

BTO/WSG BREEDING WADER MONITORING SCHEME

by Ken Smith

In 1982 major surveys of breeding waders were carried out in England, Wales and Scotland (Smith 1983). As a continuation of this work the British Trust for Ornithology and Wader Study Group have launched an annual monitoring scheme for waders, such as Lapwing, Redshank and Snipe, breeding on grasslands. This scheme has now been running successfully for two field seasons and with the 1985 results we are able for the first time to look at annual population changes on the study sites.

Sixty sites were surveyed in 1985 which, as Figure 1 shows, were spread from Somerset in the south to the Orkneys. Not all sites were surveyed in both 1984 and 1985 so that data from only 50 were used to calculate the population changes shown in the Table 1. The estimated number of pairs are given for each species, except for Snipe where the number of drumming birds is used. In each case an index of 100 has been assigned for 1984, the first year of the monitoring scheme. Between 1984 and 1985 there were significant decreases for Lapwing and Redshank of 15% and 20% respectively. For Curlew there was an increase of 25% but this is based on a rather small sample.

As Figure 1 shows, although our coverage is widespread in England, Wales and Scotland there are still plenty of obvious gaps to be filled. For instance the southern counties of England are poorly represented and there are no monitoring sites in Northern Ireland. If you would like to join the small band of enthusiasts who are carrying out this simple survey every year please contact me as soon as possible.

REFERENCE

Smith, K.W. 1983. The status and distribution of waders breeding on wet lowland grasslands in England and Wales. *Bird Study* 30: 177-192.

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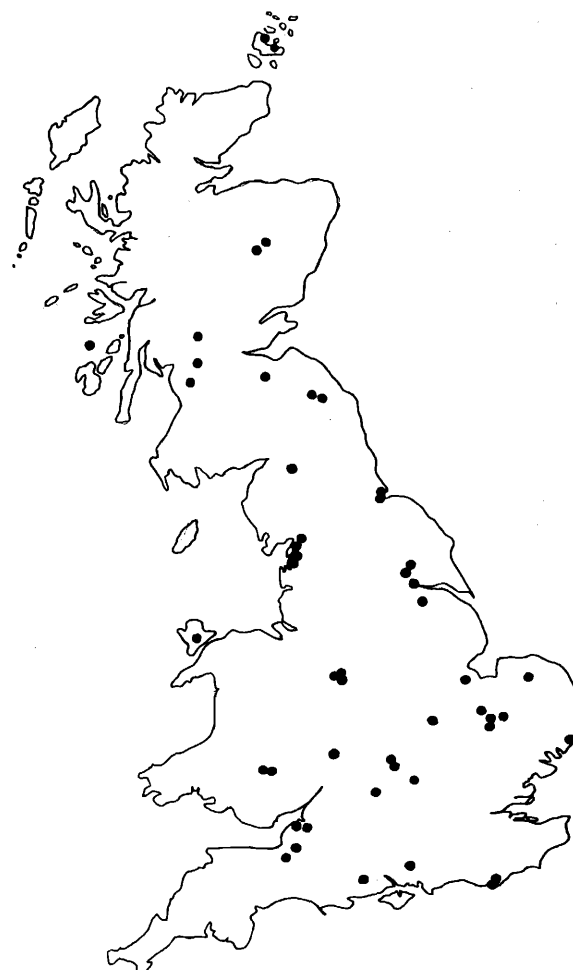


Figure 1. The distribution of wader monitoring sites surveyed in 1985. For clarity some adjacent sites have been shown as a single dot.

Table 1. Population changes of breeding waders on grasslands from 1984 to 1985.

Species	Year 1984	Totals 1985	% change with 95% confidence limits	No of plots	1985 Index
Lapwing	528	449	-15 (-29 to -1)	45	85
Snipe	186	164	-12 (-30 to +11)	32	88
Curlew	57	71	+25 (+7 to +41)	18	125
Redshank	146	117	-20 (-36 to 0)	33	80
Oystercatcher	49	51	+4 (-28 to +40)	14	104