



DESCRIPTION AND HABITAT

The Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) stands between 58-69cm with a grey back, heavily barred in black and white with a white face and black neck and breast. In flight it is strong and powerful and forms large flocks.

The Barnacle Goose favours a broad range of habitats including natural, semi-natural and agricultural grasslands, arable stubbles, sea-washed grasses on uninhabited islands, saltmarsh at the heads of tidal lochs and dune grasslands.

They roost on tidal mud flats, offshore uninhabited islands, beaches and occasionally inland.

Life Cycle: The Barnacle Goose breeds in Arctic regions of Greenland, Svalbard and Russia.

Nest: Lined depression

Eggs: 3-5, white

Incubation: 24-25 days

Young: Active and downy on hatching

Fledging: 7 weeks

Broods: 1, June - July

Feeding: Mostly on improved agricultural ground where they graze on rye-grass, fescues, timothy and clover. If available, they will graze on the stubble of spring-sown cereal crops

CURRENT STATUS

The Barnacle Goose winters in the more temperate regions of Britain, Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands. In winter, the Greenland population confines itself to the west of Scotland and Ireland with the main winter resort in Argyll on Islay with smaller numbers on Coll, Tiree, Colonsay, Oronsay and Luing. A population of 28,500 Barnacle Geese has been recorded on Islay alone.

UK BIODIVERSITY STATUS

The Barnacle Goose is on the UK long list of Globally-threatened/declining species.

LEGAL STATUS

- Protected under the Wildlife and Country Act 1981.
- Protected in Annex I of the EC Birds Directive.
- Listed on Appendix II of the Bern Convention.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES IN ARGYLL & BUTE

- Threats:-** Geographical contraction in wintering range has increased goose concentration to fewer winter resorts.
Change in agricultural practices and abandonment of agriculture.
Removal of their protected status.
- Impacts:-** Large numbers in concentrated areas can result in serious damage and little sympathy if the balance is not addressed.
Reduction in feeding habitat.
Loss of significant numbers.

OBJECTIVES		TARGETS
1	Maintain the 'favourable conservation status' of the Greenland population of Barnacle Geese in Argyll & Bute.	No reduction in status of the species within the life of this plan.
2	Maintain the current geographical range and population within Argyll & Bute.	More than 70% of the world population of Greenland Barnacle Geese wintering in Argyll & Bute, distributed at a minimum of 7 key sites.
3	Ensure that Barnacle Geese are promoted, together with Greenland White-fronted Geese, as a wildlife spectacle and attraction for the winter tourists to Argyll & Bute and particularly to Islay.	Establish links with the Scottish Tourist Board 'Visit Scotland'.

ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY	
1	6 sites are designated or proposed as SPA's, 3 on Islay, 1 Coll, 1 Tiree, 1 Treshnish Isles, with several sites recognised under the Ramsar Convention.
2	Appropriate grassland management on 4 RSPB reserves in Argyll & the Islands.
3	Local Goose Management plans – includes compensation for farmers affected, licensed shooting to protect newly re-seeded grassland and sufficient disturbance-free areas for feeding Geese.
4	Monitoring of key sites and frequent counts carried out in winter on Islay.
5	Continue to monitor Barnacle Goose populations.
6	Support integrated management of protected geese with agriculture through implementation of the National Goose Forum report – establish local Goose Management groups.
7	Promote the spectacle of geese as a wildlife attraction for winter tourism to Argyll & Bute and particularly Islay.

Partners involved include SNH, SEERAD, SNFU, SCU, SLF, RSPB, GWGSG and Tourist Boards/Film Makers.