



# Forth Seabird Group

## Forth Islands Bird Report

### 2007

Compiled by Bill Bruce

MARCH 2008

#### SEABIRD SPECIES SUMMARIES 2007

##### FULMAR

Complete Forth Islands count of 1384 AOS. After last year's increase, numbers are down by 11% and are back to 2004 level. Lamb and Fidra were the only islands to show an increase, all other islands showed decreases.

##### CORMORANT

Complete Forth Islands count of 335 AON, down 3% (i.e. 12 nests) on last year. On Craigleith numbers dropped from 109 to 79 (i.e. -30%) while on neighbouring Lamb numbers increased from 62 to 106 (i.e. +71%). Once again both Haystack and Carr Craig were occupied and almost identical counts.

##### SHAG

Complete Forth Islands count of 1133 AON, down by 13 nests (i.e. 1%) on last year. Biggest changes were on Craigleith (up 81 AON or 69%); Inchkeith (up 22 AON or 13%), Fidra (down 29 AON or 15%) and May Isle (down 86 AON or 18%). Haystack had no breeding Shags this year. On this island they have normally nested under some pallets but these have now rotted and collapsed.

##### GANNET

No count made. The most recent count was in 2004 of 48,065 AOS.

##### EIDER

These were only counted on Inchgarvie and Carr Craig where numbers were very similar to last year's.

##### GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Complete Forth Islands count of 58 AON – up 8 (or 16%) on last year.

##### LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Incomplete count of 1691 AON. The total from the same islands last year was 1754 AON. This would suggest a drop of about 5%.

Once again, the substantial colonies on Craigleith, Inchkeith and Inchcolm were not counted.

##### HERRING GULL

Incomplete count of 2999 AON. The count from the same islands last year was 3310 AON. This would suggest a drop of about 9%.

Once again, the substantial colonies on Craigleith, Inchkeith and Inchcolm were not counted.

##### KITTIWAKE

Complete Forth Islands count of 5164 AON which is an increase of 4%. The biggest changes were: Bass Rock down by 128 (i.e. 25%); Lamb down 106 (i.e. 52%); Inchkeith up 104 (i.e. 35%); May Isle up 257 (i.e. 8%)

##### COMMON TERN

Overall, numbers are up by 57 nests (29%). On May Isle there was a reduction of 16 nests (16%) while Long Craig showed an increase of 80 nests (87%). They continue to breed at Leith Docks

##### ARCTIC TERN

Once again this species only bred on May Isle where an extra 10 pairs bred. This is an increase of 2%.

#### **ROSEATE TERN**

Last year there were 5 pairs breeding. This year only one pair returned to breed and 2 youngsters were confirmed to have fledged.

#### **SANDWICH TERN**

This is the second year when this species has not bred on the Forth islands.

#### **RAZORBILL**

Complete Forth Islands count of 3407 pairs. This is 4% down on last year. Bass Rock and May Isle both showed decreases (30% and 5% respectively while the other islands showed increases.

#### **GUILLEMOT**

Complete Forth Islands count of 21,039 birds on breeding ledges which is 7,500 (26%) down on last year. Fidra was the only island to show an increase while Bass Rock dropped by 2110 (65%) and May Isle dropped by 4674 birds (22%).

#### **PUFFIN**

Incomplete count of 1021. This does not include any of the main colonies.

Table 1: Summary of seabird counts for the Forth Islands, 2007

	Bass Rock	Craigleith	Lamb	Fidra	Eyebr-oughty	Inchkeith	Carr Craig	Inchcolm	Haystack	Inch-mickery + Cow & Calves	Inch Garvie / Forth Bridge	Long Craig	May Isle	Total
<b>Fulmar (AOS)</b>	48	106	9	203	0	315	0	172	0	32	218	0	281	1,384
<b>Cormorant (nests)</b>	0	79+	106	0	0	93	29	0	28	0	0	0	0	335
<b>Shag (nests)</b>	28	199	73	169	0	187	14	7	0	57	0	0	399	1,133
<b>Gannet (nests)</b>	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Eider (nests)</b>	X	x	X	x	0	x	2	x	0	x	61	5	x	68
<b>Great B-b Gull (nests)</b>	X	17	4	2	0	5	1	0	1-2	1+	1	0	30	62
<b>Lesser B-b Gull (nests)</b>	X	x	X	x	0	x	3+	x	c7	x	c18	0	1,665	1,693
<b>Herring Gull (nests)</b>	X	x	X	x	0	x	c46	x	5-6	x	c94	0	2,854	2,999
<b>Kittiwake (nests)</b>	377	508	96	244	0	399	0	116	0	0	0	0	3,424	5,164
<b>Common Tern (nests)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	172	83	255
<b>Arctic Tern (nests)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	525	525
<b>Roseate Tern (nests)</b>														1
<b>Sandwich Tern (nests)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Razorbill (pairs/sites)</b>	119	181	77	128	0	56	0	6	0	0	0	0	2840 (3635 ind)	567
<b>Guillemot (birds on cliffs)</b>	1120	1150	1395	588	0	16	0	1 close inshore	0	0	0	0	16,770	21,039
<b>Puffin (birds unless otherwise stated)</b>	X	x	x	262 on sea & land	0	970 on sea and land	0	39 on sea and land	0	12 close inshore	0	0	X	1,021

