



Forth Seabird Group

Forth Islands Bird Report

2010

Compiled by Bill Bruce

April 2011

SEABIRD SPECIES SUMMARIES 2010

Note: AOS = *Apparently occupied sites*; AON = *Apparently occupied nests*; AOB = *Apparently occupied burrows*; AOT = *Apparently occupied territories*

FULMAR

Overall, total numbers are very similar to last year (up 18 birds, 1%)

CORMORANT

On Craigeith and Inchkeith breeding numbers are exactly the same as last year. For the second year none were breeding on Haystack while on Carr Craig and Lamb numbers are down. Overall numbers are down by 21 AON or 8%.

SHAG

Biggest increases are on Lamb (+39 AON, 52%) and Fidra (+45 AON, 28%) while the biggest decrease is on Inchkeith (-32 AON, -20%). The total for all islands is up 135 AON (12%), which continues the general increase since numbers halved between 2004 and 2005.

GANNET

Not counted this year.

EIDER

This species was counted on Inchkeith for the first time since 1994 and over this period numbers are down by 56 AON (17%). However, for all islands where a count was done this year, there has been a slight increase (24 birds, 2%) since 1994.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

On Fidra, Carr Craig and Inchmickery numbers are the same as last year while all other islands show a decrease. Overall numbers are down by 12 AON (17%)

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL & HERRING GULL

These gulls were counted on Inchkeith, the first count since 2002. This showed that there were 2620 AON / 3720 AOT for herring gulls and 2670 AON / 3500 AOT for LBB gulls

KITTIWAKE

With the exception of 2009, numbers of AON for all islands have fluctuated by approx. $\pm 4\%$ for a number of years. The May Isle in 2009 was lower (21% down compared to 2008) than this general trend would expect but numbers have recovered this year and are slightly up on the 2007 count.

COMMON TERN

A poor year on May Isle with numbers well down and the whole colony being abandoned. The Leith Docks colony had more success with 818 nests counted by Lothian Ringing Group. Long Craig was also successful with over 100 chicks fledged by 109 pairs.

ARCTIC TERN

Very few birds attempting to breed on May Isle before the whole colony was abandoned.

ROSEATE TERN

Two abandoned nests, each with a single cold egg, reported.

SANDWICH TERN

No recorded attempts at breeding.

RAZORBILL

After four years of decline, there has been a small increase (6%) this year. The biggest increase is on May Isle of 157 AOS (7%)

GUILLEMOT

May Isle shows an increase of 1208 (7%) birds while there were big drops on Craigleith (-690 birds, -38%) and Bass Rock (-950, -37%). Overall the number of birds seen on the breeding ledges is very similar to the previous two years.

PUFFIN

This species was only counted on Craigleith and Fidra as part of the SOS Puffin Project. Both islands show an increase: Craigleith +7% (+300 AOB) and Fidra +44% (+350AOB)

Table 1: Summary of seabird counts for the Forth Islands, 2010

2010	Bass Rock	Craig-leith	Lamb	Fidra	Eyebr-oughty	Inch-keith	Carr Craig	Inch-colm	Hay-stack	Inch-mickery + Cow & Calves	Inch-garvie / Forth Bridge	Long Craig	May Isle	Total
Fulmar (AOS)	39	113	40	234		258	0	177	0	25	210	0	381	1,477
Cormorant (AON)	0	50	41	0		c75	82	0	0	0	0	0	0	248
Shag (AON)	16	207	114	204		194	9	3	0	55	0	0	492	1,294
Gannet (AON)	x	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	x
Eider (AON)	8+	213+	x	117+		267+	0	x	0	41	x	5	1,099	1,750+
Great B-b Gull (nests)		16	1	2-3		3	1?	0	0	1	0	0	36	c60
Lesser B-b Gull (AON)	c1	x	x	x		c3500 AOT	5	x	15	x	14	0	2,348	5,883+
Herring Gull (AON)		x	x	x		c3700 AOT	35	x	25	x	134	0	3,215	7,109+
Kittiwake (AON)	440	600	133	232		402	0	103	0	0	0	0	3,422	5,332
Common Tern (AON)	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	109	17	126
Arctic Tern (AON)	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	34
Roseate Tern (AON)														0
Sandwich Tern (AON)	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Razorbill (pairs/sites)	63	136	42	123		80	0	4	0	0	0	0	2557 (3234 b)	3,005
Guillemot (birds on cliffs)	c1600	c1110	c2175	517		56	0	0	0	0	0	0	18096 (15029 pr)	c23,554
Puffin (birds unless otherwise stated)	1-2 on land	c4800 AOB	x	c1150 AOB		x	0	2 on land	0	18 on land	0	0	x	5,950+

AOB/AOS/AOT=Apparently occupied burrows/sites/territories; x=birds present but not counted; 0=none breeding; c=circa

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF VISITS AND SIGHTINGS

CRAIGLEITH – 13 March 2010

Rene van der Wal

2 mallard
4 greylags
1 skylark
3 blackbirds (all male)
1 wren
4 linnet
4+ rock pipit

Also, in my seed bags I found a wee land snail:
Columella edentula (nothing special although probably the first record of a land snail on Craigleith).

