



International Swan Census 2015

Information for Local Organisers and counters

1) Count dates

The count is scheduled for the weekend of **17/18 January 2015**, the same date as the WeBS priority date, although we understand that some counts may need to be made on different dates for a variety of reasons. Please try to conduct any swan counts as close to the coordinated weekend as possible.

If you are unable to count additional sites, or record habitat or brood information, on the census weekend, but are still interested in visiting other sites or collecting additional information, please note that all counts made in January are welcome and of value to this census.

2) Information collated during the census

The principal information required is the number of Bewick's and Whooper Swans present. However, we would also like to take this opportunity to encourage counters at both WeBS and non-WeBS sites to collect information on breeding success and habitat use, as this is valuable to our ongoing studies of these species.

A recording form is available to download from WWT's Waterbird Monitoring website (<http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/get-involved/isc-2015/>) which provides further details about the information to be collected for the census. However, we ask that all counts are submitted using our **online recording form** (please see below).

3) Online recording form

We would be very grateful if any counts of Bewick's and Whooper Swans, including those recorded at WeBS sites, are submitted using our online recording form at <http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/recording/>. Counters will need to register to access the form, and instructions on how to complete the form are available on the website.

We appreciate that for WeBS counts this may seem like somewhat of a duplication of effort. However, receiving the counts directly will enable us to process and report on the results much quicker as data for the whole census, covering Britain and Ireland, will be collated in one place; plus the census also records additional information, such as habitat use and age assessments, which are not recorded by WeBS.

Zero counts recorded at WeBS count units do not need to be entered on the census forms. However, please submit any nil counts from non-WeBS sites.

If any counters are unable to use the online recording form, a paper copy of the form can be completed and returned to the national organiser. Forms can either be downloaded from WWT's website (see above) or requested from the national organiser.

4) Site coverage

Many key sites are already covered by WeBS Core Counts, however, birds at some sites are best counted at different times, e.g. at dawn or dusk roost, and many birds occur at other sites not normally visited for WeBS requiring additional counts. Additional counting effort is, therefore, required for this census in order to achieve complete coverage for all sites holding Bewick's and/or Whooper Swans.

A list of all sites known to have held Bewick's and Whooper Swans is available on WWT's Waterbird Monitoring Website (<http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/get-involved/isc-2015/>): the list is divided into WeBS Regions. The list was produced using WeBS data (Core Counts and supplementary data) from 2003/04 – 2012/13, for December, January and February only, and swan census counts from the 2005 and 2010 censuses. For each site, the peak count is given for each season. A pdf or printed copy of the list is available on request.

We hope this list is helpful, but please bear in mind that it is intended as a guide rather than a definitive list. There may be additional sites not listed which you know hold swans, or you may know that some of the sites are no longer used. We would be grateful if coverage can be arranged for any additional sites, if not regularly counted by WeBS. And, if there are any additional sites [to those covered by WeBS] that may potentially no longer hold swans, it is still important for these

sites to be visited, even if a zero count is recorded, as we can then be sure that everywhere we know of has been checked and we are not possibly missing birds.

In those areas where birds are particularly mobile we ask that you endeavour to coordinate the counts in order to minimise duplication by double-counting of birds at roost sites and nearby feeding areas.

a) To Local Organisers

We would be grateful if you could arrange for any additional sites, if not regularly counted by WeBS, to be covered for this survey. If it is not possible to provide coverage for all known sites, we would ask that you prioritise cover for those sites holding large numbers of swans. If full coverage in your area is proving difficult, particularly if major sites may not be counted, please contact the national organiser as soon as possible so that we can look into ways to overcome these gaps.

b) To counters in regions with a Local Organiser

Your Local Organiser may already have asked you to cover a non-WeBS site that is suspected to hold Whooper or Bewick's Swans. However, if you know of any other additional swan sites that you suspect may not be covered by anyone else, please liaise with your Local Organiser.

c) To counters in regions without a Local Organiser

We would be very grateful if you can have a look at the site list (mentioned above) to see if there are any further sites that you can cover in addition to your usual WeBS count units. If you are able to cover any of these additional sites we would be grateful if you could inform the national organiser of the sites you would be willing to visit, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Likewise, if you are unable to undertake your usual WeBS count in January, and do not have another counter who can provide cover for you, please can you contact the national organiser as soon as possible so that we can look at ways of filling these gaps – this is particularly important for any WeBS count units that usually hold Whooper and/or Bewick's Swans. Also, so that this census is as complete as possible, we would be grateful for counts from any additional swan sites not listed or currently covered by WeBS. If you know of sites in your area that you suspect are not being counted, again, please contact the national organiser so that we can ensure effort is not duplicated.

5) Contact and further information

National Organiser (Britain)

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Further information about the census can be found at <http://monitoring.wwt.org.uk/get-involved/isc-2015/>.



The International Swan Census is coordinated overall by the Wetlands International / IUCN SSC Swan Specialist Group. The census takes place throughout the wintering areas of the Icelandic Whooper Swan and Northwest European Bewick's Swan populations. The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) coordinates the census in Britain, Ireland and Iceland. The census is organised in Britain by WWT; in Northern Ireland by the Irish Whooper Swan Study Group; in the Republic of Ireland by BirdWatch Ireland; and in Iceland by colleagues of WWT.