

Movements of the male bar-tailed godwit in 2009

March 2009

On 6th, it was encouraging to get the first signals today and to find that the godwit was on Whiteness Sands - a favourite low tide feeding area for this species. On 11th, the godwit was at Whiteness Sands and on 15th and 19th was in Ardersier Bay. On 23rd, he was at Castle Stuart and offshore in the Firth. On 27th, he was at Ardersier Bay at 1748 GMT (all times from here on are in GMT), at Castle Stuart point at 2043 and had flown to Whiteness by 2138.



Locations in March 2009

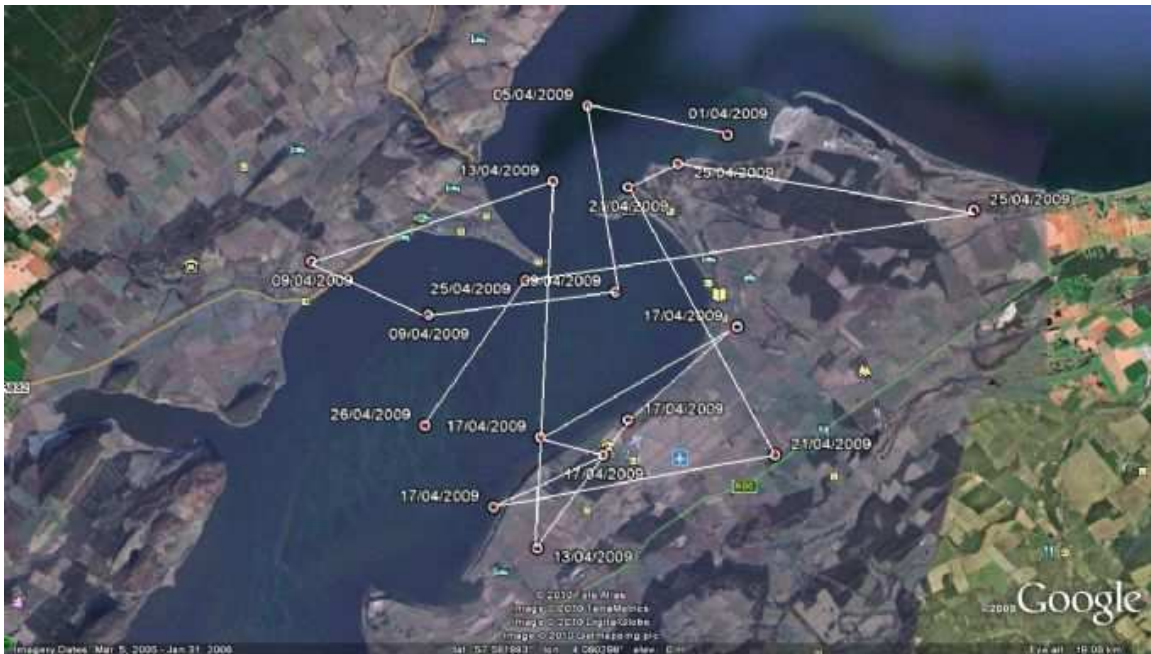
April 2009

On 1st at Whiteness Sands and on 5th at outer edge of Whiteness Sands. He was at Ardersier Bay and then across the firth in the Avoch area. On the 13th, there was a big scatter of low quality signals that he was almost certainly off Fort George at 0916 and at Castle Stuart at 1323. On the 17th, he was on the Dalcross shore, then to the Ardersier roost and then back to Dalcross. On the 21st, he started at Castle Stuart, and then was 1 km SE of Inverness airport at 1740 and at 1800 on the north beach at Fort George. On 25th April, he was on Whiteness Sands and then at 2027 in the Carse of Ardersier. Two hours later he

was at Chanonry Point and then flew across the firth to Dalcross shore at 0126 on 26th April.

On the 30th, he was on Ardersier beach at 0143, over at the plantations near Whiteness at 0324. At 0507 he was over the land again, probably on the way back from Nairn, and then off Ardersier at 0659. See the following map.

