

WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

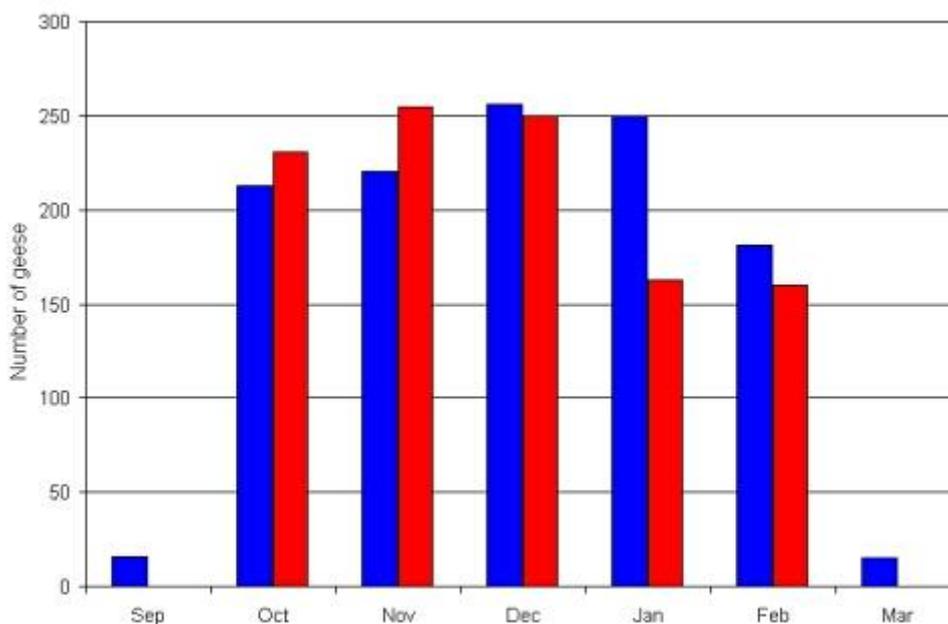
survey results 2006/07

Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis fabalis*

1. Abundance

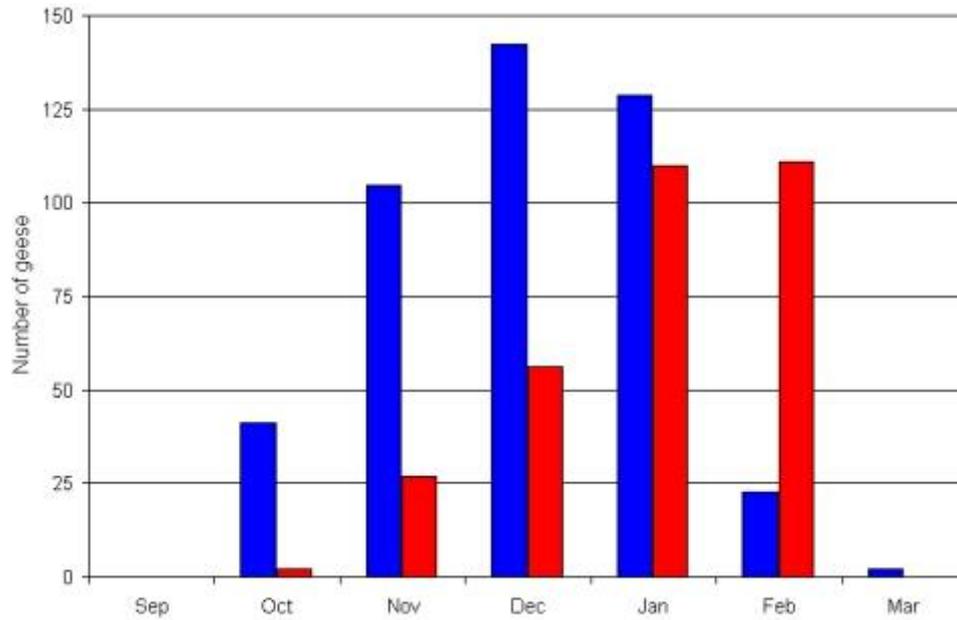
During 2006/07, counts were undertaken at the two key sites for Bean Geese in Great Britain, the Slamannan Plateau and the Yare Valley. A peak count of 255 birds was recorded at the Slamannan Plateau, a decrease of 45 birds on the record count of 300 in 2005/06, and the first large decrease there since 1991/92. The peak of 111 at the Yare Valley is also a decrease on the previous year, and the lowest peak count recorded there since 1977/78, reflecting the steady decline in numbers at the site since the mid-1990s.

The phenological patterns at both sites showed some key differences during 2006/07. At the Slamannan Plateau, the arrival was typical, with a rapid build-up during October, and stable numbers between October and December. Unusually, the number present seemed to decrease by about 110 birds during January, and it is not known where these birds might have dispersed to. During February, the number present was similar to January, but this is less unusual as a decrease in February is more typical.



Peak monthly counts of Bean Geese at the Slamannan Plateau (blue columns represent the mean of 2001/02 -2005/06; red columns 2006/07).

At the Yare Marshes, the arrival of Bean Geese was much later than the average during the previous five years. Even in December numbers were very low, and it was not until January that they reached something approaching a typical level for the time of year. As a consequence, numbers in February were much higher than usual - in most years the majority of the flock has migrated by then, but in 2006/07 the number present was close to the number present during January.



Peak monthly counts of Bean Geese at the Yare Valley (blue columns represent the mean of 2001/02-2005/06; red columns 2006/07).

2. Breeding success

Bean Geese were aged at the Slamannan Plateau in late October, and the proportion of first-winter birds was estimated at 18.2% (n=121). The size of six broods at Slamannan was also recorded, with a mean of 2.2 (± 0.47 se) young per successful pair.

3. Discussion

The numbers of Taiga Bean Geese at the two key sites in the UK were low during 2006/07, perhaps a reflection of the particularly mild temperatures experienced that also apparently affected the numbers of other migratory waterbirds from the east that were present in the UK, e.g. European White-fronted Geese and Bewick's Swans.

The breeding success again appeared typical for an *Anser* goose, based on a sample of approximately half of the Slamannan flock. No productivity data were again collected at the Yare Valley as too few birds had arrived within the period when it is possible to confidently identify first-winter geese.

This report should be cited as:

WWT. 2007. *Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme: survey results 2006/07 Taiga Bean Goose* *Anser fabalis fabalis*. WWT/JNCC/SNH, Slimbridge.

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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