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Appendices

Appendix 1 – New Counter Check List

When you have a new volunteer there is so much to remember we thought it might be useful for you to have a check list of online tasks to complete. These tasks are listed in the order they should be completed:

1. Online Username – Ask the counter for their BTO online username (you will need this later). If they don't yet have an online username they can select one as part of the registration process (see step 2). If they will be using paper forms, please ask for their full postal address and forward these details to the WeBS Office who will be able to issue them an online username.

2. Register for WeBS Online – Ask them to visit **www.bto.org/webs** to register for WeBS Online (see **Appendix 3** for example emails). All counters must register for WeBS online in order for you to 'see' them within the online system. If you have requested an online username for a counter who is using paper forms, they will automatically be registered for WeBS Online by the WeBS Office staff.

3. Assign/Allocate a Site – Using their online username and the 'Manage My Team>Locations' options, assign and allocate a site to them (see pages 23 to 26). This will mark their site(s) as 'counted'.

4. Update their Report and Newsletter Subscriptions – Every counter must be given the option to receive a printed copy of the WeBS Annual Report and Newsletter. At the moment counters can only be added to the mailing lists by LOs or the WeBS Office, see page 36 for instructions on how to add them to the mailing list and adjust the number of copies they should receive. At the time of writing this, BTO is in the process of introducing a new system which will allow WeBS volunteers to add/remove themselves to/from the mailing lists. We will let you know when this process has been completed.

5. Counter Handbook – Each volunteer should receive a copy of the WeBS counter handbook. The handbook is a folder of leaflets about the scheme, including instructions on how to complete a WeBS count, which species to record and how to submit data online. Depending upon available supplies, it will also include a copy of a recent Report and/or Newsletter. **Please send the counter's online username and/or postal address to the WeBS Office and request that a handbook be sent to them**. The files, Reports and Newsletters can also be downloaded from the website, the link to the

files is: **www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs/taking-part/counter-resources**. Electronic copies of the printed Reports and Newsletters can be found using this link: **www.bto.org/webs-publications**.

Appendix 2 – Retiring Counter Check List

There are two tasks that need to be completed when a counter retires from WeBS - they must be completed in the order set out below:

1. Update their Report and Newsletter Subscriptions – Retiring counters who have contributed data to the current WeBS year are entitled to receive copies of the relevant Reports. Please see pages 36 and 37 for instructions on how to update their subscriptions. This must be completed before step 2 otherwise they will disappear from your Counters list and you will not be able to make any changes. Please contact the WeBS Office if you have any problems.

At the time of writing this, only LOs and the WeBS Office can update/unsubscribe counters from the mailing lists. However, BTO is in the process of introducing a new system which will allow WeBS volunteers to add/remove themselves to/from the mailing lists. We will let you know when this process has been completed and send updated instructions.

2. De-allocate/un-assign a site - Using their online username and the 'Manage My Team>Locations' options, you can de-allocate them from their sites and then downgrade them to 'VIEW' only. See page 26 for full instructions. If there are no other Allocated counters their site(s) will be marked as 'vacant' on the vacant sites page.

> **!** *NOTE - If you receive the* sad news that an existing counter has passed away please complete the above steps and notify the *WeBS Office immediately.* We will ensure that the records for the volunteer are archived and will notify other departments within the BTO as appropriate.

Appendix 3 – Example Emails

Counters must register for WeBS **before** they can log into WeBS online. The following two emails give instructions on how to do this for existing BTO online users and volunteers who are completely new to the BTO or who have not contributed to a BTO Online Survey (ie do not have a BTO username or password).

BTO Online Surveys include BirdTrack; Breeding Bird Survey (BBS); Bird Atlas 2007–2011; Garden BirdWatch (GBW); Woodcock Survey; House Martin Nest Study; Heronries Census; Waterways Breeding Bird Survey (WBBS); Breeding Waders of Upland Farmland (BWEUF); Tawny Owl Calling Survey (TOCS); Tawny Owl Point Survey (TOPS).

A) Email to **counter with a BTO online username**.

