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**To whom it may concern,**

**The bearer of this letter is a volunteer fieldworker taking part in the Waterways Breeding Bird Survey. This survey is organised by the British Trust for Ornithology and supported by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.**

**The scheme has three broad aims:**

- To provide information on year-to-year, and longer term, changes in waterways bird populations.
- To promote a greater understanding of the population biology of waterways birds.
- To promote conservation via the involvement of large numbers of amateur survey workers.

The scheme started in 1998, and now just under 300 randomly located stretches of waterway are covered throughout the UK, with around 50 of these in Scotland. The bearer of this letter has volunteered to take part in this project, and has been allocated one of the random stretches which they will need to access in order to carry out the fieldwork.

The work itself involves a maximum of three short, early morning visits each year. An initial visit is sometimes necessary in order to record the habitat and establish a survey route. During the two core visits, the volunteer will record the birds that they see and hear as they walk the survey route at a steady pace. All survey work should take place during early morning visits between late March and the end of June. By repeating this work year after year it will be possible to build up a picture of how national bird populations are changing through time.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, and the guidance offered by the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (2005), make reference to land access for surveys such as this as follows:

*"Access rights extend to individuals undertaking surveys of the natural or cultural heritage where these surveys have a recreational or educational purpose within the meaning of the legislation. A small survey done by a few individuals is unlikely to cause any problems or concerns, provided that people living or working nearby are not alarmed by your presence."*

The access required for this survey is not intensive and we hope that, where applicable, prior liaison will ensure that any management or operational constraints can be accommodated. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like further information.

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Dr Chris Wernham, **Head of BTO Scotland**

**BBS website:** [www.bto.org/wbbs](http://www.bto.org/wbbs)