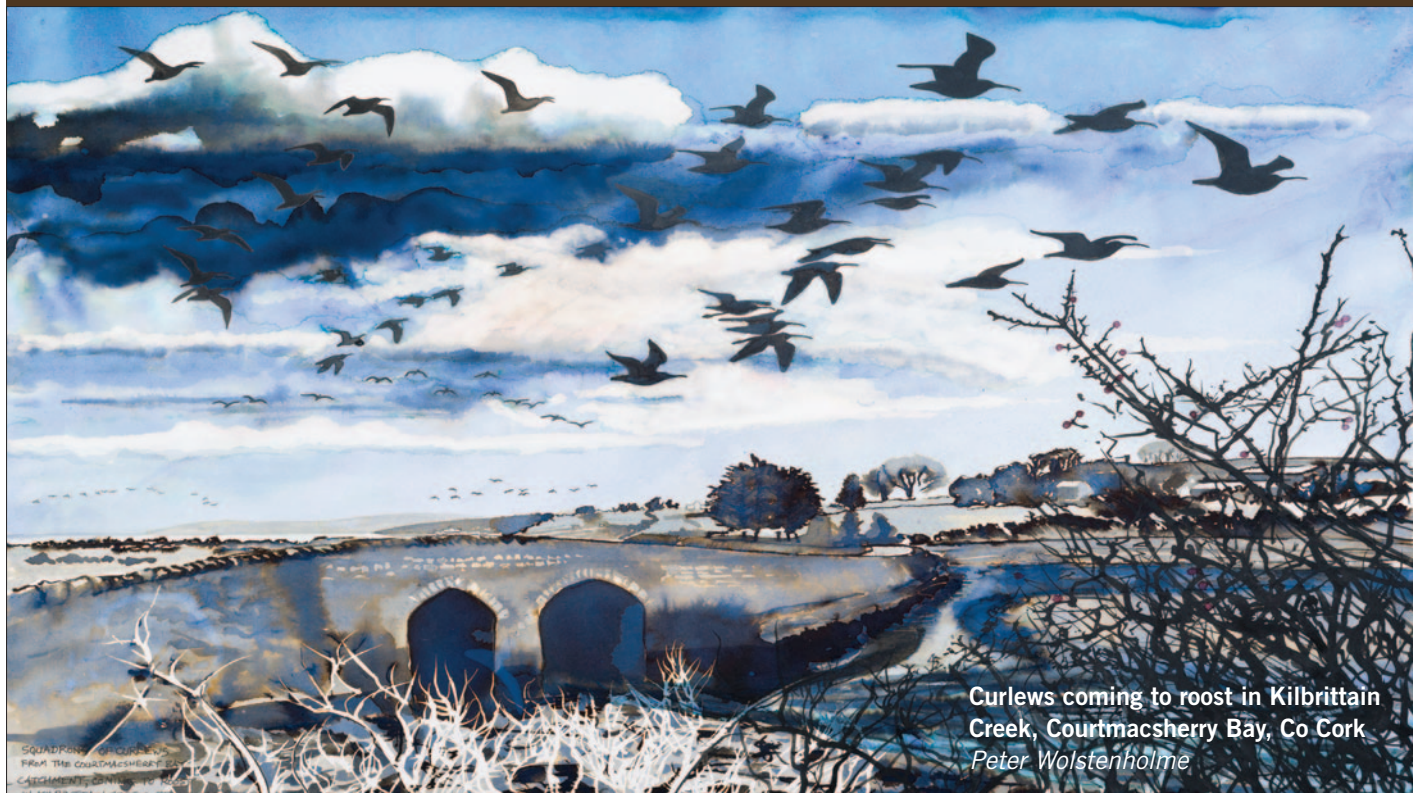




I-WeBS News

The Newsletter of the Irish Wetland Bird Survey

Issue 28 August 2024



Curlews coming to roost in Kilbrittain Creek, Courtmacsherry Bay, Co Cork
Peter Wolstenholme

A new season, a new chapter

As I prepare to pass the torch, I reflect on the remarkable journey I've had over the last seven years as the coordinator of the Irish Wetland Bird Survey. It has been a privilege to be part of this incredible community, and I am filled with gratitude for the experiences and friendships that have enriched my time in this role. The memories of our shared passion for waterbirds and the beauty of Ireland's wetlands will stay with me forever.

From countless surveys to treasured conversations with fellow bird enthusiasts, I've had unforgettable experiences that took me to breathtaking corners of our lush, green island – places I might never have explored otherwise. Along the way, I've had the honour of meeting and learning from some of the most dedicated and knowledgeable people, whose insights and camaraderie have been invaluable.

