

CARDIGAN TIDAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEME

Appendix 6.6 - Wintering Bird Surveys



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Natural Resources Wales





**Wintering Bird Survey
Cardigan Tidal Flood Risk Management Scheme
October 2022 – February 2023**

Client: NRW

Survey Dates: October 2022 – February 2023

Report Reference: WW/NRW/WBC

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1. Introduction

Matt Sutton of Wyndrush Wild was contracted to survey wintering birds on the Teifi estuary at Cardigan. Counts were required from 300m west of Castle Bridge to 300m east of Priory Bridge (see figure 1 below).

The survey area comprises tidal stretches of the Afon Teifi, with associated muddy shores / mudflats exposed at low tide. Brackish reedbeds dominate the southern shore in the western part of the site, a WTSWW reserve. The section between the bridges is edged by development and has only limited exposed mud, constrained by walled banks. The western section has a muddy southern shore edged by mature broad-leaved trees; the northern bank is mostly walled and edged by development. There is a muddy shore at the western end, past the Quay Street car park.

NRW required an assessment of the overwintering bird populations on site to inform the development of a tidal flood risk management scheme.

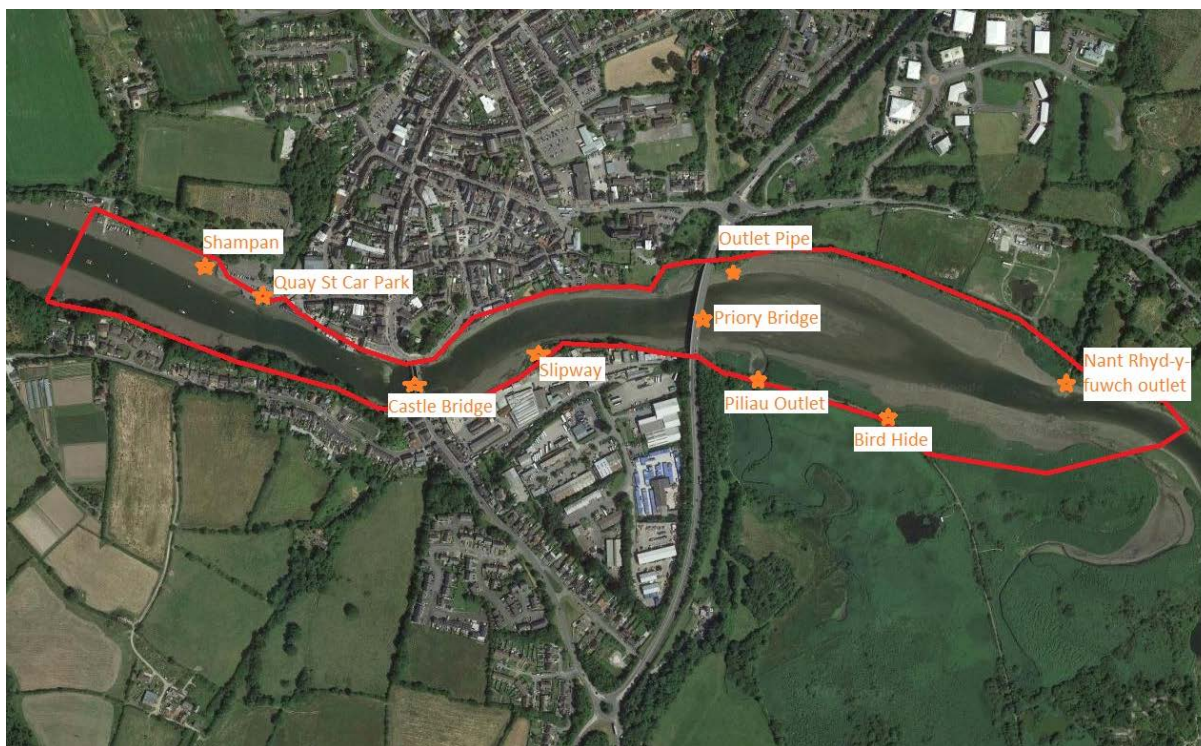


Figure 1. Survey site at Cardigan, with selected features used in text

2. Survey Methodology

Two survey visits were made each month between October and February, one around low tide and one around high tide. Time and weather details are given in Appendix 2. Surveys began approximately an hour before the expected tide, and finished an hour after it. A slow walk was made along the path on the southern boundary of the site from Priory Bridge to the bird hide, then along the path on the south side between the bridges. A stop was then made on the north side just west of Castle Bridge, and a final viewing of the western third of the site was made from Quay Street car park.

All waterbirds, ie. divers, grebes, cormorants, herons, spoonbills, swans, geese, ducks, rails, cranes, waders, gulls, terns and kingfisher, were recorded. Leica Ultravid 10x40 binoculars and a Kowa Prominar TSN4 telescope were used.

Following the visit, the records made were added to a spreadsheet, with approximate grid references derived from BNHS Grab a Grid Reference duo. Where flocks of birds such as gulls were present, an approximate centroid for the flock was recorded. Maps were then produced to display the approximate distribution of bird species across the site.



