



Forth Seabird Group

Forth Islands Bird Report

2004

Compiled by Dave Jones

FEBRUARY 2005

SEABIRD SPECIES SUMMARIES 2004

FULMAR

Complete Forth Islands count of 1,364 aos, down again. Greatest losses on the Bass Rock only 40 from 119 last year, and Craigleith, 136 from 168. Overall, a decrease of 141 on last year. Further still from the peak of 2,045 aos in 1997. Also, four aos again on the cliff at Carling Nose Point and 16 at Deep Sea World, North Queensferry.

CORMORANT

Complete Forth Islands count of 400 nests, an increase again on last year (372). Previously this species reached 511 nests in 1991.

SHAG

Complete Forth Islands count of 1,690 nests, a fall of 104 nests on last year. The largest decrease was of 271 on the Isle of May, while the largest increase was of 127 nests on Craigleith.

GANNET

Complete Forth Islands count of 48,065. This is 8314, or almost 21 % up on the photographic survey in 1994, which gave an estimate of 39,751 aos. It appears that the rate of increase is beginning to decrease.

EIDER

Incomplete count of 1,386 nests. The greatest change recorded was on the Isle of May, the largest colony, where numbers fell by 161 to 1101 nests.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Complete Forth Islands count of 38 nests on nine islands, just one nest more than last year.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Incomplete count of 1480 nests. Most counted islands showed similar numbers to last year, although Fidra fell from 300 to 90 nests. Again, the substantial colonies on Craigleith, Inchkeith and Inchcolm were not counted.

HERRING GULL

Incomplete count of 4,214 nests, continuing a downward trend, with falls on all islands counted except The Lamb, Fidra and on the Bass, where numbers jumped from >50 to 169.

KITTIWAKE

A complete Forth Islands count, giving a rise to 5,803 nests, but still well below 11,229 of 1997.

COMMON TERN

Complete Forth Islands count of 238 nests, another increase, following the low of 69 nests in 2002. 745 pairs at two other mainland sites.

ARCTIC TERN

Complete Forth Islands count, with a rise again to 666 nests. Most recent high was 916 nests in 2001. One nest, also, at Aberlady on the mainland.

ROSEATE TERN

Complete Forth Islands count, halved from last year to four pairs. Five young and one failed egg from 3 nests, 4th nest outcome unknown nest scrape present but no eggs. Young may have hatched but were missed on the ringing visit. Three individuals were seen at another site, but did not breed.

SANDWICH TERN

Complete Forth Islands count of 151 nests. As recently as 2001, the Isle of May held 500 nests.

RAZORBILL

Complete Forth Islands count of 3,271 pairs/sites, continuing the fall each year since 4,643 were recorded in 2001.

GUILLEMOT

Complete Forth Islands count of 29,355 birds on cliffs. An overall decrease of over 14% on last year. Decreases noted at all sites except the small colony of 35 on Inchkeith.

PUFFIN

Incomplete count. Birds recorded on Inchkeith, Inchcolm and Inchmickery. Less than 100 counted on three of the islands, an insignificant part of the 83, 000+ occupied burrows in the Firth of Forth.

Table 1: Summary of seabird counts for the Forth Islands, 2004 (x = present but no count, 0 = none breeding).

	<u>Ba</u>	<u>Cr</u>	<u>La</u>	<u>Fi</u>	<u>Eb</u>	<u>Ik</u>	<u>CC</u>	<u>Ic</u>	<u>Hs</u>	<u>Im</u>	<u>Ig/Frb</u>	<u>LC</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fulmar (AOS)	40	136	7	204	0	306	0	205	0	24	206	0	236	1364
Cormorant (nests)	0	85+	96	0	0	137	82	0	0	0	0	0	0	400
Shag (nests)	46	324	111	272	0	153	10	4	5	78	0	0	687	1690
Gannet (nests)	48,065	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48,065
Eider (nests)	x	x	0	69	2	x	2	x	0	142	62	8	1101	1386
Great B-b Gull (nests)	1	3	1	2	0	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	25	38
Lesser B-b Gull (nests)	4	x	0	90	0	x	>5	x	c3	134	23+	0	1,221	1480
Herring Gull (nests)	169	x	38	1035	0	x	c30	x	c12	313	c189	0	2,428	4214
Kittiwake (nests)	660	501	126	217	0	358	0	65	0	0	0	0	3,876	5803
Common Tern (nests)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	>5	171	62	238
Arctic Tern (nests)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	666	666
Roseate Tern (nests)														4
Sandwich Tern (nests)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	151	151
Razorbill (pairs/sites)	158	171	105	101	0	54	0	5	0	0	0	0	2,677	3271
Guillemot (birds on cliffs)	2260	1780	1744	566	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	22,970	29,355
Puffin (as stated) OB = occupied burrows	x	x	x	x	0	78 ind on land &569 on sea	0	2 on land, 60 on sea	0	16 ind ashore 8 at sea	0	0	x	>733 inds

Frb = Forth Rail Bridge

MAIN BREEDING SEABIRDS - ADDITIONAL COUNTS AND COMMENTS

GANNET

First of the year, were ten on 21st January over north side of Bass Rock. Up to 50 by early February, and hundreds by 18th. Three days later 1,000 present. By 27th, March 10,000s present. First egg seen 25th April. By 9th, May 75,000 birds, many with eggs. First chick seen 2nd June. Twins seen on 4th July. One off Inchkeith on 4th September and 20 off the east end of Inchcolm on 14th. A young bird tended by both parents in the second week of November.

