

Terns are back after failure to breed last year

Hundreds of terns are nesting on one of Scotland's most important seabird islands – after failing to breed last year.

Staff on the Isle of May were baffled last year when the Arctic and Common Terns failed to breed for the first time in decades.

Despite fears of a repeat, there are now over 200 pairs nesting on the island in the outer Firth of Forth, which is a NatureScot reserve.

David Steel, NatureScot's reserve manager, said: "This very welcome sight and sound is brilliant news for the island and the conservation management we have put in place to help the terns nest."

Each spring, the Isle of May becomes home to up to 200,000 birds including terns, puffins, guillemots, razorbills, shags, kittiwakes, fulmars, oystercatchers, gulls and eider ducks.

Arctic Terns make their nests in small depressions in the ground. Pairs lay clutches of 2-3 eggs, which once hatched take just 21-24 days to fledge.

The birds start to depart the island from early August and begin one of the world's most incredible journeys as they move to the Antarctic for the winter.

Mr Steel warned visitors to wear a hat as the birds can be

aggressive and swoop down on those who come close to their nests.