RIVERINE & STILLWATER BIRDS COUNT REPORTING FORM

Birds are mobile and their activity changes at different times of the day and different seasons of the year. This means that it is important to collect data in the time of year for which you are applying for a licence (i.e. winter) and that you record variability in numbers and behaviour through that season in order to fully understand the impact birds may be having at a particular site. Variability is best recorded by making several visits to the same site – using the same recorder and the same reporting method but on different days and (ideally) at different times of day. This form sets out a reliable counting and reporting method used in standard surveys, and provides tables to make repeat counts easy to record and report to NRW.

COUNTING AND RECORDING METHOD

1. *Decide on the site/reach to be counted:* linear sites (e.g. sections of rivers) each 'site' no more than 2km long but a longer stretch may be counted as a series of several 2km 'sites' and one copy of the form filled in for each site. Still-water sites: try to break up a large lake into 2km sections, and pond systems use either the whole site or more than one sub-site if there is a sensible way to separate them.

2. *Sketch or print a map of the count site:* Record the 6 figure National Grid References (NGR) of the start and end point of each count site. In addition, sketching or noting useful landmarks will help you to remember the site boundaries and will help make your repeat counts more reliable. You might add a sketch map for each site to a copy of this form (of which you could then photocopy or print further copies for future use).

3. *Record date, start and end time:* for each count of each 'site' (2km river stretch or lake section; mapped pond system)

4. *Birds arriving and leaving:* count birds that arrive into or leave the site during your count UNLESS you are walking a stretch of linear water (river reach) and they fly over your head and go in ahead of you – in this case you will see these birds again later in the survey and they should not be double-counted.

5. *Count individuals by activity:* wherever possible, count the birds according to what they are apparently doing. There are boxes in the count table for each of the likely activities. If the birds are doing something else or you do not have time to record activity there is a 'no behaviour' column.

6. *Record other riverine species:* if you are interested and have time, many riverine species are under-reported in Wales and additional information is a valuable clue to the general health of our freshwater ecosystems. We have added a table to make this easy for you: feel free to add species you see on your site that are missing from the table.

TIPS FOR REPORTING TO NRW

1. Make more than one count per site

> The more times you repeat a count, the more reliable your reported data is likely to be. Especially count at different times of day and through the season, and aim to provide data from at least one count per month, for each site / reach.

2. Keep repeat visits at least 3 days apart

> Repeated counts recorded for the same site should be at least three days apart. However, if you are counting something linear (e.g. reaches of a river) you can count as many successive 2km sections as you like on the same day, since each 2km section will be a different 'site' for recording purposes. Remember to record the time at the start and end of each section ('site').

3. Keep and report records of zero counts

> If you make a visit to count a site and there are no goosander or cormorant present that day, it is just as important to record this 'zero data' as the days when you find these birds. Complete the form as normal, and write a zero in the total count for each species.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

ID help for separating Goosander and Mergansers is available on the BTO website at this link**:**
> **http://www.bto.org/about-birds/bird-id/bto-bird-id-goosander-and-red-breasted-merganser**

Count data can also be entered and stored using BirdTrack (online at www.birdtrack.net or using the free apps) which is an easy way to store and visualise your site count data – instructions for setting up your sites and entering counts can be provided by BTO, or NRW on request.

OBSERVER	
SITE/REACH NAME	*NRWF-

DATE		WEATHER	
START TIME		**END TIME**	
START POINT (6 fig Grid Ref)		**END POINT (6 fig Grid Ref)**	

*Please use this prefix if submitting your data electronically to BirdTrack, as this will allow us to search for and extract these data from the bigger BirdTrack database.

BIRD COUNTS

(species)	Flying in (n)	Flying out (n)	Swimming (n)	Feeding (n)	Roosting (n)	no activity recorded (n)	TOTAL
GOOSANDER							
MERGANSER							
CORMORANT							
unidentified SAWBILL							

OTHER RIVERINE BIRDS

(wading birds)	(n)	(riverine birds)	(n)	(ducks)	(n)	(geese)	(n)
Grey Heron		Dipper		Feral/domestic ducks		Feral/domestic geese	
Little Egret		Kingfisher		Mallard		Canada Goose	
				Goldeneye		Greylag Goose	
				Tufted Duck			
				Mandarin			

SITE / REACH SKETCH MAP