of waterbirds, which are not routinely monitored by standard WeBS surveys but rather by the Icelandic Goose Census and aerial surveys.

A total of 240 sites are listed in tables 6 and 7. Of these 223 supported one or more species in internationally important numbers and 82 held a five-year mean peak of 10,000 or more birds. Typically there are few changes to the top twenty sites listed in the principal sites table, with the order of the top ten changing little each year.

The Wash remains as the key waterbird site in terms of absolute numbers, but in 2008/09 held figures 8% lower than the five-year average (attributable to apparent redistribution of Knots to North Norfolk Coast; see page xxx). The Ribble Estuary consolidated second place in the table following a further increase. Totals at both Morecambe Bay and North Norfolk Coast returned to over 200,000 birds; the Morecambe total being the highest since 2003/04. Total numbers at both Thames Estuary and Humber Estuary were approximately 20% lower than the averages for recent years, those on Dee Estuary were typical, whereas the total from Breydon Water & Berney Marshes was the highest ever from there. Totals at the two most important non-estuarine sites, Somerset Levels and Ouse Washes, were representative of the trends at those two sites in recent years.

Overall, five-year averages of sites holding 10,000 or more waterbirds were relatively similar compared to the previous year, with 69 of the 82 sites undergoing changes of less than 10%. The greatest increases were at Eden Estuary (36%), Slains Lochs (32%), Blyth Estuary (25%) and Dengie Flats, Camel Estuary and Ythan Estuary (all 14%). The greatest decreases were seen at Moray Firth (23%), Loch Spynie (17%) and Mersey Estuary (15%).

Table 6. Total number of waterbirds at principal sites in the UK, 2004/2005 to 2008/09 (includes data from all available sources) and species occurring in internationally important numbers at each. (Species codes are provided in Table 8.)

Site	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Average	Int.Imp.Species
The Wash	369,627	398,373	380,003	372,405	344,411	372,964	PG DB SU PT OC RP GP GV L. KN SS DN BW BA RK
Ribble Estuary	242,686	220,693	214,279	263,180	274,248	243,017	WS PG WN T. PT OC RP GV KN SS DN BW BA RK
North Norfolk Coast	221,337	241,410	215,396	142,870	206,843	205,571	PG DB PT RP KN BW BA
Morecambe Bay	204,114	205,571	194,375	131,200	219,070	190,866	MS PG SU PT OC RP KN DN BW BA CU RK
Thames Estuary	172,491	186,385	226,127	186,982	149,746	184,346	DB SV OC AV RP GV KN DN BW BA RK
Humber Estuary	163,357	187,065	167,461	145,783	125,257	157,785	PG DB SU RP GP GV KN DN BW BA RK
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	115,307	130,362	125,640	103,875	123,880	119,813	SU PT OC KN DN BW RK
Breydon Water & Berney Marshes	110,759	106,453	96,850	100,555	128,151	108,554	PG WN SV AV GP L. BW
Solway Estuary	140,091	103,053	118,198	89,947	88,008	107,859	WS PG YS SU PT OC RP KN RK
Somerset Levels	99,789	87,827	108,162	114,246	104,340	102,873	MS WN GA T. SV GP L.
Ouse Washes	112,818	133,474	72,202	66,975	76,765	92,447	MS BS WS WN GA T. PT SV BW

Site	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Average	Int.Imp.Species
Strangford Lough	78,452	83,314	74,420	87,104	81,364	80,931	MS WS QN SU KN BW RK
Forth Estuary	85,047	76,269	59,926	76,364	87,301	76,981	PG JI SU BA RK
Blackwater Estuary	78,286	70,069	71,847	70,905	85,695	75,360	DB GP GV KN DN BW RK
Swale Estuary	73,873	83,000	61,681	91,462	65,942	75,192	DB PT GP BW
Severn Estuary	64,111	79,969	66,483	72,088	85,631	73,656	MS BS SU PT SV RP KN DN
Mersey Estuary	85,580	84,138	61,549	68,494	39,184	67,789	SU T. DN BW RK
Loch of Strathbeg	81,644	84,266	51,244	52,062	61,125	66,068	WS PG YS
Dengie Flats	45,747	58,280	61,848	53,041	58,262	55,436	DB GV KN BA
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	63,707	73,248	47,200	43,378	42,200	53,947	PG JI
Loughs Neagh and Beg	56,262	58,256	50,737	56,277	45,690	53,444	MS WS PO SP CA
Montrose Basin	50,184	57,115	45,569	45,842	55,217	50,785	PG
Lindisfarne	54,785	58,944	47,959	46,950	44,989	50,725	PG YS QS BA
Stour Estuary	47,600	51,225	63,976	40,232	49,808	50,568	MS SU KN DN BW
Chichester Harbour	43,386	47,685	44,029	54,125	55,980	49,041	DB DN BW
Alt Estuary	53,071	41,837	50,362	40,256	48,787	46,863	PG KN SS BA
Carmarthen Bay	55,752	45,084	52,876	47,922	28,794	46,086	SS
Burry Inlet	49,291	46,256	44,491	44,720	42,564	45,464	PT OC KN BW
Hamford Water	39,943	43,469	34,137	44,842	48,865	42,251	DB GV
West Water Reservoir	.	28,244	43,252	27,960	47,361	36,704	PG
Lough Foyle	33,080	38,654	35,251	34,118	38,461	35,913	WS QN BA
Dungeness and Rye Bay	41,682	33,898	34,863	37,990	26,409	34,968	MS SV
Loch Leven	33,773	40,355	34,279	19,699	44,968	34,615	MS PG T.
Crouch-Roach Estuary	41,774	29,562	31,804	36,013	32,007	34,232	DB BW
Alde Complex	31,841	34,368	33,242	38,602	30,865	33,784	AV BW
Langstone Harbour	45,658	41,481	28,041	30,784	22,066	33,606	DB DN BW
Dornoch Firth	37,057	34,313	28,356	30,940	32,282	32,590	WS JI
Duddon Estuary	29,347	34,653	28,783	34,689	35,003	32,495	PT RK
Cromarty Firth	37,955	35,799	23,332	39,053	25,256	32,279	PG JI
Lower Derwent Ings	34,625	38,497	37,609	33,236	17,025	32,198	
Medway Estuary	30,544	30,870	24,225	35,350	39,263	32,050	PT AV BW
WWT Martin Mere	45,361	37,632	28,328	22,270	25,943	31,907	WS PG
Nene Washes	29,271	20,702	30,296	37,769	30,316	29,671	BS WS PT BW
Abberton Reservoir	24,137	50,320	12,674	30,140	25,419	28,538	MS GA SV
Rutland Water	26,209	31,194	30,381	22,912	26,769	27,493	MS GA SV
Cleddau Estuary	27,746	33,419	19,643	23,336	21,212	25,071	
Orwell Estuary	20,757	26,377	23,326	19,901	23,714	22,815	BW
Pegwell Bay	18,231	20,225	29,811	23,940	19,544	22,350	
Inner Firth of Clyde	19,915	23,161	24,256	22,172	19,771	21,855	
Loch of Skene	18,834	24,764	24,338	20,620	20,401	21,791	PG JI
Colne Estuary	18,430	19,106	16,672	31,305	22,697	21,642	DB
Tees Estuary	21,054	23,601	22,607	22,633	16,716	21,322	
Pagham Harbour	20,539	20,787	22,636	18,437	16,672	19,814	DB PT BW
Wigtown Bay	19,049	14,994	18,101	26,145	19,647	19,587	WS PG YS
Tay Estuary	20,585	25,896	18,460	18,196	14,439	19,515	
Deben Estuary	19,054	19,061	19,355	21,365	18,288	19,425	BW
Belfast Lough	23,198	19,598	18,805	19,279	16,175	19,411	BW
Exe Estuary	20,139	19,167	17,765	19,262	19,560	19,179	BW
West Mainland, Orkney	20,653	17,008	.	.	.	18,831	JI
Lavan Sands	22,038	19,284	22,558	16,111	13,800	18,758	
Poole Harbour	26,368	17,691	15,978	15,752	17,880	18,734	AV BW
Ythan Estuary	13,597	17,747	20,245	14,117	18,459	16,833	
Eden Estuary	14,215	12,190	5,688	12,957	36,795	16,369	PG
Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs	12,262	17,028	17,238	14,294	19,858	16,136	PG
Middle Yare Marshes	17,677	18,066	12,049	18,161	13,537	15,898	

Site	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Average	Int.Imp.Species
Slains Lochs	17,310	12,615	11,408	17,604	19,700	15,727	PG
North West Solent	16,237	13,713	13,915	15,623	16,755	15,249	DB
Fleet and Wey	17,496	17,349	13,774	13,051	14,354	15,205	MS
Taw-Torridge Estuary	16,427	17,259	13,154	10,242	16,373	14,691	
WWT Caerlaverock (Inland)	16,137	16,298	14,199	13,931	10,541	14,221	WS YS
Loch Spynie	30,734	27,245	9,000	1,181	1,404	13,913	PG JI
Portsmouth Harbour	9,666	17,234	14,275	14,020	14,037	13,846	DB BW
Blyth Estuary	4,831	11,769	13,432	19,188	14,001	12,644	
Dyfi Estuary	12,421	12,015	13,117	12,330	12,812	12,539	
Southampton Water	15,048	13,670	11,462	11,345	11,091	12,523	
Camel Estuary	12,965	16,423	10,049	8,156	12,727	12,064	
Cotswold Water Park (West)	10,178	12,157	12,151	12,439	13,219	12,029	
Moray Firth	15,006	21,254	13,850	4,941	1,630	11,336	
Loch of Lintrathen	11,066	10,330	10,937	11,156	13,135	11,325	PG
Arun Valley	9,981	9,600	13,501	11,598	10,360	11,008	
Carlingford Lough	10,952	10,165	9,692	10,705	10,289	10,361	QN
Outer Ards Shoreline	9,551	9,952	12,291	9,673	9,731	10,240	QN
Mersehead RSPB Reserve	15,290	124	16,112	12,457	1,420	9,081	YS PT
Dundrum Inner Bay	7,490	8,435	6,565	13,582	8,634	8,941	QN
Loch of Harray	8,501	7,566	12,639	7,250	7,676	8,726	JI
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	8,404	8,823	7,434	9,011	8,916	8,518	GA
Upper Lough Erne	9,369	9,154	8,712	7,396	6,434	8,213	MS WS
Fen Drayton Gravel Pits	6,125	7,288	9,079	7,674	10,249	8,083	BW
R.Avon: Fordingbr'-Ringwood	6,405	6,311	8,523	8,088	7,618	7,389	GA BW
Overcote Marina	.	.	7,828	.	6,055	6,942	BW
Tiree	8,411	15,171	5,297	4,196	979	6,811	NW JH YN
Loch Fleet Complex	5,177	7,972	7,141	7,754	4,802	6,569	JI
Hule Moss	9,007	6,954	2,647	7,095	6,569	6,454	PG
R.Avon: Ringwood-Ch'church	2,798	2,796	12,591	9,026	4,347	6,312	BW
Horsey Mere	7,231	6,240	5,430	.	.	6,300	PG
R.Nith: Keltonbank-Nunholm	5,976	.	8,115	.	4,282	6,124	YS
Kilconquhar Loch	2,983	3,728	1,187	7,622	14,884	6,081	PG
Loch of Tankerness	5,261	4,980	.	.	7,730	5,990	JI
Loch of Boardhouse	5,904	7,159	5,983	4,939	5,199	5,837	JI
Loch of Stenness	5,071	6,475	6,039	5,993	4,963	5,708	JI
Heigham Holmes	.	5,670	.	.	.	5,670	PG
Loch Eye	8,352	15,004	1,087	1,667	2,002	5,622	WS JI
East Mainland	7,325	8,589	424	.	.	5,446	JI
Hornsea Mere	7,063	6,338	4,244	4,560	4,820	5,405	MS
Rossie Bog	6,410	3,060	.	2,645	8,856	5,243	PG
R.Clyde: Carstairs-Thankerton	4,510	5,785	3,666	6,283	5,833	5,215	PG
Larne Lough	4,990	5,548	4,108	4,050	6,283	4,996	QN
R.Tay: Haughs of Kercock	6,029	6,254	5,045	3,622	3,295	4,849	PG JI
Hickling Broad	4,980	6,211	3,662	.	4,529	4,846	BS
Loch Heilen	6,698	7,863	2,567	4,898	492	4,504	JI
North Uist	5,806	2,671	4,437	.	.	4,305	JH YN
Milldam and Balfour Mains Pools	3,918	4,839	4,200	4,911	3,293	4,232	JI
Loch Tullybelton	6,500	.	2,757	2,800	4,000	4,014	PG
Biggar Moss	2,075	2,326	638	7,442	7,375	3,971	PG
Lochhill	277	4,578	1,816	5,506	7,516	3,939	PG
Loch Bee (South Uist)	4,273	3,430	3,907	3,671	3,708	3,798	MS JH
Island of Egilsay	5,401	3,609	3,051	.	3,057	3,780	JI
Orchardton, Auchencairn Bays	3,072	3,570	4,170	2,800	5,017	3,726	YS