> *Dear*
>
> *Thank you for offering to help out with WeBS counts, which is much appreciated. In order to submit your data online you will first need to register for WeBS Online, please follow these steps...*
>
> *1   Go to www.bto.org/webs*
>
> *2   Click on the orange "**Have a Login?**" button and then enter your login details.*
>
> *3   Under the "**Sign Up for Projects**" header you will see the Wetland Bird Survey logo. Click on the orange "**Sign Up**" button. Read through and agree to the WeBS terms and conditions.*
>
> *4   If you are not automatically redirected to the WeBS Data Home page, you can find WeBS under the "**My Current Projects**" header (you may need to refresh the screen), please click on the orange "**Go to project**" button and then you should be in. If you are asked to login please use your BTO username (not email) and password.*
>
> **After you have completed step 4 please email me your username and I'll make your site available to you.**
>
> *I hope this makes sense but if you have any problems then please get back in touch.*
>
> *Best wishes,*

By following the steps set out in the email above the counter will be registered to WeBS which will allow you to 'see' them within WeBS online. This also activates their online access allowing them to submit data (once you have added them to a site).

B) Email to a **counter without a BTO online username**.

Dear

Thanks for offering to help out with WeBS counts, it is much appreciated. In order to get set up on WeBS Online, you'll first need to create a BTO username and password, so please follow these steps...

1   Go to www.bto.org/webs

*2   As you don't yet have a username and password, click on the orange "**New to BTO?**" button.*

3   Enter your details to get your BTO username and password.

*4   You should eventually get to a page entitled "**MyBTO**". Under the "**Sign Up for Projects**" header you will see the Wetland Bird Survey logo. Click on the orange "**Sign Up**" button. Read through and agree to the WeBS terms and conditions.*

*5   If you are not automatically redirected to the WeBS Data Home page, you can find WeBS under the "**My Current Projects**" header (you may need to refresh the screen), please click on the orange "**Go to project**" button and then you should be in. If you are asked to login please use your BTO username (not email) and password.*

After you have completed step 5 please email me your new username and I'll make your site available to you.

I hope this makes sense but if you have any problems then please get back in touch.

Best wishes,

By following the steps set out in the email above the counter will be registered to WeBS which will allow you to 'see' them within WeBS online. This also activates their online access allowing them to submit data (once you have added them to a site).

Appendix 4 – Site Hierarchies

As you know WeBS sites vary in size from a small village pond to large estuaries. Large sites would be difficult to cover without splitting the site down into smaller, more manageable areas that can be counted by one or two people. Over the last 70 years these large sites have become quite **complex** having been split and re-split several times.

In order for us to make current data comparable to the historic data we have to set **rules** about how sites are split or merged. We use a **site hierarchy or 'Site Tree'** to show how a site has been split and how the data can be traced from the smallest sub-sector up to the top-level (original) site.

Below is an example of a site that has been split several times.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Original Site	Sector 1	**Sector 1A**	
		Sector 1B	
	Sector 2	Sector 2A	**Sector 2AA**
			Sector 2AB
		Sector 2B	
	Sector 3	**Sector 3A**	
		Sector 3B	
		Sector 3C	

The orange site at level 1 is the **original, 'top-level' or 'Ancestor' site**. The grey sectors at level 2 and 3 are what we call **'mid-level' sectors** and the sub-sectors that are coloured blue as what we refer to as **'lowest-level' or 'bottom-level' sectors**.

It is the top-level sites that appear in the WeBS Annual Report.

The bottom-level sectors should be counted if at all possible. If that is not possible then it is the next level up that should be counted. For example, if Sectors 2AA and 2AB are counted the data can/should be submitted for each sector separately (the preferred option), or the combined figures can be submitted against Sector 2A.

However, problems can occur if data are entered at the wrong level. For example, say that Sectors 3A, 3B and 3C are all counted and the data for Sector 3B is being entered under the correct name but the data for 3A and 3C are combined and submitted as Sector 3 (one level up). When producing the Annual Report, only the count entered at the highest level (i.e. Sector 3) is used, in this case, meaning the counts for 3B don't contribute to the site totals. It is therefore important that any count entered for Sector 3 did indeed cover all of sectors 3A, 3B and 3C.

The reporting number crunching for site trees is done on a **species by species basis**. As LO, sometimes you might purposefully want to enter a particular count for a species at a higher level due to double counting. For example, if when you look at the counts for 3A, 3B and 3C you spot that your local flock of Spoonbills has moved from 3A to 3B and been counted twice (and wasn't seen on 3C), you can put the true total for Spoonbill at Sector 3. Our programmes will still calculate the totals for the other species recorded separately on the three lower sectors.

