

Common Crane

Grus grus

Scarce resident

Cranes were recorded at five WeBS sites in 2010/11, with a maximum of five birds reported from two sites in Fenland. Elsewhere, singles

were at North Norfolk Coast (Aug), Montrose Basin (Aug) and Arun Valley (Apr).

Eurasian Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

GB max: 246,014 Oct
NI max: 14,130 Jan

International threshold
(Europe & NW Africa): 8,200
Great Britain threshold: 3,200
All-Ireland threshold: 680

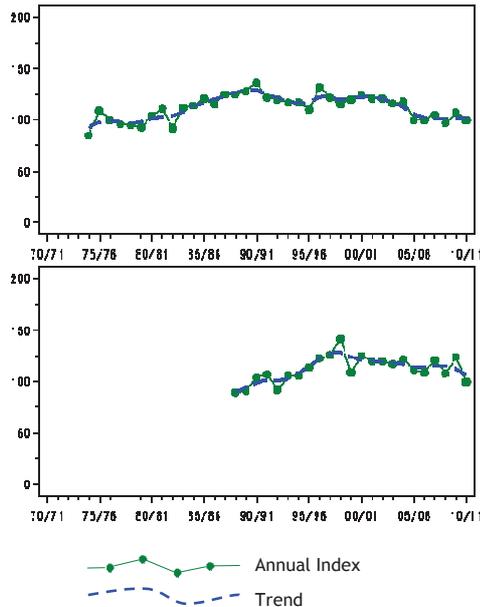


Figure 42.a, Annual indices & trend for Oystercatcher in GB (above) & NI (below).

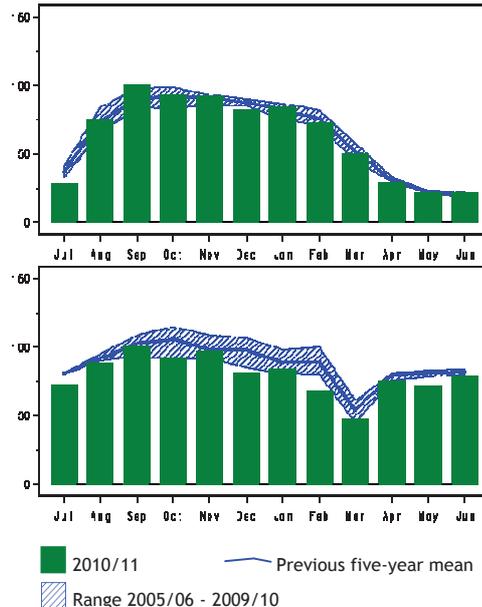


Figure 42.b, Monthly indices for Oystercatcher in GB (above) & NI (below).

Oystercatchers in the UK form part of a population of the nominate race *ostralegus*, which breeds in north and west Europe, and winters in west Europe southwards to west Africa. Up until six years ago, the British trend for Oystercatcher was largely stable. However, since then it has become evident that this species is declining very slowly, mirroring the situation across the North Sea in The Netherlands, where Oystercatchers have declined at a faster rate (Hornman *et al.* 2012). The decline is especially pronounced at Scottish sites, and a slow decline seems to also now be apparent in Northern Ireland. In keeping with these trends, the estimated size of the *ostralegus* population internationally was

recently revised downwards by 20% (Wetlands International 2012).

There are eight sites in Britain where numbers of Oystercatchers surpass the threshold for international importance, and a further ten sites of national importance. A number of stories stand out from the table below. At Morecambe Bay, an exceptional peak of 82,288 was present in September 2010, representing the highest count of all time at a site in the UK (and some 13% more than the previous maximum of 72,653 there in October 2002). A notable count also occurred at The Wash during the frozen conditions in January; the total of 26,028 contrasting with a recent decline associated with human over-exploitation

of the shellfishery (Atkinson *et al.* 2010). In Wales, Carmarthen Bay consolidated its position among the top sites for Oystercatcher with a peak Core count of 11,912 birds in November. The maxima at Solway Estuary and Thames Estuary were both below average, peaking prior to the onset of the cold weather in December –

at which point the monthly indices suggest a reduction in the numbers of birds present in both Britain and Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, the two most important sites (Strangford Lough and Belfast Lough) both registered peaks which were below average.

