

Forth Seabird Group

Forth Islands Bird Report

2008

Compiled by Bill Bruce

November 2008

SEABIRD SPECIES SUMMARIES 2008

FULMAR

All islands were counted and unfortunately the downward trend seen in the last ten years has continued – down from the high of 2045 AOS in 1997 to 1169 AOS this year. The only island showing an increase this year is May Isle.

CORMORANT

In 2004 the Forth islands were home to 400 breeding pairs. Since then numbers have been falling steadily and this year only 259 AON were counted. Compared to last year, numbers on Haystack increased, Inchkeith remained the same while the other islands all showed decreases.

SHAG

In recent years, this species reached a peak of 1794 AOS in 2003. Since then breeding numbers have dropped and this year saw only 1061 AON. May Isle and Lamb showed an increase on last year while all other islands showed a decrease.

GANNET

Not counted this year.

EIDER

This species was not counted on all islands. Generally, where they were counted they showed an increase compared to last year. On Craigleith, René van der Wal counted at least 150 nests on one of his tree mallow monitoring visits.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Back in 1995 there were only 20 pairs breeding. Since then there has been a steady increase. This year the count for all islands was 60 AON. The central part of Craigleith was not fully covered because the count had to be brought to a quick end as the weather rapidly deteriorated. The actual total might therefore be higher.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

On the islands where this species was counted, the numbers were similar to last years figures. However, on May Isle there was an increase from 1665 last year, to 1944 AON i.e. an increase of 17%.

HERRING GULL

This species is only counted on some of the islands and numbers on each of these islands showed increases. On Inchgarvie numbers more than doubled from about 94 AON last year to 202 this year. Interestingly, the numerical increase on May Isle was the same (ie 108 AON) but the percentage increase here was only 4%.

KITTIWAKE

Kittiwake numbers in the Firth of Forth reached their peak of well over 11,000 AON in the mid-1990's. Then there was a sharp drop to around 7,000 AON in the late 90's. Since then there has been a steady drop to this year's count of 4,962 AON. Apart from Craigleith and Lamb, where there were slight increases, the other islands all showed decreases in numbers.

COMMON TERN

Last year, the count was 255 AON. This year only 196 nests were counted, taking numbers back to what they were in 2005 and 2006.

ARCTIC TERN

This year's count is a few nests down on last year's which brings them back to what they were in 2006.

ROSEATE TERN

In recent years, there have been very few of this species breeding on the Forth islands. This year 2 nests were counted – up from one last year.

SANDWICH TERN

This year a single nest was counted. This is better than the previous two years when none were counted, but nothing like the 500 AON in 2001.

RAZORBILL

Although there was a peak of over 5,200 AOS in 2005, the general trend in recent years has been downwards. Lamb and Inchkeith showed slightly increased numbers while the other islands all showed decreases.

GUILLEMOT

Unlike most of the other seabird species, the guillemot has shown an increase in breeding numbers. This increase was seen on all islands except Fidra where numbers dropped.

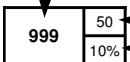
PUFFIN

On May Isle it was expected that breeding numbers might have reached 100,000 pairs this year. However only c42,000 AOB were counted and this is 39% down on last count in 2003 which found c70,000 AOB. The Farne Islands have shown a similar decline.

On the other islands, where numbers of puffins are shown in the table below, these are birds which were seen near the breeding colonies.

