

Wild Geese at the New Grounds, 1965-66

M. A. OGILVIE

European White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons albifrons*

The first to arrive were three on 28th September, 1965. There was a slow increase to 100 by the end of October. The cold spells in November brought more birds and 800 were counted in mid-December, the highest for that time since 1959. There were further arrivals in the next few weeks with counts of 2,250 on 3rd January, 1966, and 3,150 on 15th. There was a short-lived but large influx in early February with 4,700 counted on 6th and 5,500 on 9th. This latter figure is the highest recorded at the New Grounds since the Trust was founded. Although some of the birds departed almost at once there were over 4,000 present for the remainder of February. The general departure in March was both early and rapid, with 3,500 counted on 7th, but only 350 the next day. The last few were seen on 10th.

The breeding success in 1965 was similar to that of the two previous years. In November and December the proportion of young birds was 31% and the average brood-size was 2.7. Unusually it was a little higher in January at 35%, average brood-size 2.7. It fell again to 31% in late February, and the average brood-size was also lower at 2.4.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

After only one sighting in the last three winters, 1965-66 produced a bumper crop.

Two adults were present during the second week of February, 1966, and a third was seen on 27th February. On that date also two first-winter birds were seen.

Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

A first-winter bird of the Western race *fabalis* was seen on 6th February, 1966, and on a number of occasions later the same month.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

The only autumn record was of a flock of 19 flying over the river on 26th September, 1965. This is the third season running in which a few birds have appeared in the autumn but failed to stop. A single bird was seen on 7th January, 1966, and this stayed for several weeks, being joined by a second for a time in February.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

A first-winter bird was present from 2nd February, 1966, until 6th March.

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Seven adults were seen together on the Dumbles on 26th January, 1966. This is the largest number recorded at the New Grounds in one winter. A single bird was seen on 2nd February.

Ringling, 1965-66

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Ducks. The total of 4,697 ducks caught and ringed by the Trust and its helpers is just over 1,000 down on last season. This is principally due to a much reduced catch of Mallard by Mr. W. A. Cook at Borough Fen Decoy. Major General C. B. Wainwright's catch of Teal was his lowest for five years but a larger number of Mallard more than compensated for this. The catch of Mallard at Slimbridge was again kept down to 500.

Useful numbers of ducks were caught at the Trust's other stations. Mr. J. E. A. Lambert caught over 100 ducks at Dersingham Decoy. An account of the history and re-building of the Decoy will be found on p. 22. At Loch Leven, Kinross, Mr. H. Boyd and Mr. C. Campbell of the Trust's research staff caught 80 ducks, including 13 Gadwall and 25 Tufted Ducks, mostly females on the nest. Details of their study of the breeding ducks at Loch