Inchkeith – 21 March 2010

Ron Morris

Peregrine
Black Guillemot (north bay)
Redshank 1
Curlew 2
Mallard 2 males + 2 females
Blackbird 6 males

Grey Seal = 76 including 73 on Iron Craig and 3 on Seal Carr.

Fidra – 7 April 2010

David Ross

Greylag goose on 5 eggs in tree mallow overlooking channel to the Castle

INCHMICKERY – 18 April 2010

Ron Morris

13+ shelduck ashore, mainly on roof of an old searchlight building at the island's north side.
Puffin - 5 offshore

INCHKEITH – 18 April 2010

Ron Morris

Pied Wagtail – 1
Mallard – 2 drakes
Peregrine – 2
Blackbird – 6 males
Buzzard – 1
Great Black-backed Gull – 3 pairs nesting on roofs of pillboxes and gun emplacement.

Seals – see appendix 1

Rabbit - 8+ seen

Craigleith – 4 May 2010

Seen during puffin count

Greylag goose - 2
GBB gull – 3 pairs
Eider – c40-60 females offshore
Purple sandpiper - 2
Linnet - c8
Pied wagtail - 1
Wren & Dunnock singing
Swallow & House Martin flying over
Grey seal – 4, one with tag 9073

Fidra – 6 May 2010

Seen during puffin count

GBB gull – 1 pair
Pied wagtail – 1 pair
Purple sandpiper – 1
Wren – 1 nesting
Peregrine – 2
Dunnock – singing
Robin
Oystercatcher

Inchkeith - 22 May 2010

Seen during gull count

Blackbird - several males singing, nest with two hatchlings
Buzzard - flying into building
2 mallard ducks
Rock pipit
1 shelduck

Cormorant – 51 aon, seen from boat
Shag – 67 aon, on outside of stacks
Razorbill – 1 aos, on outside of stacks
Guillemot - 52 aos, on outside of stacks

Primrose and bluebells in flower

Red tide was noticeable: bloom of dinoflagellate algae

Inchkeith - 23 May 2010**Seen during gull count**

Mallard – 3 drakes, 2 ducks, nest with 10 eggs

Pied wagtail

Pigeon

Pigeon nest

2+ pairs rock pipit

Tufted duck - 1 pair plus 1 drake on water

Rabbit - 4 (inc babies)

several peacock butterflies (by beach)

tortoiseshell butterflies (on top)

various white butterflies

25 seals (14 + 11)

Red tide was noticeable: bloom of dinoflagellate algae

Inchcolm – 26 May 2010**Seen during main seabird count**

Wren, 2 birds singing

Chaffinch, 2 birds singing

Oystercatcher, 3 territories

Woodpigeon, 3+ birds

Jackdaw, 2+ birds, (young calling from cave above harbour, adults going in with food)

Robin, 1 bird

Blackbird, 1 bird

Swallow, 2 birds & 1 nest.

Pied wagtail

Feral pigeon

6 Grey seals (on shore facing Fife)

Eider – two adult females with 15 young on water

Carr Craig – 26 May 2010**Seen during main seabird count**

Curlew, 1 calling

Haystack – 26 May 2010**Seen during main seabird count**

Crow, 1 bird

1 puffin in water

3 grey seals

Inchgarvie – 26 May 2010**Seen during main seabird count**

60+ feral pigeon

Garden Tiger moth caterpillars (many!!)

Inchmickery – 26 May 2010**Seen during main seabird count**

Blackbird, M, F & 2 chicks.

12 Puffin on water

Feral pigeon

Rabbit x1

Eider –adult with 5 young in nest + two dead nearby

Fidra – 29 May 2010**Seen during main seabird count**

Oystercatchers: 2 pairs

Eider: 12 on nest; 3 nests of mixed eider and gull eggs; 2 nests taken over by gull

Mallard nest with 8 eggs

Rock pipit: 1 Pair

Dunnock: several

Inchkeith - 30 May 2010**Seen during main seabird count**

Oystercatcher: 9 pairs

Blackbird: 1 on nest

Buzzard: 1

Peregrine: 1

Puffin: large numbers (30 plus on one headland; 140 in one raft on water)

Rock pipit: several pairs

Shelduck: 2

Eider: 2 ducks with 12/13 ducklings making for the water; drakes and ducks displaying on water

Ringed dead shag [1416900 + red PNS]