Table 1: Summary of seabird counts for the Forth Islands, 2008

2008	Bass Rock		Craigeith		Lamb		Fidra		Eyebroughy	Inchkeith	Carr Craig	Inchcolm		Haystack	Inchmickery + Cow & Calves		Inchgarvie / Forth Bridge		Long Craig		May Isle		Total			
Fulmar (AOS)	43	-5 -10%	86	-20 -19%	7-8	-2 -22%	160	-43 -21%		248	-67 -21%	0	124	-48 -28%	0	23	-9 -28%	175	-43 -20%	0	293	12 4%	1,159	-225 -16%		
Cormorant (nests)	0		41	-38 -48%	73	-33 -31%	0			93	0%	20	-9 -31%	0	32	4 14%	0	0	0	0	0	0	259	-76 -23%		
Shag (nests)	22	-6 -21%	133	-66 -33%	97	24 33%	146	-23 -14%		161	-26 -14%	13	-1 -7%	7	0	55	-2 -4%	0	0	0	427	28 7%	1,061	-72 -6%		
Gannet (nests)	✓		0		0		0			0		0		0		0		0	0	0	0	0	0			
Eider (nests)	5+	5	✓		✓		8	8		✓		4	2 100%	50+	50	0	33	33	71	10 16%	11	6 120%	1,088	1,270 1768%		
Great B-b Gull (nests)	0		10+	-7 -41%	2-3	-2 -50%	2	0%		5	0%	1	0%	1	1	1	0%	?	-1 -100%	1	0%	0	37	7 23%	60	-2 -3%
Lesser B-b Gull (nests)	3+	3	✓		✓		✓			✓		c3	0%	✓	3	-4 -57%	✓		c17	-1 -6%	0	c1944	279 17%	1,970	277 16%	
Herring Gull (nests)	✓		✓		✓		✓			✓		c51	5 11%	✓	c8	3 60%	✓		c202	108 115%	0	c2962	108 4%	3,223	224 7%	
Kittiwake (nests)	323	-54 -14%	513	5 1%	110	14 15%	222	-22 -9%		352	-47 -12%	0	88	-28 -24%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,354	-70 -2%	4,962	-202 -4%	
Common Tern (nests)	0		0		0		0			0		0		0		0		0	0	0	c90-100	-43 -31%	c101	18 22%	197	-25 -11%
Arctic Tern (nests)	0		0		0		0			0		0		0		0		0	0	0	0	c511	-14 -3%	511	-14 -3%	
Roseate Tern (nests)																						2	1 100%			
Sandwich Tern (nests)	0		0		0		0			0		0		0		0		0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	
Razorbill (pairs/sites)	85	-34 -29%	147	-34 -19%	80	3 4%	95	-33 -26%		62	6 11%	0	5	-1 -17%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3464 b (c2700 s)	-140 -5%	3,174	2,607 460%	
Guillemot (birds on cliffs)	c1600	480 43%	c1550	400 35%	c2900	1,505 108%	403	-185 -31%		28	12 75%	0	1 on land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17,157	387 2%	23,638	2,599 12%		
Puffin (birds unless otherwise stated)	a few		✓		51 on land	51	50 on land, 270 sea	58 22%		646 on land & sea	-324 -33%	0	36 on sea	-3 -8%	0	1 on land	-11 -92%	0	0	0	0	c42,000 AOB		c42,000 AOB + 1054 b		

KEY:  Number counted this year
 Numerical change from last year
 Percentage change from last year
 AOS = Apparently occupied sites
 OB = occupied burrows
 ✓ = birds present but not counted
 0 = none breeding
 c = circa
 b = birds
 s = sites

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF VISITS AND SIGHTINGS

FIDRA – 20th January 2008 – Tree mallow trip

Bill Bruce
GREY-LAG GOOSE – c. 30 flying in to land, but disturbed.
BLACKBIRD- 2+
ROCK PIPIT – 3 +
HERRING GULL – Present, not counted
FULMAR – Present
EIDER – Some offshore

CRAIGLEITH – 10th Feb 2008 – Tree mallow

Bill Bruce
ROBIN – 1
BLACKBIRD – 1
LINNET – 3
HERRING GULL – Many present
GREY-LAG GOOSE – Droppings present

CRAIGLEITH – 3rd to 9th January 2008

John Hunt
FIDRA – PEREGRINE – two seen
BASS ROCK – PEREGRINE – One seen
CRAIGLEITH – PEREGRINE – One seen.

CRAIGLEITH – 2nd April 08 – Tree mallow trip

John Davies
PUFFIN – Large raft off south shore
SHAG – A few ashore. No evidence of nesting
CORMORANT – Apparently nesting
WREN – Two heard

INCHCOLM – 7th May 2008

Ron Morris
SHELLDUCK – 7 seen (3ps + 1 single)
MALLARD – 1 pair, 2 drakes, 1 female, plus 1 female flushed from nest (not found) ?
RAZORBILL – 10+ ashore SW point near old harbour, 2 with eggs at NW cave.
SHAG – 7+ birds, 4 nests (at least 3 with eggs).
OYSTER CATCHER – Nest with 1 egg. Birds not counted.
JACKDAW – c. 9 birds, at least 4 breeding sites.
WOOD PIGEON – 9+ birds.
CURLEW – 1

LINNET – Several pairs (breeding). 1 nest under construction.

CARRION CROW – 1 (Likely breeding)
WREN – 2+ (breeding).
CHAFFINCH – Three
DUNNOCK – 1 (breeding)
ROBIN – 1 (breeding)
SWALLOW – 1-2
CORMORANT – 1 ashore
PIED WAGTAIL – 1 possibly breeding
SONG THRUSH – 2-3, possibly breeding
BLUE TIT – 1, breeding ?