As we celebrate 30 years of I-WeBS, this edition is a tribute to the enduring spirit of our community. We feature a wonderful article from two surveyors who have counted at Courtmacsherry Bay since day one, capturing the essence of their commitment. Peter's artwork, gracing our cover, is a poignant reminder of the beauty we strive to protect – especially as it portrays the Curlew, now in alarming decline.

In this issue, we also explore new horizons in coastal protection through managed realignment, delve into the winter habits of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and share exciting updates on our data capture methods. As I step back, I invite you to embrace the next chapter with our new coordinator, who will undoubtedly be welcomed with the same warmth I was shown. Thank you for being part of this wonderful journey with me.

Go raibh séasúr na n-éan ag d'eolas agus ag do bhriathra.

(May the season of the birds be in your wisdom and your words.)

Niamh Fitzgerald (Outgoing I-WeBS Coordinator)

Contents

- 2 Managed realignment
- 4 Counting Courtmacsherry Bay
- 6 Species Focus:
Lesser Black-backed Gull
- 7 Survey Coverage:
Let's try to count more of our wetlands
- 7 Changes to I-WeBS data submission
- 8 I-WeBS count dates and information

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Managed realignment

How realigning the coastline has the potential to combat coastal flooding while mitigating the effects of climate change

By Lesley Lewis (I-WeBS Office)



For the past few years a team of **Lesley Lewis**, **John Kennedy** and **Tom Gittings** have been working on an **Office of Public Works (OPW)** funded project – ‘Screening of Special Protection Areas for Managed Realignment’ – focusing mainly on coastal sites identified as flood risk areas by the OPW study ‘Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management’ (CFRAM).

So, what is **managed realignment**, why is it so important for wintering waterbirds, why are you likely to hear more about it in the coming years, and why does it have the potential to provide a nature-based solution to managing coastal flood risk?

■ What is managed realignment?

Much of our coastline, especially in urban areas, is bounded by sea walls which form a hard, immovable defence against rising sea levels and coastal flooding. Managed realignment is the deliberate landward movement of coastal flood defences, which allows the tides to inundate the land (often land that was claimed from the sea), which then converts to intertidal or saltmarsh habitats or both.

It is an example of a nature-based flood relief method used in low-lying areas where the sea is held back by a sea wall or other structure.

■ Are there any existing examples in the Republic of Ireland?

No. There are no existing examples that were created for flood defence. There is an example in outer Tramore Bay which was undertaken to create intertidal habitat, while around 1 ha of intertidal habitat was created by managed realignment as a compensatory measure during the construction of the Youghal bypass (you can read more on this in issue 21 of *I-WeBS News*).

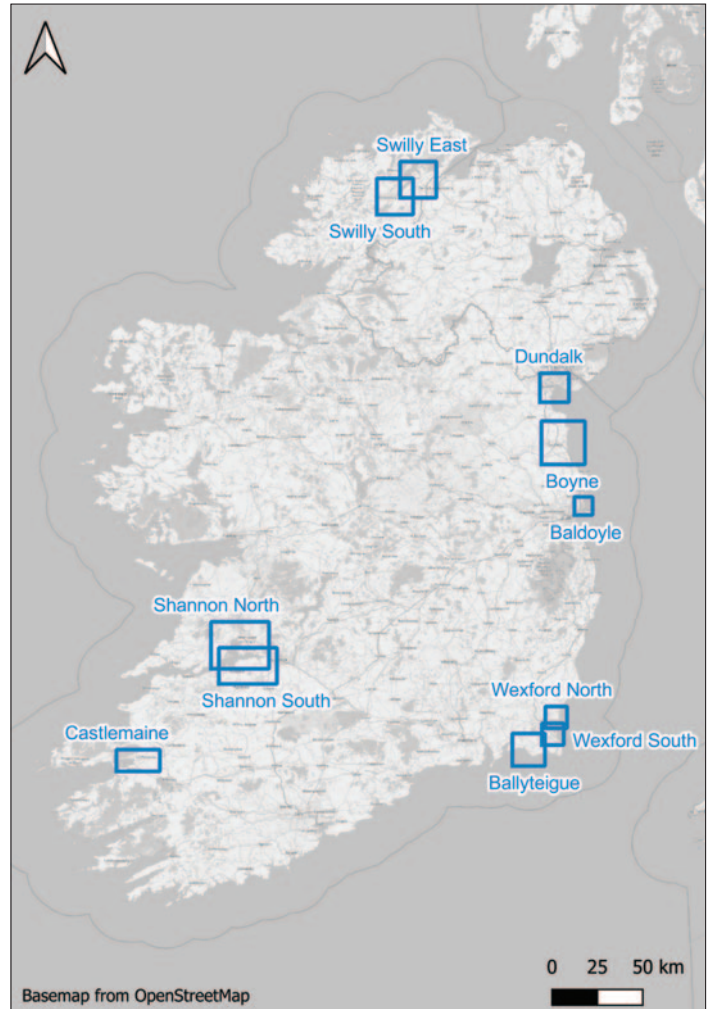
There are also numerous examples of unmanaged realignment, where failure of sea defences due to lack of maintenance has led to the development of intertidal habitat. Such examples can result in the development of habitats of great importance for waterbirds, such as at the Harper’s Island Wetlands Nature Reserve in Cork Harbour.