Site	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Average	Int.Imp.Species
Loch a` Phuill (Tiree)	2,800	5,937	3,931	3,578	2,358	3,721	JH
Island of Papa Westray	3,320	4,067	.	3,144	4,139	3,668	JI
Loch Gruinart	4,646	3,808	3,042	3,274	3,323	3,619	JH
Loch Gruinart Floods	4,298	4,142	3,669	2,731	3,188	3,606	JH
Tweed Estuary	3,525	3,521	3,672	2,786	2,912	3,283	MS
Killough Harbour	2,736	4,164	2,838	.	.	3,246	QN
Loch of Swannay	2,910	2,779	3,075	3,728	3,259	3,150	JI
Lower Lough Erne	3,343	2,878	2,999	3,245	.	3,116	MS
Ravenstruther	408	987	2,344	2,131	9,650	3,104	PG
Warton Floods	.	.	.	3,049	3,130	3,090	BW
Martham Broad	1,576	1,320	984	1,024	10,469	3,075	PG
Loch Watten	3,100	2,447	2,963	2,828	3,867	3,041	JI
Loch of Skaill	2,649	4,310	2,542	2,785	2,619	2,981	JI
Islands of Shapinsay	3,469	5,200	178	.	.	2,949	JI
Sanday	2,365	2,990	.	.	.	2,678	JI
Isle of Coll	3,072	4,000	3,143	1,245	336	2,359	NW JH YN
Gadloch	2,070	2,049	2,310	1,922	2,991	2,268	JI
Balranald Nature Reserve	2,893	1,714	1,593	2,283	1,679	2,032	JH
South Uist	2,111	2,119	1,719	.	.	1,983	JH
Loch Paible (North Uist)	2,697	1,705	2,061	1,419	1,932	1,963	JH
Melbost Sands (Lewis)	1,807	1,527	1,826	2,202	2,305	1,933	JH
Upper Quoile River	979	4,394	1,177	653	.	1,801	MS
Machrihanish	1,487	2,106	1,831	1,345	1,494	1,653	NW
Loch Garten	2,417	1,715	1,581	284	.	1,499	JI
Stronsay (Whole Island)	1,775	2,393	.	.	9	1,392	JI
Broubster Leans	75	1,123	2,979	.	.	1,392	JI
Baleshare (North Uist)	1,110	768	1,617	1,631	1,574	1,340	JH
Loch Ussie	457	3,604	447	1,514	249	1,254	JI
Ceann a Bhaigh	1,294	984	1,194	1,175	1,244	1,178	JH
Loch Garten and Mallachie	.	1,472	.	.	879	1,176	JI
Rhunahaorine	894	955	940	1,451	879	1,024	NW
Island of Eday	890	1,060	.	.	.	975	JI
Loch Bhasapoll (Tiree)	1,171	1,579	844	619	586	960	JH
Loch Gorm	187	1,629	.	.	.	908	NW JH YN
Isle of Colonsay	2,152	111	76	1,319	.	852	NW YN
Loch An Eilein (Tiree)	641	865	431	661	1,260	772	JH
Loch Riaghain (Tiree)	684	523	648	899	1,051	761	JH
Loch Eaval and Loch Hosta	829	456	649	654	871	692	JH
Keills Peninsula & Isle of Danna	1,051	816	300	913	239	664	NW YN
Balnakiel Farm	.	1,195	288	1,109	33	656	YN
Isle of Colonsay	2,152	111	76	1,319	.	852	NW YN
Stranraer Lochs	257	282	1,105	877	273	559	NW
Sound of Gigha	276	520	105	194	1,355	490	ND
Scapa Flow - Deer Snd offshore	.	457	.	.	.	457	ND
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	383	379	359	521	.	411	SZ
Claish Moss and Lower Loch	363	306	262	351	366	330	JH
South Uist West Coast	286	.	.	.	.	286	ND
Scarp to Vatersay offshore	119	280	.	.	.	200	ND
Outer Loch Indaal	57	279	.	.	.	168	ND
Coll, Tiree and west Mull	154	73	.	.	.	114	ND
Sound of Barra (Barra)	189	37	.	.	.	113	ND

Table 7. Other sites in the UK holding internationally important numbers of waterbirds in 2008/09 which are not routinely monitored by standard WeBS surveys. (Species codes are provided in Table 8.)

Site	Int.Imp.species	Site	Int.Imp.species
Benbecula	JH	Holme and Thornham	PG
Berney Marshes	PG	Norton Marsh	PG
Bute	JI,JH	Scolt Head Roost	PG
Caithness Lochs	NW,JI	Snettisham Roost	PG
Colonsay/Oronsay	YN	Wells-next-the-Sea	PG
Cromarty Firth	JI	North Uist	JH,YN
Dingwall Bay	JI	Baleshare and Carinish (Grimsay)	JH
Nigg Bay	JI	Balmartin To Vallay	JH
Dalreoch	WS,JI	Balranald Clettraval and Tigharry	JH
East Mains Flood	JI	Berneray	JH,YN
Floodwater South Of Braco	PG	Boreray and Lingay	JH
Forth Estuary	PG	Clachan Na Luib to Bayhead	JH
Aberlady Bay	PG	Malaclate To Grenitote	JH,YN
Forth Grangemouth to Kincardine	PG	Oronsay	JH
Hule Moss (West)	PG	Paible	JH
Read`s Island Flats	PG	Trumisgarry to Newton	JH
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	PG,JI	Orkney	JI, YN
Beauly Firth	JI	Isle of South Ronaldsay	JI
Easterton - Fort George	PG,JI	South Walls (Hoy)	YN
Findhorn Bay	PG	Ribble Estuary	PG
Island of Islay	NW,JH,YN	Banks Marsh Central	PG
Isle of Oronsay	YN	Hesketh Out-Marsh	PG
Isle of Lismore	NW	Simonswood Peat Moss	PG
Loans of Tullich	WS	Solway Firth	YS
Loch Eye and Cromarty Firth	WS,JI	South Uist	
Loch Fleet	JI	Askernish To Smerclate	JH
Lune Estuary	PG	Bornish To Askernish	JH
Martin Mere and Ribble Estuary	WS	Drimore To Howmore	JH
Morecambe Bay	PG	Howbeg To Bornish	JH
Wyre to Cockerham	PG	Lochdar, Gerinish and Drimsdale	JH
Wyre Estuary	PG	Southwest Lancashire	PG
Wyre Estuary to Arm Hill	PG	Tayinloan	NW,JH
North Norfolk Coast & The Wash	PG	Winter Loch, St Fergus Gas Term.	PG
Holkham Bay Roost	PG	Ythan Estuary and Slains Lochs	PG
Holkham & Burnham Marshes	PG		

Table 8. Species codes for species listed in tables 6., 7. and 9.

AV	Avocet
BA	Bar-tailed Godwit
BS	Bewick's Swan
BV	Black-throated Diver
BW	Black-tailed Godwit
CA	Cormorant
CO	Coot
CU	Curlew
CX	Common Scoter
DB	Dark-bellied Brent Goose
DN	Dunlin
E.	Eider
EW	European White-fronted Goose
GA	Gadwall
GG	Great Crested Grebe
GK	Greenshank
GP	Golden Plover
GV	Grey Plover
JH	Greylag Goose Northwest Scotland population
JI	Greylag Goose Icelandic population
KN	Knot
L.	Lapwing
LG	Little Grebe
MA	Mallard
MS	Mute Swan
ND	Great Northern Diver
NW	Greenland White-fronted Goose
OC	Oystercatcher
PG	Pink-footed Goose
PO	Pochard
PS	Purple Sandpiper
PT	Pintail
QN	Light-bellied Brent Goose Nearctic population
QS	Light-bellied Brent Goose Svalbard population
RH	Red-throated Diver
RK	Redshank
RM	Red-breasted Merganser
RP	Ringed Plover
RU	Ruff
SP	Scaup
SS	Sanderling
SU	Shelduck
SV	Shoveler
SZ	Slavonian Grebe
T.	Teal
TT	Turnstone
WN	Wigeon
WS	Whooper Swan
YN	Barnacle Goose Nearctic population

WeBS Low Tide Counts

AIMS

Estuarine sites in the UK provide the most important habitat for non-breeding waterbirds, acting as wintering grounds for many migrants but also as stopover feeding locations for other waterbirds passing along the East Atlantic Flyway. Core Counts on estuaries tend to quantify birds present at high tide roosts. Although important, knowledge of roost sites provides only part of the picture, and does not elucidate the use that waterbirds make of a site for feeding.

The WeBS Low Tide Counts scheme has flourished since its inception in the winter of 1992/93, with most of the major estuaries covered. The scheme aims principally to monitor, assess and regularly update information on the relative importance of inter-tidal feeding areas of UK estuaries for wintering waterbirds and thus to complement the information gathered by WeBS Core Counts.

The data gathered contribute greatly to the conservation of waterbirds by providing supporting information for the establishment and management of UK Ramsar sites and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), other site designations and whole estuary conservation plans. In addition, WeBS Low Tide Counts enhance our knowledge of the low water distribution of waterbirds and provide data that highlight regional variations in habitat use, whilst also informing protection of the important foraging areas identified. WeBS Low Tide Counts provide valuable information needed to gauge the potential effects on waterbirds of a variety of human activities which affect the extent or value of inter-tidal habitats, such as proposals for dock developments, recreational activities, tidal power barrages, marinas and housing schemes. Designing mitigation or compensation for such activities can be assisted using data collected under the scheme. Furthermore, the effects on bird distributions of climate change and sea level rise can be assessed.

METHODS

The scheme provides information on the numbers of waterbirds feeding on subdivisions of the inter-tidal habitat within estuaries. Given the extra work that Low Tide Counts entail, often by the same counters that carry out the Core Counts, WeBS aims to cover most individual estuaries about once every six years, although on some sites more frequent counts are made. Co-ordinated counts of waterbirds are made by volunteers each month between November and February on pre-established subdivisions of the inter-tidal habitat in the period two hours either side of low tide.

DATA PRESENTATION

Tabulated Statistics

Tables 9 and 10 present three statistics for 18 of the more numerous waterbird species present on 21 estuaries covered during the 2008/09 winter: the peak number of a species over the whole site counted in any one month (with checks for count synchronicity made from assessing proximity of count dates and consultation with Local Organisers); an estimate of the mean number present over the winter for the whole site (obtained by summing the mean counts of each species for each count section) and the mean density over the site (in birds per hectare), which is the mean number divided by the total area surveyed (in hectares). The area value used for these calculations is the sum of the inter-tidal and non-tidal components of each count section but omits the sub-tidal areas (*i.e.* those parts of the count section which are under water on a mean low tide).

Dot Density Maps

WeBS Low Tide Count data are presented as dot density maps, with subdivision of count sections into basic habitat elements. The reason for such a subdivision is to ensure species are plotted on appropriate habitat areas and to improve the accuracy of density

estimates. Each section for which a count has been made is divided into a maximum of three different habitat components:

Inter-tidal: Areas that lie between mean high water and mean low water.

Sub-tidal: Areas that lie below mean low water. In more 'open-coast'-type situations, a sub-tidal zone reaching 500 m out from the inter-tidal sections has been created arbitrarily, to indicate the approximate extent of visibility offshore from land-based counts.

Non-tidal: Areas that lie above mean high water (usually saltmarsh although some grazing marshes are also covered).

The mean count for the sector is then divided amongst a varying number of the different components, dependent on the usual habitat preferences of the species involved. For example, Dunlin dots are plotted exclusively on inter-tidal sections whereas Wigeon dots are spread across inter-tidal, sub-tidal and non-tidal areas (in proportion to the relative areas of these three components).

Currently, throughout all WeBS Low Tide Count analyses, mean low tide and mean high tide are taken from the most recent Ordnance Survey 1:25000 maps (in Scotland, the lines on the OS maps are mean low water springs and mean high water springs instead). It is recognised, unfortunately, that these maps represent the current real shape of the mudflats, water channels and saltmarshes to varying degrees of accuracy. However, in the interests of uniformity across the UK, the Ordnance Survey outlines are adhered to throughout the analyses.

The maps display the average number of birds in each count section as dots spread randomly across habitat components of count sections, thus providing an indication of both numbers and density. **It is important to note that individual dots do not represent the precise position of individual birds; dots have been assigned to habitat components proportionally and are then randomly placed within those areas. No information about the distribution of birds at a finer scale than the count sector level should be inferred from the dot density maps.** For all maps in the present report, one dot is equivalent to one bird, except where stated. The size of individual dots has no relevance other than for clarity.

As most estuaries have now been covered more than once at low tide, density maps show the relative distributions of species in the winter of 2008/09 compared to an earlier winter of survey. It is hoped that comparative dot density distributions will lead to an easier and fuller appreciation of low tide estuarine waterbird distribution, and changes therein. The following colour conventions apply to density maps: red dots = 2008/09 winter; blue dots = earlier winter; pale blue = water; yellow = inter-tidal habitat (e.g. mudflat, sandflat); pale green = non-tidal habitat (e.g. saltmarsh, reedbed); grey = not covered in one survey winter. More detailed information concerning analysis and presentation of WeBS Low Tide Counts can be obtained from Neil Calbrade, the National Organiser (WeBS Low Tide Counts), or from the publication *Estuarine Waterbirds at Low Tide* (Musgrove *et al*. 2003)

ESTUARY ACCOUNTS

The main estuaries counted at low tide in the winter of 2008/09 are discussed. WeBS Low Tide Counts were carried out on 23 different sites, with estuary accounts encompassing 9 of these. To allow space in this report for these sites which have not been counted for many years, dot density distribution maps for Belfast Lough, Breydon Water, Strangford Lough and the Stour/Orwell Estuaries where repeat counts are made each year are available on our website at ***www.bto.org/webs/websdownloads/lowtidemaps*** or from the WeBS office. Other counts, usually on limited numbers of sectors or only in one month, were made in the winter of 2008/09 on Adur Estuary, Burry Inlet, Carmarthen Bay, Dyfi Estuary, Killough Harbour, Langstone Harbour, Loch Fleet and Thames. These sites are not included in

the estuary accounts, but data can be obtained from the WeBS Low Tide Count National Organiser upon request.

For the main site accounts, data were collected during the period November to February. Assessment of national and international importance is based on five- year peak mean counts from the main species accounts in this volume of *Waterbirds in the UK*. Figure 56 shows the location of the sites discussed, and a site description is presented for each estuary. Distribution maps are presented for selected species, which are those of national or international importance, or are known to be undergoing site-level changes, where possible. General bird distribution is described for the winter of 2008/09, focusing on species held in important numbers at the site in question.