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Morecambe Bay	55,874	(41,199)	60,323	58,596	82,288	Sep	64,270
Solway Estuary	35,571	(31,091)	(25,417)	23,890	21,323	Nov	27,969
Thames Estuary	27,836	26,905	33,659	24,278	20,494	Oct	26,634
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	15,808	20,922	32,820 ¹⁰	25,886	21,993	Dec	23,486
The Wash	22,963	19,626	17,788	19,232	26,028	Jan	21,127
Burry Inlet	15,110 ¹²	13,257	13,980	15,957	9,966 ¹⁰	Jan	13,654
Ribble Estuary	10,872	13,148	(9,524)	(8,518)	(12,381)	Oct	12,134
Carmarthen Bay	10,154 ¹⁰	10,911 ¹⁰	10,562	13,673 ¹⁰	11,912	Nov	11,442
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Forth Estuary	8,235	7,230	8,046	(5,949)	6,164	Sep	7,419
Lavan Sands	9,587	5,783	5,611	6,129	5,919	Jan	6,606
Duddon Estuary	5,758	(4,251)	(7,296)	(3,444)	(3,354)	Jan	6,527
Inner Moray and Inverness Firth	5,099	8,003	3,883	3,547	3,875	Oct	4,881
Swale Estuary	3,762	4,106	3,293	(5,425)	6,819	Nov	4,681
Humber Estuary	2,942	(3,121)	(2,746)	4,503	(6,104)	Nov	4,516
Medway Estuary	(1,005)	(2,535)	(4,160)	(991)	(2,285)	Oct	(4,160) ▲
North Norfolk Coast	3,238	3,954	5,111	3,936	4,271	Nov	4,102
Inner Firth of Clyde	4,144	4,663	3,450	3,866	4,165	Oct	4,058
Swansea Bay	4,430 ¹²	3,150	3,743	(3,850)	2,650	Oct	3,565
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	6,842	8,689	9,575	8,513	7,910	Sep	8,306
Belfast Lough	(4,411)	3,580	3,624	3,798	3,374 ¹⁰	Nov	3,757
Lough Foyle	(2,347)	2,837	3,629	3,647	2,792	Oct	3,226
Outer Ards Shoreline	1,825	1,515	1,622	1,569	1,712	Jan	1,649
Dundrum Inner Bay	1,027	1,700	1,497	(1,635)	2,261	Feb	1,624
Carlingford Lough	1,552	(1,446)	1,529	839	(710)	Jan	1,342
Newcastle Shore			1,331				1,331
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain							
Wigtown Bay	2,058	2,363	(3,335)	2,407	3,379	Jan	2,708



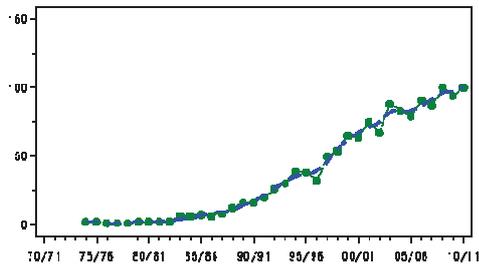
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Pied Avocet

Recurvirostra avosetta

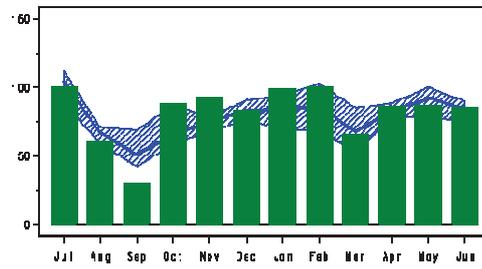
International threshold (W Europe & NW Africa): 730
Great Britain threshold: 75

GB max: 7,183 Oct
NI max: 0



—●— Annual Index
- - - Trend

Figure 43.a, Annual indices & trend for Avocet in GB.



■ 2010/11 — Previous five-year mean
▨ Range 2005/06 - 2009/10

Figure 43.b, Monthly indices for Avocet in GB.

The wintering population of Avocets in Britain comprises an increasing proportion of resident breeders with additional birds from the nearby Low Countries. The WeBS trend continues to illustrate an increasing population and the index value for 2010/11 equalled the high point reached two years previously.

Avocets were recorded at 70 WeBS sites in 2010/11, the most ever in a WeBS-year. These were all in England, including the Dee and Severn estuaries bordering England and Wales, with the exception of a single bird seen at Carmarthen Bay. There appears to have been no marked change in wintering numbers or distribution in response to the coldest winter for 35 years. Prior to the onset of the cold conditions, reasons for the drop in the monthly index for September are unclear.