■ Why is managed realignment so important in combatting coastal flooding?

Ireland’s coastline has been experiencing the effects of climate change in increasingly frequent and worrying events over the past few years. Many coastal communities are at risk of flooding due to severe weather, storm surges, and sea waters over-topping sea walls.

Our seas are rising, and our weather is becoming more unpredictable. Our coastlines need to adapt, but this is difficult with traditional ‘hard’ sea defences. The heavy engineering required to reinforce, heighten and lengthen defences at their present locations is often prohibitively expensive.

Once viewed as a method of ‘last resort’, managed realignment is increasingly used across the world as a method that can provide



Study areas for the OPW ‘Screening of Special Protection Areas for Managed Realignment’ project.

economic gains in terms of reduced costs of maintaining sea walls and flood embankments, preventing flooding, and combatting coastal erosion, with added biodiversity benefits.

■ How coastal flooding events impact waterbirds, now and into the future

Sea-level rise poses a great threat to our coastal and marine ecosystems. Natural coastlines can adjust dynamically to rising sea levels, and habitats can naturally migrate landwards. This is prevented in places where there are hard sea walls, however, and the natural intertidal habitat becomes squeezed between the rising water levels and the sea walls (‘coastal squeeze’).

For birds such as waders, this means loss of valuable habitat. For other species, this may lead to lost breeding habitat – for example, for terns – or roosting habitat.

If Ireland continues to manage coastal flooding by building more and higher sea walls, then eventually, our intertidal habitats will be much reduced and some, such as salt marshes, will be lost through erosion. This has obvious implications for Special Protection Areas and their waterbirds, as well as the biodiversity of coastal habitats in general.



Construction works at the Medmerry Managed Realignment Scheme, 2012 *RSPB-images.com*

Case study: Medmerry, West Sussex

Medmerry, West Sussex is located on the south coast of England. Coastal flooding had long been a problem there and was posing a serious risk to the towns of Selsey and Pagham. The existing sea defence was a three km-long shingle bank, which was breaching regularly and becoming costly and unsustainable to maintain.

In 2011, the UK **Environment Agency** built a new 7-km flood embankment on higher ground and breached the existing defence. Taking just over two years to complete, the project was completed in November 2013. This impressive scheme created 183 ha of intertidal habitat and a landscape-scale nature reserve in collaboration with the RSPB and the local community. It also

provided flood protection to 348 properties in Selsey as well as protecting key infrastructure such as roads and wastewater treatment plants.

Overall, the Medmerry site is said to be delivering 500 ha of functional intertidal, freshwater and terrestrial habitats, and has been designed to be resilient to sea-level rise for at least 100 years.

There are economic benefits, too. The direct economic benefits are estimated to be £90 million,* while the project has generated eco-tourism estimated at 30,000 visitors a year.

➔ To read more on this case, please see bit.ly/medmerry-case

*www.nationaltrust.org.uk/our-cause/nature-climate/climate-change-sustainability/case-study-medmerry-nature-reserve or bit.ly/national-trust-medmerry

■ Why will managed realignment be so important for wintering (and breeding) waterbirds?

Managed realignment will be vital to compensate for habitat loss through coastal squeeze. Managed realignment projects can, for example, create both intertidal mudflat and saltmarsh habitat, both essential for our wintering waterbirds.

Indeed, such ecological restoration will likely be necessary in the future to maintain the diversity and distribution of species identified as qualifying interests for Natura 2000 sites and to provide resilience to cope with the effects of climate change.

Saltmarshes and mudflats also store carbon, so maintenance or restoration, and not loss, is crucially important in light of climate change.

■ What did our project involve?

The project 'Screening of Special Protection Areas for Managed Realignment' was aimed at identifying potential managed realignment sites in areas of Dundalk Bay, the Boyne Estuary, Baldoyle Bay, Wexford Harbour, Ballyteigue, Castlemaine Harbour, the Shannon Estuary and Lough Swilly, each identified in the OPW CFRAM study as a coastal Area for Further Assessment (AFA).

