

Argyll Bird Report

Volume 17 (2001)

with Systematic List for the year

2000





Cover Picture

LESSER YELLOWLEGS

Ulva Lagoons (Loch Sween), October 2000

(see p.63)

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The Seventeenth ARGYLL BIRD REPORT

**With Systematic List for the year
2000**

Edited by
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Assisted by
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Systematic List by
Paul Daw

**Published by the
Argyll Bird Club**
(Scottish Charity Number SC008782)

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ABOUT THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB

The Argyll Bird Club was formed in 1985. Its main purpose is to play an active part in the promotion of ornithology in Argyll. It is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a charity in Scotland.

The Club holds two one-day meetings each year, in spring and autumn. The venue of the spring meeting is rotated between different towns, including Dunoon, Oban, Lochgilphead and Tarbert. The autumn meeting and AGM are held in a conveniently central location, usually Lochgilphead or Inveraray.

The Club organises field trips for members. It also publishes the annual *Argyll Bird Report* and a quarterly members' newsletter *The Eider*, which includes details of club activities, reports from meetings and field trips, and articles by members and others.

Each year the subscription entitles you to the *Argyll Bird Report*, four issues of *The Eider*, and free admission to the two annual meetings. There are four kinds of membership. Current rates (at 1 January 2001) are:

Ordinary	£10
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Further copies of this report can be obtained from:
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Editorial

First, my sincere apologies for the very late appearance of this issue of *Argyll Bird Report*. There are two reasons for this. The main one is the greatly increased number of records that the Recorder, Paul Daw, now has to process each year. Paul is doing his best to keep up with these by trying to recruit more people to help him with the many routine but very important tasks – see Paul's article in the last *Eider* (Jan 2002).

If Paul does not receive this help, bird-recording in Argyll as we have come to know it through his and his predecessors' unstinting efforts may well have to change very soon. This may be the last time that such an interesting and detailed Systematic List appears.

The second reason is that records are being sent to the Recorder later each year. Many members will remember the time, in the mid-1990s, when the *Argyll Bird Report* regularly appeared in time for the autumn meeting of the club. In those days, the strict deadline by which bird records for each year had to reach the county recorder was March of the following year. This three-month period was always enough, and this deadline was strictly observed. This gave the recorder time to compose the Systematic List, the main item of the report, by the end of the summer. The production time from completion of the Systematic List to issue of the report was and still is always about two months.

This happy state of affairs gradually decayed. Records were sent to the recorder later and later. In the late 1990s, they often did not reach him until midsummer of the following year and, at the same time, the number of records increased year by year. The result was that the report did not appear until almost the end of each year.

This year there has been an enormous disruption to a timetable that had already slipped. Most records for 2000 were submitted in good time, but one large batch did not reach the recorder until midwinter 2001-2002. It is a great tribute to Paul that he still managed to complete the long and detailed Systematic List for 2000 by March 2002, making May 2002 the expected time of issue of this report.

Clearly this state of affairs is unacceptable to the Club. The committee have asked that the next edition of *Argyll Bird Report* (with records for year 2001) should be issued by the end of 2002. To make this happen, we are now asking that all bird records for 2001 should be sent to the Recorder by midsummer of 2002, please. Provided that substantial help is forthcoming with the processing of records, this will give Paul time to produce the Systematic List by September. With the usual period for editing and printing, the next report will appear by the end of 2002. This will not happen unless everyone sticks to these deadlines.

Very many thanks to Paul for his huge efforts in producing another excellent Systematic List under increasingly difficult conditions, and to Tristan ap Rheinalt for his report of a first record for Argyll. As before, I (and no doubt other readers) would also welcome articles from other contributors! Special thanks to Bill Jackson for the superb cover picture of the Lesser Yellowlegs that briefly stayed in Argyll in 2000.

J C A Craik
Editor *Argyll Bird Report* (April 2002)

Systematic list for 2000

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Introduction

The systematic list below includes entries for 215 species, not including escapes or races (cf totals of 222 in 1999, 215 in 1998, 209 in 1997, 213 in 1996, 204 in 1995, 213 in 1994 and 213 in 1993), making this a slightly above-average year for numbers of species. Two of the 215 species, Pacific Golden Plover and White-rumped Sandpiper, are additions to the Argyll list, which now stands at 320 species.

Six category E species (escapes) were recorded in 2000.

Among the more regularly reported species, the following were not recorded in Argyll during 2000 and so have been omitted from the list below: Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Western Capercaillie (Capercaillie) *Tetrao tetrix*, Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, Common Quail (Quail) *Coturnix coturnix*, European Turtle Dove (Turtle Dove) *Streptopelia turtur* and Eurasian Tree Sparrow (Tree Sparrow) *Passer montanus*. Some of these may simply have been overlooked, but there have been no records of Grey Partridge since 1998 and this is the fourth successive blank year for Tree Sparrow.

ORNITHOLOGICAL REVIEW OF 2000

January to March

January was changeable. It was mild at first, followed by heavy rain and gales towards the end of the first week. There followed a spell of cold mostly fine conditions, but with heavy rain again towards the end of the month.

The first notable record of the year was a female/immature Smew on Loch Seil on 1st and 2nd Jan. An unexpected wader turned up on Loch Sween on 4th Jan – Argyll's first-ever wintering Common Sandpiper. Numbers of Little Grebes in Outer Loch Etive continued to increase, with a new record count of 42 on 15th Jan. Also during Jan, single Great Crested Grebes were on Loch Beg and Loch Indaal. The winter gathering of Whooper Swan on Tiree peaked in Jan with 78 on 16th. Yet another Green-winged Teal appeared at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Jan and stayed until mid-Feb.

A coastal survey of Tiree on 14th-20th Jan revealed some impressive totals. The aim was to count waders, but it also found 189 Common Eiders and over 100 Red-breasted Mergansers. Among the wader totals were: 443 Eurasian Oystercatchers, 561 Ringed Plovers, 45 Grey Plovers, 1,055 Northern Lapwings, 589 Sanderlings, 263 Purple Sandpipers (far more than usual), 609 Dunlin, 319 Common Snipe, 845 Eurasian Curlews, 415 Common Redshanks, 858 Ruddy Turnstones and a single Red Knot. An adult Black-headed Gull at Inveraray on 12th Jan had been ringed near Trondheim (Norway)

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in Jul 1997. Amazingly, its companion had an Icelandic ring - details still awaited. Our first **Iceland Gull** of the winter at Port Charlotte on 5th Jan was the first of many: between then and early Apr we had at least 19. There were also good numbers of **Glaucous Gulls** (at least 12) starting with an adult at Hynish on 9th Jan. On 23rd Jan two lucky RSPB volunteers found a first-winter **Ivory Gull** on the shores of Loch Gruinart, the first in Argyll since 1969 and the first on Islay since 1867! On 23rd Jan a remarkable flock of 50 **Common Bullfinches** was encountered on a forestry track in Glen Orchy.

Mild wet weather in early February gave way to colder temperatures with heavy snow in mid-month. After a brief mild spell, conditions for the rest of the month were mainly wintry showers with brighter intervals.

Loch Caolisport had a total of at least 50 **Great Northern Divers** on 19th Feb, and 34 were counted in West Loch Tarbert on 21st. Our third **Great Crested Grebe** of the year was at Loch Craignish on 20th Feb. Numbers of **Eurasian Wigeon** on *Tiree* reached 397 in Feb, well up on the past two years. The WeBS count found 138 **Tufted Ducks** on the four main freshwater lochs on *Tiree* on 21st Feb, the highest total there since records began; and the highest count of **Common Goldeneye** at Loch Caolisport was 110 on 3rd Feb.

An unusually early **Great Skua** was seen at Bowmore on 15th Feb. Five **Bramblings** (incl. 2 males) at Cluanach on 20th Feb were among the very few records of this species.

The first half of March was mainly very wet with brief intervals of brighter weather. Later conditions were drier and there were some sunny intervals.

Winter numbers of **Black-throated Diver** in Loch Caolisport peaked at 35 on 3rd Mar, and **Slavonian Grebes** on Loch Indaal reached a peak of 37 on 31st Mar. **Greenland White-fronted Geese** in Argyll in Mar numbered 17,312, well down on 1999, but **Barnacle Geese** (38,269) were at similar levels to the previous year and they were accompanied, as is often the case, by an adult white-phase **Snow Goose**.

70 **Northern Shovelers** were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 14th Mar, a new record count, and our regular male **American Wigeon** returned to Ardfarn on 16th Mar. A gathering of 505 **Great Black-backed Gulls** were washing and resting at the head of Loch Feochan on 17th Mar, and an adult **Ring-billed Gull**, the first of two in 2000, was at Machir Bay from 12th-26th Mar.

The second half of the month saw early arrivals of spring migrants. The first **Northern Wheatear** was at Southend on 13th followed by singles on Oronsay on 15th and at Campbeltown on 16th. Southend also had an early **Sand Martin** on 19th Mar, and by 24th Mar 4 were at Moine Mhor and singles were at Easter Ellister and RSPB L. Gruinart. A female **Whinchat** at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 19th and 20th Mar was exceptionally early, possibly the earliest ever in Argyll.

An early **Common Chiffchaff** at Kames on 23rd Mar was followed by singing birds at Dunbeg on 27th, Lower Ardtun on 29th and Oban on 30th Mar. The first **Barn Swallows** arrived at Imeraval and Carnain on 29th Mar.

A small influx of up to 15 **Goldcrests** occurred on *Tiree* on 21st Mar, and 17 **Snow Buntings** at Sorobaidh Bay on 15th Mar was the largest number in a poor winter for this species. A single **Corn Bunting** at Heylipol on 4th Mar may have been a migrant and was the only confirmed record of the year. It looks as though our resident population is now extinct.

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April to June

The first three weeks of April were cold, with winds from the east or north and snow on hills but plenty of sunshine. By the last week it was milder with showers and sunny intervals.

Perhaps because of the cold, the first two weeks of Apr were quiet with few reports of spring migrants. Some wintering species were still here in numbers, including 57 Black-throated Divers and 16 Velvet Scoters in the Sound of Gigha on 5th Apr. Our second Ring-billed Gull of the year, a first-summer bird, was at Lochan Luing on 4th Apr. The 'star' bird was a male King Eider, first seen on 8th Apr in Ardmucknish Bay, which stayed for the rest of the month.

The only spring migrants at this time were Willow Warblers on Islay on 8th and 9th and Common Sandpiper at RSPB L. Gruinart on 9th Apr. There was a gap until 15th Apr when the first House Martins appeared at Benderloch. They were followed by Common Cuckoos on Islay and Mull on 17th, 4 Ring Ouzels at Glen Noe on 17th, and a Tree Pipit at Taynish NNR on 18th Apr. A female at An Airidh on 16th Apr was the first Common Bullfinch ever recorded on Tiree.

The first of 2 Mediterranean Gulls appeared at Machrihanish SBO on 21st Apr.

With an improvement in the weather, a noticeable passage of waders from 22nd-28th Apr included Eurasian Dotterels on Mull on 23rd and on Tiree on 27th, ca 4,500 European Golden Plover at The Reef on 26th, 100 Black-tailed Godwits on Tiree on 27th and large numbers of Ringed Plovers, Grey Plovers, Sanderlings, Purple Sandpipers, Dunlins, Whimbrel, Common Redshanks and Ruddy Turnstones (see Systematic List).

Several spring migrants made their appearance including our annual Hoopoe, this time at Gott on 26th Apr. The first Common Grasshopper Warbler was reeling near Loch Awe on 22nd Apr and other 'firsts' included Sedge Warbler at RSPB L. Gruinart and Wood Warbler at Taynish NNR on 23rd, Common Redstart at Brainport Bay and Common Whitethroat at many sites on 24th, Garden Warbler at Cairnbaan on 27th and Blackcap at Ardnave on 28th Apr. A Spotted Flycatcher at Taynish NNR on 30th was the first Apr record in recent years and possibly the earliest ever in Argyll.

On 22nd Apr a fortunate bird club member found a Hawfinch in her garden at Achnacreebeag, the first confirmed record of the species in Argyll for 12 years. Numbers of 'White' Wagtails on passage peaked at 34 at Vault Bay on 24th Apr, and a Blue-headed Wagtail was at Colonsay House on 26th Apr. A Black-billed Magpie in Glen More on 28th Apr (and earlier at Loch Beg) was the first on Mull since 1992. On 30th Apr, a pr of Garganey were at Loch Bhasapol and three were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, but sadly none stayed to breed.

The early part of May was almost all fine and sunny and it became very warm by mid-month. This was followed by a period of fine sunny days but with cool easterly winds. Towards the end of the month it became cooler with showers and bright intervals.

Some later spring migrants appeared in May, including Pied Flycatcher at Dalavich Woods on 8th and Common Swift at Scammadale on 10th. There were also some scarce passage migrants, including a European Nightjar at Tarbert on 2nd May (our first record since 1993), a Lesser Whitethroat at Kiloran on 4th and 2 Wood Sandpipers at RSPB L.

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Gruinart on 17th May. On 9th May a total of 125 **Whimbrel** were counted at 4 sites on *Islay*. This is often a good month for rarities and May 2000 did not disappoint. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** at RSPB L. Gruinart on 11th May (an unusual date) was the first of 5 during 2000, and a **Temminck's Stint** on 15th May also at RSPB L. Gruinart was our first spring record of this species. An adult **Great White Egret** (only our fourth) in breeding plumage made a fine sight at Loch an Eilein on 18th, and an immature **Yellow-billed Diver** was on Loch na Keal on 21st May.

An otherwise common species can sometimes be a rarity depending on its location. For example, a **Common Moorhen** on Oronsay on 1st May was the first sighting there since the 1970s while a pr of **European Greenfinches** at Tainish NNR on 28th May were, amazingly, the first ever recorded there.

Sunny periods and showers characterised the first half of June and it remained cool for the time of year. Mid-month was drier but with gale-force winds for a time, followed by more sunshine and showers, some thundery. Sunnier and warmer weather returned towards the end of the month.

Although most of the activity concerned breeding, a few untypical sightings were noted including a **Stock Pigeon** at Kiloran on 4th Jun (first record for *Colonsay* for many years), a **Red Knot** at Machrihanish SBO on 6th and a **Yellow Wagtail** at The Laggan on 30th Jun. Large numbers of **Manx Shearwaters** were noted off *Tiree*, including at least 5,000 off Rubha Chraiginis on 19th Jun.

The only real rarity during Jun was a male **Black-headed Bunting** seen at a garden bird table in North Connel on 15th, a classic example of the 'almost anything can turn up almost anywhere' nature of bird watching.

The breeding season

In general, it appears that 2000 was a reasonably good breeding season for birds in Argyll.

Of 9 prs of **Black-throated Diver** monitored, 8 prs are known to have bred and 3 single chicks survived to fledging. A complete census of **Manx Shearwaters** on Lunga, Treshnish Isles found an estimated 1,283 prs. Few if any are thought to breed on other Treshnish islands due to lack of suitable habitat.

In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 145 prs of **Great Cormorants** at 5 sites fledged at least 263 young, and 268 prs of **European Shags** at 6 sites fledged at least 365 young. **Mute Swans** had another poor breeding season: of 23 prs with known productivity, only 8 prs raised young at all (a total of 20), 5 in areas where mink were controlled and 3 where they were not. Breeding **Canada Geese** were found on *Colonsay* and in *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *N Argyll* and their distribution and numbers still appear to be increasing.

Of the rarer duck species, only 2 broods totalling 8 young of **Eurasian Wigeon** were seen and there was no confirmed breeding of **Northern Pintail**, **Gadwall** or **Garganey**. **Northern Shoveler** had 5 broods on *Tiree* and 6 broods at RSPB L. Gruinart.

Among the raptors, only 33 **Hen Harrier** territories were checked but these produced at least 58 young, while **Common Buzzards** did better than in 1999 with 97 young fledged from monitored territories. **Golden Eagle** had a slightly better season than in 1999 but the percentage of successful territories was still below the 5-year mean. **Ospreys** did well with all 4 known prs breeding successfully and rearing 9 chicks. The few **Peregrine Falcon**

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territories checked seemed reasonably successful.

It was another encouraging year for **Corn Crakes**, which showed a further increase following the recovery in numbers in 1999. A total of at least 252 calling males were heard in Argyll.

Breeding Oystercatchers are rarely monitored but, in the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, of 47 prs with known productivity, as many as 22 prs (47%) were unsuccessful, and at least 19 of these were at colonies where mink predation occurred. At RSPB L. Gruinart, 182 prs of **Lapwing** were up on 1999, and a census at The Reef produced a minimum 297 prs; however, numbers at Coll RSPB Reserve (47 prs) were well down on 1999. A survey of drumming and 'chipping' **Common Snipe** on *Tiree* produced a total of 31 males, 3 drumming/chipping birds were heard at Smaull RSPB Reserve and 42 were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart. At Coll RSPB Reserve 27 prs of **Common Redshank** nested and the total of 85 prs at RSPB L. Gruinart was a welcome recovery from 1999.

The pr of **Red-necked Phalaropes** were present at the same site as in 1999 and were seen mating, but there was no evidence of nesting.

A full census of **Arctic Skuas** for Seabird 2000 confirmed that numbers are at a low ebb in Argyll. There are now less than 25% of the numbers present in 1987 with the largest decline evident on Jura. However **Great Skuas** on the Treshnish Isles bred successfully for the second time, one pr having a single chick in late Jun.

Black-headed Gulls in the SAMS study had a much more successful year than in 1999 with 240 young fledged from 185 pairs at 7 sites; and a full census found 312 prs on *Tiree* where there were also 335 prs **Mew Gulls**, 597 prs **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, 868 prs **Herring Gulls** and 131 prs **Great Black-backed Gulls**.

The **Herring Gull** colony at Eilean Loch Oisair, off Lismore, was reduced to 3 prs and no young were fledged. This colony has declined from 287 prs in 1994, when mink were first detected, to 106 in 1995, 74 in 1996, 22 in 1997, 81 in 1998 and 59 in 1999. There was well-documented mink predation and no fledged young in each of the years 1994 and 1996-2000. This is typical of what is happening at many colonies, not only of **Herring Gulls**.

Common Terns again increased, fledging 732-792 young from 1,181 prs at 12 sites. Whole-island counts found 41 prs on *Tiree* and 71 prs and another 44 individuals on *Coll*. Performance of **Arctic Terns** improved and ca 360 prs at 10 colonies fledged ca 250 young; and there were 470 prs on *Tiree* and 30 prs on *Coll*. There were at least 201 prs on *Colonsay* (inc. *Oronsay*) together with another 150 or more individuals. There were 53 prs of **Little Terns** on *Tiree* and at least 22 prs were breeding elsewhere. The total of 2,659 adult **Atlantic Puffins** on the Treshnish Isles in late Jun was by far the highest count in recent years, and on 5th May at least 150 birds were present on *Staffa*.

At least 127 young **Barn Owls** are known to have fledged from around 48 successful territories in Argyll, and young **Long-eared Owls** were heard calling on *Colonsay*. At least 16 prs of **Short-eared Owls** bred in *Cowal* and *Kintyre* and on the *Ross of Mull*.

A survey of **Sky Larks** (a Red-Listed species) at RSPB L. Gruinart found 93 territories in 279 ha (0.33 prs per ha) in 2 moorland compartments. One 1-km square surveyed for the BBS held 100 **Meadow Pipits** and a *Countryside 2000* square held 109 birds, giving an indication of population density in suitable habitats. Nevertheless, for the first time in recent years, **Meadow Pipits** lost their place as Argyll's most widespread breeding bird and were equalled by **Winter Wren**, **European Robin** and **Song Thrush**, all of which were found in 75% of the BBS squares. Indeed, in the *Countryside 2000* survey, **Winter Wren** was most widespread with records in 93% of squares. There was also an outstanding total of 76

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Winter Wren territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 51).

Nine boxes were occupied by **Common Redstarts** at Bonawe, the most since the scheme began in 1988. Because of predation by Pine Martens, only 5 boxes were successful giving 33 fledged young. Figures for **Song Thrushes** from monitored sites showed that it was an excellent breeding season for this Red-listed species and at Taynish NNR there was a record total of 15 territories in the CBC plots.

On the whole it was a good year for **Common Grasshopper Warblers** especially on *Islay*, but with fewer records from *Mull* than usual. **Sedge Warblers** also had a good year, with a total of 60 singing birds on *Colonsay*, the highest since surveys there began. It seems also to have been a good season for **Common Whitethroats**, with 23 prs on *Colonsay*. **Blackcaps** and **Garden Warblers** had more mixed fortunes, but Taynish NNR again had an excellent year for the latter with 5 territories in CBC plots. **Willow Warbler** was one of only three species recorded in 86% of Countryside 2000 squares and was exceeded only by Wren (93%). Taynish NNR had a record total of 8 **Spotted Flycatcher** territories in the CBC plots, and at Bonawe 12 prs of **Pied Flycatcher** nested in boxes, the most since the scheme began in 1988. Predation by Pine Marten took its toll and 6 successful boxes fledged a total of 25 young. A record 6 territories of **Eurasian Treecreeper** were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR.

Eight prs of **Red-billed Chough** were feeding young on *Colonsay* but there was no count on *Islay*. **Common Ravens** in all areas were more productive than in 1999 and 63 prs monitored in Argyll produced at least 149 fledged young.

Common Starlings are absent as breeding birds from many areas of Argyll but the 145 recorded in a single 1-km square on *Tiree* shows how numerous they can be on the islands.

July and August

Most of July was warm and dry, except for the second week when there was a period of cool northerly winds, although it stayed mainly dry. There was plenty of sunshine during the second half of the month.

On 1st Jul a **Water Rail** chick caught by a cat at Cornaigmore was released apparently unharmed.

The first **Sooty Shearwater** was seen at Machrihanish SBO on 13th Jul and it was followed by a total of 102 birds during Aug. Also on 13th Jul the first of many large flocks of **Common Linnets** appeared at Springbank; it numbered at least 170. In the Sound of Gigha the moult congregation of **Red-breasted Mergansers** reached a peak of 420 on 17th Jul and, on the same day, an adult **Spotted Redshank** still in breeding plumage spent several hours at Machrihanish SBO. On *Islay* the concentration of **Red-billed Choughs** in the Kilchoman area reached its highest numbers when 65 were present on 23rd Jul.

The first **Pomarine Skua** of the year was seen chasing an **Arctic Skua** just off the south end of *Jura* on 26th Jul and, on the same day, the first of no less than four **Black Terns** recorded during the year was seen in Gunna Sound. On 27th Jul an unusually large gathering of 15 **Common Greenshanks** was present at Loch Don and a **Green Sandpiper** was sighted at RSPB L. Gruinart.

A **Eurasian Siskin** found dead at Kilmore nr Oban in Jul had been ringed at Bidston (Wirral) on 6th Mar, an indication of where some of our birds winter.

It was changeable during August with some rain, heavy at times, in the earlier part of the

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month although remaining mild and humid. The second half of August was drier and warmer with good periods of sunshine, but with a short spell of heavy rain at the end of the month.

Our second Pectoral Sandpiper, a juvenile, was seen with Dunlins at Loch a' Phuill on 3rd Aug. The first Balearic Shearwater of autumn was seen flying S at Frenchman's Rocks on 5th Aug. Two more were seen there, and a total of 7 were seen on 5 dates in Aug at Machrihanish SBO. In Scotland, this species is something of an Argyll speciality. Red-necked Phalaropes are very scarce passage migrants in Argyll, so 2 just offshore at Machrihanish SBO on 6th Aug were a good find.

A large number of Eurasian Oystercatchers gathered on the sand spit at Otter Ferry on 13th Aug and at least 750 were counted. On the same day, the first of many Curlew Sandpipers were noted when 2 adults were reported from Loch Gruinart. To prove that 13th is not always unlucky, an adult White-rumped Sandpiper was also found at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Aug, the first record in Argyll of this transatlantic vagrant.

Towards the end of the month, Machrihanish SBO had its peak count of Sooty Shearwaters when 38 passed southwards on 29th. Also on 29th, Pied Wagtail passage on Tiree was at its height with at least 60 birds present in Gott Bay.

September and October

At first September was mainly mild and dry, although with gales at sea, but it soon became overcast with periods of heavy rain and only a few bright intervals. These conditions gave way to heavy showers with longer bright intervals, but the last week of the month was mainly overcast and rather humid.

Early in Sep the first of several large autumn flocks of European Goldfinches were at Aros Moss where 122 were counted on 1st. These were followed by 49 at Colintraive on 3rd and flocks on Islay and in Mid-Argyll later in the month. Common Eiders gathered in large numbers at favoured locations and 1,118 at Otter Ferry on 3rd was the highest single count of the year.

Then, after gales at sea, some interesting sightings of seabirds occurred. On 6th Sep, 8 Leach's Storm-petrels flew south past Machrihanish SBO (with 6 more in the following 2 days) as well as a Pomarine Skua, our 2nd Black Tern of the year and 9 Sandwich Terns. There was much activity at Frenchman's Rocks on 9th, including 23 European Storm-Petrels, 28 Leach's Storm-petrels and 235 Brent Geese all flying south in 3½ hrs. Also on 9th, a 'wrecked' Grey Phalarope appeared at Loch a' Phuill and the first of 3 Sabine's Gulls of the autumn was found at sea off Texa. Then on 10th Sep Sanderling passage on Tiree peaked at 450 birds, and there were another 2 juv Pectoral Sandpipers at RSPB L. Gruinart on 12th.

About the same time, migrant land birds passing through included our last Willow Warbler at Balemartine on 10th, at least 12 'Greenland' Wheatears on the Rhinnis and a Lapland Longspur at Port Wemyss on 12th, a Common Cuckoo, a Garden Warbler and a Lesser Whitethroat on Colonsay on 14th and a Yellow Wagtail at Machrihanish SBO on 15th. Meanwhile our 2nd juv Sabine's Gull and 3rd juv Black Tern of the year were at Frenchman's Rocks on 14th.

Although Common Coots have bred on Colonsay in the past, an adult on Loch an Sgoltaire on 16th Sep was the first on the island since 1997.

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Frenchman's Rocks had its highest autumn count of **Red-throated Divers** when 34 flew south on 18th Sep. A spate of wader migrants appeared at RSPB L. Gruinart from 20th Sep, when 36 **Ruffs** were counted. A total of 43 **Ruffs** were present there on 22nd Sep and 10 **Curlew Sandpipers**, 13 **Little Stints** and 38 **Grey Plovers** were also in the Loch Gruinart area that day. Also on 22nd a count of 2,343 **Eurasian Teal** was a new record total for RSPB L. Gruinart. The **Curlew Sandpiper** total there reached 12 on 23rd Sep and a juv **Spotted Redshank** was present on 25th.

Towards the end of the month, 2 **Little Gulls** were seen at Machrihanish SBO, a juv on 22nd and an adult on 29th. The last **Osprey** was reported from the inner Loch Scridain area of Mull on 22nd-24th Sep.

A total of 153 **Mistle Thrushes** passing through Cairnbaan on 28th Sep made a remarkable sight, and a late **Pied Flycatcher** was at Loch Caolisport on 29th.

October started with strong SW winds but was quite mild. Then it became colder for a time before turning to sunny intervals and showers. It was cooler again towards the end of the month with gales at times. Despite periods of rain, it was less wet than further south where much of England suffered from severe flooding.

Our only **Eurasian Marsh Harrier** of the year was a female seen flying over a reed bed at Loch a' Phuill on 1st. The same day a **Lapland Longspur** was at Ardnave Loch, and a flock of 55 **European Goldfinches** at Lochgair continued the autumn influx. Next day Machrihanish SBO had 37 **Red-throated Divers** flying past in 8 hrs, 49 **Greater Scaup** and the last of our three **Sabine's Gulls**. A **Grey Phalarope** was seen, unusually, well inshore in fine conditions there on 4th.

