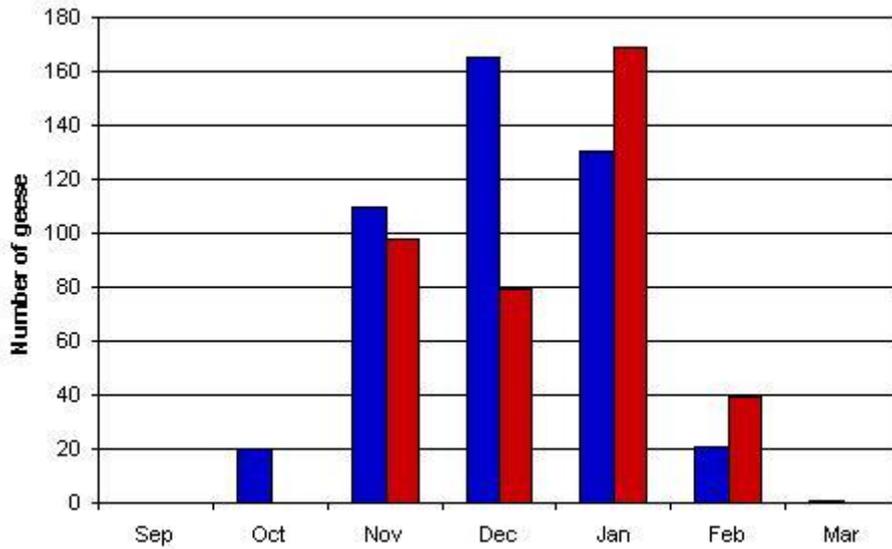


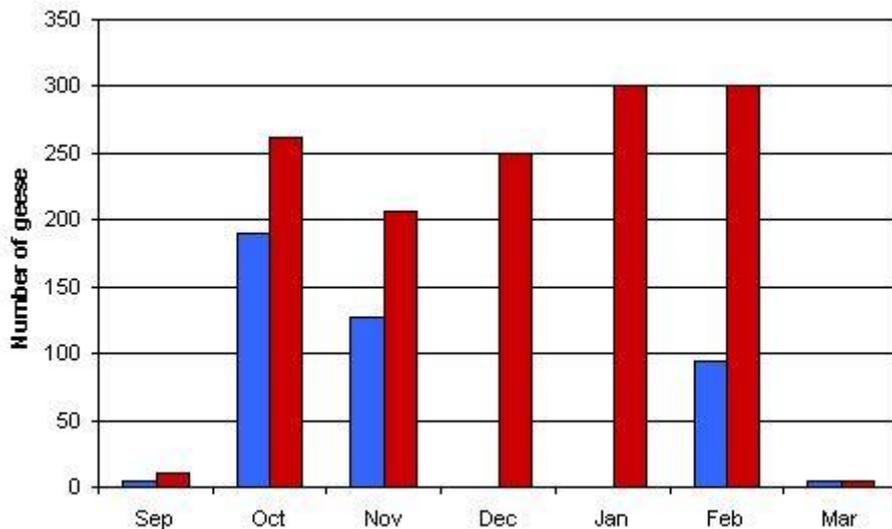
WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme
 survey results 2005/06
 Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis fabalis*

1. Abundance

During 2005/06, counts were undertaken at the two key sites for Bean Geese in Great Britain, the Slamannan Plateau and the Yare Valley. A peak count of approximately 300 birds was recorded at the Slamannan Plateau, thus continuing the increase that has taken place each year for the past ten years; the peak count doubling between 1996/97 and 2004/05. The peak of 169 at the Yare Valley is an increase of 8.3% on the 2004/05 peak.



Peak monthly counts of Bean Geese at the Yare Valley (blue bars represent the mean of 2000/01-2004/05; red bars 2005/06).



Peak monthly counts of Bean Geese at the Slamannan Plateau (blue bars represent the mean of 2000/01 -2004/05; red bars 2005/06). No counts were made in December and January during the period 2000/01 -2004/05.

The pattern of monthly numbers was broadly similar to the previous five years, although at the Yare Valley numbers remained well below the peak during December, with the number present doubling during January. This is later than usual, with numbers normally peaking during December and falling during January. As usual, there was a rapid departure with few remaining into February, although numbers were double the recent average that month, which is possibly a consequence of the late arrival during January.

At the Slamannan Plateau the numbers were typically stable between October and February, peaking towards the end of the winter. This is in contrast to most other recent years, when numbers have been highest in the autumn, and slightly lower at the end of the winter. However, as numbers increase it becomes harder to make counts as accurate as those in the years when Bean Geese began to frequent this site because they are now more likely to be found in more than one flock, and thus can be harder to locate during counts. Although the peak count occurred in January/February in 2005/06, it is likely that around 300 birds were present from November onwards.

2. Breeding success

Bean Geese were aged at the Slamannan Plateau in November, and the proportion of first-winter birds was estimated at 14.4% (n=125). The size of four broods at Slamannan was also recorded, with a mean of 1.25 (± 0.25 se) young per successful pair.

3. Discussion

Numbers of Bean Geese continue to increase at the Slamannan Plateau, thereby maintaining its position as the premier site for this species in Britain. This is in contrast to the Yare Valley and other key sites for this population in Denmark, where numbers have decreased in recent years. Productivity appears typical of Anser geese, but few data exist with which to confirm this, and it is currently not possible to determine trends in breeding success as data were only collected for the first time in 2004/05. No productivity data were collected at the Yare Valley in 2005/06 as too few birds had arrived within the period when it is possible to confidently identify first-winter geese. Given the small proportion of this population present in the UK, productivity assessments should be better coordinated with other key sites on the continent.

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Goose & Swan Monitoring