This lengthy and complex assessment included site evaluations, multi-criteria scoring, GIS analyses and mapping to result in a suite of areas that are not only vulnerable to coastal flooding but are also worthy of further investigation as future managed realignment sites, providing potential solutions to flood risk and environmental co-benefits.

■ Is the research project published or available?

For now, this research is for internal use by the OPW only. Identifying potential managed realignment sites has obvious

implications when suitable land may be privately owned. But hopefully, this research provides a catalyst and will aid the OPW in commencing such projects around the country.

■ Will managed realignment have a place in coastal flood defence in Ireland in the future?

The impacts of coastal climate change will affect many sectors of our economy, including households, transport, agriculture, our environment, tourism and our cultural assets.

During October 2023, the government published the report of the **Inter-Departmental Group on National Coastal Change Management Strategy**.** This report sets out the challenges, approaches and strategic pillars/recommendations for national coastal change management. One approach being considered is managed realignment as a long-term sustainable solution to flood risk.

■ Does managed realignment have any challenges?

Probably the biggest challenge to managed realignment is that it requires the giving of land to the sea, often land that was claimed from the sea centuries ago. The land may have local, cultural or agricultural value. Buildings and other infrastructure may need to be rebuilt elsewhere.

This form of flood defence sometimes gets some bad press, but it is important to remember that the buildings or land 'given over' to managed realignment projects are at risk from flooding anyway.

Acknowledgments

We thank the Office of Public Works for funding the study and for their input throughout.

** www.gov.ie/en/publication/9a967-report-of-the-inter-departmental-group-on-national-coastal-change-management-strategy or bit.ly/coastal-change



Courtmacsherry Bay on a cold winter's morning Peter Wolstenholme

Thirty years of counting for I-WeBS

Looking back over thirty years of counting Courtmacsherry Bay, Co Cork

Peter & Fran Wolstenholme (I-WeBS counters)



Peter and Fran Wolstenholme

Birdwatching was seen as a rather nerdy pastime in 1973 when my wife Fran and I moved to the picturesque village of Courtmacsherry in west Cork – ‘a drinking village with a fishing problem,’ as the local car stickers announced.

My boyhood interest in birds had lain dormant through the years of living in the steel city of Sheffield and the cotton town of Rochdale. But this estuary was alive with birds new and mysterious to me.

Living by the estuary of the Argideen River, I could enjoy the birdlife on every journey I made to the next village. There were thousands of birds circling overhead: Golden Plovers, Lapwings and Dunlin. On the water were the stunning Great Northern Divers, which became my main interest for years.

One day, I noticed an advert for an outing to observe estuary birds, led by **Clive Hutchinson**. His whirlwind tour of Clonakilty Bay introduced many new species to me, and my interest was re-awakened. **Tom Kelly** was another inspiring birder to learn from. I remember counting eleven thousand gulls with Tom one day when it was a ‘sprat year’ and Courtmacsherry Bay was crammed with sprats. We had whitebait suppers in the local bar, and the sprats created a wonderful wildlife spectacle, with seabirds and seals gorging on the fish twenty-four hours a day. Over the years, the sprats became fished out and the spectacle hasn’t been seen for years.

Clive and Tom became good friends and they helped me set up the **West Cork Branch** of BirdWatch Ireland with **Michael Sullivan** and the late **Mike Fox**. By that time I could identify all of the estuary’s birds, such as Black-tailed Godwits, Knots and Dunlin, *etc*, and as chairman of the branch I led many outings around south-west Cork.

I was delighted when I-WeBS was started in 1994, and I

volunteered to be the counter for Courtmacsherry Bay, with my wife volunteering to record numbers and send in the data. I only missed one count in thirty years, and I made sure that, with the help of friends, the data were collected.

Over the years, the estuary has had its fair share of rarities. Five Black Terns, a Gull-billed Tern, Ruddy Duck, Slavonian and Black-necked Grebes, Ruddy Shelduck, 11 Spoonbills, 29 Glossy Ibises, American Wigeon and Green-winged Teal, six Dark-bellied Brent Geese and regular Ospreys; the latter come every autumn to feed on mullet and salmon in the Argideen River. I’m sure there were plenty more rarities I can’t recall.

Until 2012, a large flock of Golden Plovers roosted in the estuary, usually 5,000-strong. But one day, I noticed a young man with a gun standing out in the middle of the bay, firing straight up in the air. I stopped and asked him what he was doing. He replied that if he fired up into the flock of plovers circling high overhead, they would come



Flaxfort Marsh, Courtmacsherry Bay Peter Wolstenholme

down low and allow him a good shot. Happily, this didn't work, but after that year the flock never returned. Of course, this disappearance could have coincided with a major change in agriculture.