The 2nd **Mediterranean Gull** of the year, a 1st winter bird, was at Loch Bhasapol on 5th Oct at the same time as a late **Tree Pipit** was passing through RSPB L. Gruinart. On 6th Oct a late **Common Chiffchaff** was at RSPB L. Gruinart and, next day, the first of our winter migrants were reported when 8 **Redwings** were at Aros Moss.

Machrihanish SBO had 37 **Red-throated Divers** in 8 hrs on 2nd Oct and 39 in 5 hrs on 10th Oct. The male **American Wigeon** that now seems to be a regular feature of *Mid-Argyll* in autumn reappeared near the head of Loch Craignish on 8th Oct and was later seen in Loch Crinan. More late summer migrants were 40 **House Martins** in a flock near Kilchurn Castle on 9th Oct.

A juv **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Ulva Lagoons was first reported on 9th Oct although it had apparently been present since the end of Sep. This is only our second confirmed record of this scarce transatlantic vagrant. Only 3 days later (on 12th) an even rarer vagrant wader was found at Vaul, a **Pacific Golden Plover**. This was the first in Argyll and only the 11th record for Scotland.

Pomarine Skuas were noted passing through on 10th, with 6 juvs at Machrihanish SBO and a single off Balevulin. On 14th Oct a total of 23 **Gadwall** were at RSPB L. Gruinart, possibly a record count for *Islay*. An exceptionally large post-breeding gathering of 670 **Black-headed Gulls** was at Loch Caolisport on 19th Oct. Our last **Arctic Skua** of the year was at Frenchman's Rocks on 24th and the last **Great Skua** was also there, on 29th Oct.

Fieldfares were apparently later than normal and the first reported were 5 at Tayinloan on 24th Oct. For the fifth year running a **Surf Scoter** (normally a rare visitor) was reported, an adult male in Loch Indaal on 26th Oct.

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November and December

Early November was mainly dry and cold with NE winds. It became much milder towards the middle of the month but still with showery rain. Then there was a colder period with squally showers and some hail before it became wet and windy at the end of the month.

During Nov an extraordinary ringing return occurred when an Osprey ringed as a chick near Loch Awe in 1998 was found dead inside a crocodile in the Gambia.

On 2nd Nov the first of at least 10 wintering Blackcaps was reported, at Ballochgair, and our largest flock of wintering Twite (333 birds) was counted at The Reef. A 2nd winter Glaucous Gull at Machrihanish Village on 4th Nov was our only record at this time. The very last summer migrants were a Common Chiffchaff at The Reef on 3rd Nov and a juv Barn Swallow at Campbeltown on 7th. A lone Chaffinch was an unusual sight at Vaul on 9th Nov, as were 2 Little Auks seen at sea NW of Gigha the same day.

Throughout Nov an influx of Common Wood Pigeons was noted in Mid-Argyll and, by 26th Nov, 300+ were in the oak woods at Blarghour (Loch Awe). A single Lesser Black-backed Gull at Blackrock (Loch Indaal) on 30th Nov was our only winter record.

It was very wet and windy at the beginning of December but also very mild. This was followed by showers with some longer periods of rain but mainly light winds. It was much colder by mid-month with light snow showers, followed by a brief spell of heavy rain. After this, it was mainly dry for some time and cold with bright clear days and only a few light showers. At the end of the month, there was some quite heavy snow which lay for a few days.

After overnight gales a Little Auk appeared in a garden at Ardrishaig on 1st Dec. It was returned to the sea unharmed. A Common Kingfisher (rather a misnomer in Argyll) was seen at Barnluasgan on 2nd Dec and probably the same bird was at Caol Scotnish on 18th. A Green Woodpecker near Blarghour on 5th Dec was well away from the recent known range of the species.

A 2nd Lapland Longspur, over Ben Hynish on 4th Dec, was an unusual winter record. Calls of Common Crossbills in Fearnoch Forest on 8th Dec suggested that breeding was in progress. A count of 36 Northern Shovelers on Tiree on 17th Dec was the highest in recent years. 90 Common Ravens were flying to roost at Bridgend on 25th Dec and the roosts of Common Starlings in Campbeltown peaked at an estimated 4,500 birds during Dec.

The major event of Dec was an influx of Bohemian Waxwings, the first in Argyll since 1996. The first were 3 seen at Loch Gair on 25th Dec. They were followed by 30 or more in a garden in Campbeltown on 26th and soon by others in most areas of Argyll. The flock of 24 at Loch Skerrols on 29th was the largest single group ever recorded on Islay. The influx continued into Jan 2001.

BIRD RECORDING IN ARGYLL

Advice to contributors

For advice on submitting records of birds to the Recorder please see the paper "Bird Recording in Argyll – Guidelines for Observers" on pp 109-117.

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INTERPRETATION OF THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

In the species accounts below, English and scientific names are as in the latest *Scottish Bird Report*; the sequence of species follows the Voous order as in the same report. As agreed by the Argyll Bird Club Committee and following the practice of the *Scottish Bird Report*, the official English names as adopted by the British Ornithologists' Union have been used. This involves changes in the names of 108 or so species on the Argyll List although over half of these involve just the addition of the prefixes 'Common', 'Eurasian', 'European' or 'Northern'. To avoid confusion where there are changes, the 'old' name is shown in brackets after the 'new' name.

Each species heading in the report contains the following information:

Common name - new (old)	Scientific name	Gaelic name	EURING code
e.g. COMMON RAVEN (RAVEN)	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Fitheach	1572

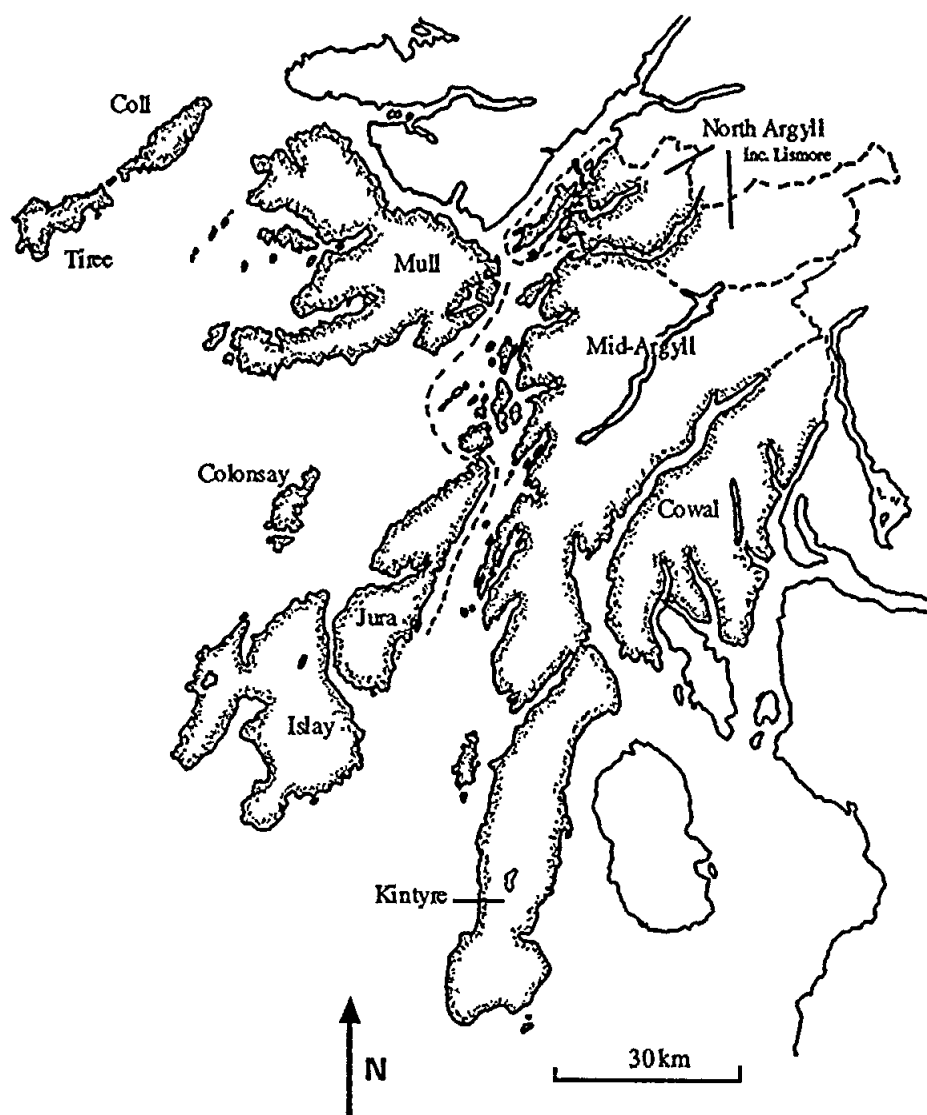
Each heading is followed by a summary of the bird's known status and distribution within Argyll (see species status categories on p. 21), together with any other relevant information. The information regarding sites of national or international importance for wintering/passage birds is taken from Musgrove, A. J. *et al.* (2001) *The Wetland Bird Survey 1999-2000: Wildfowl and Wader Counts*. The qualifying threshold for identification as such a site is generally that they hold, at some time during the qualifying period, at least 1% of the national (Great Britain) or international population of the species. The minimum qualifying count is normally 50 birds, although a lower figure has sometimes been chosen where the British population is very small. Significant 2000 records are then listed in approximate chronological order. For scarcer species, records for 2000 may be followed by late records or recent acceptances from earlier years.

For the purposes of this report, Argyll is divided into 10 areas, which are named on the accompanying sketch map (p. 16). Because very few records have been received from Lismore in recent years, it is no longer considered a separate area but has been merged with North Argyll. For similar reasons Gigha will no longer be considered as a separate area but, from 1st January 2000, records will be included with those from Kintyre. Note that, for the moment at least, boundaries of the Argyll recording area remain unchanged despite local government reorganisation in 1996.

Records of rarities in the systematic list are accompanied by the names of the observers, starting with the finder(s)/identifier(s) (or, in the absence of this information, the person who first reported the bird to me), followed by the observer(s) who submitted details of the record, if different. An asterisk after the square bracket indicates acceptance by the relevant rarities committee. Summarised data from many surveys of breeding birds are also accompanied by the initials of the observers or organisations responsible, in order to help readers who are interested in obtaining more detailed information.

Place names

An attempt has been made to ensure that all place names in the systematic list feature on the 1:50,000 (Landranger Series) Ordnance Survey maps. An exception is The Laggan (Kintyre) which refers to the roughly triangular area west of Campbeltown, bordered by the



Map showing the areas of Argyll used in this Report

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B843, the A83, and Machrihanish Bay. Campbeltown Airport (previously RAF Machrihanish) is in this area. The Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (SBO) is situated at Uisaed Point on the western outskirts of Machrihanish (NR628209). In Mid-Argyll, Kilmichael Glen extends north-eastwards from Kilmichael Glassary at NR8593. On Mull, the Mishnish Lochs are the series of lochs extending from NM4652 to NM4853.

On Islay, the term 'Loch Gruinart' may refer to the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve at Loch Gruinart, or to parts of the loch lying outside the reserve. When a distinction has been made by the observer and when presenting counts of breeding pairs within the reserve, the abbreviation 'RSPB L. Gruinart' is used throughout. The same applies to the use of the terms 'Moine Mhor' and 'Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve (NNR)' (Mid-Argyll); I have used the former term to cover an area extending west to the landward edge of Loch Crinan and north to Barsloisnoch.

The following places are mentioned frequently in the text and are cited as shown in the first column. The relevant recording area is shown in the second column and a four-figure Grid Ref. is given in the third. Where the location is a large feature (such as many of the sea lochs) the Grid Ref. is conventional and refers to approximately the centre of the feature.

Balephetrish Bay	<i>Tiree</i>	NM0047
Frenchman's Rocks	<i>Islay</i>	NR1554
Gott Bay	<i>Tiree</i>	NM0546
Loch a 'Phuill	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9541
Loch Bhasapol	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9747
Loch Caolisport	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR7475
Loch Don	<i>Mull</i>	NM7332
Loch an Eilein	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9843
Loch Etive, Outer (i.e. Connel Br. to Taynuilt)	<i>North Argyll</i>	NM9434
Loch Indaal	<i>Islay</i>	NR2961
Loch na Keal	<i>Mull</i>	NM5038
Loch Scridain	<i>Mull</i>	NM4525
Loch Sween	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR7484
Moine Mhor (National Nature Reserve)	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR8192
Oronsay (island)	<i>Colonsay</i>	NR3489
Machrihanish SBO (Seabird Observatory)	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR6220
Sanda Islands	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR7204
Sorobaidh Bay	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9942
Sound of Gigha	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR6749
Tayinloan	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR6946

All other locations are given as a place name followed by the recording area in italics e.g. Minard *Mid-Argyll*. Occasionally, where the locality is not well known, a qualifier may be added in brackets, e.g. Kintallan (Tayvallich), *Mid-Argyll*.

Tables

Tables 2 to 7 are derived from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) goose counts. Tables

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1, 8-19 and 21-32 are based principally on data from the Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS), The Islay Bird and Natural History Report 2000 and John Halliday's (SNH) Moine Mhor NNR and Loch Crinan Bird Reports 2000, although higher counts have been included where available.

Figures in these tables for 'Loch Gruinart' represent the total for the RSPB Reserve at Loch Gruinart (in particular the area of flooded fields) and Loch Gruinart proper (below high water mark). In most cases the figures come from the respective WeBS counts for these areas although where higher counts are available these have been used. There were no WeBS counts at these sites from Jun to Sep. Also 'Outer Loch Etive' refers to WeBS counts covering the area from Connel Bridge to Taynult. 'Tiree' refers to WeBS counts covering the four main freshwater lochs on the island viz. Loch an Eilein, Loch Bhasapol, Loch Riaghain and Loch a 'Phuill. For certain species numbers on Tiree may be higher, at any given time, elsewhere on the island: where available appropriate counts are cited in the main text.

Special studies carried out in 2000

Regular monitoring of certain species and groups of species in Argyll continued in 2000; examples are the goose counts carried out by SNH, the monthly wildfowl and wader counts (WeBS) at several sites and the monitoring of breeding birds of prey on Cowal by Arthur French and David Anderson. Other single-species studies, either new in 2000 or continued from previous years, are referred to in the species-accounts.

Seven further multi-species studies are summarised here to avoid repetition of details in the species accounts.

(1) Breeding Birds Survey (BBS)

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), which started in 1994, gives all birdwatchers a chance to take part in important survey work. Its objective is to extend and improve the monitoring of population changes of common breeding birds. It now counts birds annually in more than 2,300 randomly chosen one-km squares in the UK, using a line-transect method. **New recruits are always needed for the BBS.** If you think you might be interested but are not sure how much time it would take or how expert you need to be, or would like to know the location of the squares needing coverage, please contact your local BTO Representative (see p. 3 for details) or Mike Raven at the BTO, National Centre for Ornithology, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, (01842) 750050 or e-mail: Mike.Raven@bto.org

In 2000, 12 such squares were surveyed in Argyll. They were located in *Colonsay* (NR 3588 & NR 3895), *Cowal* (NS0393, NS0884, NS1280), *Mid-Argyll* (NM9409, NN0104, NN0615, NR7770, NR7992, NR8888), and *Mull* (NM4421). Three squares (NM3021, NM8224 & NN1035) were surveyed in 1999 but not in 2000.

In the systematic list below, BBS data are quoted for species which are widely distributed or for which little other information was available.

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In addition surveys using BBS methodology were undertaken (by Saya Harvey - Scottish Power's Carradale Ranger) during spring 2000 for six 1 km squares in the Carradale area (although only one count was carried out for each square). Data from these squares are quoted where significant.

(2) Countryside 2000. The Countryside Surveys are a comprehensive audit of the British countryside and combine detailed studies of a sample of 1 km squares with satellite imaging. The surveys collect information on environmental factors such as habitat types, plant species and freshwater invertebrates (for further information see the Countryside 2000 website www.cs2000.org.uk). This was the fourth such study since 1978 but the first in which birds have been included. Some 340 1 km squares throughout Britain were surveyed for birds, under the auspices of the British Trust for Ornithology. Similar line transect methods to those used for the BBS were employed but with four rather than two transects. This probably gave rise to a more comprehensive count for each Countryside 2000 square than is usually achieved for BBS squares. The results were analysed by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (formerly Institute of Terrestrial Ecology). The aim is to link changes in bird populations with changes in the environment.

Fourteen of the squares surveyed fell within the Argyll recording area, one on *Colonsay*, 3 in *Cowal*, one in *Kintyre*, 4 in *Mid-Argyll*, one on *Mull*, 3 in *N Argyll* and one on *Tiree*. The exact locations of the squares are confidential but they cover a range of habitats from coastal grassland through broadleaf and conifer woodland to upland heaths. Most of the squares were visited only once during the breeding season (late Apr-late Jun) but four were visited twice; once early and once late. In the latter case the highest counts for each species were used when analysing the data.

(3) Common Bird Census. This national scheme is run by the British Trust for Ornithology and involves mapping breeding territories of common and widespread birds in around 200 selected plots throughout the United Kingdom. The aim has been to quantify trends in bird populations and it has been instrumental, for example, in drawing attention to the declines among farmland birds. The scheme has been running since 1962 and from 1990 onwards two plots in the Taynish National Nature Reserve *Mid-Argyll*, one in woodland and one coastal, have been monitored by John Halliday. Because it is very labour intensive (involving around 10 detailed survey visits each breeding season) the CBC has been gradually replaced by the simpler BBS scheme, which requires only three visits. From 2001 the CBC will no longer be supported nationally. However a core of about 50 high priority sites will continue to be supported and fortunately the two Taynish plots are among them. Because of the detailed nature of this survey and the continuity of the work (over 10 years now) at Taynish, the data provided are particularly significant for Argyll. John Halliday has carried out an analysis of the data so far collected and the figures for average numbers of territories over the period 1990-2000 are taken from his report.

(4) Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) study of seabird breeding success [J. C. A. Craik]

As part of an on-going wider study of seabird breeding success, selected species were monitored in a study area along the west coasts of *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, and *N Argyll* (including Lismore), and at additional sites in Loch Fyne (*Cowal/Mid-Argyll*) and *Mull*. Further details can be found in ABR 11.

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(5) Systematic sea-watching at Machrihanish Sseabird Observatory (*Kintyre*) [E. J. Maguire].

Movements of seabirds, wildfowl and waders past this site are monitored regularly during certain months of the year. With a few exceptions, all birds flying past when the hide is manned are identified and logged. All records from Machrihanish SBO were provided by E.J. Maguire. More comprehensive data for Machrihanish SBO can be found in Maguire (2000).

(6) Seabird 2000

Seabird 2000 is the third census of breeding seabirds in Britain and Ireland, following on from Operation Seafarer in 1969-70 and the Seabird Colony Register census in 1985-87. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Seabird Group jointly own the Seabird Colony Register (SCR), to which information on existing and new colonies is constantly added. JNCC also co-ordinates the Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) which through contributions from other bodies and dedicated individuals, regularly monitors population size and productivity at a number of sites in Britain and Ireland. Seabird 2000 will determine whether population trends recorded at local levels by SMP, have actually been realised on a national scale; and will also identify long-term (last 30 years) national trends by comparison with the previous two censuses. Standardised counting techniques are being used to carry out the census work over the period 1999-2001. A good number of significant colonies are found in the Argyll area.

(7) Tiree Coastal Survey. A coastal survey of Tiree was carried out by Alan Leitch, Roger Broad and Gregg Corbett from 14th to 20th January 2000. The entire coast was walked, mainly to count wintering wader numbers, although records were kept of other species of note.

Categories of the British list (as revised by the BOURC - Jan 1998):

- Category A. Species that have been recorded in an apparently natural state at least once since 1st Jan 1950.
- Category B. Species that would otherwise be in Category A but have not been recorded since 31st Dec 1949.
- Category C. Species which, although originally introduced by man, either deliberately or accidentally, have now established breeding populations derived from introduced stock that maintain themselves without necessary recourse to further introduction.
 - C1. *Naturalised Introductions* Species that have occurred only as a result of introduction e.g. Mandarin Duck, Little Owl.
 - C2. *Naturalised Establishments* Species with established populations as a result of introduction by man, but which also occur in an apparently natural state e.g. Canada Goose.
 - C3. *Naturalised Re-establishments* Species with populations successfully re-established by man in areas of former occurrence e.g. Red Kite, Capercaillie.
 - C4. *Naturalised Feral Species* Domesticated species with populations established in the wild e.g. Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon).
 - C5. *Vagrant Naturalised Species* Species from established naturalised populations abroad (none accepted yet although most Ruddy Shelducks occurring here must fall into this category).

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- Category D. Species that would otherwise appear in Categories A or B except that there is reasonable doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state.
- Category E. Species that have been recorded as introductions, transportees, or escapes from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining. (E* indicates breeding has been recorded in the wild.)

Species status categories: Definitions.

Resident	Resident and normally sedentary
Breeding	Breeding and wintering ranges may differ
Summer visitor	Breeds unless otherwise stated
Passage migrant	Birds passing through on the way to breeding grounds or winter quarters
Winter visitor	Includes species that are also resident but whose numbers are augmented by immigrants during the winter months
Introduced	Introduced species recorded in Argyll that may or may not breed here.
Vagrant	Five or fewer records since 1980.
Site of national importance	Sites of national importance in Great Britain (as defined by The Wetland Bird Survey)

Symbols and abbreviations

*	Record accepted by relevant rarities committee
<i>ABR</i>	<i>Argyll Bird Report</i>
ABRC	Argyll Bird Records Committee
ARSG	Argyll Raptor Study Group
AOB	apparently occupied burrows
AON	apparently occupied nest-sites
AOS	apparently occupied sites
av.	average
b/-	brood of...young
BBRC	<i>British Birds</i> Rarities Committee
BBS	Breeding Birds Survey
BOURC	British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
<i>ca</i>	<i>circa</i> = approximately
c/-	clutch of...eggs
<i>cf</i>	confer = compare
CBC	Common Birds Census
CES	Constant Effort (ringing) Site
inc.	including
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
juv/juvs	juvenile/juveniles
L.	Loch
max.	maximum (the highest of 2 or more counts at a given locality during the period being analysed)
NCC	Nature Conservancy Council
NEWS	European Non-estuarine Coastal Waterfowl Survey
NNR	National Nature Reserve
n/r	not recorded (in tables of counts, where no count was made)
pr/prs	pair/pairs

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RSPB Loch Gr.	Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve
SAMS	Scottish Association for Marine Science
SBO	Seabird Observatory
SBR	<i>Scottish Bird Report</i>
SBRC	<i>Scottish Birds</i> Records Committee
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
TIARG	Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey

ARGYLL BIRD RECORDS 2000

RED THROATED DIVER

Gavia stellata Learga ruadh 0002

Widely distributed but scarce breeder. Also winter visitor and passage migrant.

Jan-Apr. Reported widely, in small numbers, around islands, in sea lochs and along the coast. Apart from Loch Indaal, where there were 20 on 16th Jan, 11 on 13th Feb, 25 on 31st Mar and a maximum count of 61 on 9th Apr, the only count in double figures came from West Loch Tarbert *Mid-Argyll* with 16 on 5th Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999). In *Mid-Argyll*, the Ederline/Eredine survey area had at least four prs attempting to nest (all using rafts). The only known successful pr raised two young to flying [DM]. Breeding was also reported from 6 other sites in *Kintyre* and *Mid-Argyll* [per RAB]. Elsewhere, a pr fledged a single young on *Islay*, and prs were present during the breeding season at one site on *Colonsay* and three sites on *Mull*.

Sep-Dec. Twelve birds were present in the Sound of Gigha on 7th Jul and passage birds were recorded in good numbers. Frenchman's Rocks had 34 flying south in 4 hrs on 18th Sep and 20 in 3½ hrs on 2nd Oct, while Machrihanish SBO had 37 in 8 hrs, also on 2nd Oct, and 39 in 5 hrs on 10th Oct. A total of 32 birds flew past Balevullin *Tiree* between 4th and 11th Oct, with 12 in one hour on 5th. During the winter months the only counts of 10 or more birds were at Loch Indaal (21 on 12th Nov, 12 on 29th Dec) and Loch Caolisport (16 on 16th Dec).

BLACK-THROATED DIVER

Gavia arctica Learga dhubh 0003

Very scarce breeder in Mid- and North Argyll. Scarce in winter but more numerous on passage. Loch Caolisport is a site of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-Apr. Reported widely, in small numbers, around islands, in sea lochs and along the coast. Counts of 10 or more birds were made at: Loch Caolisport (22 on 21st Jan, 35 on 3rd Mar and 28 on 10th Apr), the Sound of Gigha (23 on 18th Mar, 27 on 27th Mar and 57 on 5th Apr) and Skipness Bay *Kintyre* (12 on 18th Mar and 19 on 14th Apr).

Breeding. Nine sites in Argyll with summering prs were monitored and breeding was confirmed at 8 (2 natural, 6 rafts). Single chicks were hatched at 3 sites, all of which survived to fledging.

Sep-Dec. One to 4 birds reported from *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*. Counts of 10 or more birds were made at Skipness Bay (10 on 13th Oct) and Loch Caolisport (10 on 13th Nov and 41 on 16th Dec).

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER

Gavia immer Muir bhuachaill 0004

Numerous visitor, both in winter and on passage. Birds in breeding plumage regularly recorded Apr to mid Jun. Pre-migratory gatherings occur off some coasts in late Apr and early May. A few individuals summer. Loch Indaal (Islay), Loch Caolisport (Mid-Argyll) and Lochs Beg & Scridain (Mull) are sites of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. Reported from all areas except *Cowal* and *Jura*. Counts of 10 or more birds came from: Ardnave Point *Islay* (max. 12 on 25th Jan), Loch na Keal (max. 22 on 16th Feb), Loch Caolisport (max. 50 or more on 19th Feb), Rubha Buidhe *Mull* (11 on 19th Feb), mouth of West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre* (max. 34 on 21st Feb), Sorobaidh Bay (12 on 4th Mar), Loch Buie

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Mull (12 on 11th Mar), Loch Scridain (max. 16 on 12th Mar), Hynish Bay *Tiree* (max. 44 on 28th Apr) and Loch Indaal (max. 96 on 29th Apr). In addition, 42 were counted during a coastal survey of *Tiree* from 14th - 20th Jan, 11 were seen together from the Oban-Colonsay ferry on 28th Apr, and an estimated 65 birds were present around the coasts of *Mull* during Mar.

Jun-Aug. Reported in ones or twos from *Colonsay, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree* from Jun to the first week in Aug, including six birds in full breeding plumage. Six were counted in the Sound of Gigha on 14th Jun, 4 in Gott Bay on 15th Jun, and 6 in Gunna Sound *Coll/Tiree* on 26th Jul.

Sep-Dec. Records were received from *Colonsay, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree* but included no really large counts. Sites with 10 or more birds were: Hynish Bay *Tiree* (max. 30 or more on 12th Nov), Loch Indaal (max. 19 on 12th Nov) and Loch Caolisport (max. 19 on 13th Nov).

YELLOW-BILLED DIVER (WHITE-BILLED DIVER)

Gavia adamsii Learga Bhlar 0005

Vagrant seen on only four occasions, all since 1986. Last recorded at Machir Bay (Islay) in Sep 1999.

An immature at Sgeir Maldaig (Loch na Keal) on 21st May was accepted by BBRC as a first-summer bird [N. Greatholder]*.

