



**POPULATION and DISTRIBUTION
of
BEAN GEESE
in the
SLAMANNAN AREA
2002/2003**

THE BEAN GOOSE ACTION GROUP

REPORT BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	SUMMARY.....	3
2	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.1	POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION	3
3	METHODS	4
3.1	FIELD NUMBERING	4
3.1.1	<i>Diurnal distribution of Bean Geese</i>	4
3.1.2	<i>Roost Sites</i>	4
4	RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	4
4.1	POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION	4
4.1.1	<i>Diurnal distribution (see map - showing location of sites)</i>	5
4.1.2	<i>Roost Sites</i>	5
5	DISTURBANCE	6
6	RINGED GEESE	6
7	DISCUSSION.....	7
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
9	REFERENCES	8
10	BEAN GEESE SCOTLAND.....	8

1 Summary

This report details the results of a study undertaken between September 2002 to March 2003, 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, 2002)

The first record this winter was on 6th October when 18 birds were seen coming into roost on Fannyside Muir. Numbers increased on 14th October with 159 birds seen at Beam Farm. By the 26th October the flock size had reached 231 birds. This is an increase of 39 birds from the previous winter and a new high figure for this flock. This flock size remained constant throughout the winter. The last record of 130 birds was on 27th February which is a week later than in recent years.

The pattern of feeding was similar to recent years with fields in the western sector being the most grazed. A total of 20 fields were seen to be used this winter.

There were 21 juveniles identified within the flock.

Roosting behaviour followed the usual pattern with the Fannyside Lochs and the adjoining muir being the preferred site.

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, 2001/02), for the RSPB, S.N.H., Falkirk Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Central Scotland Forest Trust.

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 2002/03 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.

3.1.1 Diurnal distribution of Bean Geese

The technique employed was similar to last year consisting of routine observations with no specific pattern. There were over 100 visits to record bean geese between late September and early March. 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.

3.1.2 Roost Sites

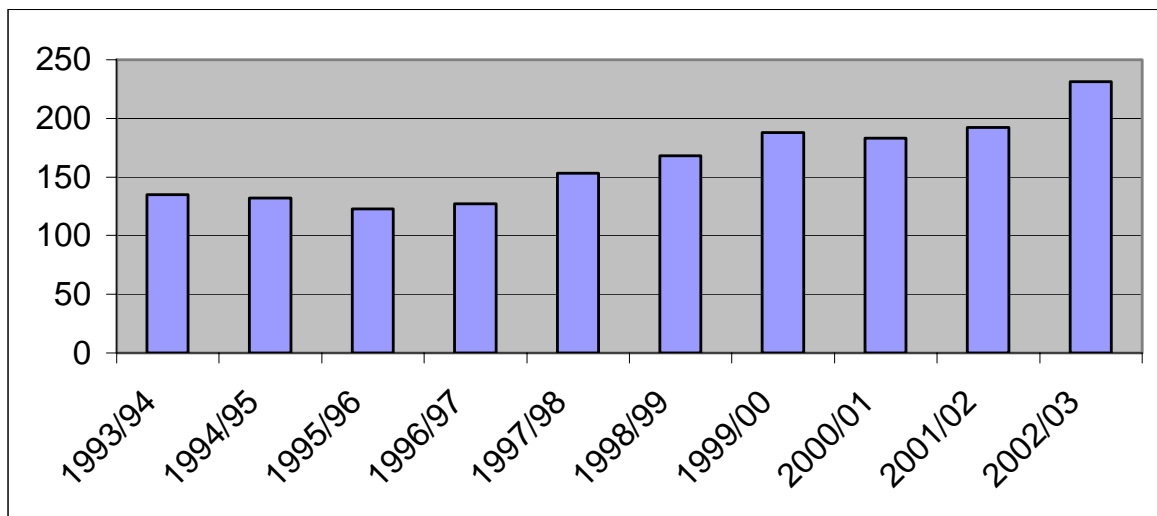
The method employed was to arrive at a particular position that allowed monitoring of East/West Fannyside Lochs and Fannyside Muir to determine the selected roost site or to detect a shift in roost site during the night.