AOS=Apparently occupied sites, OB=occupied burrows; x=birds present but not counted; 0=none breeding; c=circa;

## MAIN BREEDING SEABIRDS - ADDITIONAL COUNTS AND COMMENTS

### FULMAR

27 June, Inchcolm: 121 AOS counted on north side from boat.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1 bird flew by.

### CORMORANT

24 March, Bass Rock: 1 ashore near landing stage.

1 June, Inchgarvie: 3 roosting.

10 June, Fidra: 2 birds seen ashore, no nest.

16 Dec, Craigleith: 1 on rocks.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 3+.

### SHAG

2 June, Craigleith: 9 nests on east cliffs. \*

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 4+.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 6+.

### GANNET

24 March, Bass Rock: many birds back at the Rock.

### EIDER

2 April, Craigleith: 1 duck ashore.

9 June Craigleith: several ducks on nests.

10 June, Fidra: several ducks on nests.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 6+

### GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

31 May, Haystack: 3 adults present; 1 nest with 2 chicks; possible second nest with 3 eggs.

31 May, Inchcolm: 1 adult seen.

1 June, Inchgarvie: 1 nest with 2 chicks.

10 June, Fidra: 2 pairs including 1 nest with 2 chicks on west side; 1 nest with 3 eggs near harbour.

27 June, Inchmickery: 2 pairs apparently breeding on roofs of military buildings.

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 2+ seen.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 5+

### HERRING GULL

17 Nov, Inchkeith: c.100 present.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 100+.

### KITTIWAKE

2 June, Craigleith: c320 nests on east cliffs. \*

### COMMON TERN

1 June, Inchgarvie: 7+ fishing close inshore.

27 June, Inchcolm: 6-7 fishing close inshore.

27 June, Inchmickery: 3+ fishing around island.

### SANDWICH TERN

27 June, Inchcolm: 1 flying near island.

### GUILLEMOT

31 May, Inchcolm: 1 bird very close inshore at north side, west end of island.

2 June, Craigleith: c.1225 birds on east cliffs. \*

27 June, Haystack: 2 birds ashore on north cliffs.

27 June, Inchcolm: 4 ashore on rocks ( 2 on Swallowcraig), plus 1 in water.

27 June, Inchmickery: 2 ashore on north rocks.

### RAZORBILL

2 June, Craigleith: c.48 sites on east cliffs. \*

### PUFFIN

10 June, Fidra: c.394 apparently occupied burrows on Castle Tarbert.

27 June, Haystack: 2 birds close inshore.

27 June, Inchcolm: at least 5 offshore.

27 June, Inchmickery: 27 counted on sea, about half of which were seen coming ashore with fish.

\* An attempt was made to carry out count on Craigleith on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. Conditions were too rough so count was abandoned after counting the east cliffs.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST OF OTHER BIRD SIGHTINGS (including breeding records)

### RED THROATED DIVER

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 2 off NE point.

### GREY HERON

14 Feb, Inchgarvie: 10+ roosting, seen from North Queensferry. Anecdotal accounts suggest this is a regular occurrence.

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 1 present.

### MUTE SWAN

2 June: 4 seen flying east between Craigleith and North Berwick.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1 dead bird at south point.

### GREYLAG GOOSE

15 April, Craigleith: bird seen on nest.

8 Sept, Craigleith: 1 seen flying close to island.

### CANADA GOOSE

3 June, Inchkeith: 3 birds in harbour area.

### SHELDUCK

31 May, Inchcolm: 5 birds ashore at south side, west end.

31 May, Inchmickery: c.5 birds on and offshore.

3 June, Inchkeith: 4 birds seen ashore at harbour, later seen on Long Craig with a 5<sup>th</sup> bird

27 June, Inchcolm: 1 inshore.

27 June, Inchmickery: 4+ present.

### MALLARD

14 April, Craigleith: 3 nests found including 1 with 16 eggs 1 with 6 eggs, one bird incubating.

31 May, Inchcolm: 1 pair flying close inshore.

3 June, Inchkeith: 1 male and 1 female seen separately.

10 June, Fidra: 1 duck flushed from tree mallow.

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 1 drake and 1 duck.

