

## CLEVELAND WATER BODY SURVEY RESULTS (2006-07)

### Background

The Cleveland Water Body Survey was carried out between September 2006 and March 2007. The object was to make monthly counts of waterbirds in those locations not covered by the Wetland Bird Survey. Waterbirds in this context consisted of grebes, cormorants, herons, swans, geese, ducks, rails, waders and Kingfisher.

A list of Cleveland water bodies was compiled and this is given in the accompanying MS Word document CWBS\_06\_07 Sites.doc. This list includes Wetland Bird Survey sites, which are not included in this analysis. It also includes stretches of the River Tees.

Coverage of the larger sites was reasonable with many receiving the full 7 visits. Others were less well covered, though the results should be adequate for assessing the bird numbers and the range of species present.

### Results

Counts and other relevant information are summarised in an Excel Workbook CWBS\_06\_07\_analysis.xls. This consists of three worksheets as follows :

1. 'Sites-species' : this lists the sites and for each the number of visits, the species present, the total number of species, the number of species of conservation concern, and the total bird count.
2. 'Species list' : The species present, the number of sites at which each was found and the total count for each species
3. 'Species peak counts' : the highest count of each species at each site.

The total bird count for each site and the total count of each species are the sums over all the visits (i.e. many, or most, birds will have been counted several times). The totals are intended to give an indication of relative rather than absolute numbers.

Many of the species are on the Amber List of the Birds of Conservation Concern, and their names are highlighted on the first worksheet. Although Greylag Goose is on this list, it has not been included as such in this analysis since the listing refers to the wild population rather than the introduced birds.

### Comments on the results

Species distribution : The most widespread species have a wide habitat tolerance and a tendency to be less wary of people. Mallards are the prime example, though it should be noted that several, especially those in public parks, are domestic strains. At Ward Jackson Park, about 7% of the Mallards were these domestic types.

Less widespread birds are mostly present in smaller numbers. The obvious exceptions are the plovers, especially the Golden Plovers, which are found in high numbers on just one site.

Most of the scarcest birds are those waders which are mainly or entirely autumn passage migrants.

Assessment of the importance of sites : The sites listed in the 'Sites-species' worksheet can re-ordered on a different basis using the Excel Data>Sort... command. A list based on the total number of birds counted favours the large sites, especially the public parks, while a list based on the number of species favours less artificial sites. The importance of these less artificial sites is even more evident if the Amber List species are considered. Their importance would be increased further if the breeding season was considered since they would attract wetland passerines such as Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting.

Most of the data obtained from this survey should still be relevant. However, at least one site has since been changed sufficiently to affect the bird population. At Poole Hospital Lake, much of the emergent vegetation has been cleared away with the consequent less frequent sightings of Little Grebe, Water Rail and Coot, but with an increase in Mallard. Any changes at other sites should be seen in the results from the current 2008-09 survey.