Little Egrets were just becoming established in the early nineties, and a highlight was visiting their nesting site in the local woods and finding their blue eggshells below the Grey Heron colony. Looking up, I could see their young: extraordinary, other-worldly birds with their white punk haircuts – something completely new to me. Egrets are now established in nationally important numbers on the estuary. They are joined most years by Cattle Egrets, but I haven't yet managed to find a nesting site of theirs yet.

As the years passed, Sea Lettuce (*Ulva intestinalis*), a floating seaweed that grows quickly when there are high levels of nitrate and phosphate in the water, covered a larger area each year. It eventually seemed to carpet the entire estuary with a fresh, green blanket and became a nuisance for bathers and boat owners.

It's hard to say if this affected foraging birds, as it grew in the summer when many birds were not present. Autumn and winter storms cleared it away.

Unfortunately, the **Environmental Protection Agency** says Courtmacsherry is one of the most polluted estuaries in the country, but a new sewage scheme and a biodigester are now contributing to cleaner water.



Black-tailed Godwits Peter Wolstenholme

Overall, the decline of birds over thirty years has been devastating. Sometimes I feel local extinction is inevitable, as some species have almost disappeared here, such as Pintail, Shoveler, Knot and Grey Plover. Some insight into the declines is apparent from the figures in the table (right). In 1994/95, the average number of birds counted on each outing was 15,000. In 2023, it was 3,500.

Numbers of gulls have increased significantly over the last few years. Hundreds of Lesser Black-backs are now a major part of the estuary's birdlife, feeding on nearby fields and roosting on the mudflats. In fact, it is now one of the top sites for these once-rare wintering gulls (you can read more on Lesser Black-backs on page 6).



Mute Swans in the fog Peter Wolstenholme



Spoonbills arrive at Timoleague Peter Wolstenholme

Black-headed, Common, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls have all increased in number. Recently, it seems that almost all the birds on a count around the bay are gulls!

So, after thirty years, Fran and I are retiring from I-WeBS. **Claire Deasy O'Leary**, our local enthusiastic and knowledgeable NPWS Ranger, has taken over the count this season, and we both wish her all the best. I wonder what Claire would write in another 30 years?!

But it's not all doom and gloom. Nowadays, the general public is more aware of environmental matters and global warming. BirdWatch Ireland outings are more popular, and plenty of illustrated signs are common on beaches, walkways and even in town centres. Every year, as I walk along my local beach, I am greeted by an excited shout, "Hi Peter, the geese have arrived!" It's no longer nerdy to be a birdwatcher!

Species	Five-year average, winters 1994/95-1998/99	Five-year average, winters 2018/19-2022/23	% Change
Shelduck	202	86	-57%
Wigeon	910	772	-15%
Red-breasted Merganser	46	11	-76%
Great Northern Diver	23	33	+43%
Little Egret	3	26	+767%
Grey Heron	15	16	+7%
Oystercatcher	590	393	-33%
Golden Plover	4,478	45	-99%
Grey Plover	70	4	-94%
Lapwing	2,603	468	-82%
Knot	45	9	-80%
Dunlin	1,245	509	-59%
Black-tailed Godwit	481	535	+11%
Bar-tailed Godwit	167	59	-65%
Curlew	1,202	249	-79%
Redshank	226	128	-43%
Greenshank	25	14	-44%

Five-year averages and percentage change for selected species at Courtmacsherry Bay.

More and more Lessers

Wintering numbers have been on the increase since the 1970s

By Brian Burke (I-WeBS Office)



Lesser Black-backed Gull Jan Rod



Lesser Black-backed Gulls are migrants, departing their Irish breeding colonies between August and November and heading south along the western seaboard of Europe, often flying directly over the

Bay of Biscay before making landfall in northern Spain. From there, they move south along the coast of Portugal, where some spend the winter in fishing ports, salt pans and beaches in the Algarve or along the Mediterranean coast as far east as Malaga.

Others continue on to Morocco, roosting on the coast and either feeding in offshore waters or suburban landfills, whilst a few adventurers continue on to Western Sahara, Mauritania, Senegal and, in the case of a handful of Irish-ringed individuals, The Gambia, over 4,500 km from the natal or nesting site they started from.

Up until the middle of the last century, Lesser Black-backed Gulls were considered 'complete migrants,' with all birds leaving Ireland after the summer and only starting to reappear in February. In the 1950s and 1960s they were considered very scarce in winter, with a few regular individuals in Dublin and the north-east in most years, with otherwise a small scattering of single individuals elsewhere.

There was a noticeable change around the mid-1970s, with regular winter sightings in Cork, Wexford, Kerry and Wicklow, still in relatively low numbers but becoming more widespread, with occasional peak counts of >10 birds from sites such as Ballycotton (Cork).