LITTLE GREBE

Tachybaptus ruficollis Spagriton 0007

Breeds locally in small numbers. Widespread in sheltered coastal waters in winter. Winter counts in Outer Loch Etive currently exceed the qualifying level for a site of national importance.

Jan-Apr. Numbers in Outer Loch Etive continue to increase, with a new record of 42 on 15th Jan. Numbers then declined to 26 on 13th Feb and 15 on 11th Mar. No more than 4 birds were reported elsewhere, with records from every area apart from *Coll* and *Jura*.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf one of 15 in 1999). Adults with young were reported from East Loch Fada *Colonsay* (2 broods), Loch Tallant *Islay*, Loch Bhasapol, Lochan Taynish *Mid-Argyll* and Loch Peallach *Mull*. Elsewhere, prs were present during the breeding season at two other lochs on *Colonsay*, Loch nan Cadhan *Islay*, Bishop's Glen (Dunoon) *Cowal* and at Cam Loch (Knapdale) and Lochan Taynish *Mid-Argyll*.

Aug-Dec. Numbers on Outer Loch Etive built from 26 on 17th Sept to 37 on 19th Nov and 15th Dec. Elsewhere, 8 were at the Mishnish Lochs *Mull* on 11th Sep, 11 were counted on Loch Sween on 22nd Oct, and up to 4 birds were recorded at various other places in *Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree*.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE

Podiceps cristatus Gobhlachan Iaparan 0009

Uncommon winter and passage visitor, with 2-6 records annually since 1984. Recorded in all months except Jun.

A good year for this species, with records of single birds from Air of Kinloch *Mull* on 10th Jan, Loch Indaal on 15th Jan and 23rd Oct, Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* on 20th Feb, and two birds on Loch Indaal on 25th Oct.

RED-NECKED GREBE

Podiceps grisegena Gobhlachan ruadh 0010

Scarce winter and passage visitor. Of 20 records during 1980-99, 17 were during the period Sep-Mar, with one each in Apr, May and Jun.

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For the second year running, no less than three individuals were recorded: one on Loch Indaal on 14th Jan, an adult in breeding plumage in the Sound of Gigha on 18th Mar, and a juv/1st winter bird at Port Lunna (Loch Sween) on 19th Nov.

SLAVONIAN GREBE

Podiceps auritus Gobhlachan mara 0011

Regular winter and passage visitor to sea lochs and sounds. Occasionally on inland waters. Loch Indaal, the Sound of Gigha and Loch na Keal are sites of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-Apr. Numbers on Loch Indaal rose from 25 on 16th Jan to a peak of 37 on 31st Mar, and the count of 44 in the Sound of Gigha on 5th Apr was the highest on record there. The only other sites where birds were reported were Loch Caolisport (max. 4 on 21st Jan), Loch Ba Mull (14 on 3rd Apr) and Head of Loch na Keal (one on 25th Apr).

May-Jul. No summer records received.

Aug-Dec. Apart from one at Machrihanish SBO on 8th Aug, the first returning bird was one at Loch na Keal on 2nd Sep. Numbers on Loch Indaal built up from 14 on 10th Sep to 22 on 8th Oct and then stayed high with 21 on 12th Nov and 15th Dec. The maximum count in the Sound of Gigha reached only 9, on 10th Dec. This species is seldom seen on freshwater lochs in Argyll so a single bird on Loch Gorm Islay from 24th Sep to 14th Oct was unusual. Elsewhere, *Mull* had two off the south end of Iona on 25th Sep, 4 on Loch na Keal on 6th Nov, and 2 on Loch Scridain; while in *Mid-Argyll* one was on Loch Caolisport on 16th Dec and 4 were together in Loch Gair on 26th Dec.

NORTHERN FULMAR (FULMAR)

Fulmarus glacialis Eun crom 0020

Common but localised breeding species in all areas except Cowal and N Argyll. Large numbers on passage off western headlands.

Jan-Apr. On 16th Jan at least 500 birds were at Ceann a' Mhara Tiree.

Breeding. Treshnish Isles *Mull* had an estimated total of 1078 AON with breeding confirmed on Bac Mor, Bac Beag, Cairn na Burgh More, Cairn na Burgh Beg, Fladda, Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil. 13 AON were counted at Druim an Aoineidh (Iona) *Mull*. On Sanda Islands there were 500 AON (as in 1999) and breeding success appeared to be good. Counts at the sample census cliffs on *Colonsay* in June gave: 492 AOS at Uragaig (*cf* 448 in 1999), 50 AOS at Kiloran Bay (57 in 1999) and 29 at Port Lobh (28 in 1999). A full census on *Tiree* (excl. Ceann a' Mhara, where 1,382 AOS were counted in 1999) gave a total of 241 AOS. On *Coll* 170 prs bred on the RSPB Reserve, and 26 AOS were counted on Gunna Island. On *Islay*, 56 AON were counted at Laggan Point, 34 at Kilchiaran and 175 between Tormisdale and Lossit. A survey of the west coasts of *Islay* and *Jura* carried out by boat in early Jun for Seabird 2000 found totals of 56 AOS on *Jura* and 1,957 AOS on *Islay*.

Jun-Dec. At Caliach Point *Mull*, 600 birds were counted flying past in one hour on 13th Jun. An exhausted bird was found at the Highways depot in Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 30th Oct and taken into care.

SOOTY SHEARWATER

Puffinus griseus Fachadh dubh 0043

Passage migrant almost exclusively recorded Jul-Oct. Sometimes in large numbers off headlands during Aug-Sep.

Jul-Oct. After the first bird of the year, on 13th Jul, Machrihanish SBO recorded a total of 102 birds on 6 dates in Aug, with a maximum of 38 on 29th. There were only two records at Frenchman's Rocks in Aug, 2 birds on 7th and 2 on 8th. Records were more widespread in

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Sep: on Tiree 2 passed offshore at Ard More on 1st and one flew over Rubha Chraiginis on 25th. At Machrihanish SBO, 15 flew south on 6th and 9 on 13th, while at Frenchman's Rocks, single birds were recorded on 5th, 14th and 18th Sep and 6 on 9th. Also in Sep, 12 were seen from the Kennacraig-Islay ferry on 3rd, 8 flew past Ardnave Point Islay on 6th, and 12 seen from the ferry on 9th were mostly close to Islay. The only Oct records were of 8 passing Machrihanish SBO on 10th and a single at Frenchman's Rocks on 29th. Frenchman's Rocks recorded few this autumn, at a time when there were high numbers elsewhere in the UK.

MANX SHEARWATER

Puffinus puffinus Fachadh ban 0046/1

Breeding colonies confirmed only on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Large numbers on passage, especially during Aug-Sep.

Mar-May. At Balephetrish Bay, 50 flying past on 9th Apr were the first of the year, and 260 were counted off Ard Ear Tiree on 5th May.

Breeding. A complete census of Lunga (Treshnish Isles) Mull found an estimated 1,283 prs breeding. Few if any birds are thought to breed on other Treshnish islands due to lack of suitable habitat. On Sanda Islands there were an estimated 200 AOB in Jun and 23 chicks were found in a sample of 28 nests.

Jun-Dec. Approx. 660 birds were counted in rafts off the Garvellach Islands Mid-Argyll on the evening of 16th Jun. Later in the month, large numbers were recorded off Tiree with at least 5,000 off Rubha Chraiginis on 19th and 2,000 - 3,000 off Miodar on 26th Jun. No further large gatherings were reported until Aug when 3,000 flew past Frenchman's Rocks in 4 hrs on 7th and 1,000 were seen apparently feeding on jellyfish off Oronsay on 27th. The peak autumn count at Machrihanish SBO was 3,300 in 9 hrs on 6th Sep, and on the same day 2,000 flew past Ardnave Point Islay in 1 hr and 2,000 were counted from the Kennacraig-Islay ferry. Small numbers were still passing in Oct with a late record of one at Frenchman's Rocks on 25th. A single bird at Port Wemyss Islay on 29th Dec was a very unusual mid-winter record.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER

Puffinus mauretanicus

0046/2

A regular passage migrant (Aug-Dec) in very small numbers, since 1992. Usually seen with Manx Shearwaters. The former Mediterranean Shearwater P. yelkouan has now been split into two species: Balearic Shearwater P. mauretanicus and Yelkouan Shearwater P. yelkouan. All Argyll records that have been specifically attributed relate to Balearic Shearwater, and there are, as yet, no accepted records of Yelkouan Shearwater in Great Britain.

The only sightings came from Machrihanish SBO, where 7 were seen on 5 dates in Aug including two on each of 20th and 29th, and Frenchman's Rocks, where singles were recorded flying south on 5th Aug, 7th Aug and 14th Sep.

EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL (STORM PETREL) *Hydrobates pelagicus* Paraig 0052
Summer visitor. The only known large breeding colonies are on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Breeding birds first come ashore in late May or Jun. Most sightings away from breeding colonies are during Jul-Sep.

Apr-May. There were no records for this period.

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Breeding. An estimated 1,700 prs were breeding at the Boulder Beach colony on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*; and the colony on Sanda Islands remained stable at an estimated 200 AOB (240 adults were ringed). A new breeding site was discovered on Staffa *Mull* but no information is yet available on numbers.

Jul-Sep. Single passage birds were seen during Jul at Oronsay (on 2nd) and at Machrihanish SBO (on 5th). In Aug a total of 183 birds were recorded on 7 dates at Machrihanish SBO, with a maximum of 66 on 24th. At Frenchman's Rocks a total of 20 were recorded on 5 dates in Aug. Apart from 23 flying south at Frenchman's Rocks in 3¼ hrs on 9th Sep, subsequent reports were all in single figures with singles flying west at Ardnave Point *Islay* on 6th Sep and 6th Oct, 3 from the Oban-Colonsay ferry on 17th Sep and 2 flying south at Frenchman's Rocks on 24th and 25th Oct. A bird was found freshly dead at Pulpit Hill (Oban) on 10th Nov.

Among birds controlled on the Treshnish Isles in 1999, 16 had been ringed as adults on Sanda (including one nearly 21 years old) and one had been ringed at the Basket Islands, Kerry, Eire (554km SW).

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL (LEACH'S PETREL)

Oceanodroma leucorhoa Gobhlan mara 0055

Scarce, but regular in autumn off western headlands following strong westerlies.

Sep-Nov. No birds were seen until early Sep when there was a brief flurry of records, starting on 6th when 8 flew south past Machrihanish SBO and one flew west at Ardnave Point *Islay*. Six more birds passed Machrihanish SBO on the following two days, 3 were at Frenchman's Rocks on 8th, and on 9th Sep 28 flew past Frenchman's Rocks in 3¼ hrs and 4 were seen from the Kennacraig-*Islay* ferry. There were no further records until Oct, when Machrihanish SBO had 3 on 2nd and 2 on 24th. Frenchman's Rocks had single birds on 8th & 21st Oct and two each on 24th & 25th Oct. The last record was of a single bird at Machrihanish SBO on 4th Nov.

NORTHERN GANNET (GANNET) *Morus bassanus* Sulaire 0071

The nearest breeding colonies to Argyll are Ailsa Craig (40 km east of Mull of Kintyre) and the Shiant Isles (140 km north of Mull). Common inshore from Apr to Oct, and often seen high up sea-lochs. Infrequently reported Nov/Dec.

Jan-Jun. The only birds recorded in Jan were 4 off Hynish *Tiree* on 14th and 10 were there on 13th Feb. One or two birds were seen from *Colonsay* during Feb, and the species was widespread from early Mar. In Apr one discovered in a walled garden in Campbeltown was captured with some difficulty and safely returned to Campbeltown Loch. The only count of 50 or more birds came from Rubha Chraiginis *Tiree* where 60 or more were following a fishing boat on 19th Jun.

Jul-Nov. On 3rd Aug approx. 100 were fishing offshore at Bullwood Quarry (Dunoon) *Cowal*. 120 or more were feeding offshore at Hynish on 21st Sep. Large numbers were recorded passing through Argyll waters in early Oct. A total of 170 flew south past Machrihanish SBO with other passage migrants on 2nd Oct, and daily sea-watches of birds passing *Tiree* gave hourly counts of 90 on 4th, 408 on 5th and 138 on 6th Oct. The last reported birds of the year were 10 offshore at Balephetrish Bay on 12th Nov.

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GREAT CORMORANT (CORMORANT)

Phalacrocorax carbo Sgarbh 0072

Resident. Breeds in Cowal, Gigha, Jura, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull and N Argyll. Less numerous than Shag. Small numbers occur on some inland waters. 71 chicks were colour ringed at 3 sites (3 letter code, green on white) during 1999. Please report date and place of any sightings to C. Craik (address p.3).

Jan-Apr. A minimum of 47 birds were present around the coast of *Tiree* on 15th Jan. The only other counts of ten or more birds were: 17 in Loch Indaal on 16th Jan, 16 at Eilean Aoghainn (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Jan, and 11 in Outer Loch Etive on 11th Mar.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 145 prs were noted breeding at 5 sites (colony size 6-65 prs). Together they fledged at least 263 young (1.8 young/pr) (cf 162-177 from 122 prs in 1999) and all 5 colonies fledged young. On Sanda Islands *Kintyre*, 28 obviously used nests were found in late Jun (cf 21 active nests in 1999).

Jul-Dec. Ten or more birds were reported from: Loch Indaal (10 recorded for WeBS counts in Sep, Oct and Dec), Eilean Fada (Loch Caolisport) (13 on 25th Sep) and East Kames (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* (11 on 1st Oct).

Apart from the occasional bird on the freshwater lochs of *Tiree*, there were no records from inland waters during the year.

EUROPEAN SHAG (SHAG)

Phalacrocorax aristotelis Sgarbh an sgumain 0080

Very common resident. Breeds on the coast and on islands in sea lochs. Widespread in winter but rare inland at all times.

Jan-Jun. Counts of 50 or more were reported from: West Hynish *Tiree* (50 at roost on 16th Jan), Oronsay (77 at Ceann Riobha on 9th Apr) and Treshnish Point *Mull* (50 or more on 23rd Apr). At least 500 were reported roosting on the Creachasdal Islands *Tiree* in Jun.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, at least 365 prs bred at 9 colonies (4-103 prs in size), (cf 374 prs at 8 colonies in 1999). Young were not counted at 3 colonies. At the other 6, ca 268 prs fledged ca 365 young (1.4 young/pr). At the 2 most successful sites, productivity was 2.1 and 2.0 young/pr. On the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, 244 nests were found on Lunga and 16 on Sgeir a Chaisteil, and 5 adults and 54 chicks were ringed; breeding was also confirmed on Bac Mor, Bac Beag, Cairn na Burgh Beg and Fladda. 20 prs were nesting at Scoor *Mull* and at least 6 were nesting at Druim an Aòineidh (Iona) *Mull*. Counts at sample census sites on *Colonsay* yielded 10 nests at Urugaig (cf 8 in 1999) and 37 nests at Pigs Paradise, mean clutch 2.59 (cf 31 in 1999, mean 2.20). Twelve prs nested on Oronsay (the first recorded breeding on this island), 76 prs nested at the RSPB reserve on *Coll*, at least 6 prs nested at Smaull RSPB reserve on *Islay*, and an estimated 500 prs bred on Sanda Islands. A survey by boat of the west coasts of *Islay* and *Jura* for Seabird 2000 in early Jun found totals of 108 AON for *Jura* and 286 AON for *Islay*.

Aug-Dec. On 11th Sep 1,000 birds were estimated to be roosting and feeding in the Sound of Gunna *Coll/Tiree*. Other counts of 50 or more birds included: 67 at the north end of Kilfinan Bay *Cowal* on 16th Sep, 66 flying past Balevullin *Tiree* on 7th Oct, 55 in Loch Caolisport on 19th Oct and 170 roosting on rocks at West Hynish on 18th Nov.

GREAT WHITE EGRET

Ardea alba Corra bhan mhor 0121

Vagrant. Only three previous Argyll records: one at Gruinart Flats (Islay) in Jun 1986, one at Ballachuan Loch, Seil (Mid-Argyll) in Apr 1988 and one at Loch Gruinart (Islay) in May 1998.

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An adult in breeding plumage was present all day at Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 18th May. Another sighting of an adult in breeding plumage at Loch Bhasapol *Tiree* exactly a month later, on 18th Jun, was presumed to relate to the same individual, although where it had been in the meantime is a mystery [AJL/JDi]*.

GREY HERON

Ardea cinerea Corra ghritheach 0122

Widespread resident, breeding in all areas.

Jan-Apr. Counts of 10 or more birds were reported from: Loch Etive (Outer) (max. 16 on 15th Jan & 13th Feb), Loch Don (max. 18 on 12th Mar), Loch Scridain (Inner) (max. 12 on 12th Mar) and RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 10 on 24th Apr). A complete coastal survey of *Tiree* on 14th-20th Jan revealed a total of 32 birds.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 12 BBS squares (33%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and in 3 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%). At Eilean Eoghainn (West L. Tarbert) *Kintyre* 18 nests were counted in Jun. Of these, one held a clutch of 3 eggs and 8 held 17 medium/large young. On *Colonsay*, 6 nests at Garvard, with at least 16 eggs, produced at least 13 young, and three nests at Mid-West Loch Fada produced at least two young; no nests were found at three former heronry sites. One nest at Eilean nan Ron, Oronsay, produced one young. Elsewhere, there were 4 occupied nests at a heronry at Kilfinichen Bay *Mull*, one nest at Rubha na Moine (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* and 2 nests were visible in trees at Bagh Dun Mhuiligh (L. Craignish) *Mid-Argyll*.

Jul-Dec. Counts of 10 or more birds were made at: Colintrave *Cowal* (11 on 3rd Sep), Loch Etive (Outer) (max. 24 on 17th Sep), Loch Indaal (max. 11 on 8th Oct), Loch Don (max. 14 on 31st Oct & 29th Dec), Loch Sween (max. 11 on 19th Nov) and Loch Scridain (Inner) (max. 12 on 17th Dec).

MUTE SWAN

Cygnus olor Eala 0152

Widespread but uncommon breeding species, both inland and at sheltered coastal locations. Absent from Colonsay. Pairs leave many breeding sites in winter, when flocks gather at favoured localities.

Jan-May. Counts made as part of the Swan Survey/WeBS in mid-Jan found the following totals: *Islay* 6; *Mid-Argyll* 91 (incl. 56 in Oban Harbour), *Mull* (Loch Don) 3, *N Argyll* (outer Loch Etive) 7; *Tiree* 29. A further 13 birds were reported from *Cowal*, *Kintyre* and *Ardtrishaig Mid-Argyll* at other dates in Jan, giving a minimum total for *Argyll* of 149 birds of which 25 were recorded as juvs. However, some areas were not covered and there is certainly some local movement in winter. Thus the true total is probably higher and, for example, 15 were counted between Balvicar Bay and Clachan Bridge (Seil Island) *Mid-Argyll* (an area not covered by the Swan Census) on 17th Mar.

Breeding. In the *Argyll* part of the SAMS study area, 27 prs were noted during the breeding season. Productivity of each pr was measured by the number of large young in late summer or autumn but the outcome was unknown for 4 prs. Nine prs were in areas where mink were controlled (to protect terns and gulls). Five of these raised 9 large young (b/ 3, 2, 2, 1, 1) and 4 prs raised no young (i.e. 1.0 young/pr). Fourteen of the 27 prs were in areas where mink were not controlled. Three of these raised a total of 11 young (b/ 4, 3, 4) and 11 raised no young (i.e. 0.79 young/pr). In addition, 5 broods totalling 22 juvs. were on Loch Gorm *Islay* on 24th Jul, 8 prs attempted to breed on *Tiree* (outcome unknown), a pr attempted to breed on *Scarba* (but failed) and a pr with 6 young at *Tayinloan* on 13th Jun had only two remaining by 13th Aug.

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Jul-Dec. The peak count on the freshwater lochs of *Tiree* was 72 on 11th Aug, most of which were on Loch a'Phuill. Highest counts at other favoured sites were: 14 on Outer Loch Etive on 17th Sep, 18 on Loch Sween on 22nd Oct, 18 at the head of Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 30th Oct, 11 on Loch Indaal on 1st Nov and 51 (inc. just one juv) in Oban harbour on 13th Dec.

WHOOPEE SWAN

Cygnus cygnus

Eala bhan

0154

Common on passage; smaller numbers winter. Loch a'Phuill (Tiree) is a site of national importance for wintering birds. A few birds summer in most years and breeding has been recorded.

Jan-Apr. Numbers on the four main freshwater lochs of *Tiree* peaked at 78 on 16th Jan, although 115 migrant birds were counted flying over on 22nd Mar [Table 1]. Smaller numbers were reported elsewhere throughout the winter, from all areas except *Coll*, *Jura* and *N Argyll*. Counts in double figures, most of which were in mid-Mar/early Apr when birds were obviously on the move, came from: Oronsay (max. 18 on 14th Mar), Loch Buie Mull (16 on the sea on 14th Mar), Ardnave Loch *Islay* (max. 15 on 17th Mar), RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 26 on 19th Mar), Arrochar *Cowal* (28 inc. 5 juvs on 2nd Apr) and Kilmichael Glen *Mid-Argyll* (17 flying N on 3rd Apr). A late bird was at Moine Mhor on 11th May.

Summering birds. There were 3 or 4 on Loch Bhasapol/ Loch a'Phuill from Jun to mid-Sep and 5 were present on 25th Sep, all of which were probably injured birds.

Oct-Dec. The first returning birds were seen on 5th Oct when 32 flew high over Heylipol *Tiree* and two were on *Islay* at RSPB L. Gruinart. Numbers built up rapidly over the next few days and by 7th Oct there were 56 at RSPB L. Gruinart, 4 at Aros Moss *Kintyre* and 5 at Loch Beg Mull. On the following day (8th), 30 were on Oronsay and 6 at Tayinloan; and 116 flew over Heylipol on 13th Oct.

In the latter part of Oct and into Nov, birds were widespread in groups of up to 25, and 10 or more were reported from: Moine Mhor (10 flying over on 19th Oct), Frenchman's Rocks (10 flying N on 21st Oct), Ardnave Loch *Islay* (max. 22 on 23rd Oct), Oronsay (12 on 31st Oct), Bridgend (Loch Indaal) (52 flying W on 1st Nov), Loch Indaal (max. 17 on 1st Nov), Ulva Lagoons (Loch Sween) (max. 23 inc. 11 juvs. on 19th Nov) and Loch Gorm *Islay* (14 inc. 4 juvs on 24th Nov). A whole-island census of *Tiree* on 3rd Nov revealed a total of 66 birds.

Numbers fell off generally in Dec, although there were still 44 on *Tiree* on 17th, 14 at Ulva Lagoons on 18th and 13 at Ardnave Loch on 24th.

Table 1. Maximum monthly counts of Whooper Swans at RSPB L. Gruinart *Islay* and on *Tiree* in 2000

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	1	2	26	16	0	0	0	0	0	56	15	n/r
<i>Tiree</i>	78	59	115	30	6	4	3	3	5	116	66	44

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Anser brachyrhynchus

Geadh gorm

0158

Variable numbers on passage, with occasional large flocks. Relatively few winter.

Jan-Apr. From Jan to Mar single birds were recorded among flocks of other species at various locations on *Islay*. A colour-ringed individual at Knocklearoch on 18th Mar had been marked in Iceland on 31st Jul 1998. Up to 3 were recorded during goose counts on *Tiree* during Jan-Mar. The only migrant flock reported during Apr comprised 29 birds at RSPB L. Gruinart on 19th.

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May-Aug. A single bird was seen among the resident Greylags on *Tiree* during May-Jul.

Sep-Dec. The first autumn migrants reported were 11 coming off the sea at Frenchman's Rocks on 18th Sep. They were followed by 13 over Heylipol *Tiree* on 19th and 26 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 20th Sep. Elsewhere 4 were with Greylags at the head of Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Sep, and 8 flew N at Machrihanish SBO on 30th Sep. From Oct onwards very few birds were recorded, with 8 at Frenchman's Rocks on 5th Oct, 3 at RSPB L. Gruinart in mid-Oct, max. 5 at The Laggan *Kintyre* on 29th Oct, up to 3 up to the year end on *Tiree*, and 3 on Loch Indaal on 29th Dec.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Anser albifrons

Geadh bhlar

0159

Winter visitor. Birds are of the Greenland race A. a. flavirostris, apart from occasional vagrants of the European race A. a. albifrons. Argyll holds about 40% of the world population of the Greenland race in winter, mainly on Islay. All the localities covered by the SNH goose counts are sites of international or national importance for wintering birds. A small introduced population breeds on the Rhinns of Islay.

Jan-May. A whole-island census on *Islay* on 10th Jan gave a total of 10,260 birds (cf 8,931 in 1999 and 12,418 in 1998). The co-ordinated count in late Mar produced a total of 17,312 in *Argyll* (cf 20,192 in 1999) [Table 2]. In *Kintyre* birds were at The Laggan (1,322), Clachan (232) and Tayinloan (1,585), and in *Mid-Argyll* at Danna (71), Keills (219), Ulva (82) and Moine Mhor (33) [SNH Goose Project].

The last notable count on *Tiree* was 200 on 14th Apr and the main spring departure from *Islay* took place on the night of 15th-16th Apr. A flock of 60 migrants flew over Ulva Islands (Loch Sween) on 19th Apr, and up to 20 stragglers stayed on at RSPB L. Gruinart until early May. Late singles were at Lower Kilchattan *Colonsay* on 6th May and at RSPB L. Gruinart on 12th May.

Breeding. The only breeding season record involved 5 (introduced) birds at Easter Ellister *Islay* on 29th Jun.

Sep-Dec. Twelve birds at Claddach *Islay* on 9th Sep were probably of introduced origin. A single bird was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 19th Sep, but 8 flying in from the N on 30th were the first obviously returning birds. Numbers here soon built up to a peak of 1,337 on 11th Oct. Elsewhere, 6 flew S at Machrihanish SBO on 2nd Oct, and 2 birds passing over on 5th Oct were the first on *Tiree*. Numbers at The Laggan *Kintyre* had built up to 825 by 23rd Oct. The co-ordinated count carried out in mid-Nov gave a total of 18,786 birds in *Argyll* [Table 3] (cf 18,710 mid-Nov 1999). The *Kintyre* birds were at The Laggan (1,386), Tayinloan (1,551) and Clachan (366); and all but 22 (at Moine Mhor) of the 453 counted in *Mid-Argyll* were on the Tayvallich peninsula [SNH Goose Project]. The only significant count of birds not covered by this survey was 130 at Ardnacloch (Appin) *N Argyll* on 6th Nov.

Ageing of samples (n = 4,725) on *Islay* in late autumn showed that 8.2% were young birds (well below the long-term average) with a mean of brood size of 3.5 (cf 3.6 in 1999) [MAO].

Table 2. Numbers of White-fronted Geese in Argyll areas, 25th to 30th Mar 2000.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
3,139	405	34	1,014	1,347	157	0	11,201	15

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

Table 3. *Numbers of White-fronted Geese in Argyll areas, 11th to 12th Nov 2000.*

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
3,303	453	0	520	1,064	125	40	13,281	n/r

GREYLAG GOOSE

Anser anser

Geadh glas

0161

Increasing breeding population on Colonsay, Mull, Tiree and Coll. Some of these may be native birds that have colonised from the Outer Hebrides, while birds of introduced origin breed in Mid-Argyll. Tiree, Coll and Colonsay are sites of international importance for wintering birds. Migratory flocks also reported from most areas.

