

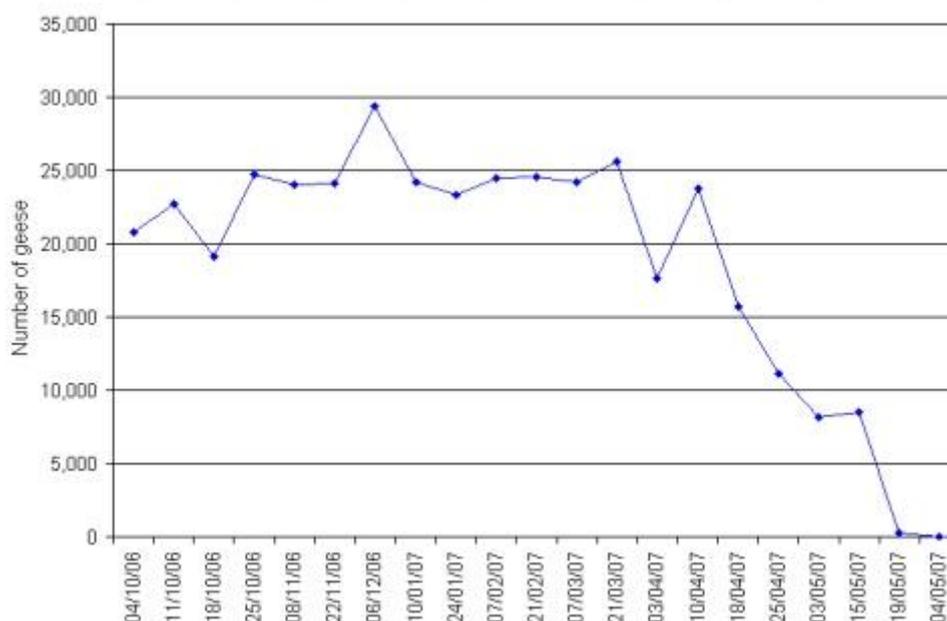
# WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

## survey results 2006/07

### Svalbard Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

## 1. Abundance

Between 4 October 2006 (by which time 20,830 Barnacle Geese had arrived on the Solway) and 15 May 2007 (when 8,500 remained), 20 coordinated counts were carried out across the whole of the Inner Solway Estuary. The peak count was 29,370 recorded during a very high tide on 6 December over a count period within which there was a lot of flock movement. Thus, as a precaution against the possibility of some of the birds having been counted twice, this count was averaged against all of those within 10% of the next highest count within the October to March period; nine counts in all. This procedure gives an adopted population total for 2006/07 of 25,000. This is an increase of almost 5% on the adopted population estimate of 2005/06 (23,900).



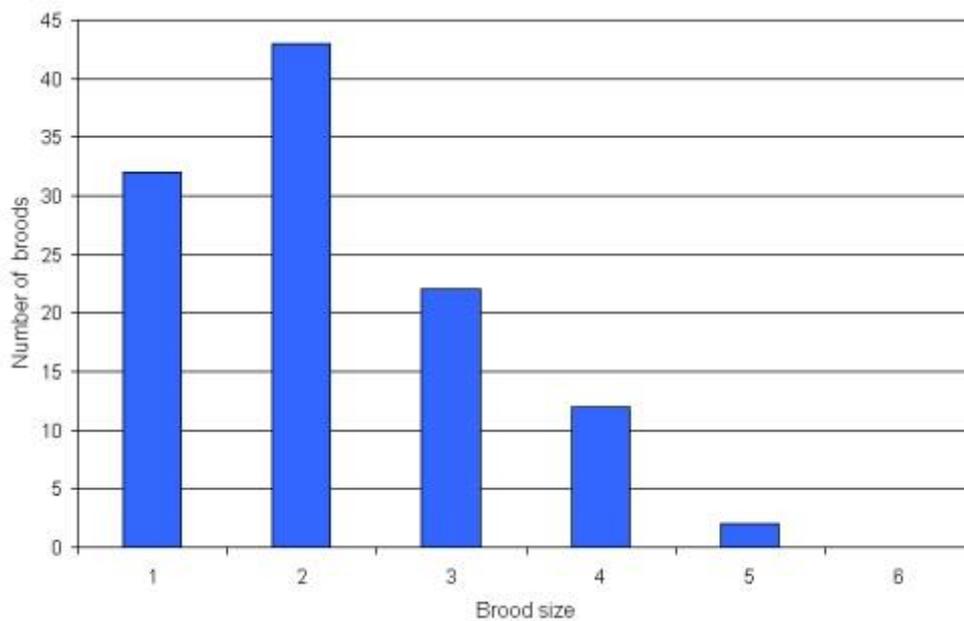
Total number of Svalbard Barnacle Geese on coordinated Solway counts during 2006/07.

Unlike last winter, goose arrival on the Solway was more in line with expectation, with 22,680 recorded on 11 October 2006 and almost the whole population present by the end of the month.

## 2. Breeding success

Between 25 September 2006 and 8 March 2007, a total of 7,043 Barnacle Geese was aged by a single observer at WWT Caerlaverock. A total of 18 flocks was sampled, varying in size from 52 to 2,600 birds. Sample size ranged from 52 to 1,300. The overall percentage of young present in these flocks was 14.6%, ranging from 5.7% to 25.0% within individual flocks. This is the highest percentage of young since 1998, and is well above the current 10-year mean (8.9%  $\pm$  1.78 se), thus representing a good breeding season.

Brood size was recorded for a total of 111 families, and the mean brood size per successful pair was 2.2 goslings, with brood sizes ranging from 1-5 goslings, down slightly on last year. The mean for the most recent ten year period (1997-2006) is 1.81 ( $\pm$  0.11 se) goslings per successful pair.



Frequency distribution of brood sizes of Svalbard Barnacle Geese on the Solway Estuary in 2006/07.

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## Goose & Swan Monitoring