

Monitoring wintering waterbird populations

The Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) has been monitoring wintering waterbird populations at their wetland sites across the Republic of Ireland since the winter of 1994/95.

BirdWatch Ireland coordinates the ongoing annual survey and the National Parks and Wildlife Service funds it.

The basic unit of monitoring is the count unit. Some large sites are divided into smaller sub-sites and each of these is a separate count unit. Nationally, more than 800 subsites are counted up to seven times annually by over 400 volunteers.

There are four I-WeBS sites on the South Wexford Coast: Bannow Bay, The Cull & Killag (Ballyteige), Tacumshin Lake, and Lady's Island Lake.

A national trends report, published on 1 April 2022, presented long term trends for 35 species with sufficient data for a 23-year period. The chart (Table 1) tabulates the national trend for these 35 species with corresponding local trends at the four I-WeBS sites on the South Wexford Coast: Bannow Bay (BB), The Cull & Killag (Ballyteige) (CK), Tacumshin Lake (TL), and Lady's Island Lake (LIL). Species that are qualifying interests of the relevant Special Protection Area (SPA) at each of these four sites are indicated by an **X**.

National trend	Species	Local trend			
		BB	CK	TL	LIL
Large Decline	Scaup				
	Pochard				
	Goldeneye				
	Lapwing	X	X	X	
	Grey Plover	X	X	X	
	Golden Plover	X	X	X	
Moderate Decline and/or Intermediate Decline	Dunlin	X			
	Curlew	X			
	Turnstone				
	Coot			X	
	Mallard				
	Wigeon			X	
	Tufted Duck			X	
	Red-breasted Merganser				
	Pintail	X		X	
	Great Crested Grebe				
	Shoveler			X	
	Knot	X			
	Bar-tailed Godwit	X	X		
	Ringed Plover				
Stable or Increasing	Grey Heron				
	Redshank	X			
	Shelduck	X	X		
	Oystercatcher	X			
	Mute Swan				
	Teal			X	
	Purple Sandpiper				
	Gadwall			X	X
	Little Grebe			X	
	Greenshank				
	Cormorant				
	Sanderling				
	Black-tailed Godwit	X	X	X	
	Light-bellied Brent Goose	X	X		
	Little Egret				

Table 1. National and local trends in wintering waterbird populations.

(Source: https://birdwatchireland.ie/app/uploads/2022/04/iwebs_trends_00000_National.html)

The four I-WeBS sites on the South Wexford Coast: Bannow Bay, The Cull & Killag (Bal-lyteige), Tacumshin Lake, and Lady's Island Lake are featured below (Figure 1).

The basic I-WeBS unit of coverage, or count unit, is the subsite. Shown below are sites (blue circles), subsites (black dots), and the extent of coverage, where known (black boundary lines).

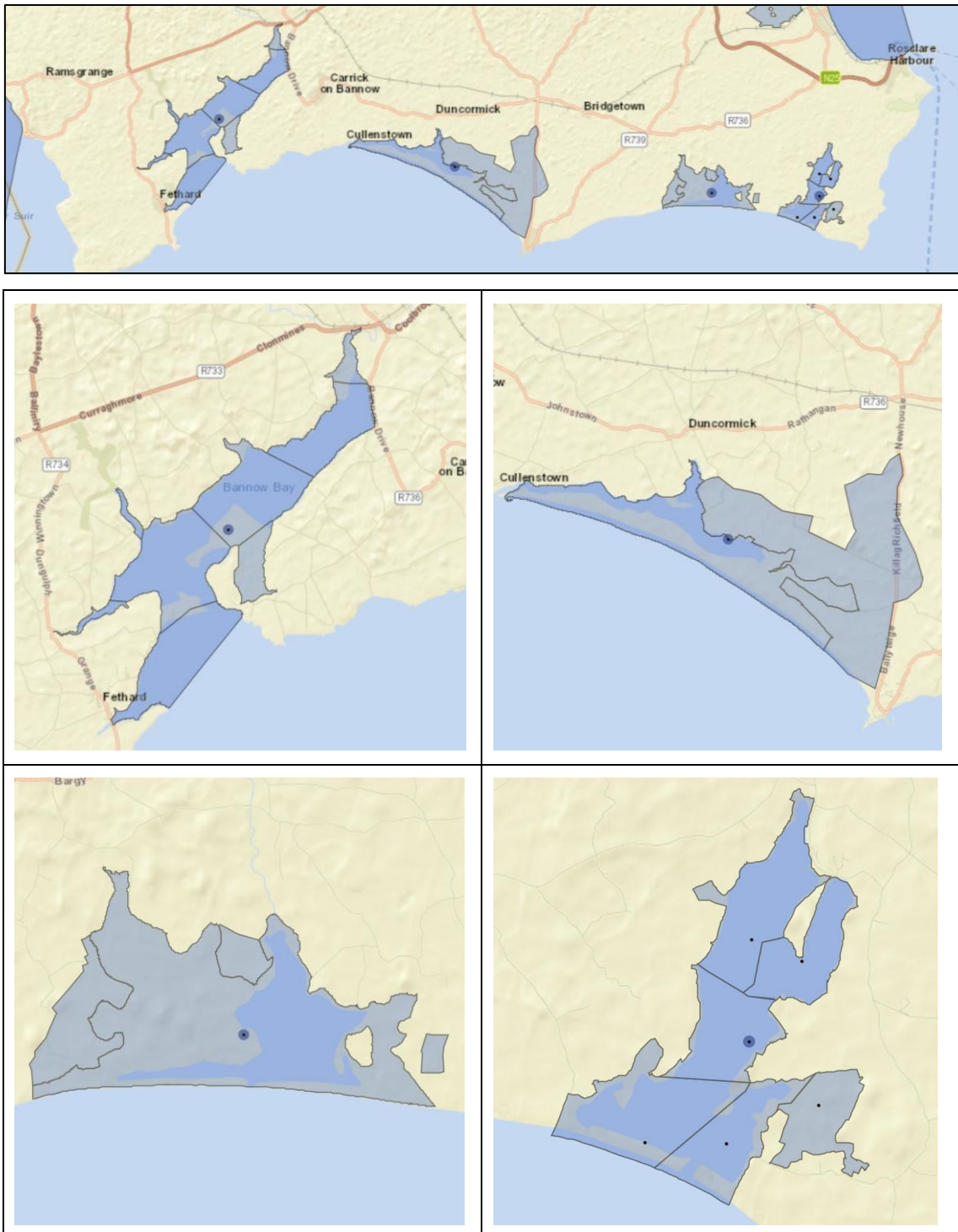


Figure 1. I-WeBS sites and subsites on the South Wexford Coast.

(Source: <https://bwi.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=1043ba01fcb74c78bc75e306eda48d3a>)