Goose Count Methodology

Aim
To determine the number of geese using Semer Water and adjacent areas in the catchment and to determine if numbers are related to breeding, non-breeding or moulting birds.

Methodology
Determine a suitable vantage point overlooking the lake and one, possible two locations within Raydale (based on information on feeding areas from landowners). Determine and map each area to be surveyed so the survey effort and results are consistent.

Undertake monthly counts during the first week of every month on days with excellent visibility.

In order to determine if birds are using the site to roost undertake counts from first light (45 mins before sunrise) between Sept to March. Undertake observations for 2.5 hours to determine if birds are roosting on site then leaving to feed and/or roosting elsewhere and coming to feed.

Visits between April and Aug should be done prior to noon, with an hour spent at each vantage point.

During the breeding season territorial birds should be recorded separately to non-breeding birds or flocks to give an indication of the number of breeding pairs.

As a measure of breeding productivity can be obtained by recording the number of young birds in sampled flocks, an additional visit should be made in the last week of June to determine the number of adults and juveniles present. These should be expressed as a percentage of the total number of birds aged.

If possible, assess the behaviour and relationship between individuals in a flock, with the number of young birds associating with, usually, two adults, used to determine brood size.

Additional Information
Access any results from the national Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) waterbird monitoring scheme.

Access any records from BirdTrack (see here), the online bird recording system.

Encourage the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to record and submit goose counts from their reserve.