Small (green-veined) white butterfly

Grey seals: 32 on Iron Craig; 13 grey on Seal Carr

Primrose and henbane in flower

Bass Rock – 5 June 2010

Peregrine - 1 bird seen in castle walls

Rock pipits - breeding

Seals: Common - 2 at west caves

Grey – 2 at west caves, 1 at east caves, 2 hauled out at SE corner

Craigleith – 5 June 2010

Oystercatcher- 1 pair

Rock pipit -several pairs, some carrying food

Peregrine - 1 bird seen, agitated, but no nest seen

Starling

Carrion crow - nest with 1 half fledged chick in elder bushes

Swallow - 2 birds flying over

Ringed shags: the following darvics were noted, all on west side of island: red TPD; red TSA, red TPC, red TXB, TUS, TUU

Leith Docks – 11 June 2010

John Davies

Common Tern: 818 nests this year, one of the largest colonies in Britain & Ireland

Inchcolm – 28 July 2010

Ron Morris

Starling – Flock of 20

Chaffinch – one male

Rock Pigeon – Flock of 250

Jackdaw – 1+

Pied Wagtail – 1 male

Swallow – two nests in toilet recess. 1 still occupied. 2-4 swallows flying about.

Wren – 1

Wood Pigeon – Appears more numerous. 1 nest with 2 eggs, 1 with two squabs, one with 1 squab, 1 fledged juvenile, 6 or more adults flying from prospective elder bushes.

Shag – 1 adult still on nest. Two large chicks in another.

Herring Gull/Lesser Black-backed Gull – Most birds with near fledged chicks.

Fulmar – A few with chicks in nests

Kittiwake – A few still at nests

Grey seals – 154+ on Inchcolm and neighbouring rocks and bouys

Common seals – 18 on Carr Craig

Craigleith – 7 August 2010

Rene van der Wal

1 blackbird

1 wren

3 rock pipits

2 willow warblers

10 odd linnets

1 common sandpiper taking a rest on a vegetated low lying platform in the glen directly at sea; this is bound to be a new species!

29 August 2010

seen on Fife Seal Group trip

Oyster Catcher – Inchmickery, Carr Craig (2),

Turnstone (10) Carr Craig

Curlew (1) – Haystack

Arctic Skua (2) – (near Haystack), (1) Burntisland – Inchkeith, – Inchkeith – Granton

Godwit – Burntisland Harbour Rocks

Guillemot - Burntisland – Inchkeith, – Inchkeith – Granton

Shag (leucistic) – Inchkeith later seen on Long Craig

Peregrine (dive bombing buzzard) – Inchkeith

Manx Shearwater – Inchkeith – Granton

Great Skua/Bonxie – Inchkeith – Granton

Butterflies all on Inchkeith:

Lacewings

Painted Lady

Peacock

Red Admiral

Tortoiseshell

White (?Green-veined)

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		5 June 2010
Craigleith	Puffin count	4 May 2010
	Seabird count	5 June 2010
The Lamb		29 May 2010
Fidra	Puffin count	5 May 2010
	Seabird count	29 May 2010
Eyebroughty		
Inchkeith	Gull count	22 & 23 May 2010
	Seabird count	30 May 2010
Carr Craig		26 May 2010
Haystack		26 May 2010
Inchcolm		26 May 2010
Inchmickery		26 May 2010
Inchgarvie		26 May 2010
Forth Rail Bridge		
Long Craig		May to June
Isle of May		late May to June

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

Tree Mallow Project – SOS Puffin

For further information about this project go to the Scottish Seabird Centre website at www.seabird.org or for information on tree mallow go to www.abdn.ac.uk/treemallow

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Rene van der Wal
Peter Wright

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Appendix 1

Survey of Inner Forth haul-out sites – Sunday 18th April 2010

A circuit of the inner Forth islands and rocks for the purpose of surveying known seal haul-out sites took place on the above date. Sailing from and returning to, Granton Harbour, Edinburgh, the trip took in the following islands and rocks, i.e. Inchmickery, Cow and Calves, Oxcars Rocks, Inchcolm, Haystack, all of the offshore sub-tidal rocks between Downing Point, Dalgety Bay and Burntisland harbour and Inchkeith. The trip was finished off with a three hours landing at Inchkeith, allowing the party to explore the island, including a visit to its lighthouse.

The day was overcast and drizzling moderately for the most part, but cleared up after the party landed at Inchkeith. A cold north-easterly wind (speed approx. 9 knots) prevailed.

Although the date and times chosen allowed these locations to be surveyed within the two hours either side of low tide period, seal counts were lower than expected and it is thought the weather conditions were less than ideal for seals hauling out. Nevertheless, concentrations of seals were seen at the west sides of Haystack and Inchkeith, which on the day were the most sheltered of the haul-out sites. It was surprising that a number of the usual locations were completely free of seals.