FULMAR

One on site above the West Cave on Bass Rock on 25th November 2003. A dozen prospecting at Craigleith on 17th January, eight pairs there on 23rd. Ten on Fidra and Isle of May on 21st. Sixty present on Inchkeith on 4th September. Two over Inchcolm on 14th September.

CORMORANT

Three on Isle of May on 26th January and 14th February. By 10th March, seven were already on nest sites on Craigleith. Five birds on Inchgarvie on 29th May. Two chicks seen on 4th June on the Lamb. At least three each on Craigleith and Bass Rock on 25th November. 250 on Inchkeith on 4th September. Ten off Inchcolm on 14th September.

SHAG

100s off Craigleith on 7th January. Two eggs seen in a nest on 17th April on Inchmickery. Chicks seen on Isle of May on 2nd June. Twenty on Inchkeith on 4th September. One off Inchcolm on 14th September. At least three on Craigleith on 25th November.

EIDER

The two nests found on Eyebroughy on 5th June were predated. About 370 around Inchkeith on 4th September and 23 off Inchcolm on 14th September. On Long Craig, eight nests confirmed young hatched and on water.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Fifteen birds near to The Lamb and Craigleith on 24th January. Up to seven around by 29th February. Four adults present, although only one nest found on Inchmickery on 22nd May. Two pairs on Fidra, no nest found, six birds and one nest on The Lamb on 5th June. The three pairs on

Inchkeith included two broods of three. Two or more pairs observed on Inchmickery on 31st May. Seven around The Lamb, Fidra and Craigleith on 1st September, one on Inchkeith on 4th. Two on Inchcolm on 14th September. One on Carr Craig on 21st November. At least two on Craigleith and six on Bass Rock on 25th November.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

26 on Fidra by 2nd April. 23 on Inchkeith on 4th September. On 14th September on Inchcolm, a pair in the harbour still tending and defending a near-fledged chick. Two others present

HERRING GULL

120 already present on Craigleith in late January. About 200 on Inchkeith on 4th September. Around 105 present on Inchcolm on 14th September. Up to 500 on Craigleith and 200 on Bass Rock on 25th November.

KITTIWAKE

Four pairs present on Fidra by 4th April. 114 on Inchkeith on 4th September.

COMMON TERN

Up to eight birds on the Navy mooring buoy No. 1 (yellow) on 31st May. Eleven birds were on Jubilee Tower of the FRB on 12th June. On Long Craig 210 nests recorded, max of 171 aon. It would appear that the Rosyth Dockyard birds joined the Long Craig colony this year. 54 pulli ringed. Ten at Inchkeith on 4th September. Two in the south bay of Inchcolm on 14th September.

SANDWICH TERN

First of the year were five on 4th April near Gullane Point. One near Inchmickery on 22nd May. Two over Inchkeith on 30th May and two on the Navy mooring buoy No. 1 (yellow) on 31st. Post-breeding birds were present on Long Craig from 27th June into early September. Max count 305 adults 60 immature on 4th August. Birds were also at roosts on 16th August of 30 at Gullane and 40 at Yellowcraig, near Eyebroughy. Five still near Fidra on 28th. Eleven near Craigleith and Eyebroughy on 1st September and 38 at Inchkeith on 4th. Ten were around the harbour area of Inchcolm on 14th September. Two also recorded in week ending 21st October near North Berwick.

ROSEATE TERN

In addition to the breeding birds mentioned above, two pairs observed mating on the Navy-mooring buoy No.1 (yellow) in the upper firth on 31st May. Three individuals were seen at another site, but did not breed.

RAZORBILL

Three were on The Lamb on 2nd January and six near Bass rock and Craigleith on 2nd February. One was offshore at Inchkeith on 4th September and five off Inchcolm on 14th September.

GUILLEMOT

Over 130 birds on The Lamb in breeding plumage on 2nd January. 52 birds on Craigleith stacks on 23rd January. 200 there and Isle of May on 2nd February, some mating. By 14th February 100s on Fidra and Isle of May. Thirty birds passing Inchgarvie on 31st May. Thousands at Craigleith by 6th June. Twelve offshore at Inchkeith on 4th September. One on Swallowcraig, at Inchcolm, on 14th September.