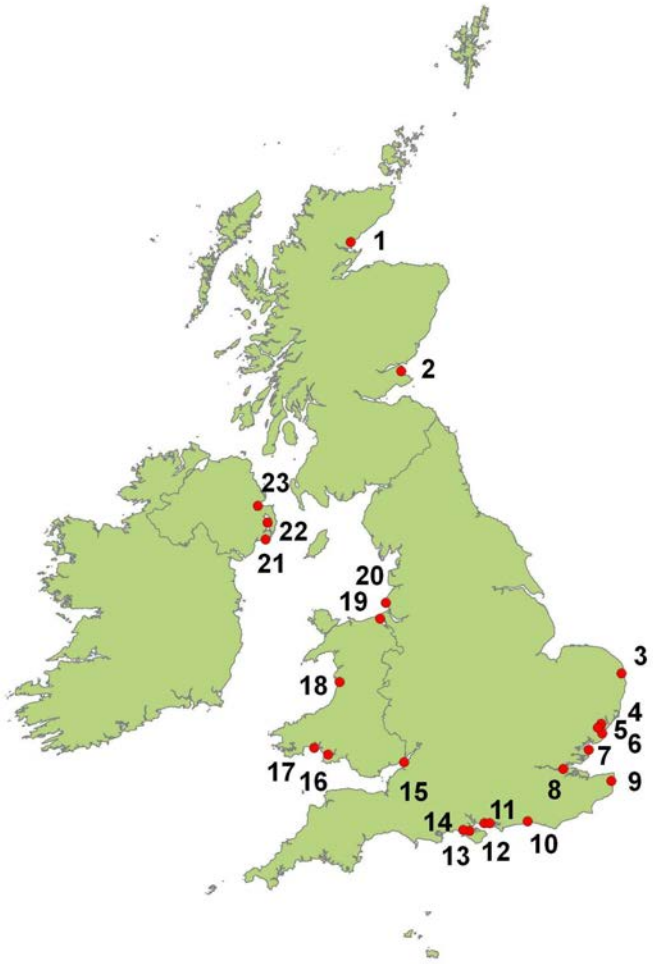


Figure 56. Map showing estuaries covered at low tide in the winter of 2008/09.
1: Loch Fleet; 2: Eden Estuary; 3: Breydon Water; 4: Orwell Estuary; 5: Stour Estuary; 6: Dengie Flats; 7: Hamford Water; 8: Thames Estuary; 9: Pegwell Bay; 10: Adur Estuary; 11: Langstone Harbour; 12: Portsmouth Harbour; 13: Newtown Harbour; 14: Northwest Solent; 15: Severn Estuary; 16: Burry Inlet; 17: Carmarthen Bay; 18: Dyfi Estuary; 19: Dee Estuary; 20: Alt Estuary; 21 Killough Harbour; 22: Strangford Lough; 23: Belfast Lough.

Table 9. Sites with Estuary Accounts and important bird numbers held. Numbers in parentheses refer to the location in figure 56. For species codes see table 8.

	International Importance	**National Importance**
Adur Estuary (10)	None	None
Alt Estuary (20)	KN, SS, BA	CX, RP, GV, DN, LB
Belfast Lough (23)	BW	SU, SV, SP, E., GN, RM, RH, BV, GG, OC, RP, PS, RK, TT
Breydon Water (3)	BS, PG, WN, T., SV, AV, GP, L., BW, RK, CN	BS, EW, PT, RU
Burry Inlet (16)	PT, OC, KN, BW	DB, SV, DN, CU, GK
Carmarthen Bay (17)	CX, SS	OC, GP, BW, GK
Dee Estuary (19)	SU, PT, OC, KN, DN, BW, RK	WN, T., CX, GG, CA, RP, GV, L., SS, RU, BA, CU, GB
Dengie Flats (6)	DB, GV, KN, BA	RP, GP, DN
Dyfi Estuary (18)	None	None
Eden Estuary (2)	PG	QS, BW
Hamford Water (7)	DB, GV	SU, T., LG, AV, GP, KN, RU, BW, BA, RK
Killough Harbour (21)	QN	None
Langstone Harbour (11)	DB, DN, BW	RM, GV, TT
Loch Fleet (1)	JI	None
Newtown Harbour (13)	None	DB, BW
Northwest Solent (14)	DB	PT, BW
Orwell Estuary (4)	BW	DB, GA, PT, AV, KN, BW, RK
Pegwell Bay (9)	None	RH, GP, L., GB
Portsmouth Harbour (12)	DB, BW	LG, DN
Severn Estuary (15)	MS, BS, EW, SU, PT, SV, RP KN, DN, LB, HG	WN, GA, T., PO, LG, AV, GP, L., SS, RU, BW, CU, RK
Stour Estuary (5)	MS, BW,	DB, SU, PT, AV, GV, DN, RU, RK, TT
Strangford Lough (22)	MS, WS, QN, SU, GP, KN, BW, BA, RK	T., WN, MA, PT, SV, E., GN, RM, BV, GG, CO, RP, GV, L., DN, CU, GK
Thames Estuary (8)	DB, SV, AV, RP, GV, KN, DN BA, RK, BH	SU, WN, GA, T., LG, CA, GP, BW, L., SS, RU, CU, TT, LB, HG, GB

Table 10. Peak and mean counts and mean density (birds per ha) of 18 waterbird species across 18 estuaries covered by the 2008/09 WeBS Low Tide Counts. Stour and Orwell estuaries displayed separately. "+" indicates non-zero densities of <0.01 birds per ha.

Species	Adur Estuary			Alt Estuary			Belfast Lough		
	Peak No.	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*	***Peak No.***	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*	***Peak No.***	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*
Brent Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	165	115	0.06
Shelduck	0	0	0	250	216	0.08	604	342	0.17
Wigeon	0	0	0	3	1	+	188	169	0.08
Teal	42	25	0.28	115	72	0.03	400	371	0.18
Mallard	14	5	0.06	263	184	0.07	313	255	0.13
Pintail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oystercatcher	3	2	0.08	540	491	0.3	2599	2369	5.63
Ringed Plover	42	26	0.91	45	20	0.01	147	112	0.27
Golden Plover	0	0	0	500	162	0.1	0	0	0
Grey Plover	13	6	0.19	212	151	0.09	1	0	+
Lapwing	191	119	1.59	306	172	0.11	667	542	1.26
Knot	0	0	0	335	213	0.13	7	2	0.01
Dunlin	257	99	3.41	2711	1705	1.04	559	368	0.87
Black-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	36	17	0.01	690	349	0.81
Bar-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	2651	1309	0.8	28	18	0.04
Curlew	2	1	0.01	876	516	0.31	554	404	0.94
Redshank	50	31	0.41	683	488	0.3	1122	1026	2.39
Turnstone	26	7	0.22	63	54	0.03	300	268	0.64

Species	Breydon Water			Burry Inlet			Carmarthen Bay		
	Peak No.	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*	***Peak No.***	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*	***Peak No.***	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*
Brent Goose	1	1	+	288	182	0.03	0	0	0
Shelduck	15	9	0.02	604	396	0.06	165	115	0.03
Wigeon	14398	10700	22.29	249	193	0.03	1032	593	0.14
Teal	1044	340	0.71	18	10	+	195	100	0.02
Mallard	148	97	0.2	31	15	+	218	82	0.02
Pintail	50	21	0.04	517	407	0.06	276	213	0.05
Oystercatcher	2	1	+	10005	7640	1.91	8135	6954	2.68
Ringed Plover	15	6	0.02	14	5	+	73	66	0.03
Golden Plover	3500	2493	6.2	251	63	0.01	3000	750	0.23
Grey Plover	25	13	0.03	97	30	0.01	40	21	0.01
Lapwing	5186	3329	8.28	1062	417	0.07	804	347	0.11
Knot	215	263	0.67	423	304	0.08	1650	1371	0.53
Dunlin	4785	2792	7.07	3900	2611	0.65	3793	1917	0.74
Black-tailed Godwit	2712	1551	3.86	220	142	0.02	85	43	0.01
Bar-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	82	35	0.01	95	30	0.01
Curlew	607	372	0.92	578	489	0.08	473	266	0.08
Redshank	1903	1132	2.82	363	262	0.04	649	370	0.12
Turnstone	0	0	0	2	1	+	101	61	0.02

Species	Dee Estuary			Dengie Flats			Dyfi Estuary		
	Peak No.	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*	***Peak No.***	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*	***Peak No.***	*Mean No.*	*Mean Dns.*
Brent Goose	141	132	0.01	881	1230	0.33	1	0	+
Shelduck	2640	1827	0.1	205	191	0.05	79	47	0.05
Wigeon	1627	1263	0.07	281	192	0.05	234	180	0.19
Teal	3129	2468	0.13	32	24	0.01	7	3	+
Mallard	1108	994	0.05	58	38	0.01	42	32	0.03
Pintail	2541	1869	0.1	2	1	+	41	28	0.03
Oystercatcher	32820	29478	2.68	4489	3943	1.72	136	111	0.2
Ringed Plover	165	87	0.01	13	22	0.01	27	11	0.02
Golden Plover	225	183	0.01	8820	4505	1.67	86	22	0.03
Grey Plover	2033	1505	0.14	1480	1982	0.86	2	1	+
Lapwing	3768	2698	0.2	589	385	0.14	63	45	0.06
Knot	20850	15624	1.42	9075	8125	3.54	0	0	0
Dunlin	16855	15107	1.38	5991	7259	3.16	121	65	0.12
Black-tailed Godwit	2872	2582	0.19	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bar-tailed Godwit	4213	3311	0.3	1930	1871	0.81	0	0	0
Curlew	3021	2872	0.21	349	510	0.19	83	77	0.1
Redshank	9576	5533	0.4	395	512	0.19	31	21	0.03
Turnstone	345	259	0.02	160	174	0.08	3	1	+

Table 10 continued. Peak and mean counts and mean density (birds per ha) of 18 waterbird species across 18 estuaries covered by the 2008/09 WeBS Low Tide Counts. Stour and Orwell estuaries displayed separately. "+" indicates non-zero densities of <0.01 birds per ha.

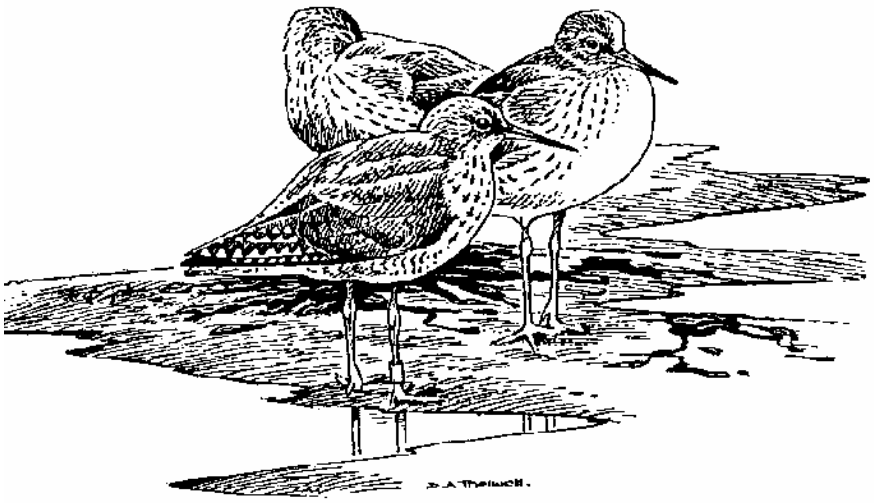
	Eden Estuary			Hamford Water			Langstone Harbour		
	Peak	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*
Species	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*
Brent Goose	29	26	0.02	5698	3161	2.26	1563	1399	2.97
Shelduck	183	141	0.1	1243	1022	0.73	187	131	0.28
Wigeon	108	53	0.04	2491	1678	1.2	969	591	1.25
Teal	91	61	0.04	10684	4471	3.2	94	60	0.13
Mallard	112	72	0.05	117	87	0.06	42	25	0.05
Pintail	1	0	+	56	28	0.02	24	12	0.03
Oystercatcher	2505	2007	2.14	899	646	0.96	364	297	0.74
Ringed Plover	21	6	0.01	237	168	0.25	54	40	0.1
Golden Plover	50	14	0.01	7234	5513	6.98	0	0	0
Grey Plover	344	218	0.23	1786	1004	1.49	170	128	0.32
Lapwing	433	197	0.21	3523	2114	2.68	156	73	0.18
Knot	530	278	0.3	4263	1957	2.91	101	56	0.14
Dunlin	2371	1654	1.76	3731	3103	4.61	4163	3169	7.84
Black-tailed Godwit	162	122	0.13	521	339	0.43	68	46	0.11
Bar-tailed Godwit	264	176	0.19	619	453	0.67	13	8	0.02
Curlew	640	386	0.4	256	203	0.26	186	155	0.38
Redshank	1401	720	0.75	1036	922	1.17	189	160	0.4
Turnstone	6	2	+	274	185	0.28	66	33	0.08

	Loch Fleet			Newtown Harbour			Northwest Solent		
	Peak	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*
Species	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*
Brent Goose	0	0	0	1158	938	2.13	1716	1437	2.14
Shelduck	28	22	0.03	225	186	0.42	186	107	0.16
Wigeon	839	764	0.98	1241	1068	2.42	330	157	0.23
Teal	222	127	0.16	1207	983	2.23	116	39	0.06
Mallard	142	129	0.17	77	36	0.08	20	10	0.02
Pintail	0	0	0	173	94	0.21	4	1	+
Oystercatcher	785	580	1.02	104	83	0.37	150	86	0.2
Ringed Plover	14	4	0.01	54	29	0.13	28	19	0.04
Golden Plover	0	0	0	2	1	+	415	119	0.28
Grey Plover	0	0	0	161	97	0.43	98	84	0.2
Lapwing	16	8	0.01	349	151	0.58	50	13	0.03
Knot	303	103	0.18	1052	713	3.16	6	2	+
Dunlin	143	48	0.08	2474	2094	9.27	5850	3559	8.35
Black-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	140	37	0.14	433	225	0.53
Bar-tailed Godwit	25	7	0.01	6	2	0.01	8	4	0.01
Curlew	287	220	0.38	175	107	0.41	120	79	0.19
Redshank	234	154	0.27	88	63	0.24	156	98	0.23
Turnstone	2	1	+	36	32	0.14	121	70	0.16