No seals were present at Inchmickery, Cow and Calves, Inchcolm, or Inchcolm. However, two grey seals were hauled out on the catamaran floats of No.14 Buoy (red) off Oxcars. A further grey seal was on one of the floats of No.15 Buoy (green), west of Inchcolm.

At Haystack a total of 18 grey seals (13 ashore + 5 in water) were present. Afterwards the boat made for Thank Rocks (Downing Point) before turning east towards Burntisland Docks.

One grey seal was swimming off Long Craig rocks (Dalgety Bay). Three were in the water off the Common Rocks and 5 common seals were on the tidal rocks at the west side of Burntisland harbour.

En-route to Inchkeith one grey seal was seen on each of Nos. 9 and 10 Channel Buoys. On arrival at the island 5 grey seals were seen hauled out on Seal Carr and c.50 grey seals were hauled out on Iron Craig.

In total 82 grey seals and 5 common seals were accounted for over an area which included a sizeable proportion of the more suitable haul-out sites in the Firth of Forth.

Ron Morris

Appendix 2

Puffin Count Results 2010

The puffin burrows were counted on Craigleith and Fidra. These were counted by a team of volunteers who covered all possible nesting habitat (except for the east end of Craigleith). Sample plots were looked at more closely to establish a correction factor which was then applied to the total count to give a figure of apparently occupied burrows (aobs).

Craigleith – 4 May 2010

5,311 "burrow"s were counted (5,363 in 2009). The correction factor was complicated by the presence of rabbits some of whose burrows were being used by puffins though it was not possible to quantify what proportion. It was concluded that the correction factor lay somewhere between 0.79 and 0.85, therefore giving a corrected count figure in the range between 4,196 aobs and 4,514 aobs.

Because we kept away from the east end of the island (in order not to disturb nesting cormorants) and only counted about 90% of the island, the total estimated count for the whole island came to between 4,662 aobs and 5,015 aobs. This compares with the total figure for 2009 (when rabbit numbers were not significant) of 4,500 aobs and suggests there has been a modest increase in numbers since last year of between 4% and 11%. The figures show that no new puffin burrows have been made this year but more of them are being occupied than last year.

213 eider nests were also counted as compared with 204 in 2009. May 4th is too early for an accurate count of eiders so the full figure will be higher. The larger numbers of nesting eiders in the last three years suggest that they too have benefited from the clearance of tree mallow.

Fidra – 5 May 2010

1,240 "burrows" were counted on the whole island (987 in 2009). The correction factor came to 0.927 giving a corrected figure of 1,150 aobs. This compares with only 800 aobs in 2009 and is a significant increase (44%) since last year.

The increase from last year in the number of "burrows" (about 25%) was the same on both the Main Island and Castle Tarbet while there was also an increase in the proportion of these which were apparently occupied.

117 eider nests were also counted though not quite all the island was covered. This is not directly comparable with last year when 70 nests were counted on a smaller part of the island. May 5th is too early for an accurate eider count so the full figure will be higher. Since tree mallow was not so dominant on Fidra as on Craigleith, it is not thought to have significantly affected the numbers of nesting eiders.

The increase on Fidra is very good news and the small increase on Craigleith suggests that numbers are moving in the right direction.

John Hunt

Appendix 3

Inchkeith Gull Count 22-23 May 20

Saturday 22 May:

- Count 9.40 - 10.45 from boat
- Count 11.00 - 15.30 on island
- Wind force: 0 – 1 westerly
- Sea state: waves 0 inches (flat calm)
- Full sun

Sunday 23 May

- Count 10.30 - 16.00 on island
- Wind force 0 – 1 westerly
- Sea state: waves 0 inches (flat calm)
- Cloudy soon changing to full sun

Taking part: Bill Bruce; Dave Aiton; Bobby Anderson; John Davies; Nadia Al-Dujaili; Alex Laird; Alan Leitch; Hannah Morton; Elaine O'Mahony; Connor Proud; Tara Proud; Lynn & James Strachan; Peter Wright

During an earlier visit to Inchkeith, it was noticed that the slopes all round the island would be clearly visible to count from a boat sailing close to the shores. This would leave a few flatter areas which would need to be counted from vantage points on the island. These areas are:

- Three areas along the ridge, south of the lighthouse
- The area roughly north of the lighthouse
- The area below the lighthouse around the West Fort

On Saturday 22 May the boat left Granton Harbour and headed for the south end of Inchkeith. The tide was high so we were able to cruise close in to the eastern side of the island. Three groups of people were assigned to counting herring gulls, lesser black-backed gulls or all gulls. When we reached East Stoll numbers were noted and a new count was started covering the slopes and cliffs round to the pier at Leith Harbour. A third count was then carried out from the southern tip of the island back to the cliffs which reach nearly to Leith Harbour. It was intended that the slopes above Leith Harbour would be counted from the pier but this was not done due to lack of time.

