

**Winter 1997/98 European
Non-estuarine Coastal
Waterfowl Survey (NEWS)
update**

(on behalf of the UK WeBS partners:
BTO, WWT, JNCC and RSPB)

Steve Holloway has become the Non-Estuarine Coastal Waterfowl Survey (NEWS) Project Officer at the British Trust for Ornithology. Future NEWS correspondence should be sent to Steve at the address below. In the UK, the WeBS regional organisers have been contacted and sent survey methods. Preparation of the UK coastline maps with the sections to be counted has started.

Progress with planning the Europe-wide coverage has been very encouraging. Although there are people who are prepared to assist with the counts, however we still do not have confirmed National Organisers for Greece or Iceland. If you are keen to take on that responsibility or know somebody who might be interested, then please let Steve know as soon as possible.

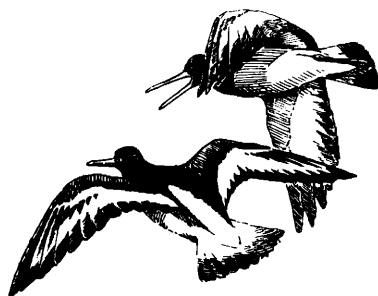
Although the project will concentrate on European coastal areas, the extended coverage of several important African countries is very gratifying. To date we are hoping to get some counts from at least Mauritania and South Africa.

*Steve Holloway & Mark Rehfish,
British Trust for Ornithology, The
Nunnery, Nunnery Place, Thetford,
Norfolk, IP24 2PU, UK.*

Tel: + 1842 750050

Fax: + 1842 750030

*e-mail: stephen.holloway@bto.org or
mark.rehfish@bto.org*



Reviews
Reviews
Reviews

Cranswick, P.A., Waters, R.J.,
Evans, J. & Pollitt, M.S. 1995.
*The Wetland Bird Survey 1993-94:
wildfowl and wader counts.* BTO/
WWT /RSPB/JNCC, Slimbridge. ISBN
0 903793 42 3 (BTO), ISBN 0 900806 19 2
(WWT). [£15 including postage from WWT,
Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BT, UK].

Congratulations to our UK colleagues!

This most recent annual report of monitoring activities for wildfowl and waders on coastal and inland sites, in estuaries or fresh water bodies, at high or low tide represents a major step to an comprehensive view of UK waterfowl populations. It highlights the importance of specific sites as staging or wintering grounds and provides data that can be used as an important tool in daily bird and nature conservation issues.

The report has several sections. Firstly, a short overview on recent developments in the UK counting system is given, followed by a summary of additional counting schemes which complement Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) core counts. The former refers to particular species' groups like geese or gulls, periods or particular sites. An outline of research projects and conservation efforts informs all counters - the major target audience - as to how WeBS data are used in terms of conservation and scientific progress.

A short chapter describes the weather conditions of the counting period, coverage and data presentation, accompanied by some critical remarks on how to use such data (a

very important issue in times when raw data may be used as the truth!).

In total, data from 1 885 sites are presented in the report. Monthly counts on these sites are called 'core counts' and are separated from additional counts made using different methodologies (such as low tide counts). A map of count density per 10 x 10 km grid square is added but this gives no real information on coverage per site.

After a review of total numbers and monthly fluctuations in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectively, separate accounts summarise data for each species (including feral and introduced waterfowl).

These chapters present data against the criteria for numbers of international and national importance according to the 1% criterion of the Ramsar Convention (sites of national importance are those with at least 1% of the national total of the species), maximum numbers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland and information on population trends calculated using the Underhill Index. Tables present numbers of all important sites with maximum numbers in each of the last five years. For each species a comprehensive evaluation of national status and the most important sites for conservation is given.

The text discusses trends in numbers and distributional changes at main resorts. Also included are results of recent research programs or conservation related topics. So, the reader, especially all the counters (which are unfortunately not personally mentioned), can find a clear review of the UK status and populations of most waterfowl species.

Something genuinely new and very interesting is the implementation of low tide counts at selected estuaries. These data are presented as density values and offer new possibilities to interpret high tide counts, to evaluate the use of different habitat types by waterfowl species, and to assess the importance of particular parts of the estuaries with respect to adverse impacts. These counts are an