PUFFIN

Two dozen seen on 9th April on Craigleith. Five seen at Inchmickery on 17th April. c30 seen on land and sea there on 31st May. One off Craigleith and another off Bass Rock on 25th November.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF OTHER BIRD SIGHTINGS (including breeding records)

RED THROATED DIVER

One southeast of Craigleith on 22nd January. Five near to Eyebroughy at the end of September. Present in late October, and two flying close off Inchkeith on 21st November.

GREY HERON

One on The Lamb on 28th August. Two on The Lamb on 5th September.

MANX SHEARWATER

Four seen west of Inchkeith on 29th May on RSPB puffin cruise. On the 29th May one past Isle of May, on 31st May, one west of Inchcolm and another four further up river. Nine passing Inchgarvie on 31st May.

MUTE SWAN

Three on the sea at Bass Rock on 11th April.

GREYLAG GOOSE

Eight near Craigleith on 1st February. One on Fidra camera on 27th March, four on 2nd April, and two on 16th May. Seven on Craigleith were joined by a flock of 24 on 25th November.

GREY GOOSE sp

About 55 heading north, high over Inchkeith on 6th November.

CANADA GOOSE

One in the south bay of Inchcolm on 31st May.

SHELDUCK

A pair on Inchmickery on 22nd May. Eight at Inchkeith Harbour on 30th May. Four on Inchcolm on 31st May.

MALLARD

A nest containing eight eggs found on 5th June on Fidra. Two females seen on Craigleith, one with a clutch of ten eggs. Three past Eyebroughy on 1st September. A pair on Inchcolm on 6th November.

COMMON SCOTER

A possible at Inchkeith on 4th September.

LONG-TAILED DUCK

One close off the south end of Carr Craig on 21st November and one off the east cliffs of Craigleith on 25th November.

GOLDENEYE

Two off Craigleith in early May. One at Inchcolm on 6th November.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

One near Eyebroughy on 2nd January. One near to Eyebroughy in late September. Seven past Carr Craig and eight at south end of Inchmickery on 21st November.

BUZZARD

One seen on Inchkeith on 6th and 21st November.

SPARROWHAWK

One seen on Inchkeith on 6th and 21st November. Also at Inchcolm on the latter date.

PEREGRINE

One on Fidra on 1st January. Ones and twos seen regularly through the first three months of 2004, mostly on Fidra, occasionally Bass Rock. A pair mating on Fidra on 2nd February. Two juvs reported on Fidra Web cam on 3/6. Three seen there with both adults on 5th June. Reported from Craigleith again this year. One over Forth Rail Bridge on 12th June. One at Inchcolm on 14th September. One on Inchkeith, Inchcolm and Inchmickery on 21st November. One on Craigleith and a possible juvenile on Bass Rock on 25th November.

KESTREL

A female seen at Inchcolm on 14th September.

MERLIN

One on Isle of May on 31st March. A female or immature seen at Isle of May on 3rd April.

OYSTERCATCHER

Three birds on Craigleith on 9th April. Three nests on Inchmickery on 22nd May, still present on 31st. Two nests on Fidra and one (predated) on Eyebroughy on 5th June. A flock of 18 also seen on The Lamb. Eight pairs on Inchkeith on 30th May. On the next day at Inchcolm there were 11-12 territories, including five nests with eggs. A pair with no nest present on Carr Craig on 29th May. 16 passing Bass Rock on 31st July. 11 near Eyebroughy on 16th August. 29 on Eyebroughy on 1st September and six on Inchcolm on 14th. Over 35 at Inchkeith on 6th November. 90 on Inchkeith and two on Carr Craig on 21st November. Two on Craigleith and three on Bass Rock on 25th November.

KNOT

Two on Inchkeith on 21st November.

PURPLE SANDPIPER

Fourteen on 2nd January near Eyebroughy. Three on Inchmickery on 17th April. Two on Cow and Calves on 22nd May. Three near Eyebroughy on 1st September. One on Inchkeith on 21st November. Eight on Craigleith and two on Bass Rock on 25th November.

DUNLIN

Four at Bass Rock on 6th August.

WHIMBREL

One reported from Fidra via the SSC camera on 9th March. Two on Eyebroughy on 1st September.

CURLEW

17 at Eyebroughy on 1st September, two on Inchcolm on 14th. 42 at Inchkeith on 6th November and 37 on 21st.

REDSHANK

Two on The Lamb on 1st September. One on Swallowcraig, Inchcolm, on 14th. One on Inchkeith on 6th November and two on 21st.

WOODCOCK

One 28th October on the Bass Rock and one in the beginning of November.

TURNSTONE

25 seen on Inchmickery on 17th April, one there and two on Cow and Calves on 22nd May. Eight

near to Eyebroughy on 16th August. At least 22 on The Lamb and Eyebroughy on 1st September. Six on Inchkeith on 4th and five on Inchcolm on 14th September. At least 12 on Inchkeith on 6th November and 15 on 21st. Five on Craigleith and four on Bass Rock on 25th November.

GREAT SKUA

One seen west of Inchkeith on RSPB puffin cruise 29th May. One in the harbour area of Inchcolm on 14th September.