Jan-Apr. In late Mar, the SNH co-ordinated goose count recorded a total of 4,133 birds in Argyll (cf 3,502 in 1999), of which 60.2% were on *Tiree* [Table 4]. Higher numbers were recorded on 17th Feb at two of the sites, Moine Mhor (299) and *Tiree* (total for island of 2,984). In addition, there were 32 in Outer Loch Etive on 15th Jan. Migratory flocks included 220 in the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 5th Apr and 90 flying N over Loch Don on 22nd Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (14%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). Confirmed breeding records came from all areas of Argyll except *Jura* and *Kintyre*.

Five prs with 5 broods totalling 17 goslings were found on *Colonsay*. Eight prs bred on *Oronsay* and produced at least 3 broods totalling 10 goslings. In *Mid-Argyll*, 6 prs bred at Kilmoronaig (Connel), hatched nests were found on Eilean Creagach (Loch Melfort) and Glas Eilean (Loch Fyne), 2 prs were present on the Abbot Islands (Loch Etive) but no nest was found, two prs with broods of 4 and 5 young were seen in Shuna Sound, and a pr with 6 large young were on Reisa mhic Phaidean (nr Craignish Point) on 27th Jun. A nest with eggs was found on the Burnt Islands (Kyles of Bute nr. Colintrave) *Cowal* in May and a family party was there at the end of Jul. In the Sound of Mull 2 prs had at least 5 goslings between them on Ban Eileanan, a hatched nest was found on Eileanan Glasa with 15 adults on the sea nearby, and a pr was on Scallastle beach on 29th May. A pr was on Geasgill Mor (Loch na Keal) in Jul but no young were seen; and at Fladda (Treshnish Isles) Mull a pr with 4 young were on the sea in late Jun. On Loch Gorm *Islay* there were 5 broods totalling 22 juvs in late Jul.

A survey on *Tiree* during Jun revealed a minimum of 175 broods comprising 630 goslings; and there was a minimum of 10 broods on Gunna Island *Coll*, while 2 prs bred on *Coll* RSPB Reserve.

Aug-Dec. In late summer, numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart peaked at 345 on 31st Aug but had declined to 7 by 13th Oct. A whole-island census on *Tiree* on 29th Aug found 3,522 birds. In mid-Nov, the co-ordinated goose count produced a total of 4,704 in Argyll [Table 5] (cf 4,289 in 1999). Of this total 74.6% were on *Tiree* and all the *Mid-Argyll* birds were at Moine Mhor [SNH Goose project]. Later in the winter, 240 were at Tayinloan on 26th Nov and, in Dec, 177 were counted at Moine Mhor, 36 were in Outer Loch Etive on 15th, and 377 were found during a whole-island count on *Coll*.

A flock of 60 or more flying S over Blairmore *Cowal* on 27th Dec was an unusual record for this locality.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

Table 4. Numbers of Greylag Geese in Argyll areas, 25th to 30th Mar 2000.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
731	120	0	587	2,489	136	38	0	0

Table 5. Numbers of Greylag Geese in Argyll areas, 11th to 12th Nov 2000.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
141	137	0	679	3,508	112	25	102	n/r

SNOW GOOSE

Anser caerulescens Geadh ban 0163

A small introduced population breeds on Coll and on Mull, wintering mainly on Coll. Stragglers among wintering Greenland Whitefronts on Islay and Tiree may have a wild origin.

Jan-Apr. An adult white-phase bird was present with Greenland White-fronted Geese on Tiree from at least 9th Jan to 9th Apr.

Breeding. No information was available from Coll or Mull regarding the introduced population.

Aug-Dec. Two blue-phase adults seen with other exotic wildfowl at the head of Loch Feochan Mid-Argyll on 14th Aug were presumably escapes. A single white-phase bird was reported at various locations on Islay from 9th Oct to 25th Dec.

CANADA GOOSE

Branta canadensis Geadh dubh 0166

Resident population on Colonsay, introduced in 1934. Regular breeding, since 1992, in Mid-Argyll, now in increasing numbers. Occasional breeding attempts elsewhere. A transatlantic origin seems probable for at least some of the medium-sized and small individuals seen in winter goose flocks on Islay.

Jan-Apr. A single large-race bird was with Greylag Geese at Hough Tiree on 12th Jan and 3 members of one of the, possibly vagrant, smaller races were reported from Bridgend Islay on 20th Feb. Elsewhere, 20 were at Garvard Colonsay on 20th Mar. On 22nd Mar, 54 were counted at An Lodan (at the south end of Loch Awe), 6 at Loch Ederline, 6 at Ardfern and 6 in the Add estuary, making a total of 70 birds in Mid-Argyll.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (14%), (cf one of 15 in 1999). Breeding was confirmed on Colonsay and in Kintyre, Mid-Argyll and N Argyll.

On Colonsay (excluding Oronsay), 9 prs with broods totalling 28 young, together with at least 15 non-breeders, were found in Jun. An adult was seen with 3 goslings on Oronsay on 8th May.

In Mid-Argyll a pr was present on the Abbot Isles and a predated nest was found; a pr was seen at Eilean Inshaig (Ardfern) with 5 small goslings in early May; 5 prs were seen near and on Tucker's Islet (L. Craignish) with a total of 25 goslings; and 3 prs on Eilean Gamhna (L. Melfort) had a total of 15 goslings on 16th Jun. A pr nested on Eilean an Ruisg (L. Feochan) and, on 13th May, the nest contained 3 Eider eggs as well as 6 Canada Goose eggs; adults were seen with 7 goslings at Eilean Gamhna on 31st May; and 2 adults with 2 broods of 5 and 4 goslings were seen at Loch Craignish causeway on 29th Jun. On 30th Jun, 2 adults were on Cam Loch (Knapdale) with 3 juvs, and 17 adults with 11 juvs were on Loch Glashan. A flock of 26 at Blarghour on 15th Jun included 2 goslings, and a pr bred unsuccessfully on Loch Leathan.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

In *Kintyre* a pr at Ballochgair raised a brood of 5 goslings to fledging and a pr was present at Loch na Ciob near Carradale on 3rd May.

Aug-Dec. During Aug, 20 were in the Add Estuary and 63 on Loch Craignish, while 38 were counted on Oronsay on 16th Sep. A small bird, possibly of the race *hutchinsii*, was at Loch Gruinart during the 2nd half of Oct, and a large-race individual was at Cornaigbeg Tìree on 20th Oct.

A BARNACLE X CANADA GOOSE HYBRID was seen at Loch an Sgoltaire Colonsay on 11th Jun, and one on Oronsay on 15th Jun was probably the same bird.

BARNACLE GOOSE

Branta leucopsis

Cathan

0167

Very large numbers of birds from the Greenland population winter on Islay, and smaller numbers elsewhere. Most of the localities covered by the SNH goose counts are sites of international importance for wintering birds. A few birds occasionally summer. A few introduced birds have bred on the Rhinns of Islay.

Jan-May. On 11th Jan, an all-island count of *Islay* produced a total of 31,795 (cf 35,417 in Jan 1999). The SNH co-ordinated goose count on 25th-30th Mar recorded an Argyll total of 32,501 birds (cf 38,269 in 1999 and 32,841 in 1998). As usual, the great majority (28,500 or 87.7%) were on *Islay* [Table 6].

Peak winter counts at other times included 788 on *Coll* on 10th Jan, 1,607 on *Tìree* on 17th Feb (the highest recorded total for the island) and 75 over Inch Kenneth *Mull* on 15th Mar.

There were still 2,550 birds at RSPB L. Gruinart on 19th Apr but numbers dwindled rapidly after this, to 18 on 30th Apr and 2 on 2nd May.

Summering birds. The only summer record was one at Loch Gruinart on 23rd Jun.

Aug-Dec. Unusually, birds were seen as early as Aug, with one on Oronsay on 27th and one at Balephetrish *Tìree* on 29th. There 4 were on Oronsay on 8th Sep. The origin of at least some of these birds may be open to question.

Seven birds flying S at Sandaig *Tìree* on 21st Sep were almost certainly genuine migrants, as were 7 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 22nd. Numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart increased rapidly after this, with mass arrivals from 5th Oct onwards bringing the total to 16,490 by 13th. Also on 5th Oct, a flock of 221 flew in off the sea at Balevullin *Tìree*, 81 were flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 10th Oct, and 7 were at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd Oct.

By the time of the co-ordinated count in mid-Nov, *Islay* had 35,332 birds (cf 35,429 in 1999) and accounted for nearly 95% of the Argyll total of 37,262 (37,766 in 1999) [SNH Goose Project; see Table 7].

The peak winter count for *Coll* was made in Dec, when 718 birds were recorded. Ageing of a sample of 10,473 birds on *Islay* revealed that 10.1% were young birds (slightly above the average over the last ten years), with a mean brood size of 2.1 (cf 1.9 in 1999) [MAO].

Table 6. Numbers of Barnacle Geese in Argyll areas, 25th to 30th Mar 2000.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tìree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
1	610	0	667	1,123	37	563	28,500	0

Table 7. Numbers of Barnacle Geese in Argyll areas, 11th to 12th Nov 2000.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tìree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
3	280	0	380	1,024	2	242	35,332	n/r

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

BRENT GOOSE

Branta bernicla

Geadh got

0168

Passage migrant, uncommon in spring but sometimes in considerable numbers in autumn. Very few winter. Most birds seen in Argyll are of the light-bellied race B. b. hrota, which breeds in Greenland and arctic Canada and winters mainly in Ireland. Birds of the dark-bellied race B. b. bernicla occur occasionally, and there has been one record of the Black Brant B. b. nigricans.

Jan-Apr. Up to 5 birds were seen at various locations on *Islay* from Jan to early Apr. Elsewhere, Oronsay had a single juv. on 1st Jan and an adult on 29th Mar, a single bird was with Greenland White-fronted Geese at Tayinloan from Feb to mid-Apr, and one was seen on Oronsay and *Colonsay* from late Apr to mid-May. The only reports of migrant flocks concerned 15 at Loch Indaal on 8th Apr and 10 at Gott Bay on 10th Apr.

Sep-Dec. The first birds of autumn were at Machrihanish SBO where 2 flew S on 7th Sep. These were followed, on 9th, by 235 flying S in 3¼ hrs at Frenchman's Rocks, 20 at Loch Gruinart and 5 flying S through the Sound of Iona *Mull*. The first arrivals on *Tiree* were 31 at Balephetrish Bay on 17th Sep but, following this, counts on the island were only in single figures until 13 flew past Balevullin on 10th Oct. Also on 10th Oct, Machrihanish SBO had the highest count of autumn with 164 birds. Numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart reached 82 on 27th Sep and then declined to 57 on 29th Sep and 38 on 11th Oct. Apart from 22 in 2 hrs at Frenchman's Rocks on 21st Oct and 15 at Loch Indaal on 24th Oct and 14 there on 30th Nov, the remaining records all concerned single figure counts on *Islay*.

COMMON SHELDUCK (SHELDUCK)

Tadorna tadorna

Cra-gheadh

0173

Widespread breeding species, especially on sandy coasts. The majority are absent from mid-Aug to late Oct, when they migrate to moulting grounds.

Jan-May. At Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart, numbers peaked at 210 in May (*cf* max. 177 in Jan 1999) [Table 8]. Elsewhere, counts of 20 or more birds were made at Tayinloan (max. 35 in Feb), The Strand *Colonsay* (max. 47 on 13th Feb), Ceann an t-Sailein (Loch Sween)(max. 37 on 11th Mar), Loch Don (max. 38 on 9th Apr), Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 36 on 8th May) and on *Tiree*, where a whole-island coastal survey on 14th Jan found a total of 61 birds.

Breeding. On *Colonsay* (inc. Oronsay), a total of 19 prs plus 17 unattached birds were found in Jun and 6 broods totalling 45 young were seen. Sanda Islands had two prs: one had a brood of 3, the other failed. An adult with 5 young was at Tayinloan on 18th Jun, and a pr with 4 juvs were at Loch Crinan on 24th Jun. Three prs with a total of 12 young were found on Iona *Mull* in early Jun, and 2 prs nested in Loch Beg *Mull*.

Aug-Dec. The last summer record was of 8 birds at RSPB L. Gruinart on 27th Aug, but 12 were at Tayinloan on 15th Sep, an unusual date for this species. Following this, none was recorded until 23rd Oct when 10 were at Bridgend Merse *Islay*. Apart from 26 at Loch Gruinart on 24th Nov and 47 at Loch Indaal on 15th Dec [Table 8], the only other site with 20 or more birds was Loch Don, where 38 were present on 18th and 29th Dec.

Table 8 Maximum monthly counts of Shelduck at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	162	108	23	163	1	n/r	54	0	0	26	n/r
Indaal	43	39	52	38	47	31	27	9	0	10	11	47

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

MANDARIN DUCK (MANDARIN) *Aix galericulata* 0178
Introduced species which has bred regularly at Loch Eck (Cowal) in recent years. The present size of the Argyll population (whose origin is unknown) suggests that it may well now be self-sustaining.

The two records received, involving a female on a large garden pond at Tobermory Mull on 7th Jun and a pr with 2 juvs at Braevallich (Loch Awe) Mid-Argyll, probably relate to recent escapes. No information was forthcoming regarding the Loch Eck Cowal population.

EURASIAN WIGEON(WIGEON) *Anas penelope* Glas lach 0179
Scarce and local breeding species. Common passage migrant and winter visitor to all areas.

Jan-Apr. Numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal Islay peaked at 477 birds in Mar (cf 618 in Jan 1999) and numbers on Tiree were well up on 1998 and 1999 [Table 9]. Other than those listed in Table 9, the only sites with counts of 100 or more birds were: Outer Loch Etive (max. 127 on 15th Jan) and Loch Don (max. 110 on 16th Jan). Flocks of 50-100 were reported from Balliemore Cowal and Tayinloan.

Breeding. Breeding occurred at Loch Tulla N Argyll where 2 broods totalling 8 young were seen in Jun. No evidence of breeding elsewhere was reported, although birds were present on Islay and Tiree in May and Jun.

Sep-Dec. The combined counts at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal built up to a peak of 734 in Oct (cf 902 in Oct 1999) [Table 9]. The only other sites reporting counts of 100 or more birds were: Loch Sween Mid-Argyll (max. 126 on 20th Oct), Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll (max 102 on 27th Nov) and Loch Don (max. 170 on 29th Dec).

Table 9. Maximum monthly counts of Wigeon at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll), Holy Loch (Cowal) and Tiree in 2000 (i.e. all sites which regularly held 100+ birds in the winter months).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart*	255	204	368	99	32	1	0	0	293	363	285	n/r
L. Indaal	95	119	109	9	0	2	0	0	410	371	398	333
L. Crinan	101	63	148	0	3	0	0	67	250	413	210	208
Holy Loch	152	96	26	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	?	?	?
Tiree	297	397	316	80	5	2	6	9	56	144	200	184

* The majority of birds were on the flooded fields of RSPB Loch Gruinart.

A presumed EURASIAN WIGEON X AMERICAN WIGEON hybrid was seen at Port Ellen Islay 20th Mar.

AMERICAN WIGEON *Anas americana* 0180
Vagrant. Five previous Argyll records, all since 1989 and all of single males.

What is now presumed to be our regular returning male was seen at Ardfert (Loch Craignish) Mid-Argyll on 16th Mar and subsequently in the River Add Estuary on 30th Apr.

The pattern was repeated in the autumn, when it was seen near the head of Loch Craignish on 8th Oct and then in Loch Crinan on 22nd Oct and intermittently until the end of the year [R&DM/JDi/JHa] *.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

GADWALL

Anas strepera

Lach glas

0182

Scarce but regular on passage and in winter, with most recent records from Kintyre, Islay, Mid-Argyll and Tiree. Breeding confirmed on Tiree and probable on Islay 1986 - 1994.

Jan-May. A pr was seen regularly at RSPB L. Gruinart from Jan to Mar. In Apr a pr was at Tayinloan on 1st, 6 birds were at Loch Leathan *Mid-Argyll* on 5th, and up to 4 (2 prs) were seen at RSPB L. Gruinart from 9th to the end of the month.

Breeding. Up to 5 birds (inc. 2 prs) were at RSPB L. Gruinart until mid-May, but there was no evidence of breeding.

Jun-Dec. A drake was on Loch an Eilein on 9th Jun and on 3rd and 24th Jul. Three birds were at Tayinloan on 26th Aug and 3rd Sep; and 7 at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Sep were the first recorded there in recent years. Numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart in Sep peaked at 5 on 27th Sep, but in the afternoon of 14th Oct a total of 23 were present, possibly a record count for *Islay*. A female was at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 20th Oct; and 5 flew S at Machrihanish SBO on 29th Oct. Up to 3 were at RSPB L. Gruinart in Nov and Dec and one was at Tayinloan on 30th Dec. Altogether a good autumn for this species, which seems to have become more frequent and widespread in the last two or three years.

EURASIAN TEAL (TEAL)

Anas crecca

Crann lach

0184

Widespread but uncommon breeding species. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Jan-Apr. At Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart *Islay*, numbers peaked at 1,050 in Jan (cf. 1,451 in Jan in 1999) [Table 10]. The only other sites with counts of 50 or more birds at this time were Loch Sween (max. 59 on 16th Jan), Loch Don (max. 80 on 16th Jan) and Ardnave Loch *Islay* (max. 77 on 25th Feb).

Breeding. Recorded in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). At RSPB L. Gruinart 41 prs were on the flooded fields in early May but only 3 broods were seen. Females with young were seen at two locations on *Tiree*, and at least one pr bred on Oronsay. A female with 10 ducklings at Torran (Loch Awe) was the only confirmed breeding record from *Mid-Argyll*; and birds were present at Loch Leathan *Mid-Argyll* in Apr and at Loch Tulla *N Argyll* in May but with no evidence of breeding.

Aug-Dec. The total of 2,343 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 22nd Sep was an increase even on the record total of 2,150 on 23rd Sep 1999 [Table 10]. Other than those listed in Table 10, the only sites with counts of 50 or more birds were: Tayinloan (max. 60 on 16th Oct), Ardnave Loch (max. 78 on 24th Nov), Loch Sween (max. 52 on 18th Dec) and Loch Don (max. 125 on 18th Dec).

Table10. *Maximum monthly counts of Teal at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) and Tiree in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart*	928	577	890	324	82	28	12	104	2,343	1,710	1,398	n/r
L. Indaal	122	100	62	24	2	0	0	41	38	117	101	157
L. Crinan	60	106	98	0	0	0	0	15	100	43	128	101
Tiree	257#	406	208	75	6	3	0	48	209	135	197	312

*The majority of birds were on the flooded fields of RSPB Loch Gruinart.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

This WEBS count was made on *Tiree* on 16 Jan. In a coastal survey of *Tiree* on 14 Jan, 306 were counted.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL

Anas carolinensis

Hitherto considered a race (*A. c. carolinensis*) of Eurasian Teal, this is now treated as a separate species.

Rare visitor from North America with eight or more accepted Argyll records since 1980, mostly on Islay. Some records may well involve returning individuals.

An adult male first seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Jan was present until 14th Feb. Possibly the same individual was at the same site on 3rd and 17th May [TapR/RDM/AJW/CRM et al]*.

MALLARD

Anas platyrhynchos

Lach

0186

Common breeding, passage and wintering species.

Jan-Apr. Numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart *Islay* peaked at 340 in Jan (cf 314 in Jan 1999) [Table 11]. Other than those shown in Table 9, the only count exceeding 50 birds at this time came from Loch Sween (max. 65 on 16th Jan).

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 12 BBS squares (25%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and 3 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%). Two territories were recorded in the coastal CBC plot at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1) and up to 3 broods of young were on Lochan Taynish. At RSPB L. Gruinart, 47 prs on the flooded fields in early May produced at least 37 broods, and females with young were seen at two other sites on *Islay*. On *Colonsay* 4 prs were present in Jun with up to 6 recently fledged young, and 2 prs bred on *Oronsay*. Four prs bred on *Sanda* and up to six young were seen, while a minimum of 10 broods was found on *Tiree*. Elsewhere, there were scattered records of confirmed breeding from *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *N Argyll*.

Aug-Dec. Numbers at Loch Indaal and RSPB L. Gruinart peaked at 390 in Oct, well down on 1999's record total of 704 [Table 11]. Other than those shown in Table 11, the only sites holding 50 or more birds were *Tayinloan* (max. 61 on 1st Oct) and *Loch Caolisport* (238 on 13th Nov and 308 on 16th Dec).

Table 11. Maximum monthly counts of Mallard at two sea-lochs on *Islay*, *Loch Crinan* (*Mid-Argyll*), *Outer Loch Etive* (*N Argyll*), *Holy Loch* (*Cowal*) and *Tiree* in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart*	209	95	55	40	163	96	100	170	347	338	148	5
L. Indaal	131	129	42	23	11	41	21	20	38	52	77	201
L. Crinan	12	17	11	3	13	0	40	95	102	18	8	9
L. Etive	139	97	62	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	143	116	171	112
Holy Loch	56	30	4	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	?	?	?
Tiree	144	77	33	30	68	48	75	180	213	48	38	48

NORTHERN PINTAIL (PINTAIL)

Anas acuta

Lach stiùireach

0189

Very scarce breeding species. Scarce passage migrant. Winter visitor, regular only on Islay and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. Numbers on *Islay* reached a peak in Mar, when a total of 64 birds were at RSPB L. Gruinart and on Loch Indaal [Table 12]. The highest count on *Tiree* was at Loch Riaghain, where 7 birds were present on 12th Mar. There were no records elsewhere.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

Breeding. Two prs were present on *Tiree*. Their behaviour indicated that one pr nested, but no ducklings were seen. Although 7 prs were at RSPB L. Gruinart until the end of Apr, they all left in May and there was no evidence of breeding.

Jul-Dec. A drake was at Loch a'Phuill on 30th Aug and 4 were at Port Fada *Tiree* on 4th Sep, but the first returning birds at RSPB L. Gruinart were not until 17th Sep when 2 were present. Numbers there peaked at only 10 [Table 12], but at Bridgend Merse *Islay* numbers reached 20 on 31st Oct and the Loch Indaal total peaked at 27 on 15th Dec. The highest count on *Tiree* was only 2, at Loch Riaghain in Nov and Dec. Apart from one flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 22nd Sep, there were no records outwith *Islay* and *Tiree*.

Table 12. *Maximum monthly counts of Pintail at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	4	24	22	14	0	0	0	0	10	2	1	n/r
L. Indaal	14	21	42	22	0	0	0	0	2	20	16	27

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula* Lach crann 0191
Rare summer visitor and passage migrant. Bred in Kintyre in 1994 and on Islay in 1997.

Jan-May. A pr present at RSPB L. Gruinart from 23rd Apr was joined by a second male on 30th Apr, and one or two males were there until 18th May. A pr was at Loch Bhasapol from 28th-30th Apr, and 3 males and one female were seen at various locations on *Tiree* from 4th-11th May. Three were seen on Oronsay on 13th May.

Breeding. There was no evidence of breeding.

Jun-Sep. A female/eclipse male was at An Fhaodhail *Tiree* on 19th Jun, two were on Oronsay on 27th Aug, and one at RSPB L. Gruinart on 2nd Sep was the last of the year.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (SHOVELER) *Anas clypeata* Lach a'ghuib leathainn 0194
Scarce breeding species. More numerous as passage migrant and winter visitor, although largely restricted to Islay and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. Numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart were well up again and a new high count for *Islay* was achieved when 70 were present on 14th Mar. *Tiree* had a total of 29 on 16th Jan and numbers declined thereafter to 9 on 4th May [Table 13]. Elsewhere, birds were reported from Oronsay (2 on 21st Apr) and Moine Mhor (a female on 5th Jan and a male on 7th Mar).

Breeding. Recorded in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). Five broods of young were seen at various locations on *Tiree*, and 6 broods were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart.

Sep-Dec. The peak count at RSPB L. Gruinart, of 56 on 24th Nov, was the same as for this period in 1999. Numbers were also high on *Tiree*, where the total of 36 on 17th Dec was the highest in recent years [Table 13]. The only records elsewhere were of single males at Loch Crinan on 10th Dec and Loch Caolisport on 16th Dec.

Table 13. *Maximum monthly counts of Shovelers at Loch Gruinart (Islay) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	24	52	70	15	41	6	0	2	34	32	56	n/r
Tiree*	27	18	18	15	9	6	3	5	13	18	35	36

* Mostly on Loch Bhasapol and/or Loch a'Phuill.

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COMMON POCHARD (POCHARD) *Aythya ferina* Lach mhasach 0198

Winter visitor in small numbers. No confirmed breeding in recent years.

Jan-Apr. The only counts in double figures came from *Tiree* (WeBS count of 30 on 16th Jan and 14 on Loch Bhasapol on 13th Feb). Elsewhere, up to 3 were reported from Loch Leathan, Loch nan Druimnean, Loch Awe and St Mary's Loch (Ford), all in *Mid-Argyll*. A lone female was at RSPB L. Gruinart from 15th-22nd Apr.

Sep-Dec. The first returning bird was a female at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 22nd Sep. Apart from 11 at Loch Gorm *Islay* on 24th Sep, and 7 there on 14th Oct and 3 at Loch Finlaggan *Islay* on 27th Dec, the remaining records all concerned single birds, at Machrihanish SBO on 2nd and 23rd Oct, Loch Bhasapol from 16th-20th Oct, Loch Skerrols *Islay* on 2nd Nov, and Loch an Eilein on 9th Nov.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula* Lach thopach 0203

Scarce breeding species. Common winter visitor.

Jan-Apr. The WeBS count of 138 on *Tiree* (of which 94 were on Loch Bhasapol) on 21st Feb was the highest since regular records began [Table 14]. The only other sites with counts of 10 or more birds were: Easter Ellister *Islay* (max. 28 on 3rd Feb), Dubh Loch (Glen Shira) *Mid-Argyll* (17 on 2nd Feb), Loch Gorm *Islay* (max. 35 on 25th Mar) and Loch Ballygrant *Islay* (19 on 29th Apr).

Breeding. The only confirmed breeding record was of 2 broods on Loch Bhasapol in Jun, although birds were present during the breeding season on *Colonsay* and *Islay* and in *Mid-Argyll*.

Sep-Dec. Numbers peaked in Oct when there were 116 on *Tiree* on 20th [see Table 14] and 55 at Loch Gorm on 14th. Other counts of 10 or more birds came from: Loch Gorm (42 on 24th Sep), Lochan Taynish *Mid-Argyll* (13 present in Nov) and Loch Finlaggan *Islay* (12 on 27th Dec).

Table 14 *Maximum monthly counts of Tufted Ducks at Ardnave Loch (Islay) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ardnave L.	n/r	12	11	25	15	n/r	n/r	n/r	3	14	18	5
Tiree	106	138	111	88	26	10	5	3	35	116	88	67

GREATER SCAUP (SCAUP) *Aythya marila* Lach mhara 0204

Winter visitor and passage migrant. Large numbers at Loch Indaal (Islay), which is a site of national importance for wintering birds, but scarce elsewhere. Occasionally summers.

Jan-May. Numbers at Loch Indaal peaked at 780 on 16th Jan (*cf* 1,120 in Jan 1999) [Table 15]. There were still 83 present on 3rd May and a single female on 13th May. Elsewhere on *Islay* there was a single bird at RSPB L. Gruinart from Jan to late Mar (with 2 on 13th Jan) and a male at Ardnave Loch on 28th Apr.

The only other records were from Loch Bhasapol where there were 2 males & 2 females on 9th Jan, 3 birds on 13th Feb, 2 on 12th Mar and a single male on 9th Apr.

Summering birds. A single female was present on Loch Etive near Taynuilt in Jun but with no evidence of breeding.