Bar-tailed godwit (75381) is still living in the Inner Moray Firth and it does not look as though it is going to migrate to the Arctic. In most summers, small numbers of non-breeding godwits occur in the Moray Firth.



Locations in April 2009

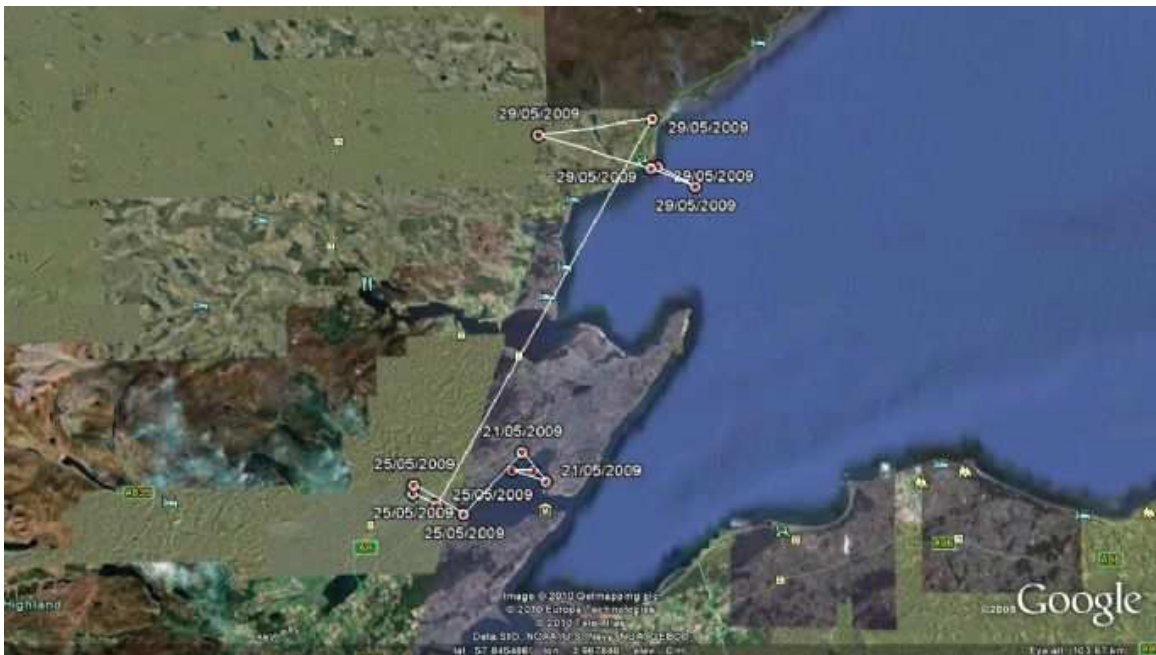
May 2009

On 4th May, he was over the Black Isle at 0745, at the high tide roost at Ardersier at 0752 and off Ardersier at 0930. On the 8th, he was off Nairn at 1206, inland near Cantray at 1251 and at Ardersier Bay at 1337 (high water was at 1141). On the 12th, he was at the Ardersier roost at 1613 and offshore there at 1744. On 16th May, he was at Ardersier at 1939, to the north of Whiteness at 2233 and in Nigg Bay at 2256. This was the first time that we recorded him in the Cromarty Firth. On the 21st, he was at three locations in Nigg Bay, and on the 25th was at Udale Bay at 0543. At 0743 and 0845, he was over or just north of Alness on the north shore of the Cromarty Firth (were these false starts to fly to the Dornoch Firth?), as at 1041 he was back over the Firth. By the 29th, he had flown north in the intervening period, and at 0938 was at Loth, north of Brora in

Sutherland. At 0942 the location was near Loch Horn 10 km inland from Brora. From 1115 to 1458, 4 locations were on the south beach at Brora (a well used wader roost) or offshore (3.5 and 5.5 km out to sea).