As can be seen from table 1 there is a wide range of numbers for each of these count areas.

Table 1. Numbers from all counters, counted 22 May 2010

Counted from boat	All Gulls			Herring Gulls				LBB Gulls		
East Side	493	1145	1930	318	350	432	622	244	376	459
Kinghorn Harbour to										
Leith Harbour	142	310	570	40	51	97	149	24	34	115
South of Leith										
Harbour to south										
point	407	723	790	52	152		212	20	50	147
Slopes above Leith										
Harbour										

The following reasons have been identified for the differences:

- Tally Counters: although this is only the second season that these tally counters have been used, a number of them did not function correctly. For this reason the lowest figures will be discarded.
- Due to the nature of the seabed and the shallow depths, the boat could not get close to shore along the south west part of the island. Here it was difficult to distinguish between species.
- It transpired later that the figures are a mixture of apparently occupied nests (AON) and apparently occupied territories (AOT). The highest figures are therefore being interpreted as AOT and the others as AON.

As can be seen from table 2, the counts made after landing are much more consistent between the different counters.

Table 2. Numbers from all counters, counted 22 May 2010

		All Gulls			Herring Gulls			LBB Gulls	
Counted after landing	Control area	260	264	267	39			190	204
	Areas to NW of lighthouse	304			133			201	
	Areas to NE of lighthouse	203	223		90			86	
	Ridge: Lighthouse to battery F	63			28	31		29	33
	Ridge: Battery F to battery B	32			20			12	
	Ridge: South of battery B	133			50	54		26	

Table 3 is an attempt to make sense of the figures and to work out the numbers of AON and AOT.

Table 3: Numbers of AON and AOT

		All Gulls		Herring Gulls		LBB Gulls	
		AON	AOT	AON	AOT	AON	AOT
Counted from boat	East Side	1145	1930	367	622	310	459
	Kinghorn Harbour to Leith Harbour	310	570	63	149	29	115
	South of Leith Harbour to south point	723	790	102	212	35	147
	Slopes above Leith Harbour						
Counted after landing	Control area	264		39		197	
	Areas to NW of lighthouse	304		133		201	
	Areas to NE of lighthouse	213		90		86	
	Ridge: Lighthouse to battery F	63		28		31	
	Ridge: Battery F to battery B	32		20		6	
	Ridge: South of battery B	133		50		13	
Totals		3187	4299	891	1343	908	1255

During the planning of this count, Ron Morris had identified an area below the lighthouse around the West Fort as being suitable for use as a control area (see photo 1). This contains a mix of buildings, elder bushes, areas with vegetation about 0.5m in height and clear areas.

Photo 1: Control area



The team went up to the lighthouse and counted the gulls in the control area and also in the flat areas to the north of the lighthouse. Further flat areas along the ridge to the south of the lighthouse were counted from other vantage points.

On Sunday 23 May, after landing, the party carried out a walk-through count of the nests in the control area. This included a few nests with small chicks, nests with eggs and empty nests. No attempt was made to identify the species.

When counting the control area from the vantage point, a total of 264 (i.e. 264 – 267) gull nests/territories were counted. During the walk through of this same area a total of 443 gull nests were found. This gives a correction factor of 1.678 (i.e. 443 / 264) which needs to be applied to the counts to allow for gulls hidden by vegetation and buildings.

From the boat and the various vantage points a total of c.3200 AON / c.4300 AOT were counted. By applying the correction factor, these numbers are converted to c.5300 AON / c.7200 AOT. These numbers should be considered as a minimum count since the slopes above Leith Harbour were not counted and other birds on the lower slopes elsewhere were hidden from view when counting from the boat.

These totals can then be split between herring gulls and LBB gulls using the proportions obtained from the various counts, see table 4.

Table 4: Proportion of herring gulls and lesser black-backed Gulls

	AON	Percent	AOT	Percent
Herring Gulls	891	49.5%	1343	51.7%
LBB Gulls	908	50.5%	1255	48.3%
Total	1799		2598	

As can be seen, there is close to a 50/50 split between the two species though there are perhaps a few more herring gulls than LBB gulls. This then gives estimated figures of 2620 AON / 3720 AOT for herring gulls and 2670 AON / 3500 AOT for LBB gulls.

For comparison, table 5 shows some counts from previous years. It will be seen that there has been a slight increase in breeding numbers of both species (ie herring gulls +4%, LBB gulls +7%) since the last count in 2002.

Table 5: Historical figures

	Herring Gull	LBB Gull
1940	1	
1959		12
1975	4000	
1977		300-350
1987	c4000	c1750
1994	4977	2607
2002	3580	3276

Footnote: AON is being taken to be birds that can be reasonable assumed to be on nests e.g. a bird sitting or a pair of birds close together in a place that is suitable for a nest. AOT also includes single birds which are standing alone, at a suitable distance from neighbouring birds and in suitable locations, but may not be on a nest.