Only same-level sectors can be split or merged. For example, Sectors 3B and 3C are on the same level, they could be merged and counted as a new, single mid-level sector (see red box in the figure below).

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Original Site	Sector 1	**Sector 1A**	
		Sector 1B	
	Sector 2	Sector 2A	**Sector 2AA**
			Sector 2AB
		Sector 2B	
	Sector 3	**Sector 3A**	
		New Sector	**Sector 3B**
			Sector 3C

However, you cannot merge across levels or overlap previous splits. For example, you cannot merge Sectors 1B and 2AA, nor can you merge Sectors 2B and Sector 3A.

In the '**Manage My Team>Locations**' section we have tried to make it easier to tell whether or not a site is part of a multi-level site, similar to the one above, by listing the immediate **Parent** sector (the sector that is one level up) and the **Ancestor site** (see page 22). Looking at Sector 2AA in the example above, Sector 2 is its 'Parent' and Original Site is its 'Ancestor'. Now looking at Sector 1, Original Site is both its 'Parent' and its 'Ancestor'.

We hold site trees for all multi-level sites from the simplest 2-level sites, to the more complex 7-level sites. We are hoping to make these available online in future developments. In the meantime, if you would like to receive copies of any site trees for your region or if there are any changes that you would like to be considered please contact the WeBS Office (**webs@bto.org**).

Appendix 5 – Vacant Sites Hints and Tips

- The WeBS vacant sites tool at **www.bto.org/webs-vacant-sites** allows you to search for sites/bottom-level sectors (see **Appendix 4**) by name or region, or to browse via an interactive map.
- In Map View, sites that are being counted are coloured grey, and vacant sites that need a new counter are coloured shades of blue depending on how high a priority they are to be covered for WeBS, with higher priority sites being a darker blue.
- In List View, sites can be filtered by region, whether they are vacant and their priority for coverage for WeBS.
- In Map View, searching by region highlights all sites in that region by outlining them orange.
- Each lowest-level sector (count unit) or stand-alone site is shown on the map and has an individual details page.
- The details page gives key information including the parent site (where applicable) and a link to data for the parent site on the WeBS Online Report (opens in a new window).
- The site is shown on an inset map on the details page, and the parent site (where applicable) can be clicked on and off in the map.
- Copying the URL from the address bar of your browser allows you to share your current view (e.g. site detail page, or zoomed to region) with others.

Screenshots below demonstrate how to find these features
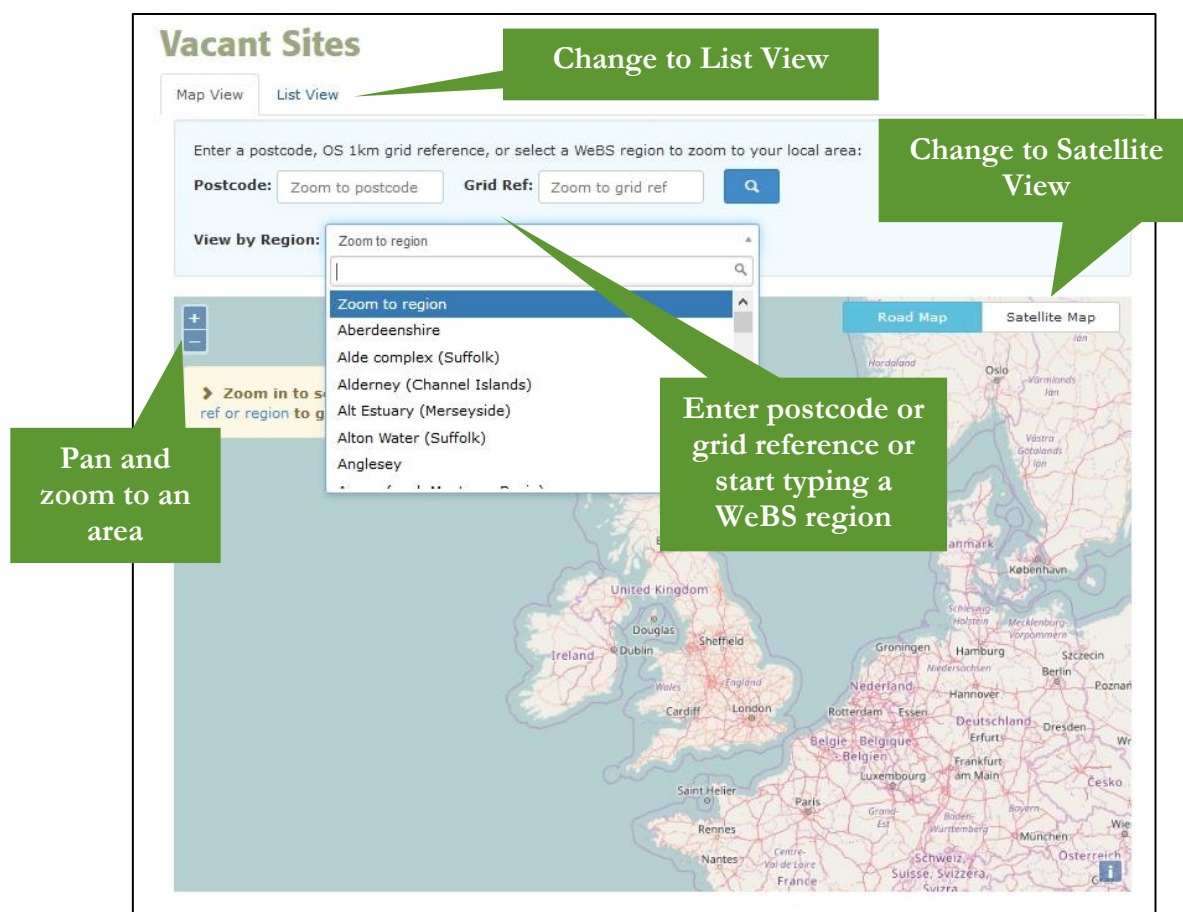
Vacant Sites