	Orwell Estuary			Pegwell Bay			Portsmouth Harbour		
	Peak	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*
Species	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*
Brent Goose	1130	682	0.39	42	18	0.01	2538	2042	1.29
Shelduck	807	555	0.32	96	76	0.06	138	87	0.06
Wigeon	1370	1200	0.69	410	373	0.27	500	423	0.27
Teal	940	598	0.34	761	337	0.24	148	99	0.06
Mallard	363	335	0.19	391	262	0.19	82	44	0.03
Pintail	125	88	0.05	26	9	0.01	0	0	0
Oystercatcher	1464	1120	1.71	620	462	0.78	574	494	0.51
Ringed Plover	176	135	0.21	175	124	0.21	62	31	0.03
Golden Plover	609	197	0.16	3500	2974	3.68	0	0	0
Grey Plover	358	225	0.34	210	96	0.16	52	32	0.03
Lapwing	747	380	0.31	8260	6730	8.33	113	86	0.09
Knot	3357	1931	2.94	260	173	0.29	4	1	+
Dunlin	2260	2001	3.05	1153	770	1.3	6143	5466	5.67
Black-tailed Godwit	813	454	0.37	0	0	0	666	477	0.49
Bar-tailed Godwit	3	2	+	273	182	0.31	57	15	0.02
Curlew	526	457	0.37	496	343	0.42	369	275	0.28
Redshank	1392	1309	1.07	190	106	0.13	624	472	0.49
Turnstone	156	114	0.17	130	81	0.14	142	79	0.08

Table 10 continued. Peak and mean counts and mean density (birds per ha) of 18 waterbird species across 18 estuaries covered by the 2008/09 WeBS Low Tide Counts. Stour and Orwell estuaries displayed separately. "+" indicates non-zero densities of <0.01 birds per ha.

	Severn Estuary			Stour Estuary			Strangford Lough		
	Peak	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*	***Peak***	*Mean*	*Mean*
Species	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*	***No.***	*No.*	*Dns.*
Brent Goose	27	20	+	1631	1354	0.55	3191	2643	0.3
Shelduck	2450	2160	0.06	3499	2282	0.93	5583	3304	0.37
Wigeon	8672	6231	0.18	4702	3907	1.6	917	625	0.07
Teal	4401	3150	0.09	1109	799	0.33	1012	805	0.09
Mallard	2321	2137	0.06	203	171	0.07	405	378	0.04
Pintail	655	441	0.01	486	293	0.12	414	332	0.04
Oystercatcher	1046	958	0.05	1133	1041	0.67	9231	6573	1.72
Ringed Plover	127	100	0.01	218	191	0.12	277	183	0.05
Golden Plover	1440	1020	0.05	2174	1276	0.78	11328	6817	1.78
Grey Plover	343	198	0.01	2208	1593	1.02	71	39	0.01
Lapwing	9081	7337	0.34	1543	531	0.33	5198	3482	0.91
Knot	4066	2553	0.13	7704	4607	2.95	6376	3357	0.88
Dunlin	27136	25614	1.32	18338	13099	8.4	4455	2701	0.71
Black-tailed Godwit	646	456	0.02	932	613	0.38	327	122	0.03
Bar-tailed Godwit	87	31	+	115	87	0.06	969	542	0.14
Curlew	2612	2291	0.11	1231	946	0.58	1381	1266	0.33
Redshank	2936	2641	0.12	2176	1721	1.06	2782	2120	0.55
Turnstone	629	467	0.02	496	487	0.31	199	162	0.04



Redshanks (D. Thelwell)

ALT ESTUARY

Site description

The River Alt emerges as a creek on the shoreline of Liverpool Bay, between the Ribble and the Mersey Estuaries. The majority of the site is sandy in character, although somewhat muddier at the river mouth where there are also some artificial rocky areas. A large area of saltmarsh used to be present at the mouth of the Alt but has mostly been lost to land claim, principally in the early 19th century. The whole site is backed by one of the most important dune systems in the country, though much of the southern part has been lost to housing and docklands (Sefton Council 2009). The whole of the Alt is both a Ramsar Site and SPA, most of it in combination with the Ribble Estuary to the north but Seaforth in combination with parts of the Dee. Potential threats include dock expansions and recreational disturbance.

General bird distribution 2008/09

Area covered 1,639 ha; Mean total birds 7,620; Mean bird density 4.6 birds/ha.

The 2008/09 Low Tide Counts were the first at this important site since 1998/99, being carried out in order to inform future coastal management by Sefton Council. The beach at Crosby was the main area for wading birds, most notably Sanderling, which peaked at 1,278 birds in January; this is by far the highest count of this species on any of the low tide counts carried out this winter. Dunlin, with a peak of 2,711 birds, was the most numerous species recorded, followed by Bar-tailed Godwit. Curlews were most numerous around the Hightown area, and numbers peaked at 876 in February. Wildfowl numbers were relatively low, largely due to the lack of creeks and saltmarsh that species such as Teal and Wigeon tend to favour. Mallard, concentrated around the Hightown Dunes, were the most numerous wildfowl species, whilst the 1,500 Pink-footed Geese recorded were probably the remains of the overnight roost of c.5000 off Formby Point (White *pers. comm.*).

Comparative bird distribution

In both winters, Shelduck have shown aggregated distributions, with birds being concentrated almost exclusively at just one location, off Hightown. Between 1998/99 and 2008/09, Shelduck numbers counted on the Alt estuary have increased, from a mean site count of 119 in 1998/99 to a recent mean site count of 216 birds. This is also reflected in the mean site density, up to 0.08 birds per hectare from 0.05 birds per hectare. However, the Ribble/Alt SPA has shown a decline in the numbers of Shelduck in line with the region, following a peak in the early 1990s, with the site being issued with a Medium Alert (see *http:/www.bto.org/webs/alerts*) over the ten-year period. Seaforth Docks, which had a concentration of up to 56 birds in 2008/09, was omitted from the 1998/99 counts.

Bar-tailed Godwit numbers have also steadily declined on the Ribble/Alt SPA with a Medium Alert over five-, ten-, and 25-year periods. However, numbers counted on Low Tide Counts have shown an increase in the last ten years. However, in previous years, many birds roosting on the Alt use the North Wirral shore to feed at low tide. This apparent increase would suggest that many birds now remain on the Alt throughout the Low Tide period too. In 1998/99, the mean site count was 1,021 (with a peak count of 1,657) whilst in 2008/09 the mean site count had risen to 1,309 (with a peak of 2,651). Moreover, there was a major shift in distribution between 1988/99 and 2008/09: the main area of concentration in 2008/09 was near Crosby where there was a mean count of 793 birds and a mean density of 11 birds per hectare. A few birds were scattered further north, particularly off Hightown, whilst in 1998/99 the majority were present between Hightown and Formby Point with relatively few at Crosby.

The Alt Estuary counts were made by BCM Environmental Services Ltd on behalf of Sefton Council. These data are generously made available by Sefton Council to The Wetland Bird Survey.

FIGURE 57 Low Tide distribution of Shelduck and Bar-tailed Godwit (below: 1 dot = 2 birds) for the winters of 1998/99 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) on the Alt Estuary. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal.

DEE ESTUARY

Site description

The Dee is a large estuary situated between the Wirral and the north Wales coast and is characterized by extensive sand flats, mudflats and saltmarsh. The main channel of the Dee runs close to the Welsh shore for much of its length where the mudflats are less wide. On either side of the estuary mouth there are long expanses of sandy beaches and sand dunes. A line of cliffs stretches between Hoylake and Heswall along the eastern side of the Dee. At the northern end, close to the eastern shore at Hilbre, there are a series of small rocky islands. The Dee is heavily industrialised, particularly along the Welsh Shore. There are steel and paper mills at Shotton, a gas-fired power station at Connah's Quay and a gas terminal at Point of Ayr, docks at Mostyn and several chemical works concentrated along the Welsh shoreline. Recreational disturbance is potentially widespread, especially from sailing, windsurfing, jet skiing and kite surfing, but is controlled by wardening by local authority rangers. Around the estuary mouth, the sands are used for dog walking and horse riding. There are two wardening schemes to reduce disturbance to wader roosts operated by RSPB and local rangers services. Other leisure activities and commercial fishing prevail. Evidence suggests that there is considerable interchange of waterbirds between here and the Mersey, Ribble and Alt Estuaries.

General bird distribution 2008/09

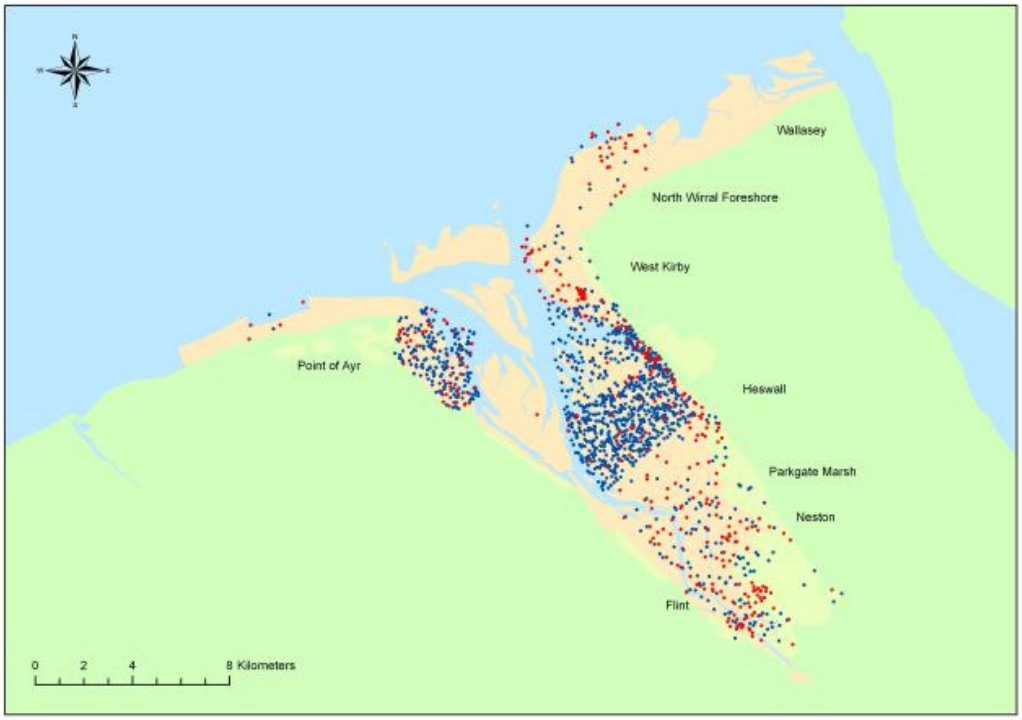
Area covered 13,793 ha; Mean total birds 91,697; Mean bird density 6.6 birds per ha.

The Dee Estuary supports a diverse range of species in nationally and internationally important numbers, and the 51 species recorded during the Low Tide Counts in 2008/09 was the second highest of all the sites counted. Oystercatchers were present in the largest numbers, with a peak of 32,820 birds followed by Knot (20,850) and Dunlin (16,885); all three species were present throughout the main body of the estuary and along the North Wirral Foreshore. Wildfowl such as Wigeon, Teal and Mallard were largely found at the upper reaches of the estuary between Parkgate Marsh and Flint, whilst the main concentration of Pintails (for which the Dee Estuary is the most important site in the UK) was off the Wirral Country Park near Thurstaston: in earlier years the favoured area was the main river channel between Oakenholt and Bagillt. An example of the increase of Little Egrets in UK is shown by a peak of 18 in 2001/02 rising to 57 in 2008/09.

Comparative bird distribution

Shelduck are present in internationally important numbers on the Dee Estuary, being only second in numbers to the neighbouring Mersey Estuary. Numbers on the Dee have steadily increased in the long-term with peak high water counts in autumn reflecting movement of moulting birds from the Mersey to the Dee but numbers in the winter period have fallen. Low Tide Counts have fallen dramatically, with a mean of 5,460 in 2001/02 to a mean of 1,827 in 2008/09. Much the same areas were favoured in both winters, with the bulk of the birds between Heswall and West Kirby where the mean count fell from 2,666 (1.77 birds per hectare) to 171 (0.11 birds per hectare). A smaller concentration was also present at the Point of Ayr where again the mean count fell from 928 (0.96 birds per hectare) in 2001/02 to 236 (0.24 birds per hectare) in 2008/09.

Knot, which are also present in internationally important numbers here, have undergone a big decline. As a result, the site has been issued with a High Alert (see *http://www.bto.org/webs/alerts*) over the twenty-five-year period although numbers more recently have remained stable. There has also been a decline in numbers on the Low Tide Counts too, falling from a mean count of 19,850 in 2001/02 to 15,624 in 2008/09. The distribution of birds has also changed between the two counts; in 2001/02 the vast majority of the birds were present along the North Wirral Foreshore, whilst in 2008/09 many more were within the estuary's main body.



