



## WETLAND BIRD SURVEY

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### Local Organiser Handbook



The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is the monitoring scheme for non-breeding waterbirds in the UK which aims to provide the principal data for the conservation of their populations and wetland habitats. WeBS is a joint scheme of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, in association with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

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*Front cover photograph: Common Snipe by Niko Pekonen.  
Drawings by Dan Powell, Peter Scott, Richard Johnson, Steve Suttill, R Plummer and Mark Hulme  
Back cover photograph: Mallard by Teresa Frost*

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# Introduction and Overview

The most significant factor in the success of the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) is the efforts of several thousand volunteer counters. Local coordination of counters is vital to the survey's success and it is with this aspect of work that we rely on the help of volunteer **Local Organisers** (LOs) to organise the Core or Low Tide Counts within a certain area or for a certain site. Without LOs, we could not contemplate a scheme the size of WeBS.

## 1.1 Key responsibilities

WeBS has grown in complexity in the last few years so that there are a number of different tasks that an LO might have to deal with. However, the most fundamental parts of the job are to coordinate coverage of the most important areas for waterbirds within the region, to encourage volunteers to enter their data into WeBS Online as soon as possible after each monthly count and to verify the submitted data. As long as this is done, WeBS will continue to achieve its objectives. The key responsibilities are thus as follows:

- **Ensuring coverage** – LOs are responsible for coordinating a team of counters covering a particular area, usually a county or large site (e.g. an estuary). We ask LOs to ensure that key waterbird sites within their region are covered regularly;
- **Data Submission** – We ask LOs to encourage the use of WeBS Online where possible and to use WeBS Online to monitor data submission. You may have some counters who do not have internet access and therefore use recording forms instead. In this case we ask LOs to distribute recording forms to these counters; to collate the returned forms and either submit the results online (this is optional) or return them to the WeBS Office by the end of August each year;
- **Verifying WeBS data submissions** – We ask LOs to check each count entry for obvious mistakes, querying any potential problems with the relevant counter or accepting the submission if there are no obvious mistakes;
- **Distributing WeBS materials** – Each year WeBS publishes an Annual Report and Newsletter which are sent direct to counters. Please keep us informed of any changes to your counter's contact details. Alternatively, you may wish to distribute the Newsletter yourself; please let us know if you would like to do this;
- **Promoting WeBS** – we ask LOs, where possible, to publicise and promote the WeBS scheme locally (see page 10).