



WWT Washington Breeding Bird Survey Summary 2015

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Number	Species	WWT Washington
1	Mute swan	During February/March, a pair showed signs of breeding on Wader Lake. They were regularly noted pair-bonding and nest-building but no egg-laying was attempted. The pair then spent most of the spring/summer on Wader Lake and the River Wear.
2	Greylag	At least 16 pairs nested and many young were noted.
3	Canada goose	Seven pairs nested and young noted.
4	Shelduck	Over 50 birds noted in May & June. Ten broods hatched in 2015 and seven of the broods successfully raised young, mainly on the reservoir and Wader Lake. Nesting was finally successful at the Saline Lagoon, despite a lot of fox activity at this part of the reserve. Once the ducklings hatched they quickly moved onto the River Wear and the lagoon.
5	Mallard	The first ducklings (a brood of seven) hatched in the Stream Channel on 20 th March and many broods followed across site. The last brood of the year was noted during November in the Stream Channel.
6	Gadwall	Six pairs of gadwall noted on site during the spring/summer. The first brood of 12 ducklings was noted at the start of June on Wader Lake. Two of the four broods managed to fledge eight young between them.
7	Shoveler	The slow increase in the number of breeding pairs has continued again this year, with six pairs of Shoveler noted on site. Wader Lake still remains the strong hold for pairs, however, this year the Round Table Ponds, Saline Lagoon, Filter Reedbed and the collection pens also held pairs during spring/summer. The first ducklings to be noted at the Filter Reedbed were in June and they fledged five young. Shortly after broods were noted at the Round Table Ponds and collection pens with at least three pairs fledging ten young.
8	Teal	One pair present during spring & summer but unclear if breeding took place.
9	Tufted duck	First brood noted 12 th June at the White Head Pen followed by a brood on Wader Lake the next day. Approximately 20 pairs nested on-site with at least 10 pairs successfully raising broods.
10	Pheasant	Many pairs and young noted.
11	Grey heron	The grey herons started to return to Wader Lake Heronry on 16 th & 17 th January, one bird stood on the ground below the Heron Hedge and it took until 29 th January before three herons moved into the hedge. By 17 th March, 18 nests were occupied and most pairs had started incubating eggs. The first chick was seen in the nest on 27 th March, by then 20 nests were occupied. During the rest of March and April, the number of occupied nests reached 30. On 30 th April, the first fledged heron was helped on its way by its other two siblings as they squabbled for space in the nest. A staggered fledging rate followed between May and June with approximately 55 young. 10 pairs re-nested between May and July and by late August approximately 18 fledged. The last late brood of one chick finally fledged the nest in late September. This brought the total number of young herons recorded fledging from the Heron Hedge in 2015 to 74 birds. Away from the main colony, a single bird was noted resting on top of a maturing cherry tree in the plantation woodland of South Wood on 5 th February. It had a twig in its beak but the bird did not return with any further nesting material.
12	Sparrowhawk	A female was noted regularly in and around the Heron Hedge between February-March, with a pair seen courtship displaying above the area at the start of April. The pair nested at the western edge of the Heron Hedge, unfortunately the nest was raided by a pair of carrion crow and the female sparrowhawk was seen chasing off one of the crows which had an egg in its beak. A second pair within the Hawthorn Wood area was more successful and fledged at least one chick. In June the young fledged female was noted hunting at the feeding station at Hawthorn Wood. A possible 3 rd pair (they might have been the failed pair from the Heron Hedge) nested just outside the fence line, in the woods opposite North Wood, during July/August. By September 3 rd these very vocal chicks fledged.
13	Kestrel	An adult male was spotted in the Hollowood/Filter Reedbed tree plantation during the start of spring but it was unclear if nesting was attempted in that location. One

		pair was regularly seen hunting on-site throughout the summer and by late summer three juveniles, one female & two males, appeared on-site confirming successful breeding occurred locally/on-site.