Map View   List View

🔍 Zoom To Postcode, Grid Ref or Region

> Selected Region: ☐ Islay, Jura and Colonsay   🗑

Satellite Map

Unique URL for region, use this to share on local websites, newsletters etc.

Click on bin to remove orange outlines

Selected region sites highlighted in orange

Sites in other regions outlined in blue

Vacant WeBS Sites Key
- Very High Priority
- Medium High Priority
- High Priority
- Lower Priority
- Access Issue
- Non-Vacant

Islay

Loch Indaal

Vacant Sites

Map View   List View

🔍 Zoom To Postcode, Grid Ref or Region

Clicking on site highlights it in green and brings up basic info

Light blue indicates sites that are of lower priority but have been counted previously

Windermere   ✕

Sector: Windermere
Location Code: 58031
Site: Windermere
Region: Cumbria (excl. estuaries)
Priority: High Priority
Status: Vacant

View Details

Click to see further details

Grey indicates sites that are counted (you can still click on them to see details)

Vacant WeBS Sites Key
- Very High Priority
- Medium High Priority
- High Priority
- Lower Priority
- Access Issue
- Non-Vacant

Only stand-alone sites and **bottom-level sectors** appear in the vacant sites tool. The way to tell the difference is to look at the Site and Sector names, for stand-alone sites these two names will be the same. For bottom-levels sectors (sectors that are part of a multi-level or complex site) the two names will be different, the Site name will be the top-level or Ancestor site and the Sector name will be the name of the bottom-level sector (see **Appendix 4** for more information about multi-level sectors).

If a mid-level sector is being counted, all of its sub-sectors will be listed as 'counted'.

Count sector name and sector code

Parent site name

Click to see map of site with parent site

Last date counted

Site Details   ✕

Kirkby (Duddon Estuary)
Location Code: 58419
Grid Reference: SD215830
Status: Vacant
Priority: Very High Priority
Habitat: estuarine
Submission History: 18/11/90 to 19/03/14
Local Organiser: Colin Gay
WeBS Report: View Site

☑ **This sector is vacant.** If
to count this sector for WeBS, p
Local Organiser for further details

✉ Contact the Local Organiser

Link to species peak counts for site (or parent site)

Road Map   Satellite Map
☐ Show Parent Site
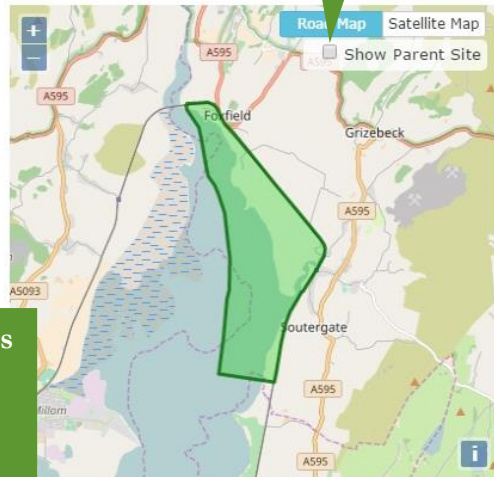
Summary of WeBS samples per count year at Kirkby

