



Skogsøy 2006

Spring Migration

Preliminary Results

[Julian Bell](#)



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1. Introduction

During the spring of 2006 the numbers of migrating waterbirds were monitored on a near daily basis. Generally the seawatches were of between six and seven hours in duration.

The numbers given in the species counts are not standardised (seawatches have been of differing duration) and reflect all the birds seen during the seawatches.

A total of over 60500 birds were logged during 466 hours of seawatching (an average of six hours per day). Not all of these birds were actually migrating as local movements were also counted. Movements of all species other than the large gulls were logged; unidentified terns and skuas have not been included in this report.

Numbers of species dependent on small surface prey have all shown massive declines since the last systematic counts were conducted in the early 1980s. Not surprisingly Arctic Skua, which prey on these species, also show indications of a significant decrease.

Some statistics that may be of interest are given below:

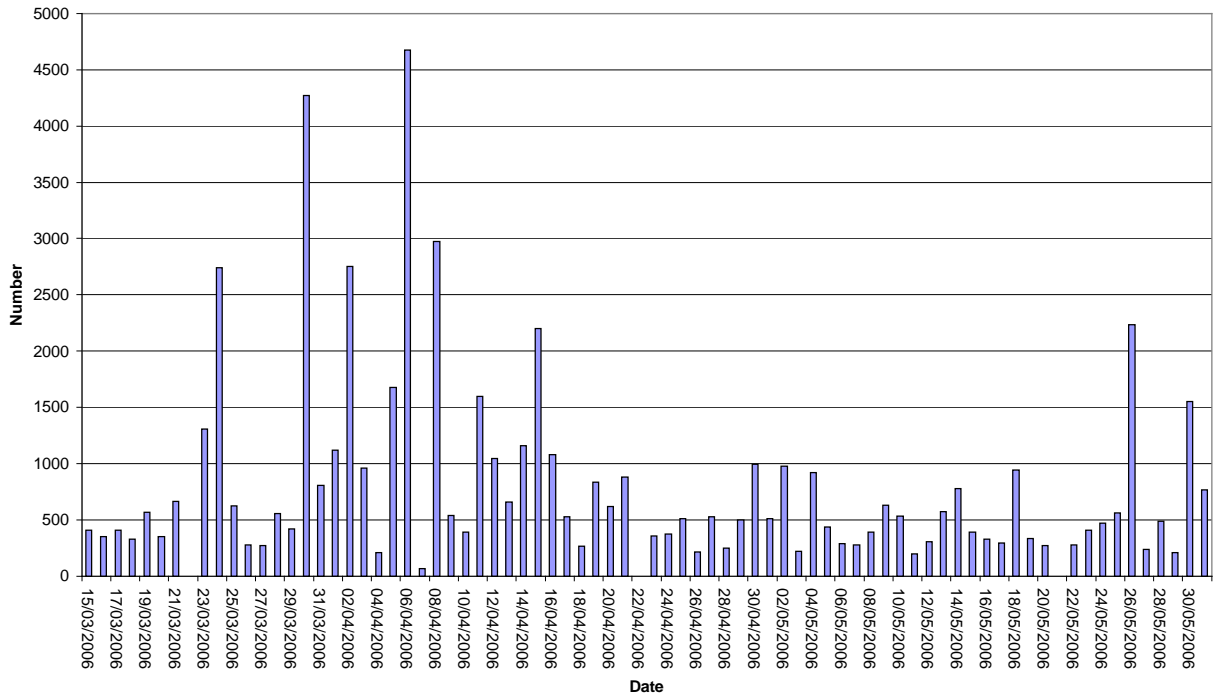
A total of 114 species were recorded at Skogsøy / Herdlevær between 15 March and 31 May although there was very little coverage of Herdlevær indeed.

Table 1 Species with season totals of more than 1000

Common Gull N	22853
Oystercatcher N	6771
Barnacle Goose N	4382
Common Scoter N	3933
Eider N	3034
Red throated Diver N	2079
Eurasian Shag S	1933
Northern Gannet N	1798
Great Cormorant N	1764
Eider S	1453
Brent Goose	1337
Northern Gannet S	1226
Common Scoter S	1225
Long tailed duck N	1007



Daily total number of birds logged at Skogsøy, spring 2006



Further information about birdlife and migration at Skogsøy can be found here:
<http://www.naturalbornbirder.com/skogsoey/Skogsoey.php>

2. Species Accounts

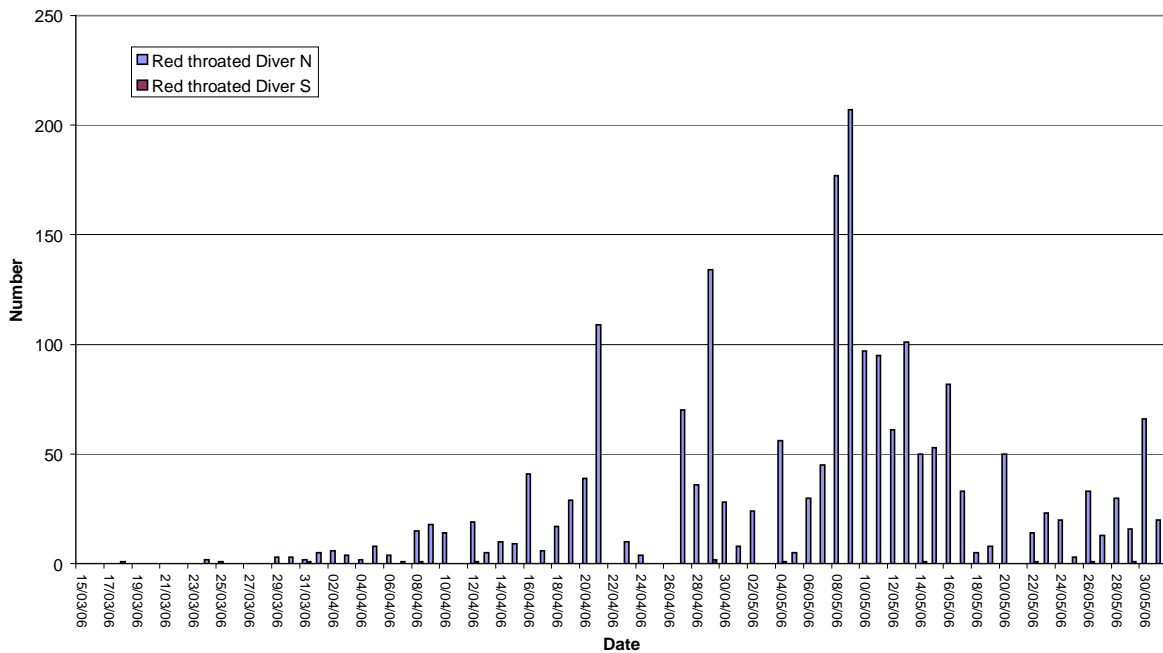
Only species logged passing the lookout are dealt with in this section. For other species seen at Skogsøy during the spring of 2006 see section 3.



Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Total North 2079
 Total South 10
 Maximum 207, 09 May

A gradual build-up in numbers from late March and a peak in the first half of May follows the normal trend for this species. A somewhat lower total than anticipated; a theory regarding this will be published at a later date.

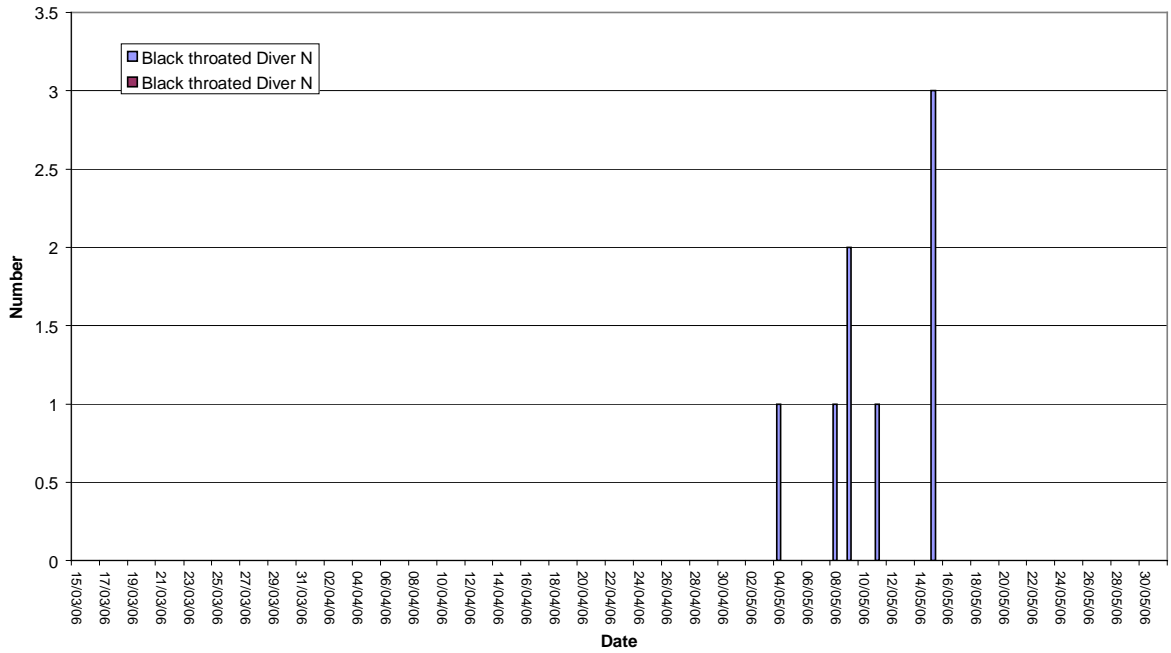




Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Total North 8
 Total South 0
 Maximum 3, 15 May

Again normal timing and lower than expected numbers for this scarce spring migrant.

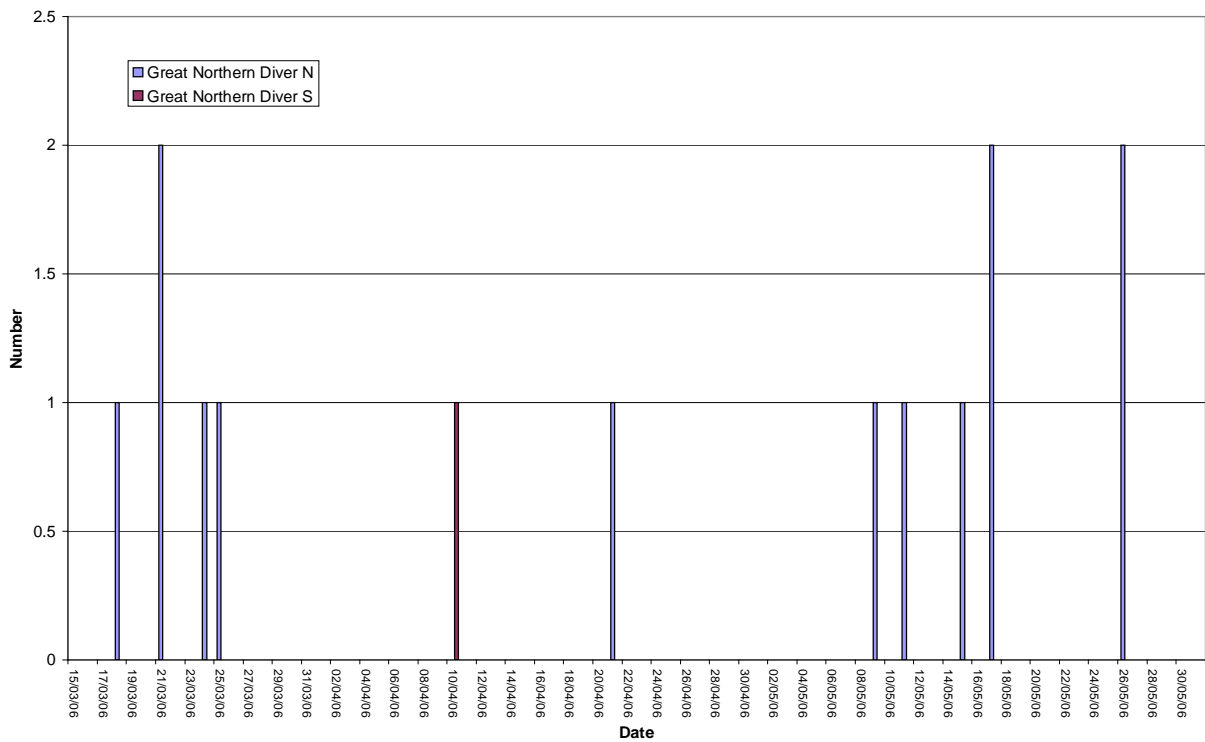




Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Total North	13
Total South	1
Maximum	2

Apparently normal numbers of this regular migrant, no clear peak noted. Large numbers were present further south along the coast during the period (Egil Ween pers. Comm). It seems possible that this species must migrate later than the other diver species.



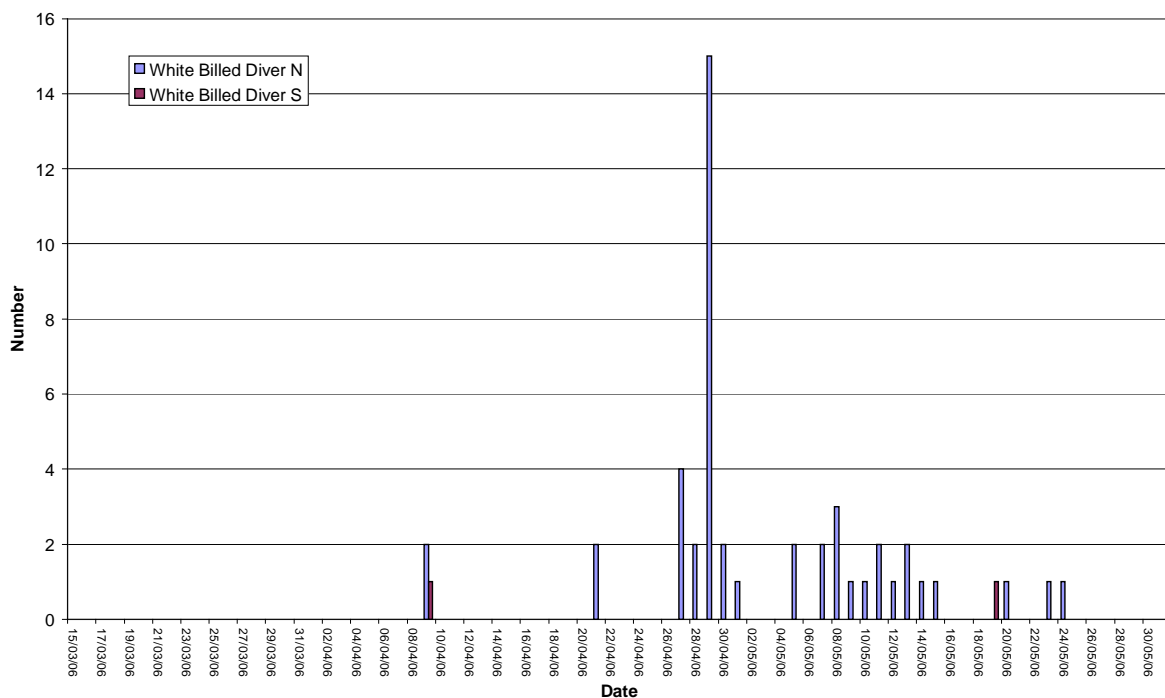


White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

Total North	47
Total South	2
Maximum	15, 30 April

Some indication that this species migrated earlier than usual, although this is not certain. A very disappointing year for this species, especially when compared to 2005 when 44 were logged in only eight visits, however, it seems that 2005 may have been an exceptional year at Skogsøy. An probable explanation for this will be published at a later date.

Note that a further four northbound large divers (Great Northern / White-billed) were logged during the period. Statistically these are likely to have been White-billed Diver.



Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Total North	1
Total South	1
Maximum	1

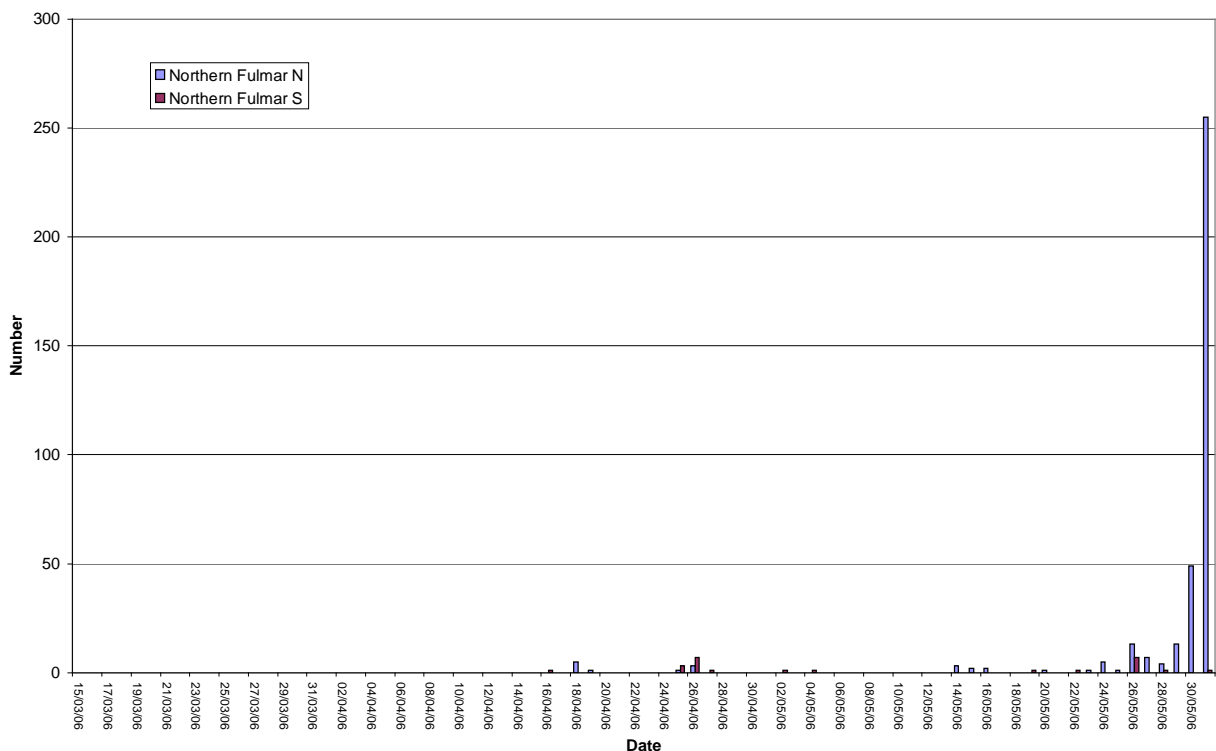
This species is rarely seen on spring migration at Skogsøy, 2006 was no exception. Two birds were recorded, one heading south on 01 April and one north on 29 April.



Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Total North 366
 Total South 25
 Maximum 255, 31 May

A normal year for this species both in timing and in numbers – with the exception of the last two days of the project when good numbers were observed.



Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Total North 0
 Total South 3
 Maximum 1

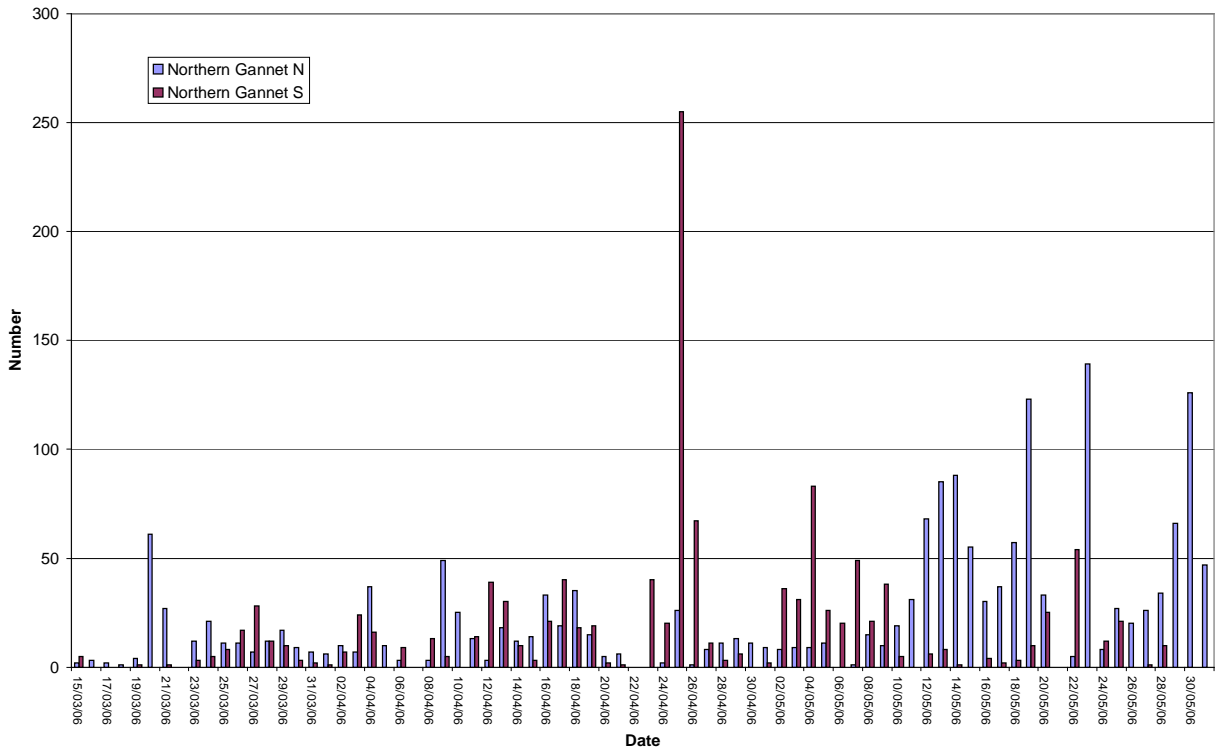
This species is a local rarity. Three single birds were noted on three different dates, all were southbound. Dates were 03, 27 and 28 May.



Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Total North	1798
Total South	1226
Maximum N	139, 23 May
Maximum S	255, 25 April

Other than a count of 255 birds heading south on 25 April the 2006 season appeared not to deviate much from the norm. Larger numbers of immature birds were seen later in the season. In general movements seemed to related to foraging rather than passage as such, although in the second half of May the vast majority were seen heading north.

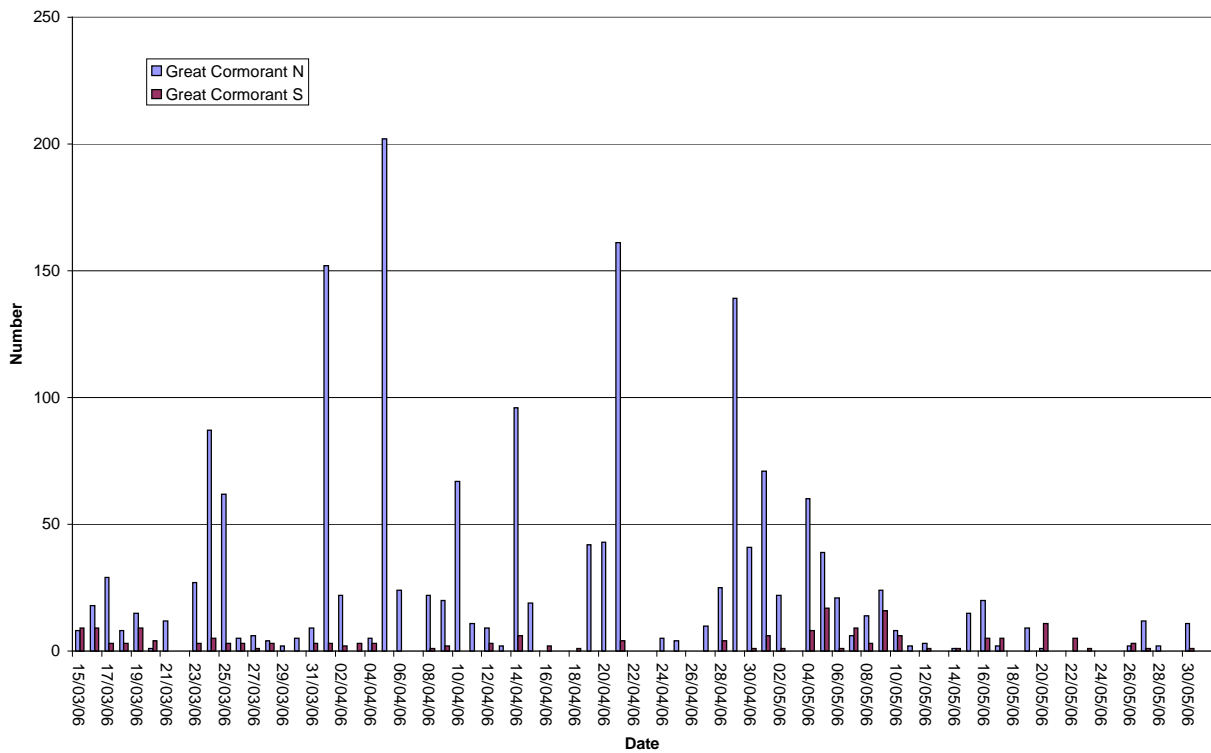




Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Total North	1764
Total South	194
Maximum N	202, 05 April
Maximum S	17

Rather fewer than expected. Only one count in excess of 200 birds was something of surprise when compared to previous years. Normal peak for Great Cormorant is around mid April. This species can be overlooked as they regularly pass over the land behind the lookout point.



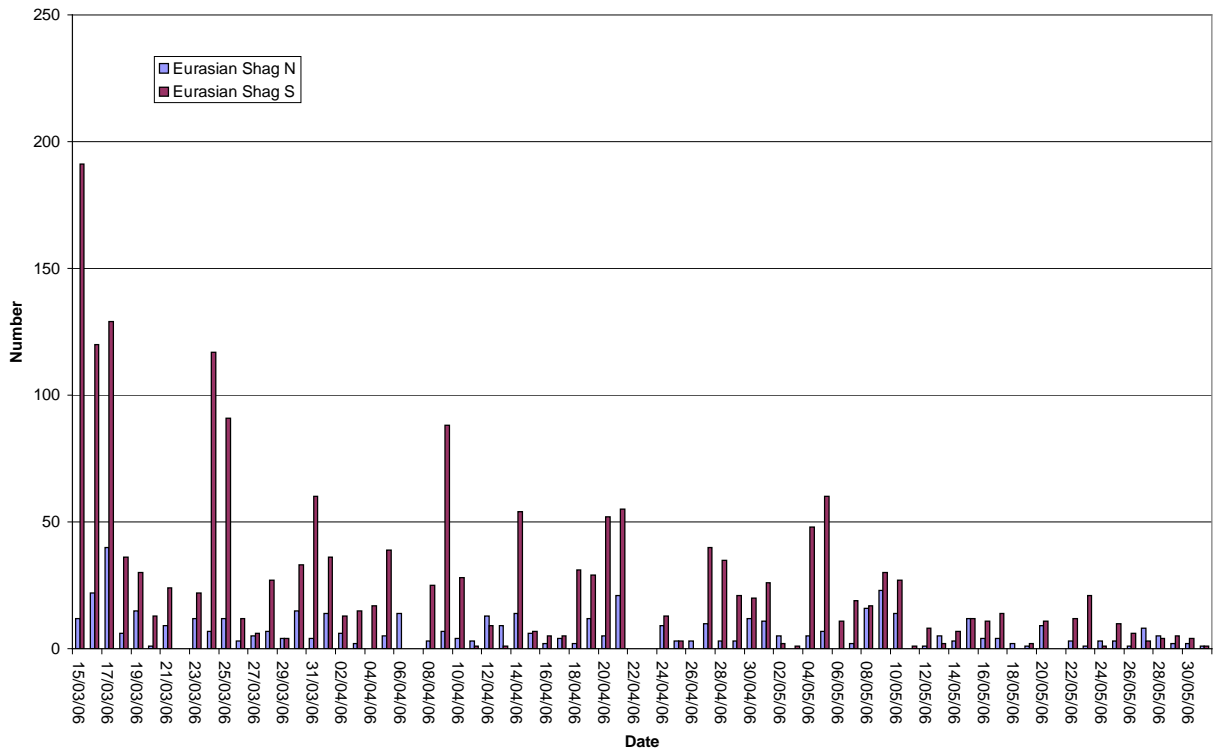


Eurasian Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Total North	516
Total South	1933
Maximum N	40, 17 March
Maximum S	191, 15 March

This species is one of the few species observed to be heading south on their spring migration; this project may have started too late to fully document the numbers involved as Eurasian Shag start moving in late February / early March.

Numbers were lower than expected and the timing seemed normal. There was a long period of good migration weather for this species prior to the start of the project.





Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Total North	6
Total South	3
Maximum N	4
Maximum S	3

Typically small numbers were seen migrating either well out to sea, or coming in off the sea from a long way out. It is more than likely that these birds originated in the British Isles. None were observed on migration during April.

Whooper Swawn *Cygnus cygnus*

Remarkably only one bird was seen flying north on the unusual date of 30 May – into a strong headwind.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

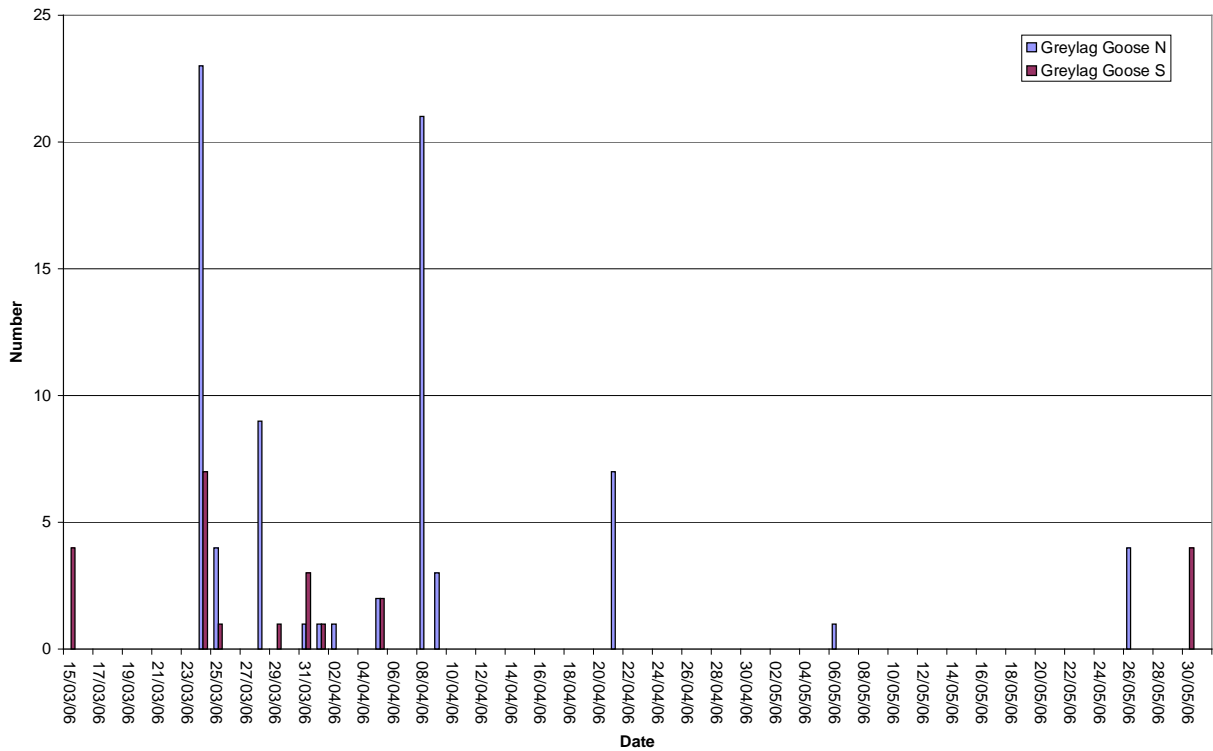
One seen flying north in a Barnacle Goose flock 26 May.



Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Total North	77
Total South	23
Maximum N	23, 24 March
Maximum S	7

Typically not recorded in large numbers during the spring migration. Most were seen in late March and early April, although four were seen flying north with Barnacle Geese towards the end of May.



Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Total North	6
Total South	0
Maximum N	4, 23 March
Maximum S	0

A new species for Skogsøy during the 2006 season Canada Geese were observed on two occasions with four north on 23 March and two, also northbound, on 05 April.

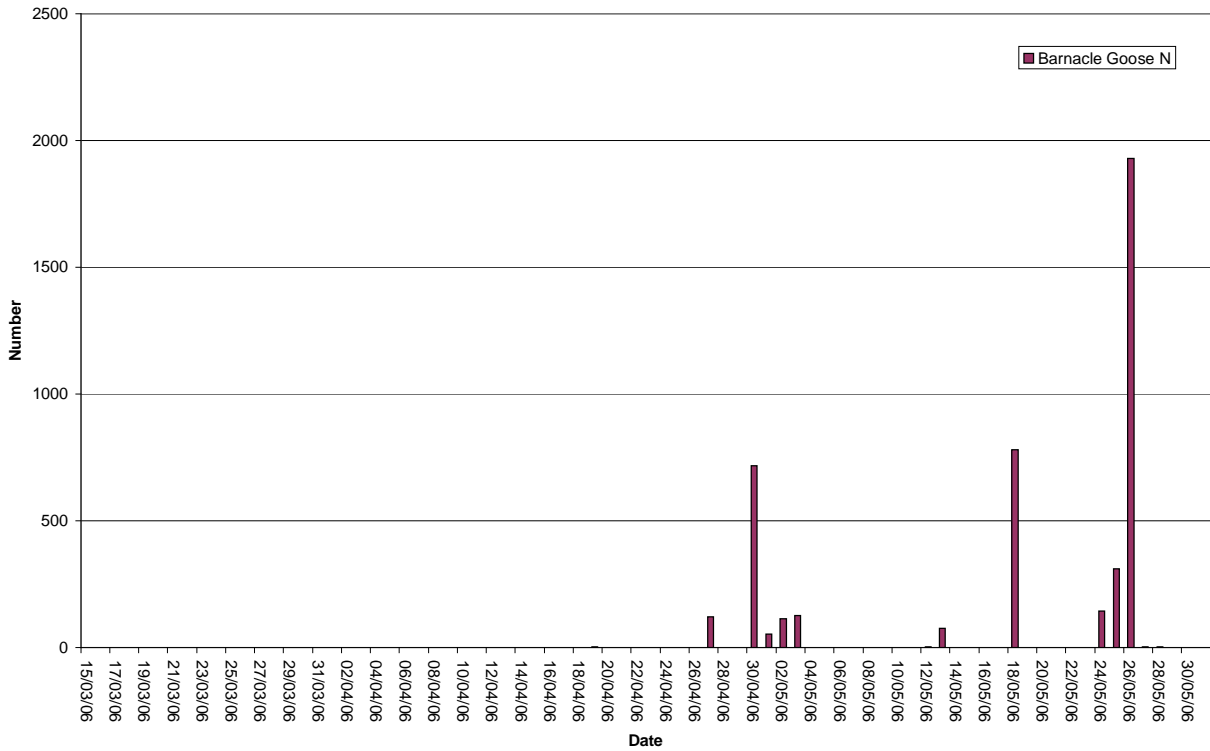


Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Total North	4382
Total South	0
Maximum N	1928, 26 May
Maximum S	0

A seemingly unusual year with no "big" day and with many birds passing very late in the season. At least two distinct waves went through which may be an indication of different populations being involved.

