



Forth Seabird Group

Forth Islands Bird Report 2019

Compiled by Bill Bruce

February 2020

SEABIRD SPECIES SUMMARIES

Notes:

- AOS / AOB / AON / AOT = apparently occupied sites / burrows / nests / territories.

FULMAR

Last year some islands showed decreases while others didn't. Overall last year's count was down 17% compared to 2017. This year the numbers on some islands are down while the overall total has gone up by 5%. This year's total AOS is exactly on the 10 year mean.

CORMORANT

The colonies on Craigleith and Inchkeith haven't done so well this year while Lamb and Carr Craig have done better. Overall the number of AON is down 13% compared to last year. However an aerial photo showing the Craigleith colony suggests that there are probably more nests (c60?) here which would improve the total and result in an 8% decrease compared to last year.

SHAG

Most islands are showing reduced numbers of AON (the exceptions are Lamb and Inchkeith) and overall numbers are down 8%. This year's total AON is only slightly more than half of those counted during the most recent peak in 2003 and 2004.

GANNET

The news from St Abbs Head is that there were 11 AON this year though no eggs were laid and therefore no chicks.

EIDER

A full count of nests was carried out on Inchkeith which showed good numbers. Unfortunately, on the other islands where a count was carried out, decreases were seen.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

These weren't counted on Isle of May which hosts the largest numbers. However looking at the other islands numbers are down by 4% this year.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Looking at the islands where a count was carried out this year numbers are significantly down ie down 30%.

HERRING GULL

On the islands where this species was counted some numbers are up and others are down however the overall total is very similar to last year's.

KITTIWAKE

After a poor year last year numbers have seen some recovery and overall are showing a 19% increase compared to last year and an 8% increase on the 10 year average.

COMMON TERN

Once again disturbance at Leith Docks caused the colony there to abandon and this is likely to be the reason increased numbers have been seen elsewhere. The RSPB's new raft at Port Edgar (now in its second year) did well with 109 AON, Long Craig increased by c60% and a new colony was seen at Methil Docks (c150-190 AON).

ARCTIC TERN

This year saw much better breeding numbers on Isle of May compared to last year ie up 86%

however this is well down (ie down 40%) on the recent peak count of 832 AON in 2017.

ROSEATE TERN

There were no reports of any roseate pairs breeding, however a couple of individual birds were noted paired with common tern partners.

SANDWICH TERN

Isle of May is the only island where this species bred this year.

RAZORBILL

This has been a good year for razorbill with healthy increases being seen on Craigleith (+42%), Lamb (+57%) and Isle of May (11%). Overall numbers are up by 524 AOS or 12% compared to last year, giving the highest total ever.

GUILLEMOT

Overall numbers are up 14% compared to the average for the last 10 years. Isle of May holds the largest numbers and saw an increase of 58% compared to 2018.

PUFFIN

No puffin burrow counts were carried out this year.

A full report has been compiled and although it is initially being withheld it will be published here in due course.