



**POPULATION and DISTRIBUTION
of
BEAN GEESE
in the
SLAMANNAN AREA
2001/2002**

THE BEAN GOOSE ACTION GROUP

REPORT BY

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1 Summary

This report details the results of a study undertaken between September 2001 to March 2002, to monitor the population and distribution of the Central Scotland flock of Bean Geese (*Anser fabalis fabalis*), which use the Slamannan Plateau area of Central Scotland. This is a continuation of research started in January 1990, presented elsewhere, (Simpson 1990, 1992, Smith et al 1994 and 1995, Simpson and Maciver 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001)

The first record this winter was on 24th September when 20 birds were seen flying to roost on Fannyside Muir. There was no further increase in numbers until 19th October when 79 birds were located at Beam Farm. By early November a winter peak count of 192 birds was present at Beam Farm. This is an increase of 9 birds from last year and a peak count for the area.

The pattern of feeding was similar to recent years with fields in the western sector being the most grazed. A total of 19 fields were used this winter, which is a slight decrease to the 23-used last winter. Field 170 at Beam Farm resumed the preferred field for feeding after a drop to third place last winter. The other two main feeding areas were at Tippetcraig and Blackhill.

A minimum of 15 juveniles were identified within the flock.

Roosting behaviour followed the usual pattern with East Fannyside Loch and the adjoining Muir being the preferred site.

Half of the flock departed around the 11th February and only 44 were seen on the 14th. The last two birds were seen on the 17th. This is an earlier departure date than in previous years that may be indicative of our milder winters.

2 Introduction

This study is the continuation of research into the use of the Slamannan Plateau by Bean Geese (*Anser fabalis fabalis*). It follows on from the work done by Simpson (1989-95), Maciver (1993-95), Smith et al. (1993-95), Simpson and Maciver (1995/96, 1996/97, 1997/98, 1998/99, 1999/00 2000/01), for the RSPB, S.N.H., Falkirk Council, North Lanarkshire Council.

Other members of the Bean Goose Action Group (BGAG) who use the information contained in this report are; Forestry Commission, Forest Enterprise, Central Scotland Forest Trust, Scottish Agricultural College, Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group

The 2001/02 monitoring programme "Population and Distribution of Bean Geese in the Slamannan Area" identified two main areas of study.

2.1 Population and Distribution

- a) Routine observations.
- b) Visiting Roost Sites.

3 Methods

3.1 Field Numbering

The numbering system as used by Smith et al. (1994/95) was again adopted for continuity.

3.2 Distribution

3.2.1 Diurnal distribution of Bean Geese

The technique employed was similar to previous years consisting of routine observations with no specific pattern. On most visits to the plateau the whole study area was visited so as to record all geese present.

- Number of Bean Geese.
- Number of other geese.
- Disturbance factors.

