

# Qualifying Thresholds for Winter and Passage Birds

*Compiled by the  
Records and Research Committee  
Bedfordshire Bird Club*

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## Appendix 8A: Qualifying Thresholds for Winter and Passage Birds.

This document has been compiled by the Records and Research Committee of the Bedfordshire Bird Club. All three authors serve in an honorary capacity under the following titles:

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### Use of the Criteria.

Most bird species have specialised requirements that can only be met in certain locations and regularly used sites are probably familiar in terms of habitat, food resources, disturbance and predator risk. The size of a site and the number of habitats (quality) it has will influence the number of species it is able to support and it is reasonable to presume that large-scale habitat mosaics will support the most species (Fuller, 2012). The more species a site supports, the more important it is. For the purposes of this document, the winter and passage periods are considered to be:

- Winter; November-February, inclusive.
- Spring passage; March-May, inclusive.
- Autumn passage; July-October, inclusive.

Species are included in the site score if they have been recorded as regularly using a site in at least two of the five years under review, provided information is available to support that statement.

### Selection Criteria; qualifying thresholds for County Wildlife Site (CWS) status.

Sites meeting one or more of the qualifying thresholds set out in Tables 2-7 should be identified as CWS.

- Table 1. List of winter and passage species.
- Table 2. Qualifying thresholds for sites that are important for winter wetland birds, other than waders.
- Table 3. Qualifying threshold for sites that are important for winter waders.
- Table 4. Qualifying thresholds for sites that are important for passage wetland species.
- Table 5. Qualifying thresholds for sites that are important for migrant Ring Ouzels.
- Table 6. Qualifying thresholds for sites that are important for winter woodland species.
- Table 7. Qualifying thresholds for sites that are important for passage passerines.

### References

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Table 1. List of winter and passage species.

<b>Species</b>	<b>National list</b>	<b>Winter, passage or both</b>
Mute Swan	Amber	Winter
Bewick's Swan	Amber	Winter
Whooper Swan	Amber	Winter
Barnacle Goose	Amber	Winter
Egyptian Goose	Not listed	Winter
Common Shelduck	Amber	Winter and passage
Mandarin Duck	Not listed	Winter
Eurasian Wigeon	Amber	Winter
Gadwall	Amber	Winter
Eurasian Teal	Amber	Winter
Mallard	Amber	Winter
Pintail	Amber	Winter
Garganey	Amber	Passage
Shoveler	Amber	Winter and passage
Red-crested Pochard	Not listed	Winter
Common Pochard	Red	Winter
Tufted Duck	Green	Winter
Greater Scaup	Red	Winter
Common Scoter	Red	Winter
Common Goldeneye	Amber	Winter
Smew	Amber	Winter
Goosander	Green	Winter
Grey Partridge	Red	Winter
Great Northern Diver	Amber	Winter
Great Cormorant	Green	Winter
Eurasian Bittern	Amber	Winter
Little Egret	Green	Winter
Grey Heron	Green	Winter
Little Grebe	Green	Winter
Great Crested Grebe	Green	Winter
Slavonian Grebe	Red	Winter and passage
Black-necked Grebe	Amber	Winter and passage
Red-necked Grebe	Red	Winter
Water Rail	Green	Winter
Common Coot	Green	Winter
Avocet	Amber	Passage
Oystercatcher	Amber	Passage
European Golden Plover	Green	Winter and passage
Grey Plover	Amber	Passage
Northern Lapwing	Red	Winter and passage
Little Ringed Plover	Green	Passage
Ringed Plover	Red	Passage
Whimbrel	Red	Passage
Eurasian Curlew	Red	Passage

Black-tailed Godwit	Red	Passage
Bar-tailed Godwit	Amber	Passage
Turnstone	Amber	Passage
Red Knot	Amber	Passage
Ruff	Red	Passage
Sanderling	Amber	Passage
Dunlin	Amber	Winter and passage
Common Sandpiper	Amber	Winter and passage
Green Sandpiper	Amber	Winter and passage
Spotted Redshank	Amber	Passage
Greenshank	Amber	Passage
Wood Sandpiper	Amber	Passage
Common Redshank	Amber	Winter and passage
Jack Snipe	Green	Winter
Woodcock	Red	Winter
Common Snipe	Amber	Winter and passage
Little Tern	Amber	Passage
Black Tern	Green	Passage
Sandwich Tern	Amber	Passage
Common Tern	Amber	Passage
Arctic Tern	Amber	Passage
Black-headed Gull	Amber	Winter and passage
Little Gull	Green	Passage
Mediterranean Gull	Amber	Winter
Common Gull	Amber	Winter and passage
Caspian Gull	Amber	Winter and passage
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Amber	Passage
Glaucous Gull	Amber	Winter
Iceland Gull	Amber	Winter
Yellow-legged Gull	Amber	Passage
Herring Gull	Red	Winter and passage
Great Black-backed Gull	Amber	Winter and passage
Turtle Dove	Red	Passage
Common Cuckoo	Red	Passage
European Nightjar	Amber	Passage
Common Kingfisher	Amber	Winter
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Red	Winter
Common Raven	Green	Winter
Firecrest	Green	Winter
Marsh Tit	Red	Winter
Bearded Tit	Green	Winter and Passage
Woodlark	Green	Passage
Skylark	Red	Winter
Wood Warbler	Red	Passage
Common Starling	Red	Winter
Ring Ouzel	Red	Passage
Fieldfare	Red	Winter
Song Thrush	Red	Winter
Redwing	Red	Winter