SMALL TORTOISESHELL Butterfly – 4+

GREY SEAL – c. 27

INCHKEITH – 10th May 2008

Ron Morris, Bill Bruce, Stuart O'Malley, Mike Ramage, Lesley Fairweather

CORMORANT - 93 nests.
SHAG – 3 at cormorant colony
GREAT BLACK BACKED GULL – 5 breeding pairs. On Long Craig , 8 X 1st year birds and 1 x 3rd summer bird.
PUFFIN – 118 birds counted
PEREGRINE – Female on nest. Male seen overhead.
KNOT – 30 at NE Stell.
GANNET – Two dead birds North Bay
MALLARD – 5 drakes, 1 pair
SHELDUCK – 2 individuals
OYSTER CATCHER – 7 territories
ROCK PIPIT – 1-3 birds
BUZZARD – 1, mobbed by gulls.
BLACKBIRD – 1 nest with young. Four old nests. 1 nest with eggs.
REDWING – 1 dead bird, peregrine kill ?
PIED WAGTAIL – 1
CARRION CROW – 1
ROBIN – 1
GREEN-VEINED WHITE Butterfly
SMALL TORTOISESHELL Butterfly
SYCAMORE SEEDLINGS – c. 4 above strandline N. Bay.

KINCRAIG CLIFFS, ELIE, FIFE – 21st May 2008

Ron Morris
 FULMAR – 6 AOS
 EIDER – 1 duck on nest.

INCHKEITH – 30th May 2008 (Main Count)

Ron Morris, Bill Bruce, John Davies, Stewart O'Malley, David Ross, John Hunt
 FULMAR – 248 AOS
 KITTIWAKE – 352 nests
 GUILLEMOT – 28 birds on cliffs
 RAZORBILL – 62 sites
 PUFFIN – 646 birds
 SHAG – 161 nests
 CORMORANT - 68 (undercount) – use result for 10/5/08
 OYSTER CATCHER – 9 pairs plus 3 other birds, incl 1 nest x 3 eggs
 ROCK PIPIT – c. 4 pairs
 GREAT BLACK BACKED GULL – 5 breeding pairs. Single bird seen/ poss 6th pair.
 PEREGRINE – 1 pair x 4 chicks (ringed)
 ROCK PIGEON – c. 70 birds seen, incl at least 12 nest sites
 SHELDUCK – 2 pairs
 MALLARD – 6 drakes
 BLACKBIRD – 4 territories. 1 juv. seen.
 CARRION CROW – 1 bird seen
 CURLEW – 6 birds
 GANNET – One off East Stell

GREY SEAL – 6

CRAMOND ISLAND – 31st May 2008

Ron Morris, Bill Bruce, Alistair Ballingall
 FULMAR – One bird close inshore
 EIDER – 19 (16 drakes and 3 ducks ashore east side or just offshore)
 MALLARD – 6 drakes offshore
 CURLEW – 1 over
 MEADOW PIPIT – 2-3 pairs (breeding)
 ROCK PIPIT – 2 pairs (breeding)
 LINNET – Many pairs (breeding). 1 nest with 4 young.
 SONG THRUSH – 1 carrying worms. 1 fledgling seen
 BLACK BIRD – Several seen or heard. Old nests found.
 CROW – two seen. Two nests found, one old, one recent.

SWALLOW – Three+ birds. Breeding in old buildings?

ROBIN – 1-2 (breeding)
 WREN – 2-3 (breeding)
 GREENFINCH – Two + (breeding)
 WILLOW WARBLER – 1-2, 1 with food (breeding)

SMALL COPPER Butterfly - 1
 ORANGE TIP Butterfly – 3+
 WHITE Butterfly sp – 1

CRAMOND (River Almond mouth towards Cramond Island)

GREY HERON – 1
 MUTE SWAN – 20 incl 1 nest
 SHELLDUCK – 16
 OYSTER CATCHER – c.80
 MALLARD – 13
 CURLEW – c.40

BASS ROCK – 1st June 2008

Bill Bruce, John Hunt, David Ross, Linda Jobson, Maggie Sheddan, James Leyden
 GANNET – Present, not counted
 KITTIWAKE – 323 nests
 GUILLEMOT – 1600 birds
 RAZORBILL – 85 AOS
 SHAG – 22 nests
 PUFFIN – Present in small numbers.
 HERRING GULL – Present, not counted.
 LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – 3 prs (Maggie Sheddan DATE ?)
 GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - ?
 PEREGRINE – Two birds on Castle walls. Probably beeding ?
 CARRION CROW – One bird on west cliff.
 ROCK PIPIT – 3 birds (Maggie Sheddan – DATE ?)
 EIDER – 5 nests (Maggie Sheddan DATE ?)

