

Brent goose (Branta bernicla)

Identification

L: 16–20 cm/S: 110–120 cm

Small goose with a black head and breast, black neck with a white streak. Bill and legs are black. The under-tail is white with dark brown wings. Pale flanks streaked with brown. The body can be darker or paler depending on the form (pale-bellied, darkbellied or black).



Distribution

Population



Why this species?

- The brent goose is the most northernly breeder out of all geese.
- Beautiful and easy to observe
- Distinctive and pleasant "snoring" call

Fun facts

It is the smallest goose to reproduce in Greenland, Siberia, Iceland or Svalbard. It has the shortest tail of any geese.

In the brent goose's skull, there is a gland that takes salt out of their blood and secretes it through their nostrils. This allows them to eat salty marsh plants and green sea algae.

The migration of the arctic Canadian brent to Europe is the longest of any north Atlantic goose.

There are three different populations of the brent goose, all high-arctic breeders, which can be identified by slightly different colorings. The pale-bellied brent breeds in N Greenland, NE Canada, Svalbard and Franz Josef Land. It winters in the North sea and the US east coast, passing through Iceland.

The dark-bellied brent breeds in central and W Siberia, and winters in NW Europe. The black brent breeds in NW Canada, Alaska

and E Siberia and winters on the US west coast and in Japan.

More than 920,000 (2000s) but trend unknown