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Jul-Dec. None were reported until 10th Sep, when 111 were counted on Loch Indaal and numbers there built up to a peak of 1,450 on 29th Dec [Table 15]. Elsewhere on *Islay*, Frenchman's Rocks had 30 passing southward on 18th Sep (inc. 28 males), 6 on 2nd Oct and 5 on 21st Oct, and RSPB L. Gruinart had single birds on 15th & 22nd Sep. A total of 49 flying south past Machrihanish SBO on 2nd Oct was the maximum autumn count there. Few birds were present on *Tiree*, where up to 3 were at Loch Bhasapol from 11th Sep to the year end. The only other records concerned single females on Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 23rd-25th Sep and Loch an Torr *Mull* on 4th Dec.

Table 15. *Maximum monthly counts of Scaup at Loch Indaal (Islay) in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	780	680	265	260	83	0	0	0	190	309	880	1,450

COMMON EIDER (EIDER) *Somateria mollissima* Lach lochlannach 0206
Resident breeding bird, common on all suitable coasts. Large flocks of moulting drakes and first-year birds gather at some sites during Jun to Aug. Many Argyll breeding birds apparently winter in the Firth of Clyde, which is a site of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-Apr. Other than those listed in Table 16, flocks of 100 or more birds were reported from: Holy Loch *Cowal* (max. 217 on 20th Jan), Oronsay (max. 144 on 27th Feb), Scallastle Bay *Mull* (max. 245 on 9th Apr) and Killunaig *Mull* (110 on 22nd Apr). In addition, 189 were counted during a coastal survey of *Tiree* on 14th-20th Jan, although most were well offshore.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, ca 548 nesting birds were noted at 25 sites. 436 of these (80%) were at the largest 5 colonies. The largest colony (at least 250 nests, 46%) was at Burnt Islands, Kyles of Bute. A further 190 nests (35%) were at 7 sites in Loch Fyne and Loch Gilp. On *Colonsay* a census in Jun found 109 males and 48 females with no young, and 42 females with 42 broods totalling 110 young (mean size of 11 broods on Ardenish peninsula was 2.69 [cf 3.21 in 1999]). On Treshnish Isles *Mull* a minimum of 7 broods of 1 to 4 young were seen on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil, and 3 empty nests that had previously held incubating females were found on Sgeir a Chaisteil in early Jul. In addition, reports of females with young came from many other sites in *Cowal*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*.

A female with 6 newly hatched ducklings was seen at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 19th Aug, a very late date for this species. The first brood in this area was seen on 20th May.

Autumn Eider Survey. The co-ordinated count of Eiders in the Firth of Clyde, which took place, as usual, in Sep, gave a total of 4,087 for the Argyll part of the area (cf 5,519 in 1999, 4,771 in 1998 and 5,715 in 1997). Numbers were well down on previous years and this was a reflection of low levels in the Firth of Clyde as a whole. No records of mass mortality were recorded anywhere in the Firth so the birds were probably displaced elsewhere (C. Waltho). Also much higher counts were made at at least one key site in Argyll, earlier in the autumn (Otter Ferry - see below).

Aug-Dec. The highest single count was 1,118 at Otter Ferry on 3rd Sep (cf co-ordinated Eider count here of 721 on 24th Sep), while numbers at Loch Indaal peaked at 231 on 10th Sep [Table 16]. Elsewhere, counts of 100 or more were made at Kilmichael Beg (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* (156 on 19th Sep) and off Hynish *Tiree* (max. 170 on 20th Dec).

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Table 16. Maximum monthly counts of Eider at Loch Indaal (Islay) and Otter Ferry (Cowal) in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	79	141	127	181	101	147	161	191	231	171	122	161
Otter Ferry	n/r	n/r	n/r	380	140	n/r	n/r	1,044	1,118	341	600	n/r

KING EIDER

Somateria spectabilis

0207

Vagrant. Ten Argyll records dating back to 1889, all of single males. The most recent was in Kintyre in 1998.

On 8th Apr an adult male was found near North Ledaig (Ardmucknish Bay) N Argyll by a visitor. The bird stayed in Ardmucknish Bay (between North Ledaig and Ledaig Point) for the rest of April and was seen by several observers. It was last recorded on 1st May [G. Coombs/ARJ/JMH et al]*.

LONG-TAILED DUCK

Clangula hyemalis

Eun buchainn

0212

Uncommon winter visitor, most frequent in Sound of Gigha (Kintyre), Islay, Coll and Tiree. Usually marine but occasionally seen on inland lochs. Occasional summer records.

Jan-May. Numbers were greatest in the Sound of Gigha from mid-Mar to the end of Apr, with 26 on 18th Mar, 37 on 5th Apr and 39 on 24th Apr. The highest count elsewhere was 20 in Balephetrish Bay on 22nd Mar with smaller numbers there throughout the period. Smaller numbers were seen regularly on Loch Indaal, with monthly maxima of 6 on 16th Jan, 7 on 13th Feb, 9 on 27th Mar and 9 on 14th Apr. On 18th Mar, 6 were seen at Bowmore and 6 at Knockangle Point, and at other times up to 4 were at other localities on Islay. The last birds of spring were 2 in Balephetrish Bay on 1st May and a male at Bowmore on 3rd May.

Summering birds. One flew S past Machrihanish SBO on 23rd Jun.

Sep-Dec. The first bird of autumn was one flying N past Machrihanish SBO on 4th Sep; and singles were seen at Loch na Keal on 29th Sep and at Balephetrish Bay on 30th Sep. The highest count was 8 birds in Hynish Bay Tiree on 12th Nov, and numbers in Loch Indaal peaked at 6 on 12th Nov. Only single birds were recorded in Balephetrish Bay during the period, and 3 drakes at Rhunahaorine Point Kintyre on 26th Nov were the most reported from the Sound of Gigha.

BLACK SCOTER (COMMON SCOTER)

Melanitta nigra

Lach bheag dubh

0213

Very rare breeding species in Islay, Mid-Argyll and N Argyll. Present throughout the year in the Sound of Gigha (Kintyre) and at Loch Indaal (Islay). Scarce winter visitor elsewhere.

Jan-Jun. Numbers at Loch Indaal peaked at 97 on 9th Apr (cf 142 on 18th Apr in 1999) [Table 17]. Only small numbers were reported from the Sound of Gigha until early Apr when 126 were counted on 5th. Thereafter numbers steadily increased with 231 recorded on 24th Apr, reaching a peak in Jun when 264 were counted on 25th, the majority of which were drakes. The only other counts in double figures were 47 at the mouth of Loch Caolisport on 10th Apr and ca 45 in the Firth of Lorn N Argyll on 22nd Apr. Eight were at the mouth of West Loch Tarbert Kintyre on 18th Feb, and elsewhere up to 3 birds were seen off Tiree, on

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Loch na Keal, at Taynuilt *Mid-Argyll* and at various locations around *Islay*.

Breeding. The regular breeding site on *Islay* dried up completely in spring but at least 7 prs were present in early Jun. A pr was seen on Loch Awe *Mid-Argyll* on 3 dates in early Jun, and a pr was present at site in *N Argyll* throughout May but not thereafter.

Jul-Dec. The Loch Indaal flock peaked at 63 on 10th Sep (*cf* 69 on 18th Jul in 1999) [Table 17]. A total of 260 was counted in the Sound of Gigha on 17th Jul but the most reported after that were 11 off Tayinloan on 14th Oct. Apart from single birds elsewhere on *Islay*, the only other record concerned 2 flying past Machrihanish SBO on 2nd Oct.

Table 17. Maximum monthly counts of Common Scoter at Loch Indaal (*Islay*) in 2000

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	35	69	87	97	42	42	22	23	63	49	61	49

SURF SCOTER

Melanitta perspicillata

0214

Rare. At least 10 Argyll records, mostly in spring.

An adult male was found with Black Scoters in Loch Indaal on 26th Oct and may have been present for a day or two thereafter [GJ/TapR/GY/MAO et al]*. There have now been records of this species in each of the years 1996-2000.

VELVET SCOTER

Melanitta fusca

Lach dubh

0215

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Most often on the west coast of Kintyre and at Loch Indaal (Islay), rare elsewhere. Occasional summer records.

Jan-Jun. The majority of records came from the Sound of Gigha where the following counts were recorded: 5 (4M/1F) on 12th Jan, 2 (M) on 4th Mar, 7 (4M/3F) on 18th Mar, 11 (7M/4F) on 27th Mar, 16 (incl. 10M) on 5th Apr, 11 on 10th Apr, 13 on 13th Apr and 4 (3M/1F) on 25th Jun. All the remaining records were on *Islay*, where single females were seen in the Bowmore area of Loch Indaal on 9th and 29th Apr and on Loch Gorm (unusual freshwater location) on 17th May.

Jul-Dec. All records were in the Sound of Gigha, where 6 were seen on 17th Jul and single birds on 14th Oct, 5th Nov and 10th Dec.

COMMON GOLDENEYE (GOLDENEYE) *Bucephala clangula* Lach bhreac 0218

Common winter visitor. Birds regularly present in all areas from early Oct to late Apr. Occasional summer records.

Jan-Apr. The highest count was 110 at Loch Caolisport on 3rd Feb [Table18] and 90 were counted there on 19th Feb. Other than those in Table 18, the only sites with counts of 10 or more birds were: Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* (19 on 4th Jan), Kilnaughton Bay *Islay* (max. 24 on 24th Jan), Loch na Keal (max. 15 on 16th Feb), Ardnave Loch *Islay* (11 on 16th Mar), Holy Loch Cowal (max. 15 on 18th Mar), Loch Gorm *Islay* (max. 12 on 25th Mar), Loch Leathan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 10 on 1st Apr) and Loch Don (max.13 on 18th Apr).

There were no records of summering birds.

Sep-Dec. The only Sep record concerned a single 'brownhead' on Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 28th. Apart from this and 8 on Loch Indaal on 8th Oct, no birds were reported until late Oct. However by 5th Nov 66 had gathered in the Sound of Gigha, and numbers in Loch

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Caolisport peaked at 108 on 16th Dec [Table 18]. Elsewhere the only site with 10 or more birds was Loch Gilp with max. 10 on 6th Dec.

Table 18. Maximum monthly counts during 2000 of Goldeneyes at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Caolisport (Mid-Argyll), Outer Loch Etive (N Argyll), Loch Sween (Mid-Argyll) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree. No birds were reported at these sites from May to Aug.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	10	17	6	2		0	9	11	11
L. Gruinart	5	10	5	n/r		0	n/r	2	n/r
L. Caolisport	n/r	110	n/r	n/r		n/r	0	26	108
L. Etive	23	27	24	n/r		0	0	3	14
Loch Sween	22	n/r	27	n/r		0	0	13	21
Tiree	47	51	51	18		0	40	20	36

N.B. Holy Loch (*Cowal*) is not included as no counts were received after Mar.

SMEW

Mergus albellus Sioltaich breac 0220

Rare winter visitor.

A female/immature bird was on Loch Seil Mid-Argyll on 1st and 2nd Jan [JDi]*. After a period of eight years (1990-1997) with only a single record, the species has now been recorded in each of the last three winters.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

Mergus serrator Siolta dhearg 0221

Common resident breeder. Large moulting flocks gather at some sites during Jul-Aug. Loch Indaal (Islay) is a site of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-Apr. The peak count at Loch Indaal was 41 on 9th Apr [Table 19]. The only other counts of 20 or more birds came from: Loch Scridain Mull (max. 22 in Jan) and Loch Laich N Argyll (20 on 12th Apr). A coastal survey of Tiree from 14th-20th Jan found at least 100 birds.

Breeding. A pr with b/2 were found on Sanda Island, and adults with recently hatched young were reported from several sites in Colonsay, Mid-Argyll and Tiree.

Aug-Dec. A moult congregation in the Sound of Gigha numbering 271 birds on 25th Jun had increased to 420 by 17th Jul. A similar gathering at Uiskentuie (Loch Indaal) numbered 120 on 21st Jul and had increased to 152 birds by 13th Aug. The peak WeBS count on Loch Indaal of 163 was recorded on 14th Aug [Table 19]. The only other sites with counts of 20 or more birds later in the year were: Oronsay (max. 28 on 28th Jul), Hynish Tiree (max. 26 on 3rd Aug), Kilfinan Bay Cowal (max. 28 on 10th Sep), Otter Ferry Cowal (max. 26 on 24th Sep), Balephetrish Bay (max. 29 on 13th Oct), Loch Caolisport (24 on 16th Dec) and Tayinloan (max. 37 on 30th Dec).

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Table 19. *Maximum monthly counts of Red-breasted Mergansers at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) and Loch Sween (Mid-Argyll) in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	4	15	5	3	n/r	5	n/r	n/r	21	6	10	n/r
L. Indaal	35	39	38	41	31	29	120	163	107	72	51	32
L. Crinan	18	11	4	9	10	6	0	0	32	11	16	n/r
L. Sween	13	n/r	20	14	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	12	11	13

GOOSANDER

Mergus merganser

Siolta

0223

Scarce breeding species, mainly in Cowal, Mid-Argyll, Mull and N Argyll. More widespread in winter but only in small numbers.

Jan-Apr. A gathering of 15 birds on the Mishnish Lochs *Mull* on 15th Mar included 6 adult males, and 3 prs were at Ceann Loch Caolisport *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd Feb. Elsewhere up to 3 birds were seen in *Islay* (4 sites), *Mull* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (6 sites) and *N Argyll* (2 sites).

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf one of 15 in 1999) and in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). Females with young were seen on Loch Awe *Mid-Argyll* in Jun and on Loch Tulla *N Argyll* on 13th Jul. In addition there were records of females or prs during the breeding season in *Kintyre* (one site), *Mid-Argyll* (6 sites) and *Mull* (one site).

Sep-Dec. There were records of 7 birds on Loch Etive on 17th Sep and 9 on Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Sep. Otherwise one or two birds were recorded regularly on Loch Etive and Loch Caolisport, and up to 3 were seen on Loch Leathan *Mid-Argyll*, Loch Awe, Loch na Keal, Loch Gair *Mid-Argyll*, Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll*, River Oude *Mid-Argyll*, Portachoilan *Kintyre*, River Aros *Mull* and Taynuilt *Mid-Argyll*.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE

Haliaeetus albicilla

Iolair mhara

0243

Formerly resident breeder in Argyll. A re-introduction programme involving the release of 82 birds on Rum between 1974 and 1985, and 59 in northern Scotland between 1993 and 1998, has been successful in establishing breeding pairs in the wild. All records are requested, ideally with details of age, activity and presence/absence of wing tags.

Breeding. In Scotland, 22 areas were occupied by territorial prs/birds and 8 successful prs fledged a total of 12 chicks. In the year which marked the 25th Anniversary of the Sea Eagle Project, the 100th chick fledged in Scotland since the project began was recorded.

Wandering or dispersing birds were reported, on the islands, from *Islay* (at least 2 individuals), *Jura* (at least 5 individuals), *Mull* (at least 8 individuals) and *Kerrera* and *Scarba Mid-Argyll*. Mainland records came from *Crossaig Kintyre*, the coast of Loch Fyne *Cowal*, *Appin N Argyll* and, in *Mid-Argyll*, from *Carsaig*, *Crinan*, *Easdale*, nr *Kilmelford*, *Loch Awe* and *Taynish NNR*.

EURASIAN MARSH HARRIER (MARSH HARRIER)

Circus aeruginosus

Clamhan Ioin

0260

Scarce but now more or less annual passage migrant, with records in every year but one since 1986. Most records Apr-Jun.

A female bird flying over the reed bed at Loch a'Phuill on 1st Oct was the only record for the year.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

HEN HARRIER

Circus cyaneus Breid air toin 0261

Sparse but widespread breeding species. A survey in 1998 produced an estimate of 66-189 breeding pairs (at 95% confidence levels) in Argyll and Bute.

Jan-Apr. Numbers at the two roosts at Moine Mhor were down again in 2000. The highest combined total was only 5 in Feb with 3 in Mar. The roost at RSPB L. Gruinart was similarly down in numbers; only 3 were found there on 7th Jan, 4 on 29th Feb and 3 on 9th Mar. Elsewhere, hunting birds were reported from Oronsay and Tiree and from several sites in Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull and N Argyll.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf one of 15 in 1999) and in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). Samples of nests were monitored in Cowal, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull and Bute. Of 33 territories checked, at least 28 prs laid eggs and of these, 22 prs produced at least 58 young (2.63 young/successful territory) [ARSG].

Jul-Dec. The only roost count at RSPB L. Gruinart was 3 on 20th Dec. The Moine Mhor roosts did slightly better, with a maximum of 6 birds in Nov but still only 3 in Oct and 2 in Dec. A female and up to 2 males were seen regularly on Oronsay throughout the period, and up to 2 birds were present on Tiree. Birds were widely reported on Islay and from one location on Jura, 2 in Kintyre, 7 in Mid-Argyll, 6 on Mull and one in N Argyll.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (SPARROWHAWK)

Accipiter nisus Speireag 0269

Widespread, resident breeding species.

During the year birds were reported from all areas of Argyll except Coll and Tiree. Recorded prey species included Robin, Blackbird, Blue Tit and Chaffinch and, on 17th Mar a female at Achnacree more N Argyll was seen to attack, kill and eat another female Sparrowhawk. In May a large grey female was seen on Colonsay that could easily have been mistaken for a Northern Goshawk (Goshawk).

Breeding. Not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares, (cf one of 15 in 1999). Nests with young were reported from Dunoon Cowal, Duntaynish (Taynish NNR) Mid-Argyll, Fearnoch Mid-Argyll and Gleann Osamail Islay.

COMMON BUZZARD (BUZZARD)

Buteo buteo Clamhan 0287

Resident breeding bird, common in all areas.

Widespread records were received from all Argyll areas except Jura (where the species was almost certainly present) and a total of 18 birds were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Nov.

Breeding. Recorded in 6 of 12 BBS squares (50%), (cf 5 of 15 in 1999) and in 4 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (29%). On Colonsay, including Oronsay, at least 17 occupied territories were located. Of these 10 failed/did not breed, the outcome of one was unknown and one with young was not found. Mean brood size of 5 sites found = 1.6 [DCJ]. 31 occupied territories were located in the Cowal study area. From these, 28 prs are known to have fledged 59 young [DA, AF]. Of the 31 territories checked in SW Mull, at least 20 prs fledged a minimum of 30 young [P. Haworth]. Overall, a better breeding season than in 1999 with a total of 97 young known to have fledged from the monitored territories and 1.83 young produced per successful territory [ARSG].

In addition, 3 prs at RSPB L. Gruinart reared at least 4 young, five prs held territory on Tiree and a pr that bred on Sanda Island produced three young.

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GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos* Iolaire 0296
Scarce resident breeding species. Immatures tend to wander and may be recorded in areas where breeding does not occur.

In 2000, Golden Eagles were recorded away from the breeding areas, in winter, in Colonsay, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll and Mull.

Breeding. Of 62 known territories checked, 59 were occupied. From these, 19 nests (32.2% of those occupied) were successful, fledging a minimum of 22 young. At 1.15 young per successful pr, productivity was slightly better than the figure of 1.06 for 1999 but the percentage of occupied territories that successfully produced young was still below the 5-year mean of 38.6% [ARSG].

A bird ringed as a chick on Mull in 1984 and found dead in the sea off Rum in May was almost 16 years old.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus* Iolaire iasgach 0301
Summer visitor. Very scarce breeding species. Occurs more widely on passage.

Mar-May. Very early arrival dates were recorded, with the first flying N over Loch Etive on 17th Mar followed by one at Loch Ederline Mid-Argyll on 25th and another passing through the River Add Estuary Mid-Argyll on 27th Mar. The only other passage bird reported was one at Crosshill Loch Kintyre on 13th May.

Breeding. As in 1999 the 4 known prs all bred successfully and reared a total of 9 chicks, 6 of which were colour-ringed. A chick fledged and ringed near Loch Awe in 1998 was found dead in the Gambia in November 2000, 200 miles inland and inside a crocodile! [ARSG].

Jun-Sep. Away from the known breeding sites, single birds were at Loch Skerrols Islay on 10th Jun and Loch Frisa Mull on 17th Jul.

Passage birds were seen at Loch Gorm Islay on 17th Aug, Loch Feochan Mid-Argyll on 18th Aug, West Loch Tarbert Kintyre on 23rd Aug, Machrihanish SBO on 11th Sep, Tayvallich Mid-Argyll on 21st Sep, Smaull Islay on 21st Sep and at RSPB L. Gruinart on 27th & 31st Aug and 2nd, 4th & 10th Sep. The last bird was reported from the inner Loch Scridain area of Mull on 22nd-24th Sep.

COMMON KESTREL (KESTREL) *Falco tinnunculus* Clamhan ruadh 0304
Widespread but uncommon breeding bird. Population in some areas appears to fluctuate from year to year. Emigration from some areas in autumn (e.g. Mull) and immigration to others.

There were records from all areas except Coll and Jura during the year. Away from known breeding areas, one or two were seen on Tiree in Jan, Mar, Aug, Nov and Dec.

Breeding. On the Ross of Mull it was estimated that only 6 out of 20 known breeding areas were occupied [P. Howarth] and no occupied sites were found on Colonsay [DCJ] [per ARSG].

A bird hunting over Taynish Mill on 11th Nov was the first record at Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll since 1996.

Two birds seen at Killinallan Islay on 21st Oct were part of an apparent influx to the island. Other probable immigrants were 6 individuals seen hunting along the road from Claonaig to Campbeltown Kintyre on 21st Dec.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

MERLIN *Falco columbarius* Meimeal 0309
Scarce breeding species, possibly under-recorded. More widely distributed on passage and in winter.

Jan-Apr. Birds were reported regularly on Oronsay, Islay and Tiree (where min. 4 individuals in Jan). There were also records from 2 localities on Mull and one in Kintyre.

Breeding. Only 7 territories were checked and of these 3 were occupied, fledging 11-12 young [ARSG]. A family party comprising a female and 2 juvs was seen at a site on Mull on 26th July. Birds were also recorded during the breeding season in Cowal and Mid-Argyll and on Islay.

Aug-Dec. Up to 2 birds were seen frequently on Oronsay throughout the period. Tiree also had one or two regularly, with 3 birds present in Nov; and up to 2 birds were reported from various localities on Islay. The only records elsewhere involved single birds at Moine Mhor in Sep and at 2 localities on Mull in Nov/Dec.

PEREGRINE FALCON (PEREGRINE) *Falco peregrinus* Seabhag 0320
Sparsely distributed but widespread breeding species. Found throughout the year in all areas. Breeding recorded in fifty-two 10 km squares in Argyll in 1991 survey [RSPB et al.].

Outside the breeding season, there were records from all areas except Jura (where the species was almost certainly present).

Breeding. Of 12 known territories checked in Cowal, 11 were occupied. At these, 8 pairs were known to be successful and fledged at least 16 young [DA, AF]. Elsewhere in Argyll, 5 sites were monitored; all 5 were successful and fledged at least 8 young [ARSG]. Successful breeding was recorded in Coll, Colonsay, Cowal, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull and Tiree, but there were no breeding season records from Jura or N Argyll.

NB A national survey of breeding Peregrines is taking place in 2002. Please report all breeding season sightings.

WILLOW PTARMIGAN (RED GROUSE) *Lagopus lagopus* Coileach fraoich 0329
Sparsely distributed resident breeding bird.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in 5 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (36%). Found in 3 of the 6 Carradale Kintyre BBS squares. There was confirmed breeding at 2 sites on Mull and there were records during the season from Cowal, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll and N Argyll.

Outside the breeding season, birds were reported from Islay, Kintyre and Mull.

ROCK PTARMIGAN (PTARMIGAN) *Lagopus mutus* Tarmachan 0330
Very localised resident breeding bird, generally above 800 m. All records required.

In N Argyll there were records of one or two birds from Beinn Mhic-Mhonaigh in Jan, Ben Starav in May, and from Beinn nan Aighenan, Beinn Eunaich and Beinn Dorain in Sep. All the remaining records were from Mull where there were 2 birds at Coire Beamach in Apr, one at Coire nan Dearc in Jul and 2 at Coillan Fhraoich Mhoir in Oct.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

BLACK GROUSE *Tetrao tetrix* Caoileach dubh 0332
Scarce and local resident breeding bird. Populations in some areas may derive from released birds. Numbers apparently in steep decline: all records required.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* 1 of 15 in 1999). Two cocks were at a lek at Abhainn Achachois Kintyre in Mar, and males and signs of a lek were seen in the Narachan Forest Kintyre.

The only other records involved single males at Octofad Islay in Mar and Killinallan Islay in Aug, and at least 5 birds on Beinn Ghuilean Kintyre in Nov and Dec.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa* Cearc thomain dhearg chasach 0358
Birds (some hybrids with Chukar A. chukar) introduced to several areas. Although this species is in Category C of the British list, populations in Argyll do not appear to be self-sustaining.

Birds were seen in the Kiloran area of Colonsay in May and Dec following the reported release during 2000 of approx. 100 birds on the island. The only other record concerned a single bird at Rockside Islay on 9th Nov.

COMMON PHEASANT (PHEASANT) *Phasianus colchicus* Easag 0394
Long-established, widespread and common resident breeding bird. Birds also annually reared and released on some estates.

During the year birds were reported from all areas except Coll, Jura and N Argyll. A substantial increase in numbers was noticed in Colonsay in Jun following the reported release of ca 150 birds during 2000. The highest single count was 32 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 12th Oct. The only other locations with counts in double figures were Monybachach (nr. Skipness) Kintyre (16+ on 2nd Jan) and Ballimore Cowal (13 on 15th Jun).

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* one of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). A female with 3 chicks was in a garden at Kintallan (Tayvallich) Mid-Argyll in Jun.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus* Snagan allt 0407
Scarce breeding bird, numbers augmented by passage migrants and winter visitors. Under-recorded.

Jan-Apr. Single birds were reported at RSPB L. Gruinart in Feb, Mar and Apr and, on Tiree, single birds were seen or heard at Loch Bhasapol and An Airidh in Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* none of 15 in 1999). During the breeding season, calling birds were recorded at 4 locations on Tiree, four were heard on the RSPB Reserve on Coll, 3 were calling at RSPB L. Gruinart, and one bird was calling at Loch Fada Colonsay. A chick caught by a cat at Cornaigmore Tiree on 1st Jul was released, apparently unharmed.

Aug-Dec. Two were seen at An Airidh on 30th Sep, one was flushed from a ditch at East Lodge (Ballygrant) Islay on 26th Oct, and one was calling at Coullabus Wood Islay on 27th Oct.

There were no mainland records during 2000.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana* Traon breac 0408
Rare and irregular summer visitor. First confirmed breeding record for Argyll in 1993.

A male was calling at RSPB L. Gruinart from mid-May until the end of Jul but there was no further evidence of breeding.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

CORN CRAKE (CORNCRAKE) *Crex crex* Traon 0421
Localised summer visitor. Breeding mainly on Islay, Colonsay, Iona (Mull), Tiree and Coll.

The first record of spring was at Imeraval Islay on 20th April. This was followed by birds on Tiree calling at the Airport and at Balephetrish Bay on 23rd Apr, and records on Colonsay on 28th and Oronsay on 29th Apr.

Breeding. Another encouraging year with a further increase following the recovery in numbers in 1999 [Table 20]. Apart from a small decline on Iona and only a single record from mainland Mull, numbers of Corncrakes in all areas of Argyll held their own or showed a welcome increase in 2000. Coll and Tiree once again achieved their highest totals of calling males for at least 10 years.

Table 20. Numbers of calling Corncrakes in Argyll areas in 2000, with totals for 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996 and 1995 for comparison.