17 Nov, Inchcolm: 1 drake.

### RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1 pair flying off south tip.

### BUZZARD

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1.

### PEREGRINE

3 June, Inchkeith: 1 pair with 2 chicks.

9 June Craigleith: pair with, probably, 2 chicks (one thought to have flown off, other on nest but very close to fledging). Nest at north end of east cliff.

23 June, Inchkeith: both adults and 1 fledged young bird seen near nest site, second juvenile not seen.

3 Nov, Fidra: 1 (heard shortly after landing, in vicinity of Castle).

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 1, possibly 2, birds seen.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1 male.

### KESTREL

6 Oct, Craigleith: 1 present for some time, flying around and perching on cliffs and rocks.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1.

### MERLIN

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 1 male and 1 female flushed on east side. A male (possibly the same bird) was later flushed on west side.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1 female.

### OYSTERCATCHER

31 May, Carr Craig: 1pr present, no nest found.

31 May, Inchcolm: 8 territories including 1 nest with 3 eggs; 1 nest with 2 eggs.

31 May, Inchmickery: 2 territories.

3 June, Inchkeith: 14 territories.

9 June, Craigleith: 1 pair.

10 June, Fidra: 2 pairs.

27 June, Haystack: 1 bird ashore.

27 June, Inchmickery: 2 pairs present, including 1 pair with brood; 2<sup>nd</sup> pair appear to have failed.

17 Nov, Inchkeith: flock of 32, plus at least 4 others.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 24+.

16 Dec, Craigleith: heard.

### WOODCOCK

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 1 seen.

### CURLEW

27 June, Inchmickery: 1 bird ashore.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 24+

16 Dec, Craigleith: flying over.

**REDSHANK**

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 3 birds.  
8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1 bird.

**TURNSTONE**

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 2 birds.  
16 Dec, Craigleith: present.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL**

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 10 around harbour area.

**COMMON GULL**

31 May, Inchgarvie: c.30 on sea off the north side.  
17 Nov, Inchkeith: 1 in harbour area.

**FERAL PIGEON/ROCK PIGEON**

31 May, Carr Craig: 3 nest sites under rocks.  
31 May, Inchcolm: present in numbers.  
1 June, Inchgarvie: present in numbers.  
10 June, Fidra: small numbers.  
27 June, Inchmickery: c.17 flushed from potential nest sites plus 30 birds roosting.  
17 Nov, Inchkeith: 100+.  
8 Dec, Inchkeith: 250+.

**RACING PIGEON**

10 June, Fidra: 1 bird.

**WOODPIGEON**

31 May, Inchcolm: 2 birds.  
27 June, Inchcolm: 3+ birds.

**MEADOW PIPIT**

14/15 April, Craigleith: present.  
17 Nov, Inchcolm: 3.  
8 Dec, Inchkeith: 12+.

**ROCK PIPIT**

14/15 April, Craigleith: present.  
3 June, Inchkeith: 4+ pairs including one feeding a fledged juvenile.  
9 June Craigleith: present.  
10 June, Fidra: 4 pairs.  
3 Nov, Fidra: 3+ birds.  
17 Nov, Inchkeith: 10+.  
17 Nov, Inchcolm: 2.  
16 Dec, Craigleith: several.

**PIED WAGTAIL**

2 April, Craigleith: present.  
14/15 April, Craigleith: present  
31 May, Inchcolm: 1 bird.  
23 June, Inchkeith: 2 juveniles seen (1<sup>st</sup> record of breeding in this island).

**WREN**

2 April, Craigleith: present.  
14/15 April, Craigleith: present.  
31 May, Inchcolm: 2 birds.  
9 June Craigleith: 1 heard singing.  
17 Nov, Inchkeith: 10+.  
17 Nov, Inchcolm: 2.  
8 Dec, Inchkeith: 10+.  
16 Dec, Craigleith: several.

**DUNNOCK**

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1+  
16 Dec, Craigleith: several present.

**ROBIN**

2 April, Craigleith: present.  
31 May, Inchcolm: 1 bird.  
27 June, Inchmickery: 1 bird.  
6 Oct, Craigleith: 1.  
17 Nov, Inchkeith: 2.  
8 Dec, Inchkeith: 8+.  
16 Dec, Craigleith: several.