4 Results and analysis

4.1 Population and distribution

The maximum number of bean geese recorded during the winter was 231 birds. This was an increase of 39 birds from last year.

1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
135	132	123	127	153	168	188	183	192	231



As in previous years there were again no marked fluctuations in the flock size, which would suggest any immigration or emigration during the winter. The birds would seem to have arrived in four groups again this year. The initial group was of 18 birds to be followed a week later by another 141 which gave a total of 159. A few days later the flock size had reached 218. On 26th October the remaining birds arrived and gave us a new high total of 231. There were 21 juveniles 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

Greylag appeared on 16th November when a flock of 69 birds were present at Hillend Farm. Numbers declined during December when only 2 were seen. January 21st saw this flock return to Hillend Farm. They remained on the plateau until February 2003. See Appendix 2.

Pinkfeet were more numerous generally. On 15th November a flock of c250 made an appearance beside Loch Elrig. A flock of 325 birds was present at Hillend Farm on 3rd December. On 1st February a flock of 570 birds were seen at Hillend Farm. The highest count of 600 birds was on 24th February at Easter Jawcraig Farm. See Appendix 3.

- Carron Valley Reservoir

There were no reports of bean geese from this previously used site.

4.1.2 Roost Sites

A total of 23 visits were made to record roosting behaviour. East Fannyside Loch had 2 records. West Fannyside Loch had 8 and Fannyside Muir 13. These figures do not represent a complete picture as the flock often moves during the night between loch and muir. The West Fannyside Loch use was mainly during late February during conditions of cold weather when the small loch was frozen. The larger loch often gives some open water suitable for roosting.

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	Microlight
Foxes	Birdwatchers
Dog Walker	Accidentally flushed

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

Helicopter	4
Farming	2
Vehicle	1
Birdwatchers	1
Accidentally flushed	6
Walker	1
Total	15

6 Ringed Geese

The bean goose flock was searched whenever possible for ringed individuals but none were seen.

7 Discussion

The population increased again this winter with 231 birds being counted. This figure represents over half of the UK wintering population.

Observations started in late September but the first record this winter was on 6th October when 18 birds flew into the roosting area on Fannyside Muir. It was the 14th of the month before a further large influx took place when a count of 159 birds was made at Beam Farm. Numbers increased gradually over the next two weeks and by the 26th of October the flock total had reached 231. The flock size remained at this level throughout the wintering period on the plateau. There were 21 juvenile birds present within the flock which is the highest number we have seen over recent years.

A total of 20 fields were seen to be used this winter for feeding which is in keeping with recent winters. It is interesting to note however that in October and November the flock only used 9 fields for grazing. These fields were all good quality improved grassland and were obviously attractive to the bean geese flock.

Disturbance in and around Beam Farm was monitored whenever possible and no serious problems arose. New signage may have helped but some people ignored our request to stay well clear of the main grazing field.

The new owners of Beam Farm did not occupy the house this winter and therefore the Bean Geese flock had a free reign to graze fields close to the house. It was possible to arrange for a local farmer to stock field 170 with some sheep towards the later part of the winter and this has helped greatly with maintaining the quality of the grassland.

Hillend Farm remained occupied and our fears for grazing here did not materialise. It was thought that a change of ownership could see the present farming regime cease. There was also some talk of a forestry application, which if approved may have altered the open landscape in this area. The bean geese flock however did not use this area very much this winter.

No further forestry expansion took place and nothing has been heard of applications for forestry near Garbethill.

Birdwatchers have again been catered for with people making contact with the fieldworkers to arrange a visit to the plateau to see the geese. No serious disturbance to the flock by birdwatchers was noted. Regular contact was maintained with seven farmer/landowners during the winter months.

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 the 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, 2002.