ARCTIC SKUA

One past Kirkhaven, Isle of May on 1st August. Seven near to Inchkeith on 4th September. One off the east end of Inchcolm on 14th September.

COMMON GULL

Four near Craigleith on 15th August.

SANDWICH TERN

Two over Inchkeith on 30th May.

LITTLE AUK

One by Bass Rock on 29th February.

FERAL PIGEON

At least 19 "sites" on Inchmickery on 22nd May. c30 birds seen. Two birds on Cow and Calves on the same date. Twenty birds and two nests found on Fidra on 5th June. Present in breeding season on Craigleith. Also on Inchkeith on 30th May. Nesting on Carr Craig on 29th May. Over a thousand on Inchkeith on 4th September and common on Inchcolm on 14th. A thousand on Inchkeith on 6th and 21st November. Two on Carr Craig on this latter date. At least 200 on Craigleith and 50 on Bass Rock on 25th November.

WOODPIGEON

A pair with nest on the north side and a single bird on the south side of Inchcolm on 31st May. Four birds, two nests (one empty, but new, the other a clutch of two) seen on Inchcolm on 14th September.

SWALLOW

Small numbers passing westwards at Inchcolm on 14th September.

WREN

Male singing on Craigleith on 6th June. Several on Inchkeith on 4th September. Several on Inchcolm on 14th September and on Inchkeith and Inchcolm on 6th November. At least 15 on Inchkeith and several on Inchcolm on 21st November. Three still singing on Craigleith on 25th November.

MEADOW PIPIT

Two on Inchcolm on 14th September.

ROCK PIPIT

Two pairs on Craigleith on or 6th June. Six on Inchkeith on 6th and 21st November. Two birds on Craigleith and three on Bass Rock on 25th November.

PIED WAGTAIL

A bird present on Fidra on 5th June although no sign of breeding noted. One on Inchcolm on 31st May.

DUNNOCK

On Inchkeith, two on 4th September and one on 21st November. One on Inchcolm on this latter date.

ROBIN

Three seen on Inchkeith on 4th September. At least six on Inchcolm on 14th September. Several on Inchkeith and Inchcolm on 6th November. Ten on Inchkeith and several on Inchcolm on 21st November.

SONG THRUSH

At least five on Inchkeith on 21st November and two on Craigleith on 25th.

BLACKBIRD

Present on Inchkeith on 30th May. Several seen plus one juvenile on Inchcolm on 31st May. Five on Inchkeith on 4th September. Two on Inchcolm on 14th September. At least two on Inchkeith and six on Inchcolm on 6th November. Eleven on Inchkeith and several on Inchcolm on 21st November. Up to five seen on Craigleith on 25th November.

FIELDFARE

Three on Isle of May camera on 3rd April. Also on Bass Rock camera in the first week on November.

REDWING

On Bass Rock camera in first week on November.

BLUE TIT

One nesting in the garden on Inchcolm on the 31st May. One on Inchcolm on 6th November.

JACKDAW

On Inchcolm on 31st May, four adults were seen, plus one nest with a brood.

CARRION CROW

One on Bass Rock, 2nd February. One or two seen over Inchmickery on 22nd May and two on The Lamb on 5th June. Two present on Carr Craig on 29th May and also on Inchkeith on 30th. Two on Inchcolm on 14th September. One on Inchkeith on 6th and two on 21st November.

CHAFFINCH

Up to four, on Inchcolm on 14th September. At least two there on 21st November.

GOLDFINCH

Six on Inchkeith and about 50 on Inchcolm on 6th November. Up to c30 on Inchkeith on 21st

LINNET

At least two on Inchcolm on 31st May. Eight seen on Inchcolm on 14th September. In addition, one of this year's empty nests found in an elder on this date. On 6th November, at least four present on Inchcolm. Between 30-60 present on Inchkeith on 21st and more than six on Craigleith on 25th November.

MAMMALS 2004

WHALE sp

A 40-foot whale on Fife side of the firth reported on 4th August.

HARBOUR PORPOISE

A partly eaten corpse measuring three feet long was found in the west bay, North Berwick on 6th January and a live one seen in the east bay on 24th. On 19th July, an adult and calf were seen chasing mackerel between North Berwick and Bass Rock. A single was also seen near the Bass on the 25th.

BOTTLE-NOSED DOLPHIN

On 16th February twenty seen heading west seen from North Berwick. On 31st August one past Craigleith, possibly a bottle nosed dolphin.

GREY SEAL

Up to 15 present on Craigleith, especially the southwest, during the first three months of 2004. Two were on east side of Isle of May on 15th February and one on Bass helipad on 21-22nd. Spring records included one on Isle of May on 10th May.

In September, at least 22 were on Iron Craig, Inchkeith on 4th and eight on Craigleith on 7th.