CRAIGLEITH – 1st June 2008

Bill Bruce, John Hunt, David Ross, Linda Jobson, Maggie Sheddan, James Leyden
 FULMAR – 86 AOS
 KITTIWAKE – 513
 GUILLEMOT – c.1550
 RAZORBILL – 147
 SHAG – 133
 CORMORANT - ?

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – 10+
ROCK PIPIT – 4 Birds
WREN – 1 singing
ROBIN – 1 singing
BLACKBIRD – 1 present
MALLARD – Two ducks flushed from tree
mallow. Probably incubating ?
PEREGRINE – Two on east cliff
PIED WAGTAIL – Two
EIDER – Present, not counted. René van der Wal
counted at least 150 nests on earlier visit.

GREY SEAL – One ashore SW. Another in sea off
the island.

INCHGARVIE – 4th June 2008

Ron Morris, John Davies, Martin Moss, Emily
Barlow
FULMAR – 175 AOS
HERRING GULL – c. 202 nests
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – c. 17 nests
GREAT BLACK BACKED GULL – 1 nest x three
chicks
EIDER – 71 nests
ROCK PIGEON – c. 80 birds – breeding.

SMALL WHITE butterfly – 3+
GREEN-VEINED WHITE butterfly – 1
GARDEN TIGER MOTH – Several caterpillars
seen

HAYSTACK – 4th June 2008

Ron Morris, John Davies, Martin Moss, Emily
Barlow
CORMORANT – 32 nests
HERRING GULL – c. 8 nests
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – 3 nests
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – 1 nest

GREY SEAL – 8 present

CARR CRAIG – 4th June 2008

Ron Morris, John Davies, Martin Moss, Emily
Barlow
CORMORANT – 20 nests
SHAG – 13 nests
HERRING GULL – c. 51 nests
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – c. 3 pairs
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – 1 pair
OYSTER CATCHER – 1 nest x two eggs

EIDER – 4 nests
TURNSTONE – 4 birds

COMMON SEAL – Three present

INCHCOLM – 4th June 2008

Ron Morris, John Davies, Martin Moss, Emily
Barlow
FULMAR – 124 AOS
KITTIWAKE – 88 nests
SHAG – 7 nests
RAZORBILL – 5 AOS
PUFFIN – 36 birds on sea
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – 1 pair
OYSTER CATCHER – c. 9 pairs (2 nests x 2 eggs
found)
GUILLEMOT – 1 bird ashore SW promontory
EIDER – nesting in numbers. C. 50 nests casually
counted
HERRING GULL – nesting in numbers
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – nesting in
numbers
SHELDUCK – 1 pair present
JACKDAW – c. 7 birds seen
CARRION CROW – Three birds seen
COMMON BUZZARD – 1 bird flushed from elder
at cliffs at SW of island
WOOD PIGEON – 4+ birds seen. 1 nest x 2 eggs
SWALLOW – Three birds seen. 1 nest in toilet
block
WREN – 1+ seen (breeding)
BLUE TIT – 2 pairs seen (breeding)
ROBIN – 1+ seen (breeding)
CHAFFINCH – 2+ seen (breeding)
LINNET – 2+ SEEN (BREEDING)
BLACKBIRD – 2 seen, one with food (breeding)
SONG THRUSH – 1 seen (breeding)

GREY SEAL – Two present
SMALL WHITE butterfly – 1+

INCHMICKERY – 4th June 2008

John Davies, Martin Moss
SHAG – 54 nests
FULMAR – 23 AOS
EIDER – 33 nests
OYSTER CATCHER – Two pairs
PUFFIN – 1 ashore
SHELDUCK – 1 pair
STARLING – Two dead juveniles
LINNET – Heard calling

BLACK HEADED GULL – Two birds
HERRING GULL – Present in numbers
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Present in numbers
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - ?

COW and CALVES ROCKS – 4th June 2008

John Davies, Martin Moss
SHAG – 1 pair nesting

BASS ROCK – 13th June 2008 (date ?)

Maggie Sheddan
ROCK PIPIT – 1 pair breeding
PIED WAGTAIL – 1 bird seen. Breeding ?
PEREGRINE – 1 pair, two chicks seen.

