1. **Abundance**

The abundance of European White-fronted Geese during 2008/09 was monitored through the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS); the results are expected to become available in 2010.

2. **Breeding success**

European White-fronted Geese were aged at two localities during winter 2008/09, WWT Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, and North Warren, Suffolk. A total of 748 geese were aged, of which 13.2% were young birds. No brood size data were collected.

Data were collected during two months at both sites. At North Warren the proportion of young decreased from 20.9% (110 birds aged) in December to 13.5% (245) in January, while at WWT Slimbridge, the percentage young was only slightly lower in February (13.1%; 415) compared with January (14%; 503).

3. **Discussion**

The breeding success of European White-fronted Geese wintering in the UK was lower in 2008 compared with the previous year, and the lowest recorded since 2004/05, when counts were first routinely undertaken at other sites in addition to WWT Slimbridge.

At WWT Slimbridge the proportion of young was also lower than in 2007/08 and remained below the ten-year mean (1998/99-2007/08; 20.8% ± 2.35 SE).

The proportion of young and mean brood size of European White-fronted Geese in Britain, 2004/05-2008/09

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. sites</th>
<th>Total aged</th>
<th>% young</th>
<th>No. broods</th>
<th>Mean brood size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,377</td>
<td>27.45</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,779</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,210</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,634</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the main influences on the breeding success of tundra-nesting geese is the cyclic pattern of lemming populations. Breeding success generally decreases in years of low lemming abundance as a result of predators switching from lemmings to birds (Blomqvist et al. 2002). Reports from monitoring stations in the Arctic indicate that numbers of lemmings dropped dramatically during summer 2008 (Soloviev & Tomkovich 2009), and Arctic Foxes were common in some areas.

4. **References**


This report should be cited as:

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