

Wetland Bird Survey: Volunteer Counters Needed

The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is administered by the BTO in partnership with the WWT-RSPB-JNCC. WeBS commenced in 1947 at the instigation of Sir Peter Scott to monitor all non-breeding waterbirds in the UK to provide data on which conservation of their populations is based. The objectives are:

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

The results inform the basis of decisions for the management of wetlands by conservation organisations. The data and WeBS reports fulfil a number of objectives for conventions and directives. WeBS supplies UK data to Wetland International to assist co-ordination and reporting on wetland status at an international flyway scale.

Survey methodology is “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 undertaken on the preceding Friday, Saturday or the following Monday.

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

Additional surveyors are needed to count at Chelmarsh Reservoir (SO731877), River Severn Atcham to Wroxeter (548087) and Willey Estate Pools near Much Wenlock (667988).

Interested persons please contact Michael Wallace, 75 Larkhill Road, Kindswood, Shrewsbury, SY3 8XJ. T: 01743 369035

Michael Wallace

BTO WeBS Shropshire Local Organiser