Area	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Coll	37	40	42	40	48	53
Tiree	140	117	136	136	144	153
Mull	0	0	0	2	2	1
Iona	4	5	8	12	13	9
Colonsay & Oronsay	12	8	8	14	21	21
Islay	14	7	17	4	7	8
Total	207	177	211	208	235	245

In addition, at least 4 calling birds were reported from the Treshnish Isles Mull [TIARG], two were calling on Eilean Mor (McCormaig Islands) Mid-Argyll, and one was reliably reported from Little Colonsay Mull, all sites that are not censused annually.

The only birds recorded after the end of Jul were on Tiree, where one was seen crossing a road at Balemartine on 25th Sep and a juv. was killed by a cat at Baugh on 29th Sep.

COMMON MOORHEN (MOORHEN) *Gallinula chloropus* Cearc uisge 0424
Localised resident breeding species.

Breeding. Five or six prs were present at RSPB L. Guinart and, in Jul, a pr nesting at Moine Mhor was seen with 3 juvs. An adult was seen with 2 juvs. at Claonaig Water and, elsewhere in Kintyre, breeding was reported from Skipness (b/4), Glenreasdale (b/2) and Rhunahaorine Point (b/1+). Prs were also present in the breeding season at Loch Bhasapol Tiree and at Bridgend Islay.

Birds were also present on Islay at Carnain (Loch Indaal), Imeraval, Loch na Cachie and Loch Tallant, in Kintyre at Skipness, in Mid-Argyll at Glen Sheileach, Loch a' Bharain (Cairnbaan), Loch Ederline and Lochgilphead, in N Argyll at Keil Crofts and Benderloch, and on Tiree at Cornaigmore, Hough, Loch Bhasapol (regularly), Loch Earblaig and The Reef.

One seen on Oronsay on 1st and 13th May was the first sighting there since the 1970s, and there have been no records from Colonsay itself since 1997.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

COMMON COOT (COOT) *Fulica atra* Lach a bhlair 0429
Very scarce breeder and uncommon winter visitor.

Jan-Mar. The regular flock on Loch Bhasapol numbered 10 birds throughout Jan and peaked at 11 on 13th Feb. A single bird was present at RSPB L. Gruinart from 2nd-16th Jan and elsewhere on *Islay* single birds were at Loch Ballygrant in Feb and Loch Gorm in Mar. The only mainland sightings were at the south end of Loch Awe *Mid-Argyll*, where there were 2 birds on 1st Feb and one on 7th Mar.

Summering birds. An apparently lone bird was on the Glen Lonan Loch *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Jun.

Aug-Dec. An adult bird at Loch an Sgoltaire *Colonsay* on 16th Sep was the first record for the island since 1997, although the species has bred there in the past. Elsewhere, a single bird was at RSPB L. Gruinart on several dates from 24th Sep to 23rd Oct and, on *Tiree*, a single bird was on Loch an Eilein in Sep and Oct and numbers on Loch Bhasapol built up from 3 in Oct to 7 on 12th Nov and 5 on 17th Dec. There were no mainland records at this time.

EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER (OYSTERCATCHER) *Haematopus ostralegus* Gille brighde 0450
Widespread and common breeding species. Flocks congregate at favoured locations outside the breeding season.

Jan-Apr. Numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart peaked at 948 in Mar (*cf* peak of 936 in Apr 1999) [Table 21]. A complete coastal survey of *Tiree* on 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 443 birds.

The only sites with counts of 100 or more not listed in Table 21 were Holy Loch *Cowal* (506 on 21st Jan and 353 on 12th Feb) and Lismore *N Argyll* (106 on 12th Apr).

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* 2 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 94 prs Oystercatchers were noted breeding at 54 sites, mostly small islands in sealochs. The outcome of 47 prs was unknown. Of the other 47 prs, 25 (53%) were considered successful, because large or flying young were present (20 prs) or adults were alarmed (5 prs). 22 prs (47%) were unsuccessful, and at least 19 of these were at colonies where mink predation occurred.

Three territories were recorded in the coastal CBC plot at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2). Seven breeding prs were located on the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, at least 6 prs were present on Oronsay, 34 prs at the RSPB Reserve *Coll*, 3 prs on the fields at RSPB L. Gruinart (with others in the estuary) and at least 25 prs bred or attempted to breed on the Sanda Islands.

Jul-Dec. Large numbers congregated in the area of the sand spit (Oitir) at Otter Ferry *Cowal* and the following counts were recorded: 750+ on 13th Aug, 704 on 10th Sep and 500+ on 23rd Sep. At Machrihanish SBO, 584 birds passed in 4 hrs on 12th Aug. Apart from those in Table 21, the only site with counts exceeding 100 was Loch Caolisport (125 on 13th Nov and 121 on 16th Dec).

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

Table 21. Maximum monthly counts of Oystercatcher at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll), The Strand (Colonsay) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	242	353	n/r	4	6	26	155	139	n/r	119	n/r
L. Indaal	447	401	585	562	481	444	402	391	337	387	414	507
L. Crinan	46	46	87	53	53	60	56	70	44	31	32	32
The Strand, Colonsay	66	91	92	75	73	43	132	93	4	n/r	16	30
Tiree	443*	44	152	90	62	35	56	40	38	35	12	2

* This total derives from a coastal count of wintering waders 14th-20th Jan.

RINGED PLOVER

Charadrius hiaticula

Trilleachan traghad 0470

Widespread and common breeding species. Flocks of birds congregate at favoured locations outside the breeding season, especially on passage. Tiree is a site of international importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. Numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart peaked at 499 in May [Table 22]. During a coastal survey of Tiree on 14th-20th Jan 561 birds were counted and other significant counts on Tiree at this time included: 102 at The Reef on 2nd Mar, 215 at Gott Bay on 23rd Apr and 250 at Loch a'Phuill on 28th Apr. The only other sites with 50 or more birds were Ledaig Point N Argyll (ca 75 on 9th Jan), Fiddien Mull (50 on 22nd Apr) and Ardnave Point Islay (60, also on 22nd Apr). A flock of 10 birds at Ardnave Point on 15th May were considered to be of the *tundrarum* type (the race breeding in Lapland and N. Russia).

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 10 BBS squares surveyed, (cf one of 15 in 1999). On Colonsay 27 breeding prs were located in Jun and a possibly incomplete count on Oronsay found 15 further prs (cf 41 prs on Colonsay and Oronsay in 1999). At least 7 prs bred on Sanda Islands including a successful pr on Sheep Island, the first known breeding record for this site. A minimum of 50 prs were on territory at The Reef Tiree in Apr, 22 prs were present on the RSPB Reserve at Coll, birds were present at RSPB L. Gruinart but no count was made, and there were indications that at least 5 prs attempted to breed on Treshnish Isles Mull. There were also records of prs during the breeding season in Cowal and on mainland Mull.

Aug-Dec. The highest count of autumn was on Tiree, where a total of 411 birds were counted at various sites on 28th Sep. The island continued to hold good numbers until late in the year, with counts of 160 at Sorobaith and Balephetrish Bays on 13th Oct, 190 in Gott Bay on 12th Nov, 215 at Sorobaith and Balephetrish Bays on 26th Nov, and 130 at these two bays on 14th Dec.

Other sites with counts of 50 or more birds (in addition to those in Table 22) were: Otter Ferry Cowal (max. 67 on 10th Sep), south of Rhunahaorine Point Kintyre (70 on 7th Oct) and Loch Don (max. 55 on 8th Dec).

Table 22. Maximum monthly counts of Ringed Plover at two sea-lochs on Islay and on Oronsay in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	6	29	120	350	n/r	n/r	75	84	11	70	n/r
L. Indaal	47	49	38	97	49	29	31	61	83	69	38	69
Oronsay	74	123	23	150	14	30	5	n/r	71	5	116	91

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus* Amadan-mointich 0482
Scarce migrant, mostly in late Apr and May. Occasional breeding records in N Argyll.

Two birds, considered to be a pr, were seen on Beinn Talaidh *Mull* on 23rd Apr, one was at The Reef *Tiree* on 27th Apr, and two birds were present on Beinn a'Chochuill *N Argyll* on 7th May.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis fulva* 0484
Vagrant. No previous Argyll records.

On the morning of 12th Oct, at Vaul *Tiree*, a smaller, slimmer bird was noticed amongst a group of 30 Golden Plovers. The bird was watched for over an hour and detailed notes were taken. It was later positively identified as this species, rather than its close relative the American Golden Plover (recorded once in Argyll, on *Colonsay* in 1992). There have been only ten previous records of Pacific Golden Plover in Scotland, most of which were in the Northern Isles [AJL]*.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER (GOLDEN PLOVER) *Pluvialis apricaria* Feadag 0485
Sparse but widespread breeding species. Upland afforestation has greatly reduced available breeding habitat in some areas. More numerous in winter and especially on passage.

Jan-May. Once again by far the largest numbers were on *Tiree*, with an estimated total of 4,500 in the Reef/Heylipol area on 26th Apr. The maximum count on Oronsay was 314 on 24th Apr [Table 23]. Other than those listed in Table 23, the only sites with counts of 50 or more birds were Gartbreck (Loch Indaal)(220 on 14th Apr) and Ledmore *Mull* (80 on 16th Apr).

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 12 BBS squares (25%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). At least 3 calling males were on An Gearnna (Ben More) *Mull* on 30th May, and a pr were present on moorland at Loch na Machrach Moire *Kintyre* in Jun.

Aug-Dec. Numbers on *Tiree* peaked on 3rd Nov, when approx. 3,000 were counted on the island [Table 23]. The Laggan *Kintyre* had good numbers in Oct with a peak count of approx. 500 at the Airfield on 26th. WeBS counts at Loch Indaal yielded totals of 101 on 8th Oct, 260 on 12th Nov and 275 on 15th Dec. Elsewhere on *Islay*, 250 were at Gartbreck and over 100 at Mulindry on 28th Oct, and 52 were at Smaull (RSPB) on 30th Dec. Smaller numbers were recorded at Lochdon and Lochbuie *Mull* but no other site had 50 or more birds.

Table 23. Maximum monthly day-counts of Golden Plover and at Loch Gruinart and on Oronsay and *Tiree* in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Oronsay	0	83	117	314	2	2	0	0	8	100	20	30
Tiree*	335	750	2,300	4,500	0	0	0	236	500	2,000	3,000	850
L Gruinart	n/r	197	215	40	0	0	0	n/r	66	240	74	n/r

*Estimated whole island counts but the majority of birds were usually in The Reef/Heylipol area.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

GREY PLOVER

Pluvialis squatarola Trilleachan 0486

Uncommon passage migrant, mostly to islands. A few winter, mainly on Islay.

Jan-Apr. Higher numbers were recorded for this period than usual. The complete coastal survey of *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 45 birds. On *Islay*, birds were recorded in the Ardnave area on several dates, with a flock of 10 near the Point on 10th Feb. At RSPB L. Gruinart 11 were counted on 14th Mar and 9 were present on 23rd Apr. Elsewhere, single birds were at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 4th Jan and Loch a'Phuill on 28th Apr, and 2 were on the estuary at Fiddien Mull on 26th Apr.

Aug-Dec. The first returning bird was a single in Loch Gruinart on 25th Jul followed by 2 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd Aug. Two flew south past Machrihanish SBO on 2nd Oct, followed by singles on 13th and 15th Oct. The WeBS count at Loch Gruinart yielded a total of 28 birds on 22nd Sep and, elsewhere, four were at Port Fada *Tiree* on 24th Sep. Single birds were at Loch Crinan on 17th Sep, Gott Bay on 28th Sep and Balephetrish Bay on 13th Oct. All the remaining reports were from *Islay* where 3 flew south at Braigo on 15th Oct, 3 were at Bridgend on 23rd Oct, 6 in Loch Gruinart on 27th Oct, 3 at Ardnave on 1st and 19th Nov, 4 in Loch Indaal on 12th Nov and 2 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 24th Nov. There were no reports of birds in Dec.

NORTHERN LAPWING (LAPWING)

Vanellus vanellus Carracag 0493

Localised breeder and widespread wintering species.

Jan-Apr. The complete coastal survey of *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 1,055 birds. Numbers, generally, peaked in Feb, when in addition to the counts shown in Table 24, 150 were counted at Tayinloan on 23rd. The only other sites with counts of 50 or more birds were Loch na Cille *Mid-Argyll* (51 on 16th Jan) and Fiddien Mull (125 on 14th Mar). Birds were also reported, in smaller numbers, from *Cowal* and from elsewhere on *Mull*. A flock of 300 birds flying N at Loch Gruinart on 26th Jan included a bird with pure white outer wings. A bird in the rapids area of Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll* in Apr was the first record for the reserve since 1995.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). At RSPB L. Gruinart 182 breeding prs were found; 47 prs were breeding at Coll RSPB Reserve (cf 72 prs in 1999); 52 prs were found nesting on Oronsay, and a census at The Reef *Tiree* found a minimum of 297 prs. At least 6 prs bred at Fiddien Mull, and breeding prs were reported from *Colonsay*, one site in *Cowal*, Smaull (RSPB) *Islay*, 2 sites in *Mid-Argyll* and 6 other localities on *Mull*.

Aug-Dec. In addition to the counts shown in Table 24, a minimum of 800 birds were at the west end of *Tiree* on 30th Aug, and between 1,000 and 2,000 birds were on the island in Oct including a single flock of 650 at Barrapoll on 11th. The only other counts of 50 or more birds were in *Kintyre*, where 70 were counted at Tayinloan on 11th Nov and 90 at Ballure on 26th Nov.

Table 24. Maximum monthly counts of Lapwing at two sea-lochs on Islay, on Oronsay and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	520	1,018	80	*	*	52	n/r	36	184	240	488	480
L. Indaal	0	10	90	70	3	7	0	39	51	86	0	44
Oronsay	0	113	13	*	119	n/r	n/r	52	19	42	56	28
Tiree	312	370	357	*	*	109	256	256	110	70	518	345

* See above for records of breeding prs at these times.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

KNOT

Calidris canutus Luatharan gainmich 0496

Uncommon passage migrant with main passage Aug-Sep. A few winter.

Jan-May. A single bird was recorded during the complete coastal survey of *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan and two were in Sorobaidh Bay on 18th Feb. Birds were regularly seen on *Islay* in Feb and Mar, with monthly maxima at Loch Gruinart of 77 on 13th Feb and 48 on 14th Mar, and 2 at Gartmain on 30th Mar. In Apr, 4 were in Loch Indaal on 8th, 7 on Lismore *N Argyll* on 12th, 4 on Oronsay on 21st and one at Loch an Eilein on 29th. Most of the May records were from *Islay*, where there were 31 at Bowmore on 3rd, 20 at Gartnatra (Loch Indaal) on 13th, 26 at Gartmain on 20th and 4 at Gartbreck (Loch Indaal) on 27th. On *Tiree* 3 were at Loch a'Phuill on 11th and 22nd May and one was at Loch an Eilein on 30th.

Jun. 6th Jun was an unusual date for a single bird at Machrihanish SBO.

Jul-Dec. Two early returning birds were seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 19th Jul. There were no further records until mid-Aug, when there were 16 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th, 7 at Loch Indaal on 14th and 8 in the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 17th followed by 29 at Loch Gruinart on 27th Aug. Numbers then built up through Sep, with 17 in the Add Estuary on 8th, 60 at Machrihanish SBO also on 8th, 33 at Loch Gruinart on 10th, 41 at Gott Bay on 11th and 8 at Tayinloan on 15th Sep. The total at Loch Gruinart peaked at 107 on 22nd Sep. Following a count of 29 at Gott Bay on 30th Sep, only small numbers, including a single at Ledaig Point *N Argyll* on 8th Oct and 2 at Otter Ferry *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd Oct, were recorded away from Loch Indaal, where there were 50 on 25th Oct and 64 on 27th Dec.

SANDERLING

Calidris alba Luatharan glas 0497

Main passage in late-Apr/May and in Aug. Some winter, mainly on Islay and Tiree. Occasionally recorded in summer. Tiree is a site of national importance for passage/wintering birds.

Jan-Jun. Once again *Tiree* held by far the greatest numbers and the complete coastal survey of 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 589 birds. Other notable counts included 214 in Balephetrish Bay on 8th Feb with 235 there on 21st Mar and 410 in Gott Bay on 22nd Apr. Apart from Loch Gruinart where 20 were counted on 13th Feb and 41 on 14th Mar, and Loch Indaal where there were 10 at Uiskentuie on 25th May, all counts on *Islay* were in single figures.

Elsewhere, 6 were at Westport *Kintyre* in Feb, up to 5 were on *Colonsay* in Apr and May, and 22 were at Camas Cuil an t-Saimh (Iona) *Mull* on 29th May. The only Jun record was a single bird at the north end of Iona on 1st.

Jul-Dec. Autumn passage began with 15 birds at Gott Bay on 9th Jul followed by a single bird at Port Wemyss *Islay* on 26th Jul and 4 flying S at Frenchman's Rocks on 6th Aug. On *Tiree* combined totals for Gott, Balephetrish and Sorobaidh Bays increased from 90 on 30th Aug to 164 on 1st Sep and peaked at 450 on 10th Sep. There were still 407 there on 28th Sep but numbers then declined to 240 on 7th Oct and 171 on 12th Nov before increasing to 220 on 20th Dec. A WeBS total of 178 on 22nd Sep was the highest autumn count at Loch Gruinart, subsequent counts there amounting to 28 on 1st Nov and 25 on 24th Nov. The only other count of 10 or more birds on *Islay* was at Loch Indaal, where there were 11 on 8th Oct. Numbers at Machrihanish SBO peaked on 6th Aug, when 60 were counted.

Elsewhere, a single bird at Crinan Ferry on 1st Sep was only the third record for the Add Estuary since 1993, 12 were seen on Iona on 9th Sep, 8 were at Loch na Keal on 15th Sep, 7 were at Tayinloan also on 15th, and 16 were on the beach at Camas Cuil an t-Saimh (Iona) on 25th Sep.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* Luatharan beag 0501

Scarce but annual passage migrant, with the majority of records in autumn.

Spring. No birds were reported in spring.

Autumn. A single bird was seen at Fiddon Mull on 11th Aug and 2 were on Oronsay on 27th Sep. The remaining records all relate to the Loch Gruinart area of Islay. A total of 13 birds were recorded during the WeBS count on 22nd Sep and these were followed by 7 juvs on 23rd and 18 (also all juvs) on 30th Sep. The last report involved a single at RSPB L. Gruinart on 5th Oct.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii* 0502

Rare passage migrant with only three accepted Argyll records: one at Machrihanish, Kintyre on 9th Jul 1974, a juvenile at Fiddon Mull on 17th Sep 1985 and one at An Fhoadhail, Tiree on 23rd Aug 1992.

An adult at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on the morning of 15th May was moulting into breeding plumage. It was still present in the early morning on 16th May. This is our first spring record and is a typical date for Scottish spring migrants [CRM/TapR]*.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis* 0505

Vagrant. No previous Argyll records.

An adult bird was found at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Aug and was subsequently seen by several observers [TapR et al]*. A full account of the record appears on pp. 118-120 of this report.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos* 0507

Less than annual transatlantic visitor with ten accepted Argyll records during 1980-1999.

Another excellent year for this species with three accepted records, involving five individuals, and a further report for which no description has so far been received. An adult bird was found at RSPB L. Gruinart on 11th May, an unusual date for this species, and was seen again on 26th May [CRM/TapR]*.

A juv was seen with Dunlin at Loch a'Phuill on 3rd Aug [AJL]*. On 12th Sep, 2 juvs were found at RSPB L. Gruinart and by the following day 3 juvs were present. At least one of them was there until 1st Oct [TapR/CRM/GJ et al]*.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* Luatharan crom 0509

Scarce but more or less annual passage migrant, with most records in autumn.

Spring. After a flurry of spring records in 1999, none were reported in 2000.

Autumn. The series of recent good autumn passages of this species continued, especially at Loch Gruinart, which had the first migrants, 2 adults, on 13th Aug. All the following records were of juveniles, with 2 there on 27th Aug, then 3 on 10th Sep, one on 14th Sep, 10 on 22nd Sep, 12 on 23rd Sep and lastly 3 on 30th Sep. The only records elsewhere concerned 2 flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 24th Aug and, on Tiree, 2 at Loch a'Phuill on 2nd Sep and one at Balephetrish Bay on 28th Sep.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima* Luatharan rioghail 0510

Widely but sparsely distributed along rocky coasts from Oct to May. Tiree is a site of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. The complete coastal survey of Tiree during 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 263 birds. The usual small numbers were recorded regularly in Loch Indaal with 14 on 16th Jan, 13 on 13th Feb, 23 on 12th Mar and 4 on 8th Apr. Also on Islay, Port Charlotte had counts of 12 on

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12th Jan, 14 on 11th Mar and 5 on 9th Apr. Smaller numbers were found at Balephetrish Bay with a maximum of 6 on 13th Feb. Apart from 19 near the Rock Café (Dunoon) *Cowal* on 12th Feb and 15 at Ardskenish *Colonsay* on 23rd Apr, counts were all in single figures with up to 3 birds at Skipness *Kintyre*, Eilean Aghainn (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* and Lismore *N Argyll*. The last birds reported were 3 at Fingal's Cave (Staffa) *Mull* on 6th May.

Sep-Dec. Apart from an early single bird at Frenchman's Rocks on 18th Sep, the first returning birds were 8 flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 22nd Sep. Only very small numbers were then seen, including 2 at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 21st Oct, one at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 22nd Oct and 2 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 24th Oct, until 29 were counted around Big Scone islet, Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 29th Oct. The remaining records all came from *Islay* with monthly maxima in Loch Indaal of 4 in Oct, 11 in Nov and 12 on 15th Dec. Unusually, none were reported from *Tiree* at this time.

DUNLIN

Calidris alpina

Graillig

0512

Very localised breeding species. Numbers are generally highest on passage but large numbers winter on Islay and Tiree.

Jan-Jun. The complete coastal survey of *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 609 birds, and the total at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart peaked at 836 in Feb [Table 25]. The highest monthly totals on *Tiree* were: 142 in Balephetrish Bay on 8th Feb and 200+ in Gott Bay on 13th Feb, 170 at The Reef on 2nd Mar, 520 in Gott Bay on 23rd Apr, 450 at Loch a'Phuill on 28th Apr and 225 at Loch a'Phuill on 30th May. Outwith *Tiree* and those listed in Table 25, the only sites with counts of 50 or more birds were Fidden *Mull* (50 on 23rd Apr) and Ardskenish *Colonsay* (83 on 6th May).

Breeding. A survey of the NE wetland and Airport pools on *Tiree* found a minimum of 22 prs on territory. At least one pr each bred on Oronsay and at the Coll RSPB Reserve.

Jul-Dec. Small numbers of passage birds appeared on *Tiree* from mid-Jul and 45 were counted at Loch a'Phuill on 30th Jul. Migration was well under way by early Aug and 190 flew S past Machrihanish SBO on 1st, while 65 were counted flying past Frenchman's Rocks in 3¼ hrs on 6th. However numbers on *Islay* reached a peak in late Sep with a total of 1,251 at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart, most of which were in the Oitir nam Bo area on 22nd. These two lochs still held 835 birds in mid-Dec [Table 25]. The only other sites with 50 or more birds at this time were: Tayinloan (50 or more on 12th Aug), Loch a'Phuill and Balephetrish Bay (100 or more on 29th Aug), Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 63 on 8th Sep), Balephetrish Bay (74 on 30th Sep) and Sorobaidh Bay (max. 202 on 4th Dec).

Table 25 *Maximum monthly counts of Dunlin at two sea-lochs on Islay and on Oronsay in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	649	99	350	900	3	1	420	1,185	n/r	677	650
L. Indaal	125	187	11	63	71	11	60	99	66	68	117	185
Oronsay	9	142	n/r	19	104	4	10	40	9	1	72	102

RUFF

Philomachus pugnax

Gibeagan

0517

Scarce but annual passage migrant, more numerous in autumn.

Mar-Jun. Early birds were on Oronsay on 20th Mar and at RSPB L. Gruinart on 9th Apr, and 3 were at Loch a'Phuill on 28th Apr. Single birds were at Loch Gruinart on 8th/9th May and 12th/13th May and a male at Loch a'Phuill on 25th Jun was in breeding plumage.

Jul-Oct. The first returning birds at Loch a'Phuill were a single on 24th Jul followed by 2 on 3rd Aug and 3 on 11th Aug. One was at Fidden *Mull*, also on 11th Aug, and the first bird on *Islay* was a single at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Aug, followed by 3 on 15th. After a single female in the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Aug, there was a gap until 29th, when one was seen at Loch an Eilein. One or two birds were present on *Tiree* throughout Sep with 3 at Heylipol on 29th. After a slow start at Loch Gruinart in the early part of Sep, with up to 3 birds on various dates, unusually high numbers appeared. On 20th Sep 36 were counted near the RSPB hide, 20 were seen on the following day and a peak count of 43 was made on 22nd. There were still 36 birds present on 25th Sep and 18 on 30th but, following a count of 10 on 1st Oct, only one or two birds were present until the last individual was recorded on 14th. Elsewhere, single birds flew past Machrihanish SBO on 6th and 26th Sep and 3 were at Heylipol *Tiree* on 29th Sep.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyrtus minimus* Gobhrag bheag 0518
Scarce, but probably under-recorded, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Jan-Mar. A single bird flushed from the saltmarsh at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on 16th Jan was the only record at this time.

Oct-Dec. On *Islay*, single birds were seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 6th Oct, at Ardtalla on 25th Oct and at Machir Bay on 28th Dec. On 30th Dec one was seen in snow at Rubha Riabhach (Appin) *N Argyll*.

COMMON SNIPE (SNIPE) *Gallinago gallinago* Naosg 0519
Widespread and locally common breeding species. More numerous on passage and as a winter visitor.

Jan-Apr. The complete coastal survey of *Tiree* from 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 319 birds. Birds were reported in single figures from various localities in *Colonsay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *N Argyll* during the winter. Monthly maxima at RSPB L. Gruinart were: 48 on 16th Jan, 22 on 4th Feb, 24 on 30th Mar and 17 on 28th Apr. The only other count of 10 or more birds at this time came from Dun Ibrig *Tiree* where 34 were counted in a single one km square in Apr during the Countryside 2000 survey.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 4 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). Found in one of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares. A circuit of the road network at dusk on *Colonsay* itself on 14th Jun located 32 drumming birds (cf 40 in 1999) and 25 prs were considered to be breeding on Oronsay. A survey of drumming and 'chipping' birds in the NE wetlands of *Tiree* and at the airport pools produced a total of 31 males. Three drumming/chipping birds were heard at Smaull RSPB *Islay* on 2nd Jun, 42 were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart in the breeding season, *Coll* RSPB Reserve had one or more breeding prs and, on Treshnish Isles *Mull* in late Jun, 7 drumming birds were found on Lunga & Fladda and a bird was flushed from Dutchman's Cap (Bac Mor). Birds were also reported in suitable habitat during the breeding season from one site in *Kintyre*, 7 sites on *Mull* and 2 sites in *Mid-Argyll*.

Aug-Dec. The number of passage birds at RSPB L. Gruinart reached a peak on 22nd Sep when 50 were recorded during the WeBS count. Numbers fell thereafter, with 23 counted on 10th Oct and just 9 on 24th Nov. The only large count recorded elsewhere on *Islay* was 45 at Port Wemyss on 29th Dec. Good numbers were present on *Tiree* in Oct and 54 were recorded between Balephetrish Bay and Port Fada, and 26 were in flooded fields at Heylipol on 5th. Significant counts later in the year on *Tiree* included 39 at Loch Bhasapol

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on 20th Oct and 20 at The Reef on 2nd Nov. In *Kintyre* 15 were found near the point at Kildonald Bay in Dec and 30 were present in the marsh at Smerby on 6th Dec. Once again small numbers were widely reported, but no other sites had counts in double figures.