Peaks at the six sites of international importance were above recent respective averages, most notably at Alde Complex where the 1,946 (Feb) represents the highest monthly site count ever submitted through WeBS. This count surpasses the previous maximum of 1,893 at Poole Harbour in February 2002. Humber Estuary now surpasses the threshold for international importance for this species, following high numbers in the autumn/early winter period for the second year in succession.



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An additional fifteen sites support nationally important numbers of Avocet; the majority of these are in East Anglia, apart from Exe Estuary, Tamar Complex, and Ribble Estuary. At Tamar Complex, the annual peaks have been revised slightly (P. Reay, pers. comm.), in order to account for probable double-counting of mobile flocks of this species at the site (Reay & Kent 2011).

At Ribble Estuary, Avocet has been an annual feature since 2002/03; a strong illustration of the steady range expansion of this species in England in the last decade. This expansion has yet to include Scotland, where there have only ever been approximately ten WeBS records of Avocet, most recently in 2007/08.

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Thames Estuary	1,578	1,633	1,689	(1,702)	(1,728)	Jan	1,666
Alde Complex	1,383	1,465	1,419	1,373	1,946	Feb	1,517
Poole Harbour	(1,303)	1,068	(1,131)	(1,553)	(1,361)	Nov	1,283
Medway Estuary	(1,027)	(453)	(791)	(604)	(1,048)	Oct	(1,048)
Breydon Water and Bemey Marshes	706	896 ¹²	897 ¹²	1,017 ¹²	982 ¹²	Aug	900
Humber Estuary	652	595	486	1,159	910	Oct	760 ▲
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Hamford Water	(629)	537	729 ⁸	564	851	Nov	670
Colne Estuary	720 ¹²	586 ¹⁰	750 ¹²	613 ¹²	450 ¹²	Sep	624
Blyth Estuary	660	889	369	576	(350)	Dec	624
North Norfolk Coast	645	556	674	538	626	Apr	608
Swale Estuary	(363)	447	(586)	654	602	Oct	572
The Wash	322	850	541	493	484	Jul	538
Blackwater Estuary	367	585	(508)	422	625	Feb	501
Exe Estuary	380	358	557	(440)	626	Feb	480
Deben Estuary	315	224	342	306	306	Jan	299
Stour Estuary	428	159	112	444 ¹⁰	204	Nov	269
Tamar Complex	300	300	245	189	274	Dec	262
Crouch-Roach Estuary	22	135 ¹¹	213	139	343	Jan	170
Orwell Estuary	105 ¹⁰	134 ¹⁰	161	(124)	(262)	Jan	166
Minsmere	190	205	164	153	114	Jun	165
Ribble Estuary	76	110	71	111	68	Jul	87
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain							
Severn Estuary	26	(76)	27	66	120	Nov	63
Dungeness and Rye Bay	(59)	(64)	60	64	(91)	May	70
Ouse Washes	4 ¹²	32	42	3	84 ¹²	Mar	33

Stone Curlew

Scarce

Burhinus oedicnemus

Stone Curlews were present at both ends of the WeBS year at a site in eastern England, close to a known breeding location, with a peak of

seven noted in August. In spring, one was at Clevedon to Yeo Estuary, representing the 4th WeBS record for the Severn Estuary complex.

Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

International threshold (Europe & W Africa): 2,500

Great Britain threshold: ?[†]

All-Ireland threshold: ?[†]

GB max: 414 Apr

NI max: 0

In 2010, Little Ringed Plovers were recorded at 167 sites during WeBS Core counts, including four sites in Scotland. The species was seen at ten sites in March, prior to a widespread distribution from April to July. Maxima occurred in July, notably 48 at Rutland Water and a supplementary count of 45 at Uttoxeter Quarry.

Both these counts are an indication of increasing breeding populations at those sites. A light autumn passage had largely concluded by the end of September, with the exception of single birds at Dearne Valley (Oct) and Blithfield Reservoir (Nov).