Mistle Thrush	Red	Winter
Spotted Flycatcher	Red	Passage
Common Redstart	Amber	Passage
Whinchat	Red	Passage
European Stonechat	Green	Passage
Northern Wheatear	Green	Passage
Dunnock	Amber	Winter
House Sparrow	Red	Winter
Tree Sparrow	Red	Winter
Yellow Wagtail	Red	Passage
Tree Pipit	Red	Passage
Water Pipit	Amber	Winter and Passage
Rock Pipit	Green	Passage
Hawfinch	Red	Winter
Bullfinch	Amber	Winter
Linnet	Red	Winter
Lesser Redpoll	Red	Winter
Yellowhammer	Red	Winter
Reed Bunting	Amber	Winter
Corn Bunting	Red	Winter

Note: species not listed are assumed to be non-native, possibly resulting from captive origin (introduced), that have established resident populations. All three species are included in the winter wildfowl species group in Table 2.

Table 2. Qualifying threshold for sites that are important for winter wetland birds other than waders.

<b>Winter species groups</b>	<b>Potential maximum</b>
Wildfowl	21
Great Northern Diver	1
Eurasian Bittern, Little Egret, Grey Heron	3
Great Cormorant	1
Grebes	5
Water Rail	1
Common Coot	1
Gulls	8
Common Kingfisher	1
Bearded Tit	1
Common Starling (roosts)	1
Pipits; Rock and Water	2
Reed Bunting	1
	<b>Total: 47</b>
<b>Qualifying threshold</b>	<b>Number of species</b>
47%	22 or more

Table 3. Qualifying thresholds for sites that are important for winter waders.

<b>Wet Grassland; Swamp, Marsh</b>	<b>Standing water with shallow margins, minerals sites</b>
Golden Plover	Golden Plover
Northern Lapwing	Northern Lapwing
Common Redshank	Dunlin
Common Snipe	Common Redshank
Jack Snipe	Common Sandpiper
<b>Number of species: 5</b>	Green Sandpiper
	Common Snipe
	Jack Snipe
	<b>Number of species: 8</b>
<b>Qualifying threshold; no. species</b>	<b>Qualifying threshold; no. species</b>
2 or more (40%)	4 or more (50%)

Table 4. Qualifying threshold for sites that are important for passage wetland species.

<b>Species groups</b>	<b>Potential maximum</b>
Wildfowl	3
Grebes	2
Waders	23
Terns	5
Gulls	8
Bearded Tit	1
Yellow Wagtail	1
Pipits; Rock and Water	2
	<b>Total: 45</b>
<b>Qualifying threshold</b>	<b>Number of species</b>
40%	18 or more

Table 5. Qualifying threshold for sites that are important for migrant Ring Ouzels.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Qualifying Threshold; number of birds per site</b>
Ring Ouzel	3 or more individuals

Table 6. Qualifying threshold for sites that are important for winter woodland species.

<b>Species groups</b>	<b>Potential maximum</b>
Woodcock	1
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1
Common Raven	1
Firecrest	1
Marsh Tit	1
Thrushes	4
Dunnock	1
Hawfinch	1
Bullfinch	1
Lesser Redpoll	1
	<b>Total: 13</b>
<b>Qualifying threshold</b>	<b>Number of species</b>
77%	10 or more

Table 7. Qualifying threshold for sites that are important for passage passerines.

<b>Species</b>	
Turtle Dove	
Common Cuckoo	
European Nightjar	
Woodlark	
Wood Warbler	
Spotted Flycatcher	
Common Redstart	
Whinchat	
European Stonechat	
Northern Wheatear	
Tree Pipit	
<b>Qualifying threshold</b>	<b>No. species</b>
55%	5 or more

### **Farmland; in winter.**

It is recommended that important areas for farmland birds are identified and that the owners of key farms are encouraged to apply for funding from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Key species are:

Golden Plover; flocks consistently using a specific farm or parcel of land.

Lapwing; flocks consistently using a specific farm or parcel of land.

Grey Partridge

Skylark

Tree Sparrow

Linnet

Yellowhammer

Reed Bunting

Corn Bunting