**SONG THRUSH**

31 May, Inchcolm: 1 bird.  
17 Nov, Inchkeith: at least 3.  
17 Nov, Inchcolm: 1.  
8 Dec, Inchkeith: 3+

**BLACKBIRD**

14/15 April, Craigleith: present.  
31 May, Inchcolm: 1 bird.  
3 June, Inchkeith: 5 birds.  
23 June, Inchkeith: at least 6.  
27 June, Inchmickery: 1 heard singing; nest found with 4 cold/deserted eggs.  
17 Nov, Inchkeith: 20+.  
17 Nov, Inchcolm: 1+.  
8 Dec, Inchkeith: 20+.  
16 Dec, Craigleith: several.

10 June, Fidra: Old blackbird/thrush nest in tree mallow.

## JACKDAW

31 May, Inchcolm: 3 birds.

27 June, Inchcolm: 6-8.

## CARRION CROW

3 June, Inchkeith: 2 birds.

23 June, Inchkeith: 1.

27 June, Inchmickery: 1 empty nest with 2007 refurbishment found in an elder bush.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1.

## STARLING

23 June, Inchkeith: c.12-15 mixed adults and juveniles.

## CHAFFINCH

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 1 female.

## GOLDFINCH

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 3.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 4.

## GREENFINCH

31 May, Inchcolm: 1 bird.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: flock of c.55.

## LINNET

2 April, Craigleith: present.

14/15 April, Craigleith: present.

31 May, Inchcolm: 2 birds.

9 June Craigleith: present.

10 June, Fidra: 5+ birds; 1 nest with 5 eggs and 1 empty, this year's nest.

27 June, Inchmickery: At least 4 birds present on island. 2 nests found containing 3 eggs, however one of these had been displaced, probably by strong winds and was deserted. Also 3 old nests found from previous years. All nests in elder bushes.

1 Sept, Craigleith: nest with young found in tree mallow by a volunteer.

6 Oct, Craigleith: numbers of up to c.20.

3 Nov, Fidra: up to c.15.

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 6+ flying over.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: flock of 40 plus 6 others.

16 Dec, Craigleith: c.30.

## MAMMALS 2007

For a summary of seal breeding numbers, see Appendix 1.

## GREY SEAL

31 May, Haystack: 2 present ashore.

31 May, Inchcolm: 2 on Swallowcraig; 16 on tidal rocks at extreme west end of island.

2 June, Craigleith: 7 ashore.

3 June, Inchkeith: 31+ total for Seal Carr, Iron Craig and Long Craig.

9 June Craigleith: 2 off west side.

27 June, Haystack: 1 on rocks.

27 June, Inchcolm: 25 on rocks mainly at extreme west end of island.

27 June, Oxcars Rocks: 7 hauled out on rocks/landing.

## COMMON SEAL

31 May, Carr Craig: 1 ashore

27 June, Carr Craig: 2 in sea.

## RABBIT

3 June, Inchkeith: 2.

27 June, Inchmickery: 1.

17 Nov, Inchkeith: 6+.

8 Dec, Inchkeith: 12+.

## FLORA 2007

See Appendix 2 for a list of flora for Inchmickery.

## Fungi

16 Oct, Craigleith: A small group earthstars was found growing in tree mallow leaf litter. This was later identified by Roy Watling as the Beaked Earthstar (*Geastrum pectinatum*). It is 'rare' according to Michael Jordan's book.

## ISLE OF MAY

### **SUMMARY OF ISLE OF MAY SEABIRD PRODUCTIVITY 2007 (Based upon M Newell, MP Harris, F Daunt, E Watts, L Quinn & S Wanless (2007) Isle of May Seabird Studies in 2007 - contract report by CEH (Banchory) to JNCC as part of their Integrated Seabird Monitoring Programme).**

The 2007 season was an exceptionally poor one for most species on the Isle of May. Of the six species studied intensively, European shag and razorbill had an average season but common guillemot, Atlantic puffin and Northern fulmar all had the worst season on record, while black-legged kittiwakes had the worst season for nine years. Severe weather conditions played a part in the poor breeding season but difficult feeding conditions were still likely to be the main reason for such low productivity. Return rates were also at all-time lows for common guillemot, Atlantic puffin and black-legged kittiwake and well below average for shag. Although lesser sandeels remained the main food of young Atlantic puffins, razorbills and black-legged kittiwakes, common guillemots fed their young mainly on clupeids, while European shags brought in a wide variety of bottom-living fish. Very few 1+ group sandeels were present in food samples during the chick-rearing period. 2007 continued the recent trend for an increasing proportion of snake pipefish in the diet of several of the seabirds.

Northern fulmar breeding success (0.21 chicks per incubating pair), which, with 2004, was the joint worst season on record.