EURASIAN WOODCOCK (WOODCOCK) *Scolopax rusticola* Coileach coille 0529
Widespread but under-recorded breeder. Numbers augmented in winter by visiting birds.

Jan-Mar. The only records from earlier in the year related to 3 in Kinuachdrachd woodland on *Jura* on 4th Feb and one on Oronsay on 28th Mar.

Breeding. A circuit of the *Colonsay* road network at dusk on 14th Jun located 5 roding birds (7 along the same route in 1999) and one was roding at Scalasaig on 6th May. Four roding birds were recorded at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*. Elsewhere, roding birds were reported from one site on *Islay* and 2 sites on *Mull*.

Sep-Dec. The first reported bird of autumn was at Loch Tulla *N Argyll* on 1st Sep followed, on *Mull*, by birds at Beinn nan Gobhar on 23rd Sep and Rubha na Faolinn (Laggan) on 26th. Single birds were recorded on Oronsay in Oct and Nov with 3 on 21st Nov. In *Mid-Argyll* during Dec, the species was reported as common at Taynish NNR and birds were recorded near Loch Awe and at Connel. Elsewhere, one was flushed from Beinn Ghuilean (Campbeltown) *Kintyre* on 12th Nov. Four were seen at Lochdon on 18th Dec.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa* Cearra ghob 0532
Increasingly regular passage migrant, especially on Islay and Tiree. Scarce elsewhere.

Mar-Jun. The first arrivals were single birds at RSPB L. Gruinart from 23rd to 30th Mar and 3 at Loch an Eilein on 26th Mar. Apart from 2 at Loch an Eilein on 4th, there were no further records until 16th Apr. At Loch an Eilein numbers built up to 25 on 25th Apr and 46 on 26th and by 27th Apr the four main freshwater lochs on *Tiree* and An Fhaodhail held a total of 100 birds. Meanwhile numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart peaked at 14 on 22nd Apr; thereafter numbers there fell to 8 on 24th, 9 on 25th, and 8 on 28th Apr. Apart from 4 at An Fhaodhail on 4th, only one or two birds were seen in May, all at Loch Gruinart. The last bird there was a single on 30th May. The only records away from *Islay* and *Tiree* were single birds on *Colonsay* on 23rd Apr and at Ardanish Bay *Mull* on 25th Apr.

A single bird in breeding plumage at Machrihanish SBO on 21st & 22nd was the first Jun record for this site.

Jul-Oct. An early bird was at Heylipol *Tiree* on 1st and 2nd Jul, but there were no further records until 7 were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 24th Jul. These were followed by up to 2 at Heylipol on 3rd Aug, 2 passing Frenchman's Rocks on 6th Aug and 6 flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 10th. The highest count of autumn concerned 22 birds at Loch a'Phuill on 11th Aug, but the second half of Aug produced few birds apart from 8 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 15th and a long-staying bird at Loch Crinan, which stayed from 17th Aug to 8th Sep. The early part of Sep produced 6 at The Doirlinn (Campbeltown Loch) on 1st, 3 near Loch a'Phuill on 3rd, and 12 at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 5th. Up to 13 birds were present at RSPB L. Gruinart from 8th to 12th Sep but after this only single birds were recorded. Ten birds flew S past Machrihanish SBO on 10th Sep and singles were seen at Loch a'Phuill on 17th Sep, Loch Don on 28th and Oronsay on 30th Sep.

Single birds were present at RSPB L. Gruinart on several dates in Oct with 2 on 22nd and 26th. A long-staying late bird was at Heylipol from 31st Oct to 4th Dec, and late singles were also seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 1st Nov and 24th Dec.

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BAR-TAILED GODWIT

Limosa lapponica

Cearra ghob mhor 0534

Recorded throughout the year, especially at passage times. Most frequent and numerous on the islands with smaller numbers on the mainland. Wintering birds most numerous on Islay.

Jan-Jun. The complete coastal survey of *Tiree* from 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 69 birds. Numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart *Islay* peaked at 285 in Feb (cf 261 in Jan 1999) but were generally down on 1999 [Table 26]. The only other sites with counts of 10 or more birds at this time were Sorobaigh Bay (max. 31 on 7th Mar), Loch Don (max. 14 on 12th Mar), Killinallan *Islay* (22 on 13th May), Gott Bay (max. 11 on 15th May) and Oronsay (max. 44 on 4th Jun). Smaller numbers were recorded from Tayinloan, from Loch Crinan and Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll*, and from Salum Bay *Tiree*.

Jul-Dec. The only birds reported in Jul were 17 in Loch Indaal on 18th. Passage at Machrihanish SBO peaked on 6th Sep when 14 birds were recorded, and on 10th Sep 32 were at Gott and Sorobaigh Bays, 5 were at Loch Gruinart and 21 were in Loch Indaal. Other Sep records included 10 at The Strand *Colonsay* on 14th and single figure counts from Loch Crinan, Tayinloan and Loch Don. In Oct 19 were in Gott Bay on 7th and single figure counts came from Loch Crinan, Loch Gilp, Loch na Cille *Mid-Argyll*, Loch Don and Loch Scridain. Numbers on *Islay* peaked in Nov when a total of 151 were counted at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal [Table 26]. Later in the year the only counts of 10 or more birds outwith *Islay* were at Sorobaigh Bay (max. 22 on 26th Nov) and Loch Don (16 on 18th Dec), with single figure counts at Loch Crinan and on Oronsay.

Table 26. Maximum monthly counts of Bar-tailed Godwits at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	80	214	211	n/r	35	35	n/r	n/r	67	1	89	n/r
L. Indaal	92	71	36	14	91	21	17	11	21	27	62	76
Oronsay	9	142	n/r	19	104	4	10	40	9	1	72	102

WHIMBREL

Numenius phaeopus

Eun bealltain 0538

Regular passage migrant in small numbers, mainly from late Apr to May and late Jul to early Sep. Summer records not infrequent.

Apr-May. The first bird was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 18th Apr followed by 2 at Taynish NNR on 19th and 5 at Tayinloan on 20th Apr. From 22nd Apr onwards birds were widespread, and in places numerous, until mid-May. The highest individual counts were at Heylipol *Tiree* (max. 37 on 27th Apr), Nerabus *Islay* (43 on 29th Apr), RSPB L. Gruinart (26 on 30th Apr), Craigfad *Islay* (max. 100 on 3rd May), Tayinloan (max. 60 on 7th May), Ruaig *Tiree* (36 on 11th May) and Oronsay (max. 14 on 13th May). On 9th May a total of 125 birds were counted at 4 sites on *Islay*. Small groups of up to 8 birds were reported during this period from other sites in *Colonsay*, *Islay*, *Mull* and *Tiree*. Records were still widespread in the second half of May but in smaller numbers, the only counts of 10 or more birds being 10 at Octofad *Islay* on 17th and 23 at Tayinloan on 23rd May.

Summering birds. One was at the north end of Iona *Mull* on 1st Jun, 6 flew S past Frenchman's Rocks on 6th, at Machrihanish SBO 3 passed southward on 11th and one on 28th, one was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 18th, and 3 were at Vaul Bay *Tiree* on 23rd Jun.

Jul-Sep. The first returning migrant at Machrihanish SBO appeared on 9th Jul and from then on a total of 28 were recorded until the last on 6th Sep, with a peak count of 18 on 7th

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Aug. One was at Frenchman's Rocks on 22nd Jul and there were regular records there for the next 2 weeks with a peak of 25 (incl. a flock of 23 birds) flying S in 3¼ hrs on 6th Aug. The last birds there were 6 on 9th Sep. Between mid-Jul and mid-Sep, single birds were recorded at various locations on *Islay*, *Mull* and *Tiree*. Records of small groups of birds included 4 at Tayinloan on 18th Jul, 5 on Oronsay on 24th Aug, and 4 in the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 8th Sep. Loch Gruinart recorded its first bird on 16th Jul and up to 3 birds were found there on 8 dates during Aug & Sep with the last on 6th Oct. The very last bird was at the mouth of Balnabraid Glen *Kintyre* on 8th Oct.

EURASIAN CURLEW (CURLEW) *Numenius arquata* Guilbneach 0541
Widespread and locally common breeding species. More numerous on passage and in winter.

Jan-Apr. The complete coastal survey of *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan yielded a total of 845 birds. Numbers on *Islay* reached a peak in Feb, with a total of 540 at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart (cf 497 in Jan in 1999) [Table 27]. The only other localities with counts of 50 or more at this time were Gott Bay (70 in Feb), Holy Loch *Cowal* (max. 197 on 19th Feb) and Tayinloan (max. 70 on 17th Apr).

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (cf one of 15 in 1999) nor in any of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares. 17 breeding prs were found at RSPB L. Gruinart but the only confirmed breeding record elsewhere concerned a pr with recently fledged young on the NW slopes of Ben More *Mull*. Otherwise, birds were reported during the breeding season from several localities in *Colonsay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *Tiree*.

Jul-Dec. Numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart peaked during Nov, with a total of 698 (cf 664 in Dec 1999) [Table 27]. Flocks of up to 49 birds were reported from all areas except *Coll & Jura* between Jul and Dec, and there were many sites with counts of 50 or more birds including: Cove Point *Kintyre* (100+ on 12th Jul), Heylipol *Tiree* (96 on 7th Aug), Oronsay (max. 94 on 28th Aug), Colintrave *Cowal* (87 on 3rd Sep), Port Fada *Tiree* (max. 150+ on 24th Sep), Loch Don (max. 70 on 28th Sep), Tayinloan (max. 91 on 5th Nov), Balevullin *Tiree* (80 on 5th Oct), Machir Bay *Islay* (max. 100+ on 23rd Oct), Mulindry *Islay* (80+ on 28th Oct), Crossapol *Tiree* (max. 117 on 12th Nov) and Ballure *Kintyre* (70 on 26th Nov).

Table 27. *Maximum monthly counts of Curlew at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	16	243	153	118	7	17	240	330	227	391	287	n/r
L. Indaal	385	297	162	72	27	40	213	418	511	56	411	457

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus* Gearradh bhreac 0545
Rare passage migrant, with only 16 or 17 records in Argyll during 1980-99: 2 in Apr, 3 in May, one in Jul, 5 in Aug, 3 or 4 in Sep and 2 in Oct.

Once again a good year for this species with at least two and possibly three records. An adult bird in breeding plumage stayed at Machrihanish SBO for several hours on 17th Jul. A juvenile found at RSPB L. Gruinart on 25th Sep stayed until at least 11th Oct and one seen at the same site on 23rd Oct may have been this individual. There have now been at least 9 records of this species in the past 3 years (1998-2000), as many as in the previous 13.

COMMON REDSHANK (REDSHANK) *Tringa totanus* Cam ghlas 0546
Localised breeder and widespread passage migrant and wintering species.

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Jan-Apr. The complete coastal count of wintering waders on *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan yielded an impressive total of 415 birds. Birds were recorded in single figures from most coastal areas but, apart from those listed in Table 28, the only site reporting a count of 20 or more birds was Holy Loch (max. 26 on 12th Feb).

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). At *Coll* RSPB Reserve 27 prs were nesting and a total of 85 prs were estimated to be breeding at RSPB L. Gruinart (cf 60 in 1999, 85 in 1998, 95 in 1997 and 114 in 1996). On *Colonsay* (excluding *Oronsay*), 13 prs were found (cf 16 in 1999) while a possibly incomplete count on *Oronsay* itself located 14 prs. At least 15 prs bred at *The Reef Tiree*, including a bird colour-ringed at *Cardiff Bay* that also bred in 1999. Three prs were displaying at *Loch Crinan*, and breeding prs were reported from 3 sites on *Mull*.

Jul-Dec. Peak monthly passage at *Machrihanish SBO* was in Jul, when 216 flew past on 17 dates, but the max. daily count was 48 on 9th Aug. The highest count during autumn passage elsewhere was 45 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd Aug.

Other than those in Table 28, the only sites with 20 or more birds were: *Otter Ferry Cowal* (max. 40+ on 9th Sep), *Port Fada Tiree* (20 on 8th Oct), *Balephetrish Bay* (21 on 3rd Nov), *Loch Caolisport* (max. 62 on 13th Nov) and *Tayinloan* (max. 48 on 14th Nov). A search of favoured bays on *Tiree* on 30th Sep found a total of 50 birds.

Table 28. Maximum monthly counts of Redshank at two sea-lochs on *Islay*, *Loch Crinan* (*Mid-Argyll*) and at the four main freshwater lochs on *Tiree* in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	26	94	80	15	85	n/r	45	55	7	81	54
L. Indaal	17	7	29	20	13	10	9	13	19	7	10	11
L. Crinan	27	21	1	4	4	6	3	4	26	2	33	29
Tiree	12	9	40	73	76	30	0	10	5	1	3	0

COMMON GREENSHANK (GREENSHANK)

Tringa nebularia Deoch bhuidhe 0548

Very scarce breeding species (only in Mull and N Argyll in recent years). Small numbers on passage with a few birds wintering in some localities.

Jan-May. During the winter months (Jan-Mar), single birds were recorded at: RSPB L. Gruinart, *Bowmore Islay*, *Sorobaidh Bay*, *Loch Caithlim Mid-Argyll*, *Loch Beg Mull*, *Loch Sween*, *Ardvergnish Mull* and *Loch Riaghain Tiree*. *Oronsay* had 4 on 23rd Jan, 7 on 13th Feb and 3 on 17th Mar, and at *Loch Don* there were 3 on 12th Mar, 4 on 3rd Apr and 6 on 9th Apr. During Apr and May one or two birds were recorded regularly at RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 4 on 13th May) and, elsewhere, one or two birds were seen at *Gartbreck* (*Loch Indaal*), *Lochbuie Mull*, *Fidden Mull*, and *Loch Dochard N Argyll*.

Breeding. There were no confirmed breeding records during 2000.

Single birds were seen in Jun at RSPB L. Gruinart and two were on *Oronsay* on 15th and 24th Jun.

Jul-Dec. Single birds were recorded on *Tiree* from 1st Jul and 3 were present on 3rd. *Oronsay* had one on 6th Jul and 2 on 20th and 21st, while up to 2 were reported at RSPB L. Gruinart from 17th Jul onwards. Towards the end of Jul, singles were at *Loch Gorm Islay* on 25th, *Port Wemyss Islay* on 26th and *Loch Crinan* on 31st, while a remarkable 15 were counted at *Loch Don* on 27th. Birds were widespread throughout Aug and Sep with records of more than one bird at: *Oronsay* (max. 7 on 11th Aug and 30th Sep), *Loch Indaal* (max. 3 on 11th

Aug), *Tiree* (WeBS total 7 on 11th Aug), Ardpark *Mid-Argyll* (3 on 15th Aug), Add Estuary (max. 3 on 17th Aug), Loch a'Phuill (max. 9 on 30th Aug), Machrihanish SBO (2 on 1st Sep), Otter Ferry *Mid-Argyll* (4 on 10th Sep), The Strand *Colonsay* (7 on 16th Sep), Loch Don (max. 8 on 22nd Sep) and RSPB L. Gruinart (6 on 22nd-25th Sep). Singles were reported from Corran View *Mull*, Brainport Bay *Mid-Argyll*, Tayinloan, Loch Scridain, Loch Riaghain *Tiree* and Loch Beg *Mull*. Five at RSPB L. Gruinart on 1st was the highest count during Oct, while 3 were at Loch Don on 4th and 3 at Loch na Cille *Mid-Argyll* on 10th Oct. The only records for Nov and Dec came from: Loch Beg, where one was present throughout the period, RSPB L. Gruinart (one on 24th Nov) and Oronsay (2 on 25th Nov and 5 on 21st Dec).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS

Tringa flavipes

0551

Vagrant. One previous accepted Argyll record, at Loch Creran (N Argyll) in 1951.

On 9th Oct a juvenile bird was reported at the Ulva Lagoons *Mid-Argyll*. It later transpired that the bird had been present and first seen by a local Bird Club member (C. Pollock) on 30th Sep. The bird was very confiding and was seen and photographed by a few other observers until 11th Oct, when it was last seen [CPo/JDi/PD et al]*. This second accepted Argyll record follows almost 50 years after the first. However there was a reliable report of another Lesser Yellowlegs very nearby, at North Danna Bay, on 28th Aug 1987 although, unfortunately, no description was provided at the time.

GREEN SANDPIPER

Tringa ochropus

Luatharan uaine

0553

Scarce passage migrant. Recorded in 15 of the 20 years 1980-99. Majority of records in autumn; very rare in spring.

Two specific records were reported: singles at RSPB L. Gruinart on 27th Jul and at Mill Burn, Machrihanish on 26th Aug. Interestingly, the species was also recorded in one of the 12 BBS squares earlier in the year, although this was probably a bird on late spring passage.

WOOD SANDPIPER

Tringa glareola

Luatharan coille

0554

Scarce passage migrant. Recorded in 12 of the 20 years 1980-99, with 9 of the 14 records in spring.

One was found at RSPB L. Gruinart on 14th May, 2 were present there on 17th May and one remained until 18th. On 8th July 3 were seen well with a Common Sandpiper at Loch Don.

COMMON SANDPIPER

Actitis hypoleucos

Luatharan

0556

Widespread and common breeding summer visitor.

Winter. One was seen clearly on the shores of Loch Sween near Dunrostan on 4th Jan. Although there have been a few winter records of this species in southern Scotland in recent years, this is the first such record for Argyll.

Apr-May. An early bird was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 9th Apr but no more were seen until 18th Apr when one was at Lochbuie *Mull*. By the following day (19th) birds were widespread, with singles at Brainport Bay and Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, 3 at Loch Ba *Mull* and 6 at Claggain Bay *Islay*. The main arrival followed immediately afterwards and from 20th-30th Apr birds were reported from many sites in *Colonsay*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). A record 3 territories were recorded in the coastal CBC plot at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1). Elsewhere in *Mid-Argyll*, at least 6

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prs were breeding at Loch Glashan, and prs with young were noted at Blarghour (Loch Awe) and Carsaig. A total of 31 prs was found on *Colonsay* in Jun (cf 44 in more extensive survey in 1999) and at least 5 birds were recorded displaying or alarming on four of the Treshnish Isles *Mull*. There were records during the breeding season from all areas except *Coll* and *Jura*.

Jul-Sep. Most birds had departed by early Sep, but a late individual was recorded at Machrihanish SBO on 4th and 5th Oct.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (TURNSTONE) *Arenaria interpres* Trilleachan beag 0561
Widespread and common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly from Aug to May. Tiree is a site of national importance for wintering birds. Summer records not unusual.

Jan-mid-May. The complete coastal count of wintering waders on *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan yielded an impressive total of 858 birds. Other significant counts on *Tiree* included 111 on machair around Greenhill on 27th Feb, 85 at The Reef on 12th Mar and 66 in Balephetrish Bay on 29th Apr. The highest counts on *Islay* were at Ardnave with a maximum of 127 on 13th Feb. Other sites with peak counts of 20 or more birds were: Ledaig Point *N Argyll* (max. 45 on 9th Jan), Minard (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* (max. 20+ on 30th Jan), Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* (max. 30 on 20th Feb), Tayinloan (max. 50 on 12th Mar), Fiddon *Mull* (max. 20 on 23rd Apr), Otter Ferry *Cowal* (max. 24 on 4th May) and Oronsay (max. 28 on 14th May).

Summering birds. Records continued throughout Jun with 9 at Ardskenish *Colonsay* on 6th, 3 on Oronsay on 16th, 3 at Vaul Bay *Tiree* on 19th and 4 on Dubh Fheith in the Firth of Lorn on 19th.

Jul-Dec. Jul records included 14 in Loch Indaal on 14th, 4 at Tayinloan on 20th, one passing Frenchman's Rocks on 22nd, and 4 at Ledaig Point on 25th. By 5th Aug there were 28 on the shore at Otter Ferry and the regular flock here reached 36 on 27th Aug and a maximum of 50+ on 7th Oct. Passage birds at Machrihanish SBO peaked at 22 on 6th Aug. Numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart reached a total of 91 in Nov (cf peak of 172 in Dec in 1998 but only 62 in Oct 1999) [Table 29] and the highest count on *Tiree* at this time was 107 between Balevullin and Port Fada on 7th Oct. Otherwise, the only sites with counts of 20 or more birds were: Ledaig Point (max. 100+ on 8th Oct), Balephetrish Bay (max. 80 on 1st Dec), Ardnave Point *Islay* (20+ on 23rd Oct) and Minard (max. 25 on 14th Dec).

Table 29. Maximum monthly counts of Turnstone at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	38	42	22	n/r	0	0	n/r	60	n/r	31	n/r
L. Indaal	30	72	30	41	2	0	8	11	15	29	63	66

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus* Deargan allt 0564
Very rare and irregular passage migrant and former very rare breeding species.

A pr present at the same site as in 1999 were seen mating on 29th May. Male was not seen subsequently although female was present until 30th Jun. No evidence of nesting attempt [RSPB].

Two were seen just offshore at Machrihanish SBO on 6th Aug [EJM]*.

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius* Liathag allt 0565
Irregular passage migrant particularly associated with autumn gales. Rare in winter. All but 8 of 42 records in Argyll during 1980-99 were in the period mid-Sep to mid-Oct.

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A first-winter bird was 'wrecked' at Loch a'Phuill on 9th Sep following gales, but a similar individual at Machrihanish SBO on 4th Oct was unusual in that it occurred well inshore in bright and breezy conditions.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus* Fasgadair donn 0566
Scarce but annual passage migrant. Majority seen in autumn.

The first record of the year was one chasing an Arctic Skua just off the south end of Jura on 26th Jul. At Machrihanish SBO there were single adults on 2nd & 24th Aug and 6th Sep, a juv on 2nd Oct, and an adult and 6 juvs on 10th Oct. Frenchman's Rocks had single adult birds on 10th Aug and on 9th & 10th Sep. An adult was seen N of Coll on 12th Sep and Tiree had single birds offshore near Balevullin on 5th and 10th Oct.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus* Fasgadair 0567
The commonest skua in Argyll, regularly seen in small numbers near large seabird colonies. Small breeding colonies on Jura and Coll. Passage birds regular and widespread in spring and especially autumn.

Apr-Jun. The first returning bird was a dark morph individual chasing terns offshore near the golf course on Colonsay on 27th Apr. In May, single birds were seen at Loch Gruinart on 2nd and in Gunna Sound Tiree on 4th, 4 were seen from the ferry SW of Coll on 5th, 2 were seen from the ferry near McArthur's Head Islay on 5th, and one flew N past Saligo Bay Islay on 21st. Up to 3 were seen daily from Lunga (Treshnish) Mull in late May and late Jun but numbers were reportedly down on previous years [TIARG]. Despite this, birds were widely reported in Jun with one or two at Grasspoint Mull, Gunna Sound Tiree (one light morph), Smaul Islay (one dark morph), Oronsay, Kiloran Bay and Machrins Colonsay, Machrihanish SBO, Sound of Gigha (one light morph) and off Lussa Bay Jura (2 dark morph).

Breeding. A full census for Seabird 2000 confirmed that numbers are at a low ebb in Argyll. Only 15 AOT were found on Coll and 6 AOT on Jura. There are now less than 25% of the numbers present in 1987 with the largest decline evident on Jura.

Jul-Oct. Two dark morph birds were seen at Machrihanish SBO on 7 dates from 13th Jun to 9th Jul. During Jul, there were 4 sightings of single birds in Gunna Sound, one was seen from Oronsay, 2 were over Heylipol Tiree, and 2 just off the south coast of Jura on 26th were being chased by a Pomarine Skua. From 5th Aug-12th Sep a total of 20 birds were seen flying S and one N at Machrihanish SBO, including 5 on 22nd Aug and 8 on 6th Sep. Most of the remaining records were from Frenchman's Rocks where a total of 31 birds were logged from 7th Aug onwards, with counts of 4 on 10th Aug, 8 on 9th Sep, 4 on 14th Sep and 4 on 2nd Oct. Elsewhere on Islay, one flew S at Saligo Bay on 1st Aug, Port Charlotte had a light morph bird on 2nd Aug and a dark morph on 12th Aug, one was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Aug, and 3 flew W at Ardnave Point on 6th Sep. Otherwise, the only records from Tiree were singles at Port Fada on 18th Aug and at Hynish on 21st Sep and Mull had singles off Iona on 18th Aug, off Grasspoint on 22nd Sep and at Eorsa (Loch na Keal) on 29th Sep. Ferry sightings included 5 between Port Askaig and Kennacraig on 18th Aug and 3 between Oban and Colonsay on 17th Sep. The last bird was at Frenchman's Rocks on 24th Oct.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua* Fasgadair mor 0569
Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor. Bred successfully on Treshnish Isles (Mull) in 1998 and has also attempted to breed on Coll in recent years.

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Feb-Jun. A few birds appeared unusually early, with singles at Bowmore (Loch Indaal) on 15th Feb, herring gulls at Ardmore Point *Mull* on 17th Mar, and off Oronsay on 28th Mar. There were no further records until May when one flew past Caliach Point *Mull* on 7th, 2 were seen from the ferry SW of *Coll* on 9th, one was off Balevullin *Tiree* on 20th, one was over Oronsay on 29th, and one was off Hynish *Tiree* on 30th. A maximum of 4 birds were seen around Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late May [TIARG].

Breeding. On the Treshnish Isles, a pair had a single chick in late Jun, and another pair was present but with no proof of breeding.

Jul-Oct. In Jul, one was off Port Wemyss *Islay* on 26th, one was feeding on carrion at Loch a'Phuill on 30th and 2 flew down Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 30th. The first autumn migrant at Machrihanish SBO appeared on 1st Aug and 26 individuals were recorded there on 14 dates until 23rd Oct, with a peak count of 9 on 6th Sep. At Frenchman's Rocks a total of 19 were recorded starting on 4th Aug, mostly in ones and twos, but with 4 on 8th and 18th Sep. The only Aug-Oct records elsewhere were singles at Lismore Lighthouse *N Argyll* and at Bruichladdich (Loch Indaal) on 8th Aug, and 4 passing Carsaig *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Aug. A single at Frenchman's Rocks on 29th Oct was the last record of the year.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

Larus melanocephalus

0575

Vagrant. Only three records in Argyll since 1980: one on Mull in 1992, a 1st winter bird at Machrihanish SBO (Kintyre) in 1995 and a 2nd winter at Campbeltown Loch (Kintyre) in Nov 1998.

For the first time there were two records in a single year. A 1st summer bird was at Machrihanish SBO on 21st Apr [EJM]* and a 1st winter individual with a damaged leg was seen at Loch Bhasapol on 5th Oct [AJL]*.

LITTLE GULL

Larus minutus

Crann fhaoileag

0578

Irregular visitor, with records in all but 3 years since 1980. Typically seen Aug to Oct, but there are records for every month of the year.

Only two records, both at Machrihanish SBO: a juv flying S on 22nd Sep and an adult flying S on 29th Sep.

SABINE'S GULL

Larus sabini

0579

Scarce and irregular passage migrant, mainly in autumn, with records in 11 of the 20 years 1980-99. More frequent recently i.e. records in all but one of the last ten years.

An excellent year for this species with 3 accepted records, all of juveniles. The first was seen at sea ca 5 km SW of Texa *Islay* on 9th Sep [JDi]*, one was at Frenchman's Rocks on 14th Sep [TapR]* and the last flew past Machrihanish SBO on 2nd Oct [EJM]*.

1997. A juv flew past offshore at Hynish *Tiree* on 14th Sep [PF]*.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Larus ridibundus

Faoileag a'chinn duibh

0582

Patchily distributed resident breeder. Reduced or absent at some sites due to mink predation. Scarce in many areas in winter.

