

Numbers of geese in Britain and Ireland, 1983–84

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Throughout the arctic the breeding season of 1983 was moderate to poor. The Pink-footed Geese of Iceland and East Greenland and the Greylag Geese of Iceland both received recruitment of young just slightly above the long-term average. This lifted the Pinkfeet to a new record total, while the Greylags rose only a little. The European Whitefronts, breeding in arctic USSR, had an average season, but the Dark-bellied Brent Geese from further east had one of their periodic total failures, with hardly any young reported and a consequent drop in overall numbers.

Svalbard had a poor summer, the Barnacles achieving only about 8% young, and the Light-bellied Brent Geese faring even worse. The East Greenland Barnacle

Geese failed to reach 10% young for the third season running and while there was no complete census of the population this winter, numbers on their main haunt of Islay were close to the total in the previous winter and well below the peak of 8 years ago.

The Greenland Whitefronts, coming from the west of that country, had a relatively poor season and numbers at the main haunts remained at similar levels to last winter or slightly below.

There was no census of the Light-bellied Brent Geese wintering in Ireland, coming from northern Greenland and north-eastern Canadian breeding grounds, but age counts suggested a relatively good breeding season.

Peak counts and breeding success of goose populations in Britain and Ireland, 1983–84.

Species	Peak count	Month	% young	Av. brood size
Pink-footed Goose <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	101,000	Nov	15.9	1.7
European White-fronted Goose <i>A. albifrons</i>	5,500	Feb	35.0	2.2
Greenland White-fronted Goose	–	–	9.3	2.6
Greylag Goose <i>A. anser</i>	82,000	Nov	16.8	2.2
Barnacle Goose <i>Branta leucopsis</i> – Svalbard	8,400	Oct	8.0	2.2
– Greenland	–	–	9.9	1.9
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>B. bernicla hrota</i> – Svalbard	1,200	Jan	5.5	–
– Greenland	no count		22.0	–
Dark-bellied Brent Goose <i>B. b. bernicla</i>	87,000	Jan	4.0	–