European shags began breeding earlier than in 2006 and had a productive season. Shag was the only species for which productivity (1.07 chicks per pair) was above the long-term mean. Following high mortality during the winter, return rate at 60.8% took a drop from 2006 and was well below the long-term mean. As in the previous two years, the prey eaten was unusually varied with sandeels making up only 28.3% by mass of the diet, the lowest proportion on record. All sandeels that were recorded during chick-rearing were from older (1+ group) fish.

Black-legged kittiwakes had a very poor breeding season with productivity (0.24 chicks per

completed nest) the lowest since 1999 and well below the long term average. Adult return rate (62.9%) was the lowest on record. The proportion of sandeel in the diet (48% by biomass) was also the lowest recorded.

Common guillemots had their poorest breeding season on record with 0.28 chicks leaving per pair laying. The last four seasons have seen the three lowest breeding successes on record. As in the previous three years, many chicks were left unattended. Surprisingly, fewer were taken by gulls than killed by other guillemots and razorbills. Return rate of adults (75.2%) was also the lowest on record. Adults fed their chicks mainly on sprats with small gadoids the main alternative. Sandeels made up only 1% of the diet by mass. Chicks grew slowly and all the evidence suggested that feeding conditions were poor.

Razorbill breeding was earlier than last year and, in contrast to most other species, breeding success (0.63 chicks leaving per pair) was close to the long-term average. Adult return rate (80.0%) was also close to the long-term average. Chicks were fed mainly 0 group sandeels.

Atlantic puffins had their worst ever breeding season at 0.29 chicks per pair, which is a huge drop on the previous lowest figure. Unprecedented rainfall washed out numerous burrows and those chicks which managed to survive the wet conditions showed slow growth rates and high mortality. Return rate for adults (56.9%) was also the lowest on record. Chicks were mainly fed 0 group sandeels (82% by number, 76% by biomass).



## FSG FOOTNOTES

Reports and monitoring figures for previous years can be found on the group's website: [www.forthseabirdgroup.org.uk](http://www.forthseabirdgroup.org.uk)

## DATES FOR MAIN ISLAND COUNTS

<b>Bass Rock</b>	10 June
<b>Craigleith</b>	9 June
<b>The Lamb</b>	10 June
<b>Fidra</b>	10 June
<b>Eyebroughty</b>	(not visited)
<b>Inchkeith</b>	3 June
<b>Carr Craig</b>	31 May
<b>Haystack</b>	31 May
<b>Inchcolm</b>	31 May
<b>Inchmickery</b>	31 May
<b>Inchgarvie</b>	1 June
<b>Forth Rail Bridge</b>	
<b>Long Craig</b>	late May to June
<b>Isle of May</b>	late May to June

Counts were attempted:

2<sup>nd</sup> June, Craigleith: east cliff was counted then count abandoned due to rough conditions.

9<sup>th</sup> June, Bass Rock: mist too thick to see cliffs.

In recent years Fidra, the Lamb and Inchmickery have been counted by the RSPB. Unfortunately they were unable to do so this year, so these islands were counted by other members of the Forth Seabird Group.

Bass Rock and Lamb were counted from boat; Craigleith, Fidra and Inchgarvie were counted partly from boat and remainder after landing; all other islands were counted from ashore.

## OTHER NEWS

### Tree Mallow Project

Work has continued on Craigleith and Fidra to try and control the spread of the Tree Mallow (*Lavatera arborea*). Under the right conditions this alien plant can grow from a seedling in early May to over 2 meters tall by September – this is what happened in the Glen area on Craigleith this year!

During 2007 more than 20 visits were made – some of these were to Fidra but most were to Craigleith.

Strimmers have been used to try and maintain the areas cut on previous visits while the majority of volunteers work with loppers on the more mature plants.

On Craigleith the area which has been cut extends from the Glen, on the south side of the island, up over the ridge to the pond and then over to the top of the east cliff.

On Fidra, Castle Tarbert has been cut. Now work has started on the highest areas above the lighthouse and is continuing downwards. The theory being that if the highest areas can be cleared, fresh seeds will fall downwards and so re-colonisation of these areas will be minimised.

For further information about this project go to the website at [www.ceh.ac.uk/treemallow](http://www.ceh.ac.uk/treemallow)

### Scottish Seabird Centre

In April, the SSC installed two remote control cameras on Craigleith. One is mounted above the east cliffs overlooking part of the area used recently by breeding cormorants. The other is located on the south side of the island overlooking the area used by grey seals when they come ashore in November to breed.. These cameras transmit pictures back to screens in the SSC and also to internet webcams.

### Weather Monitoring Mast

In October, SLP Energy, of Lowestoft, received permission to erect a temporary 60 metre anemometer mast near the south end of Inchkeith. It had been erected prior to the seal count visits. Permission for the mast is for three years after which time the mast must be completely removed and the site reinstated. This is to assess the suitability for wind turbines.