Exposed mud at low tide below the Shampan boat-restaurant provides a focus for small numbers of waders in the western part of the site

3. Results

Species	Map Code	% Low-tide Surveys Recorded	% High-tide Surveys Recorded	Maximum Count	UK Status ²
Bar-tailed Godwit	BA	20	0	1	Amber
Black-headed Gull	BH	100	100	180+	Amber
Black-tailed Godwit	BW	60	20	3	Red
Canada Goose	CG	20	40	8	
Common Gull	CM	40	40	30+	Amber
Cormorant	CA	80	60	7	
Curlew	CU	100	40	8	Red
Dunlin	DN	40	0	112	Red
Goldeneye	GN	20	40	2	Red
Goosander	GD	20	0	3	
Great-crested Grebe	GG	20	20	1	
Greater Black-backed Gull	GB	20	0	1	Amber
Grey Heron	H	40	0	1	
Herring Gull	HG	100	100	98	Red
Kingfisher	KF	40	60	2	
Lapwing	L	20	20	150+	Red
Lesser Black-backed Gull	LB	40	40	13	Amber
Little Egret	ET	60	0	1	
Little Grebe	LG	60	40	5	
Mallard	MA	100	100	39	Amber
Mediterranean Gull	MU	60	60	8	Amber
Moorhen	MH	0	20	1	Amber
Mute Swan	MS	80	40	4	
Red-breasted Merganser	RM	20	0	1	Amber
Redshank	RK	80	40	7	Amber
Snipe	SN	40	60	18	Amber
Teal	T	100	60	72	Amber

¹Birds of Conservation Concern 5

Results for each survey visit are presented in map form in Appendix 1.

Summary of Birds Seen within the Survey Area

The site is used by a small number of waders, mostly at low tide. The muddy shore alongside the Shampian restaurant to the west of Lower Quay Street Car-park was occasionally used by one or two redshank and curlew, and a small flock of dunlin on one occasion. The opposite shore here was also used by one or two redshank and curlew, as was the exposed shore just to the west of Priory Bridge. The north shore opposite the WTSWW reserve held one or two redshank, curlew, black-tailed godwit and bar-tailed godwit. The southern shore, within the reserve, held up to 18 snipe at the reedbed edge near the hide; more are likely to have been out of sight within the reedbed or further to the east. 150+ lapwing were seen in flight over the reserve on the January high-tide count, then 138 were roosting on the February low-tide visit. Flocks of c.300 were recorded in February by other observers (from the Teifi Birding Blog). Very few waders were present on high-tide counts, and no significant roosts were present.

Teal was the most numerous duck from November onwards, with the most significant flocks in the eastern part of the site. Smaller numbers were associated with the patch of reed just to the east of Castle Bridge, and the shore opposite Lower Quay Car-park. Mallard numbers were more constant, with flocks focussed on the northern shore at or beyond the eastern boundary of the survey site, and on the southern shore opposite Lower Quay Car-park. No wigeon were recorded; this duck winters lower down the estuary towards Poppit.



Small flocks of teal favour the reedbed edge

Small numbers of diving ducks – goldeneye, goosander and red-breasted merganser – were recorded in the channel to the east of Priory Bridge on a few occasions. Great-crested grebe was also recorded under this bridge on one occasion, and a small number of little grebes favoured this area too.

Flocks of herring and lesser black-backed gull were encountered in or alongside the channel by the WTSWW reserve, and in the channel downstream of Lower Quay Car-park. A single greater black-backed gull was also recorded at the latter location on one occasion, whilst three common gulls were recorded once at the former location. Black-headed gulls were more widely distributed across the site, but Lower Quay Car-park was a favoured location, as well as the channel to the east of Priory Bridge. A small number of Mediterranean gulls were associated with the black-headed gulls in the autumn months, but not later in the winter.

Other waterfowl seen included one or two kingfishers, grey herons, little egrets and a small number of cormorants.



Herring gulls on posts by the slipway

4. Conservation Assessment



Eastern part of the site as viewed from the WTSWW hide at high tide

The site supports only low – moderate numbers of wintering waterfowl. None of the totals for individual species come close to being of significance on a national or international level, as judged on JNCC criteria - at least 20,000 waterfowl or 1% of a wintering population of any one species (Stroud et al, 1990). For example, teal numbers would have to exceed 1000 to be of national significance, and 4000 to be of international significance. The lower reaches of the Teifi hold larger numbers of waterfowl, but annual Welsh Bird Reports compiled by the Welsh Ornithological Society, and recent records posted on the Teifi Birding and Wildlife Blog, indicate that these are still well below significance thresholds. However, the site does support small numbers of 6 species on the UK red-list, and 12 on the amber-list. The site can therefore be considered to be of local significance for its wintering bird populations. The eastern part of the site, alongside the Teifi Marshes reserve, holds the greatest diversity and number of birds. The section between the two bridges, and downstream to the Lower Quay car park, has limited exposed mud and this is reflected in the small number of birds recorded here. The muddy banks opposite and to the west of the car park are used by small numbers of ducks, waders and gulls.

5. Summary and Conclusions

Monthly low tide and high tide counts of wintering birds between October and February revealed only low – moderate numbers of waterfowl using the site. However, 18 of these are classed as Birds of Conservation Concern, and the site is clearly of local significance for its waterfowl.

6. References

Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. (2021). *The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain*. British Birds 114: 723-747.

Stroud, D.A, Mudge, G.P and Pienkowski, M.W. (1990) *Protecting Internationally Important Bird Sites*. NCC.

Appendix 1: Survey Details

Month	Tide	Date	Start Time	Weather
October	High	25 th	8.45	Cloudy, dry, mild
	Low	25 th	15.50	Cloud, breezy, spots of rain
November	Low	18 th	8.00	90% cloud, fresh westerly wind
	High	18 th	14.45	Low sun, partial cloud
December	High	11 th	8.30	Still, cold, foggy
	Low	11 th	14.15	Still, fog/sun
January	High	11 th	9.15	Mild, sun, then cloud before showers
	Low	17 th	8.45	Still, clear, cold after frost
February	Low	10 th	15.40	Dry, cloudy, mild, light breeze
	High	14 th	12.55	Dry, cloudy, mild, light breeze

Appendix 2: Maps of Birds Recorded on Site during each Survey

Species codes are included in the above table.