By the early 1980s, site totals of ten or more were much more commonplace, with numbers in excess of 100 occasionally: for example, 160 at Lough Neagh in 1979/80.

Thereafter, the increase in wintering Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Ireland has

been described as 'dramatic,' with hundreds seen at major wetlands on the east and south coasts, including 840 at Ballycotton in 1983.

By 1986, the wintering population there was estimated at 5,000-10,000 individuals.

The **2007-11 Bird Atlas** reported a 55% expansion in their wintering range in Ireland since the early 1980s.

Nowadays, I-WeBS data show that the largest winter concentrations are in Cork, with sites such as Ballycotton, Ballymacoda, Courtmacsherry and Inishcarra supporting >1,000 individuals in recent years. Notably, a quarry in County Carlow also regularly

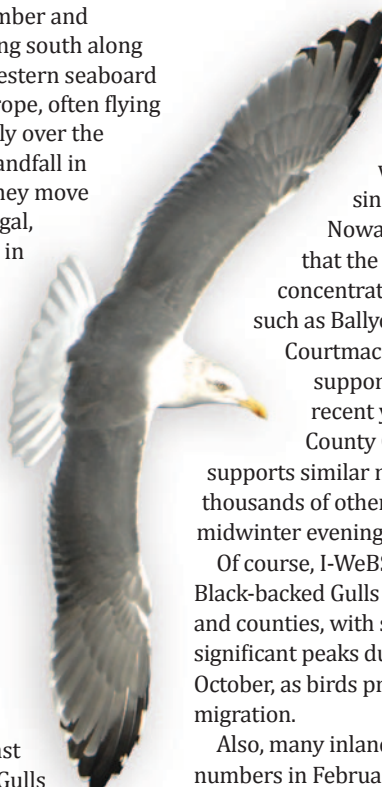
supports similar numbers, along with thousands of other roosting gulls, on midwinter evenings.

Of course, I-WeBS has found Lesser Black-backed Gulls in a range of other sites and counties, with some coastal sites showing significant peaks during September and October, as birds prepare for autumn migration.

Also, many inland sites record reduced numbers in February, when the gulls are making their way back to breeding grounds.

There are a number of **colour-ringing projects** in Ireland that are focused on Lesser Black-backed Gulls. One of the many questions we hope to answer is what proportion of the Irish-breeding population remains here all year round. So far, it seems that very few of them do.

Over 1,500 chicks have been ringed on Lough Ree since 2018, nearly 400 of which



Lesser Black-backed Gull in winter plumage Harry Hussey

Factfile

Name

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Irish name

Droimneach Beag

BoCCI status

Amber-listed for both breeding and wintering populations

Wintering population

Peak counts of circa 2,000-6,000 in recent winters from I-WeBS are thought to be an underestimate of true numbers

Breeding population

9,968 pairs

Subspecies

There are five subspecies, three of which are found in Ireland:

- ***Larus fuscus graellsii*** – westernmost subspecies. Breeds in Ireland, Britain, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland. Has a dark blue/grey mantle – it is the palest of the subspecies (see photos on this page).
- ***Larus fuscus fuscus*** – northernmost subspecies. Breeds in northern Norway, Sweden and Finland. Has a darker mantle (sooty-black).
- ***Larus fuscus intermedius*** – breeds in the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, southwest Sweden and western Norway. It is the darkest of the subspecies, with a jet-black mantle.

have been seen since, but only three of which appear to have wintered in Ireland.

Similar projects based in Dublin and in Roaringwater Bay, Co Cork, have had one and no birds wintering in Ireland, respectively.

Evidence suggests that Lessers migrate further when they are young and can switch to wintering closer to their colony when they reach breeding age. So, as the colour-ringed individuals mature, we may find that our wintering population contains more Irish breeders than we think.

➡ You can help us better understand our wintering Lesser Black-backed Gulls and other gulls by including them in your counts throughout the winter. Please keep an eye out for colour rings at the same time.

