

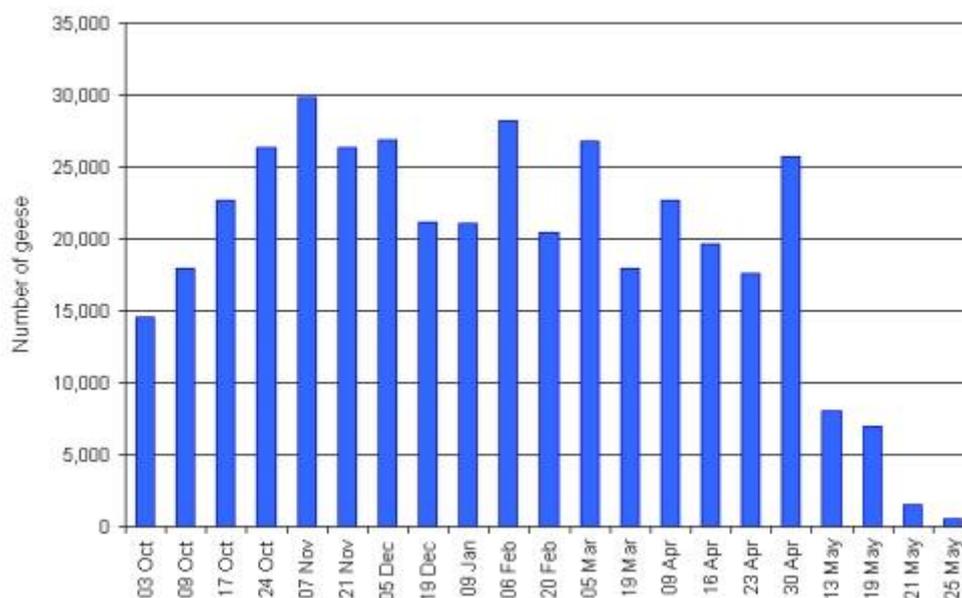
WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

survey results 2007/08

Svalbard Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

1. Abundance

Between 3 October 2007 (by which time 14,590 Barnacle Geese had arrived on the Solway) and 19 May 2008 (when 7,000 remained), 20 coordinated counts were carried out across the whole of the Inner Solway Estuary. The peak count was 29,815 recorded on 7 November. 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; two counts in all. This procedure gives an adopted population total for 2007/08 of 29,000. This is an increase of almost 16% on the adopted population estimate of 2006/07 (25,000).



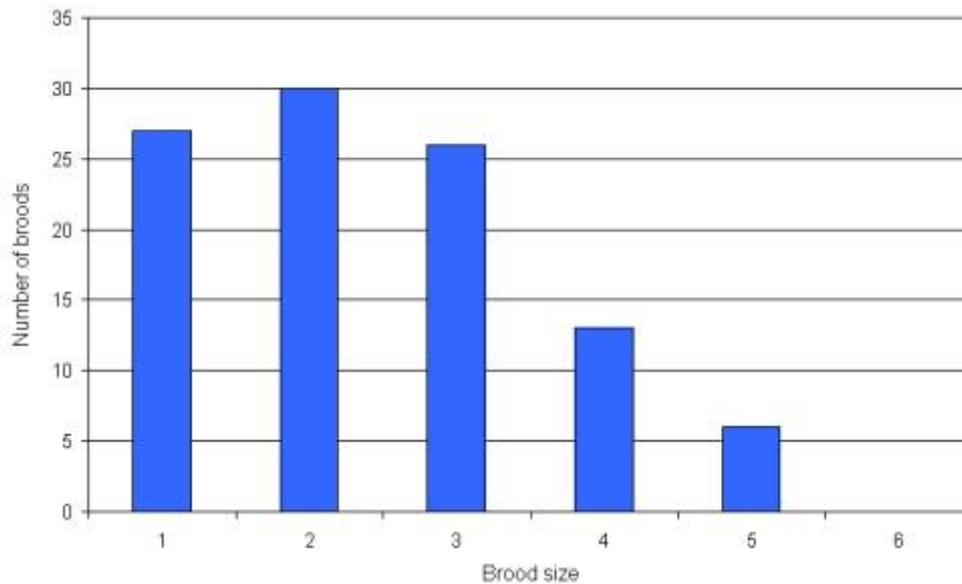
Total number of Svalbard Barnacle Geese on coordinated Solway counts during 2007/08.

As with last winter, goose arrival on the Solway was fairly typical, with 22,640 recorded on 17 October 2007 and almost the whole population present by the end of the month.

2. Breeding success

Between 26 September 2007 and 31 March 2008, a total of 27,544 Barnacle Geese was aged by four observers at WWT Caerlaverock and at other sites around the Solway. A total of 35 flocks was sampled, varying in size from 41 to 4,500 birds. Sample size ranged from 41 to 2,500. The overall percentage of young present in these flocks was 12.8%, ranging from 7.0% to 70.7% within individual flocks. As with the 2006/07 season, this value is well above the current 10-year mean ($8.5\% \pm 1.6$ se), thus representing a good breeding season.

Brood size was recorded for a total of 102 families, and the mean brood size per successful pair was 2.4 goslings, with brood sizes ranging from 1-5 goslings, up slightly on the previous year. The mean for the most recent ten year period (1998-2007) is $1.9 (\pm 0.1$ se) goslings per successful pair.



Frequency distribution of brood sizes of Svalbard Barnacle Geese on the Solway Estuary in 2007/08.

This report should be cited as:

WWT. 2008. *Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme: survey results 2007/08 Svalbard Barnacle Goose Branta leucopsis*.
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This report was produced under the Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme (GSMP). This programme monitors numbers and breeding success of geese and swans in the UK during the non-breeding season. GSMP is organised by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust in partnership with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of Natural Resources Wales, Natural England and the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside) and Scottish Natural Heritage.



Goose & Swan Monitoring