

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Status

Amber listed: BL
Non-SPEC
Schedule 1 of WCA 1981
Annex II/2 of EC Wild Birds Directive

National monitoring

National surveys: 1995 (RSPB/SNH/JNCC), 2005.
WeBS.

Population and distribution

There are an estimated 1,440 summering pairs of greenshanks in the north and west of Scotland (Hancock et al 1997). The range of this species has contracted slightly and birds have disappeared from some areas in recent years mainly due to afforestation of suitable breeding habitat (88–91 *Atlas*). Breeding occurs primarily in peatland areas, but also in open forest bog. Between 600 and 1,000 birds overwinter. Most of the breeding population is thought to winter around the coast of the British Isles, in the south and west of Britain and Ireland (*Winter Atlas*).

Ecology

Greenshanks breed on the open wet moorland and flow country of the north. A clutch of usually four eggs is laid in May to mid-June. There is one brood and the young fledge from the end of May (*Red Data Birds*).

Breeding season survey – population

This method follows Hancock et al (1997).

Information required

- estimated number of summering pairs
- estimated number of pairs that hatched young
- maps showing the area covered, registrations and survey route.

Number and timing of visits

Two visits, the first in the period 10 April to 25 May (highest detectability 15 April to 8 May), the second in the period 26 May to 11 July (highest detectability 1–23 June). At least one of the two visits should be within a high-detectability period.

Time of day

Any time of the day before 1800 BST.

Weather constraints

Do not survey in conditions of poor visibility, continuous rain or wind speeds of Beaufort force 5 or greater.

Sites/areas to visit

The Scottish Highlands, sub-montane zone. The following areas can be excluded from the survey: areas higher than 800 m above sea-level; slopes steeper than 13% (>25 25-ft contours per 1 km² diagonal at 1:25,000); built-up areas; enclosed farmland; dense native or planted forests at thicket stage or older; and offshore islands smaller than 25 ha. All waterbodies should be visited, including lochs, lochans, pool complexes and rivers. Open forests, young plantations and coastal areas (except sea cliffs) should also be surveyed.

Equipment

- 1:25,000 OS maps of the area
- prepared field recording maps
- Schedule 1 licence.

Safety reminders

A reliable person should know where you are and when you are due back. Carry a compass at all times and know how to use it. When surveying remote upland areas, take spare warm clothing, a plastic survival bag, first-aid kit and food supplies.

Disturbance

Minimal; there is no need to search for nests or to get close to adults. Adults with young chicks are likely to be disturbed when pool systems and lochs are checked in June, but keep disturbance to a minimum.

Methods

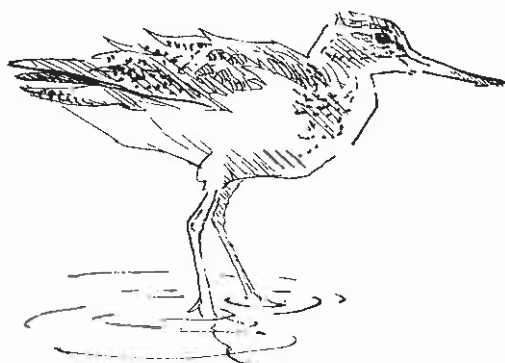
Mark the boundary of the survey area (using a solid line) and a predetermined survey route (using a dotted line) clearly on a map. An area of 5 km² will take about 2–3 days for one person to complete. Use a new field map on each visit to the survey area.

Visit all waterbodies within the survey area and get to within 500 m of all other areas to be surveyed. Record all greenshank registrations on the map using standard BTO notation (Appendix 1). Record the behaviour of any greenshank seen, noting in particular any adult alarm-calling (chipping), any broods seen or adults exhibiting mobbing behaviour.

If working in a pair or team, record the time of each greenshank registration, then resolve any possible duplications immediately after each field visit.

All the registrations from different observers and from different days should be put on a single summary map for each site and for both visits. Code any registrations from the first visit with an 'A', and those from the second visit with a 'B'. Halve the peak count of individuals from any one visit to give the estimated number of summering pairs.

For the second visit only, sum the number of adults either heard 'chipping' at or mobbing the observer for an extended period, and give this figure as the estimated number of pairs that hatched young.



Winter survey

WeBS.

See *Generic wintering bird monitoring methods* in the generic survey methods section.

Reference

Hancock, M H, Gibbons, D W and Thompson, P S (1997) The status of breeding greenshank *Tringa nebularia* in the United Kingdom in 1995. *Bird Study* 44: 290–302.