As usual the first birds turned up towards the end of April.

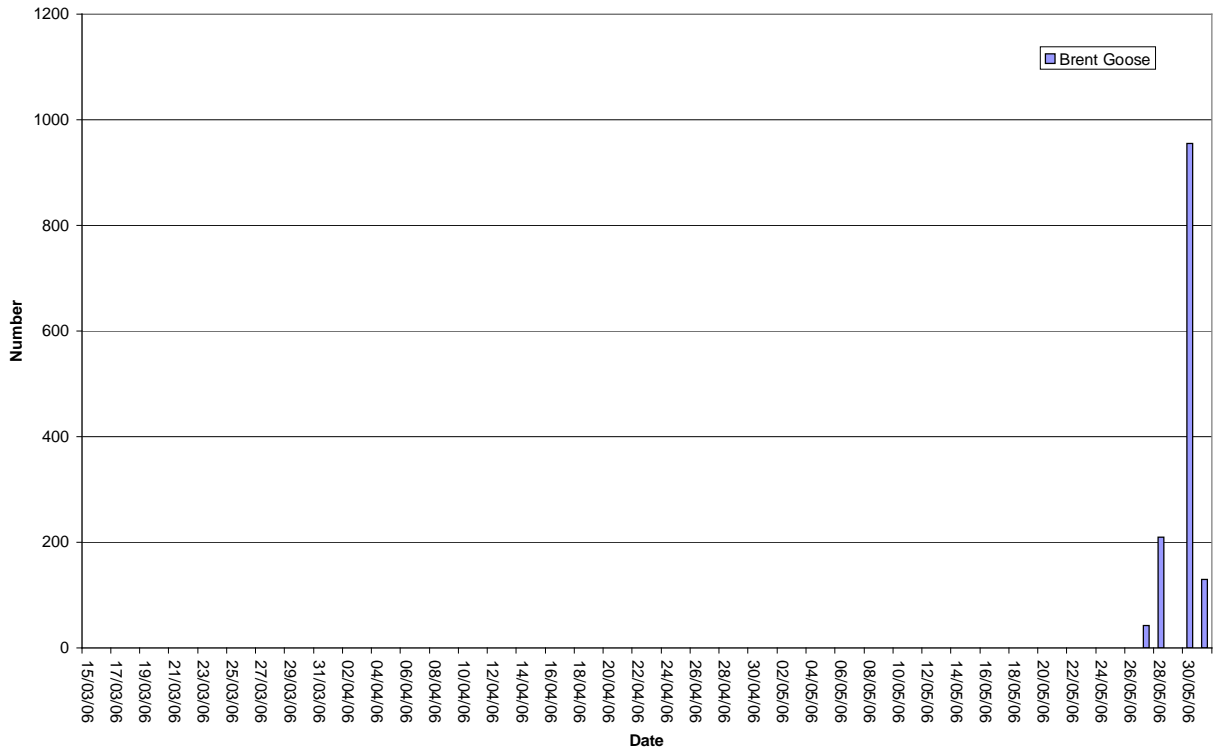




Brent Goose *Bernicula hrota*

Total North	1337
Total South	0
Maximum N	955
Maximum S	0

Typically the Brents came past in the last few days of May with most passing in strong headwinds.

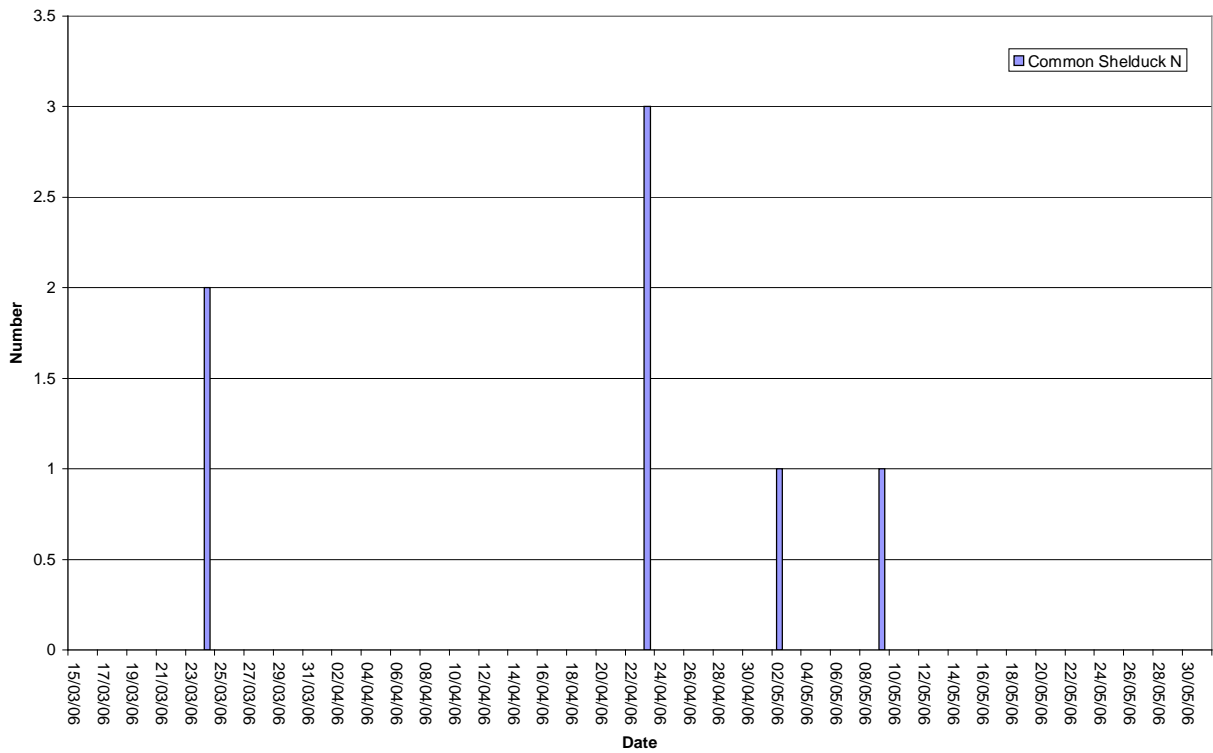




Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Total North	7
Total South	0
Maximum N	3
Maximum S	0

A normal or poor year for Common Shelduck, never a common migrant at Skogsøy. As usual records were from late March to early May.

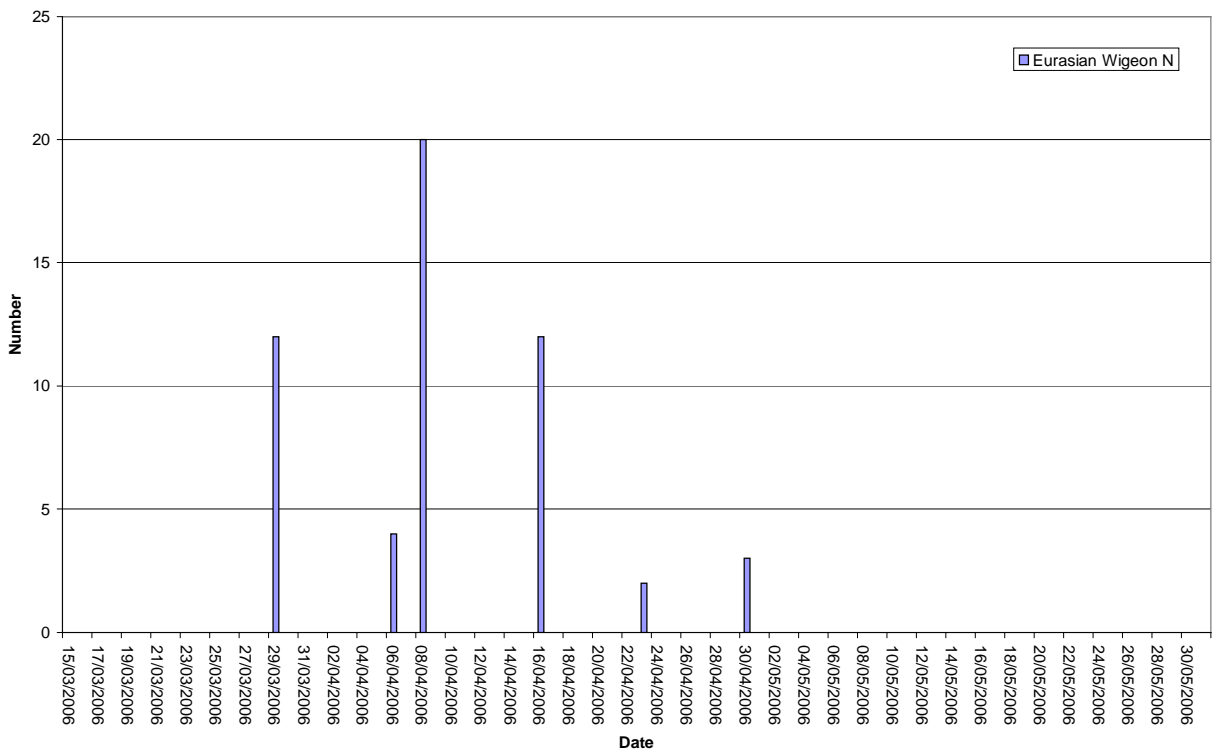




Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Total North	53
Total South	0
Maximum N	20, 08 April
Maximum S	0

The commonest of the dabbling ducks on spring migration, this species occurred in the usual numbers at the usual time.

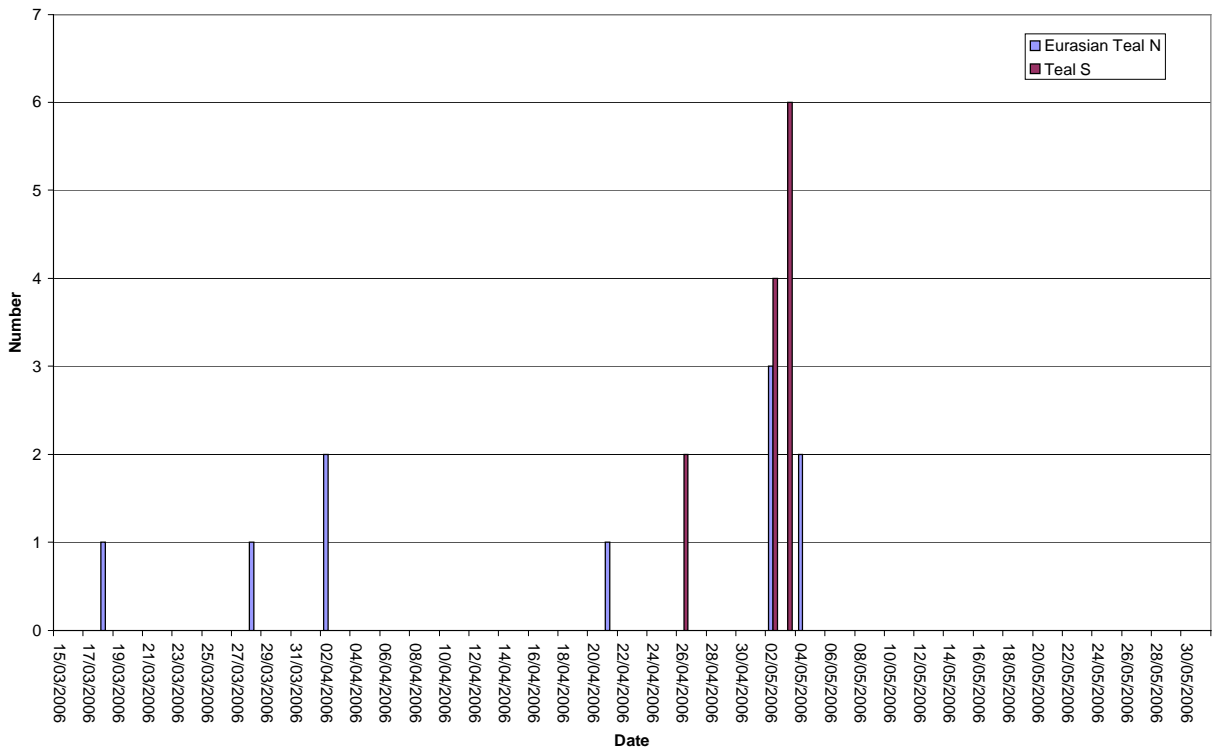




Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Total North	10
Total South	12
Maximum N	3
Maximum S	6

A poorer than average year. This species was seen resting in the area on a number of occasions.

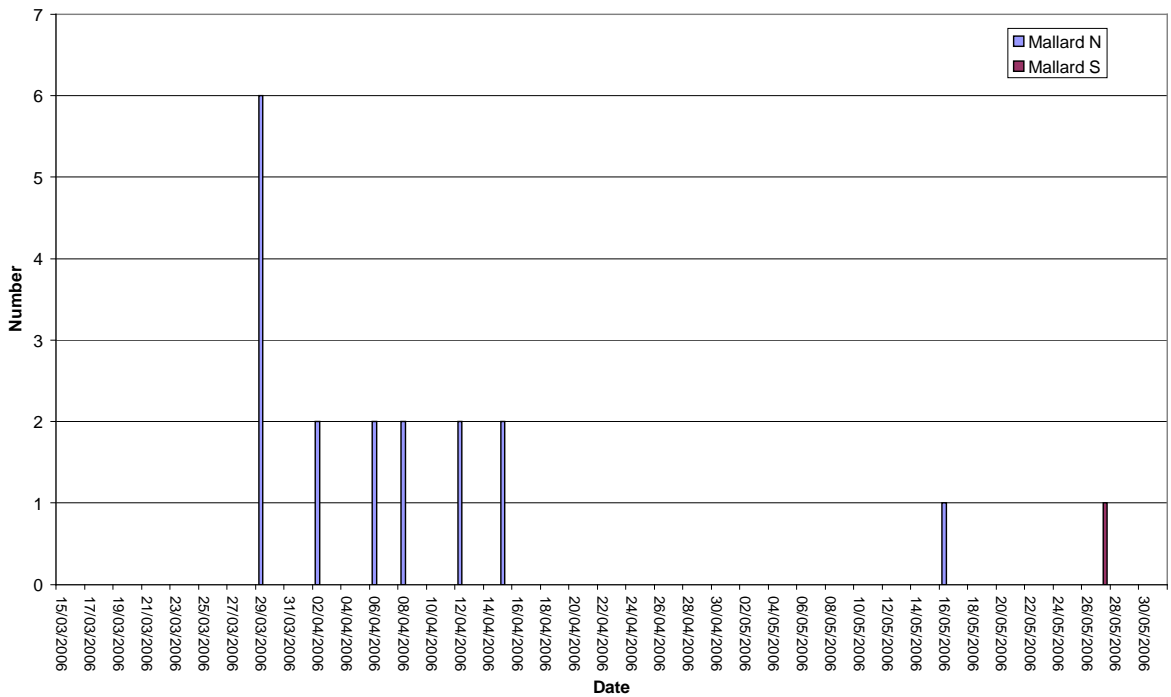




Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Total North	17
Total South	1
Maximum N	6
Maximum S	1

A fairly normal pattern of spring occurrence.

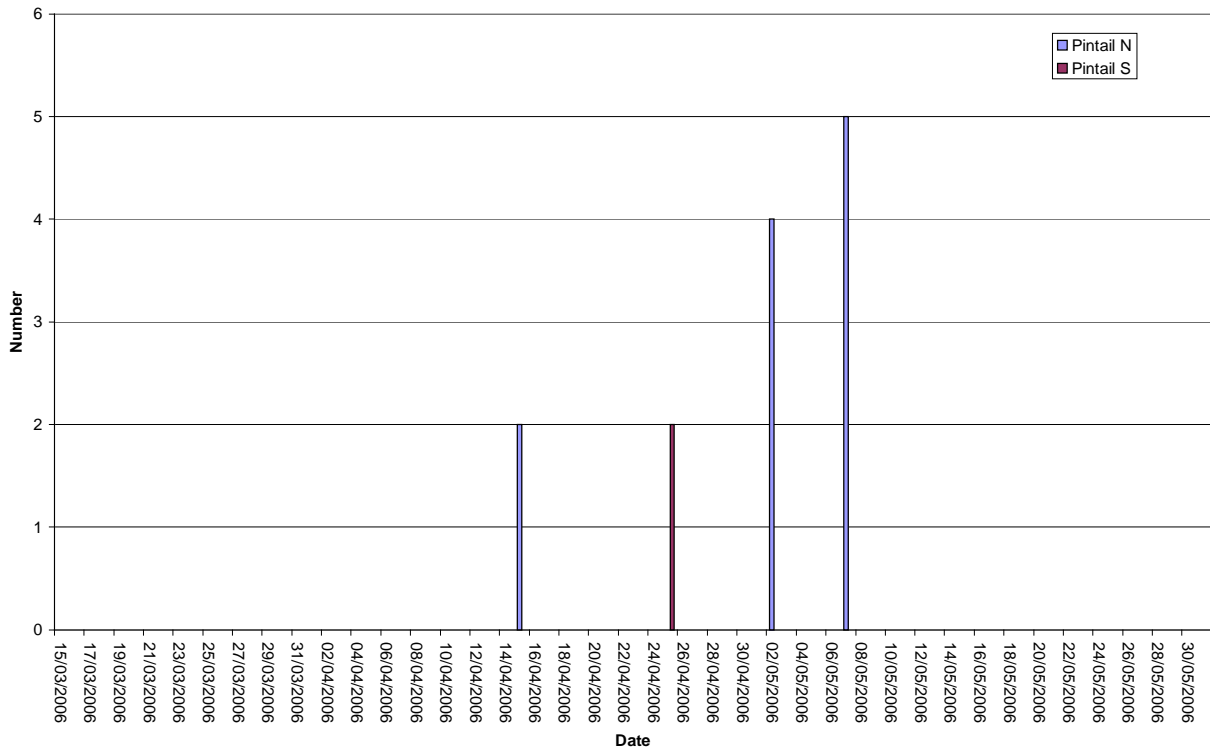




Northern Pintail *Anas*

Total North	11
Total South	2
Maximum N	5, 07 May
Maximum S	2

A good spring for this unpredictable species in Hordaland. All records between mid April and mid May.



Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

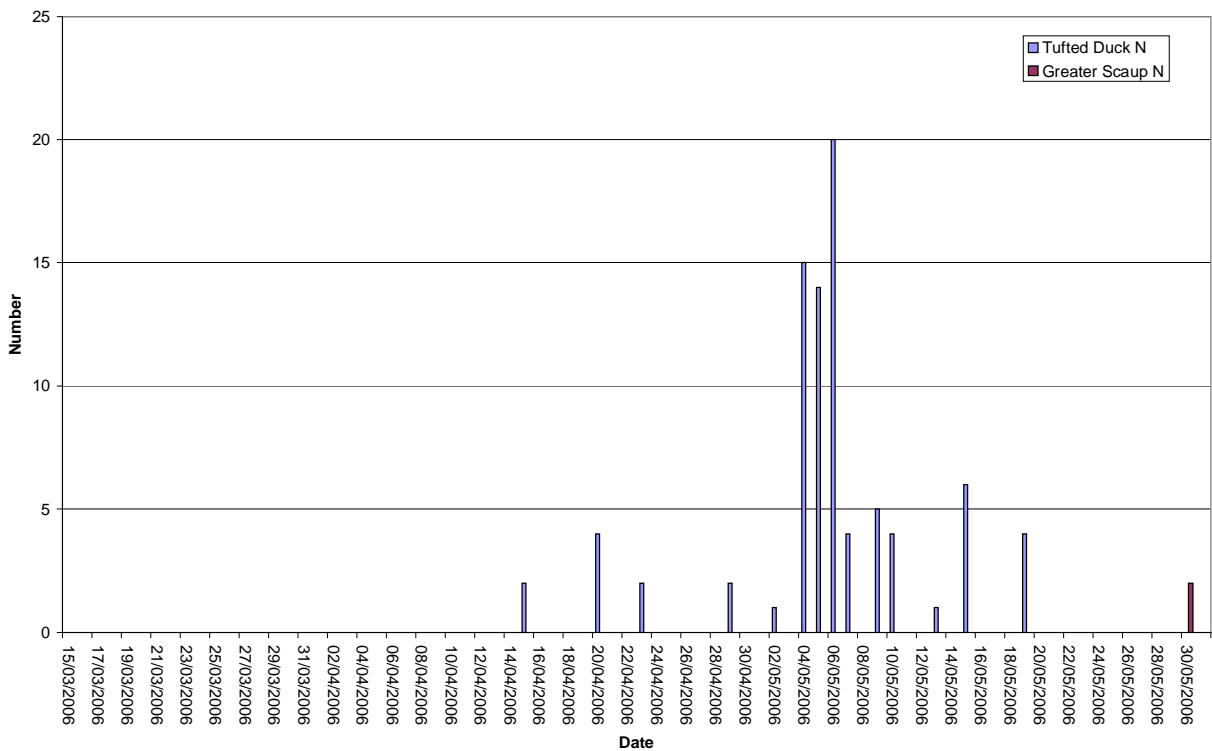
Two heading north on 04 May was the only record of this locally rare species.



Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Total North	84
Total South	0
Maximum N	20, 06 May
Maximum S	0

A seemingly normal year; observed on migration from mid April to mid May, with a clear peak in early May.



Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*

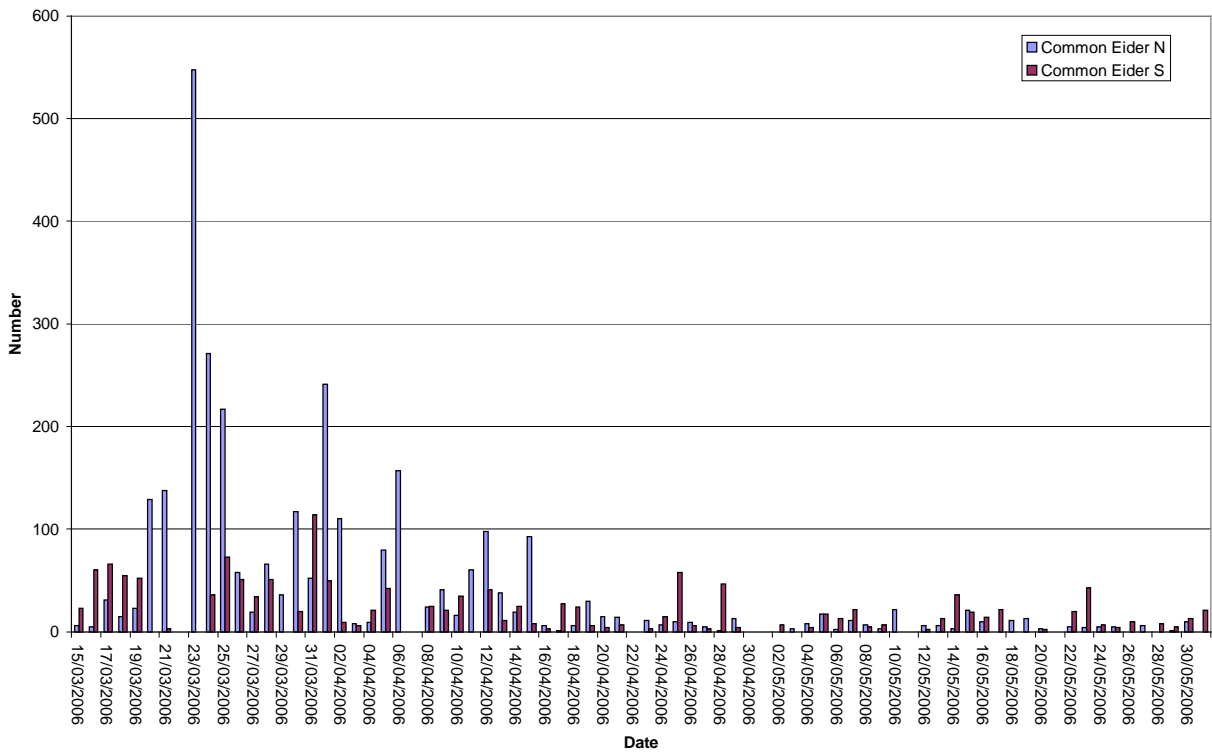
A pair heading north on 30 May was the only record of this relatively scarce migrant.



Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Total North	3034
Total South	1453
Maximum N	547, 23 March
Maximum S	114, 31 March

A lot of local movement is likely to be included in the counts. However, an obvious northerly movement noted in the second half of March. From the end of April the majority were seen flying south.

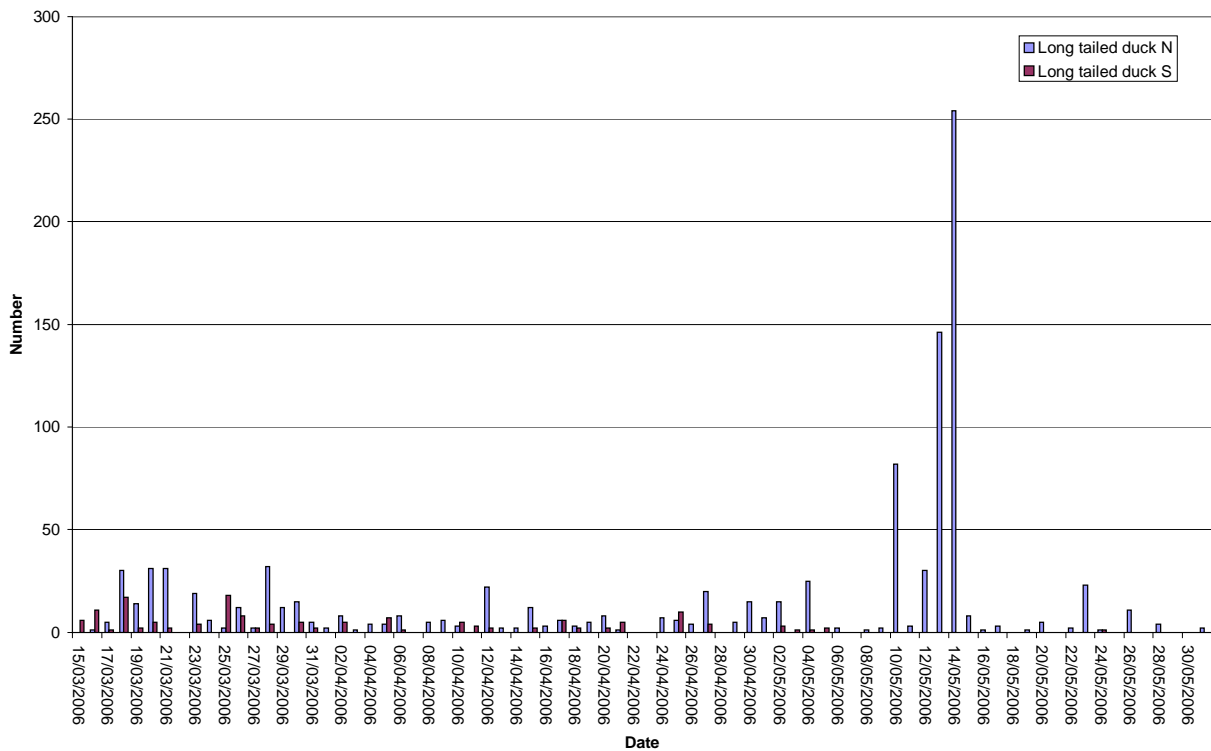




Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Total North	1007
Total South	149
Maximum N	254, 14 May
Maximum S	18

Compared to recent years 2006 seemed to be relatively normal. However, compared to some counts in the early 1980's the total is shockingly low.

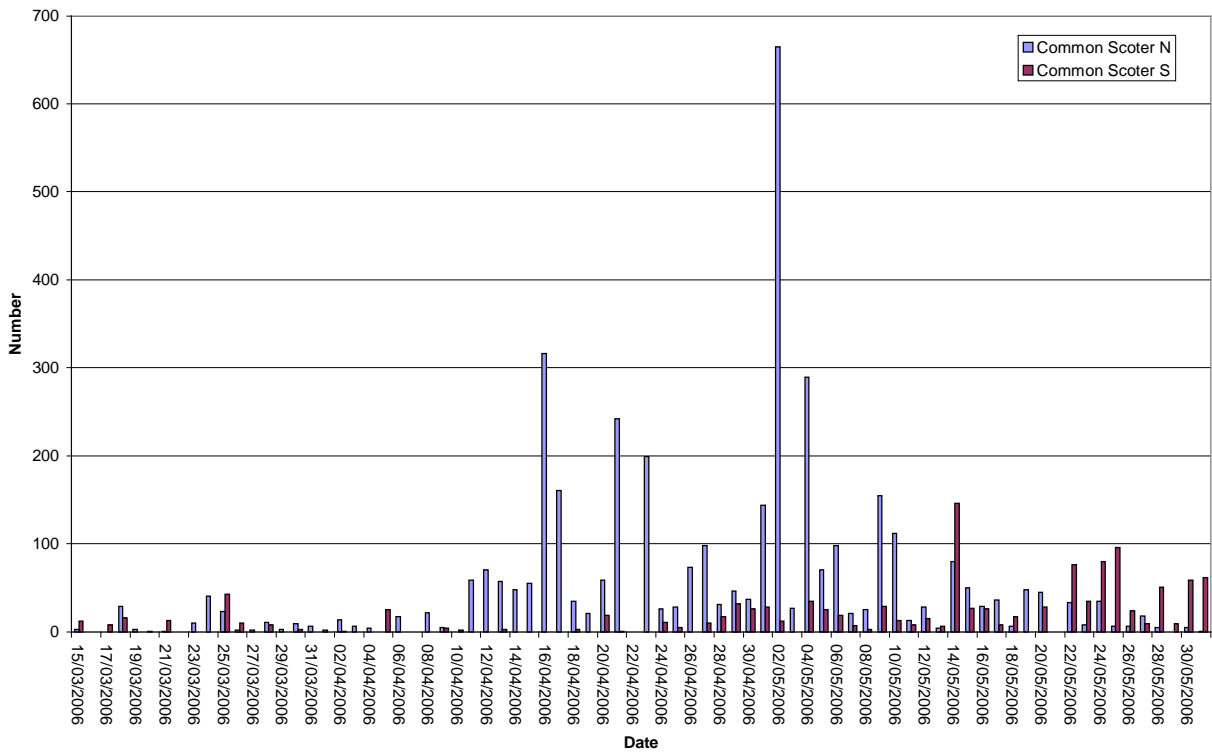




Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Total North	3933
Total South	1225
Maximum N	665, 02 May
Maximum S	146, 14 May

As usual the peak northbound migration came in early May. After mid May the majority of birds were logged heading south, these may well be from a different population. Seems more numerous than indicated by counts in the early 1980's.

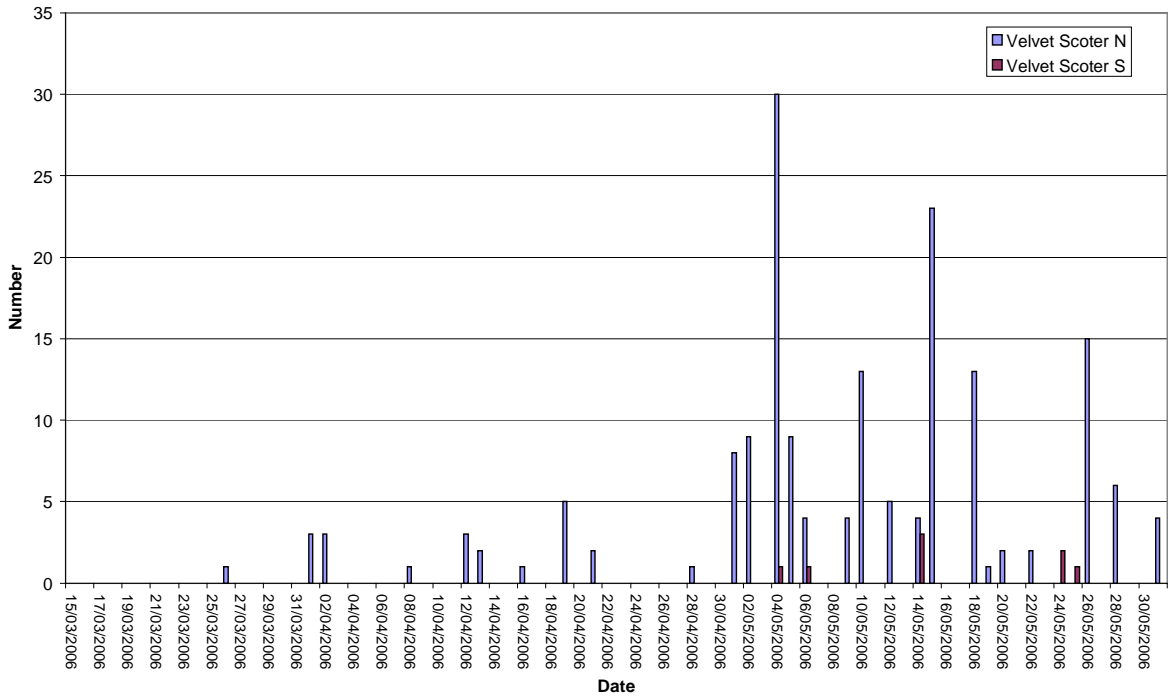




Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Total North	174
Total South	8
Maximum N	30, 04 May
Maximum S	3

A little less numerous than anticipated. As usual the majority passed during May, some two weeks later than Common Scoter.