## LIST OF COUNTERS & CONTRIBUTORS

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MAGGIE SHEDDAN  
DANAE STEVENS  
MATT STEVENS  
ANNA WHITE

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## Appendix 1

# SEAL SURVEY OF THE FORTH ISLANDS 2007

### CRAIGLEITH

Seabird Centre reported first pup born 30/10/07. On 3/11/07 Dougie Ferguson checked island from boat and reported 6 seal pups, 2 of which were low down and at risk of being washed off. From Seabird Centre on 3/11/07 cameras were able count 5 seal pups. In early December MS reported 17 seals (one still in white coat) Season's total = c.23+

### INCHKEITH: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007

GREY SEAL – 123 pups counted, all but one still in white coat. Several had started to shed their white coats. Ninety-one cows and 13 bulls counted.

### INCHCOLM: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007

GREY SEAL – Four cows and five pups in south bay. Seven cows, one bull and one yearling on Swallowcraig.

### INCHMICKERY: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Two cows at landing steps on east side. No pups.

### CRAIGLEITH: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007

GREY SEAL PUPS – 7 still present. One still in white coat. Three others dead. One cow still present.

### INCHKEITH: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2007

GREY SEAL – 101 pups counted, 55 of which (including 5 dead) were calculated to have been born since the previous visit, giving an approximate total of 178 Grey Seal pups born at Inchkeith this year. Ten bulls and 61 cows were also recorded although 29 of the cows were hauled out on Iron Craig rocks (post weaning).

Ron Morris

Appendix 2

INCHMICKERY FLORA 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2007

<u>Family and Botanical Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	
Agrostis capillaries	Common Bent-grass	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Anisantha sterilis	Barren Brome	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Arctium minus	Burdock	Compositae
Atriplex littoralis	Grass-leaved Orache	Chenopodiaceae
Capsella bursa-pastoris	Shepherd's Purse	Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)
Carduus tenuiflorus	Slender Thistle	Compositae
Chenopodium vulvaria	Stinking Goosefoot	Chenopodiaceae
Cirsium vulgare	Spear Thistle	Compositae
Cochlearia officinalis	Common Scurvy Grass	Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)
Crepis capillaries	Smooth Hawksbeard	Compositae
Elytrigia repens	Common Couch	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Festuca ovina	Sheep's Fescue	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Festuca rubra	Red Fescue	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Galium aparine	Cleavers	Rubiaceae
Geranium pyrenaicum	Hedgerow Crane's-bill	Geraniaceae
Heracleum sphondylium	Hogweed	Apiaceae (Umbelliferae)
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire-fog	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Hordeum murinum	Wall Barley	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Lolium perenne	Perennial Rye-grass	Poaceae (Gramineae)
Matricaria matricarioides	Pineapple Weed	Compositae
Papaver rhoeas	Common Poppy	Papaveraceae
Plantago major	Greater Plantain	Plantaginaceae
Polygonum aviculare	Knot Grass	Polygonaceae
Rheum rhabarbarum	Rhubarb	Polygonaceae
Rumex crispus ssp crispus	Curled Dock	Polygonaceae
Rumex obtusifolius	Broad Leaved Dock	Polygonaceae
Sambucus nigra	Elder	Caprifoliaceae
Senecio vulgaris	Groundsel	Compositae
Silene uniflora	Sea Campion	Carophyllaceae
Sisymbrium officinale	Hedge Mustard	Brassicaceae (Cruciferae)
Sonchus asper	Prickly Sowthistle	Compositae
Sonchus oleraceus	Smooth Sowthistle	Compositae
Spergularia marina	Lesser Sea Spurrey	Carophyllaceae
Stellaria graminea	Lesser Stitchwort	Carophyllaceae
Stellaria media	Common Chickweed	Carophyllaceae
Taraxacum officinale	Dandelion	Compositae
Tripleurospermum maritimum	Sea Hogweed	Compositae
Urtica dioica	Common Nettle	Urticaceae
Urtica urens	Small Nettle	Urticaceae

Anna White  
27<sup>th</sup> June, 2007

Appendix 3

**LEPIDOPTERA RECORDED ON FORTH ISLANDS 2007**

	Inchgarvie	Inchmickery	Inchcolm	Inchkeith	Fidra	Craigleith
<b>Red admiral</b>		27/6: 1	27/6: 1	3/6: present 23/6: several	10/6: 1	6/10: 1
<b>Small tortoiseshell</b>				3/6: present		
<b>Painted lady</b>		27/6: 1+	27/6: several	23/6: several	10/6: 15-20 seen as day warmed up	9/6: easily 20-30 6 Oct, 1
<b>Small white</b>				3/6: present 23/6: several		
<b>Large white</b>	1/6: 1			3/6: present 23/6: several		
<b>G-v white</b>				3/6: present		
<b>Unidentified white sp</b>						9/6: several 6 Oct, several
<b>Angle shades moth</b>						29/10: 1 in tree mallow.