14	Moorhen	Nest-building noted on 1 st January. Many pairs and young noted across the site.
15	Coot	Six pairs nested and five pairs successfully raised young.
16	Oystercatcher	Four pairs nested on-site in 2015. Three pairs nested on Wader Lake, all fledging young. The fourth pair attempted nesting at the gravel base of Mount Eric without success so they moved to the east shingle island of the Saline Lagoon and for the second year running three chicks hatched on the lagoon with two chicks fledging. A gathering of a mix of 10 adult/fledged young was noted at the lagoon in late June.
17	Avocet	<p>Arriving The first avocet arrived on 28th February followed by two more birds on 3rd March. A gap of eight days followed until 11 birds were noted on Wader Lake. Numbers fluctuated between 12-14 birds from March to May until a site record of 17 adults was recorded on the 9th May. Despite the birds arriving at around the same time as previous years the avocets took much longer to settle (one possible reason could be the increase in the number of pairs encouraged more courtship between the birds before settling down and nesting). The site record for adult birds was broken again this year with an amazing 23 birds recorded on 22nd June.</p> <p>Nesting A total of seven pairs nested. Two pairs attempted nesting in late April/early May but soon abandoned the idea - this was probably due to very heavy rain at the time. By late May seven pairs had settled and started nesting. For the first time ever all the pairs nested away from Tern Island, with four pairs nesting along the mud fringe of the Fingers (where Slick Gill enters the lake). The fifth and sixth pairs nested on the exposed mud between Northumbrian Water Hide and the Fingers. The seventh pair prospected the islands of the Saline Lagoon.</p> <p>Chicks/Broods A total of 18 chicks were recorded from six pairs/broods. The first brood of three chicks hatched at the Fingers on 4th June but by the 5th June only two chicks remained. The second brood, which nested at the Fingers, hatched two chicks on the 12th June and the third brood, also from the Fingers, hatched three chicks on 16th June. The fourth brood hatched three chicks on 18th June and the fifth brood hatched three chicks on 20th June. The sixth brood hatched four chicks on the 24th June. The seventh pair, which prospected nesting on the east island of the Saline Lagoon, failed to breed.</p> <p>Ringing On the 4th July three chicks from the sixth brood were colour ringed.</p> <p>Fledged A total of 12 chicks fledged. The first brood of two chicks fledged around the 24th June. Then between 1st & 11th July the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th broods managed to fledge six chicks between them. The sixth brood managed to fledge all four of their young on 28th July.</p> <p>Departing During late July and early August the avocet family parties started departing site. The last three avocets were seen at Wader Lake on the 10th August. Interestingly, an autumn migrant avocet was spotted on Wader Lake on the 29th August.</p> <p>Locally At the local Chartershaugh/Lambton site a pair of avocets also attempted to nest.</p>
18	Little ringed plover	One pair was present during spring/summer and breeding was attempted on Wader Lake during a very dry period in late June, however, this was followed by heavy rain. The sluice boards were removed to save the tern colony from being washed out but unfortunately the little ringed plover nest (which was on the exposed mud in the middle of the lake) quickly succumbed to the rain.
19	Lapwing	15 territories were held during March/April and the first chicks were seen on 29 th and 30 th April. A second brood of three chicks appeared on 10 th May. A third brood of four chicks was noted at the edge of Wader Meadow/Round Table Ponds on the 20 th May. A fourth brood consisting of two chicks at the edge of Wader Lake was recorded on 28 th May. Out of the 15 territories held, five territories managed to hatch chicks and at least three of the broods fledged six chicks in 2015.

20	Redshank	At least two pairs nested on Wader Meadow, one pair failed to hatch young but the other pair hatched four chicks between 1 st – 3 rd June. All four chicks fledged around 24 th June.