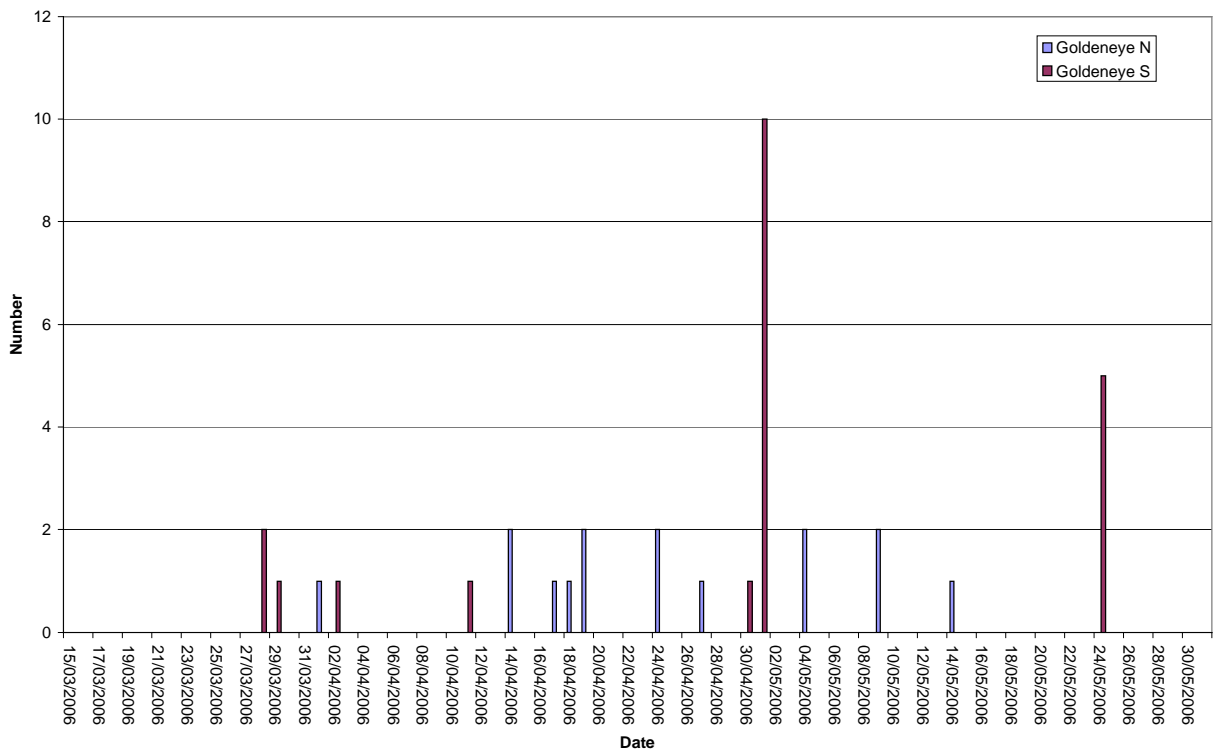




Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Total North	15
Total South	21
Maximum N	2
Maximum S	10

Normal season, this species is a lot more common as a stationary bird than as a migrant.

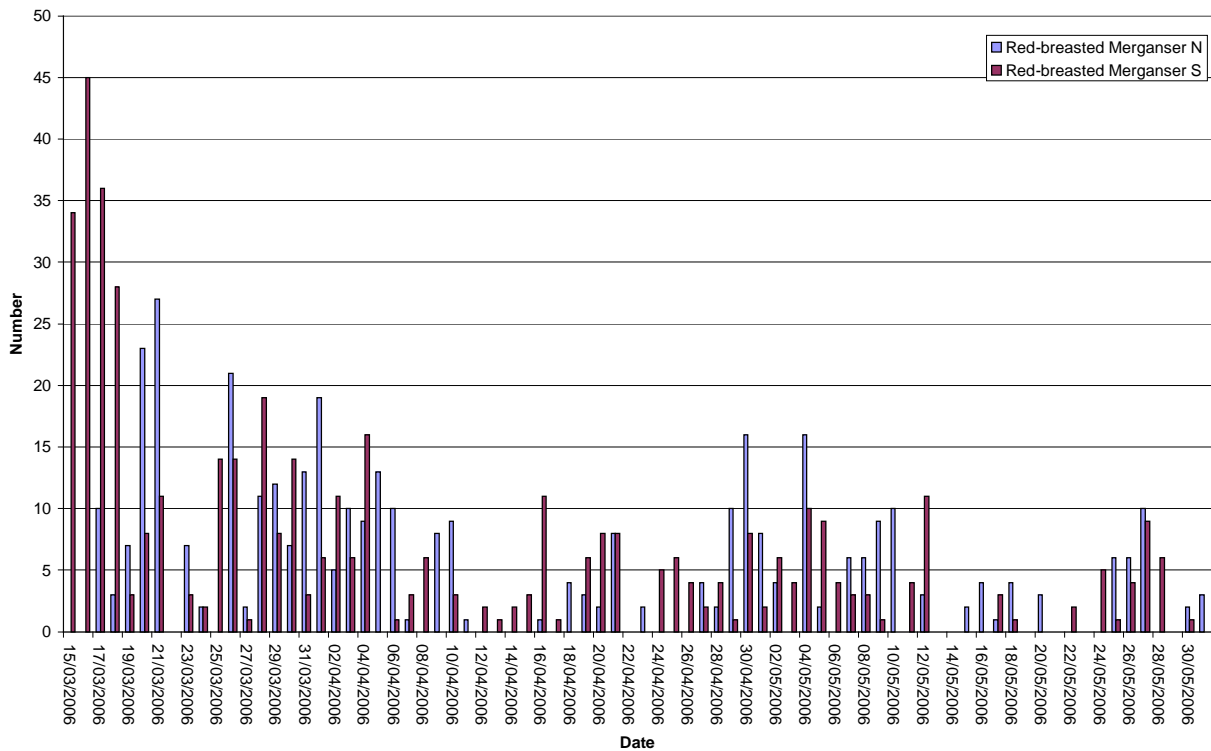




Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Total North	385
Total South	456
Maximum N	27, 21 March
Maximum S	45, 16 March

Many of the birds logged may have been moving locally to and from roosts and feeding areas. Numbers were clearly higher in March and dropped fairly steadily.

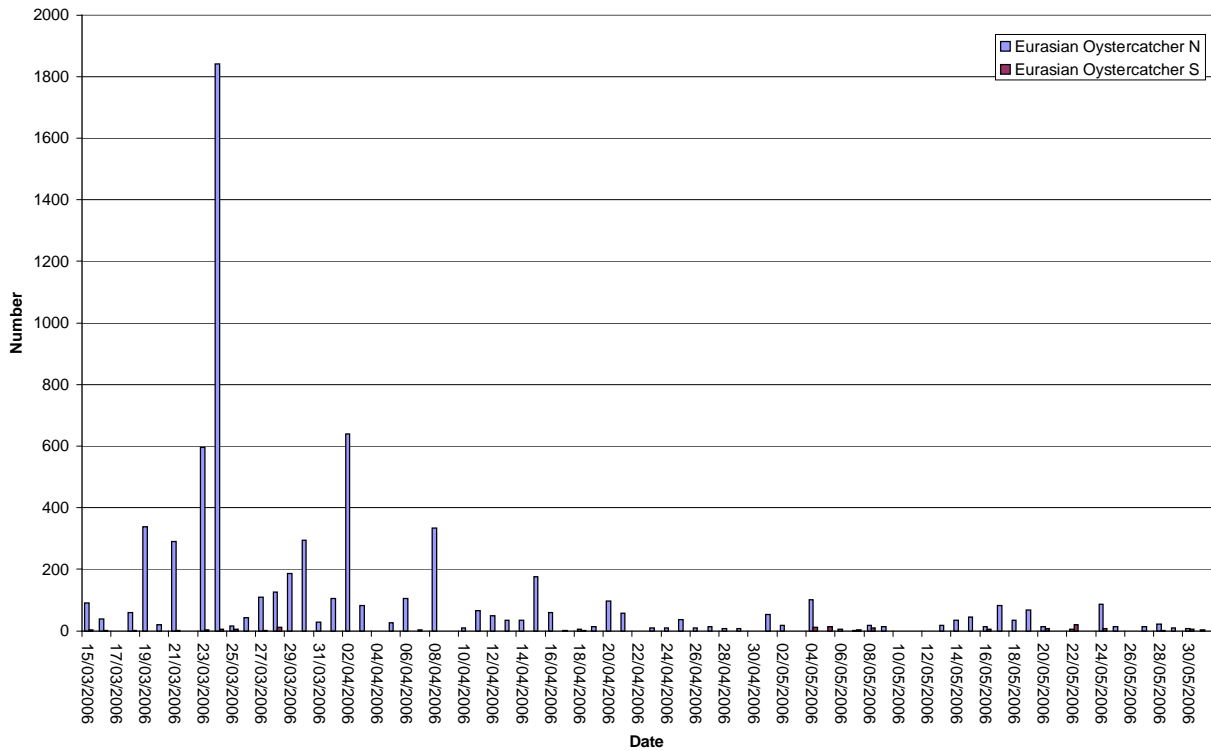




Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Total North	6771
Total South	125
Maximum N	1842, 24 March
Maximum S	21, 22 May

Rather fewer than expected, this may be because there was a long period of favourable migration weather in the first half of March when many may have migrated. Indications are that there may have been a considerable decrease since the early 1980's.

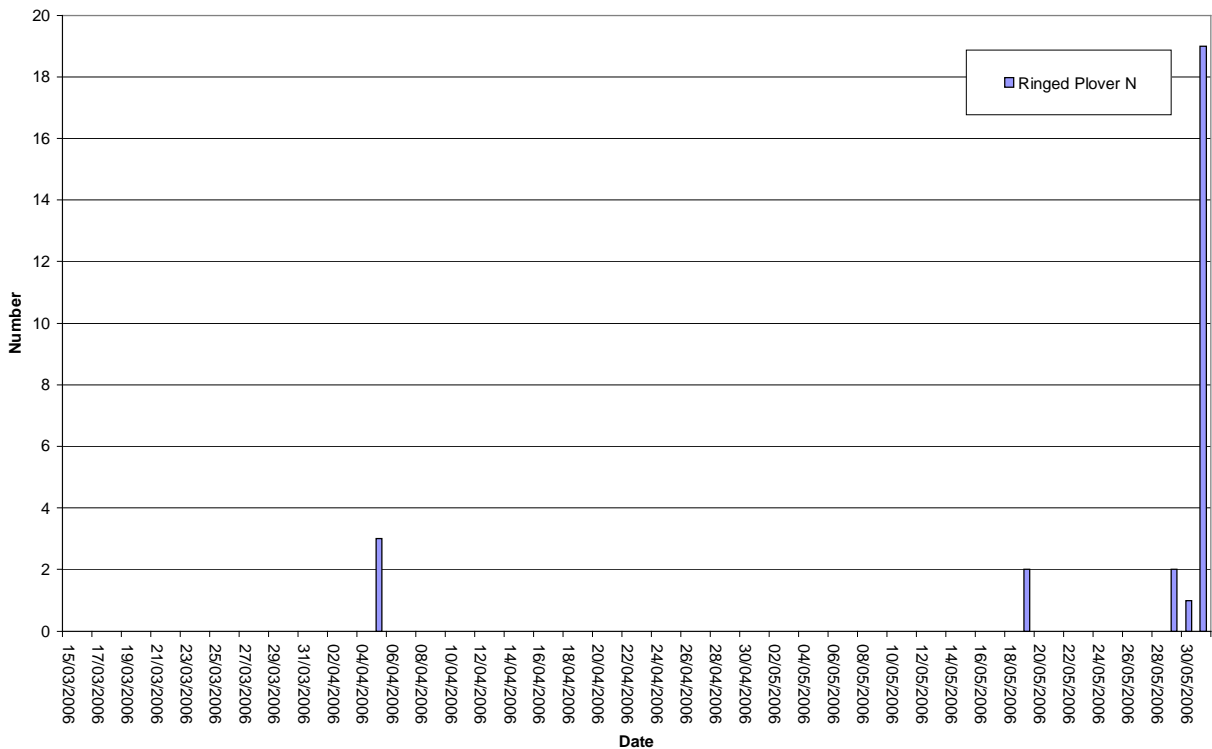




Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Total North	27
Total South	4
Maximum N	19
Maximum S	3

A typical spring, mostly seen during strong headwinds.



European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Total North	4
Total South	2
Maximum N	3
Maximum S	2

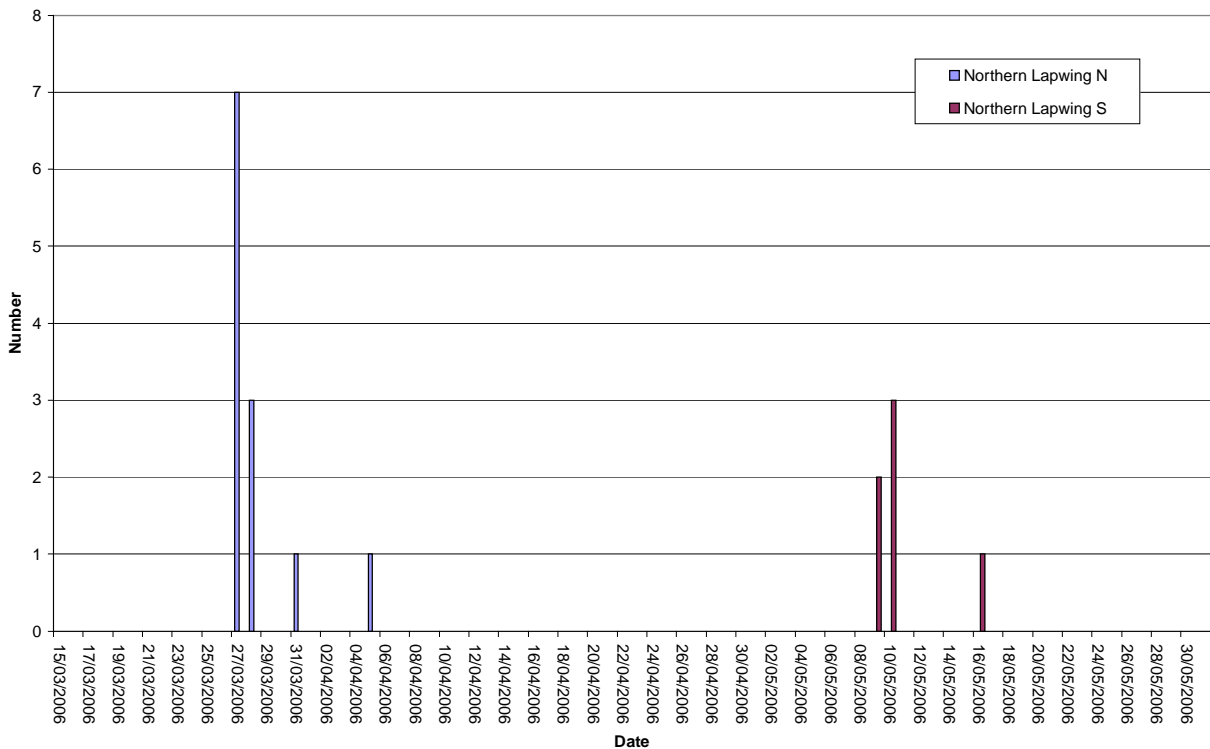
Typically few recorded during the spring season, only being logged on two dates, 12 April and 10 May. This species was heard on a number of other occasions.



Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Total North	12
Total South	6
Maximum N	7, 27 March
Maximum S	3, 10 May

Typical spring. Some indication of southbound migration in mid May.



Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Total North	57
Total South	0
Maximum N	50, 23 May
Maximum S	0

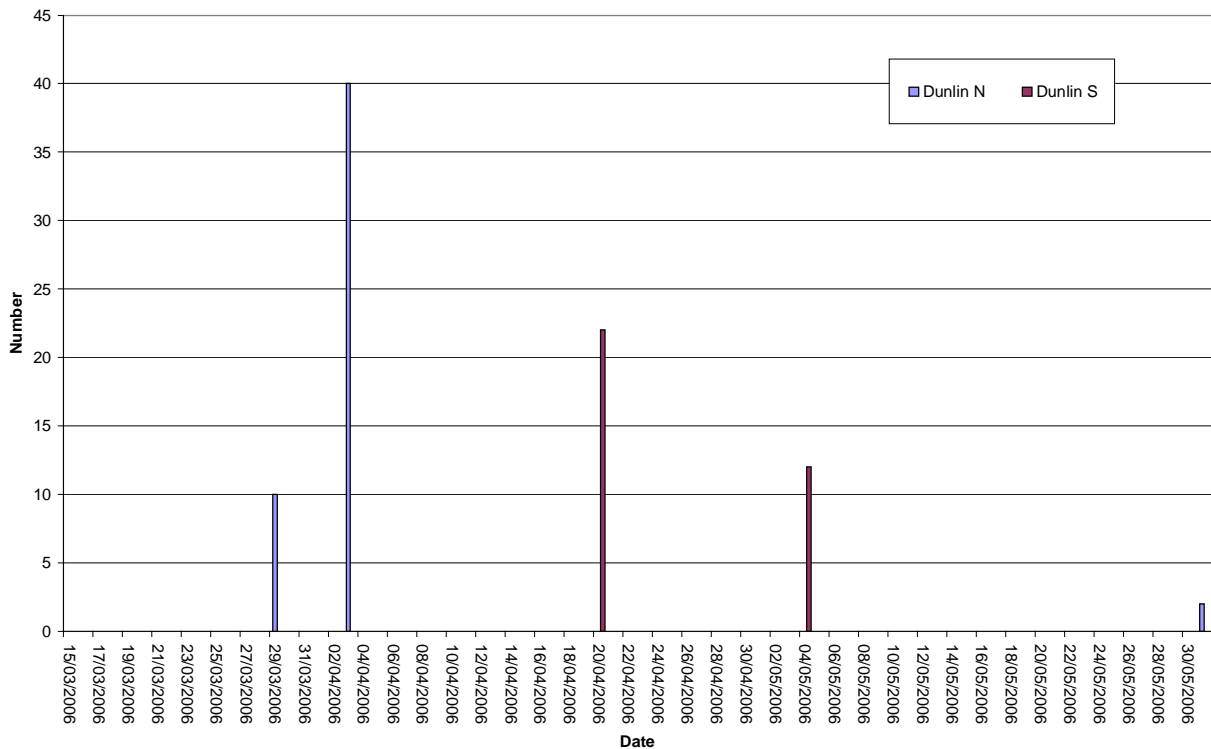
Seen only on three occasions in late May. Normal pattern of occurrence.



Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Total North	52
Total South	34
Maximum N	40
Maximum S	22

Typically scarce during spring migration.



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Total North	10
Total South	0
Maximum N	7
Maximum S	0

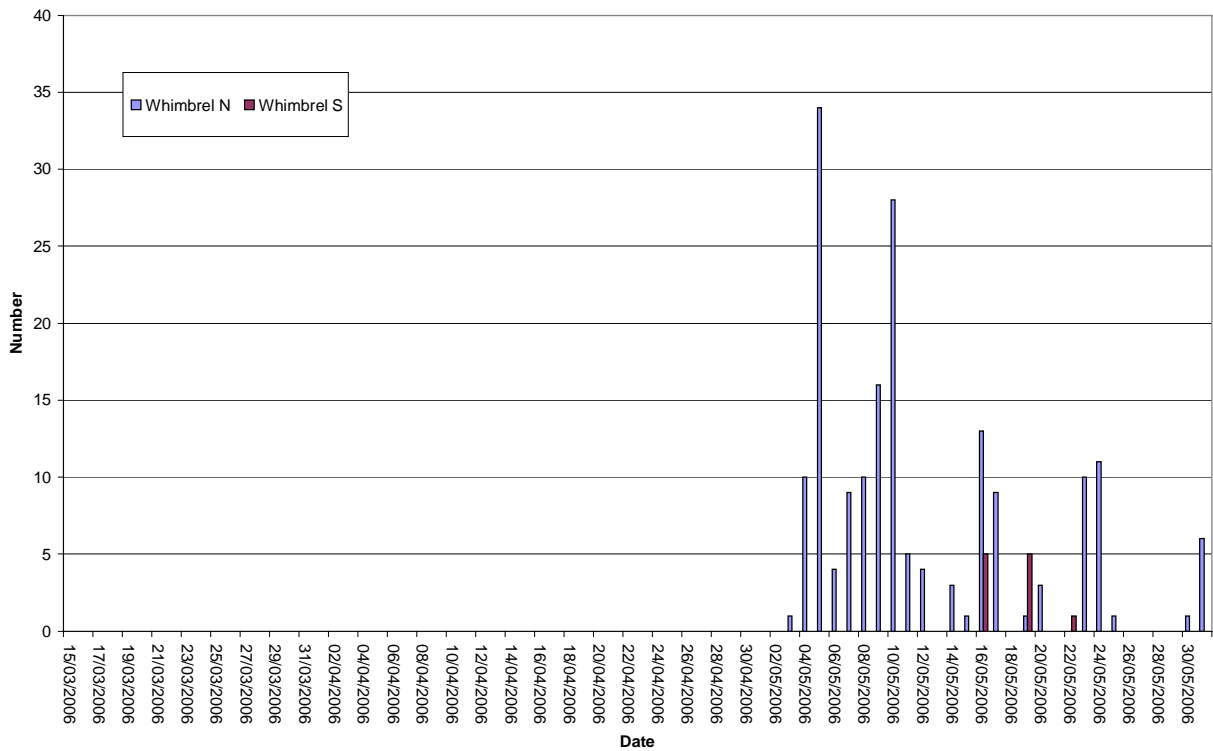
Migrating birds were seen on only two occasions, seven on 04 April and three 14 May.



Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Total North	180
Total South	11
Maximum N	34, 05 May
Maximum S	5

Very regular from early May onwards. A fairly typical pattern of occurrence.

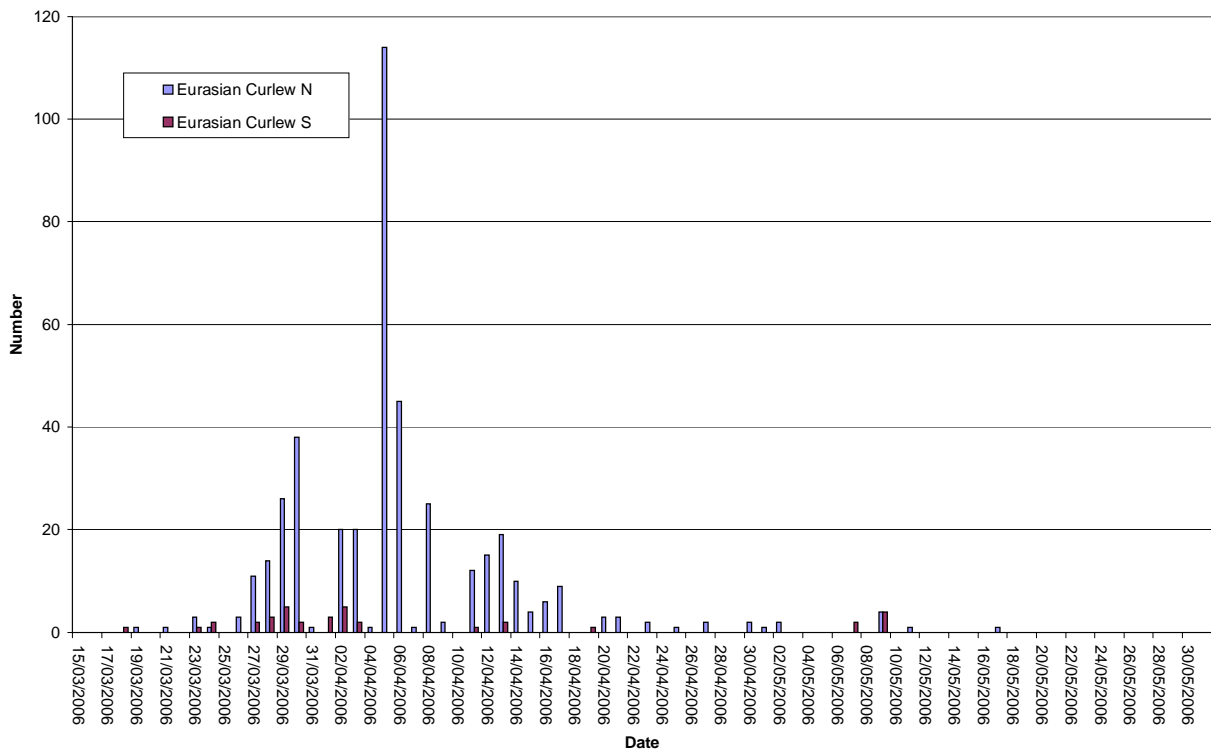




Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Total North	422
Total South	36
Maximum N	114, 05 April
Maximum S	5

A normal spring by all accounts. 114 heading north on 05 April was a good number for this locality.



Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

One seen migrating 06 May. This species was also noted in probable breeding territory throughout May.



Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

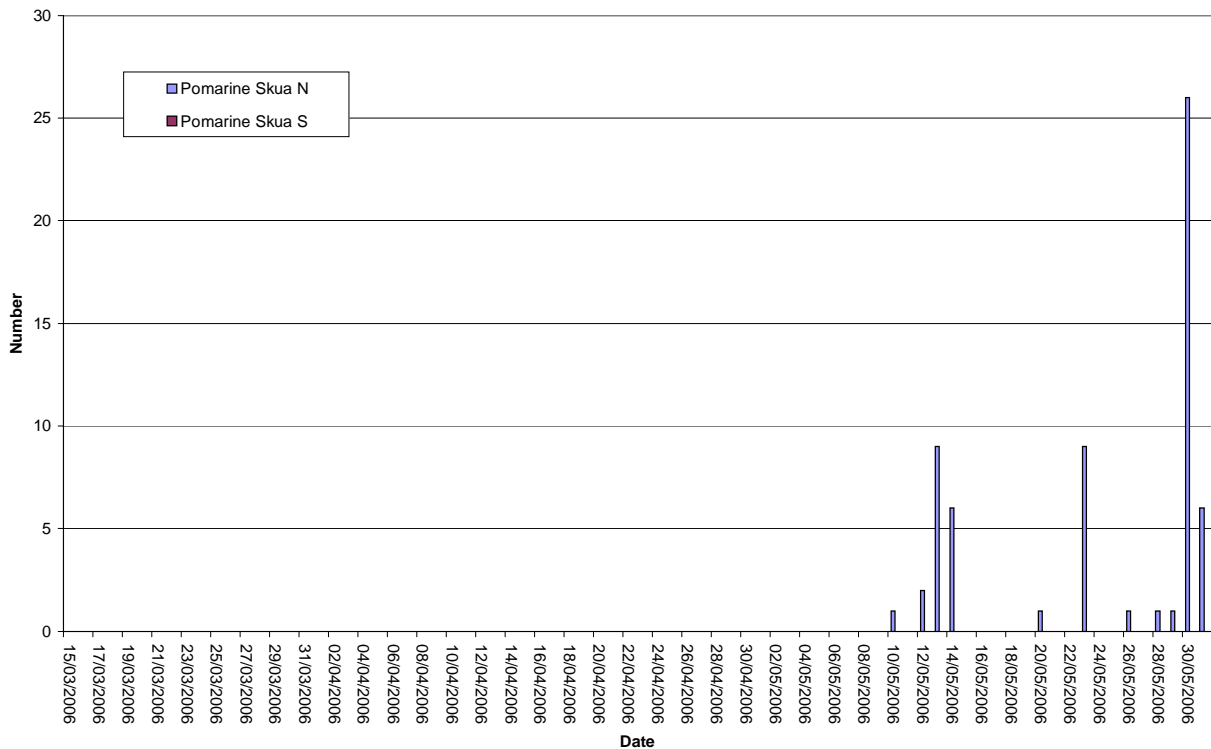
Total North	12
Total South	0
Maximum N	8
Maximum S	0

A typical spring with a scattering of records in the second half of May.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Total North	63
Total South	0
Maximum N	26, 30 May
Maximum S	0

At best a normal spring for this species. 2005 seemed to be a better year, probably due to more “favourable” winds.

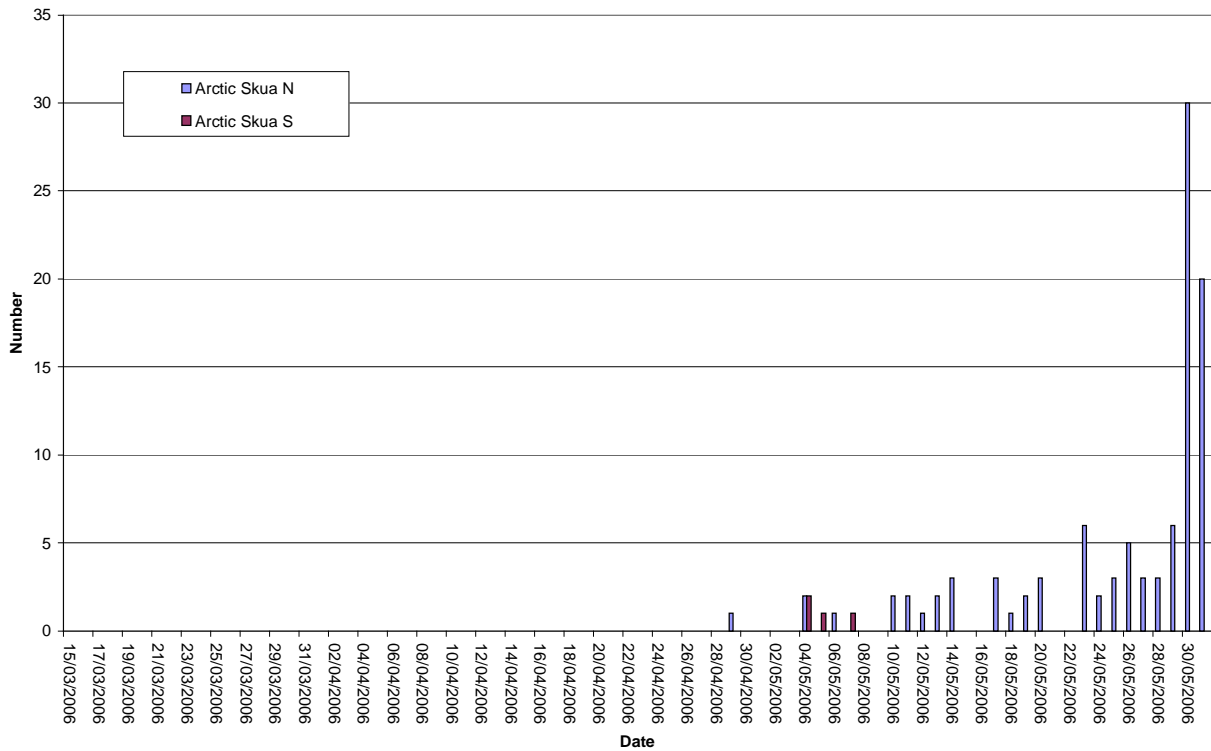




Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Total North	101
Total South	4
Maximum N	30, 30 May
Maximum S	2

Not a major year for this species with low numbers logged during most of May, as with Pomarine Skua most were seen in strong north westerly winds towards the end of May. Some indication that there has been a substantial reduction in numbers.

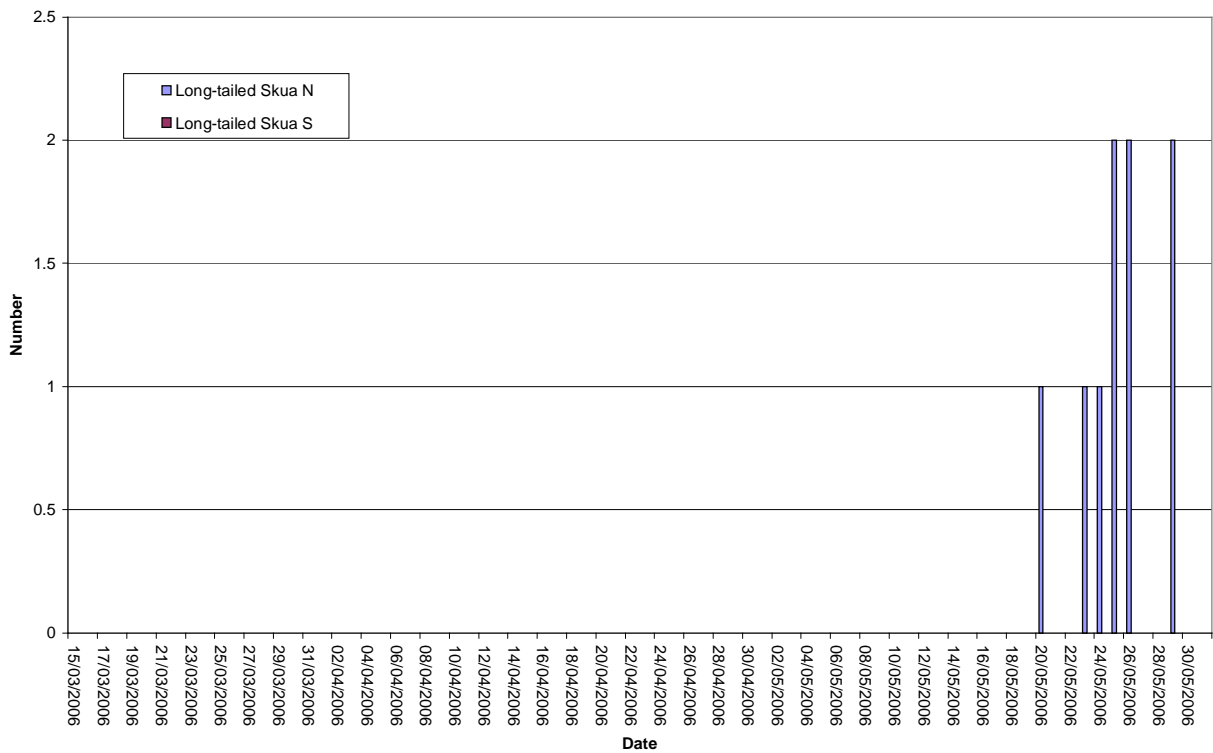




Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Total North	9
Total South	0
Maximum N	2
Maximum S	0

A normal year, this species typically turns up a little later than the of *stercorarius* skuas.