**ODONATA RECORDED ON FORTH ISLANDS 2007**

9 June, Craigleith: Azure damselfly (*Coenagreon puella*), 1 seen near pond.

## Appendix 4

### Lothian Ringing Group Ringing Totals

	Full	Pulli	Retraps/ Recoveries	Total
Fulmar	6	148	0	154
Cormorant	1	169	0	170
Shag	1	20	0	21
Eider	1	0	0	1
Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	20	0	20
Herring Gull	0	6	0	6
Kittiwake	49	163	18	230
Common Tern	0	71	0	71
Guillemot	8	2	0	10
Razorbill	0	1	0	1
Total:	66	600	18	684

John C. Davies

## Details of Long Craig breeding 2007

**Eider** Five nests were recorded this year. Four females nested on island by 25<sup>th</sup> May reducing to two by 9<sup>th</sup> June. Two of the nests one with seven addled/infertile eggs the other with thirteen were undoubtedly deserted without any success however the other two nests with just two addled/infertile eggs each may have produced young. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> June a fifth nest was noted with the female sitting until at least 7<sup>th</sup> July however when checked on the ringing visit (31<sup>st</sup> July) two addled/infertile were found and no egg shell/membrane was in evidence to suggest any success.

**Common Terns** returned to the island to breed during the last week of May with 58 active nests by 9<sup>th</sup> June. During the breeding period at least 125 pairs bred with a total of 172 clutches/nests involving a minimum total of 249 eggs being recorded. A minimum of 117 young were hatched from 69 of the nests. A total of 26 young were found dead.

Many of the failing single/double egg clutches recorded during the period tend to be indiscriminate and poorly sited and are subsequently deserted.

During the ringing visit on 31<sup>st</sup> July 26 pullus were ringed. During the visit on the 28<sup>th</sup> August the island was checked for dead young, a total of 26 dead young were found of which six (23%) had been ringed during the previous visit. Similarly the 26 dead young represents 22% of the minimum 117 young recorded. The corpses of the young were of varying ages of death since i.e. some long dead but mostly recent with several very fresh.

A single dead (not fresh) adult bird (ringed SV75864) was found at a nest site on the island on the 28<sup>th</sup> August probably the result of a squabble between breeding pairs. One late pullus found at this nest was ringed. The dead adult bird was ringed as a pullus on the island on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2004 (3 years 39 days). A second pullus found during the visit was weak and showing signs of malnutrition was not ringed.

<b>Common Tern</b>	<b>Nests</b>	<b>Eggs</b>	<b>Young</b>	<b>Dead</b>
AN	84	98	-	-
NN	55	101	95	3
ED	19	26	-	-
JD	14	24	22	23
<b>Totals</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>26</b>

**Rosyth Dockyard.** Common Terns did breed and fledge young but unable to gain access and do any counts.

Mark Oksien

## HISTORICAL NOTES

by Ron Morris

The Booth Museum of Natural History in Brighton holds one of the largest collections of Victorian Taxidermy in the U.K. It is named after the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century “naturalist” Edward Thomas Booth who donated many taxidermy subjects (mainly birds) to the museum. A large amount of the museums holdings can be viewed online at [www.booth.virtualmuseum.info](http://www.booth.virtualmuseum.info)

There are many Victorian taxidermy collections held at the museum with Booth’s being one of the largest. In his collection there are a number of species of birds which were “shot or obtained” on or near Bass Rock and one or two other islands in the Forth. The specimens which are housed in cases are set in dioramas replicating their natural surroundings and although “taxidermy” is largely controlled and “frowned upon” nowadays, it cannot be denied these displays are works of art.

Displays aside, Booth’s collection has retained an historical record of some of the species he encountered on some of the islands in the Firth of Forth. From this perspective it may be worth noting brief details of the pertinent subjects from Booth’s collection in the event they may prove of value at some later time.

The displays do not follow any general order.

**1. Case of Gannets (*Morus bassanus*)**

Thirteen mounted gannets and their chicks in a display recreating their surroundings on the north side of Bass Rock. Obtained from the Bass during the summer of 1874.

**2. Case of Common Guillemots (*Uria aalge*)**

Ten mounted guillemots in cliff setting. Collected from the Bass in June 1867.

**3. Case of Sandwich Terns (*Sterna sandvicensis*)**

Seven sandwich terns collected Aug.-Sept. 1874 in the Firth of Forth.