CRAIGLEITH – 14th June 2008

Martin Moss, John Davies
CORMORANT – 41 nests
CARRION CROW – Two dead juveniles.
Breeding evidence.
LINNET – Present
PIED WAGTAIL – One male seen
ROCK PIPIT – Present

The LAMB – 14th June 2008

Bill Bruce, Ron Morris, John Hunt, James Leyden, Emily Barlow.
Count made from boat. Numbers are estimates.
FULMAR – 8 AOS
KITTIWAKE – 110 nests
GUILLEMOT – c. 2,900 birds ashore
RAZORBILL – 80 AOS
SHAG – 97 nests
CORMORANT – 73 nests
HERRING GULL – Present in numbers
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Present
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – 2-3 pairs nesting
EIDER – Present
PUFFIN – c. 51 ashore
CARRION CROW – 1 bird ashore

FIDRA – 14th June 2008

Bill Bruce, Ron Morris, John Hunt, James Leyden, Emily Barlow.
Landing made.
FULMAR – 160 AOS

KITTIWAKE – 222 nests
GUILLEMOT – 403 birds on cliffs
RAZORBILL – 95 AOS
SHAG – 146 nests
HERRING GULL – Present in numbers
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL – Present in numbers
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL – 2 pairs nesting + 1 single bird
EIDER – Present. Twelve nests noted casually.
PUFFIN – 320 birds on land and sea (undercount)
OYSTER CATCHER – 3-4 pairs.
PEREGRINE – 1 pair present. 1 juvenile seen
CARRION CROW – 2 birds
ROCK PIGEON- Breeding in rocks, cliffs and in puffin burrows.
ROCK PIPIT – 3-4 pairs.
MALLARD – Two individual ducks seen.
LINNET – c. 3 pairs
STARLING – 1 adult and 2 juveniles
RED ADMIRAL BUTTERFLY – 1 seen.

INCHKEITH – 3rd August 2008

Ron Morris
PIED WAGTAIL – 1 juvenile (possible breeding ?)
BLACKBIRD – 6+
CURLEW – Two
OYSTER CATCHER – 1 –pair alarm calling

Butterflies:

RED ADMIRAL – One
SMALL TORTOISESHELL – Abundant
GREEN-VEINED WHITE – Abundant
SMALL WHITE – Common

CRAIGLEITH – 21st Sept 2008 – Tree mallow

Bill Bruce
ROCK PIPIT - c2-3
LINNET - c6
Island very quiet – no gulls, etc, present
RED ADMIRAL BUTTERFLY - 1
PEACOCK BUTTERFLY - c1-2
SILVER-Y MOTH - 1
1 GREY SEAL off western side

FIDRA – 28th September 2008 – Tree mallow trip

Bill Bruce
LINNET (a few)
ROCK PIPIT (a few)

PEREGRINE - 1 flew from main island to perch on top of Castle
EIDER - a few sitting on rocks just north of harbour
Many skeins of pink-footed geese flying over, heading south

RED ADMIRAL BUTTERFLY - c2-3

CRAIGLEITH – 5th October 2008 – Tree mallow

Bill Bruce
STARLING - 1
LINNET – flock of c40
ROCK PIPIT – c1-2
ROBIN – 1 singing
PEREGRINE – 2 birds flew off east cliff
SHAG – c6 on rocks at SE corner
Plenty of goose droppings around top of island

Inchgarvie - 16th November 2008

Ron Morris
GREY HERON – 15 roosting (seen from mainland)

Inchkeith - 15th November 2008

Ron Morris, Lesley Fairweather, Alex Laird
Seal trip – see appendix 1 for seal numbers.
BLACKBIRD - 13+
GREY WAGTAIL - 1
ROCK PIPIT - c.6
MEADOW PIPIT - 5
ROBIN - 4+
SONG THRUSH 5+
WREN - 5+
CURLEW - 18
DUNNOCK - 1
GOLDFINCH - c.30
RED BREASTED MERGANSER - 3
EIDER c.12
OYSTERCATCHER - 30+
GUILLEMOT – 1 on sea
KESTREL - 1
Imm. GANNET - two past
REDSHANK - 1
ROCK PIGEON - 200+
RABBIT - 2

CARR CRAIG - 15th November 2008

Ron Morris, Lesley Fairweather, Alex Laird

Seal trip – see appendix 1 for seal numbers.

SHAG - two on nests

CORMORANT 15+

INCHCOLM - 15th November 2008

Ron Morris, Lesley Fairweather, Alex Laird

Seal trip – see appendix 1 for seal numbers.