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>

Appendices

Appendix I Bean Geese Survey Data 2002/2003. Bird-Days per Field	9
Appendix II Greylag Geese Survey Data 2002/2003 Bird-Days per Month	10
Appendix III Pinkfeet Geese Survey Data 2002/2003 Bird-Days per Month	11
Appendix IV Bean Geese Survey Records 2002/2003	12

Appendix I Bean Geese Survey Data 2002/2003 Bird-Days per Field

FIELD NO	Total No of Bean Geese					Total	Average Monthly Bird Days	No of Positive Visits
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb			
170	516	679	1762	1269	848	5074	1015	30
26	234	231	924	436	659	2484	497	18
77	18	451	924	375	709	2477	495	13
326	4	1089	402	370	300	2165	433	14
305	739	1129				1868	374	11
306	1419	332				1751	350	10
400					1438	1438	288	8
48					743	743	149	4
9	293	444				737	147	5
337		231			231	462	92	2
324			391	15		406	81	3
325			239	60		299	60	3
8			231	18		249	50	3
251	233					233	47	3
51					231	231	46	1
401		231				231	46	1
336					215	215	43	2
401	211					211	42	1
339				180		180	36	1
290		53			80	133	27	2
29					80	80	16	1
53					63	63	13	1
173					18	18	4	1
261				4		4	1	1
255				3		3	1	1

Appendix II Greylag Geese Survey Data 2002/2003 Bird-Days per Month

FIELD NO	Total No of Greylag					Total	Average
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
251	138	2	123			263	53
255			73	72		145	29
261			52	32		84	17
401					30	30	6

Appendix III Pinkfeet Geese Survey Data 2002/2003 Bird-Days per Month

FIELD NO	Total No of Pinkfeet				Total	Average
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb		
261	336	428	171	4	939	235
120				737	737	184
255			38	634	672	168
330				342	342	86
153			250		250	63
189	250				250	63
180	225				225	56
251		100	9		109	27
306	1				5	1
305	2				3	1
26					2	1
170		1			1	0

Appendix IV Bean Geese Survey Records 2002/2003

DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERATION TYPE
06/10/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	18	NONE	ROOST
07/10/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	20	NONE	ROUTINE
09/10/02	BLACKHILL	26	821727	20	NONE	ROUTINE
14/10/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	159	NONE	ROUTINE
15/10/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	126	NONE	ROUTINE
16/10/02	LUCKENBURN	9	818723	84	NONE	ROUTINE
16/10/02	BLACKHILL	26	821727	84	NONE	ROUTINE
17/10/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	204	FARMING	ROUTINE
19/10/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	211	NONE	ROUTINE
19/10/02	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	806737	211	NONE	ROOST
20/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	207	VEHICLES	ROUTINE
20/10/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	4	NONE	ROUTINE
22/10/02	HILLEN	251	850734	62	NONE	ROUTINE
22/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	149	NONE	ROUTINE
23/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	211	NONE	ROUTINE
24/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823723	170	NONE	ROUTINE
25/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	211	NONE	ROUTINE
26/10/02	BLACKHILL	26	821727	130	NONE	ROUTINE
26/10/02	HILLEN	251	850734	95	NONE	ROUTINE
26/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	232	FARMING	ROUTINE
27/10/02	HILLEN	251	850734	76	NONE	ROUTINE
27/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	127	NONE	ROUTINE
28/10/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	60	NONE	ROUTINE
28/10/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	112	NONE	ROUTINE
29/10/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	229	NONE	ROUTINE
30/10/02	LUCKENBURN	9	819723	209	NONE	ROUTINE
30/10/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	20	NONE	ROUTINE
31/10/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	226	NONE	ROUTINE
01/11/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	211	NONE	ROUTINE
01/11/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	226	NONE	ROUTINE
02/11/02	LUCKENBURN	9	819723	56	NONE	ROUTINE
02/11/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	15	NONE	ROUTINE
02/11/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	138	NONE	ROUTINE
03/11/02	LOCH ELRIG	180	891746	0	NONE	ROUTINE
03/11/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	190	HELICOPTER	ROUTINE
04/11/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	220	NONE	ROUTINE
06/11/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	220	NONE	ROOST
06/11/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	220	HELICOPTER	ROUTINE
06/11/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	220	NONE	ROUTINE
07/11/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	227	WALKERS	ROUTINE
07/11/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	227	NONE	ROUTINE
09/11/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	229	NONE	ROUTINE
10/11/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	216	NONE	ROUTINE
12/11/02	LUCKENBURN	9	818723	229	NONE	ROUTINE
13/11/02	BLACKHILL	26	821727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
13/11/02	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	804738	231	NONE	ROOST
15/11/02	LOCH ELRIG	189	890740	0	NONE	ROUTINE