**4. Case of Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*Larus fuscus*)**

A pair of lesser black-backed gulls collected from Bass Rock in June 1867.

**5. Case of Bar-tailed Godwits (*Limosa lapponica*)**

Six mounted bar-tailed godwits collected Ebris Island (Eyebroughty) Sept. 1874

**6. Case of Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)**

Three eider. Collected Ebris (Eyebroughty) Sept. 1874.

**7. Case of Arctic Skuas (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)**

Six arctic skuas collected in the Firth of Forth in Aug. 1874.

**8. Case of Arctic Skuas (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)**

Three arctic skuas collected at Bass Rock Aug. 1874.

**9. Case of Pomarine Skua (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)**

One Pomarine Skua collected Firth of Forth Aug. 1874.

**10. Case of Common Guillemots – bridled form (*Uria aalge*)**

Ten mounted “bridled” guillemots. Collected Firth of Forth May 1867.

**11. Case of Kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*)**

Two Adults and 4 chicks collected at Canty Bay June 1867.

**12. Case of Gannets (*Morus bassanus*)**

Twelve mounted 1-2 year old gannets. Collected Bass Rock Aug. 1874.

**13. Case of Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)**

Two immature birds collected Bass Rock Sept. 1874.



14. **Case of Manx Shearwaters (*Puffinus puffinus*)**  
Two birds collected in the Firth of Forth Aug. 1874.
15. **Case of Eiders (*Somateria mollissima*)**  
Three adults (2 drakes + one duck) and three ducklings. Drakes collected on Fidra in May 1867. Duck and brood near Ibris (Eyebroughty) same year.
16. **Case of Long-tailed skuas (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)**  
Two birds. One collected near Brighton in Nov. 1870. The other near Bass Rock on 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1874 (1<sup>st</sup> Autumn plumage).
17. **Case of Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)**  
One adult with chicks. Collected at Bass Rock in Sept 1874 (presumably adult bird only ?)
18. **Case of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*)**  
A pair of herring gulls with chicks. Collected at Bass Rock in Sept 1874 (presumably only adults collected then ?) These birds are actually Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*Larus fuscus*).
19. **Case of Gannets (*Morus bassanus*)**  
Colony of gannets. Collected at Bass Rock 1874
20. **Case of Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)**  
One bird. Collected at Bass Rock Sept. 1874.
21. **Case of Puffins (*Fratercula arctica*)**  
Puffins at battlements on Bass Rock. Collected 1870.
22. **Case of Razorbills (*Alca torda*)**  
Birds in winter plumage. Collected at Bass Rock 1874.
23. **Case of Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)**  
Eider duck with nest and eggs. Duck collected at Gullane Bay May 1867, nest and eggs at Fidra June 1867.
24. **Case of Lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*)**  
Two adults and 4 chicks collected at Gullane Bay May 1867.
25. **Case of Razorbills (*Alca torda*)**  
Seven mounted razorbills. Collected at Bass Rock June 1865.
26. **Case of Puffins (*Fratercula arctica*)**  
Five mounted puffins. Collected Firth of Forth June 1865.
27. **Case of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*)**  
Two birds collected at Bass Rock in June 1867.
28. **Case of Black-headed Gulls. (*Larus ridibundus*)**  
Seven birds collected in the Firth of Forth Sept-Oct 1874.
29. **Case of Kittiwakes (*Larus tridactyla*)**  
Six kittiwakes collected at Bass Rock June 1867.
30. **Case of Rock Pipits (*Anthus petrosus*)**  
Two birds collected at Bass Rock May 1867.

The University of St. Andrews Photographic Library (accessible online) contains a collection of black & white photographs by Robert Moyes Adam, amongst which are the following interesting subjects:

1. HAYSTACK – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1904. Two Photos of COMMON TERN nests.
2. HAYSTACK – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1904. Three photos of a Young Tern (Presumably Common Tern)
3. HAYSTACK – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1904. One photo of two young COMMON TERNS

4. HAYSTACK – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1904. One photo of short grass protruding through jagged rocks.
5. CRAMOND ISLAND – 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1905. 1 photo of a SHELDUCK nest hole at east side of island.
6. CARR CRAIG – 26<sup>th</sup> May 1906. One photo of Common Scurvy-grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*). Also grass covered ledges in background.
7. EYEBROUGHTY – 19<sup>th</sup> May 1903. One photo of ROCK PIPIT'S nest in crevice in rocks.
8. INCHMICKERY – July 1901. One photo of COMMON TERN'S nest with three eggs.
9. BASS ROCK – Many photos of Gannets/Solan Geese between 1893 and 1909.
10. BASS ROCK – 1904. Several photos of Guillemots at nest sites.