

## **Wetland Bird Survey: Volunteer Counters Requested.**

The Wetland bird Survey (WeBS) commenced in 1947 to: (i) determine the status of wildfowl in the UK and (ii) ascertain any long term population trends. WeBS is presently administered by the BTO in partnership with the WWT-RSPB-JNCC. WeBS has been extended to monitor all waterbird species: divers, grebes, cormorants, herons, swans, ducks, rails, waders, gulls, terns and kingfisher at inland and coastal habitats throughout the year but primarily during September-March. The current objectives are to detect:

(1 ) UK Population changes; (2) sites of conservation importance for particular species; (3) changes in locations of populations; (4) site thresholds for UK national and international importance and (5) reasons for population changes at site, regional and national levels.

Survey methodology is simply “look-see” within site boundaries. To minimise statistical bias by double counting, surveys are undertaken on synchronised monthly core count priority dates, Sundays, which if inconvenient may be carried out on the preceding Friday or Saturday or the following Monday.

The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) recognises WeBS as an example of good practice due to fulfilment of statutory national and international obligations and directives. The WeBS series of counts has become one of the longest-term and largest-scale biological datasets in the world. From inception volunteer surveyors have been pivotal to success.

Historically 84 sites have been surveyed in Shropshire and currently 39 sites are counted by SOS members. There is an urgent need to expand the county’s coverage to improve precision of waterbird populations. There are over 45 uncounted sites throughout the county, including Chelmarsh Reservoir, Bridgnorth, Sunderton Pool, Sundorne Pools, Shrewsbury, Hardwick Pool, Lydham. Many floodplains merit exploration and surveying, for example the River Severn between Wroxeter-Ironbridge. Perhaps you know an interesting water near you that you wish to count.

Interested persons please contact Michael Wallace, 75 Larkhill Road, Copthorne, Shrewsbury, SY3 8XJ. Tel: 01743-369035; E-mail: michael@wallace7536.freeserve.co.uk

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