Population and Distribution of Bean Geese in the Slamannan Area 2002/2003

DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERATION TYPE
16/11/02	HILLEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
16/11/02	LUCKENBURN	306	823722	194	NONE	ROUTINE
17/11/02	HILLEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
17/11/02	LUCKENBURN	305	822722	232	NONE	ROUTINE
20/11/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	232	ACC FLUSHED	ROUTINE
20/11/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	232	NONE	ROUTINE
23/11/02	HILEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
23/11/02	HILLEND	261	850738	0	NONE	ROUTINE
24/11/02	HILLEND	261	850738	0	NONE	ROUTINE
24/11/02	TIPPETCRAIG	337	830768	231	NONE	ROUTINE
29/11/02	LUCKENBURN	9	818723	159	NONE	ROUTINE
29/11/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	231	NONE	ROOST
29/11/02	GRANGENEUK	290	824736	53	NONE	ROUTINE
01/12/02	HILLEND	261	850738	0	NONE	ROUTINE
03/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	35	NONE	ROUTINE
03/12/02	HILLEND	261	850738	0	NONE	ROUTINE
03/12/02	HILLEND	261	850738	0	NONE	ROUTINE
04/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	50	NONE	ROUTINE
05/12/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	231	NONE	ROOST
06/12/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	231	NONE	ROOST
06/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	142	NONE	ROUTINE
07/12/02	HILLEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
09/12/02	TIPPETCRAIG	324	828764	160	NONE	ROUTINE
13/12/02	BLACKHILL	26	821727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
13/12/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804738	231	NONE	ROOST
17/12/02	TIPPETCRAIG	325	831766	8	NONE	ROUTINE
20/12/02	BLACKHILL	26	820727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
20/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	231	BIRDWATCHERS	ROUTINE
20/12/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	231	ACC FLUSHED	ROUTINE
21/12/02	BLACKHILL	8	816727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
21/12/02	BLACKHILL	26	821727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
21/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	231	NONE	ROUTINE
23/12/02	BLACKHILL	26	820727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
23/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	231	ACC FLUSHED	ROUTINE
24/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	231	NONE	ROUTINE
24/12/02	TIPPETCRAIG	324	828765	231	NONE	ROUTINE
25/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	120	NONE	ROUTINE
28/12/02	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	231	NONE	ROOST
28/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	200	NONE	ROUTINE
28/12/02	TIPPETCRAIG	325	831766	231	NONE	ROUTINE
31/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	231	NONE	ROUTINE
31/12/02	BEAM FARM	170	836765	60	NONE	ROUTINE
31/12/02	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	171	NONE	ROUTINE
02/01/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	130	NONE	ROUTINE
05/01/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	223	NONE	ROUTINE
06/01/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	225	NONE	ROUTINE
09/01/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	160	NONE	ROUTINE
09/01/03	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	50	NONE	ROUTINE
10/01/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	231	NONE	ROUTINE
11/01/03	TIPPETCRAIG	324	828764	15	NONE	ROUTINE