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain[†]							
Uttoxeter Quarry				16	45 ⁴⁶	Jul	31
Rutland Water	8	9	6	10	48	Jul	16
Nosterfield Gravel Pits	23	24	9	9	12	May	15
Other sites surpassing table qualifying levels in Summer 2010 in Great Britain[†]							
North Norfolk Coast	(4)	5	4	5	18	Jul	8
Belvide Reservoir	9	3	4	6	15	Jul	7

[†] as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 15 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

GB max: 15,997 May
 NI max: 418 Jan

International threshold
 (N Europe, Europe & N Africa): 730
 Great Britain winter threshold: 340
 All-Ireland threshold: 150

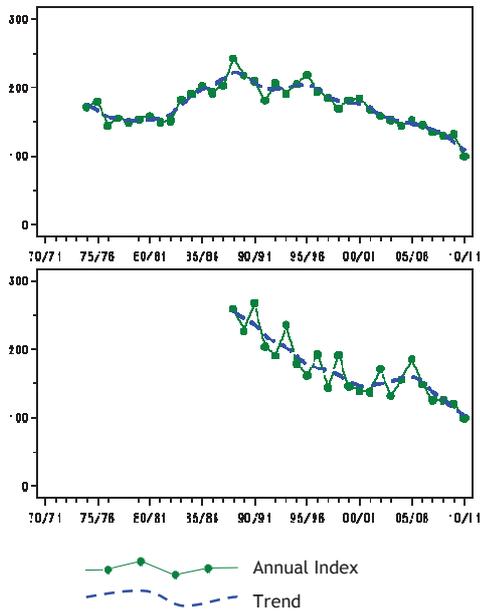


Figure 44.a, Annual indices & trend for Ringed Plover in GB (above) & NI (below).

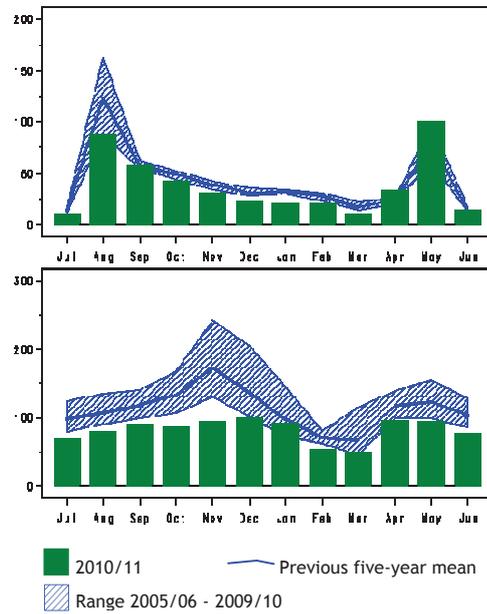


Figure 44.b, Monthly indices for Ringed Plover in GB (above) & NI (below).



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Britain and Ireland are of considerable importance for Ringed Plovers, providing winter refuges for British and continental breeders of the nominate race *hiaticula*, and passage sites for long-distance migrants of the *tundrae* race. The breeding population, comprising a large proportion of the nominate race, is in decline (Conway *et al.* 2008). The numbers of passage Ringed Plovers using UK sites in spring and autumn are much greater than those that remain in winter. Hence, virtually all the peak monthly counts from the principal sites relate to passage periods and arctic-breeding birds from Canada, Greenland, Iceland and Fennoscandia (Wernham *et al.* 2002).

The trends for wintering Ringed Plovers in both Britain and Northern Ireland have been declining steadily for over twenty years, and the

current situation for the species is now somewhat depressing. Given that the decline had previously been attributed to a shift of the core wintering range (Austin & Rehfisch 2005, Maclean *et al.* 2008), one might have expected a slight upturn in fortunes during 2010/11, when birds may have been forced to the UK from continental sites such as the Wadden Sea during frozen conditions. However, the national indices for both Britain and Northern Ireland fell quite sharply, to their lowest ever levels.

As was the case in 2009/10, the maximum WeBS count during the year contrasted with this overall downward trend in terms of wintering birds. The spring count of 5,974 at Ribble Estuary surpassed the previous record of 5,432 in May 2000, and therefore stresses the importance of UK for passage Ringed Plovers.