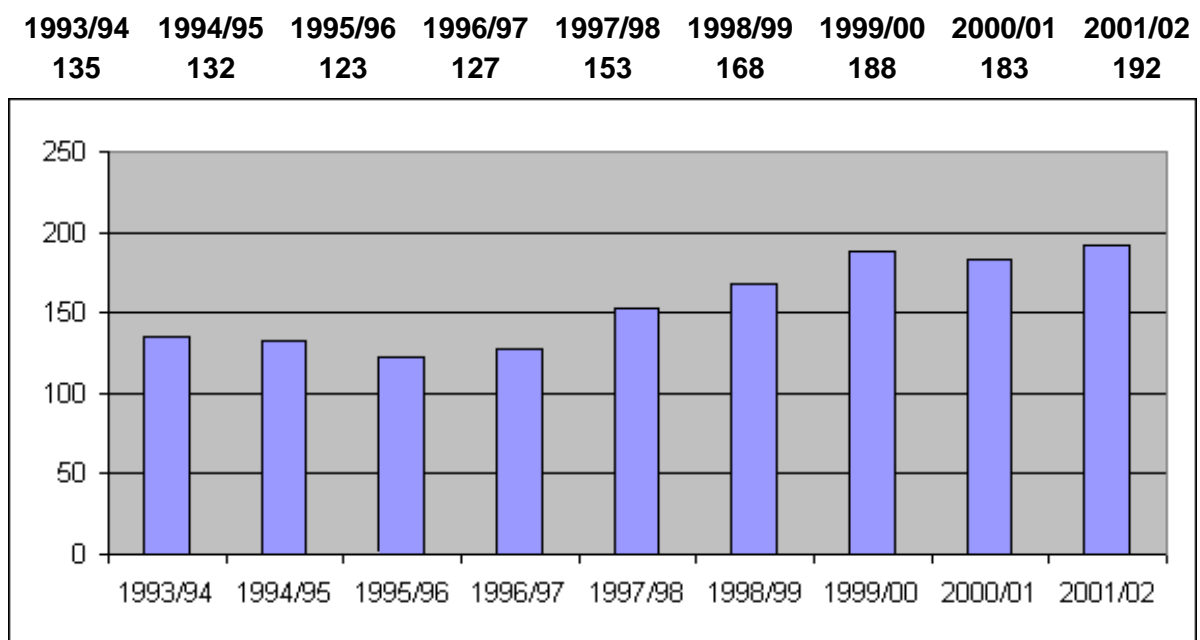
3.2.2 Roost Sites

The method employed was to arrive at a particular position that allowed monitoring of East/West Fannyside Lochs and Fannyside Muir to determine the selected roost site or to detect a shift in roost site during the night.

4 Results and analysis

4.1 Population and distribution

The maximum number of Bean Geese recorded during the winter was 192 birds. This is an increase of 9 birds from last year and our highest count since the flock were located in this area.



As in previous years there were again no marked fluctuations in the flock size, which would suggest any immigration or emigration during the winter. There was however a report of 12 Bean Geese in the Clyde area at the junction of the Rivers Kelvin/Allander on 27th November.

The birds would seem to have arrived in four groups this year. The initial group was of 20 birds to be followed three weeks later by another 59 birds. Two days later the flock size had reached 99. By the 25th October a further increase saw the flock reach a total of 150 birds. Finally on 3rd November a count of 192 heralded the arrival of the last group. This figure represents the highest number of Bean Geese seen in the area since observations began.

A minimum of 15 juveniles were identified within the flock.

4.1.1 Diurnal distribution (see map - showing location of sites)

- Routine records

The Bean Geese distribution based on all available records throughout the winter, which were precisely located to a numbered field in the study area are summarised in Appendix 1.

- Other Geese species

Greylags did not appear until November and a peak count of 14 was again less than normal for the area. December numbers reached 119 birds but declined in January with only 14 being seen. February saw an increase again with totals of 439 birds present.

For full details see Appendix 2.

Pinkfeet were again the more numerous of the two species. A total of 543 were seen during November. December counts totalled 1469 birds. The month of January produced the highest count of 1710 birds. February saw a reduction in numbers with a flock of 500 present on the plateau.

For full details see Appendix 3.

- Carron Valley Reservoir

No records were received this winter of Bean Geese being seen in this locality.

4.1.2 Roost Sites

There were a total of 32 visits this winter to record roosting behaviour. On twenty-four occasions the flock flighted onto Fannyside Muir. East Fannyside Loch was chosen seven times, with West Fannyside Loch being used once. Some night observations saw groups of birds moving from the loch to the nearby muir and vice versa.

Often during frosty weather the birds did not appear at the roost site presumably staying out to feed during favourable conditions.

5 Disturbance

As observations were not continuous, many occurrences of disturbance were undoubtedly missed. Where Bean Geese were clearly seen to be disturbed and the cause identified, these were recorded. During fieldwork there are a few occasions when the flock is disturbed accidentally.

The types of disturbance were categorised as follows, and were used in combination if appropriate:

Farming	Birds of Prey
Shooting	Helicopter
Sheep	Low flying aircraft
Vehicles	Micro light
Foxes	Birdwatchers
Dog Walker	Forestry operations

The Bean Geese were seen to be disturbed on some occasions throughout the study period. The following details are from observations during routine visits.

Forestry operations	1
Accidentally flushed	1
Farming activities	1
Low flying aircraft	1
Total	4

This is a much-reduced figure of disturbance noted than in previous years and it is pleasing to note that no Birdwatchers were seen to disturb the flock this winter.

6 Ringed Geese

The Bean Goose flock was searched whenever possible for ringed individuals but none were seen.

The previously proposed ringing and neck-banding scheme did not take place again this winter.

7 Discussion

The population increased this winter to a new high count of 192 birds. This figure represents half of the UK wintering population.

