

2024 | WADER CALENDAR



CURLEW
RECOVERY
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ENGLAND



Working
for Waders



Birds
Science
People

HOW TO TAKE PART



REGISTER

Register your interest using our online form https://bit.ly/BTO_WaderSurvey. You can also email your name and farm name to waders@bto.org to let us know you're thinking of participating.



SURVEY PERIOD

First week of April to the last week of July.



SURVEY AREA

Decide which area you want to provide counts for. This can be your whole farm or a selection of fields (e.g., if only a selection of fields have breeding waders or are being managed for waders). Please attach a map of your farm's survey area with the fields numbered. Use the same numbers in your weekly counts (below). Fields are the basic unit of area for the Wader Calendar, but if you need to use another area unit that is not a field (e.g., you want to provide counts for part of a very large field or unenclosed land), you can do so by marking these areas on your map as 'Field 1', 'Field 2', etc..).

If needed, contact us at waders@bto.org for map assistance.

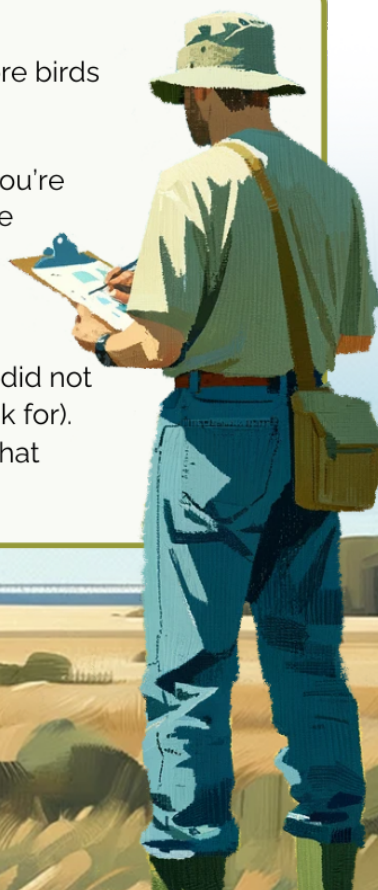
WEEKLY COUNTS

Once per week (note time/date), try to estimate counts for each species, in each field. Use these 2 categories:

- **Total count (T):** the total number of potentially breeding birds. Please don't include temporary flocks seen in fields (these can be included in *Notes* instead).
- **Breeding evidence (B):** the total number of birds displaying or 'singing', seen on nests, with chicks, or repeatedly alarm-calling/agitated and/or reluctant to leave the area (a sign nests or chicks are nearby). Include counts of chicks and the species of chicks *Notes*.

TIPS ON COUNTS

- Remember, B counts can't exceed T counts (i.e. there can't be more birds showing breeding evidence than there are birds in total).
- Read our guidance on recognising wader behaviours: www.bto.org/wader-survey-behaviour-guide, but don't worry if you're ever unsure – just do your best estimate and note wherever you're unsure in the 'Notes' column.
- No need to fill in zero counts; we assume blank cells mean you did not see that species in that field that week.
- For missed counts within a week, strike out the row (the field you did not visit) or column (the species or breeding evidence you did not look for).
- For missed weeks, tick the missed week box at the beginning of that page.



KEY WADER BEHAVIOURS

The Breeding (B) category may require recognising key wader behaviours. Territorial displays and 'song' and alarm/agitation behaviours may be difficult to recognise for beginners, but they become easier to recognise with a little practice.

Display and 'song' tends to be lengthy, melodic (Oystercatcher and Snipe are less melodic), with waders making varied calls in flight over a specific area (their breeding territory), or from the ground or perched on a fencepost or wall. Waders display when they have settled on breeding grounds, and it is a good sign that they have made a nest or intend to.

When waders are alarm-calling and agitated because they have chicks or have nests close to hatching, they:

- Persistently make repeated, less melodic alarm-calls (which often sound panicked)
- Show a reluctance to leave the area (when not breeding, or early on nests, waders tend to just leave the area to avoid potential danger)
- May fly aggressively towards an intruder or circle above them

A good rule of thumb is if a wader is making noise for longer than a couple of seconds, there is a good chance it is either displaying or alarm-calling, indicating it is Breeding (B). Do not include waders that make one or two quick calls, then leave the area in the Breeding (B) count.



We have produced guidance on interpreting behaviours of the Wader Calendar target species, available at www.bto.org/wader-survey-behaviour-guide.

The key thing to remember is just to do your best. We hope the survey is simple and enjoyable to do, so please don't get too hung up on recognising behaviours!

FARM DETAILS AND FIELD MANAGEMENT

Though it isn't essential, it is extremely valuable if you keep and provide notes on stocking, cutting, and harvest dates in each field included in your Wader Calendar. Complete the Farm Details and Field Management sections at the end of the survey period before returning your Wader Calendar.

RETURNING YOUR WADER CALENDAR

Before 20 September 2024, send your completed Recording Form and a map of your farm with numbered fields by email or post:

- **Email** a scan/photos to waders@bto.org. You can create a scan using a smartphone with a PDF scanning app. (e.g. Adobe Scan©).
- **Post** the hard copies to FAO: Wader Project Officer, BTO Scotland, Unit 15 Beta Centre, Stirling University, Innovation Park, Stirling, FK9 4NF.

FIELD MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

Field No: the same field numbers you used to count your waders in the weekly tables.

Field type: select the category which most closely reflects the field's type in April-July:



(A)
Arable



(I) Uniform, lush green sward, dominated by one or two species of grass and perhaps clover, very few other plants present.



(H)
Hay
Meadow



(U) Varying vegetation height and colour across the field, with at least a few different grasses and perhaps other (flowering) plants present.



(S)
Silage
Meadow



(O) Other
if selecting other, please describe in the *Notes* column.

Livestock

Species: Select from sheep, beef cattle, dairy cattle, pigs, or other (if selecting other, please describe in Notes column), ideally including breed(s)

Stock in 1: Enter the date you first had stock in the field (choose 1st Jan if you had them in from the start of the year) and number of stock (a simple head count)

Stock out 1: Enter the date you first took stock out of the field and number of stock

Stock in 2: Enter the date you re-stocked the field (leave blank or enter "N/A" if only stocked once) and number of stock

Stock out 2: Enter the date you took stock out of the field for a second time (leave blank or enter "N/A" if only stocked once) and number of stock

N.B. If you stocked and re-stocked fields more than twice, please just enter the relevant dates between 1 April and 31 July.



Grass cuts

Date 1st cut: The date at which you took your first hay or silage cut in that field (leave blank or enter "N/A" if permanent pasture, arable, or other)

Date 2nd cut: The date at which you took your second cut in that field (usually silage, leave blank or enter "N/A" if only one cut made)

Date 3rd cut: The date at which you took your third cut in that field (usually silage, leave blank or enter "N/A" if only one or two cuts made)

N.B. Rarely, fields can be shut-up and left to grow, but not cut, effectively as standing hay, known as "deferred grazing" – the livestock and meadow cuts should make this clear, but please include details of this in the *Notes* column as well

Arable

Crop type: E.g. wheat, barley, potato, brassicas, etc. or "fallow"

Seeded date: Enter the approximate date you seeded the crop (leave blank or enter "N/A" if left fallow)