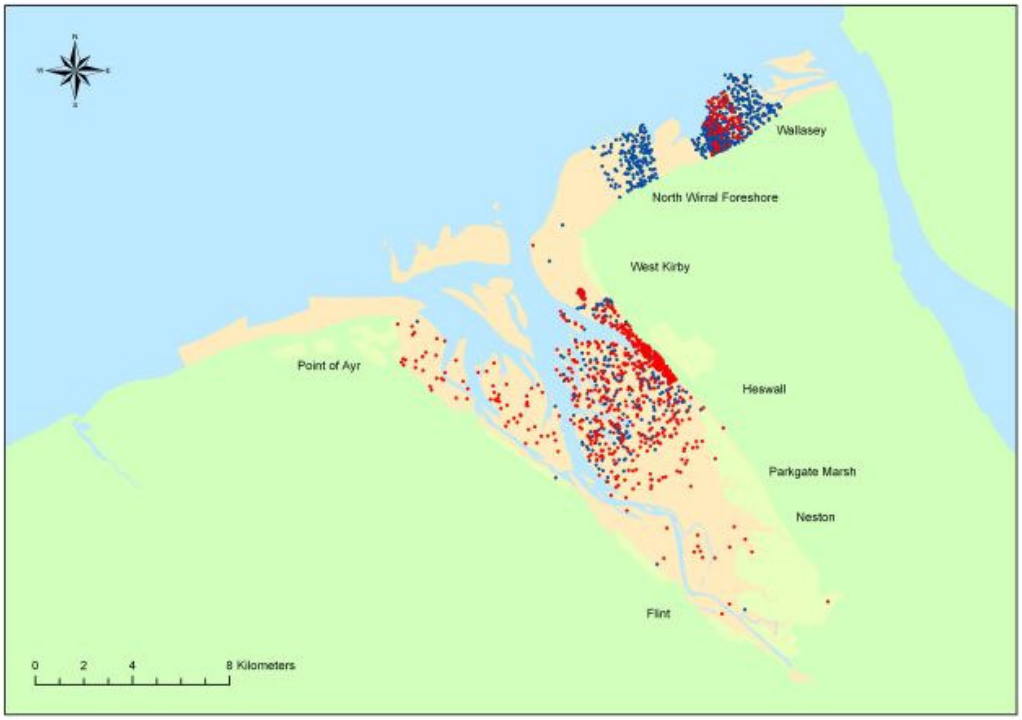


FIGURE 58 Low Tide distribution of Shelduck (above: 1 dot = 5 birds) and Knot (below: 1 dot = 20 birds) for the winters of 2001/02 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) on the Dee Estuary. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal.

DENGIE FLATS

Site description

Dengie Flats lie between the Blackwater and Crouch-Roach Estuaries. The flats are comprised of an extensive area of tidal mudflat with saltmarsh towards the eastern end of the Dengie Peninsula. Evidence suggests that there is considerable interchange of waterbirds between these adjacent estuaries. The mudflats support extensive growth of *Entermorpha* alga along with populations of molluscs, marine worms and crustaceans. Unusually, for an open-coast situation, the mudflats grade into saltmarsh and the transition zone is characterised by mud-mounds with shell-lined gullies between them. The saltmarsh vegetation is relatively intact, despite being exposed to wave action, and a series of drainage channels bisect this habitat. Opposite Bradwell, at the northern end of the site, there is a small sand and shingle spit, the front of which has been severely eroded. Agricultural operations have claimed most of the historic grazing marshes, which are now located behind the sea wall. Although a relatively remote site, there is some recreational activity; for example, water sports, beach recreation, bait digging and wildfowling. Bradwell Nuclear Power Station, at the extreme northwest corner, represents the only major industrial development adjacent to the site (Musgrove et al 2003).

General bird distribution 2008/09

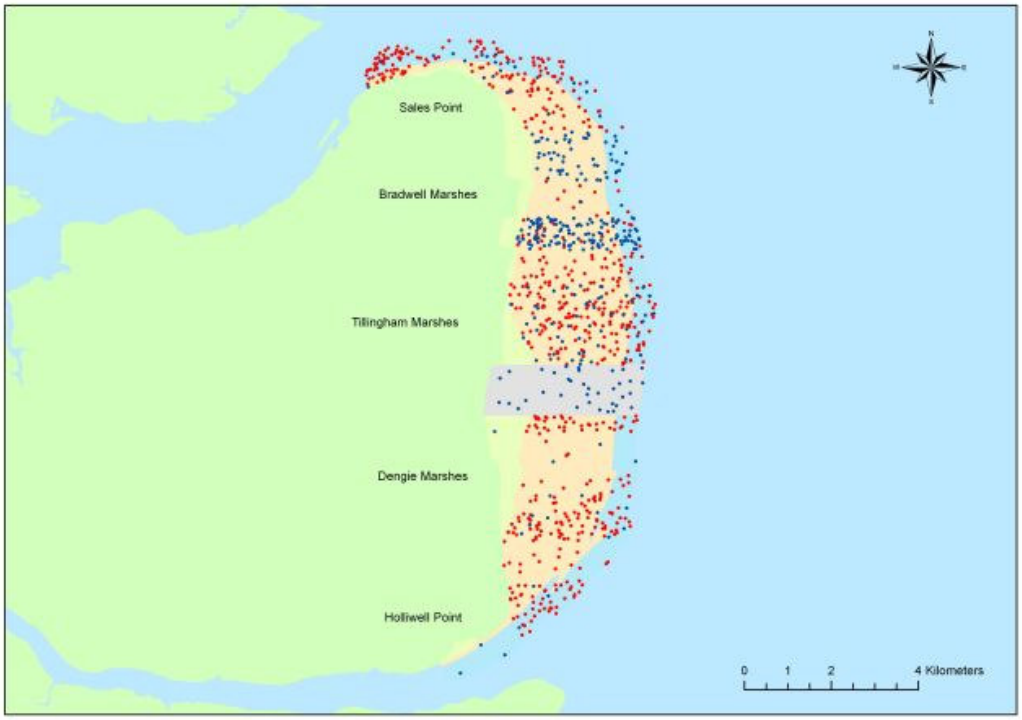
Area covered 2,696 ha; Mean total birds 31,021; Mean bird density 11.5 birds/ha.

With 22 species recorded, Dengie Flats, despite its size, produced one of the lowest varieties of waterbirds, although the number of many of species was high. Knot was the most numerous species recorded, with a peak of 9,075; although widespread along the length of the flats, the highest concentration was at the south end near Dengie Marshes. Dunlin too were found in their highest numbers at the south end whereas Bar-tailed Godwits favoured the area by Bradwell Marshes in the north. Oystercatcher and Curlew were more widespread throughout the flats with fewer concentrations of birds. The few Ringed Plover that were seen were at both the extreme north and south ends of the flats. Wildfowl such as Shelduck, Wigeon, Teal and Mallard were all found in greatest numbers around the area by Bradwell Marshes.

Comparative bird distribution

Between the two most recent winters that Low Tide Counts have been carried out on the Dengie Flats, the number of Dark-bellied Brent Geese has increased. Whilst numbers counted on Core Counts have only seen a slight increase (rising from 1,798 in 2001/02 to 2,364 in 2008/09), those counted on Low Tide Counts have doubled with a mean count in 2008/09 of 1,230 compared with 609 in 2001/02. This increase may have been brought about by improved feeding conditions at low tide following the sinking of barges offshore which have altered the floral composition of the mudflats (A. Harbott *pers comm.*). Birds in 2008/09 were widely spread out with small concentrations west of Sales Point and between Tillingham and Bradwell Marshes. In 2001/02, the majority of birds were found around Bradwell Marshes, with small numbers elsewhere.

After The Wash, Dengie Flats is the most important site for Grey Plover in the UK and numbers counted on core counts have doubled over the last few years. Numbers counted on Low Tide Counts have also seen an increase, going up from a mean site count of 1,048 in 2001/02 (mean site density of 0.42 birds per hectare) to a mean of 1,982 (0.86 birds per hectare) in 2008/09. Birds were generally quite widespread along the flats in both winters, with the highest density being between Dengie Marshes and Holliwell Point of 3.08 birds per hectare in 2008/09 (compared with 1.5 birds per hectare in 2001/02). However, in the 2008/09 counts, the area of the flats between Bradwell Marshes and Tillingham Marshes supported many more birds than on the 2001/02 counts.



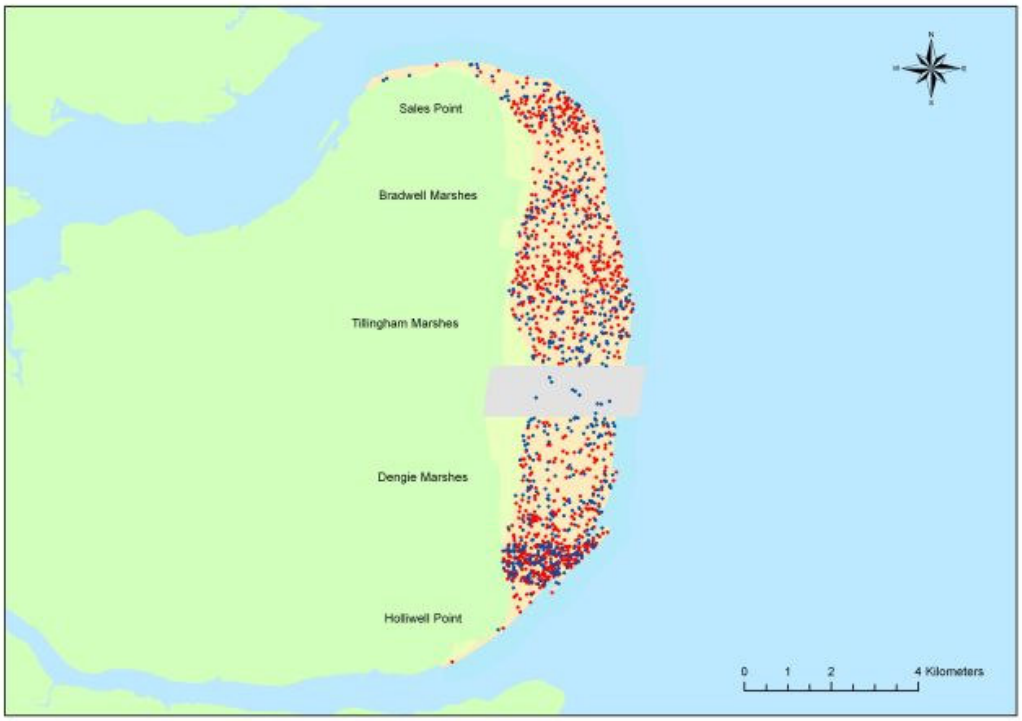


FIGURE 59 Low Tide distribution of Dark-bellied Brent Goose (above: 1 dot = 2 birds) and Grey Plover (below: 1 dot=2 birds) for the winters of 2001/02 (blue) and 2008/09 (red). Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal. Grey area not counted in later winter.

Site description

The Eden is a relatively small estuary positioned between the Firth of Tay to the north and the Forth of Forth to the south. Evidence suggests that there is considerable interchange of waterbirds between here and the Firth of Tay, and the two estuaries are considered together as one functional unit in the SPA and SAC designations. The River Eden enters the estuary in the southwest corner and at low tide a narrow subtidal channel meanders across extensive intertidal flats. The estuary is predominantly muddy, although towards the mouth, the substrate becomes increasingly sandy. Areas of mussel beds and eelgrass occur in the western zones. Saltmarsh vegetation is present along the shores, with the greatest development at the southwestern end, off Edenside. In some areas, *Spartina* is invading the saltmarsh. The estuary mouth is flanked by sand dunes on both the northern and southern sides, with a spit on the southern shore extending into the estuary, representing a mobile and dynamic sediment system. The outer southern section of the estuary abuts an area of rocky shore at St Andrews. Regular over-flying of the estuary from RAF Leuchars occurs; this airbase limits access along the northern shore. Recreational disturbance is monitored and managed by a permit system and associated byelaws. Recreational impacts include wind and sail watersports, fishing, horse riding and wildfowling. Bait digging is prohibited on the main intertidal mudflats.

General bird distribution 2008/09

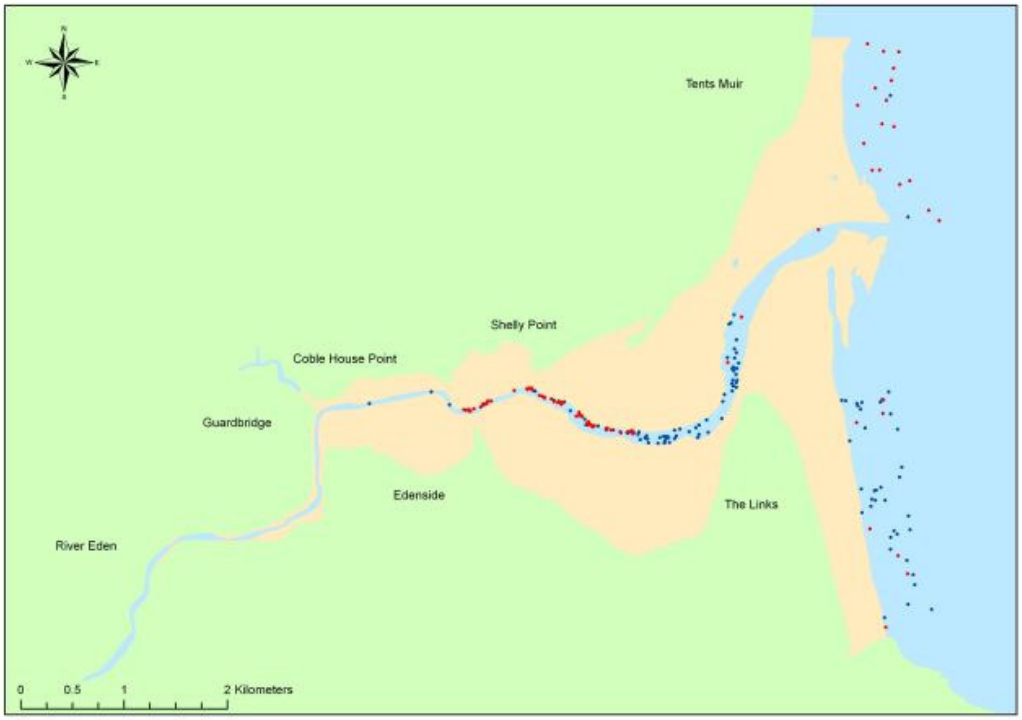
Area covered 960 ha; Mean total birds 6,542; Mean bird density 6.8 birds/ha.