Locations early May



Locations late May

June 2009

On 2nd June there were five Class 0 locations from North Sutherland, in the Melvich and Reay area, and then on the 6th he had flown 120 km south and was in Findhorn Bay at 2020. He was on the north beach at Findhorn at 2129, back in the bay at 2159 and at 2306 and 2338 was flying north over the Moray Firth, heading for Sutherland. He was at Loth Point at 0428 on 11th. Ringing studies over many years by the Highland Ringing Group have shown that bar-tailed godwits are very mobile throughout the whole of the Moray Firth. On the 23rd, locations between 0708 and 1954 were all on the south side of Loth point. On 27th June, he was at Loth point between 2126 and 2320, and then moved to Brora point.

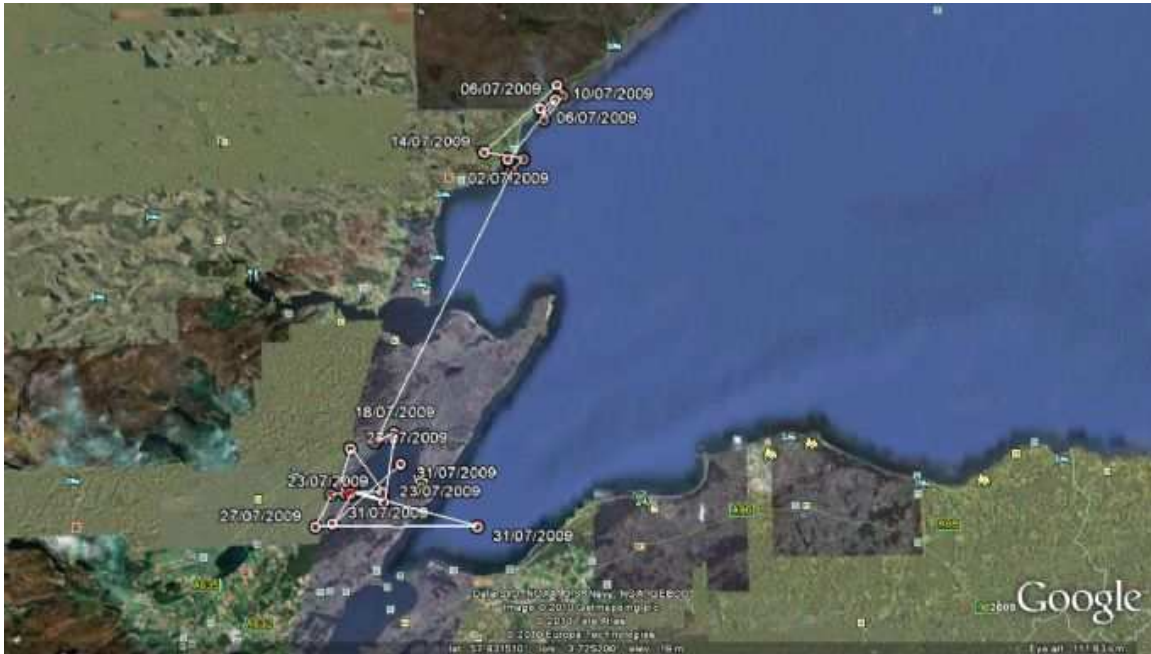


Locations in June 2009

July 2009

On the 2nd July, he was at the roost on the south beach at Brora and on the 6th was at Brora at 0958, then at Loth point at 1140 and back at Brora on the north beach at 1318. On the 10th, he was around Loth and on the 14th was around Brora, including flights out to sea and inland of Brora. On 15th July, Dean MacAskill identified it at the Brora river mouth. By the 18th July, he had moved south because the next transmission on 18th July showed that it had returned to the Cromarty Firth. It was at Babaraville at 2149, Kilmuir at 2227 and north Nigg Bay. On the 23rd, it was in Udale Bay between 0557 and 0726. On the 27th, it was mobile in the Udale Bay area, being near Invergordon at 0805 and over the

Black Isle at 12 51. On the 31st of July, it appeared to be crossing from Nairn to the Cromarty Firth at 1305, in Udale Bay at 1358 and off Nigg yard at 1540.



Locations in July 2009

August 2009

On the 4th, it was highly mobile in the Cromarty Firth, north of Invergordon at 1817, at Udale Bay at 1837, in Nigg Bay 2137-2154, and inland north of the bay at 2318. During the early hours of the 9th, it was in Nigg Bay. On the 13th, it was at Delny at 0634, of Invergordon at 0645, in Udale Bay at 0724, over the top of the Black Isle at 0804 and back in eastern end of Udale Bay at 0905 and 0945. On the 17th it was in Udale Bay but on the 21st, it was in Inver creek, in the Dornoch Firth, at 1626 to 1807, and then off the Morrish Mor at 1947. On the 25th, it was in the inner Dornoch Firth at 2206 and then on the inside of Dornoch point at 2044. It then returned to the Cromarty Firth and was in Udale Bay between 0155 and 0540 on the 30th August.



Locations in August 2009

September 2009

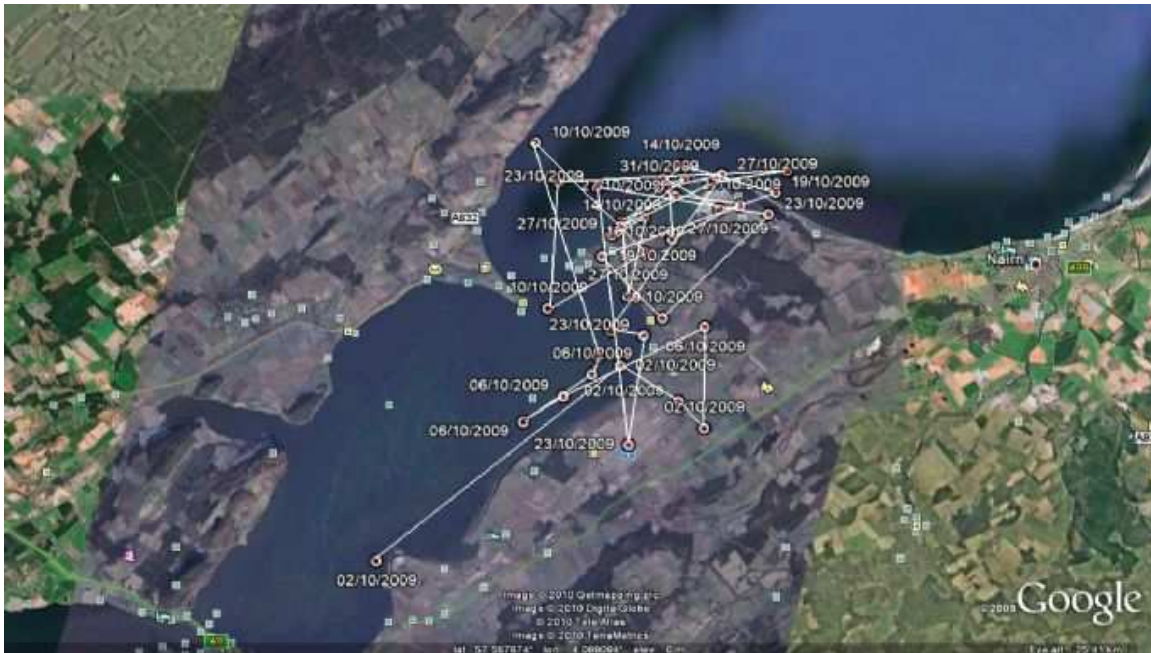
On 3rd, it was on the sands at Whiteness (0446-0859) and feeding in favourite godwit areas on low tide sand flats - first time back at Whiteness since the spring. On 7th, it was back at Ardersier roost, where it was ringed in March and also on 11th at 1313 to 1542, and then inland probably flying to Whiteness at 1721. On 19th, it was off the west beach at Nairn at 1225 and at Carse of Ardersier at 0147; this is a godwit roost at very high tides, and high water was at 0048 with a 5.1 m tide. On the 24th, it was again at the Carse of Ardersier roost at 0244, high water at 0333, and then at the edge of the Whiteness spit at 0242 and then the following the tide out at Whiteness Sands. On the 28th it was at the west end of Nairn Bar at 0524, inside the bar at 0725 and off Nairn at 0905.