14

12

10
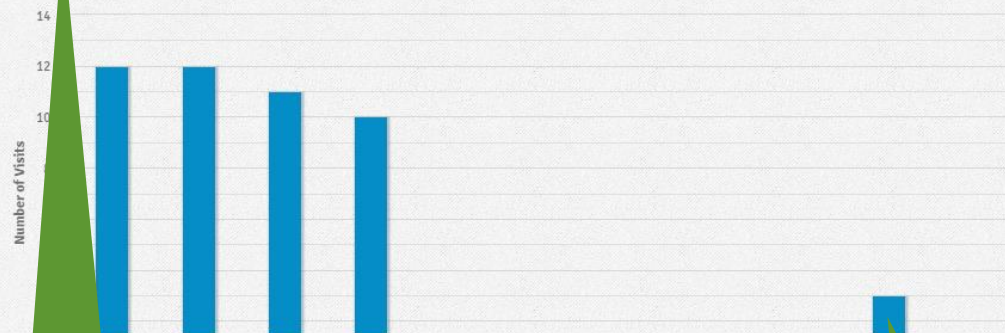
Number of Visits

Opens form to contact organiser about the site

Number of Core Count visits per year

URL for details page for this sector, use this to share on local websites, newsletters etc.

Map with Parent Site showing

Other sectors in same site shown in grey

This sector is shown in green

Clicking on the WeBS Report link from Site Details on the vacant sites page will open the WeBS Report for that site (see below) which also provides you with a unique URL that can be shared.

URL for peak counts for this site (only visible when opened via the vacant sites page)

Site name

Species peak counts by year

Appendix 6 – Troubleshooting and FAQs

A new volunteer has given me their online username but I can't find them to assign a site to them – It is likely that they have not linked their username to WeBS nor activated their access. See **Appendix 3A** for an example email with instructions that they will need to follow to link their username to WeBS and activate their access to WeBS online.

My new volunteer doesn't have an online username but would like to submit data online – They will need to register and activate their WeBS account. See **Appendix 3B** for an example email with instructions that they will need to follow to create a username and password and then activate their account.

I have allocated a site to a new counter but they say they can't log into WeBS Online – it is likely that they have not activated their WeBS account. See **Appendix 3A** for an example email with instructions that they will need to follow to activate their access to WeBS online.

One of my existing counters wants to switch from paper forms to using WeBS online – Please ask them to contact the WeBS Office before trying to register as we have already created an online username for them. We can provide them with a temporary password and instructions on what to do next.

A new counter doesn't want to use WeBS online do they still have to register? – No they don't have to register online if they will be forwarding their data to you or using paper forms. However, in order for you/us to submit data under their name (see page 14) we will need to create a username for them. Please contact the WeBS Office with their postal address, we will add them to the counter database; create an online username for them and let you know what it is. Once they have an online username you can treat them in the same way as your other, online counters within the Manage My Team sections.

I have a team of counters covering a single site; do you need everyone's contact details? – Ideally yes, it is important for us to know how many people are contributing towards WeBS. WeBS Partners use these figures in reporting and to apply for additional funding and grants. In order to add counters to our database we need a postal address for them. This also enables us to send them copies of the WeBS Annual Report which each counter is entitled to receive.

I can't find a counter in the 'Manage My Team>Counters' section – Counters need to have inputting rights to a site in your region to appear in this list. If you need to check their contact details and/or their Report and Newsletter subscriptions then you will need to give them inputting rights to a site by either assigning them to a site or upgrading their VIEW access to INPUT. See pages 23 to 25 for instructions on how to assign counters.

I input data on behalf of my team as the sector(s) they cover varies from month to month, how do I get them to appear in the 'Manage My Team>Counters' section? – Counters have to have input rights to at least one site in your region to appear in this list. You could give them inputting rights to all sectors but 'Allocate' the sectors to yourself and not your counters (see pages 23 to 25). That way they will appear in your list (see page 35); you can enter data under their name (see page 14); and you can still control whether the site appears as 'vacant' (see page 23). Alternatively, the WeBS Office can keep a master list of your counters and their sector(s). As long as you have kept us informed of all new counters we can provide you with a list of your counter contact details.

