

St Abb's Head National Nature Reserve

Seabird Report Summary for 2019

Whole Colony Counts

Species	Count Unit	2019 Total	Change on 2018	Comments
Shag	Apparently occupied nest (AON)	90	-5%	The lowest count on record. It represents 71% of the 10 year mean of 126 AON, and 41% of the 35 year mean of 222 AON. There has been an 81% decline since the highest count of 463 AON recorded in 1991.
Herring Gull	Apparently occupied nest (AON)	227	+8%	This represents 102% of the 10 year mean of 223 AON, and 70% of the 35 year mean of 324 AON. There has been a 71% decline since the highest count of 782 AON recorded in 1985.
Kittiwake	Apparently occupied nest (AON)	4,651	+43%	A marked increase on last year but still the eighth lowest count on record. It represents 115% of the 10 year mean of 4,046 AON, but just 50% of the 35 year mean of 9,268 AON. There has been a 76% decline since the highest count of 19,066 AON in 1989.
Fulmar	Apparently occupied site (AOS)	99	+29%	An increase on last year but still the fourth lowest count on record. It represents 83% of the 10 year mean of 119 AOS, and just 43% of the 35 year mean of 230 AOS. There has been a 75% decline since the highest count of 393 AOS recorded in 1994.
Gannet	Apparently occupied nest (AON)	11	+1100%	The largest number of AONs to date, but no eggs or chicks this year.

Productivity

Species	Mean productivity in 2019 (chicks fledged/active nest)	Change on 2018	Comments
Kittiwake	0.86	+4%	This represents 112% of the 10 year mean of 0.77 and 128% of the 33 year mean of 0.67 chicks fledged per active nest.
Shag	0.91	-52%	A marked decrease on last year and the eighth lowest count on record. This represents 59% of the 10 year mean of 1.54 and 69% of the 30 year mean of 1.31 chicks fledged per active nest.

Counts at Study Plots

Species	Count Unit	Sum of plot means in 2019	Change on 2018	Comments
Guillemot	Individuals	1,801	+15%	This represents 117% of the 10 year mean of 1537 and 121% of the 36 year mean of 1484.
Razorbill	Individuals	137	-13%	This represents 105% of the 10 year mean of 130 and 97% of the 36 year mean of 141.

Whole colony counts were carried out by Liza Cole, Ciaran Hatsell and Ceris Aston. Shag productivity by Ciaran Hatsell, kittiwake productivity by Liza Cole. Counts at guillemot and razorbill plots were carried out by Ceris Aston.