By 12th October, there were eleven pups on the Isle of May and by 28th c90 pups on the beach there. On another part on the May, (Rona), cows were further inland

By 4th November on the Isle of May, there are over 150 pups on the beach, (Pilgrim's Haven). Several of the older, pups have now begun to moult and its probable that a few 3wk old ones have now been abandoned by their mothers

At Inchkeith on 6th November, 31 adults, including 2+ bulls, plus 27 pups present, mostly at the south end of the island. The oldest pup was c. 14 - 16 days. In addition, one cow with a pup (c. 3 weeks old) was present on Carr Craig. On Inchcolm, one cow and pup in the North Bay, plus seven adults (incl. 1 bull) and eight pups (one dead) in the South bay. The oldest was c. 14 days. One other cow was seen. (Total for Inchcolm, nine adults and nine pups). On

Inchmickery, one bull and five cows ashore at east landing. No pups present.

Week ending 11th November: Pilgrims Haven, Isle of May, about 150 pups can be seen. Some of the oldest have left the beach others are moulting. Craigleith: Up to ten pups on the island and about 15 adults nearby.

By 18th November: Pilgrims Haven In the last week a branded cow was hauled out. It read '98' or possibly '9B'. Sea Mammal Research Unit has been informed. (Branding has been carried out in several places around the world, from the Sable Is. to Australia, where it has now been banned) At Craigleith a few more pups have been born this week

Inchkeith, 21st November; the main pupping areas are (1) Southern point, (2) South-East coastline, (3) Kirkcaldy harbour (northeast from lighthouse) and (4) North Bay (West Side) or Kirkcaldy Harbour. About seven older pups from the visit made on 6th had left the island. At (1) there were 29 pups including two dead. At (2) there were ten pups including two dead. (3) had 14 pups including one dead and (4) had two recently born pups. 55 pups not including those believed to have vacated the colonies. 54 adults were counted around the island, including at least four bulls. Many pups were less than a week old (especially at 3). Further births are expected over the next few weeks. At Inchcolm, six pups including one dead (from previous visit). No births since 6th. One bull and a cow still at the colony. Four cows also on Swallowcraig. No seals at Carr Craig on this date.

Grey Seal pups are only occasionally born on the Lamb, Fidra and Eyebroughy, i.e. one or two each year. Eyebroughy was viewed from the mainland on 18th November but there were no signs of seals. Due to time, expense, etc, and the perceived low value of visiting these islands, the others were not visited this year.

COMMON SEAL

Seven on Inchmickery on 22nd May and two on rocks at the south end there on 6th November are the only records.

RABBIT

One adult and up to four young seen on Inchmickery on 22nd May and one on 31st. A small corpse seen on Fidra on 5th June. At least seven recorded on Inchkeith on 30th May and twenty on Inchkeith on 4th September.

HOUSE MOUSE

One on Inchkeith on 4th September.

BROWN RAT

On 21st November, one seen running across the entrance to South Fort, Inchkeith. Although there have been a number of suspected sightings of live animals over the years, including 1st June last year, this is the first confirmed record for many years.

BLACK RAT

Two seen on Inchcolm on 14th September.

INVERTEBRATES 2004

A small tortoiseshell was seen on Inchmickery on 17th April.

Larvae of garden tiger moth and an adult small white were seen there on 22nd May.

On 30th May on Inchkeith, the following were seen; small tortoiseshell, small white, large white, green-veined white, and peacock. This latter species is the first record for this island.

On 4th September the following species were recorded on Inchkeith; silver y moth, green-veined white, large white, small white, small tortoiseshell, red admiral, painted lady, and peacock.

On the 14th September the following were seen on Inchcolm; red admiral, painted lady and small white.

Seven-spot ladybird was recorded on 22nd May on Inchmickery.

See appendix 4 for summary of butterfly records.

FLORA 2004

Thanks to Ron Morris and Anna White for providing the bulk of these records from their visits to Inchkeith on 4th September and Inchcolm on 14th September

TREE MALLOW (*Lavatera arborea*)

The distribution of tree mallow was queried at a meeting of the Forth Seabird Group. Current knowledge is that it occurs on the following islands;

Bass Rock	common
Craigleith	common
Fidra	common, dominant in parts
Inchcolm	a few plants, apparently spreading
The Lamb	a few plants
Inchkeith	past records, current status unknown
Inchgarvie	not recorded recently
Isle of May	May have been attempts to introduce for bird trapping, but they failed.

HENBANE (*Hyoscyamus niger*)

Henbane has much increased on Inchkeith from previous visits (at least 20 times according to RM!) It was found this year on Inchcolm, where a single plant was found overlooking the harbour, growing on soil disturbed earlier this year. There are historical records of this species on Inchcolm, but it has not be encountered there in living memory.

DWARF MALLOW (*Malva neglecta*)

Newly recorded on Inchkeith and Inchcolm (uncommon in Scotland, but a few records around the Forth)

FIELD PANSY (*Viola arvensis*)

Newly recorded on Inchkeith

HAWTHORN (*Crataegus monogyna*)

Newly recorded on Inchkeith (RM had seen this specimen on Inchkeith for over 20 years but overlooked recording it!). One or two specimens planted this year by Historic Scotland at the picnic area on Inchcolm, a new species there.

