

WWT/JNCC/SNH Goose & Swan Monitoring Programme

survey results 2013/14

European White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons albifrons*

1. Abundance

The abundance of European White-fronted Geese in the UK during 2013/14 was monitored through the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS). Results are presented in survey reports which are available on the WeBS website.

2. Breeding success

Breeding success of European White-fronted Geese was assessed in the UK with counts being made at WWT Slimbridge and RSPB Church Farm in Suffolk during 2013/14. In total, 389 birds were aged, of which 110 (28.3%) were young. Brood size counts were carried out at WWT Slimbridge with 39 goslings counted among 18 broods, giving a mean brood size of 2.17 goslings per successful pair (Figure 1).

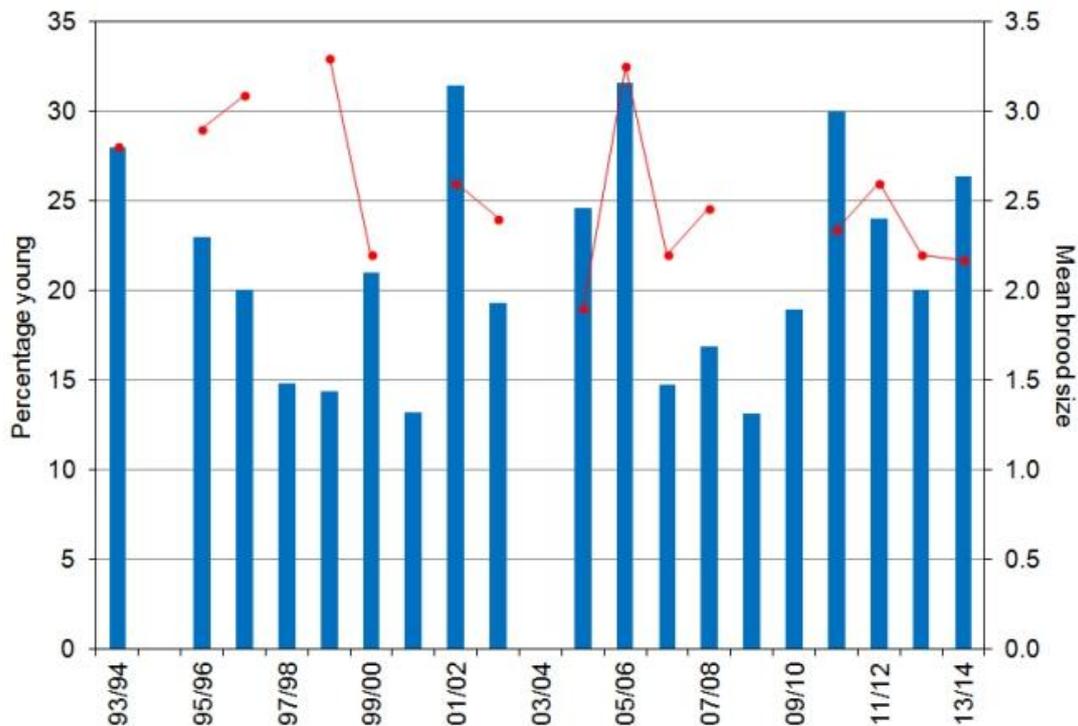


Figure 1. The percentage of young (blue columns) and mean brood size (red line) of European White-fronted Geese recorded at Slimbridge (where data have been collected regularly), 1993/94-2014/15. No data were collected during 1994/95 or 2003/04.

3. Discussion

Age assessments were undertaken in the western part of Germany, The Netherlands and Belgium and pointed at an intermediate breeding season in 2013 (K. Koffijberg pers. comm.). Among nearly 199,000 checked geese, 17.4% were first-year birds. Although some data still have to be collated, the large sample (about 16% of the flyway population) probably gives a good indication of breeding success in 2013. There was little variation among the different regions, apart from the sample from Belgium which had 31.4% first-year birds. As in previous years, towards the south western edge of the winter distribution (*i.e.* Belgium and UK) the percentage of first-winter birds is usually higher than in the core wintering areas in The Netherlands and Germany. Brood size showed considerable variation among the samples (1.15 to 2.14), and was, on average, 1.68 young per successful pair.

4. Acknowledgements

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Goose & Swan Monitoring