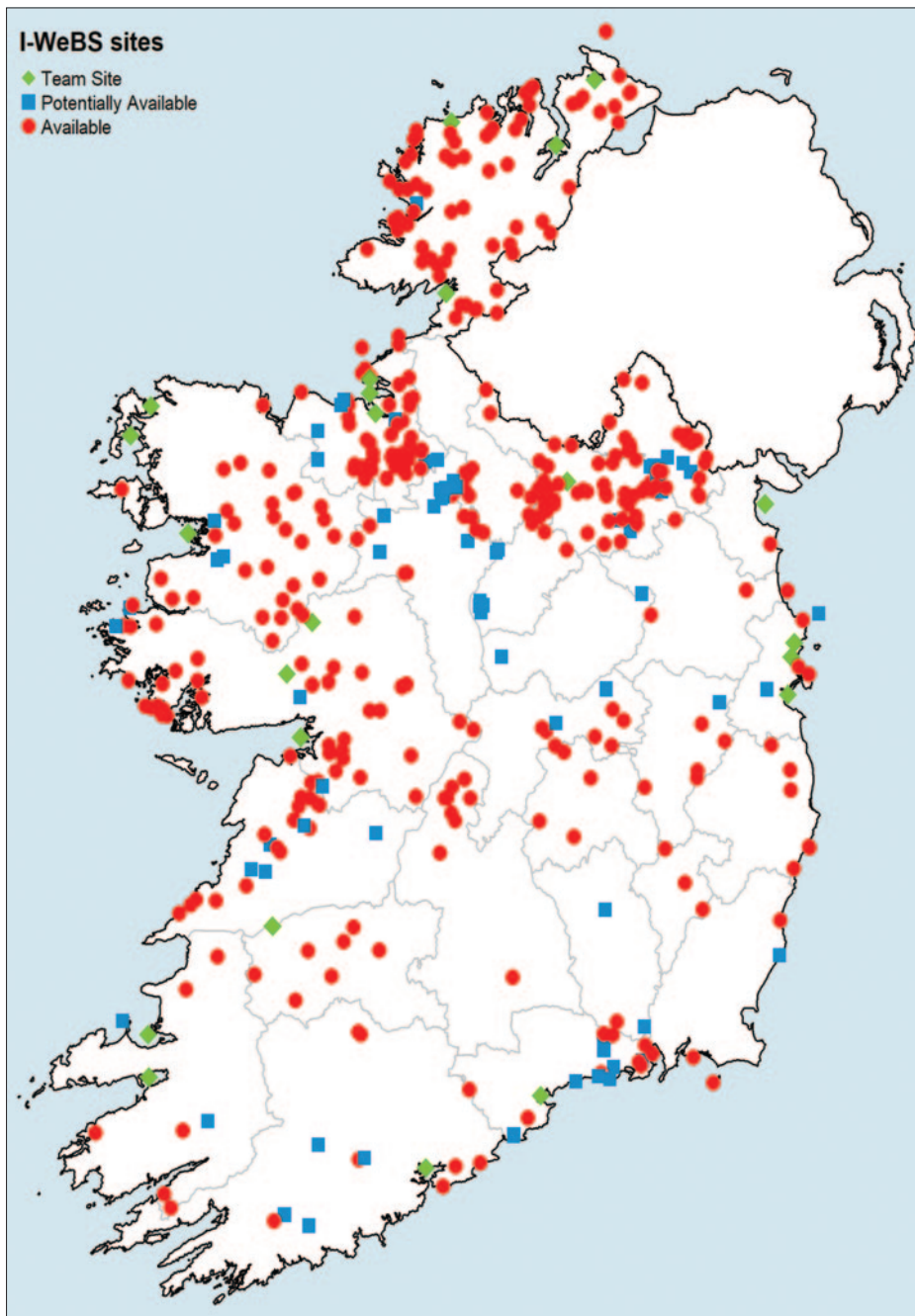
Expanding our survey coverage

I-WeBS has issued a call to action, seeking more counters

By John Kennedy (I-WeBS Office)



As part of our continuous efforts to improve the quality and scope of I-WeBS data, we are focusing on areas that need coverage. The map below offers a visual representation of these locations, highlighting where assistance is required. If you know of anyone who could take on some of these sites, or would join a group counting any of these sites, please share the map with them or contact us at iwebs@birdwatchireland.ie. Together we can ensure that every site gets the attention it needs for effective monitoring and conservation. To examine the map in greater detail, please go to bit.ly/sites-available.



Runners on Bull Island John Coveney

‘Ch...ch...ch...changes’

When entering your survey results, you may notice that two new questions have been added. We have been listening to your feedback and recognise that you’d like to document sources of disturbance at your site.

■ In response, we’ve added a new user-friendly **‘Activities’** question to the I-WeBS data submission. This will allow you to record any activities occurring at your site and how they are affecting the birds. This question will also replace the **Pressures & Threats** questionnaire, so you’ll no longer need to fill that in.

■ Additionally, to support our non-tidal sites, we’ve introduced a **‘Freshwater Level’** question, enabling you to note the water level at your site – no water, low, normal, high, or N/A.

Please note that the paper forms had already been printed before these updates were made. Therefore, we’ve included an additional insert with each form as a temporary measure for this season.

I-WeBS sites in need of coverage. Coverage is primarily based on the data received for each site. ◆ Green diamonds are sites that are currently surveyed by a coordinated team, with new team members always welcome. ■ Blue squares are sites with potential availability. While some subsites may have counters assigned, no data has been received from any of these subsites within the last five years. ● Red dots represent sites with no recent data and with at least one subsite with no counter assigned.