JUNIPER (*Juniperus communis*)

One or two specimens planted this year by Historic Scotland at the picnic area on Inchcolm, new species

SYCAMORE (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)

One or two specimens planted this year by Historic Scotland at the picnic area on Inchcolm, already occurs on the island.

WALL BARLEY (*Hordeum murinum*)

Newly recorded on Inchkeith this year.

RED CAMPION (*Silene dioica*)

Newly recorded on Inchkeith and Inchcolm

PRICKLY SOW-THISTLE (*Sonchus asper*)

Newly recorded on Inchkeith.

LESSER STITCHWORT (*Stellaria graminea*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm

FRENCH CRANE'SBILL (*Geranium endressii*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm

HERB ROBERT (*Geranium robertianum*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm

NASTURTIUM (*Tropaeolum majus*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm (garden escape)

FRANCHET'S COTONEASTER (*Cotoneaster franchetti*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm (garden escape)

MOCK ORANGE (*Philadelphus sp*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm (garden escape, variety not specified)

FUCHSIA (*Fuchsia magellanica*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm (garden escape)

BLACK BINDWEED (*Fallopia convolvulus*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm (garden escape)

RED BISTORT (*Persicaria amplexicaule var. superba*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm (garden escape)

HEDGE WOUNDWORT (*Stachys sylvatica*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm

RED VALERIAN (*Centranthus ruber*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm

OXFORD RAGWORT (*Senecio squalidus*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm

DOWNY OAT-GRASS (*Helicotrichon pubescens*)

Newly recorded on Inchcolm

SUMMARY OF ISLE OF MAY SEABIRD SPECIES ACCOUNTS IN 2004 (Using data supplied by MP Harris, S Wanless, S Murray, E Mackley)

The all-island count of fulmars gave 236 AOS, down about 5% from 2003. First egg on 16th May.

Shags were late again this year. The first laying date was 17th April. 687 AOS represents 71% of last year's figure.

1,101 eider nests were found this year, down 12% on 2003.

Great black-backed gull occupied 25 nests during 2004, another increase and two more than 2003.

An estimate was made of 2,428 herring gull nests and 1,221 lesser black-backed gulls. This means that the overall gull population decreased by c4% since last year. Herring numbers declined by about 5% and lessers by c2.5%. This reverses last year's increases for both species.

Kittiwake was very late. First courtship feeding on 7th May. Increase of 16% over last year to 3,876 aon. The first egg was not until 22nd May, first chick on 18 June, and the first fledged on 27th July.

There was a maximum of 151 nests of Sandwich terns, a substantial increase on last year's 58.

Of common and Arctic terns, it was estimated that 62 nests were common 666 were Arctic terns.

The guillemot population is estimated at 22,970 individuals, which converts to 20,332 pairs a further decrease in individuals of 24 % on 2003. Dates for the first egg laid and the first one fledged were 24th April and 23rd June.

There were 3,313 razorbills, another increase, 6% on 2003. This converts to 2,677 pairs. The first egg was noted on 2th April, the first chick 28th May, normal for the Isle of May.

The first puffin carrying fish was seen on 17th May, a week earlier than 2003, and the first young fledged on 28-29th June. Laying commenced around 6 April.

SUMMARY OF ISLE OF MAY SEABIRD SPECIES PRODUCTIVITY ACCOUNTS IN 2004 (Data supplied by MP Harris, S Wanless, S Murray, E Mackley)

Despite the fact that the ban on commercial fishing on the Wee Bankie remained in place, the 2004 breeding season was the worst on record for the Isle of May seabirds with fulmar and common guillemot having their worst seasons since monitoring started and success of shags, kittiwakes, razorbills and puffins all being well below the long term average. Severe weather conditions at the end of June clearly played a part in the poor performance, particularly in the case of shags and puffins. However, attendance and chick growth data suggest that feeding conditions were very bad and dietary data suggest that 1+ sandeels were scarce and 0 group were of poor quality in terms of size.

To date the main threat to Isle of May seabirds has been considered the sandeel fishery. However, concern is now being expressed that dramatic changes in the North Sea ecosystem, particularly the plankton community, are occurring.

The 2004 breeding season was the poorest ever recorded for most seabirds on the Isle of May. Adult return rates of all the species followed were normal or above average indicating that survival was generally good. Shags, kittiwakes and common guillemots all bred late. Most species appeared to find conditions difficult, with colony attendance being low. Problems were exacerbated by strong winds and prolonged heavy rain in late June that resulted in the deaths of large numbers of young shags and puffins. Although, lesser sandeels remained the main food of young puffins and kittiwakes, guillemots and razorbills fed their young mainly clupeids and shags brought in a wide variety of bottom-living fish.