Early observations this winter saw a group of 20 birds appear on 24 September. They spent the daylight hours feeding on East Fannyside Loch by upending like Swans or some duck species. At dusk they flighted onto the adjoining muir to roost.

Numbers did not increase until 19th October when 79 birds were recorded at Beam Farm. Flock numbers built up during the rest of the month but did not peak until early November. Thereafter flock numbers remained constant.

A total of 19 fields were seen to be used this winter, which is a decrease from the 23 of last winter. The large field at Beam Farm numbered 170 regained its position as the most favoured field for feeding. The other two favoured areas were the adjoining fields at Tippetcraig and the large field at Blackhill.

Concern last winter of possible disturbance by people using a right-of-way at Beam Farm did not materialise. Hopefully with new signposting in place this winter this possible disturbance factor will not arise.

A new cause of concern for next winter is the position at Hillend and Beam farms. Hillend is reported to be for sale and future-grazing availability is uncertain. Beam farm is also being sold and the dairying that took place here has finished. Discussions with the new owner re bean goose use are anticipated.

No further forestry expansion took place but several schemes have been tentatively applied for which would make further inroads into the open landscape of the plateau if planting were granted.

Birdwatchers have again been catered for with people making contact with the fieldworkers to arrange a visit to the plateau to see the geese. Requests to refrain from disturbance seemed to work last winter and hopefully this will continue.

Information is given to Birdline Scotland on a regular basis so as to make available locations where the geese can be seen. This always includes information on how to avoid disturbance.

8 Acknowledgements

The Landowners of the study area, who gave permission for access to their lands for fieldwork.

A grateful thanks to Willie Eglinton who submitted records to be included this report.

Thanks to Katrina Marshall S.N.H for comments on a draft of this report.

9 References

Simpson, J. 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993. Bean Geese winter Reports. Unpublished.

Simpson, J and Maciver, A. A Population and Distribution of Bean Geese in the Slamannan Area 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001,

Smith, Bainbridge, and O'Brien, Distribution and Habitat Use by Bean Geese in the Slamannan Area 1994, 1995.

10 Bean Geese Scotland

Additional information can be found on a web site created and run by volunteers, which operates through the winter season. It can be found at <http://www.bean-geese.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>

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Appendix I Bean Geese Survey Data 2001/2002 Bird-Days per Field

Field No	Total No of Bean Geese						Total	Average Monthly Bird Days	No of Positive Visits
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb			
170	0	218	1334	880	1555	0	3987	665	27
26	0	277	1301	960	126	964	3628	605	33
77	60	330	331	394	444	303	1862	310	26
323	0	0	0	192	192	192	576	96	3
9	0	0	85	368	0	0	453	76	3
13	0	0	0	300	0	0	300	50	2
325	0	0	0	126	80	0	206	34	2
326	0	0	0	180	0	0	180	30	1
305	0	0	179	0	0	0	179	30	2
173	0	0	0	102	45	0	147	25	2
251	0	77	11	58	0	0	146	24	3
48	0	0	0	59	77	0	136	23	3
43	0	115	0	0	0	0	115	19	2
335	0	0	0	0	80	0	80	13	1
260	0	0	0	40	0	0	40	7	2
255	0	0	0	22	0	0	22	4	1
229	0	0	0	19	0	0	19	3	1
241	0	0	0	14	0	0	14	2	1
261	0	0	0	12	0	0	12	2	1
402	0	0	12	0	0	0	12	2	1

Appendix II Greylag Geese Survey Data 2001/2002 Bird-Days per Month

Field No	Total No of Greylag						Total	Average
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb		
251	0	0	14	30	14	331	389	65
260	0	0	0	0	0	91	91	15
255	0	0	0	45	0	0	45	8
401	0	0	0	40	0	0	40	7
261	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	3
126	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	1

Appendix III Pinkfeet Geese Survey Data 2001/2002 Bird-Days per Month

Field No	Total No of Pinkfeet						Total	Average
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb		
251	0	0	543	213	460	0	1216	203
260	0	0	0	450	700	0	1150	192
138	0	0	0	0	550	0	550	92
158	0	0	0	0	0	500	500	83
261	0	0	0	466	0	0	466	78
255	0	0	0	330	0	0	330	55
170	0	0	0	10	0	0	10	2