Note: We strive to create images that are accessible to all, including those with colour vision deficiencies. If you encounter any difficulties interpreting maps or other visuals, please contact us at iwebs@birdwatchireland.ie. Your feedback will help us improve our standards for the future.

I-WeBS Scheduled Count Dates 2024/25

East Coast & Inland Counties			South & West Coast Counties		
	Weekend	High Tide (Sunday) Dublin ¹		Weekend	High Tide (Sunday) Cork ²
Sep	07 th -08 th	14:25		14 th -15 th	14:57
Oct	05 th -06 th	12:45		12 th -13 th	13:27
Nov	02 nd -03 rd	12:20		09 th -10 th	11:37
Dec	07 th -08 th	16:45		14 th -15 th	17:02
Jan	04 th -05 th	15:20		11 th -12 th *	16:02
Feb	01 st -02 nd	14:10		08 th -09 th	14:57
Mar	01 st -02 nd	13:05		08 th -09 th	13:32

¹ Based on high-tide time predicted for Dublin Port
² Based on high-tide time predicted for Cork Harbour

International Waterbird Census

*11-12th January 2025

Icelandic Greylag Goose Census

Late November

International Swan Census schedule change

The next International Swan Census will take place in January 2026, rather than in 2025. This change, decided by the Goose and Swan Monitoring Platform, aims to better align the census schedule with other international assessments.



Here are the recommended dates for the 2024/2025 I-WeBS count season.

These dates are chosen based on tidal conditions around Ireland's coastline, to allow coastal sites to be counted on a rising or high tide and to help maximise synchronisation of counts across the country, be they inland or coastal.

As always, we try to select dates that suit as many tidal states as possible, so that co-ordination of counts can be achieved.

If any dates are unsuitable, for whatever reason, please select the next most appropriate date and try to co-ordinate with any nearby sites, where relevant. Please refer to your *Counter Manual* for how best to cover your site.

Bar-tailed Godwit
Richard T Mills

Share the Shore

Galway City Council set to launch campaign to help protect vulnerable coastal birds



Many dogs are happiest running along the shore, which in turn makes their owners happy. But a large proportion of disturbance events affecting our wintering waterbirds involve dogs, and particularly those off the lead. Birds see dogs as predators, leading to constant stresses that significantly reduce waterbirds' chances of survival. Alas, dogs are simply following their natural instincts, so they need help to do the right thing.

To address this, Galway City Council is launching the 'Share the Shore' campaign, aiming to reduce instances of disturbance on the beaches of Galway Bay. They are recruiting **Dog Rangers** whose good behaviour will set a good example and help spread the message about waterbird conservation and how to share the shore responsibly.

If you know a dog that could join the team, then please contact parks.department@galwaycity.ie and keep up to date with the campaign on the Galway City Council social media channels.

You can learn more at bit.ly/disturb-matters about the issue of disturbance and the four simple asks for Share the Shore Dog Rangers.

Data deadline

We are thrilled with the efficiency with which we received both paper forms and online entries after the 2023/24 season ended. The deadline will remain the same each year, so please ensure all survey results are submitted **by the end of May**. If you haven't received your personalised link (which has your name, email and counter code pre-filled) for *I-WeBS online*, please contact the I-WeBS Office.

Post-breeding terns

It is crucial for us to monitor the numbers and locations of roosting tern flocks between the breeding season and their winter migration. We need your help to keep track of our post-breeding terns. Please report any sightings of tern flocks to iwebs@birdwatchireland.ie or via bit.ly/3Afb6qh. Your assistance is invaluable in helping us understand and protect these birds during this critical period.

The I-WeBS Office

Lesley Lewis, Niamh Fitzgerald, Brian Burke and John Kennedy

For queries about site coverage, counter co-ordination and for general I-WeBS queries, please contact Niamh and Brian at iwebs@birdwatchireland.ie. You can also visit our website, bit.ly/IWeBS, for other resources. For queries about I-WeBS data, please contact Lesley at ljlewis@birdwatchireland.ie

The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) is the monitoring scheme for non-breeding waterbirds in the Republic of Ireland, which aims to be the primary tool for monitoring their populations and the wetland habitats on which they depend. The data generated are used to assess the sizes of non-breeding waterbird populations, identify trends in their numbers and distribution, and assess the importance of individual sites for them. I-WeBS is funded by the **National Parks and Wildlife Service** of the **Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage** and is co-ordinated by BirdWatch Ireland.



BirdWatchIreland



An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúla
National Parks and Wildlife Service



An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage