

Firth of Clyde Eider News

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Introduction

Coverage in 2024 was again excellent, thanks to another great effort by the forty-one observers listed below.

I hope that you find these results interesting and thanks again for all your effort and support.

In summary, total numbers in 2024 were **below 4300, for the first time in 29 years**, giving an average of 5020 for the last 5 years. **The 2024 count represents a 78% decline since 1997.**

2025 will see the **30th year** of these eider counts across the Firth of Clyde.

Following this year's count, it would seem appropriate to review our results, reflect the changes recorded and consider future monitoring needs and options.

2024 counters - a special thanks to everybody who took part.

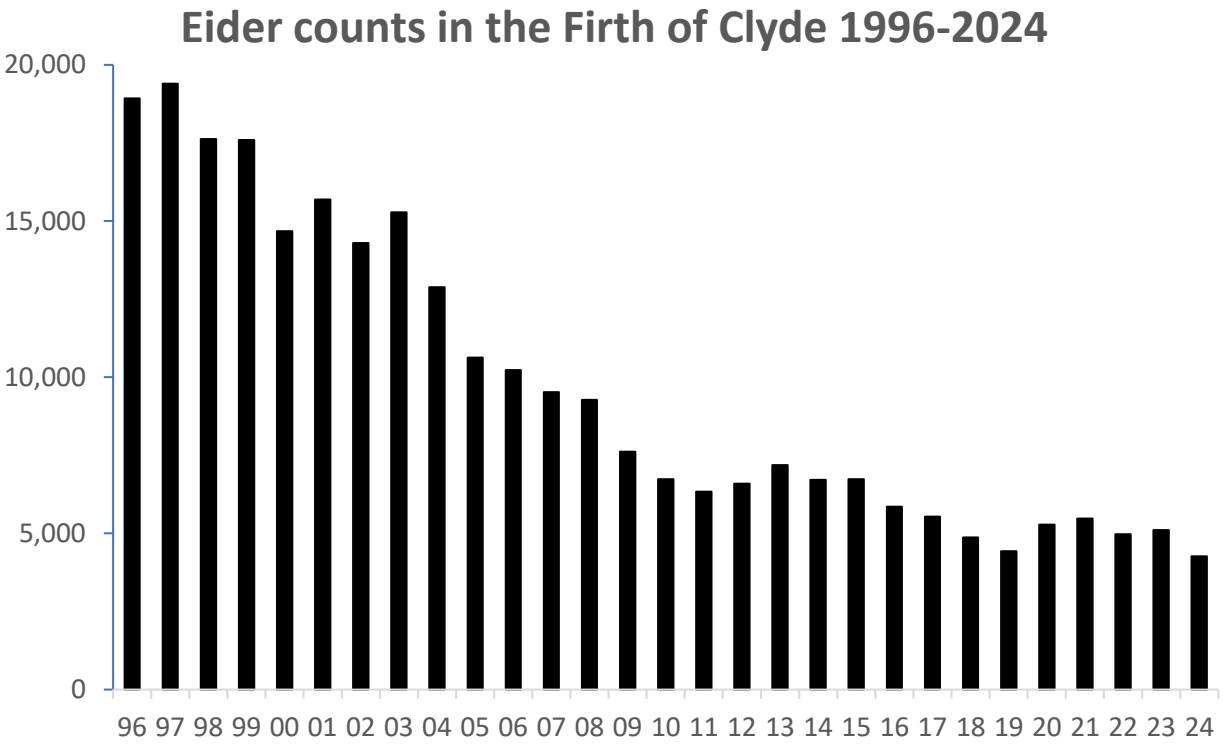
Robbie Adamson, Tony Baboolal, Tony Baker, Reuben Betley, Cathy Burnett, John Clark, Charlotte Clough, John Conner, Brian Couper, Rory Cowan, Matthew Dale, John and Jean Fitzpatrick, Jim Gibb, Corinna Goeckeritz, Steve Grover, Celia Holmes, Ian Hopkins, Simon Lawrence, Jenny MacHale, Lauren Mclean, Ann and Tom McNeish, Elanor and Andy McNamara, Kay Marais, Aine Purcell-Milton, Rab Morton, Alex Nicol, Ania Owsianka, David and Janet Palmar, Carys Reynolds, Allan Russell, Dave Smallwood, Chris Waltho, Luke Wake, Nigel and Kathy Wells, Mark Whitaker, Alan Wood.