Bill Bruce
June 2010

Appendix 4

Long Craig Island 2010

During the year two visits to the island were made;
Maintenance and clean up visit on 29th April
Ringing visit on 14th August

Island Maintenance

Present during this visit were; Alistair Whyte (AW) SWT Reserves Manager and Mark Oksien (MO) Reserve Warden/Convenor.

During the visit several before and after photographs of the island were taken for record purposes.

The nine tyres laid out the previous year had been slightly displaced by the winter storms, these were repositioned, (see photos).



The emerging new growth of Mayweed was sprayed by AW. The central areas of the island were raked over and the nest boxes and hollows were cleaned out and re-freshened with new sand. The rock walls defining the recording areas were reinstated where missing. Domestic debris on the island was collected and removed.



Photo (14/08/2010) showing significant reduction of Mayweed growth

Breeding Report

Eider

During the maintenance visit an Eider duck was found nesting. This year only five Eider ducks nested on the island. Again although some ducklings were observed during monitoring visits indicating successful breeding it is difficult to confirm that they were actually island bred. Some of the nests were noted to contain un-hatched/addled eggs during the later visits to the island.



Common Tern

Another good year for Common Terns with an early start with and a minimum 57 birds nesting before the end of May and at least 70 pairs present. The tyres again proved to be a firm favourite with the nesting Common Terns. By mid June nesting pairs had increased to 75 and before the week was out a count of 163 adult birds was made (indicative of c100+ pairs) and over 50 young had hatched. The Common Tern breeding made a good early start with young fledging by mid-July and most fledged by the end of the month.

Long Craig Island	2007	2008	2009	2010
Breeding pairs	139	90-100	122	109
Clutches	172	163	163	124
Eggs laid	249	285	218	163+
Eggs Hatched	117	73	177	c120
Eggs Un-hatched	132	170	28	38+
Eggs outcome unknown	~	43	13	38
Young Fledged	91	42	152	c100
Young Died	26	31	25	27

Ringing Report

This year's ringing visit was constrained by the tidal cycle and later than I wished as the early breeding year meant that nearly all the young had fledged and as a result only three youngsters were ringed (SR29636-638).

Development

The construction of walls to stabilise the tidal scree areas of the island discussed by AW and MO during the maintenance visit and AW is to discuss this project with the conservation team.

Mark Oksien – Reserve Convenor
2010

Appendix 5

Seabird Ringing 2010 Report

Seabird ringing trips were carried out on the following dates and visited the islands listed

Date	Islands
22 nd May 2010	Inchkeith, Inchmickery
11 th June 2010	Leith Docks
12 th June 2010	Inchkeith
15 th June 2010	Craigeith
23 rd June 2010	Inchmickery
26 th June 2010	Craigeith
3 rd July 2010	Inchkeith
31 st July 2010	Inchkeith
4 th August 2010	Inch Garvie
5 th August 2010	Craigeith

Total

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total New	Retrap	Total
Fulmar	6	238	244	1	245
Cormorant		22	22		22
Shag	12	176	188	6	194
LBB Gull		15	15		15
Herring Gull		9	9		9
GBB Gull		7	7		7
Kittiwake	1	26	27	4	31
Common Tern		31	31		31
Guillemot		2	2		2
Razorbill		6	6		6
Puffin		2	2	3	5

Craigeith

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total New	Retrap
Fulmar		75	75	
Cormorant		6	6	
Shag	7	75	82	2
GBB Gull		7	7	
Razorbill		2	2	
Puffin		2	2	2

Inch Garvie

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total New	Retrap
Fulmar	1	95	93	

Inchkeith

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total New	Retrap
Fulmar	5	68	73	1
Cormorant		16	16	
Shag	3	14	17	4
LBB Gull		15	15	
Herring Gull		9	9	
Kittiwake	1	26	27	4
Guillemot		2	2	
Razorbill		4	4	
Puffin				1

Inchmickery

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total New	Retrap
Shag	2	87	89	

Leith Docks

Species	Adult	Pullus	Total New	Retrap
Common Tern		31	31	

Discussion

Another poor season for ringing seabirds due primarily to the weather limiting access to the islands at the critical times for ringing seabird chicks.

Very poor numbers of Puffins and Kittiwakes were ringed this year. Although good numbers of Shags were ringed on Inchmickery the number ringed on Craigleith was lower than normal since most of the birds were too large and too mobile by the time we managed to get to the island on 26th June.

Good numbers of Fulmars were ringed on Inch Garvie, Craigleith and Inchkeith since the weather had relented by then.