Population and Distribution of Bean Geese in the Slamannan Area 2002/2003

DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERATION TYPE
12/01/03	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	231	NONE	ROOST
14/01/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	140	NONE	ROUTINE
14/01/03	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	90	NONE	ROUTINE
16/01/03	TIPPETCRAIG	338	830768	180	NONE	ROUTINE
18/01/03	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	130	ACC FLUSHED	ROUTINE
19/01/03	BLACKHILL	8	816727	14	NONE	ROUTINE
19/01/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	130	NONE	ROUTINE
19/01/03	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	144	NONE	ROOST
21/01/03	HILLEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
21/01/03	HILLEND	255	848736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
23/01/03	BLACKHILL	8	816728	4	NONE	ROUTINE
23/01/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	19	NONE	ROUTINE
23/01/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	160	NONE	ROUTINE
23/01/03	HILLEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
24/01/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	52	NONE	ROUTINE
24/01/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	155	NONE	ROUTINE
25/01/03	HILLEND	255	848736	3	NONE	ROUTINE
26/01/03	HILLEND	261	850738	0	NONE	ROUTINE
27/01/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	80	NONE	ROUTINE
27/01/03	HILLEND	261	850738	4	NONE	ROUTINE
29/01/03	HILLEND	251	850734	0	NONE	ROUTINE
29/01/03	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	100	ACC FLUSHED	ROUTINE
30/01/03	REDBRAE	153	873742	0	NONE	ROUTINE
30/01/03	HILLEND	255	848736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
30/01/03	TIPPETCRAIG	325	830764	60	NONE	ROUTINE
01/02/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	231	NONE	ROUTINE
01/02/03	HILLEND	255	848736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
03/02/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	200	NONE	ROUTINE
07/02/03	BEAM FARM	336	878767	15	NONE	ROUTINE
08/02/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	130	HELICOPTER	ROUTINE
08/02/03	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	100	HELICOPTER	ROUTINE
08/02/03	BEAM FARM	337	837768	231	NONE	ROUTINE
10/02/03	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	200	NONE	ROOST
11/02/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	200	NONE	ROUTINE
11/02/03	HILLEND	255	848736	0	NONE	ROUTINE
11/02/03	TIPPETCRAIG	326	832765	200	ACC FLUSHED	ROUTINE
11/02/03	BALMITCHELL	330	884731	0	NONE	ROUTINE
11/02/03	BEAM FARM	336	839767	200	NONE	ROUTINE
12/02/03	HILLEND	261	850738	0	NONE	ROUTINE
14/02/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	120	NONE	ROUTINE
14/02/03	GRANGENEUK	29	813738	80	NONE	ROUTINE
14/02/03	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	231	NONE	ROOST
16/02/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	7	NONE	ROUTINE
16/02/03	BEAM FARM	170	836765	87	NONE	ROUTINE
16/02/03	GRANGENEUK	290	825736	80	NONE	ROUTINE
17/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	231	NONE	ROOST
18/02/03	GARBETHILL	48	821755	231	NONE	ROUTINE
18/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	231	NONE	ROOST
19/02/03	GARBETHILL	48	821755	231	NONE	ROUTINE
19/02/03	EASTER JAWCRAIG	120	847746	0	NONE	ROUTINE

Population and Distribution of Bean Geese in the Slamannan Area 2002/2003

DATE	PLACE	FIELD NO	GRID	NUMBER	DISTURBANCE	OBSERATION TYPE
20/02/03	GARBETHILL	48	821755	231	NONE	ROUTINE
20/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	231	NONE	ROOST
21/02/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
21/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	231	NONE	ROOST
21/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	231	NONE	ROOST
22/02/03	GARBETHILL	48	821755	50	NONE	ROUTINE
22/02/03	OLD SHIELDS	53	813757	63	NONE	ROUTINE
23/02/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	231	NONE	ROUTINE
23/02/03	BLACKHILL	26	821727	70	NONE	ROUTINE
23/02/03	GARBETHILL	51	814757	231	NONE	ROUTINE
23/02/03	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	188	NONE	ROOST
23/02/03	EASTER JAWCRAIG	120	847746	0	NONE	ROUTINE
23/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	43	NONE	ROOST
24/02/03	EASTER JAWCRAIG	120	847746	0	NONE	ROUTINE
25/02/03	GARBETHILL	173	828763	18	NONE	ROUTINE
26/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	200	NONE	ROOST
27/02/03	FANNYSIDE MUIR	77	804740	90	NONE	ROOST
27/02/03	WEST FANNYSIDE LOCH	400	803734	40	NONE	ROOST
01/03/03	EAST FANNYSIDE LOCH	401	807737	0	NONE	ROUTINE