

CORK HARBOUR I-WEBS COUNTS: SUMMARY REPORT FOR THE WINTER OF 2015/16

INTRODUCTION

This document presents a summary of the Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts carried out between September 2015 and March 2016. 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, October, December, January, February and March. Complete coverage of all the subsites was achieved on all these counts. Several subsites were also counted in November, but this was not a coordinated count. The I-WeBS counts were not badly affected by the poor weather conditions that dominated the winter and only four subsite counts were considered to have low overall accuracy. However, the poor weather prevented a scheduled Cormorant roost count from being carried out.

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 on the same day, but shortage of counters prevented this being achieved on every count (Table 1).

Table 1. Coverage and coordination of Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts, 2015/16

Group	Subgroup	Subsites	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
West	-	Owenboy	20/09	17/10	21/11	19/12	17/01	22/02	20/03
		Lough Beg-Monkstown	19/09	17/10	21/11	18/12	17/01	20/02	19/03
Inner	-	Douglas	19/09	17/10	-	19/12	16/01	20/02	19/03
		Dunkettle	20/09	17/10	-	19/12	17/01	20/02	20/03
North	Belvelly-Glounthaune	Glounthaune	20/09	18/10	21/11	19/12	17/01	21/02	20/03
		Belvelly	20/09	17/10	-	19/12	17/01	21/02	20/03
	North Channel	North Channel (south)	20/09	18/10	-	20/12	17/01	21/02	20/03
		North Channel (north)	20/09	18/10	22/11	20/12	17/01	21/02	20/03
	Midleton	Rathcoursey-Ballynacorra	19/09	18/10	22/11	20/12	17/01	21/02	19/03
East	-	Saleen-Whitegate	19/09	17/10	22/11	21/12	16/01	20/02	20/03
-	-	Cuskinny	20/09	18/10	-	21/12	17/01	20/02	20/03

Owenboy = Owenboy Estuary (0L454) subsite; Lough Beg-Monkstown = Lough Beg (0L453), Spike Island (code not assigned) and Monkstown Creek (0L496) subsites; Douglas = Douglas Estuary (0L488) subsite; Dunkettle = Dunkettle (0L486); Glounthaune = Glounthane Estuary/ Slatty Water (0L489) subsite; Belvelly = Carrigrenan Pools (0L 041), Belvelly Tower (0L424), Belvelly Bridge – Railway (0L425), Carrigrenan - Great Island & Railway (0L426) and East Lough Mahon (0L452) subsites; North Channel (south) = North Channel – Ballintubbrid (0L492); North Channel (north) = Weir Island (0L469), Ballintubbrid (0L482) and Brick Island (0L487) subsites; Rathcoursey-Ballynacorra = Rathcoursey & Ahanesk (0L415) and Ballynacorra (0L484) subsites; Saleen-Whitegate = Rostellan Lake (0L099), Aghada (0L490), Whitegate Bay (0L491) and Saleen (0L498) subsites; Cuskinny = Cuskinny (0L485).

WATERBIRD NUMBERS

Total monthly counts for all the species recorded are shown in Tables 2 and 3. The monthly counts of selected species during 2011/12-2015/16 are compared in Table 4. As in 2014/15, gulls were counted on almost all counts, although the subsites will only cover a small proportion of their total Cork Harbour populations.

Waterbird numbers in 2015/16 generally continued trends shown in previous winters. Little Egret numbers increased again, while, following record numbers last winter, Greenshank numbers exceeded 100 for only the second winter ever. Numbers of Shelduck and Lapwing remained very

low and 2015/16 is probably the first winter when the peak Shelduck count has been less than 1000. Dunlin numbers were also very low continuing the trend of the previous two winters, although accurate counts of this highly mobile species are difficult to achieve.

Autumn numbers of Oystercatcher and Curlew were low. However, unusually large numbers (for the season) of Curlew occurred in February. This may have been due to the late timing of the count, allowing field-feeding birds that had returned to their nocturnal roosts to be included in the counts. Black-tailed Godwit numbers showed their usual autumn peak. While the very wet winter resulted in large numbers feeding on fields away from the harbour, only the December count appeared to have been affected by this.

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Table 2. Monthly totals of regularly occurring species in the Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts, 2015/16

Species	Monthly counts 2015/16						Annual maxima					
	Sep	Oct	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	5 year mean
Mute Swan	41	38	54	35	41	46	45	40	40	44	54	45
Canada Goose	5	0	4	4	2	3	14	14	10	7	5	10
Light-bellied Brent Goose	0	0	57	34	26	41	58	60	28	58	57	52
Shelduck	3	20	538	961	971	609	1140	1281	1241	1073	971	1141
Wigeon	58	354	1130	1266	1135	744	1468	1056	1503	1558	1266	1370
Gadwall	1	0	2	25	8	0	22	12	15	36	25	22
Teal	405	432	1399	1016	1450	672	929	1251	1240	1240	1450	1222
Mallard	373	439	249	237	142	131	416	319	323	378	439	375
Pintail	0	1	14	4	26	2	31	8	15	21	26	20
Shoveler	0	4	7	9	8	9	33	19	24	23	9	22
Tufted Duck	0	0	0	0	11	13	26	51	22	13	11	25
Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	6	0	20	23	8	2	6	12
Red-breasted Merganser	0	3	26	70	32	43	71	50	55	86	70	66
Great Northern Diver	0	0	5	6	1	5	3	6	5	3	6	5
Cormorant	320	401	129	159	205	74	317	363	263	330	401	335
Shag	1	1	9	9	3	4	6	5	7	7	9	7
Little Egret	168	156	21	33	15	50	67	64	83	131	168	103
Grey Heron	110	66	47	58	25	43	70	49	78	99	110	81
Little Grebe	46	57	49	52	27	15	88	62	71	90	57	74
Great Crested Grebe	4	87	65	59	46	17	165	117	82	94	87	109
Moorhen	25	20	10	12	12	23	21	15	15	25	25	20
Coot	0	2	1	2	2	2	9	11	4	1	2	5
Oystercatcher	1274	1090	756	815	858	517	1939	1294	1452	2334	1274	1659
Golden Plover	0	0	700	1970	220	93	5211	6900	2602	3650	1970	4067
Grey Plover	1	0	0	8	15	8	35	36	19	47	15	30
Lapwing	52	252	1740	1578	284	2	2217	1934	1750	1942	1740	1917
Ringed Plover	36	33	7	0	33	0	29	29	15	40	36	30
Whimbrel	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	67	8	4	3	17
Curlew	1326	988	1134	705	1684	253	1662	1266	1163	1987	1684	1552
Black-tailed Godwit	3048	2662	658	1761	2807	2740	2955	2770	2681	3299	3048	2951
Bar-tailed Godwit	140	190	167	249	74	48	312	351	300	290	249	300
Turnstone	24	48	55	50	109	58	207	177	104	89	109	137

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Species	Monthly counts 2015/16						Annual maxima					
	Sep	Oct	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	5 year mean
Knot	0	11	77	3	42	0	178	230	125	136	77	149
Dunlin	93	281	2934	2332	2229	277	5068	6789	3117	3801	2934	4342
Greenshank	101	89	111	71	72	52	88	82	85	124	111	98
Redshank	1451	1164	1542	1291	1388	692	1354	1739	1436	1906	1542	1595
Snipe	0	0	21	44	39	5	34	55	32	56	44	44
Black-headed Gull	3878	1733	1886	1879	1604	1746	3417	2067	3276	4289	3878	3385
Mediterranean Gull	78	57	97	4	8	39	8	43	44	146	97	68
Common Gull	83	57	177	262	498	295	131	200	444	295	498	314
Lesser Black-backed Gull	76	71	80	90	178	44	72	167	120	142	178	136
Herring Gull	136	82	40	24	31	65	74	70	60	187	136	105
Great Black-backed Gull	151	170	23	33	34	21	150	116	128	246	170	162
Sandwich Tern	56	0	0	0	0	0	104	85	228	378	56	170

Table 3. Monthly totals of scarce species in the Cork Harbour I-WeBS counts, 2015/16

Species	Monthly counts 2015/16						Annual maxima					
	Sep	Oct	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	5 year mean
Barnacle Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Ruddy Shelduck	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	2
American Wigeon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Green-winged Teal	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Eider	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Long-tailed Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Gannet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
White Pelican	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Glossy Ibis	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Sparrowhawk	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	1
Buzzard	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	6	1	2	2	3
Water Rail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	1
Spotted Redshank	0	1	1	1	1	1	7	4	2	3	2	4
Common Sandpiper	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Ring-billed Gull	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Yellow-legged Gull	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1
Common Tern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	26	0	6
Black Guillemot	0	0	2	3	0	3	19	5	15	6	3	10
Guillemot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Razorbill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kingfisher	2	2	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	2	2	2

Table 4. Comparison of monthly counts for selected species between 2011/12-2015/16

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
	2014/15	36	41	-	524	876	1073	-
	2015/16	3	20	-	538	961	971	609
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
	2014/15	18	422	-	1177	1557	1558	-
	2015/16	58	354	-	1130	1266	1135	744
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
	2014/15	215	586	-	889	1180	1221	-
	2015/16	405	432	-	1399	1016	1450	672
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
	2014/15	2334	1276	-	592	736	657	-
	2015/16	1274	1090	-	756	815	858	517
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
	2014/15	20	367	-	1942	1202	1570	-
	2015/16	52	252	-	1740	1578	284	2
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
	2014/15	1987	1307	-	662	797	851	-
	2015/16	1326	988	-	1134	705	1684	253
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
	2014/15	3299	2968	-	1430	666	1600	-
	2015/16	3048	2662	-	658	1761	2807	2740
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
	2014/15	54	117	-	1980	3697	3801	-
	2015/16	93	281	-	2934	2332	2229	277
Greenshank	2011/12	88	78	71	66	55	40	60
	2012/13	61	82	57	-	44	40	-
	2013/14	73	-	85	79	67	43	67
	2014/15	95	124	-	120	88	80	-
	2015/16	101	89	-	111	71	72	52
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
	2014/15	1886	1906	-	1381	1454	1271	-
	2015/16	1451	1164	-	1542	1291	1388	692

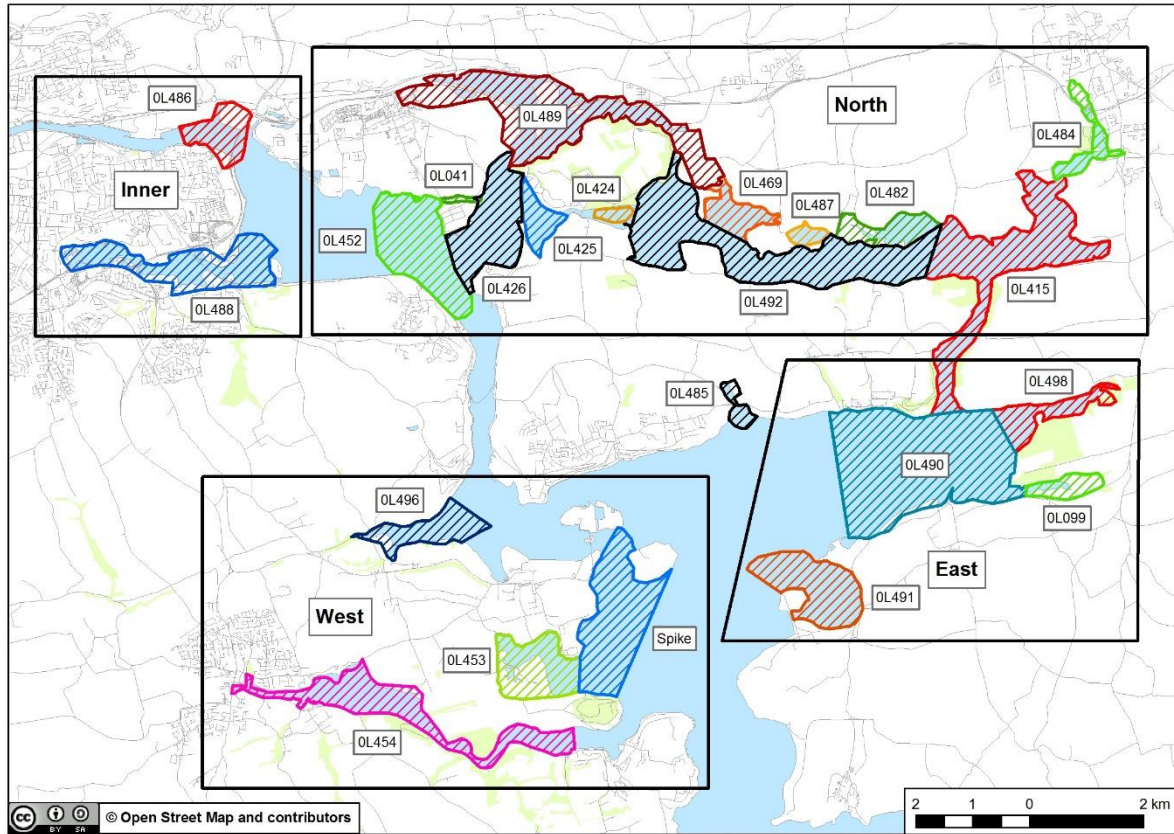


Figure 1. Cork Harbour I-WeBS subsites