RAZORBILL - 1 on sea
ROCK PIPIT - 1
CHAFFINCH - 1
WREN - 1
ROBIN - 1
CORMORANT - 8
BARN SWALLOW - 2 nests on girders in toilet recess. One brood reared in each nest, one subsequent to the other. Probably same pair ?

Inchmickery - 15th November 2008

Ron Morris, Lesley Fairweather, Alex Laird

Seal trip – see appendix 1 for seal numbers.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL - 12+
SHAG - present
CORMORANT - 1

INCHKEITH - 7th Dec 2008

BLACKBIRD – 32+
CARRION CROW - 3
EIDER - 5
GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL - 2
GOLDFINCH – 40+
GREY WAGTAIL - 1
GREY HERON - 1
KWSTREL - 1
LINNET - 2
MEADOW PIPIT - 5
OYSTERCATCHER - 7
ROCK PIGEON – Not counted
PIED WAGTAIL - 1
ROBIN - 9
ROCK PIPIT - 3
SONG THRUSH - 1
SPARROWHAWK - 1
TURNSTONE - 1
WOODCOCK - 1
WREN - 10

Rabbit - 3

FSG FOOTNOTES

Reports and monitoring figures for previous years can be found on the group's website:

www.forthseabirdgroup.org.uk

DATES FOR MAIN ISLAND COUNTS

Bass Rock	1 st June 2008
Craigleith	1 st June 2008
The Lamb	14 th June 2008
Fidra	14 th June 2008
Eyebroughty	(not visited)
Inchkeith	30 th May 2008
Carr Craig	4 th June 2008
Haystack	4 th June 2008
Inchcolm	4 th June 2008
Inchmickery	4 th June 2008
Inchgarvie	4 th June 2008
Forth Rail Bridge	
Long Craig	late May to June
Isle of May	late May to June

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 throughout the year, making over 30 landings on Craigleith or Fidra. The first cut is made by hand using loppers then later when the next flush of Tree Mallow (*Lavatera arborea*) grows it is cut down with brush cutters. Currently about three-quarters of Craigleith and about half of Fidra has had at least one cut.

For further information about this project go to the website at www.ceh.ac.uk/treemallow

LIST OF COUNTERS & CONTRIBUTORS

Alistair Ballingall
Emily Barlow
Bill Bruce
John Davies
Lesley Fairweather
Mike Harris and his team
John Hunt
Linda Jobson
James Leyden
Ron Morris
Martin Moss
Mark Oksien
Stuart O'Malley
Richard Pankhurst
Mike Ramage
David Ross
Maggie Sheddan

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[The Scottish Natural History Archive](#)
JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme.

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FORTH GREY SEAL PUP SURVEY – 2008

This survey concerns itself with the islands in the Firth of Forth, other than Isle of May, with regards to their usage by the Atlantic Grey Seal, for the purpose of pupping. Inchkeith and Craigeith have established colonies whereas the remainder only have either occasional or insignificant use.

Two land counts were conducted at Inchkeith on Saturday 15th November and Sunday 7th December, respectively and tables of the results have been compiled in respects of these visits. A total of 144 pups (including 3 dead and 3 moults) were counted on the former date, whilst 149 pups were recorded on the latter date. Out of the 149 pups, the proportion of moults was 96, with the number of whites being 53 (i.e. 44 living and 9 dead).

The year's total number of pups estimated for Inchkeith by this method is 197, calculated by adding together the first visit figure of 144 and the "new" pups figure of 53 from the second visit.

Table 1 - INCHKEITH – Saturday 15th November 2008

INCHKEITH 15 th Nov 2008	Bulls	Cows	Pups	Pups (dead)	Pups Total
Seal Carr	1	14	-	-	-
Leith Harbour	-	1	-	1	1
Kinghorn Harbour North Bay (West)	1	7	11 (inc 1 moult)	-	11
Kinghorn Harbour North Bay (East)	2	13	20	-	20
Below Bothy	1	-	-	-	-
West Cliff	1	-	-	-	-
Kirkcaldy Harbour	4	27	32	-	32
East Bay	3	28	34 (incl 2 moults)	1	35
The Funnel	-	2	1	-	1
Mid East	1	2	1	-	1
East (North of pillbox)	1	19	17	1	18
South Point	4	23	26	-	26
South Point – Harbour	-	-	-	-	-
Iron Craig	-	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	19	134	141	3	144

INCHCOLM – Sunday 15th November 2008

South Bay – Two bulls, 4 cows (one dead) and 3 pups (all whites).