Despite its relatively small size, 41 species of waterbird were recorded on the Eden Estuary. Oystercatcher, with a peak count of 2,505 birds, was the most numerous species recorded, closely followed by Dunlin with a peak count of 2,371. Redshank was the only other species with a four-figure peak count, of 1,401 birds. The majority of the wader species favoured the area between Shelly Point and The Links with Bar-tailed Godwit and Curlew favouring the north side of the river and Knot and Grey Plover favouring the south. Dunlin and Redshank however were found in the greatest densities between Edenside and Coble House Point. Wildfowl were thinly represented with relatively few Wigeon, Teal and Mallard present. Seaduck however were often present offshore in high numbers, including infrequently recorded species on Low Tide Counts such as Long-tailed Duck, and both Common and Velvet Scoter.

Comparative bird distribution

WeBS Core counts of Eider on the Eden Estuary have remained constant, though numbers counted on the Low Tide Counts during the last two sets of counts have fallen slightly. In 2001/02 the mean count was 108 birds but in 2008/09, this mean count had fallen to 84 birds. The distribution of birds within the site has changed little with most birds along the river channel and others on the sea. In 2008/09 birds tended to favour the sea to the north of the estuary mouth off Tents Muir, whereas in 2001/02 birds were found to the south off The Links (though sea conditions at the time of the count may affect this). It is possible that local movements between this site and the nearby larger Tay Estuary may contribute to this apparent decline.

Black-tailed Godwit numbers counted at low tide have also declined over the same period. In 2008/09 the mean site count was 122 (0.13 birds per hectare) compared with a mean site count of 183 (0.19 birds per hectare) in 2001/02. Again, local movements, particularly to the Forth where the core peak was at its highest ever level, may contribute to this apparent decline. Black-tailed Godwits favour the muddy, innermost parts of the estuary, unlike Bar-tailed Godwits that favours the sandier mouth and beach. The highest concentration of Black-tailed Godwits in 2008/09 was along the River Eden channel, with fewer around the Edenside area. This contrasted with the 2001/02 distributions when the Edenside area to Shelly Point was favoured.



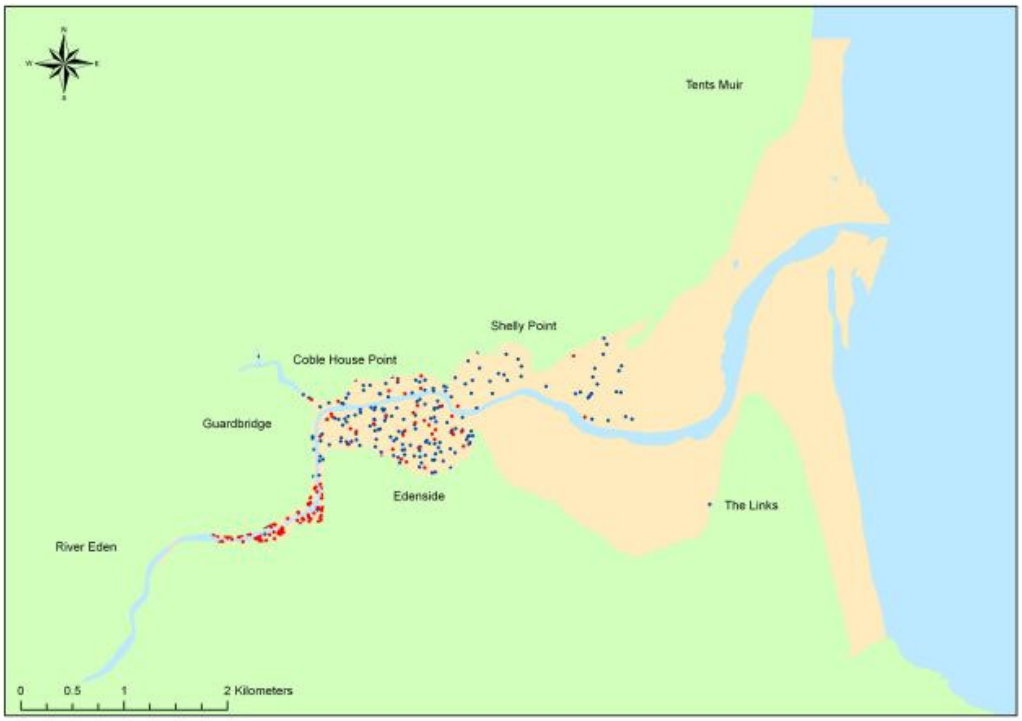


FIGURE 60 Low Tide distribution of Eider (above) and Black-tailed Godwit (below) for the winters of 2001/02 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) on the Eden Estuary. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal.

HAMFORD WATER

Site description

Hamford Water is a large, shallow, estuarine basin hosting a diverse mixture of habitats. On either side of the mouth there are shingle spits topped by sand dunes and shell banks. The combined actions of wind and waves are slowly pushing them inland over the saltmarsh. The rest of the area is a matrix of dissected saltmarshes, islands, channels and mudflats backed by a range of brackish, fresh and reed-fringed marshes. Many of the islands are former saltmarshes, now embanked and converted to wet grassland. However, some have reverted to saltmarsh after seawalls were breached at the end of the 19th century, now leaving just Horsey Island as freshmarsh. *Heteromorphy* algae and eelgrass grow on the soft intertidal sediments. Industrial activity and urban sprawl are virtually absent with the exception of an explosive works along the north shore. There are high levels of aquatic recreational activities along the main channels, with marinas and moorings along the Walton Channel. Military aircraft training is a major source of disturbance to the waterfowl and three local wildfowling clubs shoot over some of the saltings and flats. As sea levels continue to rise, erosion of the shingle spits on the estuary mouth is an ongoing concern. A more immediate problem is accretion of sediment in the creeks, possibly due to movement of sediment caused by dredging in the nearby Stour/Orwell Estuaries (J.Novorol *pers comm.*)

General bird distribution 2008/09

Area covered 790 ha; Mean total birds 27,830; Mean bird density 35.2 birds/ha.

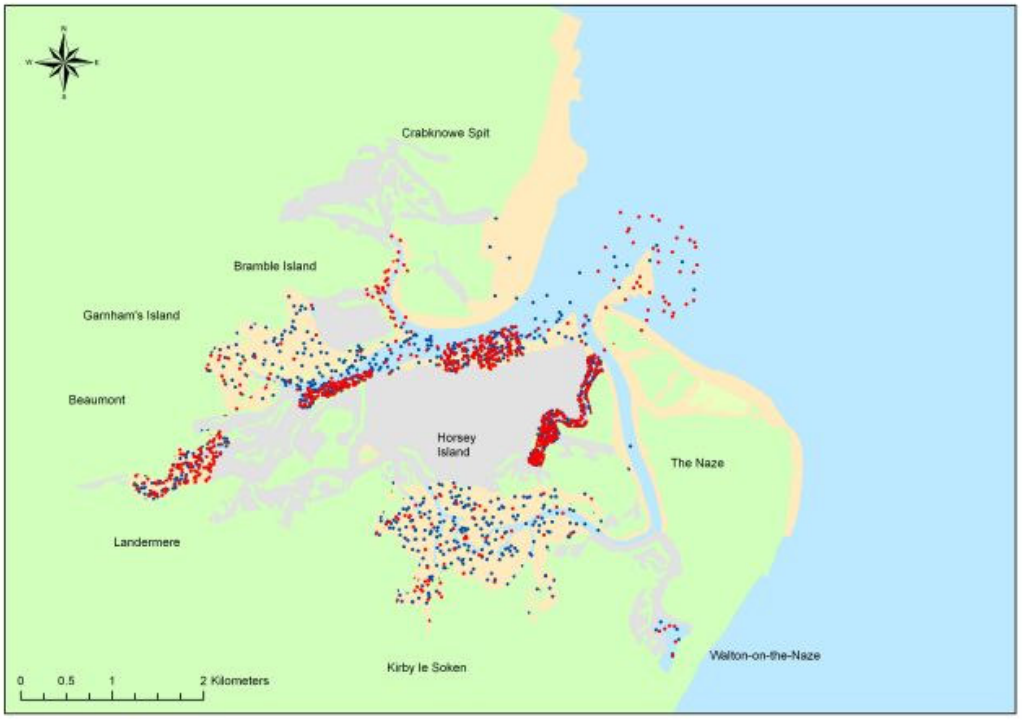
Hamford Water is a large site and due to the creeks and vegetation much of the site is inaccessible from land, thus low tide counts do not cover the whole site.

The cold weather in January brought in increased numbers of some wildfowl, predominantly Teal (J.Novorol pers comm.); the count of 10,684 was nearly double that of the Core counts. These birds were found largely on the north side of Horsey Island and the east side of Bramble Island. Redshank and Curlew were widely distributed throughout the site, but Avocets and Knot were found in their highest numbers around the south side of Horsey Island whereas Black-tailed Godwit favoured the north side. Typical tideline waders such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Ringed Plover, Sanderling and Turnstone favoured the area along the extensive mud near Crabknowe Spit.

Comparative bird distribution

Wigeon numbers at Hamford Water have shown a steady increase over the past twenty-five years. However, more recently numbers have declined and a Medium-Alert (see *http://www.bto.org/webs/alerts/*) has been triggered for this species for the last ten-year period. Numbers counted on Low Tide Counts in 2008/09 compared with the last set of Low Tide Counts here in 2001/02 has also shown a decline, with a peak of 2,491 in 2008 compared with a peak of 2,826 in 2001/02. The distribution in both winters was similar, with obvious concentrations of birds along the east and north sides of Horsey Island and at Landermere.

Numbers of Oystercatchers counted on the Low Tide Counts have also decreased between the two sets of counts. The mean count in 2001/02 was 1551 birds (2.3 birds per hectare), though by 2008/09 this mean site count had fallen to 646 (0.96 birds per hectare). However, numbers counted on core counts within the last five years have remained stable. This can largely be accounted for as birds that roost within the shelter of Hamford Water move out at low tide to favoured feeding areas such as mussel banks in the Stour and Orwell estuaries (J. Novorol pers comm.). The main concentration of birds was along the main intertidal area by Crabknowe Spit, which has seen the largest decline in numbers, falling from a mean of 912 (7.66 birds per hectare) in 2001/02 to just 178 (1.5 birds per hectare) in 2008/09. Smaller concentrations of birds were also seen in both winters around the south side of Horsey Island and to the west of Bramble Island.



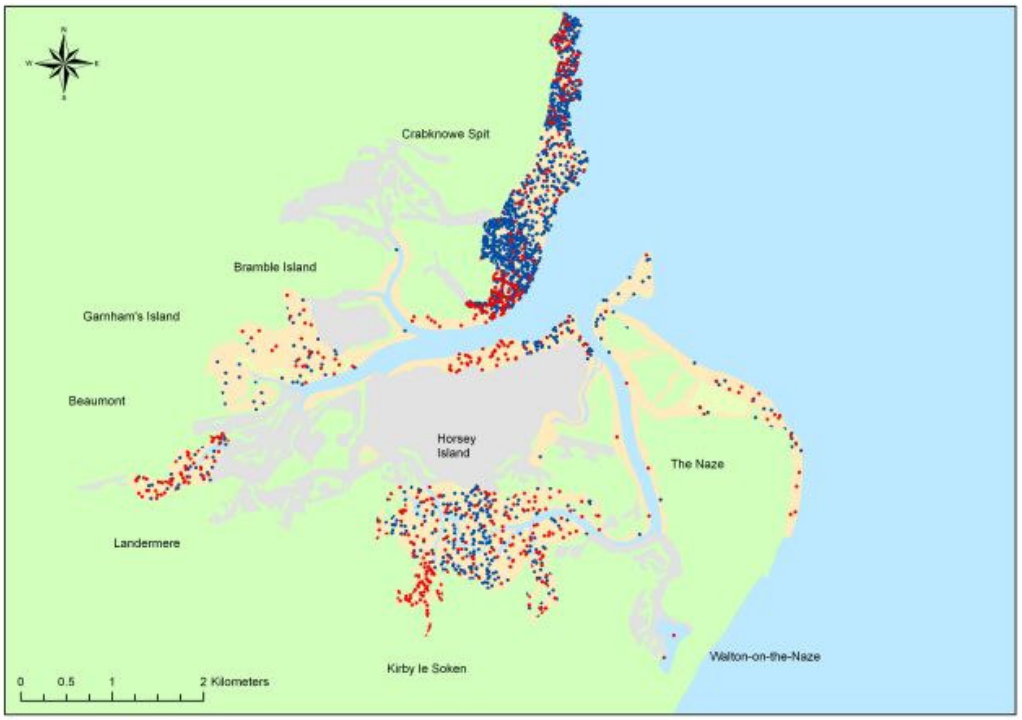


FIGURE 61 Low Tide distribution of Wigeon (above: 1 dot = 2 birds) and Oystercatcher (below) for the winters of 2001/02 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) on Hamford Water. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal. Grey area not counted in either winter.