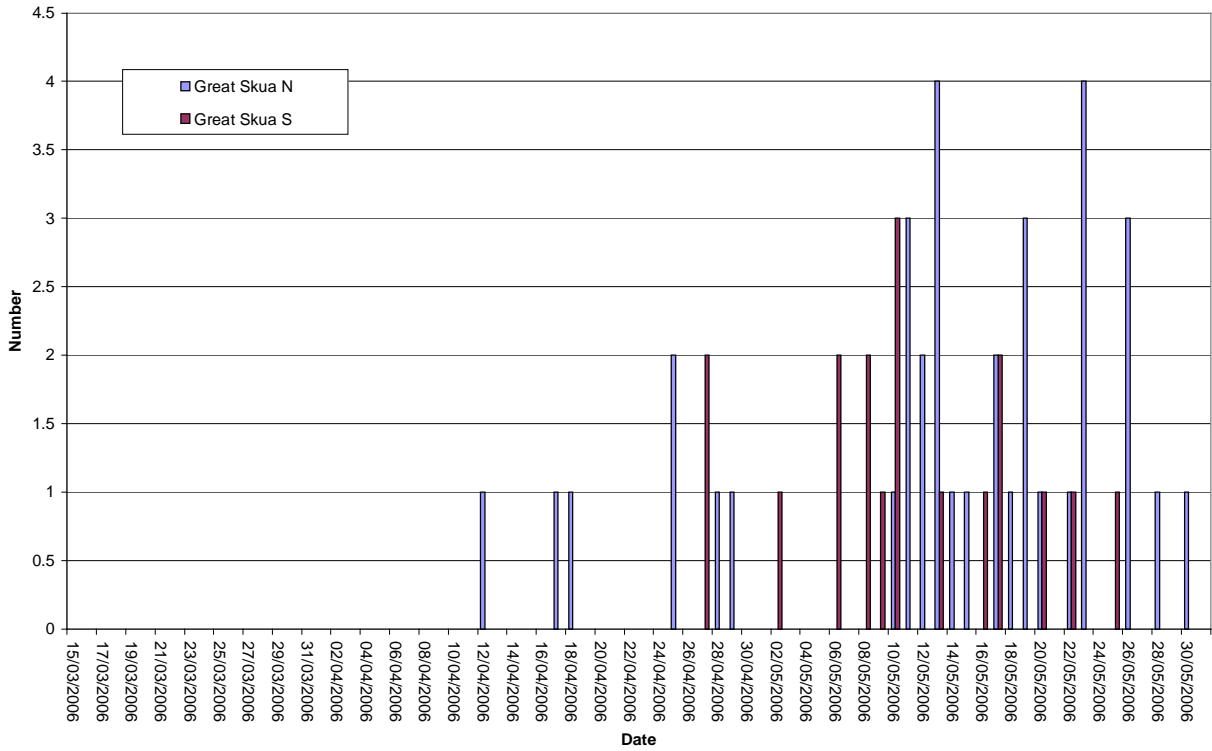




Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

Total North	36
Total South	18
Maximum N	4
Maximum S	3

After the first bird on 12 April, Great Skua were regular in small numbers from late April onwards. A typical spring for this species.

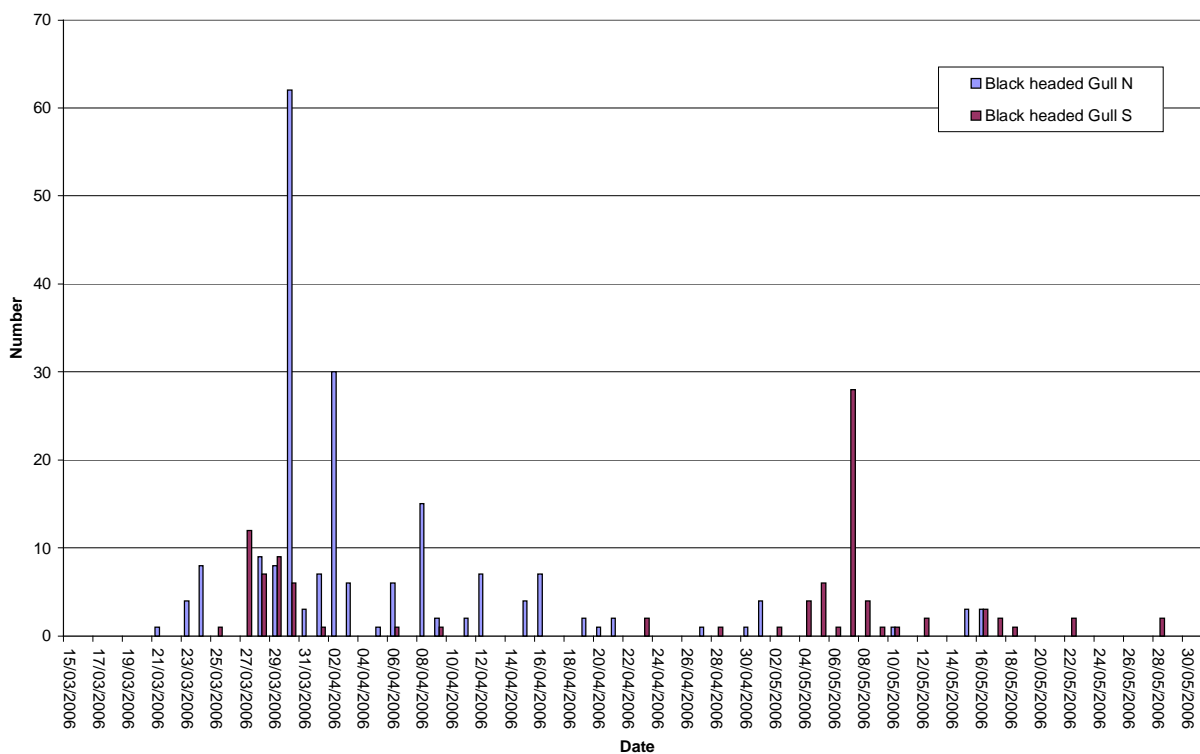




Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Total North	200
Total South	99
Maximum N	62, 30 March
Maximum S	28, 07 May

Not the best of seasons, although a new day record of 62 on 30 March occurred at the same time Fair Isle was also experiencing record numbers of this species. After the end of April most birds were sub adult birds moving south.



Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*

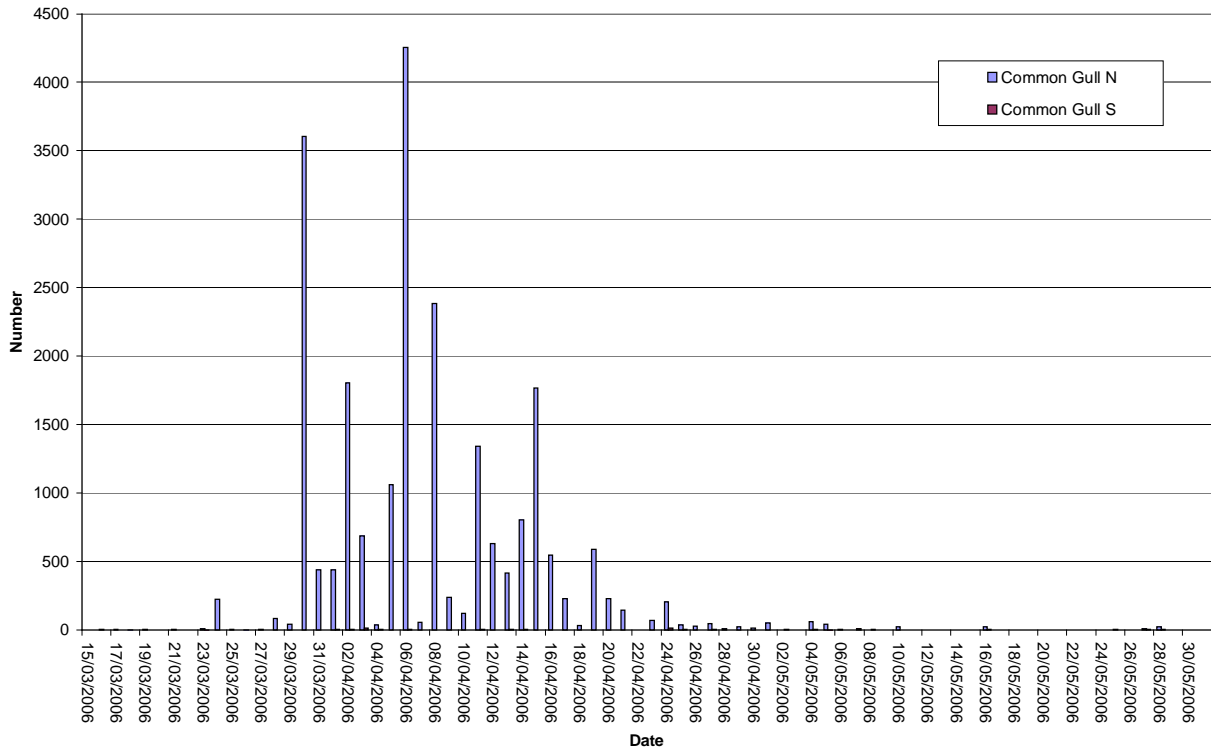
One flying south 08 May will be the first for Norway if this record is accepted.



Common Gull *Larus canus*

Total North 22853
 Total South 93
 Maximum N 4255, 06 April
 Maximum S 14

The most numerous species during the spring. Seemingly a normal spring, possibly a little earlier than usual.





Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Total North	21
Total South	24
Maximum N	3
Maximum S	4

Much smaller numbers than expected, though this species is never numerous on spring migration at Skogsøy. True migration not noted to any degree, most birds probably being local breeders.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Total North	4
Total South	0
Maximum N	1
Maximum S	0

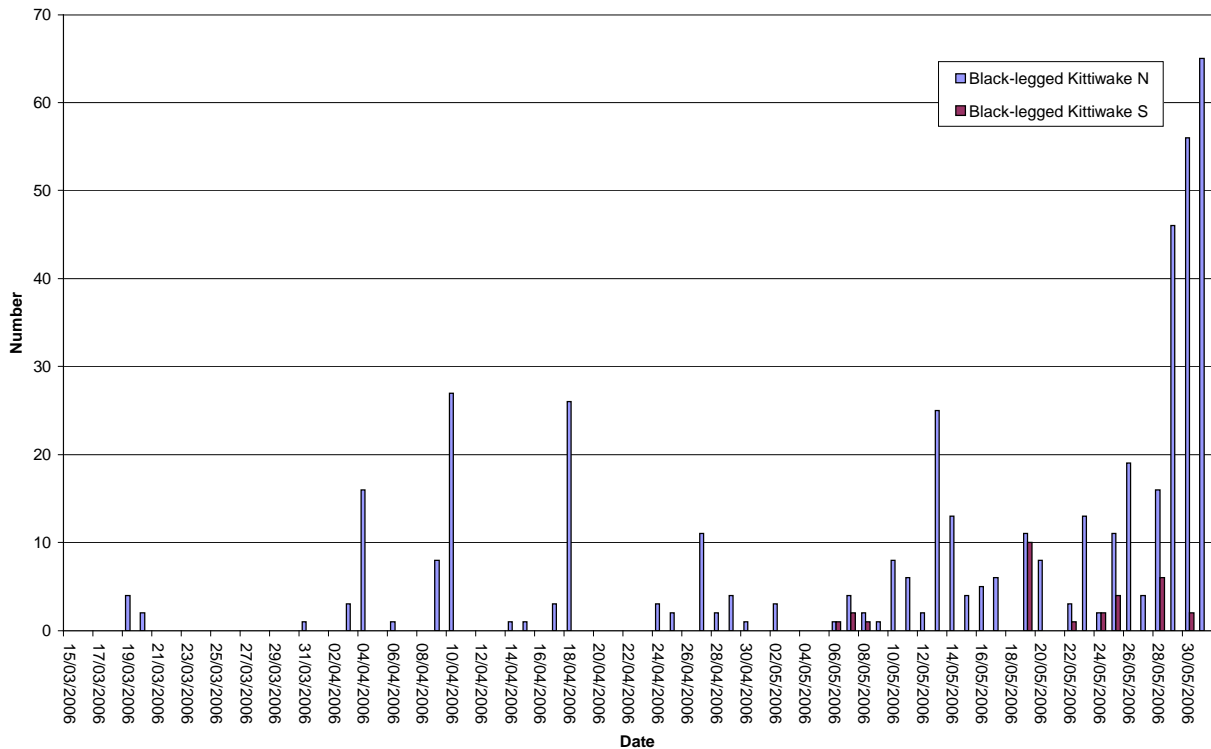
Singles noted on four occasions between late March and mid- April, probably typical for this species.



Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Total North	450
Total South	29
Maximum N	65, 31 May
Maximum S	10

Extremely poor year when compared to counts in the early 1980's with only a tiny fraction of earlier numbers (even accounting for wind direction). Numbers seem normal compared to recent years but it is obvious that there has been a catastrophic decline in numbers.



Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Total North	2
Total South	0
Maximum N	1
Maximum S	0

Two singles observed on 06 April and 28 May. This species is a local rarity with only ten records prior to 2004.



Common Tern / Arctic Tern *Sterna hirundo / paradisaea*

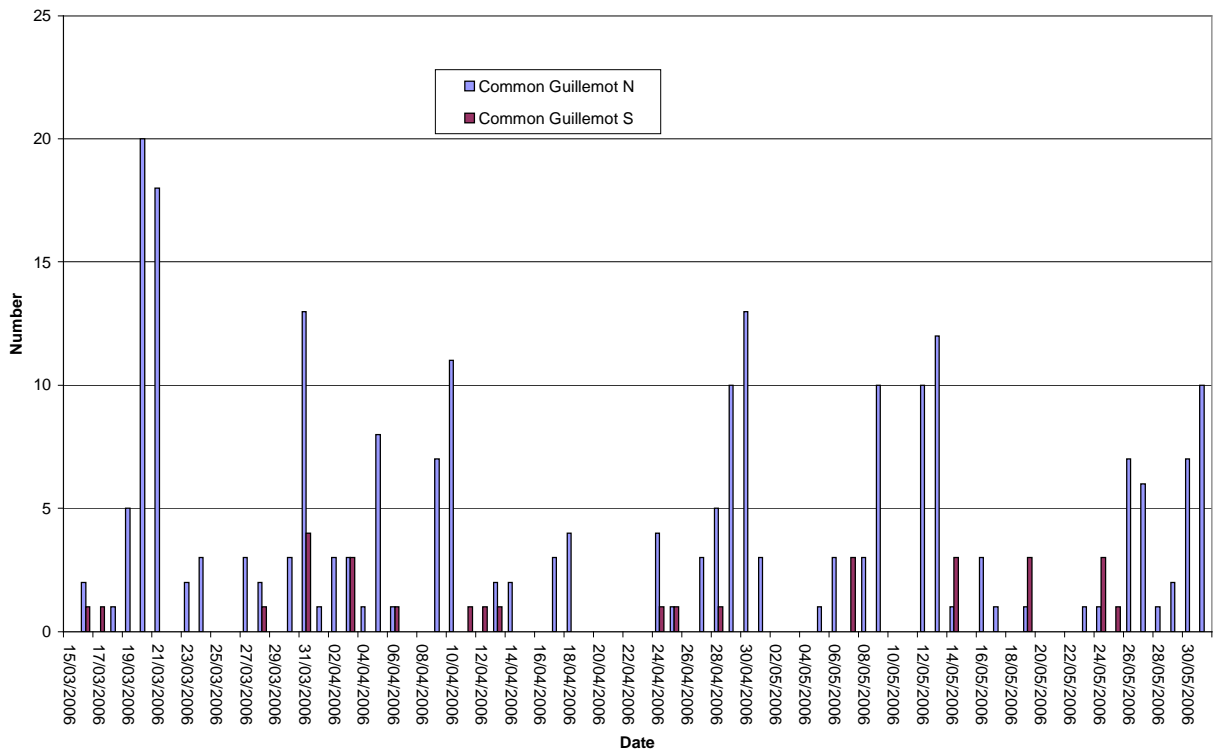
A little over 250 Arctic Tern were logged heading north with a clear peak in the second half of May. The first birds were noted 06 May. Very few Common Tern were positively identified and the number of unidentified terns also low.

Numbers of terns in 2006 were a mere fraction of counts from the early 1980's, obviously a matter of some concern.

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Total North	237
Total South	30
Maximum N	20, 20 March
Maximum S	4

Compared to recent years 2006 seems to have been a normal year.

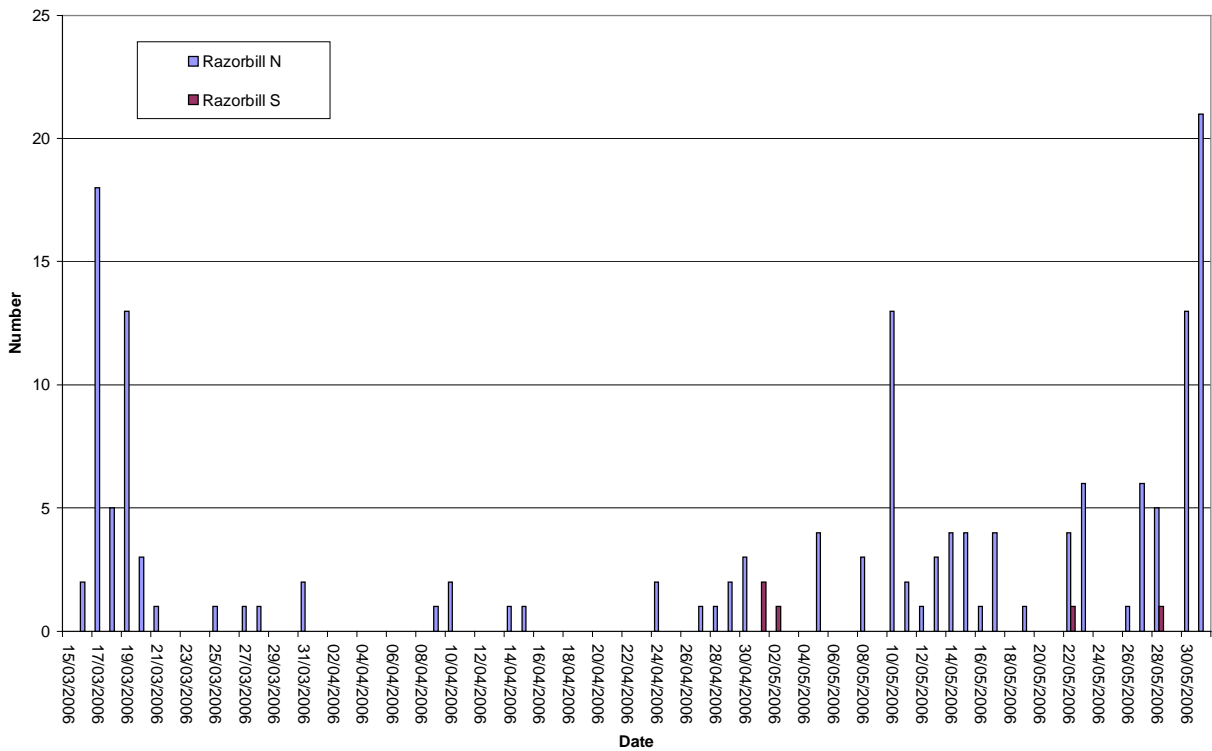




Razorbill *Uria torda*

Total North 157
 Total South 5
 Maximum N 21, 31 May
 Maximum S 2

A normal year by all accounts.