Thanks also to Jim Cassels, who co-ordinated the 23 Arran counters, while in Australia!

Apologies for anyone inadvertently missed.

**Please note that the 2025 count will take place
during period 6th-30th September**

	<u>September count stretch</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<i>2020-24 mean</i>
		20	21	22	23	24	
1	Clyde Estuary (Gourock-Craigendoran)	263	273	722	146	465	374
2	Gare Loch (Craigendoran-Kilcreggan)	1176	1459	1409	1889	1214	1429
3	L Long/Goil (Kilcreggan-Strone Point)	939	837	504	320	711	662
4	Holy Loch to Toward Pt	233	423	318	110	140	245
5	Gourock-Largs	274	182	215	614	352	327
6	Bute & Kyles (+ L Ridden & L Striven)	56	268	61	187	52	125
7	Great Cumbrae	204	157	154	72	65	130
8	Loch Fyne	988	924	681	851	625	814
9	E Kintyre (Skipness-Southend)	86	93	72	67	53	74
10	Arran	75	45	39	22	22	41
11	Largs-Seamill	34	72	55	172	58	78
12	Seamill-Saltcoats	78	93	90	4	6	54
13	Irvine & Ayr Bays	337	188	275	257	247	261
14	Dunure-Girvan	230	173	155	253	42	171
15	Girvan-Ballantrae	4	4	4	4	3	4
16	Loch Ryan	306	281	219	140	212	232
	Total Firth of Clyde	5283	5472	4973	5108	4267	5020



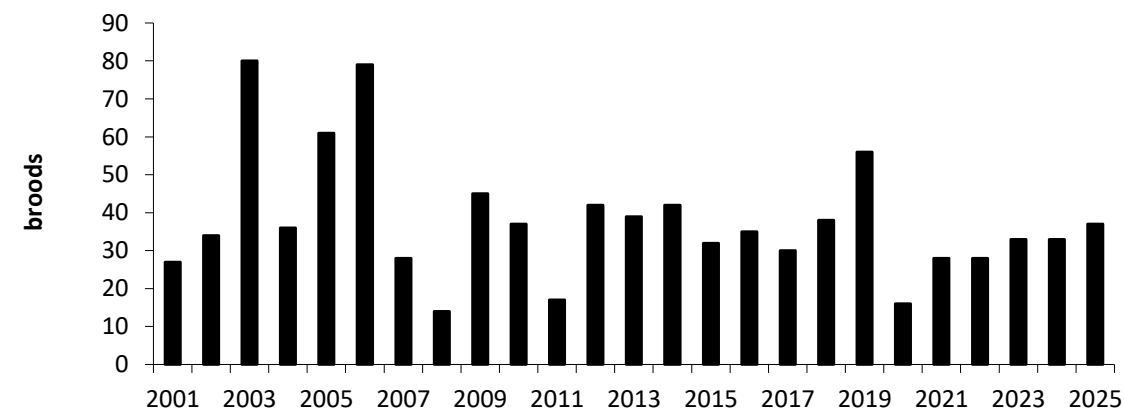
Breeding productivity in Gare Loch/Rosneath Peninsula in 2025

The survey in mid-July 2025 found 37 broods/crèches with a total of 82 ducklings.