Martin Moss

Ring recoveries

22 May 2010: Colour ring, White SSJ, found on Inchkeith was from a Shag ringed as a pullus on 27/06/06 on the Isle of May

30 May 2010: dead shag found on Inchkeith with BTO ring 1416900 and red Darvik PNS. This bird was ringed as a chick on 10/06/2009 on Inchmickery.

Appendix 6

Craigleith Grey Seal Counts

Craigleith Island visit seal count & photo ID report, 10am Tuesday November 16th 2010

(including Scottish Seabird Centre (SSC) Craigleith camera seal pup count, 10am Saturday November 13th 2010)

By: Maggie Sheddan, James Leyden

Craigleith Island visit seal count, 10am Tuesday November 16th 2010

Total number of pups: 46

34 white

7 partial moult

3 full moult

2 dead

32 cows (including one yearling)

2 bulls

SSC Craigleith camera seal pup count 10am Saturday November 13th 2010

Total number of pups: 35

31 white

2 partial moult

2 dead

Photo ID

A number of photographs were taken in accordance with the SMRU's photo ID project and these will be processed for suitability for direct passing to SMRU or other mechanism as instructed.

Comments

- Weather and conditions: calm, sunny, clear, dissipating frost
- There were two areas of seal population: (1) around the boat landing area towards the southwest of the island, and (2) the central southern "Glen" area. The remainder of the island was clear.
- It was felt 3 pups had been born from the Saturday camera count to the Tuesday visit count. Therefore, it would appear 8 pups were missed on the camera count. Indeed 4 pups were close to the landing area well away from camera coverage.
- The first Craigleith grey seal pup born for the 2010 season was estimated to have occurred on 20th October as a result of ongoing SSC volunteer camera images monitoring.
- There was a time constraint due to boat operator commitments and it was concluded that for future visits half a day would be most suitable.

- It is hoped a second count will take place between December 7th and December 14th inclusive (21-28 days from 1st count) where it will most likely be required to “chime in” with an SOS Puffin project work party visit due to boat use restrictions.

Craigleith Island visit 2nd seal count, 11am Saturday December 4th 2010

By: Maggie Sheddan, James Leyden.

Craigleith Island visit 2nd seal count, 11am Saturday 4th December 2010

Total number of pups: 32*

7 white (including partial moult)

23 moult

2 dead (white)

0 dead (moult)

*it is felt that 2 of the “whites” would have been part of the first count.

14 cows (including one yearling)

1 bull

Total number of new born combining both counts: 51

(46 from first count, and 5 from second count)

Comments

- A number of moults had travelled north and west beyond the central southern “Glen” area and so beyond SSC remote camera coverage.
- The uncertainty surrounding the opportunity of landing on Craigleith due to weather conditions dictated that the second count should take place as and when an opportunity presented itself as long as it was not prohibitively close to the first count.
- The number of days between both counts is 19. This is slightly outside the instructed ideal window of between 21 and 28 days and preferably less than 25 days, however it is hoped a final check will take place on Sunday December 12th (26 days from first count) as there is an SOS Puffin project trip due out that day and hence transport is available weather permitting.

Appendix 7

SEAL HAUL-OUT SITE SURVEY 29th August 2010

Fife Seal Group carried out their second haul-out survey of the inner Forth sites on the above date. A generally bright but breezy day was had throughout.

The boat left Granton harbour about 9 am and returned about 4 pm. A circuit of the rocks in the following order took place: Inchmickery, Cow and Calves, Oxcars Rocks, Carr Craig, Inchcolm south side, Haystack, Downing Point rocks, Long Craig (Dalgety Bay), Braefoot Bay rocks, Inchcolm north side, Meadulse Rocks, Braefoot Terminal Rocks, Craigdimas, Common Rocks, Burntisland Harbour West Rocks and Inchkeith.

Seals were present, often in good numbers, at most of these sites. A total of 263 seals were counted, 39 of which were common seals and 224 were grey seals. The following table gives a breakdown of seals per location.

In addition Danny Wallace carried out a survey of the seals at Seafield Rocks which lie between Kirkcaldy and Kinghorn on 4th September 2010. A total of 52 seals were counted, 42 of which were common seals, 6 were grey seals and four were unidentified. This is a welcome record for this location as it has not been properly surveyed for many years. Fears had been that nearby residential developments in recent times would have had an adverse effect on the numbers of seals which frequent this traditional haul-out site. On this showing it appears this is not the case.

Seafield Rocks are probably the most important haul-out site for the common seal in the Firth of Forth. Danny has taken some super photographs of common seals at Seafield Rocks.