Locations in September 2009

October 2009

On the 2nd, it was near Alturlie point at 0906, at the Ardersier roost at 1050 and then at 1125 and 1301 was on fields east of the airport. It suggests that godwit sometimes roost inland, probably with curlews. On 6th, he was in the Ardersier area and later on the Dalcross shore. On the 10th, it was at Ardersier Bay , off Chanonry Point towards the Black Isle at 1833. On the 14th, it was on the east of Whiteness Head 2028, on the end of Whiteness Head at 2102, with high water at 2049, and then at 2241 was following the tide out on Whiteness Sands. On the 19th, it was on Whiteness Head at 0321, at Fort George at 0503 and at Ardersier at 0540. On the 23rd it was at the Carse of Ardersier at 0543, on Whiteness Sands at 0600, over Inverness airport at 0724 and at the Ardersier roost at 1058. on the 27th it was at whiteness 1107 to 1640, except for 1528 when it was at the shore between Ardersier and Fort George. On the 31st, it was feeding on Whiteness Sands 1914 to 1938 (3 hours before high water) and then over the yard at 2107.



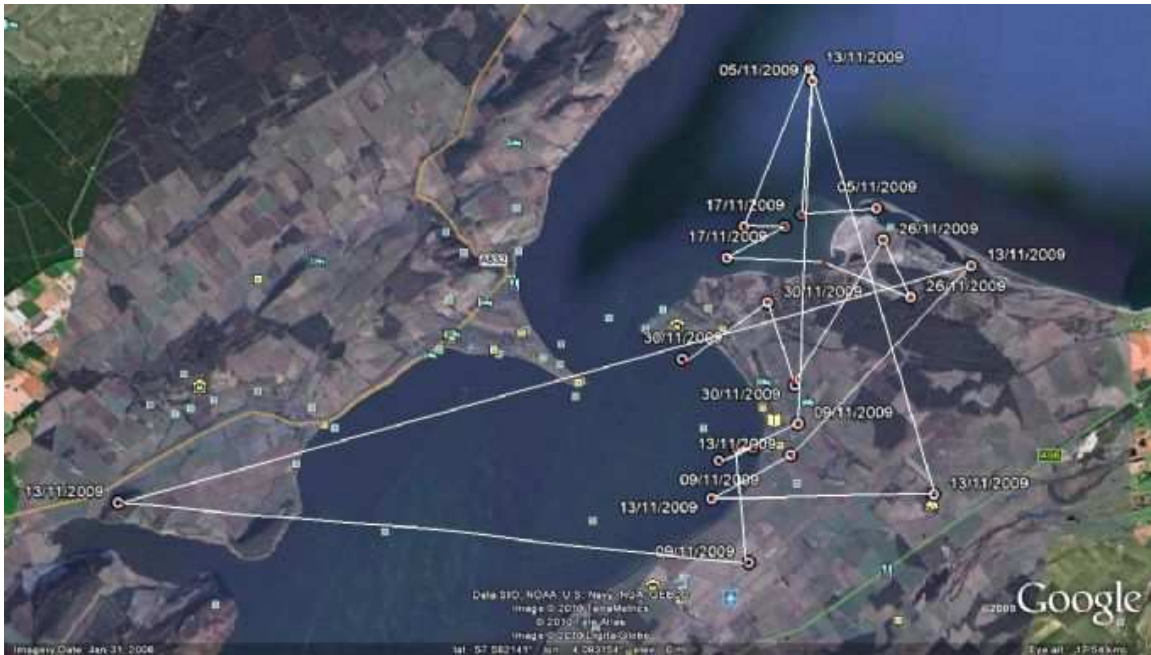
Locations in October 2009

November 2009

On the 5th, it was at the roost inside the end of whiteness head at 0217 and then at 0344 out on the tidal flats. On the 9th, it was at Ardersier bay 0717 to 1123, and over at the airport at 1137. On the 13th, it was in Munloch Bay at 1156, at the Carse of Ardersier at 1335, at Ardersier roost 1354 to 1412, inland at Gollanfield at 1640 and finally off Whiteness Head at 1711.