NEWTOWN HARBOUR

Site description

Newtown Harbour is situated on the northwest coast of the Isle of Wight, between Yarmouth and Cowes. Although it is the largest estuary on the island, the only freshwater input comes from a number of small streams. The mouth is relatively narrow and bounded on either side by shingle spits. Within the estuary, the intertidal flats comprise of combinations of mud, sand and shingle. Almost half of the saltmarsh habitat on the Isle of Wight occurs within the estuary, the majority of which occur along the banks of the creeks, many known locally as "Lakes", well inland from the mouth. In recent years however, new saltmarsh has developed in the central parts of the estuary behind the breached seawall. The area is popular with tourists, particularly in the summer months. The only light industry on the estuary is a boat repair yard at Shalfleet. Some bait digging takes place in the area. The estuary is a SSSI and forms part of the Solent & Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar Site.

General bird distribution 2008/09

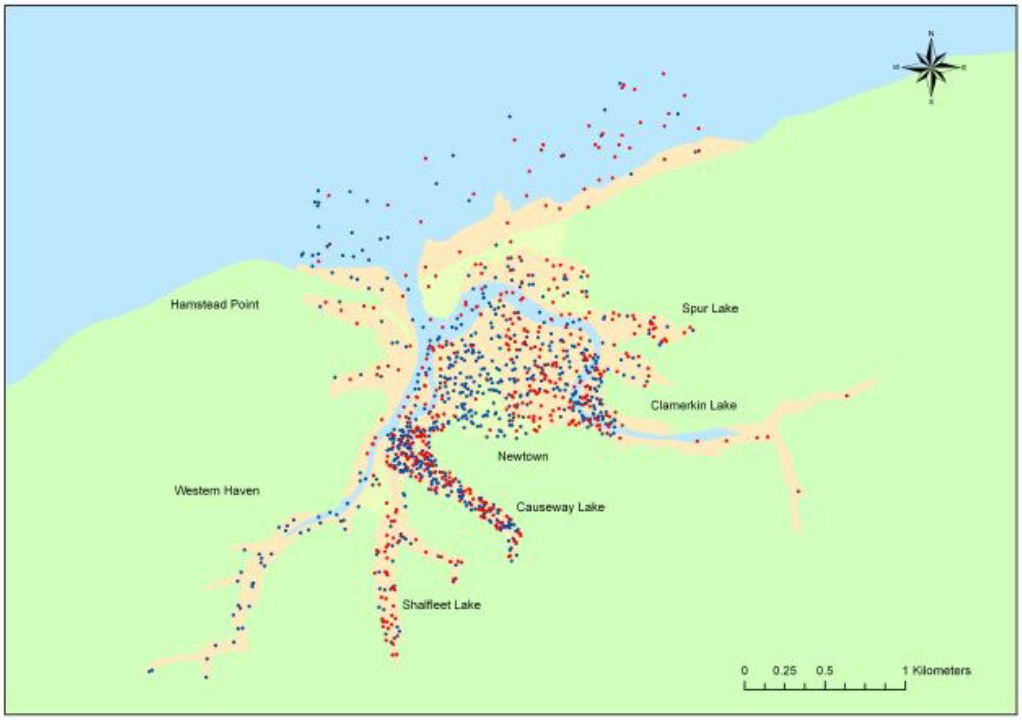
Area covered 262 ha; Mean total birds 6,877; Mean bird density 26.2 birds/ha.

At just 262 hectares, Newtown Harbour represents the second smallest site counted at low tide. Despite its size, 33 species were recorded which was more than at several larger sites. Dunlin were the most numerous species, peaking at 2,474 birds with Knot being the second most numerous wader, both species favouring the large expanse of intertidal habitat of Newtown National Nature Reserve. Wildfowl were well represented with three species (Teal, Wigeon and Dark-bellied Brent Goose) being recorded in four figure numbers. Pintail favoured Causeway Lake whilst Teal favoured Clamerkin and Spur Lakes.

Comparative bird distribution

Dark-bellied Brent Geese occur in nationally important numbers in Newtown Harbour, with numbers counted on Low Tide Counts similar to those counted on Core Counts. Between the two winter periods when Low Tide Counts have been carried out on this site, the number of Dark-bellied Brent Geese counted has declined. The mean site count between the years has fallen from 1,327 (3.01 birds per hectare) in 1999/00 to 938 (2.13 birds per hectare) in 2008/09; numbers counted on Core Counts have fluctuated over the same period. The distribution in both years was very similar, with Causeway Lake supporting the highest density of birds where the mean density fell from 385 birds (21.4 birds per hectare) in 1999/00 to 225 birds (12.47 birds per hectare) in 2008/09. Newtown Nature Reserve and both Clamerkin and Spur Lakes also held good numbers of birds in both winters.

The number of Black-tailed Godwits recorded on Low Tide Counts has also seen a decline between the two years. This species is also found in nationally important numbers though numbers counted on Core Counts in recent years has also fallen. The area around Causeway Lake was favoured in both years, though in 1999/00 birds were also found on the west side of the Harbour up towards Hamstead Point. In 2008/09, a mean of just 37 birds (0.14 birds per hectare) was counted on the Low Tide Counts compared with a mean of 113 (0.43 birds per hectare) in 1999/00.



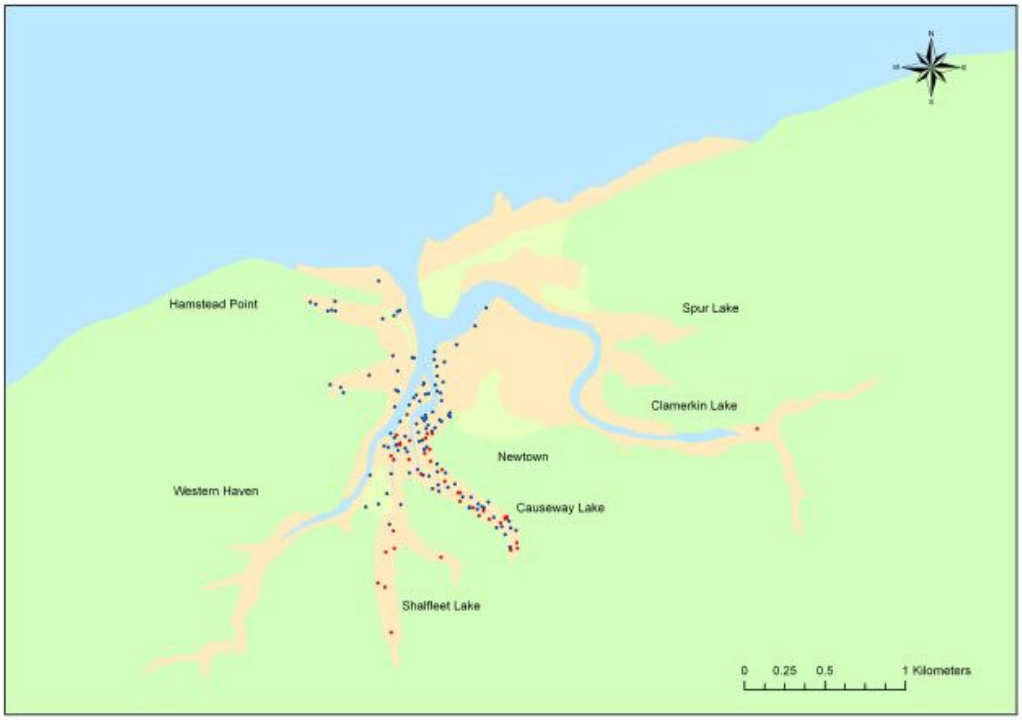


FIGURE 62 Low Tide distribution of Dark-bellied Brent Goose (above: 1 dot = 2 birds) and Black-tailed Godwit (below) for the winters of 1999/00 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) at Newtown Harbour. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal.

PEGWELL BAY

Site description

Pegwell Bay is a small estuary at the mouth of the River Stour in east Kent. For much of its length, the Stour is narrow, although it broadens widely at the mouth. The inner estuary substrates are composed of fine, muddy particles and the sediments become increasingly sandier as the estuary broadens into Sandwich Bay. There are narrow rocky outcrops in the northeastern section, between Pegwell and West Cliff areas of Ramsgate. Saltmarsh has developed around both banks of the River Stour. Along the western side, most saltmarsh has been lost to land claim. Saltmarsh habitat along the eastern bank is more extensive. The shoreline to the south of the Stour is backed by a long stretch of bare shingle, behind which there are extensive dunes and sandy grassland. The dune system is growing rapidly northwards and diverting the channel of the Stour. There is relatively little industrial activity, with a power station and industrial wharf at Richborough, a chemical works further upriver at Great Stonar and a harbour at Ramsgate. Leisure activities such as sailing, windsurfing and waterskiing are abundant and there is also a marina. Beach recreation is also widespread and wildfowling takes place on the grazing marshes.

General bird distribution 2008/09

Area covered 808 ha; Mean total birds 13,411; Mean bird density 16.6 birds/ha.

The Pegwell Bay area supports significant populations of a range of birds, some of which have shown an increase in recent years. Lapwing and Golden Plover were found in the largest numbers, predominantly in the north at Pegwell Bay and on the River Stour Estuary saltmarshes. Of the traditional wading species, Dunlin were the most numerous, with birds being found exclusively in Pegwell Bay on either side of the river mouth. Other waders such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Grey Plover, Curlew and Knot were also found in greatest numbers here. Wigeon were the most widespread of the wildfowl species, with a few birds being found as far south as Sandwich Flats. Pintail and Shoveler were largely confined to the saltmarsh areas along the length of the River Stour, whereas both Mallard and Teal were found both here and in Pegwell Bay itself. Shelduck favoured the expanse of Pegwell Bay with few birds further south. Relatively few Dark-bellied Brent Geese were present, and as with many wildfowl, were found around the mouth of the River Stour. Offshore, single Scaup and small numbers of Red-throated Diver, Common Scoter and Eider were also present.

Comparative bird distribution

In both winters, Teal have shown aggregated distributions, with birds being concentrated in the north end of the Bay in Pegwell Bay itself and the adjacent River Stour Estuary saltmarshes. However in 2008/09 they were much more numerous, in line with those counted on Core Counts, especially in Pegwell Bay. In 2002/03, the mean site count was 94 (0.08 birds per hectare), yet in 2008/09, this figure had increased to 337 (0.24 birds per hectare), though as with other sites, the harsh winter may have resulted in influxes of birds.

In contrast, Sanderlings have undergone a decline over the same period. Pegwell Bay is used as a migration route for many birds, including Sanderling and also occasionally as a refuge when higher pressure on the Thanet coast forces birds into Pegwell and Sandwich Bays and so numbers fluctuate depending on the level of disturbance (P. Findley *pers comm*.) In 2002/03 there was a mean site count of 188 (0.32 birds per hectare), though this number had fallen to 67 (0.11 birds per hectare) in 2008/09. However, unlike Teal, Sanderling distribution at this site is much more widespread along the length of Pegwell Bay south to Sandwich Bay, though in 2008/09 birds were much more localised, with the majority of birds were found around the mouth of the River Stour.

FIGURE 63 Low Tide distribution of Teal (above) and Sanderling (below) for the winters of 2002/03 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) at Pegwell Bay. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal.

PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR

Site description

This large harbour in the Solent lies between Portsmouth to the east and Gosport and Fareham to the west. The main freshwater inflow is Wallington River to the northwest. This meets the saltwater at Fareham Lake, which restricts the freshwater input to the Harbour. The connection to the Solent is only 200 metres wide at the narrowest point. Saltmarsh is a relatively limited habitat around the shores of the estuary. However, eelgrass and algal growth on the mudflats is more extensive. The shores of the harbour are heavily industrialised, including port and housing developments, along with major naval docks and installations. Future developments and dock expansion are potential threats as the pressure to reduce MOD activity/spending is one of the main future threats as this could lead to the release of land adjacent to the Harbour for development (D.Bill *pers comm*.)

General bird distribution 2008/09

Area covered 968 ha; Mean total birds 10,376; Mean bird density 10.7 birds/ha.

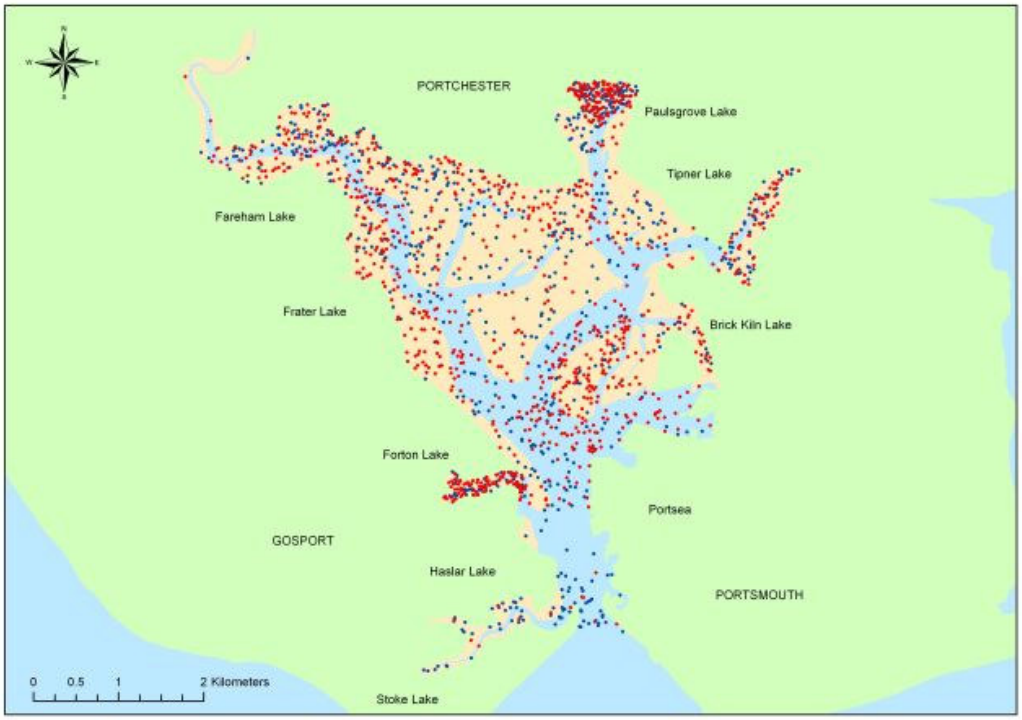
Portsmouth Harbour supports high numbers of many species of waterbird, with 36 species recorded on the Low Tide Counts. Wildfowl were well represented, with up to 77 Red-breasted Mergansers, 34 Goldeneye and a Scaup amongst the more regular species. Both Red-breasted Merganser and Goldeneye numbers have declined nationally over the last ten years and sheltered harbours and bays are often favoured along the south coast. Both these species favoured Fareham and Paulsgrave Lakes. Indeed, many of the wildfowl species recorded favoured the creeks, or 'Lakes', with Wigeon found in Fareham Lake and along the Bedenham Shore at Frater Lake only and both Mallard and Teal concentrated both here and in Tipner Lake as well. A Black Brant, an uncommon visitor to Britain from America in with the Brent Geese was probably a returning bird. Wading birds were much more widespread, with Oystercatcher and Curlew widely distributed across the site. Dunlin were the most numerous species present, peaking at 6,143 birds, with these birds favouring the northwest corner of the harbour around Fareham Lake and also Forton Lake. Due to the lack of exposed tide line, there were very few Knot, Bar-tailed Godwits, Grey Plover and Sanderling that are more numerous on the larger open estuaries. Up to 49 Little Egrets were recorded, again emphasising their abundance along the south coast in particular.