Seal Haul-out Table for 29th August 2010

Place	Common	Grey
Inchmickery	14	8
Cow and Calves	0	3
Oxcars	0	circa 27
Car Craig	19	8
Meadulse (Seals poss. disturbed by grounded yacht and crew)	0	0
Inchcolm	0	9
Haystack	0	19 (inc 1 with neck injury)
Downing Point (?not counted)	0	0
Long Craig	0	14
Braefoot Point Rocks	4	0
Braefoot Terminal Rocks	0	20+
Craigdimas	0	52
Common Rocks	2	circa 36
Burnt Island Harbour Rocks	0	1
Inchkeith Seal Carr	0	2
Inchkeith – Iron Craig	0	24
Inchkeith Harbour	0	1
Totals	39	224

Cormorant - Inchmickery
Oyster Catcher – Inchmickery, Car Craig (2),
Turnstone (10) Car Craig

Curlew (1) – Haystack
Arctic Skua (2) – (near Haystack), (1) Burntisland – Inchkeith, – Inchkeith – Granton
Godwit – Burntisland Harbour Rocks
Guillemot - Burntisland – Inchkeith, – Inchkeith – Granton
Shag (leucistic) – Inchkeith later seen on Long Craig
Peregrine (dive bombing buzzard) – Inchkeith
Manx Shearwater – Inchkeith – Granton
Great Skua/Bonxie – Inchkeith – Granton

Butterflies all on Inchkeith:

Lacewings
Painted Lady
Peacock
Red Admiral
Tortoiseshell
White (?Green-veined)

Appendix 8

Forth Seal Group Grey Seal Pup Count 2010

Inchkeith

INCHKEITH 14 Nov 2010	Bulls	Cows	Pups (white)	Pups (moult)	Pups Total
Area 1 - West Side	5	11 inc 1 yearling	4	0	4
Area 2 - NW Bay	2	38	49 inc 1 dead	0	49
Area 3 - NE Bay	3	33	37	1	38
Area 4 - East Bay	3	25	45	6	51
Area 5 - SE Bay	7	36	58 inc 1 dead	0	58
Area 6 - South Tip	2	22	19	2	21
TOTALS	22	165	211	9	221

INCHKEITH 5 Dec 2010	Bulls	Cows	Pups (white)	Pups (moult)	Pups Total
Area 1 - West Side	5	16 inc 3 yearling s	3	4	7
Area 2 - NW Bay	2	4	12 inc 1 dead	23	35
Area 3 - NE Bay	3	1	9 inc 3 dead	14	23
Area 4 - East Bay	3	12	19 inc 1 dead	14	33
Area 5 - SE Bay	3	12 inc 1 yearling	21 inc 1 dead	20	41
Area 6 - South Tip	1	4	5	5	10
TOTALS	17	49	69	80	149

Total number of pups: All pups from 14 Nov 221
Pups (white) from 5 Dec 69
Total 290

Common seal: 1 seen off west side and 1 in north-west bay

Other sightings Inchkeith

14th Nov

Blackbird
Buzzard
Chaffinch
Common scoter 5

Cormorant
Curlew (7)
Diver (unidentified)
Eider
Goldcrest
Goldfinch
Red-necked grebe 1

Kestrel
Linnet
Long-tailed duck

Oystercatcher (7 in flight + others)

Robin
Rock Pipit
Shag

Wren
Rabbit

5th Dec

Blackbird

Chaffinch
Common scoter 14
Crow
Cormorant
Curlew 30 +

Eider flocks on water
Goldcrest
Goldfinch
Grebe (possible red-necked) 2
Heron
Lapwing 4
Linnet
Meadow pipit 2 (inc 1 dead)
Merlin
Oystercatcher 31+
Redshank 2
Robin 2
Rock pipit
Shag
Skylark 32 +
Snipe
Snow bunting
Snipe 1
Woodcock 5 or 6
Wren
Rabbit

Inchcolm

14th Nov

2 bulls
5 cows + 1 yearling
2 pups

Other sightings

5th Dec

1 bull
13 cows (10 on Swallow Craig, inc 1 yearling)
0 pups

Barn Owl 1
Buzzard 2
Curlew 23
Heron 1
Peregrine 1
Redshank 3
Shag 2
Skylark 2
Sparrow hawk 1
Woodcock 5 or 6
Wren

Carr Craig

14th Nov

1 bull

5th Dec

Other sightings

Buzzard

Peregrine

Redshank

Merganser 1 (f)

Haystack

14th Nov

0 bulls

1 cow

0 pups

5th Dec

Other sightings

Eider (flock in flight)

11 oyster catchers

3 turnstone

Inchmickery

14th Nov

0 bulls

5 cows

0 pups

5th Dec

2 bulls

21 cows

0 pups

Other sightings

1 oyster catcher with broken wing

rock pipit

1 dead sheep

blackbird

greater black-backed gulls 22 (inc 2 juvenile)

greylag 2

herring gull 200 - 300

linnet/skylark/twite -large mixed flock

redshank (inc 1 dead)

shag 11 (inc 1 dead)

turnstone

rabbit