On the next day in the afternoon, I visited a Whiteness Sands and walked out from the yard across the tidal flats to search for godwit 75381. I found 19 bar-tailed godwits, and then to the north a small group of four godwits were feeding in a low water channel and I could see a transmitter on one of them. This individual was keeping close to a female, which was slightly larger, and they moved around as though paired. The satellite tagged bird behaved in every way similar to the other godwits, while it was feeding, walking and flying. The transmitter was sitting well in the centre of the back with the aerial straight, and there was no sign that it was causing any stress. The base of their bill was quite orange, indicating the bird in good condition.

On 17th, it was feeding at Whiteness Sands 0911 - 2110 and the only signal on the 22nd was from the same area at 0222. On the 26th it was still in the same area in the morning and on the 30th was near Ardersier at 1417, over the Fort George army ranges at 1440 and between Fort George and Ardersier at 1702.



Locations in November 2009

December 2009

On 13th December, good quality signals showed the godwit roosting on the Carse of Ardersier. On the 26th, it was on Whiteness Sands at 0638, on the shore line at 0651 and one km off Ardersier at 1111. The weather had been very cold for a week and some of the tidal areas closest to the coast had started to freeze over but godwits should not be so affected because they feed at the outer tide lines. On the 30th, it was inland from Ardersier at 1223, then flew over the north east end of the airport. At 1252, it was in the Ardersier roost, 1400 halfway across the firth to Chanony Point and then at 1433 was at Whiteness.



Locations in December 2009

January 2010

On 3rd January, it was on the inside beach at Fort George, the weather was very cold. On 12th January, it was feeding on the outer part of Whiteness Sands 0642 - 0820, at Ardersier at 0956 and then flying over the plantations towards Nairn at 1114. On the 16th, it was on the beach south west of the Ardersier roost at 1421. On the 20th, it was on the north side of Fort George 2000 and on the south side of 2119 and 2140, and at 2300 was out near the Riff Bank. On the 25th, it was over the army ranges at over 0432 and then out on Whiteness Sands at low tide and at 0509 was at the lowest tide mark. On the 29th, it was between Whiteness and Ardersier at 0813, at the Ardersier roost 0818 - 1130, and inland near Gollanfield at 1204.



Locations in January 2010

February 2010

On the 2nd February, he was at Ardersier beach at 1330, north east of the airport at 1344, on the Dalcross shore at 1629 and near Fort George at 1807. On 6th February, he was over land east of Fort George at 1813, roosting on the beach at the Fort George Army ranges 1821 - 1910, and then on Whiteness Sands 2000 - 2229, being furthest out at 2303 at the tide age. On the 11th February, he was at the outer edge of Whiteness Sands at 0214, and at 0310 - 0452 he was at Fort George and along the inner beach. On the 15th, he was on the shoreline west of the range at 0455, at 0550 was on the north side of Fort George and at 0625 on the south side. At zero 819 he was on the shore west of the Ardersier roost and then at 0912 had moved back close to Fort George and was still there at 1128.

On 19th February, at high tide there was a roost of 150 bar-tailed godwits on the Ardersier beach, but we did not identify 75381 in the flock. The Highland Ringing Group carried out high tide cannon netting in the afternoon, but due to the mobile nature of godwits less than 10 godwits were present with oystercatchers, turnstones and dunlin, when the net was fired. We caught 4 godwits, two adult males and two juvenile females; the heaviest female was satellite tagged. When the locations came in, it showed that 75381 was at the west end of Whiteness Sands at 1232, over the Army Ranges at 1309, out near Chanonry golf course at 1325 and just south of Fort George camp at 1410. On 23rd February, it was on the south beach east of Fort George at 1145 and on the north beach east of Fort George at 1423. This was the last signal received from this transmitter.



Locations in February 2010