

CORK HARBOUR I-WEBS COUNTS: SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE WINTER OF 2013/14

INTRODUCTION

This document presents a summary of the Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts carried out between September 2013 and March 2014. Please note that the species totals in this document are provisional and do not represent official I-WeBS data.

COVERAGE

Coordinated counts were completed in six months: September, November, December, January, February and March. Complete coverage was achieved in the September, January and February counts. There is data missing for some of the subsites in the November, December and March counts (Table 1). Weather conditions were challenging, with atrocious weather on the December count weekend, and bad weather also affecting some counts in November, January and March.

For the purposes of count coordination, the subsites have been divided into groups, where there is likely to be significant daily movement between subsites within the same group, but little movement over the short-term between the groups (see Figure 1). The large North group has been further divided into subgroups. Efforts were made to have all counts within groups completed, but shortage of counters, and the challenging weather conditions on several of the count weekends (particularly the December count weekend), prevented this being achieved on every count (Table 1), although the subsites within each subgroup in the North group were usually counted on the same day.

Table 1. Coverage and coordination of Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts, 2013/14

Group	Subgroup	Subsites	Sep	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
West		Owenboy	14/09	09/11	-	11/01	08/02	08/03
		Lough Beg-Monkstown	15/09	09/11	15/12	11/01	09/02	08/03
Inner		Douglas	14/09	09/11	14/12	11/01	09/02	08/03
		Dunkettle	14/09	-	15/12	11/01	09/02	08/03
North	Belvelly-Glounthaune	Glounthaune	15/09	10/11	13/12	11/01	09/02	09/03
		Belvelly	15/09	10/11	13/12	11/01	09/02	09/03
	North Channel	North Channel (south)	15/09	10/11	15/12	11/01	09/02	-
		North Channel (north)	15/09	10/11	15/12	11/01	09/02	09/03
	Midleton	Rathcoursey-Ballynacorra	15/09	11/11	15/12	12/01	09/02	09/03
East		Saleen-Whitegate	14/09	09/11	16/12	12/01	09/02	08/03

Owenboy = Owenboy Estuary (OL454) subsite; Lough Beg-Monkstown = Lough Beg (OL453) and Monkstown Creek (OL496) subsites; Douglas = Douglas Estuary (OL488) subsite; Dunkettle = Dunkettle (OL486); Glounthaune = Glounthaune Estuary/ Slatty Water (OL489) subsite; Belvelly = Carrigrenan Pools (OL 041), Belvelly Tower (OL424), Belvelly Bridge – Railway (OL425), Carrigrenan - Great Island & Railway (OL426) and East Lough Mahon (OL452) subsites; North Channel (south) = North Channel – Ballintubbrid (OL492); North Channel (north) = Weir Island (OL469), Ballintubbrid (OL482) and Brick Island (OL487) subsites; Rathcoursey-Ballynacorra = Rathcoursey & Ahanesk (OL415) and Ballynacorra (OL484) subsites; Saleen-Whitegate = Rostellan Lake (OL099), Aghada (OL490), Whitegate Bay (OL491) and Saleen (OL498) subsites

WATERBIRD NUMBERS

Total monthly counts for all the species recorded are shown in Table 2 and 3. The monthly counts of selected species in 2011/12 and 2012/13 are compared in Table 4. Note that gulls are not counted in all subsites, and, in any case, the subsites will only cover a small proportion of their total Cork Harbour populations.

The 2013/14 counts provide further evidence of large declines in the Shelduck and Redshank populations since the mid-2000s, and continued decline in the Lapwing population, as previously indicated by the 2011/12 and 2012/13 counts. Dunlin numbers were also much lower in 2013/14,

compared to 2011/12 and 2012/13. However, this may reflect the poor weather conditions during the mid-winter counts, which may have caused unusual distribution patterns in this highly mobile species, and may have also affected the count accuracy.

The count weekends were earlier in the month in 2013/14 compared to the previous two winters. This may have caused the relatively high numbers of several species (e.g., Wigeon, Teal and Dunlin) in the March count.

CORMORANT ROOST COUNT

A Cormorant roost count was carried out on 07 December 2013. This count covered roosts at: Drake's Pool, Owenboy Estuary; Monkstown Creek; Glanmire Wood, Glashboy Estuary; Fota Island North; Fota Island South; Bagwell's Hill East, East Ferry Channel; and Siddon's Tower, Saleen Creek. The Rostellan Lake roost was counted on 08 December 2013. An additional roost at Bagwell's Hill North, North Channel was only discovered after the count.

A total of 451 Cormorant were recorded on the count, compared to 263 and 190 in the November and December I-WeBS counts, respectively. Additional birds will have been present at the Bagwell's Hill North roost, while up to 100 Cormorant may commute from the roost at Finure, west of Trabolgan, to feed in the outer harbour.

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Table 2. Monthly totals of regularly occurring species in the Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts, 2013/14

Species	Monthly counts 2013/14						Annual maxima		
	Sep	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Mute Swan	26	22	18	39	40	25	45	40	40
Canada Goose		10	9	4	2	5	14	14	10
Light-bellied Brent Goose		28	17	27	5	20	58	60	28
Shelduck	38	274	811	911	1241	533	1140	1281	1241
Wigeon	18	762	1173	1180	1503	750	1468	1056	1503
Teal	87	609	968	1240	1201	773	929	1251	1240
Mallard	186	265	265	323	151	93	416	319	323
Pintail			14	15	2		31	8	15
Shoveler		1	12		24	7	33	19	24
Tufted Duck	2	10	10	12	22	4	26	51	22
Goldeneye			1	5	5	8	20	23	8
Red-breasted Merganser		11	10	55	31	24	71	50	55
Great Northern Diver		2		5	4	4	3	6	5
Little Grebe	13	69	31	71	46	8	88	62	71
Great Crested Grebe	1	82	26	71	55	18	165	117	82
Cormorant	204	263	190	129	68	81	317	363	263
Shag		2	2	4	1	7	6	5	7
Little Egret	83	63	26	19	12	26	67	64	83
Grey Heron	78	54	33	31	45	19	70	49	78
Moorhen	11	15	11	9	15	10	21	15	15
Coot				1	1	4	9	11	4
Oystercatcher	1452	853	1328	882	768	508	1939	1294	1452
Ringed Plover	15		4			1	29	29	15
Golden Plover		2602		1640	150		5211	6900	2602
Grey Plover			6	19	9		35	36	19
Lapwing	15	414	1581	1683	1750		2217	1934	1750
Knot	13		40	3	125	120	178	230	125
Dunlin	16	481	2021	2512	3117	1660	5068	6789	3117
Snipe		32	21	17	17	4	34	55	32
Black-tailed Godwit	2681	2091	2207	1453	867	2267	2955	2770	2681
Bar-tailed Godwit	206	46	176	77	300	155	312	351	300
Whimbrel	8					1	2	67	8
Curlew	1163	747	846	883	855	527	1662	1266	1163
Redshank	1383	1303	1115	1386	1436	1207	1354	1739	1436
Greenshank	73	85	79	67	43	67	88	82	85
Turnstone	2	104	76	48	87	51	207	177	104
Black-headed Gull	1917	1621	1352	1401	1847	3276	3417	2067	3276
Common Gull	55	34	36	84	158	444	131	200	444
Mediterranean Gull		44		4	28	25	8	43	44
Herring Gull	46	22	40	47	60	23	74	70	60
Lesser Black-backed Gull	45	37	93	13	21	120	72	167	120
Great Black-backed Gull	128	22	44	37	10	15	150	116	128

Table 3. Monthly totals of scarce species in the Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts, 2013/14

Species	Monthly counts 2012/13						Annual maxima		
	Sep	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Barnacle Goose			1	1	1		0	0	1
Ruddy Shelduck		2	2	2			2	2	2
Gadwall					15	9	22	12	15
Eider					1		1	1	1
Long-tailed Duck				1	1		0	0	1
Gannet						1	0	0	1
Sparrowhawk					1	1	0	0	1
Buzzard			1				2	6	1
Water Rail						2	0	1	2
Spotted Redshank	2			1	1	2	7	4	2
Common Sandpiper	1	1					0	0	1
Ring-billed Gull				1			0	0	1
Yellow-legged Gull					1		0	2	1
Sandwich Tern	228						104	85	228
Common Tern	1						0	1	1
Black Guillemot		1		2		15	19	5	15
Guillemot				1		1	0	0	1
Razorbill						1	0	0	1
Kingfisher	1			2		2	3	1	2

Table 4. Comparison of monthly counts for selected species between 2011/12-2013/14

Species	Season	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Shelduck	2011/12	8	43	465	681	1140	948	439
	2012/13	0	202	465	-	1281	1109	-
	2013/14	38	-	274	811	911	1241	533
Wigeon	2011/12	15	475	820	1137	1407	1468	237
	2012/13	2	348	914	-	1056	844	-
	2013/14	18	-	762	1173	1180	1503	750
Teal	2011/12	174	534	612	632	713	929	488
	2012/13	115	374	602	-	1251	1034	-
	2013/14	87	-	609	968	1240	1201	773
Oystercatcher	2011/12	1939	1281	1028	803	1220	930	400
	2012/13	1207	1294	899	-	836	764	-
	2013/14	1452	-	853	1328	882	768	508
Lapwing	2011/12	18	371	2217	1709	1792	378	4
	2012/13	10	354	1169	-	1934	294	-
	2013/14	15	-	414	1581	1683	1750	15
Dunlin	2011/12	39	600	2419	5068	4338	2771	72
	2012/13	10	697	1390	-	4261	6789	-
	2013/14	16	-	481	2021	2512	3117	1660
Black-tailed Godwit	2011/12	2955	2154	1155	700	2209	2015	1896
	2012/13	1663	1404	1037	-	767	1826	-
	2013/14	2681	-	2091	2207	1453	867	2267
Curlew	2011/12	1662	978	887	623	1357	1197	324
	2012/13	1234	1139	506	-	628	1266	-
	2013/14	1163	-	747	846	883	855	527
Redshank	2011/12	1062	1297	1352	1209	1219	1354	552
	2012/13	697	1739	1259	-	1284	978	-
	2013/14	1383	-	1303	1115	1386	1436	1207

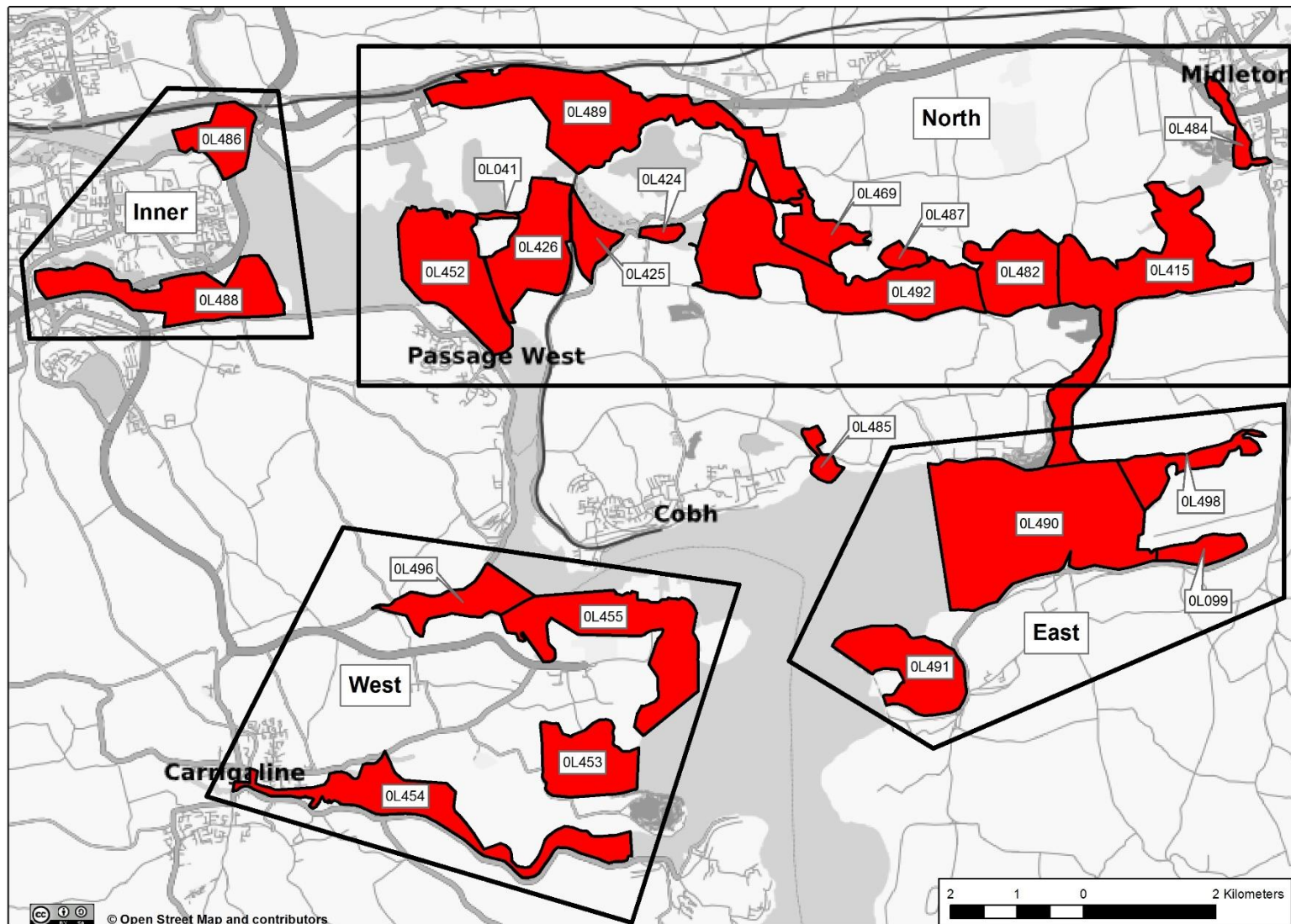


Figure 1. Cork Harbour I-WeBS subsites (note, any recent subsite amendments are not included)