Species Accounts

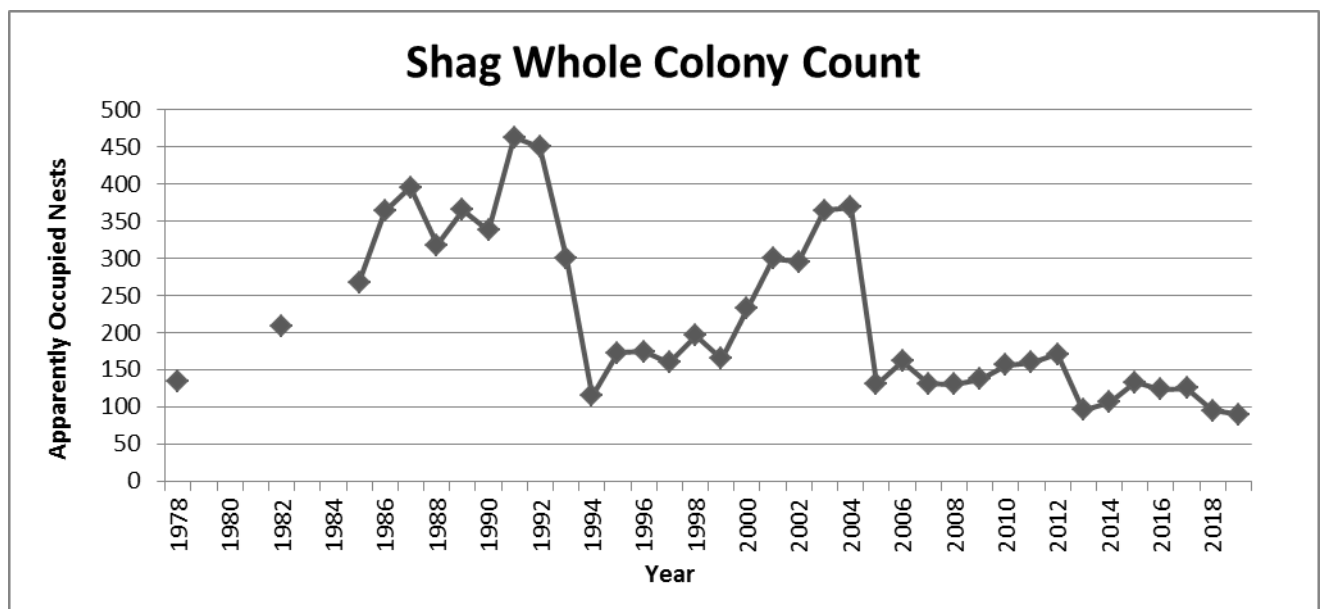
Shag

Whole Colony Count

A count of apparently occupied nests (AON ie a well-built nest capable of holding eggs with at least one bird in attendance) was carried out on 3rd and 6th June. Blind spots were counted from a boat on 5th June.

Results

90 Apparently Occupied Nests (AON), a 5% decrease on 2018.



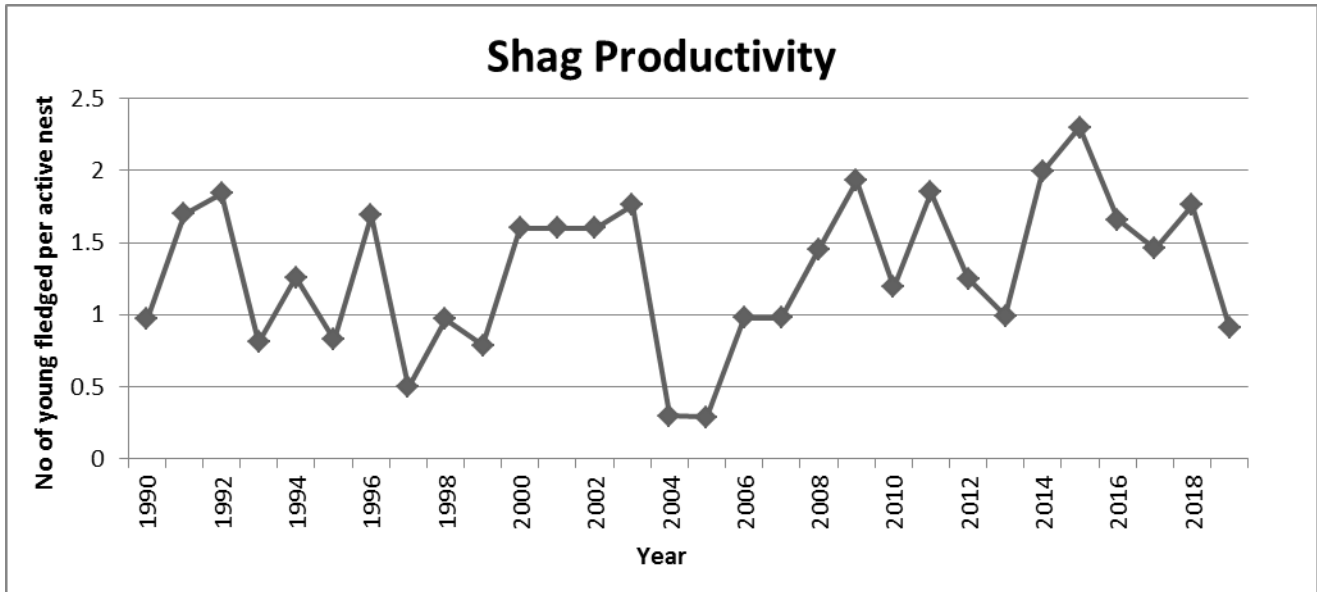
Breeding Success

An assessment of Shag breeding success was carried out using methods described in the 1990 report and following recommendations in the Seabird Monitoring Handbook. Twenty visits were made to the 4 monitoring plots between the 28th March and 24th August. Nests were individually marked on laminated photos of the monitoring plots and the progress of each nest was recorded up to fledging.

Results

A total of 44 active nests were mapped on the plots and 37 chicks successfully fledged. The breeding success, expressed as the mean of the individual plot figures, was 0.91 young fledged per active nest; a decrease of 52% on 2018.

The productivity at the separate plots was as follows: West Hurker – 1.00; Downie’s Goats – 0.47; Foul Bay – 1.18; White Heugh – 1.00.



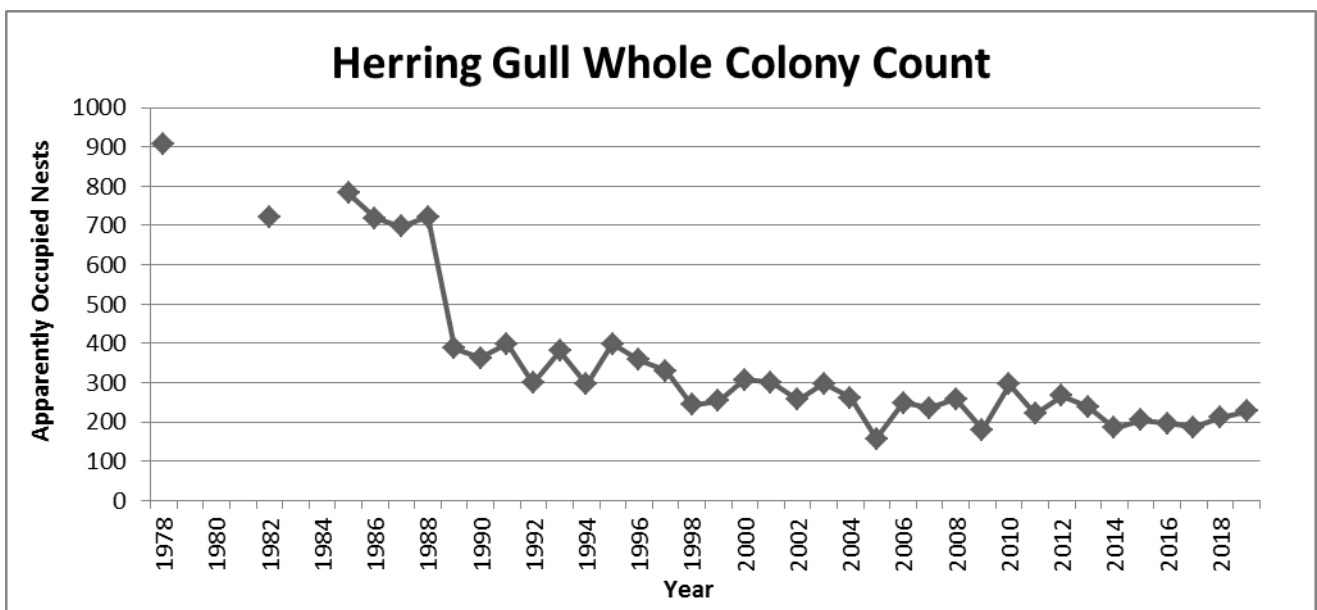
Herring Gull

Whole Colony Count

A whole colony count of apparently occupied nests (AON) was carried out on 3rd and 6th June. Blind spots were counted from a boat on 5th June.

Results

227 AON, 8% increase on 2018.



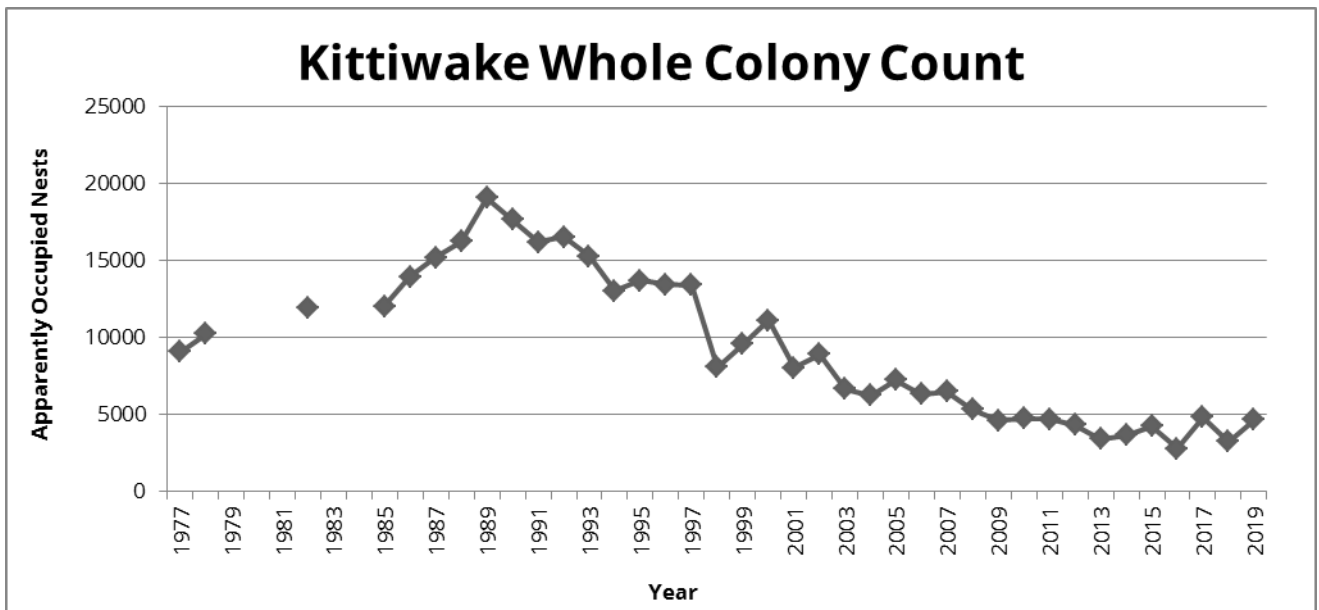
Kittiwake

Whole Colony Count

A count of apparently occupied nests (AONs) was carried out on 16th, 18th, 21st and 26th June. Blind spots were counted from a boat on 20th June.

Results

4.651 AON, 43% increase on 2018.



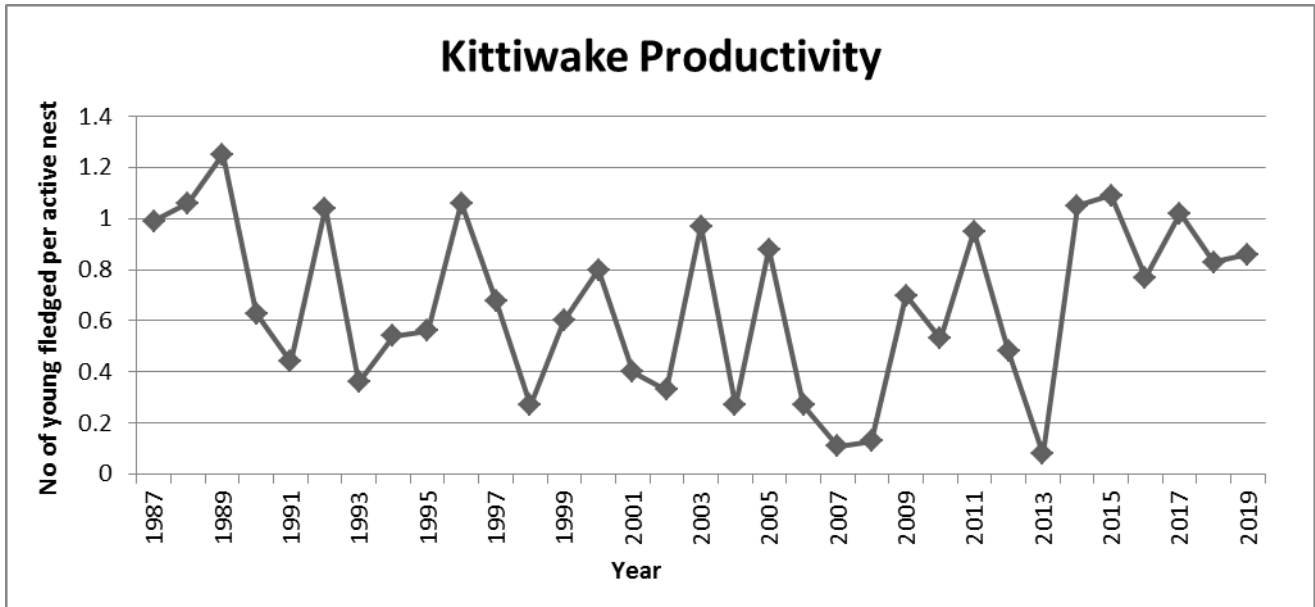
Breeding Success

An assessment of breeding success was carried out using methods described in the 1995 report following recommendations from the Seabird Monitoring Handbook. Eleven visits were made to the 3 monitoring plots between the 7th June and the 18th August. Nests were individually marked on laminated photos of the monitoring plots and the progress of each nest was recorded up to fledging.

Results

A total of 179 active nests were mapped on the plots and 155 chicks successfully fledged. The breeding success, expressed as the mean of individual plot figures, was 0.86 young fledged per AON; an increase of 4% on 2018.

The productivity at the separate plots was as follows: Hope's Heugh – 0.97 Headland Heugh – 0.85; Cleaver Gully – 0.77.



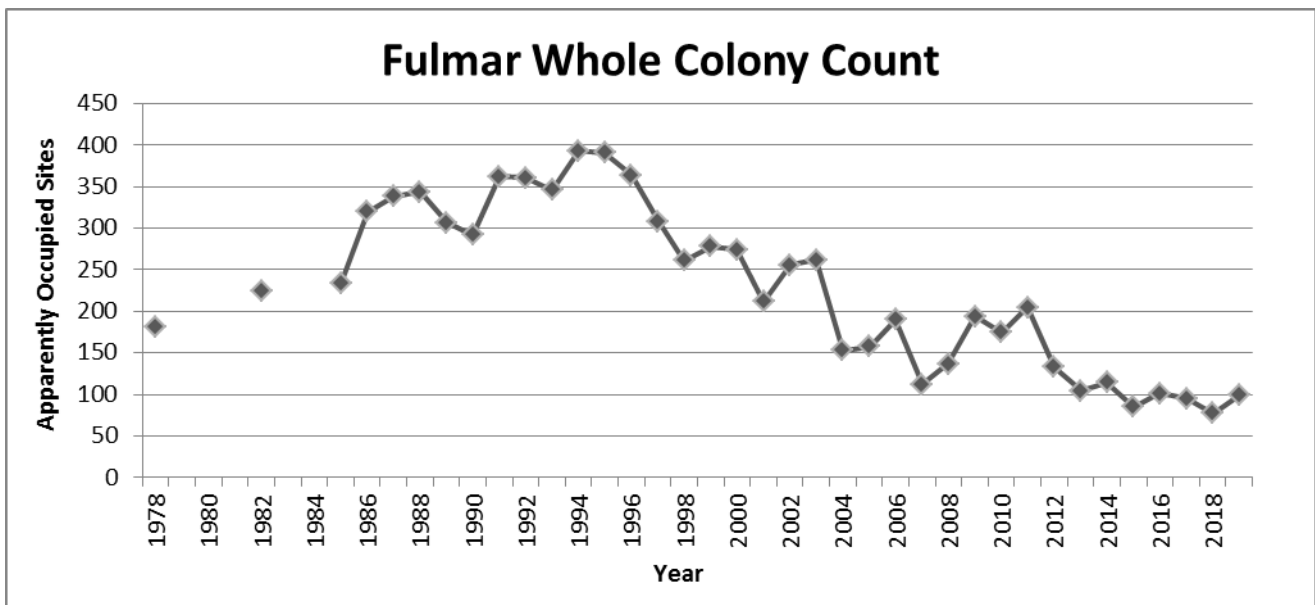
Fulmar

Whole colony count

A count of apparently occupied sites (AOS ie a site with a bird sitting tightly on a reasonably horizontal area judged large enough to hold an egg) was carried out from land on 16th, 18th, 21st and 26th June. Blind spots were counted from a boat on 20th June.

Results

99 AOS were counted, an increase of 29% on the 2018.



Breeding Success

No productivity monitoring done.

Gannet

This year there were 11 nests built on Foul Carr but no eggs or chicks sighted. The number of birds prospecting the area continues to increase, with birds settling on Cleaver Rock and Float Carr as well as Foul Carr.

