

Wetland Bird Survey: Volunteer Counters Required

4 September 2016

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is administered by the BTO in partnership with the WWT, RSPB and the JNCC. WeBS commenced in at the instigation of Sir Peter Scott to monitor all non-breeding waterbirds in the UK to provide data on which conservation of species populations is based. The objectives are to:

1. Assess the size of the the non-breeding waterbird populations in the UK;
2. assessment of long term population trends and distributions;
3. assessment of the importance of individual sites;
4. identify sites of conservation importance for particular species;
5. detect changes in locations of populations;
6. identify the reasons for population changes at site, regional and national levels and
7. reveal site thresholds of UK national and international importance.

The results form the basis of decisions for the management of wetlands by conservation organisations. The data and WeBS reports fulfil some of the objectives of statutory Conventions and Directives. The BTO supplies WeBS UK data to Wetlands International to assist co-ordination and reporting on wetland status at an international flyway scale. 2016 is the 50th year of the International Waterbird Census to which WeBS makes an important contribution.

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 practise due to fulfilment of statutory national and international obligations, directives and conventions. The WeBS series of counts is one of the longest term and largest scale biological datasets in the world. From inception volunteer surveyors have been pivotal to its success.

There are There are 82 sites on the Shropshire WeBS schedule and 69 are surveyed.

Chelmarsh Reservoir (SO731877) near Bridgnorth has become vacant due to the heavy commitments of the previous counter. Chelmarsh is an interesting and an important site that attracts a diversity of waterbirds and passerines throughout the year and merits counting. If you wish or know of another birder who is prepared to survey the site, I should be most grateful if you would kindly let me know ASAP.

Other sites not presently counted include Bomere, Shomere and Bitham Pools, Conover (SJ4980880), Acton Burnell Pool, Cressage (SJ540019), Adderley Park Lake, Market Drayton (SJ654397), Aldenham Park Pool, Morville, Bridgnorth (SO665951), Neville Hall Pool, Enville, Kinver (SO825855), Oakley Park Pool, Market Drayton (SJ701371), River Severn at Apley Park, south end, Astley Abbot, Bridgnorth (SO724956), Steadvallets Pools near Ludlow (SO455765),

River Teme, Ludlow towards Knighton (SO405735), Sundown Pool, Shrewsbury (SJ525146),
Sunderton Pool, Shrewsbury (SJ526163), Hardwick Pool, Lydham (SO367906).

**Additional surveyors are required to undertake WeBS counts on these and other wetland sites to improve the precision of wintering populations in Shropshire. Interested persons kindly contact Michael Wallace, 75 Larkhill Road, Kingswood, Shrewsbury, SY3 8XJ; T: 01743 369035 Email: michaelwallace47@gmail.com
Michael F Wallace, BTO Shropshire WeBS Local Organiser**