21	Black-tailed godwit	Two birds regularly noted during spring & summer, but unclear if breeding took place.
22	Black-headed gull	The first ever breeding recorded on-site of black-headed gull took place at Wader Lake. The pair was seen mating on the 15 th May and nested on the Fingers close to a pair of avocets. By the 16 th June one chick was noted next to the nest. The chick fledged on the 10 th July and joined the rest of the post breeding gathering juveniles. An adult bird was noted flying over Wader Lake with nesting material on 26 th June but it is unclear if any further nesting was attempted.
23	L.B.B Gull	L.B.B Gull nested locally on the nearby factory roofs
24	Common tern	The first returning common terns (three) arrived on 22 nd April and by the end of May over 60 pairs had settled on Tern Island. Once again the annual weed vegetation obscured many of the nests and made it very difficult to monitor the colony. However, despite the obscured views, the first chick was noted on the 21 st June. Heavy rain during late June could have been devastating for the tern colony but thankfully the rain was forecast in enough time to allow the sluice boards to be removed before the rain arrived. The first chick fledged on 15 th July and by 29 th July all the tern chicks had fledged. It was difficult to assess the fledging success but approximately 30 -35 young were noted. Interestingly, the first ever roseate tern was recorded on-site, it arrived early with one or two of the arriving common tern on 24 th May & was also noted 1 st & 17 th May. The first sandwich tern for eight years was also recorded on 8 th & 9 th June along the river and Stream Channel.
25	Stock dove	Adult bird seen sitting outside of Wader Lake nest box in late February/March but unsure if any successful breeding took place inside the box. However, two fledged birds were recorded on Wader Meadow late May.
26	Wood pigeon	Many pairs and young noted.
27	Collared dove	One pair noted all summer at the Farmhouse and Visitor Car Park but unknown if breeding was attempted.
28	Cuckoo	No birds recorded in 2015.
29	Tawny owl	Again at least three pairs holding territory on-site.
30	Barn owl	No evidence of nesting/breeding on-site in 2015.
31	Great-spotted woodpecker	Great-spotted woodpecker numbers increased during February/March, with males drumming from five different locations on-site. As expected, the usual mature woodland of Hawthorn Wood and Spring Gill was used, as well as the plantation woodlands around site which also attracting drumming males. Once again, in April, the well watched ash tree pair in Spring Gill nested and by late May the chicks had fledged. A pair which nested on the south side of the River Wear was regularly observed gathering chunks of bird cake to feed to their chicks during late May. By late June juveniles were noted at the feeding station.
32	Swallow	A total of 12 pairs nested on-site: two pairs at the duckery, four pairs at the farmyard (old duck nursery), one pair in the garage of the Farmhouse and one pair on the cafe veranda. Some of our hides at Wader Lake were used with a pair in Northumbrian Water Hide and a new pair using the refurbished Diageo Hide. This year, once most birds raised broods, they departed site earlier than in recent years.
33	Sand martin	Present all spring and summer but no attempts to dig a nest chamber were noted.
34	Pied wagtail	Once again, a pair bred on the scrubby bank of Wader Lake and fledged three young, which were noted on Wader Lake 7 th June.
35	Grey wagtail	A pair nested and successfully fledged two broods from the Flamingo House. Two young fledged in May (from the first brood) and four fledged in June (from the second brood).
36	Dunnock	21 singing males and young noted.
37	Robin	33 singing males and young noted.
38	Song thrush	Singing males in North Wood, Wet Wood and on Wader Lake footpath during

		March/April. Young noted along Wader Lake footpath during the summer.
39	Mistle thrush	Three pairs: one pair nested in scrub on the north side of the Heron Hedge, a second pair nested in an old alder tree along Slick Gill and fledged young from the nest in May; and a third pair nested in an ivy-covered oak in Spring Gill.
40	Blackbird	27 singing males and young noted.
41	Blackcap	10 singing males and young noted.
42	Common whitethroat	25 territories. Again, the best location for singing males this year was along Wader Lake and East Down footpaths. Fledged young noted in most territories.