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Ribble Estuary	(1,016)	1,734	(2,931)	(5,420)	5,974	May	4,376
Humber Estuary	(783)	(1,160)	(781)	2,547	1,415	May	1,981
North Norfolk Coast	2,046	1,023	1,814	2,758	1,310	Sep	1,790
The Wash	(1,127)	400	1,831	2,138	1,639	May	1,502
Solway Estuary	(644)	(402)	(936)	(1,644)	1,090	Apr	1,367
Severn Estuary	1,453	(364)	1,457	(982)	317	Aug	1,076
Thames Estuary	1,197	748	830	(733)	(719)	Oct	925
Swale Estuary	(465)	(294)	(605)	(830)	(421)	Aug	(830)
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Morecambe Bay	355	(428)	936	894	724	May	727 ▼
Lindisfarne	581	(139)	(224)	(734)	815	May	710
Dengie Flats	(127)	1,013	577	710	230	Aug	633
Forth Estuary	290	502	(875)	1,080	357	Sep	621
Blackwater Estuary	418	531	767	(689)	(434)	Aug	601
Bamkirk Point at Annan				535 ¹²			535
West Freugh					512	Oct	512 ▲
Stour Estuary	390	428	582	798	330	Sep	506
Tay Estuary	235	(170)	658	(611)	(302)	Aug	501
Crouch-Roach Estuary	816	594	349	419	316	Oct	499
Alt Estuary	257	515	515	416	648	May	470
Piltanton and Luce Estuaries				174	622	Sep	398 ▲
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	127	(551)	744	265	263	Sep	390
South Ford	743	400	300		118	Sep	390
Duddon Estuary	(495)	200	525	407	195	Apr	364
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	278 ¹⁰	227 ¹⁰	277 ¹⁰	288 ¹⁰	(86)	Feb	268
Outer Ards Shoreline	338	125	308	238	229	Jan	248
Belfast Lough	180	253	147 ¹⁰	187	103	Oct	174
Carlingford Lough	247	154	(105)	54	(52)	Oct	152
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2010/2011							
Chichester Harbour	365	233	395	422	221	May	327
Taw-Torridge Estuary	(223)	(176)	(298)	(307)	(291)	Aug	(307)
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain							
Tynningham Estuary	49	272	117	247	476	Aug	232
Breydon Water and Berney Marshes	189	184 ¹²	165 ¹²	246 ¹²	473 ¹²	May	251
Hamford Water	(328)	349	261	(220)	(346)	Sep	321

Kentish Plover

Charadrius alexandrinus

Scarce

Singles were seen at Tynninghame Bay in April and at the more typical location of Pegwell Bay in April and May.

American Golden Plover

Pluvialis dominica

Vagrant

Native Range: America

One was recorded at the Exe Estuary in October; the 14th WeBS record.

Eurasian Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

GB max: 144,916 Nov
NI max: 4,600 Nov

International threshold
(Iceland, Faroes, E Atlantic coast): 9,300
Great Britain threshold: 4,000
All-Ireland threshold: 1,700

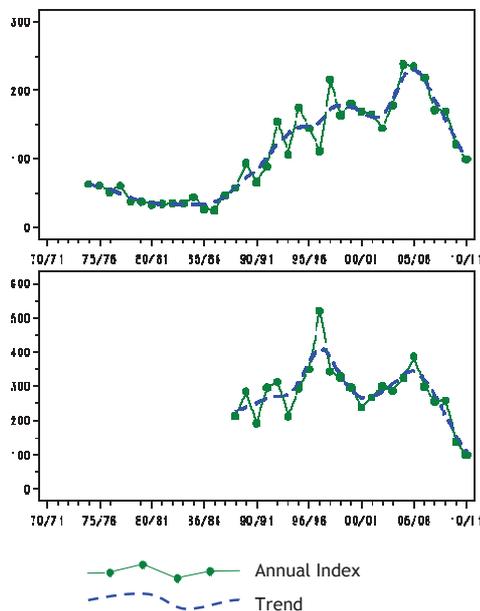


Figure 45.a, Annual indices & trend for Golden Plover in GB (above) & NI (below).

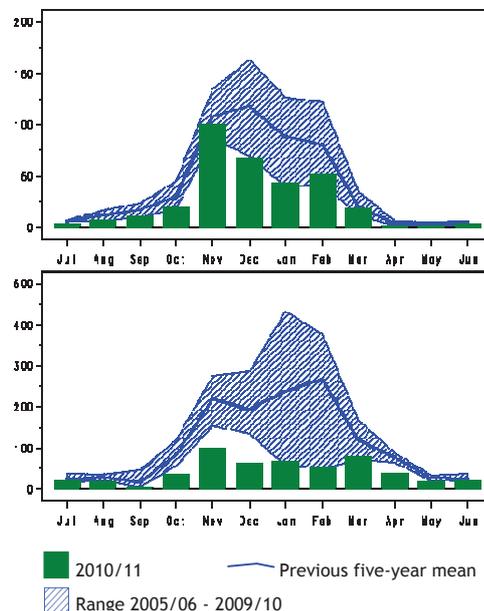


Figure 45.b, Monthly indices for Golden Plover in GB (above) & NI (below).