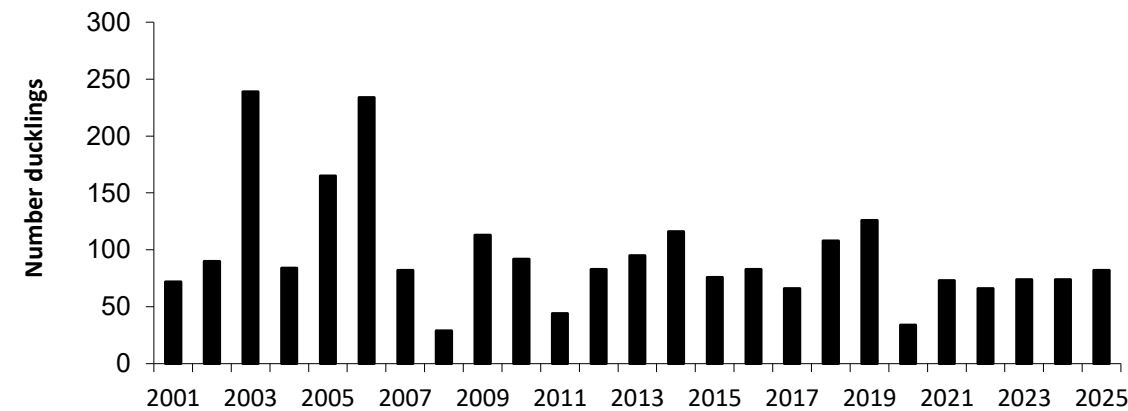
- 2024 - 33 broods/crèches with 74 ducklings
- 2023 - 33 broods/crèches with 74 ducklings
- 2022 - 28 broods/crèches with 66 ducklings
- 2021 - 28 broods/crèches with 73 ducklings

The 82 ducklings produced in 2025 was above the most recent 5-year average (73.8 in 2021-25) but below the 25-year average (96 in 2001-2024).

Broods Rhu-Coulport



Ducklings Rhu-Coulport



Future monitoring

Part of the review should consider the following:

- with fewer birds around there can be a sense of diminishing returns for observer effort, especially in those stretches that repeatedly record few or zero birds.
- we have an ageing observer network. Some long-standing observers are now in their eighties. Several others are no longer able to participate due to health/fitness reasons.
- increased use of boats. Ian Hopkins and colleagues have been counting Bute coast by boat for many years. Recently boats and kayaks have also been used around parts of Arran. Special thanks to COAST for their use of RV COAST Explorer in 2024. In 2025 Clyde SOC are planning to use a boat in parts of the Inner Firth and Loch Long.

David Palmar

We tragically lost David in December 2024.

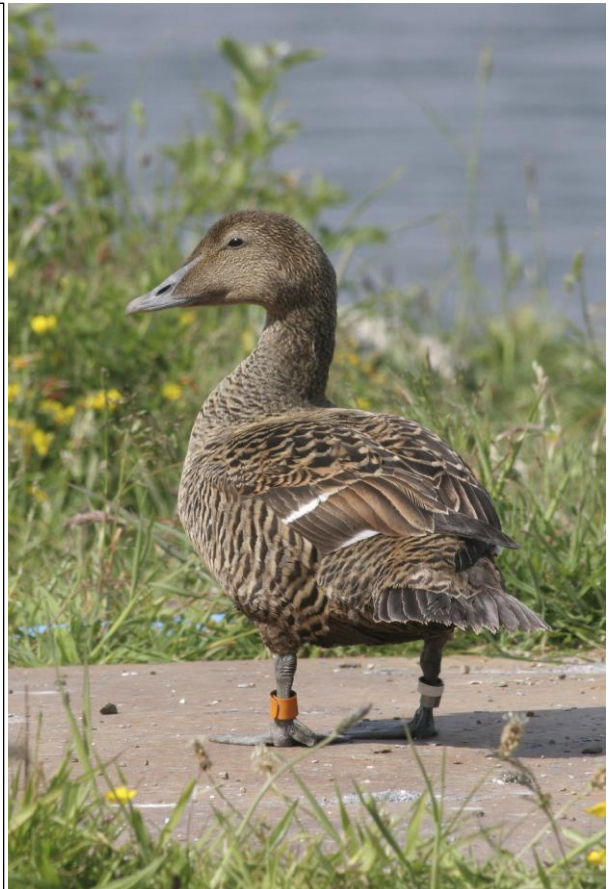
David and his wife Janet have faithfully counted Eider around Great Cumbrae for more than 20 years.

They have always been good supporters of this Eider project. David also helped with the ringing at Faslane and was happy for us to use his image (*right*) of a newly coloured-ringed bird at Faslane from 20 years ago.

David and Janet were also great helpers at the Pan-European Duck Symposium held at Millport in 2018.

There is a full obituary of David in the June 2025 edition of *Scottish Birds*, pages 147-149.

Photo by
David Palmar Photography
www.photoscot.co.uk



Please note that the September 2025 count will take place from the 6th to 30th.