Comparative bird distribution

Dark-bellied Brent Geese are present in Portsmouth Harbour in internationally important numbers. In the last twenty-five years, numbers here have increased threefold though in more recent years, numbers have stabilised (see *http://www.bto.org/webs/alerts/*).

Low Tide Counts at Portsmouth Harbour reflect the continuing increase, with the mean site count in 2002/03 being 1,549 (0.99 birds per hectare) rising to 2,042 (1.29 birds per hectare) in 2008/09. Although widely distributed across the harbour, the two main areas of concentration were in Forton Lake and Paulsgrove Lake. Fewer birds were found at the harbour mouth in 2008/09 than previously.

Redshank numbers in Portsmouth Harbour have also steadily increased in the last five years. As with Brent Geese, this trend was also reflected in the Low Tide Counts, where the 2008/09 mean site total was 472 (0.49 birds per hectare) compared with 359 (0.37 birds per hectare) in 2002/03. Typically for this species, the 'Lakes' were favoured areas rather than the more open expanses, in particular in Fareham Lake where there was a mean count of 109 birds (2.65 birds per hectare) in 2008/09 compared with 62 (1.5 birds per hectare) in 2002/03. Smaller concentrations were also found in Tipner Lake and Paulsgrove Lake.



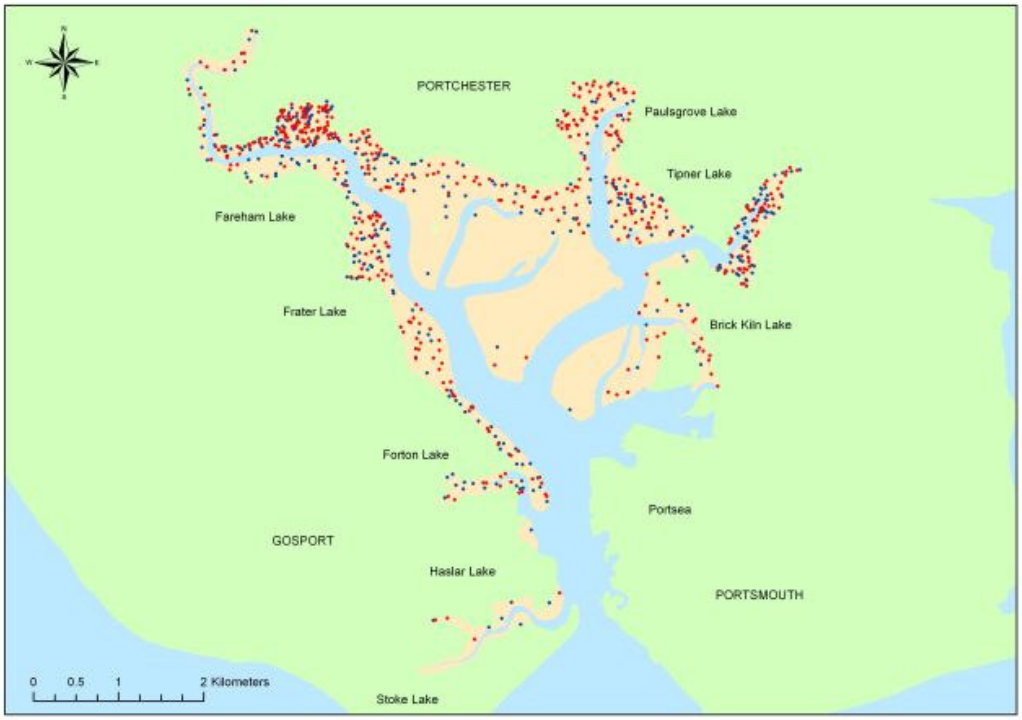


FIGURE 64 Low Tide distribution of Dark-bellied Brent Goose (above: 1 dot = 2 birds) and Redshank (below) for the winters of 2002/03 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) at Portsmouth Harbour. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal.

Site description

The River Severn is the longest in Britain and drains a large area of Wales and the Midlands. The huge tidal range (the second largest in the world after the Bay of Fundy in Eastern Canada) means that much of the intertidal sediment is mobile. The whole of the estuary is both a Ramsar Site and SPA due to its internationally important assemblages of waterbirds. The estuarine mudflats in Cardiff Bay at the mouth of the estuary were lost when the construction of the Cardiff Bay Barrage was completed in the 1999. In partial mitigation for the loss of intertidal habitat, a series of freshwater lagoons were created at the Newport Wetland Reserve. Steart Flats and Berrow Flats comprise extensive mudflats within Bridgewater Bay. Industrial development is widespread, particularly around Avonmouth, where there are major port facilities and chemical works. There are also port facilities at Barry, Cardiff and Newport. The estuary has previously suffered from pollution with the discharge of heavy metals a particular problem. The upper reaches of the estuary are more rural in character. As in 2002/03, islands and sandbars in the middle of the estuary were counted at low tide by boat.

General bird distribution 2008/09

Area covered 21,824ha; Mean total birds 81,653; Mean bird density 3.7 birds/ha.

The Severn Estuary produced the greatest diversity of species on the 2008/09 Low Tide Counts with 64 species recorded. Mallard, Curlew and Dunlin were the most widespread species, being found in good numbers throughout the estuary, with Dunlin being by far the most numerous species present with a peak count of 27,136 birds. Grey Plover and Knot favoured the areas around Burnham-on-Sea and Peterstone on the Welsh shore near Newport whilst Oystercatchers were found from Severn Beach at Bristol southwards to Burnham-on-Sea. Wildfowl were generally more restricted in their favoured areas, with Pintail and Shoveler favouring the Slimbridge, Newport and Burnham-on-Sea areas whilst Teal also favoured the Severn Beach and Weston-Super-Mare areas.

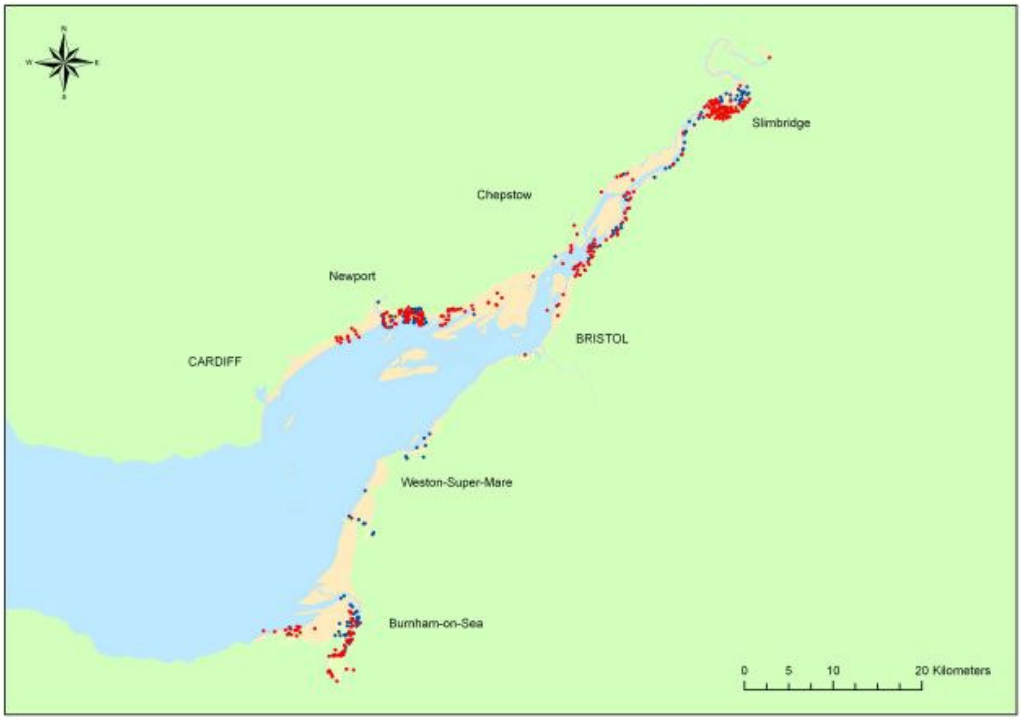
Comparative bird distribution

On the Severn Estuary, Wigeon are primarily present from September through to March, with a peak WeBS Core Count during the winter of 2008/09 of 7,589 birds. Numbers of Wigeon on the Severn Estuary have fluctuated since the mid-1970s though since the early-1990s have steadily risen (see *http://www.bto.org/webs/alerts/*).

Low Tide Counts on the Severn Estuary during 2008/09 recorded a winter mean of 6,231 (0.18 birds per hectare), which is a significant increase since 2002/03 when the mean site total was 3,283 (0.11 birds per hectare). Wigeon are most abundant at the smaller sub-estuaries near Burnham-on-Sea and north of Bristol where eel-grass on tidal flats or adjacent grassland provided extensive feeding opportunities. This species also occurs in large numbers at the Newport Wetlands Reserve and the New Grounds at WWT Slimbridge and the adjacent mudflats.

Numbers of Redshank counted on Core Counts on the Severn Estuary in 2008/09 were at their highest ever level. This peak of 2,970 matched the Low Tide peak of 2,936 well. This Low Tide peak count is also higher than the 2002/03 peak of 2,439 birds. Redshanks are widespread on the Severn Estuary in winter but favour river mouths and other sites where there are freshwater inputs into the estuary. High concentrations of Redshank are found at the mouth of the River Parrett at Burnham-on-Sea, near the mouth of the River Axe at Weston-Super-Mare, and near the mouth of the Rhymney near Cardiff and north along the shore adjacent to the Newport Wetlands Reserve.

Counts of the Severn Estuary were aided by funding from the Department of the Energy and Climate Change, which enabled gaps in coverage to be filled. The data from the surveys have been used to inform the Severn Tidal Power Strategic Environmental Assessment.



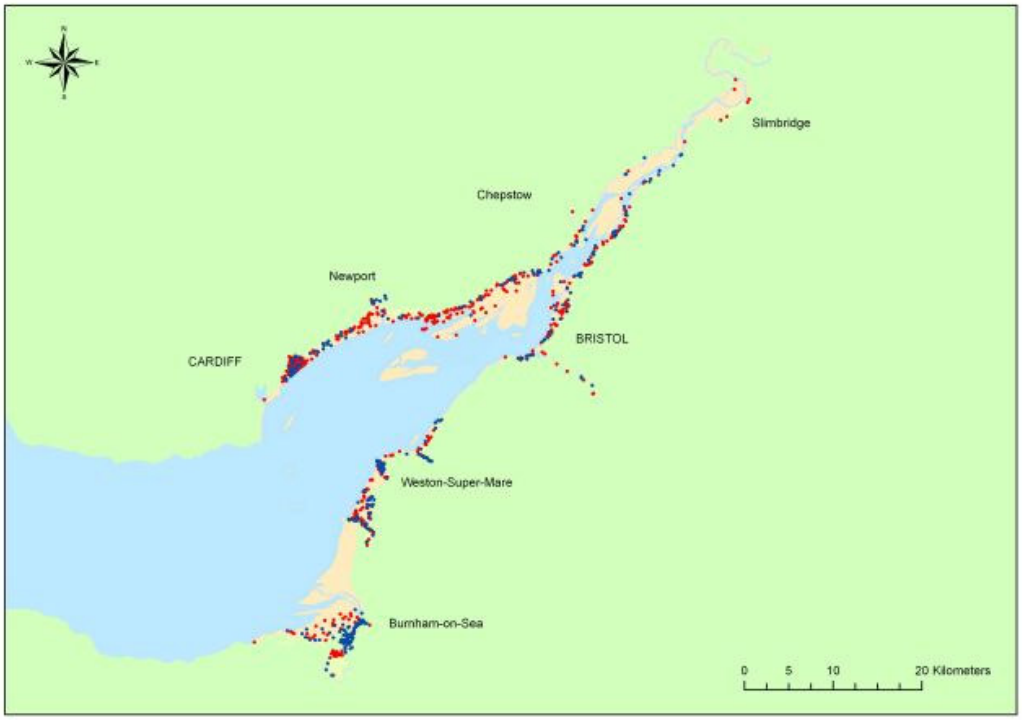


FIGURE 65 Low Tide distribution of Wigeon (above: 1 dot = 20 birds) and Redshank (below: 1 dot = 5 birds) for the winters of 2002/03 (blue) and 2008/09 (red) on the Severn Estuary. Yellow = intertidal; pale green = non-tidal; blue = subtidal.

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