There has been no commercial sandeel fishery on the Wee Bankie since 2000. Studies on the Isle of May in 2000-2003 generally reported an improvement in breeding success in some species (notably shag and kittiwake) thus providing circumstantial evidence that closure of the fishery could potentially have an immediate effect on

seabird productivity. However, the situation was radically different in 2004 with all species having very low breeding success. 2004 was also characterised by sandeels, particularly the 1+ age class, being largely absent from the diet of many seabirds. While the reason for these changes is currently unknown, the possibility that they reflect major changes in the North Sea ecosystem due to climate change is a strong candidate.

Northern fulmar breeding success (0.21 chicks per pair) was less than half that of 2003. This is the lowest recorded for the species on the Isle of May. Most failures seemed to occur during incubation.

European shags had very low productivity. It was a late season, many did not breed and those that did were unsuccessful. This situation was compounded by extremely heavy and prolonged rain on 23rd June and to a lesser extent on 26th June, when chicks, which were not yet waterproof, were too large to be brooded by the parents. Breeding success was 0.25 chicks per pair (compared to 1.83 in 2003), 0.19 per nest built. The adult return rate of 82.2% is the lowest value since 1998-99, but is still close to the long term average

From release/recapture, lesser black-backed gull productivity was calculated as 0.59 and herring gull was 1.14.

Black-legged kittiwakes bred extremely late. Clutch size was 1.65, typical for the Isle of May in recent years, although 10% of nests started did not produce a clutch. The low success (0.27 chicks fledged per active nest) reversed the improvement noted in recent years. Many chicks also died after fledging. The black-legged kittiwakes return rate (81.8%) was normal.

Common guillemots began breeding later than last year by about 7-10 days. Breeding success (0.51 chicks per pair) was the lowest recorded on the Isle of May. Common guillemot return rate (90.1%) was higher than in recent years, but slightly lower than the long-term average.

Razorbill breeding success (0.54 chicks per pair) was below that for both 2002 and 2003, and much lower than the long-term average. Most losses occurred at the egg stage, with 82% of hatchlings eventually fledging, as last year. The return rate

of razorbills (84.3%) was higher than the long-term average. For the first time since monitoring began, small clupeids, rather than sandeels, were the main item in the diet of chicks.

Atlantic puffin breeding success, (0.60 chicks per pair), was one of the lowest ever recorded on the Isle of May and well below the long-term mean. In part, this was due to flooding of burrows during the severe weather of 23rd and 26th June but chicks grew poorly suggesting feeding conditions were bad. In fact, peak weight of chicks and weight at fledging were the lowest recorded over the last 30 years. Return rate (87.9%) was high indicating that over-winter survival had been good.

Eider had a 91% hatching success this year.

Sandwich tern had a productivity of 0.03 and combined productivity common and Arctic terns was 0.1.

St Abb's Head National Nature Reserve

Summary of Seabird counts in 2004

1. Whole Colony Counts

Species	Count Unit	2004 Total	Change on 2003	Comments
Fulmar	Apparently occupied site	153	- 42%	Lowest count since 1958
Shag	Apparently occupied nest	369	+ 1%	Continues upward trend of recent years following big crash in 1993/4
Herring Gull	Apparently occupied nest	261	- 12%	Population fairly stable in recent years
Kittiwake	Apparently occupied nest	6,239	-6%	Lowest count for over 40 years

2. Counts at Monitoring Plots

Species	Count Unit	Sum of plot means	Change on 2003	Comments
Guillemot	Individuals	1,445	- 20%	Lowest count since 1994
Razorbill	Individuals	106	- 26%	Lowest count since 1986

3. Productivity

Species	Mean productivity (chicks fledged / active nest)	Change on 2003	Comments
Shag	0.30	- 82%	Lowest value since monitoring began in 1990
Kittiwake	0.27	- 72%	Joint lowest value (with 1998) since monitoring began in 1987
Fulmar			No formal monitoring this year but from casual observation only one chick known to have fledged from the whole colony

SUMMARY OF OTHER TERN SITES IN THE FORTH (Data supplied by East Scotland Tern Conservation Group (ESTCG))

Grangemouth Docks

106 apparently incubating adults/pairs of common terns at Grangemouth

Leith Docks

639 clutches of common terns recorded.

Aberlady Bay

One nest of Arctic tern

Methil Docks

No count made this year.

No birds nested at other recently used sites.

FSG FOOTNOTES

DATES FOR MAIN ISLAND COUNTS

Bass Rock	29 May
Craigleith	29 May, 6 June
The Lamb	5 June
Fidra	5 June
Eyebroughy	5 June
Inchkeith	30 May
Carr Craig	29 May
Haystack	29 May
Inchcolm	31 May
Inchmickery	22 May
Inchgarvie	29 May
Forth Rail Bridge	12 June
Long Craig	late May to Aug
Isle of May	late May to June

TERNs IN EAST SCOTLAND

Data supplied by the East Scotland Tern Conservation Group (ESTCG) whose monitoring area stretches from the Borders to the southeast boundary of the Moray Firth. Collated by Pete Gordon. Counting unit is in pairs. 2003 totals in brackets.

