

Wallasea Wetland bird monitoring: October – December counts

This inter-tidal wetland, created on Wallasea Island by DEFRA, is designed to compensate for bird habitat losses elsewhere in SE England. The site is being surveyed for winter bird usage to monitor the success of the scheme. Six counts will be carried out this winter by *CJT Ecology* on behalf of DEFRA. The following table summarises the results for key species from the first three counts, with each count made up of six sub counts (one/hour):

	12th October		5 th November		9 th December	
	Mean of 6 counts	Peak count	Mean of 6 counts	Peak count	Mean of 6 counts	Peak Count
Cormorant	2.50	9	4.17	9	8.33	14
Little egret	32.00	45	7.83	10	9.50	18
Brent goose	3.00	10	0.17	1	0.00	0
Shelduck	2.17	5	72.17	67	34.50	82
Wigeon	1.00	3	1.33	3	0.33	2
Teal	1.83	7	9.00	21	329.83	762
Mallard	5.50	11	83.67	110	67.17	133
Ringed plover	246.83	733	147.00	303	114.67	167
Golden plover	176.83	1352	47.50	150	238.67	828
Grey plover	5.00	11	6.00	26	17.33	22
Lapwing	1127.33	1530	257.67	362	692.33	1530
Knot	1.33	5	0.00	0	0.67	2
Little stint	3.83	6	1.50	3	1.67	3
Dunlin	66.17	159	189.50	424	165.17	514
Ruff	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.17	1
Black-tailed godwit	0.00	0	2.83	7	1.83	4
Curlew	4.00	9	7.50	12	19.17	43
Redshank	68.83	92	42.17	77	38.00	64
Greenshank	1.83	3	0.00	0	0.00	0
Turnstone	0.00	0	0.33	1	0.00	0
Kingfisher	0.33	2	0.00	0	0.00	0
Skylark	5.00	23	11.33	49	7.00	17
Meadow pipit	3.83	8	5.67	17	3.83	8
Rock pipit	0.17	1	0.00	0	0.00	0
Starling	52.50	133	27.17	86	0.17	1
Linnet	30.33	85	0.50	2	0.50	3
	2796	4356	954	1876	1799	4311

The numbers of wildfowl using the site have increased steadily to a peak of 979 in December, including 82 shelduck and 762 teal. The most obvious highlight among the waders was the passage peak of 733 ringed plover in October, an internationally important count, representing 1% of the E Atlantic flyway population. Also of note are the two counts of over 1,500 lapwing and the December peak of 514 dunlin. The large numbers of little egret using the site reflect the remarkable recent increase in this bird in South East England.

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