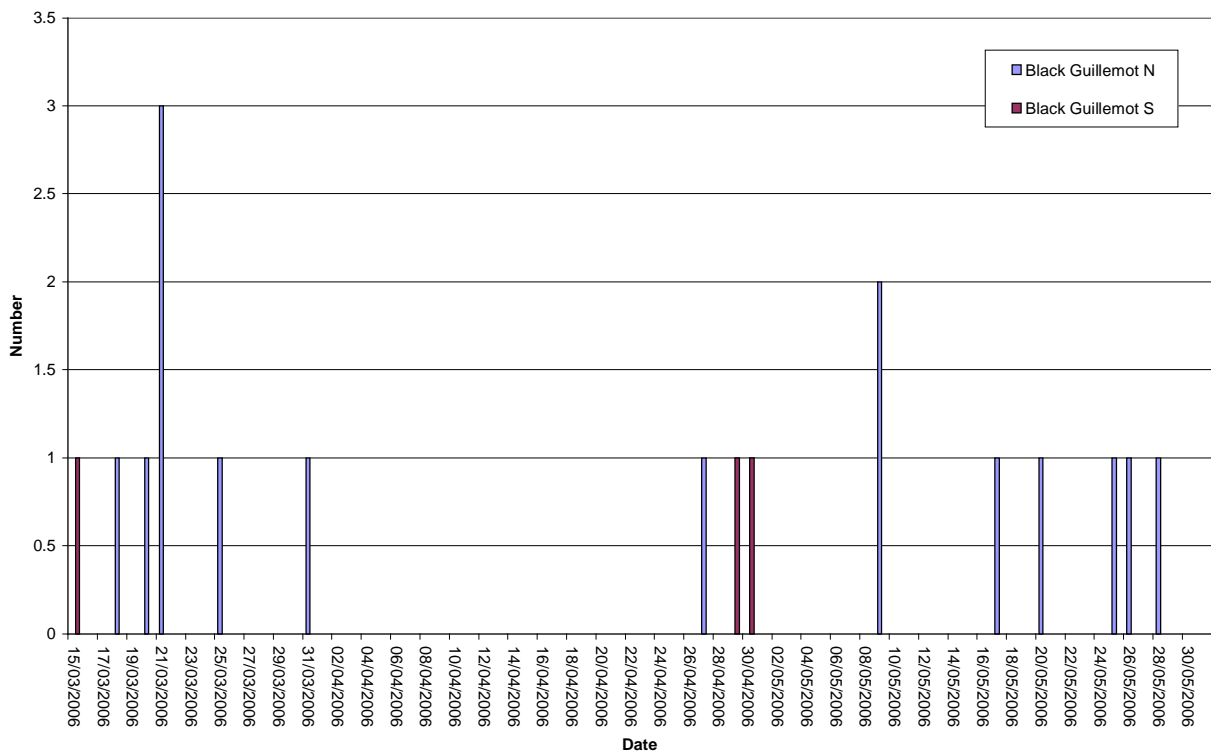




Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Total North	15
Total South	3
Maximum N	3
Maximum S	1

A normal season when compared to recent years (including the gap in records between late March and late April), however, an obvious decline in overall numbers since the early 1980's.

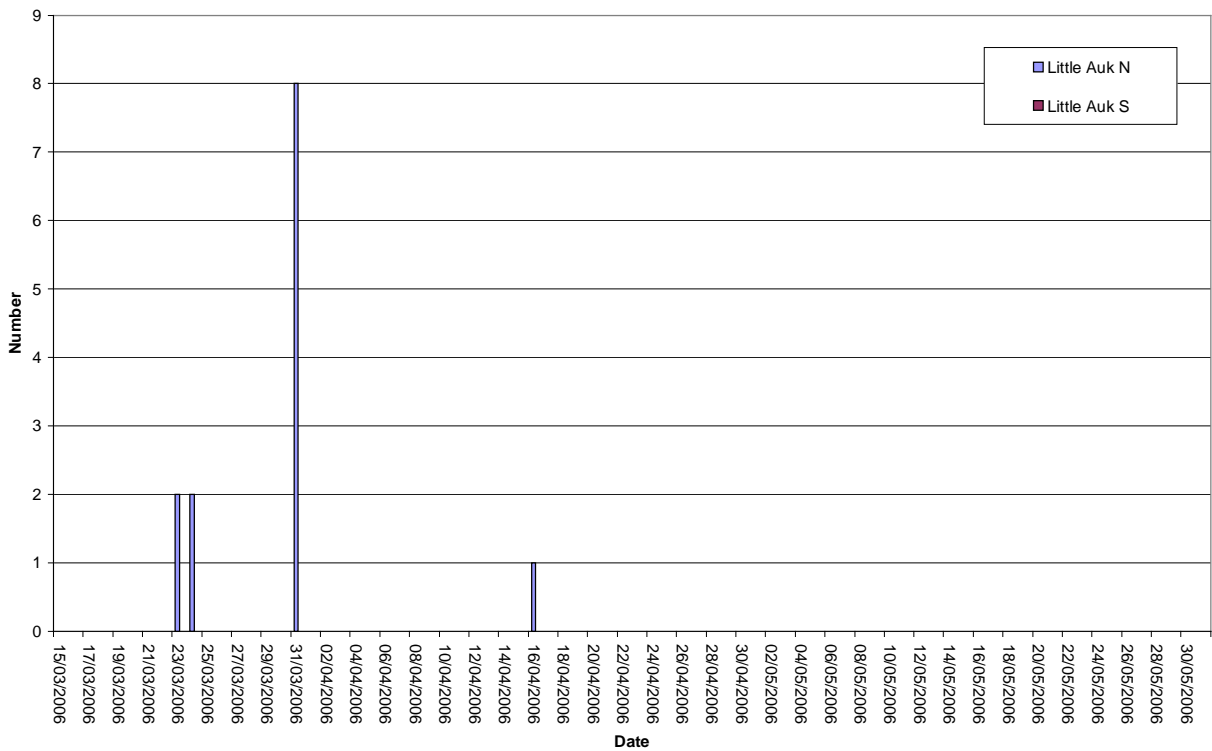




Little Auk *Alle alle*

Total North	13
Total South	0
Maximum N	8
Maximum S	0

A normal spring by all accounts.

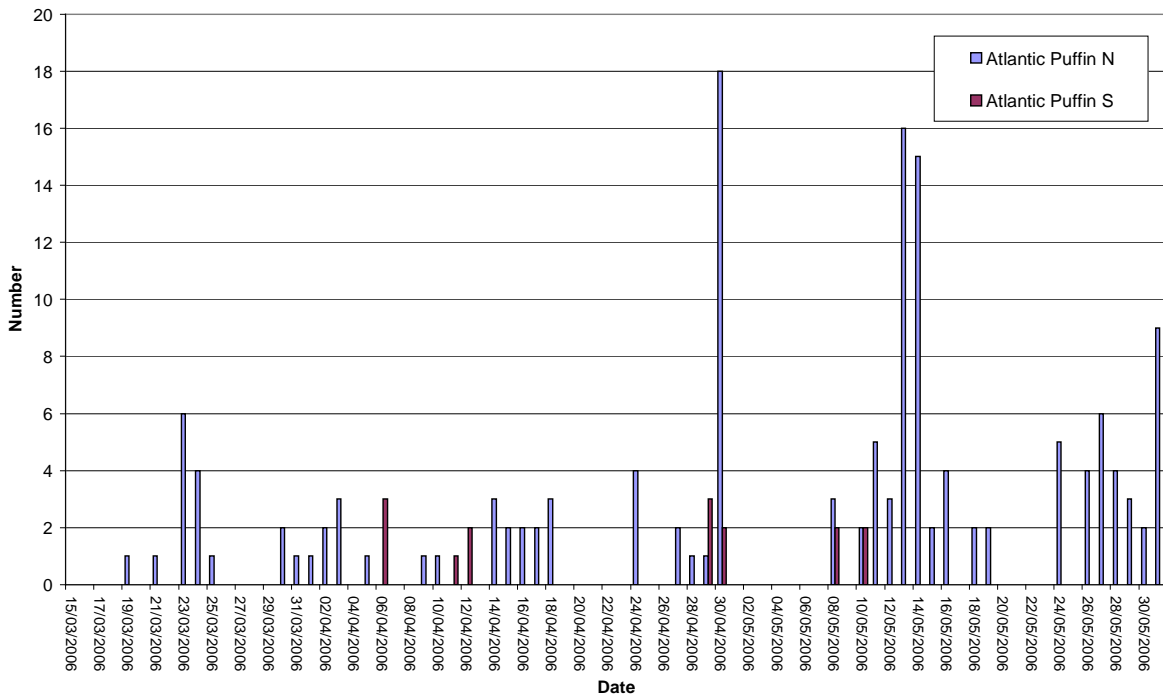




Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Total North	150
Total South	15
Maximum N	18, 30 April
Maximum S	3

Numbers rather lower than expected, higher numbers in May are normal.

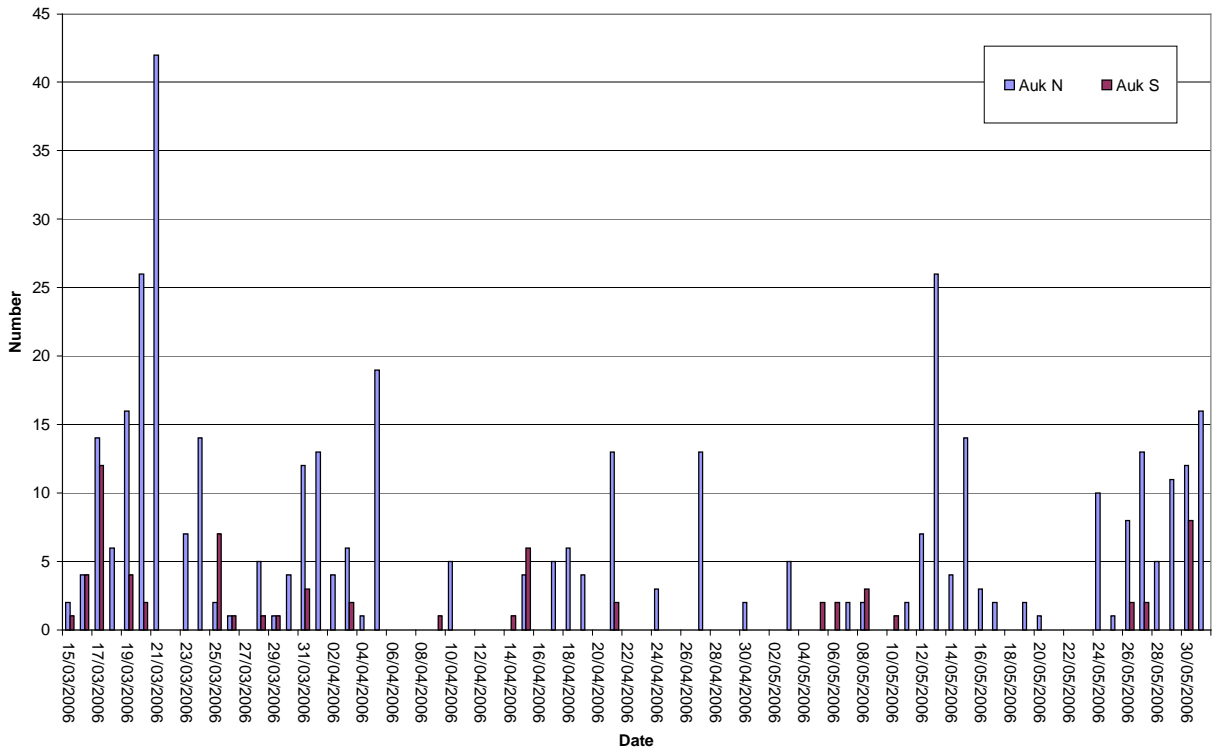




Auk sp.

Total North	400
Total South	68
Maximum N	42, 21 March
Maximum S	12

The vast majority of birds logged as unidentified auks were Common Guillemots and Razorbills, although some Atlantic Puffin and Little Auk may have been involved.





3. Other species noted at Skogsøy during spring 2006

Grey Heron	Common throughout the period, several breeding pairs
Whooper Swan	Up to 9 in mid March, very regular until late April
Greylag Goose	At least two pairs probably breeding in the area
Brent Goose	In addition to migrating birds a single flew in and landed 17 May.
Mallard	One or two pairs breeding at Skogsøy (one nest found)
Common Eider	Common on the sea throughout the period
Long-tailed Duck	Common / regular on the sea until late April, after which largely migrating birds seen
Common Scoter	Very few on the sea in 2006
Common Goldeneye	Common but gradually decreasing number in the bays until ca mid April.
Red-breasted Merganser	Common on the sea throughout with numbers gradually decreasing
White-tailed Eagle	1-4 noted regularly until end April, one 27 May.
Eurasian Marsh Harrier	One male 09 May
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	Two singles during the period
Common Kestrel	Six birds on four occasions between 06 April – 09 May
Merlin	Three singles, all in April
Peregrine	“Daily” until early April and on only two occasions thereafter
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Common breeder
	Flocks of up to 60 regular in second half of March, especially towards the end of the month.
Purple Sandpiper	Few noted in April and none in May
Eurasian Woodcock	Small numbers fairly regular between mid March and mid April
Whimbrel	Flocks of up to 10 resting on the islands during the main migration period
Eurasian Curlew	A few pairs breeding in the immediate vicinity
Common Redshank	A couple of pairs probably breeding in the area
Common Greenshank	At least two present 08-09 May
Common Sandpiper	1-3 regular in first half of May.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	A few pairs breeding close by
Herring Gull	Common breeder (20 pairs?)
Great Black-backed Gull	Common breeder (20 pairs?)
Common Woodpigeon	A few pairs breeding locally (from early April onwards)
Eurasian Collared Dove	One at Herdlevær 10 April (rare at this locality).
Short-eared Owl	One in off the sea 06 May
Common Swift	One in off the sea 07 May and two 18 May
Skylark	Five singles between late March and mid May
Sand Martin	A single past the lookout on 07 May
Barn Swallow	4-10 noted daily from 02 May onwards
House Martin	Two on three occasions in early May
Tree Pipit	One in off the sea on 08 May
Meadow Pipit	Common breeder, first recorded 16 March, daily from late March
Rock Pipit	Present throughout the period. A few pairs breeding in the area.
White / Pied wagtail	Regular from 10 April onwards. A male Pied Wagtail noted on a few occasions, obviously paired with a White Wagtail
Winter Wren	Common breeder. A maximum of up to 8 singing males heard at Skogsøy.
Hedge Accentor	Common breeder, up to five singing birds at Skogsøy from mid April
European Robin	Common breeder present throughout the period but with an increase in the number



	of singing males from early April.
Northern Wheatear	First observed 16 April, maximum of four logged.
Common Blackbird	Common breeder, flocks seen coming in off the sea in early April when up to 45 were seen.
Fieldfare	Regular from late March, a few pairs breeding at Herdlevær
Song Thrush	A few singing from mid April onwards
Redwing	First seen 31 March, daily from 08 April with 3-5 singing males thereafter
Common Whitethroat	At least one singing from 17 May onwards – much later than at other localities nearby.
Common Chiffchaff	One singing at Herdlevær 19 May
Willow warbler	Common from 30 April onwards. Minimum of 10 singing at Skogsøy
Goldcrest	Common throughout the period
Pied flycatcher	A male at Herdlevær 11 May
Crested Tit	Common breeder, although less obvious later in the period
Coal Tit	Common breeder
Great Tit	A few pairs present in the area
Black-billed Magpie	A few pairs present in the area
Eurasian Jackdaw	Two 26 May at Skogsøy / Herdlevær was an unusual date for this species
Hooded Crow	Common breeder (10++ pairs?)
Common Raven	One pair nesting near the lookout, other birds noted occasionally
Common Starling	Common from late March onwards. Max. 40,
House Sparrow	A few pairs at Herdlevær
Chaffinch	Several pairs breeding. Common from late March onwards.
Brambling	Two 18 April were the only observation
European Greenfinch	Several pairs breeding. Present throughout the period
Common Linnet	Common from 27 April onwards, several pairs breeding
Twite	1-4 seen on a few occasions during the first half of May
Lesser Redpoll	Common from 01 May onwards.
Snow Bunting	1-5 on nine occasions between mid March and mid April. Typical pattern of occurrence.



4. References

- Fugletrekket ved Skogsøy, Øygarden, våren 1982. *Kjetil Svenkerud, Knut Arne Hansen & Alf Tore Mjøs*, Krompen
- Rapport fra vårtrekket ved Fedje, våren 1983. *Kjetil Svenkerud & Alf Tore Mjøs*, Krompen
- Fair Isle Bird Observatory website:
<http://www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk/Sightings/2006/jan-mar06.htm>



View to the north, May 2006