Can I/my counters enter data for all species into WeBS Online? – Unfortunately it is not currently possible for you/your counters to enter data for all birds seen during a WeBS count. Section 5 of the

WeBS Counter Handbook (available as a pdf to download from **www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/webs/taking-part/counter-resources**) is a list of species that should be recorded for WeBS. In addition to this list you can submit data for certain other species associated with wetland habitats; seabirds and raptors e.g. Twite, Yellow Wagtail; Dipper; Barn Owl; Kestrel; Razorbill; Guillemot etc. These can be added from the Additional Species section of the data entry pages. Any species not in this section can be submitted to BirdTrack (www.birdtrack.net).

My counter doesn't want to receive a printed copy of the Annual Report and/or Newsletter, how do I remove them from the mailing list(s)? – You can update their subscription details in the Manage My Team>Counters options. The Subscribed box should remain ticked but the Quantity set to zero and "opted out dd/mm/yy" should be added to the Special Instructions box (see Section 5.3 for full instructions). If the Subscribed box is not ticked any messages in the Special Instructions box will be lost. Although keeping the Subscribed box ticked seems counter-intuitive, it is helpful for us to know why they have been set to zero.

I want to change the name of a site, how do I do this? – It is currently not possible for site names to be changed within the online system. Please contact the WeBS office to discuss a possible change to the site name.

I have looked at the boundary map for a site and it is coloured red, why is that? – This means that the boundary has been estimated by the WeBS Office, confirmed boundaries will be coloured yellow. We have tried to create a boundary outline for all sites so that they will appear on the Vacant Sites page (www.bto.org/webs-vacant-sites) but if the site hasn't been counted within the last ten years then we have had to estimate the boundary. Similarly, if a boundary map was not provided when a site was created then we have estimated the boundary. Please see page 33 for instructions on how to amend a boundary or mark it as accepted.

I want to set up a new site; can I attach a boundary map to the request form? – Unfortunately, this is currently not possible. However, once you have submitted your new location request we will let you know when it has been created, you can then add a boundary using the online mapping tool – see page 28 for more details on how to do that. Alternatively, please send us a copy of the boundary map (either via email or snail-mail) and we will add it for you.

I want to split a site, how can I do this online? – At this time it is not possible for LOs to split sites (or create them) within the online system. When a site is split the new smaller sectors will need to have their own Location Codes - please contact the WeBS Office with details of the split, we will create the new sectors and let you know when they are available online. Please also see **Appendix 4** about site hierarchies.

The site boundary is coloured yellow, indicating that it is a 'known' boundary but it is not correct, can I change it? – Absolutely, we want our boundary outlines to match the area being covered during the WeBS count. Please see page 28 for instructions on how to edit a site boundary. If we have any queries about the changes we will contact you.

My counter is currently assigned to two sites that are close together but doesn't want to submit two counts, should they enter the combined data under one site and add a note to explain? – No, please do not enter data for multiple sites under a single site as this will make it look like all the birds are using that one site. Ideally we would like data to be submitted at the smallest possible level (i.e. for each site individually), however, if your counter is adamant that they want to merge the sites please contact the WeBS Office. We will create a combined site with a new Location Code. Please also see **Appendix 4** about site hierarchies.

Can I give WeBS data to the County Recorder for the County Bird Report? – Yes you can, you can use the Search and Download option to extract the data for your region into an Excel file that can be forwarded to County Recorders/Bird Report Editors. When downloading data for a county you may have a mixture of Standard Core Counts, Supplementary Counts; Roost Counts and Consolidated counts. Consolidated Counts are only produced for large complex sites and are duplicating the information already in the table as Standard Core Counts. The Consolidated Counts are really useful when downloading data for a specific site but, when looking at data at a County level, they can be discarded. Please also ask them to include the following text within their County Bird Reports:

"*Data were supplied by the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the last on behalf of the statutory nature conservation bodies: Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage and the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland) in association with The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust. Although WeBS data are presented within this report, in some cases the figures may not have been fully checked and validated. Therefore, for any detailed analyses of WeBS data, enquiries should be directed to the WeBS team at the British Trust for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, IP24 2PU (webs@bto.org)*"

A landowner has asked for data – You or your counters may forward WeBS data to landowners but only for sites that are on their land. If they would like copies of the printed Report and/or Newsletters please contact the WeBS Office with a name and a postal address and we will add them to the relevant mailing lists.