North Bay - Three cows

INCHMICKERY – Sunday 15th November 2008

East side (close inshore). One bull and one cow.

CARR CRAIG and HAYSTACK – 15th November 2008

Checked. Nil return

Table 2 - INCHKEITH - Sunday 7th December 2008

INCHKEITH 7 th Dec 2008	Bulls	Cows	Pups (moult)	Pups (white)	Pups (dead)	Pups Total
Seal Carr	1	18	1	-	-	1
Leith Harbour	1	1	-	-	-	-
Kinghorn Harbour North Bay (West)	-	-	3	5	-	8
Kinghorn Harbour North Bay (East)	-	4	15	7	1	23
Below Bothy	1	-	-	-	-	-
West Cliff	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kirkcaldy Harbour	2	7	24	6	3	33
East Bay	2	4	23	10	2	35
The Funnel	-	1	2	1	-	3
Mid East	-	-	-	-	-	-
East (North of pillbox)	-	-	21	14	2	37
South Point	-	1	6	1	1	8
South Point – Harbour	-	-	1	-	-	1
Iron Craig	-	1	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	7	37	96	44	9	149

BASS ROCK – 5th December 2008

Two Grey Seal pups (whites) were discovered in the sea cave which traverses the rock east to west. Unfortunately one was dead.

CRAIGLEITH – Various dates.

For the second year running no arrangements were made to carry out a land count of the numbers of pups, due to the fact Scottish Seabird Centre have established a CCTV camera on the rock above the seal colony. This camera covers most of the area generally used as a rookery by the seals and is used by volunteer staff at the SSC to try and obtain numbers of seal pups. However, a proper procedure has still to be initiated with regards to this in order to obtain more accurate results.

Maggie Sheddan has provided the following information, in conjunction with members of staff at SSC and Bill Bruce.

On 19th October the first pup was born on Craigleith and was picked up on camera. Unfortunately it was dead (stillborn ?). Four pups were seen on camera on 29th October, 12 on 7th November and 30 (including 3 dead) on 14th November. Due to the time factor there is unlikely to have been few, if any, dispersals over this period.

Numbers dropped to 26 pups on 21st November. However, a land count (from a distance) did take place on 29th November when a party arrived at the island to cut tree mallow on the blind side of the island from the colony. At this time there were 25 pups including 3 dead. Amongst this figure was 6 pups in an area not covered by the camera suggesting the earlier figures obtained by camera may have been undercounts. Therefore the optimum figure of 30 recorded on 14th November may have been slightly higher.

Although there was potential for a few more births after 29th November, only 5 pups were caught on camera on 5th December. Unfortunately, information regarding “whites” and “moults” was not recorded, impairing a more rigorous assessment of the population. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say the estimated number of pups born in 2008 was c.36.

The LAMB, FIDRA and EYEBROUGHTY

No information has been received this year with regards to any pups having been born on any of these islands.

Bird data from trips

INCHKEITH - 15th Nov 2008

Blackbird – 13+
Carrion Crow – 2
Curlew – 18
Dunnock – 1
Eider – c12
Gannet (imm) 2 offshore
Guillemot – 1 offshore
Goldfinch - 30+
Grey Wagtail – 1
Red Breasted Merganser – 3 (1 m 2 f)
Oyster Catcher – 30+
Rock Pigeon – 200+
Robin – 4+
Rock Pipit – 6
Song Thrush – 5+
Wren – 5+
Kestrel – 1
Meadow Pipit – 5
Redshank – 1

Rabbit – 2

INCHKEITH - 7th Dec 2008

Blackbird – 32+
Carrion Crow - 3
Eider - 5
Greater Black-backed Gull - 2
Goldfinch – 40+
Grey Wagtail - 1
Grey Heron - 1
Kestrel - 1
Linnet - 2
Meadow Pipit - 5
Oyster Catcher - 7
Rock Pigeon – Not counted
Pied Wagtail - 1
Robin - 9
Rock Pipit - 3
Song Thrush - 1
Sparrowhawk - 1
Turnstone - 1
Woodcock - 1
Wren - 10

Rabbit - 3

INCHMICKERY Saturday 15th November 2008

Greater Black-backed Gull –Present. C.20
Cormorant - 1
Shag - Present

CARR CRAIG Saturday 15th November 2008

Shag – Two birds sitting on nests, apparently incubating/brooding ?

INCHCOLM Saturday 15th November 2008

Chaffinch - 1
Cormorant - 8
Razorbill - 1
Robin - 1
Rock Pipit - 1
Wren - 1

Barn Swallow – Two nests on girders in toilet recess. One brood was raised this year in each nest, one subsequent to the other. Probably by the same pair of birds.