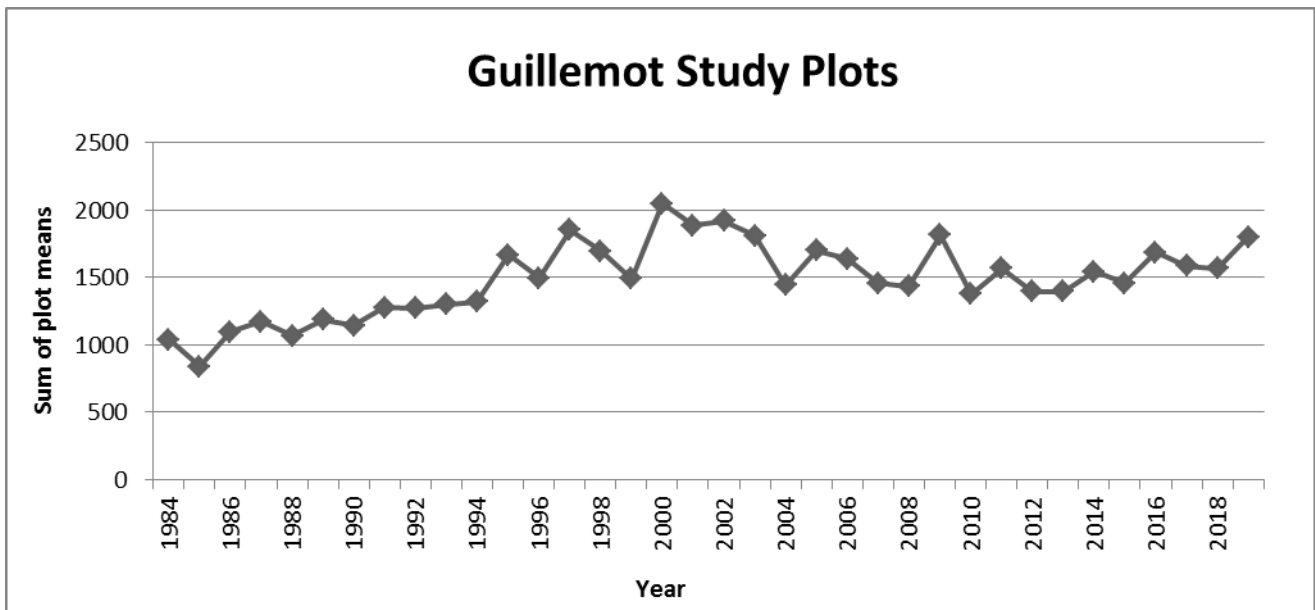
Guillemot

Counts at Study Plots

Ten counts of individual birds on ledges were carried out at each of the five plots between 1st & 20th June.

Results

The mean number of individuals on study plots in first three weeks of June was 1,801, a 15% increase on 2018.



Breeding success

No productivity monitoring done.

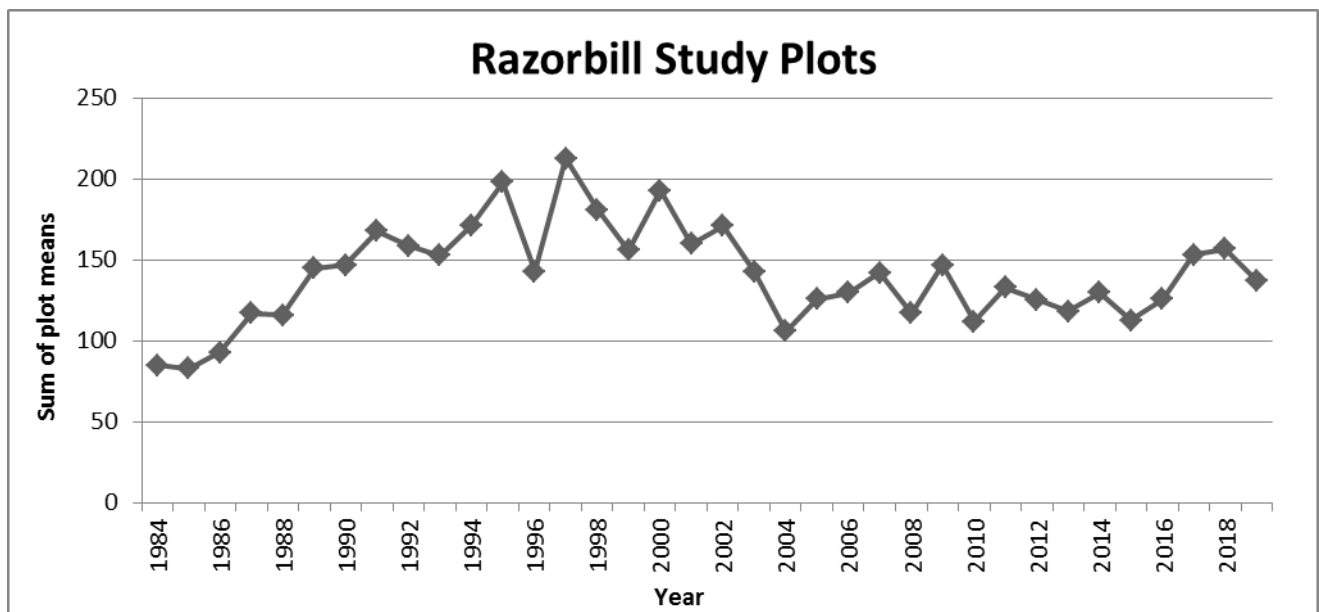
Razorbill

Counts at Study Plots

Ten counts of individual birds on ledges were carried out at each of the five plots between 1st & 20th June (as for the guillemots).

Results

The mean number of individuals on study plots in first three weeks of June is 137, a 13% decrease on 2018.



Breeding success

No productivity monitoring done.

Puffin

No puffins were seen ashore this year, at any point in the season.

Puffin Whole Colony Count