A consultancy has asked for data – Please direct all requests for data to the WeBS website **www.bto.org/webs-data** where they will find information on how to submit a data request; guidance on interpreting the data and information about any charges that may be applied. Alternatively please ask them to contact the Data Request Team on **websdata@bto.org**. **Please note** we will never ask a consultancy to contact you direct for data.

Natural England/Natural Resources Wales/Scottish Natural Heritage/Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland have contacted me asking for data/for counter contact information/asking us to complete additional fieldwork – Please do not give out any contact information without seeking permission from each of your counters first. The four Country Agencies named here are part of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and are therefore WeBS Partners. As Partners they can receive WeBS data, however, please ask them to contact the WeBS office as we can set them up with special access to WeBS online so that they can extract the data themselves. We also provide them with caveats and guidance on how to interpret the data. If they ask you to complete additional fieldwork you are at liberty to help them if you wish to do so. However, these requests are not official, WeBS related work and therefore you and your team are under no obligation to help them if you do not wish to do so. Anyone else requesting similar help should be directed to contact the WeBS Office.

If you have any questions or encounter any problems that are not covered in this section, please contact the WeBS Office (**webs@bto.org**).

Your Notes

Your Notes

Glossary

Allocated Counter A volunteer or a team of volunteers who have agreed to visit a sector on a monthly basis in order to collect and submit WeBS Core Count data. They are the official counter(s) for this site.

Casual Count An incomplete count, normally consisting on just one or two species, used to record rarities or large flocks of birds seen outside of the Primary Core Count. Where a casual count trumps the Primary count, the data from the casual count will be also displayed in the Report.

Complex Site A large site that has been split into several sectors and sub-sectors, they may span more than one country/region and may have more than one Local Organiser.

Consolidated Count These are only produced for multi-sector sites and are the combined data from all the lowest-level sectors.

Core Count The principal scheme of the Wetland Bird Survey. WeBS Core Counts are made using so-called 'look-see' methodology (Bibby *et al.* 2000*), whereby the observer surveys the whole of a predefined area. Core Counts at coastal sites/sectors are completed at high tide.

Counter A volunteer who has agreed to visit a site or sector in order to collect and submit WeBS data (including Low Tide Counts, Roost counts and Casual records) or who is an Allocated Counter.

Low Tide Count The Low Tide Count scheme aims to provide information on the numbers of waterbirds feeding on subdivisions of the inter-tidal habitat within estuaries. Low Tide Counts are completed between November and February at individual estuaries about once every six years, although, more frequent counts can be made.

Multi-level Site A site that has been split into two or more sectors.

Primary Count The main Core Count for any given month. This is the count that will be used for analysis and in the Annual Report.

Recording Year The WeBS recording year runs from July to June.

Roost Count A supplementary count of birds using the site as a roost. Normally completed at dusk and normally consisting of one or two species.

Sector A small count area created by splitting an existing site into two or more.

Site A waterbody that is counted as a single, stand-alone site; or the original site before it was split into small sectors.

Site Tree A hierarchy system of organising sectors to show how a site has been split over time.

Supplementary Count An additional complete Core Count. Where a supplementary count trumps the Primary count, the data from the supplementary count will also be displayed in the Report.

*Bibby CJ, Burgess ND, Hill DA & Mustoe S. 2000. *Bird Census Techniques. Second Edition*. Academic Press, London.

Contacts

Should you have a query regarding any WeBS matter, please contact the WeBS Office at the address below.

WeBS Office
British Trust for Ornithology
The Nunnery
Thetford
Norfolk IP24 2PU

Tel. `01842 750050`
Fax. `01842 750030`

Website: `www.bto.org/webs`

Email:
General enquiries: `webs@bto.org`
WeBS data requests: `websdata@bto.org`
Low Tide Counts: `lowtide@bto.org`

WeBS social media accounts:

Facebook page: `www.facebook.com/wetlandbirdsurvey`

Twitter account: `www.twitter.com/WeBS_UK` or `@WeBS_UK`

Local Organiser Pages:

BTO Forum discussion group: `https://forum.bto.org/c/regional-networks/TN-WeBS/12`

WeBS LO resources page: `www.bto.org/webs/lo`