Ron Morris

Appendix 2

List of plants seen on Craigleith Island by Richard Pankhurst, 3/9/2008

The presence of so many weedy species is striking, as is also the presence of cereals (oats and two-rowed barley). The absence of some maritime species eg. Thrift, is also surprising, and no ferns were seen.

Amsinckia is known in other places in E. Lothian, but is an unusual weed. The Sea Radish is otherwise only known in E. Lothian from the Bass Rock.

Codes: C – common, F - frequent, O – occasional, R- rare

Amsinckia micrantha	R	Fiddle-neck
Atriplex glabriuscula	O	Babington's Orache
A. patula	C	Common Orache
Avena sativa	O	Oat
Cochlearia officinalis	O	Scurvy-grass
Festuca rubra	C	Red Fescue
Fumaria sp.	R	Fumitory
Galeopsis tetrahit s.s.	F	Common Hemp-nettle
Galium aparine	O	Cleavers
Holcus lanatus	C	Yorkshire Fog
Hordeum distichon	R	Two-rowed Barley
Hordeum murinum	O	Wall Barley
Hypochaeris radicata	R	Cat's-ear
Lavatera arborea	C	Tree Mallow
Lolium multiflorum	F	Italian Rye-grass
Lolium perenne	F	Common Rye-grass
Matricaria discoidea	R	Pineapple weed
Persicaria maculata	R	Redshank
Poa annua	F	Annual Meadow-grass
Polygonum arenastrum	F	Knotweed
Puccinellia maritima	F	Common Saltmarsh-grass
Raphanus maritimus	R	Sea radish
Rumex obtusifolius	O	Broad-leaved Dock
Sambucus nigra	O	Elderberry
Senecio vulgaris	R	Groundsel
Silene uniflora	R	Sea Champion
Sinapis arvensis	F	Charlock
Sisymbrium officinale	O	Hedge Mustard
Sonchus oleraceus	R	Sow-thistle
Stellaria media	C	Chickweed
Tripleurospermum maritimum	R	Sea Mayweed
Umbelliferae sp.	O	
Urtica dioica	O	Common Nettle
U. urens	R	Small Nettle

Total vascular plants 34 species

Bryophytes	
Hypnum cupressiforme	R
Orthotrichum diaphanum	R
Bryum sp.	R

Total mosses 3 species

R.J.Pankhurst, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 4/9/2008

Appendix 3

Long Craig Island 2008

Eider

Eleven Eider ducks nested on the island, several of the nests were noted to contain addled eggs during the visits to the island. No ducklings were observed during monitoring visits to confirm successful breeding.

Common Tern

A poor year with breeding down to 90 – 100 pairs a drop of c30% from 2007.

Long Craig Island	2007	2008
Breeding pairs	139	90-100
Eggs laid	249	285
Eggs Hatched	117	71
Eggs Unhatched	132	170
Young Fledged	91	38
Young Died	26	28

During the ringing visit to the island on 3rd August thirteen Common Tern chicks were ringed. Two adult Common Tern corpses were found on the Island one of which was ringed, see below, also 14 dead chicks were found.

SV11381	1	16/07/2003	Long Craig Island, Fife
XL	4	03/08/2008	Long Craig Island, Fife (5 years 18 days)

The post breeding visit to the island found no live unfledged young, however thirteen new freshly dead Common Tern chicks were found during this visit which included five out of the 13 ringed during the previous visit, giving a mortality rate of 39% for the year. The deaths are considered to be a result of the inclement wet weather prevalent at the time.

Mark Oksien

Lothian Ringing Group – Seabird Ringing Summary 2008

	Full	Pulli	Retraps/ Recoveries	Total
Fulmar	2	169	1	172
Cormorant	0	16	0	16
Shag	46	136	38	220
Great Black-backed Gull	0	5	0	5
Kittiwake	38	107	24	169
Common Tern	0	79	0	79
Guillemot	4	0	0	4
Razorbill	7	25	3	35
Puffin	0	0	2	2
Unknown/Rarity	0	0	1	1
Total:	97	537	69	703

We made 9 seabird ringing trips to the islands: 3 trips to Craigleith, 5 to Inchkeith (one in lieu of a trip to Craigleith) and one to Inchgarvie. We ringed/recaptured just 624 seabirds birds, excluding the Common Terns in Leith Docks.

Thirty people in all took part in the 9 trips, (averaging 3.3 people per trip).

John C. Davies