Appendix IV Bean Geese Survey Records 2001/2002

DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERVATION TYPE
24/09/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804738	20	NONE	ROOST
25/09/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	20	NONE	ROUTINE
26/09/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	20	NONE	ROUTINE
26/09/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	20	NONE	ROOST
27/09/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804738	20	NONE	ROOST
28/09/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
03/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
03/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
04/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
04/10/01	BEAM FARM	170	835765	20	NONE	ROUTINE
04/10/01	BEAM FARM	170	835765	20	NONE	ROUTINE
05/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
10/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
11/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
17/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	20	NONE	ROOST
19/10/01	BEAM FARM	170	835765	79	NONE	ROUTINE
21/10/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	57	NONE	ROUTINE
21/10/01	BEAM FARM	170	835764	99	NONE	ROUTINE
24/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	40	NONE	ROOST
24/10/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	26	NONE	ROOST
25/10/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	80	NONE	ROUTINE
25/10/01	EAST FANNYSIDE FARM	43	816746	51	NONE	ROUTINE
25/10/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	150	NONE	ROOST
26/10/01	EAST FANNYSIDE FARM	43	816746	64	NONE	ROUTINE
27/10/01	HILLEND FARM	251	850735	77	NONE	ROUTINE
28/10/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	140	NONE	ROUTINE
02/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	180	NONE	ROUTINE
03/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	820727	192	NONE	ROUTINE
03/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	8357764	138	NONE	ROUTINE
04/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	190	NONE	ROUTINE
04/11/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	180	NONE	ROOST
04/11/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	190	NONE	ROOST
05/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	835764	143	NONE	ROUTINE
06/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	34	FORESTRY OPS	ROUTINE
06/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	835764	183	NONE	ROUTINE
07/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	120	NONE	ROUTINE
07/11/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	190	NONE	ROOST
08/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	835764	192	NONE	ROUTINE
09/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	192	NONE	ROUTINE
10/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	820727	177	NONE	ROUTINE
11/11/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	27	NONE	ROOST
11/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	825765	158	NONE	ROUTINE
11/11/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	165	NONE	ROOST
12/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	836765	192	NONE	ROUTINE
13/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	819726	79	NONE	ROUTINE

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DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERVATION TYPE
13/11/01	LUCKENBURN	305	823723	90	NONE	ROUTINE
15/11/01	LUCKENBURN	305	823723	89	NONE	ROUTINE
17/11/01	LUCKENBURN	9	817723	85	NONE	ROUTINE
17/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	823726	7	NONE	ROUTINE
17/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	825765	66	NONE	ROUTINE
18/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	825765	192	NONE	ROUTINE
19/11/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	805737	124	NONE	ROOST
19/11/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807737	56	NONE	ROOST
19/11/01	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	402	805735	12	NONE	ROOST
20/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	836766	79	NONE	ROUTINE
24/11/01	BEAM FARM	170	835766	183	NONE	ROUTINE
24/11/01	HILLEND FARM	251	850735	0	NONE	ROUTINE
25/11/01	BLACKHILL	26	823726	130	NONE	ROUTINE
25/11/01	HILLEND FARM	251	850735	11	NONE	ROUTINE
01/12/01	GARBETHILL	48	822756	40	NONE	ROUTINE
01/12/01	GARBETHILL	173	828763	102	NONE	ROUTINE
01/12/01	HILLEND FARM	251	850735	58	NONE	ROUTINE
01/12/01	HILLEND FARM	251	850735	0	NONE	ROUTINE
01/12/01	HILLEND FARM	260	851736	20	NONE	ROUTINE
02/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	870726	114	NONE	ROUTINE
02/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	820726	114	NONE	ROUTINE
02/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	820726	114	NONE	ROUTINE
02/12/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	140	NONE	ROOST
02/12/01	BEAM FARM	170	836765	190	NONE	ROUTINE
02/12/01	HILLEND FARM	255	848735	22	NONE	ROUTINE
02/12/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807736	0	NONE	ROOST
06/12/01	BEAM FARM	170	836765	180	ACC FLUSHED	ROUTINE
06/12/01	TIPPETCRAIG	326	833765	180	NONE	ROUTINE
11/12/01	LUCKENBURN	9	818723	188	NONE	ROUTINE
11/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	820726	4	NONE	ROUTINE
12/12/01	LUCKENBURN	9	817723	180	FARMING	ROUTINE
13/12/01	WEST FANNYSIDE FARM	13	805725	190	NONE	ROUTINE
13/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	820726	36	NONE	ROUTINE
13/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	860726	36	NONE	ROUTINE
16/12/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	192	NONE	ROOST
16/12/01	BEAM FARM	170	836764	192	NONE	ROUTINE
16/12/01	HILLEND FARM	255	847736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
21/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	823726	100	NONE	ROUTINE
21/12/01	WESTER LOANRIG	241	865734	14	NONE	ROUTINE
21/12/01	HILLEND	261	850738	12	NONE	ROUTINE
22/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	820727	170	NONE	ROUTINE
22/12/01	DYKE FARM	126	855744	0	NONE	ROUTINE
22/12/01	HILLEND FARM	260	852736	20	NONE	ROUTINE
23/12/01	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804738	62	NONE	ROOST
25/12/01	BEAM FARM	170	836764	192	NONE	ROUTINE
26/12/01	WEST FANNYSIDE FARM	13	805724	110	NONE	ROUTINE
26/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	819728	192	NONE	ROUTINE
28/12/01	BEAM FARM	170	832766	126	NONE	ROUTINE