Totals for East Scotland	<u>2004</u>	<u>(2003)</u>
Common tern	1385	1588
Arctic tern	1047	820
Roseate tern	4	8
Sandwich tern	984	1064
Little tern	38	39-42

Firth of Forth Breeding Terns

These totals include all reported island and mainland sites, with 2003 totals in brackets. (Methil docks not checked)

Common tern	968	(1182)
Arctic tern	667	(577)
Roseate tern	4	(8)
Sandwich tern	151	(58)
Little tern	0	(0)

OTHER NEWS

Forth Islands Special Protection Area Extension

Scottish Ministers announced, on 16th February 2004, the designation of Long Craig as a part of the Forth Islands SPA. The SPA now comprises the islands of Inchmickery, Isle of May, Fidra, The Lamb, Craigleith and Bass Rock. The SPA was originally created on 25 April 1990.

Imperial Dock Lock Special Protection Area

On 23rd September 2004, the Imperial Dock Lock, Leith was also designated a special protection area, one of the smallest in the UK. It qualifies by regularly supporting important breeding populations of common tern (558 pairs, 1997-2001; 5% GB). This is the largest colony of this species in the Forth, one of the largest in Britain.

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The Scottish Natural History Archive

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Appendix 1

**Lothian Ringing Group
Seabird Ringing Totals 2004**

	Full-grown	Pulli	Retraps/ Recoveries	Total
Craigleith				
Fulmar	1	50	0	51
Cormorant	0	80	0	80
Shag	14	154	27	195
Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	0	1	1
Kittiwake	2	5	0	7
Guillemot	0	1	0	1
Razorbill	2	22	2	26
Puffin	10	21	1	32
TOTAL	29	333	31	393
Inchgarvie				
Fulmar	1	68	0	69
TOTAL	1	68	0	69
Inchkeith				
Fulmar	0	51	1	52
Shag	0	16	5	21
Herring Gull	0	0	1	1
Kittiwake	30	162	11	203
Razorbill	0	1	0	1
Puffin	5	15	0	20
TOTAL	35	245	18	298
ANNUAL TOTAL:	65	646	49	760

Appendix 2

ADDITIONAL MAINLAND COUNTS

CARLINGNOSE POINT 12th June 2004

Supplied by Dave Jones

Count of nests from MV "Maid of the Forth"

FULMAR – Four sites

QUARRY, DEEP SEA WORLD, N. QUEENSFERRY 12th June 2004

Supplied by Dave Jones

FULMAR – Sixteen sites

SEAL SURVEY OF THE FORTH ISLANDS NOVEMBER 2004

Bill Bruce, Ron Morris, Lesley Fairweather, Paul Burns, John Done, Allan Murray
 Ian Cumming, Anna White, Kevin O’Kane
 Frazer McNaughton

Summary of counts carried out on 6th November 2004

	Grey Seals				Common seals
	Bulls	Cows	Pups live	Pups dead	
Inchkeith	2+	29	27	0	0
Inchmickery	1	5	0	0	2
Carr Craig	0	1	1	0	0
Inchcolm	1	8	8	1	0
Haystack	0	0	0	0	0

Summary of counts carried out on 21st November 2004

	Grey Seals				Common seals
	Bulls	Cows	Pups live	Pups dead	
Inchkeith	4	50	50	5	0
Inchmickery	0	0	1	0	0
Carr Craig	0	0	0	0	0
Inchcolm	1	5	6	1	0
Haystack	0	0	0	0	0

Summary of counts carried out on 25th November 2004

	Grey Seals				Common seals
	Bulls	Cows	Pups live	Pups dead	
Craigeith	2	19	36	3	0
Bass Rock	0	3	3	0	0

Appendix 4

BUTTERFLIES RECORDED ON FORTH ISLANDS 2004

	Inchgarvie	Inchmickery	Inchcolm	Inchkeith	Fidra	Craigleith	May
Red admiral			>2 on 14/9	6 on 4/9			
Painted Lady			>1 on 14/9	13 on 4/9			
Small tortoiseshell		1 on 17/4		Present 30/5 3 on 4/9			
Peacock				Present 30/5 first record for the island Also 5 on 4/9			
Small white		1 on 22/5	Several on 14/9	Present 30/5. Also 35 on 4/9			
Large white				Present 30/5. Also 20 on 4/9			
G-v white				Present 30/5. Also 7 on 4/9			
Silver Y				3 on 4/9			
Garden Tiger		Larva on 22/5					

RINGING RECOVERIES 2003-4

2004

Shag

Ring number	1389831	Also bearing a white plastic ring bearing the letters "PSS" in black
Ringed	Nestling	18/06/2003 Isle of May
Found	Dead	17/04/2004 Inchmickery

Reporter Dave Jones

Shag

Ring number	Carrying a white ring "CHL", no metal ring reported		
Ringed	Age unknown	12/06/03	Isle of May
Found	Dead	28/02/04	Pittenweem (556027)

Reporter Grant Robertson, Dunfermline.
Found with a pale brown belly, perhaps immature.