

FORTH ISLAND SEABIRD COUNTS 1995

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Because of the late nesting of Shags and Kittiwakes in 1994, we decided to make our annual visits/counts a week later this year. This proved to be a mistake as it turned out to be an early year for nesting. In addition, the Craigeith trip was put back another week due to bad weather and even our re-arranged jaunt on 11 June was the only boat trip of the day and severely restricted in time. There was a force 4-5 north wind, it had been wet and the north facing slope was a greasy hazard. It was a relief to get off the island.

Generally it was a good breeding season with the Auk numbers holding up well and large numbers of non-breeding Puffins putting in an early appearance. Cormorants are nearly back to their (presumed) peak numbers and a 50% increase in breeding Shags combined with good numbers of near-fledged young suggest that they have got over their recent problems. Kittiwake numbers have gone up by nearly a quarter on last year's totals and a pair of Great Black-backed Gulls with three eggs on Inchkeith is the first proven breeding record for the Inner Forth.

Only the Terns have slumped. Gone are the days of 600-1000+ pairs of Sandwich Terns; there were only five pairs in the Forth this year. Inchmickery, which once was the home to innumerable Common Terns, had only 11 nests. On a less gloomy note, it is nice to record that a few pairs of the rare Roseate Tern still hang on. Seventeen pairs bred, and there is report of a much better year in the British Isles breeding population - perhaps due to international work done by the RSPB and certainly helped by valiant work on the few breeding colonies of Britain and Ireland.

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	Bass Rock	Craig-leith	Lamb	Fidra	Eyebr-oughty	Inch-keith	Carr Craig	Inch-colm	Hay-stack	Inch-mickery	Inch-garvie
Fulmar(aon)	x	203	8	303	0	514	0	218	0	34	184
Cormorant (nests)	0	82	179	0	0	112	1	2	97	0	0
Shag (nests)	x	171	81	84	0	18	4	4	1	20	0
Gannet (nests)	x	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eider (nests)	x	x	4	216	0	x	3	x	2	250	63
Great B-b Gull (nests)	x	3+	2	2-3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lesser B-b Gull (nests)	x	x	230+	1848	6	x	ca 3	x	0	141	6+
Herring Gull (nests)	x	x				x	49	x	12	141	280
Kittiwake (nests)	x	951	210	435	0	551	0	190	0	0	0
Common Tern (nests)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0
Arctic Tern (nests)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Roseate Tern (nests)											
Sandwich Tern (nests)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Razorbill (sites)	x	108	47	ca 80	0	56	0	2	0	0	0
Guillemot (birds on cliffs)	x	2122	2630	289	0	48	0	0	0	0	0
Puffins (birds)	x	4000+	150+	300+	0	ca 1200	0	30+	0	13(aon)	0

Notes x = no count; 0 = none breeding; aon = apparently occupied nest, Eider and gull counts are incomplete, and all totals are missing for the Bass Rock

Please note that the numbers in this table may not agree with those in the main Forth Seabird Group tables. In some years some islands were counted more than once. When this happened the Forth Seabird Group figures reflect the main count.