43	Sedge warbler	Again, not a great year for our reed nesting warblers. Three territories occupied – one at Round Table Ponds, one at Wader Lake and one at the Filter Reedbeds. Fledged young noted at Round Table Ponds & Wader Lake.
44	Grasshopper warbler	Possible breeding took place this year near Diageo hide as this warbler was heard calling occasionally along Wader Lake footpath during the summer.
45	Reed warbler	Same as Sedge warbler with three territories occupied – one at Wader Lake, one at Round Table Ponds and one at the River Reedbed. Fledged young noted at Wader Lake.
46	Willow warbler	17 singing males and young noted. A good year for most of our scrub-nesting warblers, with more singing males and more fledging young noted this year.
47	Chiffchaff	First bird noted on 7 th March. A further 25 singing males and young noted across site.
48	Goldcrest	A couple of birds reported during the spring/summer but unclear if breeding took place.
49	Wren	22 singing males and young noted. At least 10 pairs nested in and around hides/buildings of the site. A pair at the Northumbrian Water Hide managed to fledge 12 young.
50	Spotted flycatcher	Up to three birds noted in June & July but it proved difficult to determine if any breeding took place on-site.
51	Great tit	The planned replacement of wooden nest boxes with Woodcrete nest boxes has so far been a success as predators have found it difficult to get to the eggs/chicks inside. The robust Woodcrete boxes and the natural tree cavities in the mature woodland on-site have produced many young. The Woodcrete 32mm-hole nest boxes are working very well for great tits.
52	Blue tit	(See great tit). Plus, the Woodcrete 26mm-hole nest boxes are working very well for blues tits, with boxes 2, 14 & 16 being occupied.
53	Coal tit	The coal tit prefers pine woodland and nesting nearer the ground than blue/great tit, so some of the Woodcrete 26mm-hole nest boxes were placed lower to the ground in more pine-dominant woodland. Early signs show that the commoner blue tit is out-competing the coal tit by still using these boxes, despite them being placed lower down.
54	Willow tit	Two adult birds regularly seen in the spring/summer at Hawthorn Wood but unsure if any successful breeding took place.
55	Long-tailed tit	At least four pairs nested on site, the first pair noted nest-building in a blackthorn hedge along the Saline Lagoon footpath. The second pair nested in a gorse bush at East Down. The third pair nested at the edge of North Wood and the fourth pair nested in the hedgerow of the Insect Garden.
56	Nuthatch	Again, a very quiet year for breeding nuthatch on-site. There were regular sightings of nuthatch leading up to spring/summer but they were not recorded after spring.
57	Treecreeper	A pair noted nest-building in an old bat box on the disused tower. A more unusual nest location this year was of a pair using a small gap under the roof joist of our RTV vehicle store.
58	Magpie	At least two or three pairs on-site as a couple of the characteristic domed nests were located.
59	Jay	At least two pairs nested on-site with young noted at Hawthorn Wood and the Stream Channel.
60	Carrion crow	Unclear if any nested on-site, but they do locally.

61	Chaffinch	Many pairs and young noted.
62	Linnet	A species which had not nested on-site for many years, returned as a breeding bird in 2015. The restored grassland & gorse bush habitat of East Down was home to two pairs during the spring with fledged young noted from at least one of the broods.
63	Goldfinch	Many pairs and young noted. With a plentiful knapweed seed crop at the Stream Channel, a gathering of 80+ juvenile and adult birds was noted in late summer.
64	Greenfinch	At least two pairs of Greenfinch fledged young, this is promising news as last year the local greenfinch population crashed due to Trichomonosis disease.
65	Bullfinch	At least seven pairs nested on-site with pairs nesting in a blackthorn hedge along the Saline Lagoon footpath as well as in the Wader Lake footpath hedge, with most other broods noted in Hawthorn Wood.
66	Reed bunting	Total of five territories occupied – two at Wader Lake, one at the Filter Reedbeds, one at the Reed Channel and one at the River Reedbed.