For the second year in succession the British national index for Golden Plover fell sharply, exhibiting a profound response to a colder than average winter. Pictures are said to paint a thousand words, and the monthly indices tell the story of the winter for Golden Plovers in the UK. As in 2009/10, a typical British November for this species was followed by an entire winter period during which numbers were well below average. This was undoubtedly a consequence

of cold conditions having forced birds out of northwest Europe; a similar response was recorded in The Netherlands at this time (M. Hornman, pers. comm.).

Six sites continue to surpass the threshold for international importance for Golden Plovers despite the generally low maxima at WeBS sites across Britain in 2010/11. As indicated, all these sites (as well as most of a further dozen sites of national importance) yielded their respective

peaks during November. Peak numbers were lower than average at all the major sites, including Somerset Levels where, as in the previous year, the maximum was approximately one-third of the peak recorded in 2008/09.

In Northern Ireland, the fall in the national index was similarly spectacular, dropping to its

lowest ever level. All the major sites held their lowest peaks for many years. Interestingly, the monthly indices also indicate that arrival of birds in November was much reduced, unlike that in Britain. The reason for this apparent difference is unknown.

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Humber Estuary	50,188	(23,526)	(29,172)	30,352	(29,370)	Nov	40,270
The Wash	31,350	19,643	40,588	25,628	(13,569)	Nov	29,302
Breydon Water and Berney Marshes	24,930 ¹⁰	15,790 ¹²	30,800 ¹²	21,900 ¹²	18,100 ¹²	Nov	22,304
Somerset Levels	12,054	12,422	18,467	6,874	5,917	Nov	11,147
Swale Estuary	10,520	17,327	(7,407)	6,112	8,305	Nov	10,566
Blackwater Estuary	(15,810)	5,703	(13,173)	(4,224)	(6,691)	Nov	10,344
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Dengie Flats	5,520	4,520	11,070	8,500	7,000	Mar	7,322
Carmarthen Bay	12,700	10,420	4,244	3,569	521	Nov	6,291
Hamford Water	(5,362)	10,228	7,234 ⁸	2,284	2,050	Feb	5,449
Dearne Valley	8,700	3,000	5,000	5,000	3,000	Oct	4,940
Dungeness and Rye Bay	5,000	7,210	3,772	3,450	(2,402)	Nov	4,858
North Norfolk Coast	(4,552)	3,154	5,914	5,527	4,802	Feb	4,849
Lower Derwent Ings	10,600	5,433	2,500	4,124	976	Oct	4,727
Crouch-Roach Estuary	(2,387)	(6,696)	3,298	4,342	4,018 ¹⁰	Nov	4,588
Ribble Estuary	(3,950)	6,610	4,307	5,815	1,476	Nov	4,552
Solway Estuary	5,746	3,761	3,223	5,428	3,313 ¹⁰	Nov	4,294
Nene Washes	8,500	5,650	3,500	1,600	1,790	Feb	4,208
Lindisfarne	(3,236)	(2,324)	4,228	(1,470)	4,045	Nov	4,137
Pegwell Bay	4,170	(5,500)	3,500	3,150 ¹²	4,000 ¹²	Nov	4,064
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	8,513 ¹⁰	8,817 ¹⁰	11,328 ¹⁰	7,435 ¹⁰	2,522	Jan	7,723
Lough Foyle	9,534	9,211	8,486	5,091	2,366	Oct	6,938
Loughs Neagh and Beg	6,475	7,712	7,337	4,687	2,658	Nov	5,774
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2010/2011							
Morecambe Bay	(3,429)	(3,382)	1,716	(4,715)	2,838	Nov	3,216
Thames Estuary	4,817	4,267	2,129	2,014	1,646	Nov	2,975
Camel Estuary	(3,000)	2,501	6,000 ¹²	2,100	1,100	Nov	2,940
Ouse Washes	3,312 ¹²	2,427 ¹²	485	6,071 ¹²	2,227	Nov	2,904
Otmoor	4,670 ¹²	(1,080)	(1,908)	(1,250)	500 ¹²	Feb	2,585
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2010/11 in Great Britain							
Deben Estuary	(1,558)	(2,073)	2,718	2,272	6,449	Jan	3,813



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