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DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERVATION TYPE
28/12/01	TIPPETCRAIG	325	830765	126	NONE	ROUTINE
30/12/01	BLACKHILL	26	820726	80	NONE	ROUTINE
30/12/01	GARBETHILL MUIR	48	820756	19	NONE	ROUTINE
30/12/01	WESTER LOANRIG	229	866736	19	NONE	ROUTINE
30/12/01	TIPPETCRAIG	323	826764	192	NONE	ROUTINE
30/12/01	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	806736	13	NONE	ROOST
04/01/02	TIPPETCRAIG	325	830765	80	NONE	ROUTINE
06/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	190	NONE	ROUTINE
06/01/02	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	806736	80	NONE	ROOST
09/01/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	192	NONE	ROOST
09/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	93	NONE	ROUTINE
09/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	835765	192	NONE	ROUTINE
09/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	835766	192	NONE	ROUTINE
09/01/02	TIPPETCRAIG	323	826766	192	NONE	ROUTINE
12/01/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	60	NONE	ROOST
12/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	835766	192	NONE	ROUTINE
12/01/02	HILLEND	251	850735	0	NONE	ROUTINE
13/01/02	BLACKHILL	26	820726	126	NONE	ROUTINE
13/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	120	NONE	ROUTINE
13/01/02	HILLEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
15/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	192	NONE	ROUTINE
15/01/02	HILLEND	260	851737	0	NONE	ROUTINE
16/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	835766	192	NONE	ROUTINE
17/01/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	192	NONE	ROOST
19/01/02	TIPPETCRAIG	335	832769	80	NONE	ROUTINE
26/01/02	BEAM FARM	170	836764	192	NONE	ROUTINE
27/01/02	GARBETHILL	48	820756	77	NONE	ROUTINE
30/01/02	STRATHAVON FARM	138	865740	0	NONE	ROUTINE
30/01/02	GARBETHILL	173	828763	45	NONE	ROUTINE
01/02/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	60	NONE	ROOST
01/02/02	TIPPETCRAIG	323	826765	192	NONE	ROUTINE
04/02/02	HILLEND FARM	251	850735	0	NONE	ROUTINE
05/02/02	REDBRAE	158	876743	0	NONE	ROUTINE
05/02/02	HILLEND	251	849735	0	NONE	ROUTINE
06/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	819727	192	NONE	ROUTINE
06/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	819726	138	NONE	ROUTINE
06/02/02	HILLEND FARM	251	849736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
06/02/02	HILLEND FARM	260	851736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
07/02/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	192	NONE	ROOST
09/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	821727	192	NONE	ROUTINE
09/02/02	HILLEND FARM	251	849735	0	NONE	ROUTINE
10/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	819726	25	NONE	ROUTINE
11/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	819726	160	LOW FLYING	ROUTINE
11/02/02	HILLEND FARM	260	851736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
11/02/02	HILLEND FARM	261	850736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
12/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	820728	91	NONE	ROUTINE
13/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	819726	120	NONE	ROUTINE
14/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	819726	44	NONE	ROUTINE

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DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERVATION TYPE
14/02/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	44	NONE	ROOST
15/02/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	5	NONE	ROOST
17/02/02	BLACKHILL	26	819726	2	NONE	ROUTINE
17/02/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804737	2	NONE	ROOST