Jan-May. Other than those in Table 30, the only sites with counts of 50 or more birds were: Loch Caolisport (260 [large % of 1st summer birds] on 3rd Mar), Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* (max. 210 on 7th Mar), Balephetrish Bay (150 on 20th Apr), Loch Bhasapol (240 on 27th Apr) and *Tiree* (WeBS count max. 262 on 9th Apr).

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Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf none of 15 in 1999) and in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 185 pairs at 7 sites fledged 240 young (1.30 young/pr). Colonies varied in numbers from two to 139 prs. A full census on *Tiree* in late May/early Jun found 312 breeding prs, and at least one pr bred on Oronsay.

Aug-Dec. WeBS counts undertaken at Loch Caolisport found some large gatherings, with totals of 670 on 19th Oct, 280 on 13th Nov and 510 on 16th Dec. Elsewhere, the only count of 50 or more birds, other than those in Table 30, was at the fish farm near Rhunahaorine Point *Kintyre* (130 on 5th Nov).

An adult bird seen at Inveraray on 12th Jan had been ringed as a nestling at Stora, Trondheim, Norway on 3rd Jul 1997. The ring number was read at close range through a telescope!

Table 30. *Maximum monthly counts of Black-headed Gulls at two sea-lochs on Islay and at Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	10	43	n/r	25	n/r	90	130	146	n/r	5	n/r
L. Indaal	14	55	65	42	37	30	42	39	52	60	19	17
L. Crinan	2	0	20	58	54	89	40	57	62	0	3	0

RING-BILLED GULL

Larus delawarensis

0589

Scarce visitor from North America. There are records for every month of the year, from 12 of the 17 years since the first confirmed sighting in 1983.

Unusually, there were two records during 2000; an adult bird at Machir Bay *Islay* on 12th Mar which stayed in the area until 26th Mar [TapR/AJW]* and a first summer individual at Lochan Luing (nr. Rhunahaorine Point) *Kintyre* on 4th Apr [JDj]*.

MEW GULL (COMMON GULL)

Larus canus

Faoilea

0590

Widespread and common resident breeding species but reduced or absent at some sites due to predation by mink.

Jan-Apr. Other than those in Table 31, the only sites with counts of 100 birds or more were: Skipness Bay *Kintyre* (120+ on 2nd Jan), head of Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* (820+ on 12th Jan), Easter Ellister *Islay* (175 on 9th Mar), Loch Sween (max. 197 on 11th Mar) and Tayinloan (100+ on 8th Apr).

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (10%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 1,166 prs were noted breeding at 47 colonies (1 to 368 prs in size). Of these 51 prs at 12 sites were not monitored. In areas where mink were removed, 768 prs at 14 colonies fledged 490 young (0.64 young/pr). In areas where mink were not removed, 347 prs at 21 colonies fledged ca 130 young (0.38 young/pr).

A full census on *Tiree* in late May/early Jun found 335 breeding prs, 13 prs bred on Coll RSPB Reserve and 16 prs were holding territory on Gunna Island Coll. On *Islay* there were at least 12 prs at RSPB L. Gruinart and one pr at Smaull RSPB had a nest with 3 eggs in Jun. There were 38 active nests on the Sanda Islands (23 young ringed), and at two colonies at Loch Glashan *Mid-Argyll* there were at least 41 adults and 17 young on 30th Jun.

Jul-Dec. In autumn the only records of counts of 100 or more (excluding Table 31 sites) came from: Tayinloan (max. 128 on 3rd Aug), Colintrave *Cowal* (175 on 3rd Sep), Balevullin *Tiree* (180 on 4th Oct) and Machir Bay *Islay* (150 bathing in floodwater on 2nd Nov).

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Table 31. Maximum monthly counts of Mew Gulls at two sea-lochs on Islay, at Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2000.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	33	204	2	3	12	n/r	80	217	130	136	n/r
L. Indaal	171	218	301	262	111	121	101	227	303	62	98	117
L. Crinan	174	0	92	47	30	24	85	10	0	0	90	28
Tiree	160	41	185	107	n/r	n/r	n/r	16	118	37	90	66

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* Faoileag bheag 0591
Widespread breeding species, generally present from Mar to Sep. Some colonies much affected by mink predation. A few remain in winter.

Jan-May. The earliest record concerned an adult at RSPB L. Gruinart Islay on 9th Feb, and one was at Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll on 12th Feb. From late Feb there were widespread reports of up to 3 birds with larger numbers appearing from 11th Mar (when 22 were at Bridgend Merse Islay) onwards. No counts of 50 or more birds were reported prior to the breeding season.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, ca 1,095 prs were noted breeding at 19 sites (largest colony ca 400 prs, and including 8 single prs). Most larger colonies bred successfully. There were 59 active nests on the Sanda Islands (17 young ringed) but a large number of well grown young were found dead later in the breeding season, possibly due to unusually dry conditions. A full census on Tiree in late May/early Jun found 597 breeding prs, 9 prs were on territory on Gunna Island Coll, and breeding birds were located on three of the Treshnish Isles Mull with at least 6 prs on Lunga.

On 3rd Jun, 120 birds were counted on East Loch Fada Colonsay.

Aug-Dec. 110 migrant birds flew past Frenchman's Rocks in 3 hrs on 8th Sep followed by 81 in 4 hrs on 9th and 32 in 3 hrs on 18th Sep. Most birds had departed by mid-Sep but one was at Tayinloan on 15th Oct, 4 were at Loch Caolisport on 19th Oct, and one in winter plumage flew past Frenchman's Rocks on 25th Oct. The only winter record was of a single at Blackrock (Loch Indaal) on 30th Nov.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus* Faoileag an sgadain 0592
Widespread and abundant resident breeding species. Productivity at many colonies much affected by mink predation. Some evidence for immigration into Argyll in winter; colour-ringing studies have shown that some of these birds are from the Clyde and NE England.

Jan-Apr. Other than those in Table 32, the only counts of 200 or more birds were at: Tiree (WeBS count 463 on 16th Jan), Loch Feochan Mid-Argyll (ca 1,100 on 17th Mar), Lachlan Bay (Loch Fyne) Mid-Argyll (500+ on 29th Mar), and Lingerton rubbish tip (Loch Gilp) Mid-Argyll (1,400+ on 29th Mar).

Breeding. Recorded in 7 of 12 BBS squares (58%), (cf 7 of 15 in 1999) and in 4 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (29%). In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 7,136 prs were noted breeding at 56 colonies (1- ca 800 prs in size). At 17 of these colonies there were under 10 prs, with a total of 32 prs. Considering colonies with ten or more prs: at 6 colonies where mink were removed, 1,386 prs fledged ca 1,683 young (1.21 young/pr); and at 33 colonies where mink were not removed, 5,718 prs fledged 4,529 young (0.792 young/pr). The colony at Eilean Loch Oisair, off Lismore N Argyll was reduced to 3 prs and no young

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were fledged. This colony has declined from 287 prs in 1994, when mink were first detected, to 106 in 1995, 74 in 1996, 22 in 1997, 81 in 1998 and 59 in 1999. No young were fledged in 1994 or from 1996 to 2000. This is typical of what is happening at many colonies, not only those of Herring Gulls.

A full census on *Tiree* in late May/early Jun found a total of 868 breeding prs, 21 prs bred on the RSPB Reserve *Coll*, and 35 prs were on territory on *Gunna Island Coll* on 3rd Jun. A total of 617 prs were found breeding on the *Sanda Islands* (cf 821 in 1999), but a high number of young died before fledging. This may have been due to unusually dry conditions on the island. At least 90 prs were found breeding on *Treshnish Isles Mull* in late Jun [TIARG].

Aug-Dec. The highest counts at this time were: 500 at *Colintraive Cowal* on 3rd Sep, 380 at *Loch Caolisport* on 19th Oct, 200 at *Loch Bhasapol* on 3rd Nov and 1,150 at the head of *Loch Feochan Mid-Argyll* on 14th Nov. Other than those in Table 32, no site recorded numbers exceeding 200 birds.

Table 32. *Maximum monthly counts of Herring Gulls at two sea-lochs on Islay and at Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) in 2000.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	25	46	3	22	n/r	n/r	510	445	320	118	n/r
L. Indaal	251	236	197	142	161	20	39	121	261	171	217	209
L. Crinan	156	64	100	60	32	28	6	23	163	210	69	70

ICELAND GULL

Larus glaucooides

Faoileag liath

0598

Scarce but regular winter visitor, most frequent Jan-Mar.

Jan-May. Another scarce gull species that appeared in good numbers during 2000, with records of at least 19 individuals. A single 1st winter bird was found at *Port Charlotte Islay* on 5th Jan and two were there on 13th. After this, one or two (1st winter) birds were reported at *Port Charlotte* throughout the winter and early spring, the last record being of one on 4th May (by which time it was in 1st summer plumage). Records from elsewhere on *Islay*, of what are presumed to be different individuals, came from: *Glenegedale* (2nd winter on 16th Jan), *Loch Gruinart* (1st or 2nd winter flying N on 26th Jan), *Portnahaven* (1st winter found dead on 19th Feb), *Kilchiaran* (1st winter inland on 19th Feb), *Machir Bay* (adult on 12th Mar), *Gartmain* (adult on 18th Mar) and *Bunnahabhain* (one, unaged, on 28th Mar).

On *Tiree*, a 2nd winter bird was found freshly dead at *Vaul* on 9th Jan and a 1st or 2nd winter bird was in the *Hynish* area on 16th Jan. An adult found freshly dead at *Sorobaidh Bay* on 1st Mar was possibly the same individual as the slightly oiled adult seen at *Loch an Eilein* on 8th Feb.

As usual, there were sightings around the harbour at *Oban Mid-Argyll*. A 1st winter was seen on several dates from 7th Feb to 13th Mar, usually near the ferry terminal, and was accompanied on 19th Feb and 13th Mar by a 2nd winter bird.

Elsewhere, a 2nd winter was at *Achnaba (Loch Etive) N Argyll* on 13th Feb, a 1st winter was at *Loch na Keal* on 19th Feb, an unaged bird was at *Skipness Kintyre* on 3rd Mar, a 1st winter was ca 2 km south of *Inverneil Mid-Argyll* on 7th Mar, a 2nd winter was on *Oronsay* on 9th Mar, and a bird in 2nd summer plumage was north of *Rhunahaorine Point Kintyre* on 28th Apr.

Oct-Dec. No birds were reported during the latter part of the year.

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GLAUCOUS GULL

Larus hyperboreus Faoileag mhor 0599

Scarce but regular winter visitor, most frequent Jan-Mar.

Jan-Apr. Yet another normally scarce visitor that appeared in good numbers during 2000, with at least 12 individuals recorded. On *Tiree* there were records of adult birds in the Hynish/Heylipol area on 9th, 12th, 16th and 18th Jan (presumably same bird), and at Crossapol on 20th Apr (possibly another individual). First winter birds found at Vaul on 15th Jan, Barrapol on 28th Feb and around Scarinish harbour during Mar may not all have been the same individual.

A bird described as being in 3rd winter plumage was in Loch Indaal on 13th & 14th Jan and there were reports of unaged individuals in Loch Indaal during Jan and Feb, which may have referred to this bird. Also on *Islay*, 1st winter birds were reported from Frenchman's Rocks (15th Jan), Bruichladdich (18th Feb & 2nd Mar) and Uiskentuie area (11th-18th Mar). These may refer to the same individual but could involve two or more birds. A 2nd winter bird was found near Knockangle Point on 18th Mar.

Elsewhere, an adult was seen in upper Loch Etive on 29th Jan, a dead 2nd winter was found in Kilfinichen Bay *Mull* on 28th Feb, an unaged bird was at Rhunahaorine Point *Kintyre* on 3rd Mar, a very tame 1st winter was feeding on a dead seal at Ardalanish *Mull* on 14th Mar, a 2nd winter was in Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Mar, and bird in 1st winter/summer plumage flew towards the tip site on Loch Gilp on 29th Mar.

Summering birds. No birds were reported during summer.

Oct-Dec. A 1st winter bird flew S past Machrihanish SBO on 24th Oct, and a 2nd winter was in Machrihanish village on 4th Nov.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus marinus Farspag 0600

Common and widespread resident breeding bird. Also occurs as passage migrant and winter visitor.

Jan-May. The only sites with counts of 50 or more birds at this time were: *Tiree* (WeBS count total 190 on 16th Jan), Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 505 washing and resting on 17th Mar), Lingerton rubbish tip (Loch Gilp) *Mid-Argyll* (165+ on 29th Mar) and Bridgend Merse *Islay* (55 on 12th Apr).

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and 4 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (29%). In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 562 prs were noted breeding at 57 colonies (1-65 prs in size). At 27 sites (47%) there were only single prs. Breeding was monitored at 47 sites holding 543 prs: these fledged 619 young (1.14 young/pr), (cf 0.899 young/pr in 1999).

A full census on *Tiree* in late May/early Jun found a total of 131 breeding prs, 4 prs bred on Coll RSPB Reserve and 11 prs were on territory on Gunna Island Coll. A total of 38 prs attempted to breed on the Sanda Islands (cf 54 prs in 1999) and, as with other gulls, chick mortality was higher than usual. On Treshnish Isles *Mull*, 64 prs bred on Lunga and breeding was also confirmed on Fladda, Bac Mor (Dutchman's Cap), Sgeir a Chaisteil, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Caim na Burgh Mor [TIARG].

On Lunga in Jun, one bird was seen to drown a Puffin by repeatedly forcing it to dive.

Aug-Dec. Counts of 50 or more birds came from: Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* (340 on 23rd Sep), Loch Crinan (max. 154 on 22nd Oct – the highest count there in recent years), Loch a'Phuill (88 on 13th Oct), Loch Caolisport (79 on 13th Nov), head of Loch Feochan (243 on 14th Nov) and *Tiree* (WeBS count max. 144 on 19th Nov).

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KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla* Ruideag 0602
Normally strictly marine. Main breeding area on Colonsay, with other important colonies on Islay, Treshnish Isles (Mull) and Tiree. Rare in winter and very scarce inland.

Jan-Apr. On 22nd Jan 150 flew N offshore at Skipness *Kintyre* in one hour. At least 100 were bathing in Kiloran Bay *Colonsay* on 28th Apr, and 115 gathered to wash and preen at Loch a'Phuill on 27th May.

Breeding. On *Colonsay*, the Uragaig sample colony totalled 124 prs (*cf* 117 in 1999), and the sample ledge at Pigs Paradise held 14 nests (*cf* 15 in 1999) with a mean clutch size of 1.79 (*cf* 1.93 in 1999). Although there were 18 AOS on Sanda Islands, only two prs had fully built nests in Jun, and on Treshnish Isles *Mull* a total of 815 prs were breeding on Lunga and breeding was confirmed on Dutchman's Cap (Bac Mor) [TIARG].

Jun-Dec. At least 1,000 were bathing in Kiloran Bay on 14th Jun. The peak autumn count at Machrihanish SBO was 950 in 5 hrs on 10th Oct, and 190 flew past Balevullin *Tiree* in one hour on 5th Oct.

IVORY GULL *Pagophila eburnea* 0604
Vagrant (from the high Arctic), with only three confirmed records in Argyll: on Islay in 1867, at Campbeltown in 1873 and on Coll in 1969.

On the afternoon of 23rd Jan, two volunteers working for the RSPB were walking along the shore of Loch Gruinart near Ardnave Point when a small, all-white gull landed on rocks nearby. It was not at all wary and allowed photographs to be taken from no more than 2 m distance. They identified it as an Ivory Gull but, unaware of its extreme rarity, did not report it until the following morning. That afternoon, after TapR had been looking for about an hour, the bird briefly flew quite close past him but disappeared again. Fortunately, when other birders arrived it was found again after some searching, on a sandbank some way out in the loch. The bird flew off after about 10 minutes and was not seen again. By now its identity had been confirmed and it had been aged as first-winter [Stuart Harris/Claire Andrews/TapR/CRM/MP et al]*.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* Stearnag mhor 0611
Uncommon passage migrant. Very rare and irregular breeding species.

Jan-Jun. The first birds of the year were 2 at in the Sound of Gigha on 4th Apr. The next 2 were at Tayinloan on 7th and 2 were in Loch Indaal on 8th Apr. Tayinloan then had 3 on 9th Apr, 2 on 17th Apr, 2 on 1st May and 2 on 17th Jun. Elsewhere, 2 were at Bruichladdich (Loch Indaal) on 12th Apr, 6 flew over 'The Doirlinn' (Campbeltown Loch) *Kintyre* on 19th Apr, 2 were over Campbeltown Loch on 27th & 30th Apr, 2 were seen at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 6th Jun and 3 were there on 27th Jun.

Summering birds. A pr summered in Machrihanish Bay *Kintyre* but with no sign of breeding.

Jul-Nov. The first birds seen passing Machrihanish SBO were 8 on 19th Jul and a total of 73 (incl. 14 juvs) were recorded from 1st Aug to 10th Oct with a peak of 9 on 6th Sep. Single birds were seen at Blairmore *Cowal* on 23rd & 29th Jul; and an adult and juv were at Bruichladdich on 5th Aug with one there on 7th Aug. Tayinloan had 2 on 13th Aug, 5 on 15th Aug and 2 on 3rd Sep. Elsewhere, one was at the head of Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Aug, a juv was roosting in Gott Bay on 11th Sep, one flew S at Frenchman's Rocks on 12th Sep and, on *Mull*, one was off the N end of Iona on 25th Sep, 2 were near Moy Castle

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(Lochbuie) on 26th Sep, and 2 were off Eorsa (Loch na Keal) on 29th Sep. The last migrant was seen at Machrihanish SBO on 10th Oct.

COMMON TERN

Sterna hirundo

Stearnag

0615

Locally common summer visitor, considerably more numerous than Arctic Tern close to the mainland but much less so on outer islands. Many colonies severely affected by mink predation and often unproductive where no trapping is undertaken.

Apr-May. The first arrival was one at Tobermory Mull on 6th Apr. Then one was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 17th Apr followed by 3 at Killinallan Islay on 21st and one at the head of Loch Indaal on 29th Apr. The first birds were not reported on Tiree until 4th May when 2 were at Loch Bhasapol. Also in May, 2 were seen on Colonsay on 13th and 2 were at Tayinloan on 20th.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 1,181 prs were noted breeding at 12 sites (1-768 prs in size). Most of these (1,141 prs [97%] at 7 colonies) were breeding in areas where mink were controlled. Together they fledged 732-792 young (0.65 young/pr). At the most successful colony (Loch Melfort) 278 prs fledged 575 young and no predator was detected. Fourteen prs bred on a specially adapted mussel raft at South Shian, Loch Creran N Argyll and fledged 19 young.

A full census on Tiree in late May/early Jun found 41 prs while a similar survey on Coll (inc. Gunna) found 71 prs and an additional 44 individuals. On Colonsay (inc. Oronsay) at least 31 prs were breeding, a total of 63 prs were found breeding on Treshnish Isles Mull in Jun [TIARG], and 93 prs were found at 6 colonies in Kintyre. Elsewhere, 7 individuals were recorded on Jura and 4 on Islay, but there were no breeding records [RSPB].

Seven prs were breeding at Big Scone islet, Machrihanish Bay Kintyre [EJM].

Jul-Sep. A total of 190 adults were counted at Sgeir an Eirionnaich (Treshnish Isles) Mull on 1st Jul, although these may have included a few Arctic Terns. At Machrihanish SBO a total of 62 birds (incl. 12 juvs) were recorded flying S on 8 dates from 29th Jul-22nd Sep with a peak count of 22 adults on 3rd Aug. Three were seen in Campbeltown Loch Kintyre on 12th Jul, 2 were at Tayinloan on 18th Jul, 'several dozen' were reported around Garbh Reisa (Sound of Jura) Mid-Argyll on 27th Aug, 4 were at Grasspoint Mull on 7th Sep, and the last bird was at Machrihanish SBO on 22nd Sep.

ARCTIC TERN

Sterna paradisaea

Stearnal

0616

Summer visitor and localised breeding species. Many colonies severely affected by mink predation and often unproductive where no trapping is undertaken.

Apr-May. The first bird of the year was seen at Kiloran Bay Colonsay on 22nd Apr, then 7 were at Loch an Eilein on 24th followed by singles on Oronsay on 2nd May and at RSPB L. Gruinart on 5th May. Then 8 were seen near Texa Islay on 8th May, 25 were at Sgeir na Sgarbh Islay on 9th May and 2 were at Tayinloan on 30th May.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, ca 370 prs bred at 13 colonies (1-140 prs in size). Where breeding was monitored, ca 360 prs at 10 colonies fledged ca 250 young (0.69 young/pr), (cf 72 young from 146 prs at 6 colonies in 1999).

A full census on Tiree in late May/early Jun found 470 breeding prs, while a similar survey on Coll (inc. Gunna) found 30 prs and an additional 201 individuals. On Colonsay (inc. Oronsay) at least 201 prs were breeding together with an additional 150 or more individuals, 28 prs were breeding on Islay together with an additional 374 individuals, 2 prs were found breeding on Treshnish Isles Mull in Jun, and 4 prs were on territory on Gigha

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with 4 prs elsewhere in *Kintyre*. Elsewhere 62-202 individuals were recorded on *Jura* [RSPB].

Four prs were breeding at Big Scone islet, Machrihanish Bay *Kintyre* [EJM].

Jul-Nov. Two seen at Machrihanish SBO on 30th Jun and one flying N on 4th July were first-summer birds. Migrants here totalled 23 birds (incl. 7 juvs) on 5 dates from 25th Jul-12th Sep. Elsewhere in Jul, 37 were counted in Loch Indaal on 14th, 250 were at Loch a'Phuill on 17th, 65 were on Oronsay on 20th, and 100 were in Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 26th. Later, 3 juvs were at Tayinloan on 2nd Aug and the very last birds were at Frenchman's Rocks, where one flew S on 4th Oct and 3 on 8th Oct.

LITTLE TERN

Sterna albifrons Stearnag bheag 0624

Very scarce breeding species, confined to Islay, Tiree and Coll. Scarce passage migrant elsewhere.

Apr-May. The first returning bird on *Tiree* was seen on 19th Apr, rather later than usual. On *Islay* the first report was of 5 birds at Port Charlotte on 30th Apr, and 6 were at Knockangle Point on 13th May.

Breeding. A full census on *Tiree* in late May/early Jun found a total of 53 AON. Three prs were on territory on Gunna Island and 44 further individuals were located elsewhere on *Coll.* Two prs and a single bird were found on *Colonsay*, and 17 prs plus 3 further individuals were located on *Islay* [RSPB].

Jul-Aug. The only autumn record at Machrihanish SBO was of 3 adults flying S on 31st Jul. The last birds recorded on *Tiree* were 5 at Loch a'Phuill on 7th Aug.

BLACK TERN

Chlidonias niger Stearnal dhubh 0627

Scarce and irregular passage migrant. Only 7 Argyll records 1980-1999.

An exceptional year for this species with descriptions supplied and accepted for no fewer than 4 individuals. An adult was seen in Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 26th Jul [AJL]* and juvs were recorded at Machrihanish SBO on 6th Sep (only the 2nd record for this site) [EJM]* and at Frenchman's Rocks on 14th Sep [TapR]*. It was not possible to age an individual seen at Loch Gruinart on 21st Sep because of poor weather conditions, but enough was seen to identify it as this species [TapR]*.

COMMON GUILLEMOT (GUILLEMOT)

Uria aalge Eun dubh an sgadain 0634

Highly colonial, locally abundant breeding species. Adults with small young appear on the sea far from colonies in late summer. Large numbers of passage migrants may be seen from headlands, and smaller numbers are regular in sea-lochs in winter.

Jan-May. Of 174 birds observed at Ceann a'Mhara *Tiree* in late Jan, 54 were already in breeding plumage. Away from the breeding areas, up to 10 were reported from: Blairmore (Loch Long) *Cowal* (regularly Jan-Apr), Kilbrannan Sound *Kintyre* (Jan & Mar), Loch Fyne *Mid-Argyll* (Mar), Tayinloan (Apr), Grasspoint *Mull* (Apr) and Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* (Apr). No fewer than 140 were counted in a raft off Silvercraigs (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* on 6th May.

Breeding. A total of 8,349 adults were noted on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late Jun, most of which were in the vicinity of Harp Rock [TIARG]. There were 3,290 adult birds on the Sanda Islands (819 young ringed), a considerable increase on the 2,174 found in 1999. Most were on Glunimore where they appear to be displacing Razorbills in places. A total of

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129 birds was recorded on the sample cliff at Urugaig Colonsay (cf 119 in 1999).

Aug-Dec. Single birds were again reported regularly at Blairmore, rafts of up to 10 birds were seen between Crinan and Scarba *Mid-Argyll* on 27th Aug, 5 were in Loch Caolisport on 25th Sep, at least 15 were off Eorsa (Loch na Keal) on 29th Sep, and one flew N over RSPB L. Gruinart on 25th Oct.

Two birds ringed as adults on Lunga, Treshnish Isles were found dead off the coast of France as the result of oiling. One ringed on 29th Jun 1989 was found at St. Gilles-Croix-de-Vie, Bay of Biscay on 25th Dec 1999; and one ringed on 28th Jun 1984 was found at Baie de Somme, English Channel on 31st Jan 2000.

RAZORBILL

Alca torda

Falc

0636

Locally common breeding species, although less numerous and with smaller colonies than Guillemot. Large numbers of passage migrants may be seen from headlands and smaller numbers are regular in sea-lochs in winter.

Jan-Apr. Thirteen birds were seen on the breeding ledges at Ceann a'Mhara Tìree on 15th Jan. The only birds reported away from the breeding areas were small rafts of 10 or so off Grasspoint Mull on 27th Apr and one in Campbeltown Loch Kintyre on 27th Apr.

Breeding. There were 2,910 adult birds on the Sanda Islands (237 young ringed), a similar adult total to 1999. On Treshnish Isles Mull 1,098 adults were noted on Lunga and 61 on Sgeir a'Chaisteil with other adults noted at suitable nest sites on Cairn na Burgh Beg, Cairn na Burgh More and Fladda [TIARG]. On the sample cliff at Urugaig Colonsay a total of 37 birds were counted (cf 25 in 1999).

Aug-Dec. Six were recorded at RSPB L. Gruinart on 31st Aug.

AUK SP. (GUILLEMOT/RAZORBILL)

The main southerly movement of auks past Machrihanish SBO took place between 22nd Sep and 10th Oct and totalled 3,460 birds on 7 dates, with a peak of 1,300 in 8 hrs on 2nd Oct. Sea-watching at Balevullin Tìree revealed large numbers passing in early Oct, with 160 per hour recorded on 4th Oct, 1,515 per hour on 5th, 865 per hour on 6th, 180 per hour on 7th, 400 per hour on 8th and 750 per hour on 9th Oct.

BLACK GUILLEMOT

Cephus grylle

Gearra-breac

0638

Common resident breeding species, on coasts and islands in sea lochs.

Jan-Apr. The complete coastal survey on Tìree from 14th-20th Jan found only 3 birds. One in Campbeltown Loch Kintyre on 28th Jan was already in breeding plumage. The only count of 10 or more birds came from Smaull RSPB Islay with 10 on 18th Apr.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 88 adults were noted during the breeding season at 20 sites. Adult numbers at individual sites ranged from 1-14. Clutches or chicks were confirmed at 5 sites. A total of 66 adults were noted around the Treshnish Isles Mull in late Jun (recorded around most islands) (cf 70 individuals in 1999) [TIARG]. A count of 180 individuals on the sea around the Sanda Islands was made late in the season and so may be an underestimate.

Elsewhere, at least 2 prs were breeding around Oronsay, 6 or more prs were breeding on the cliff N of Port Askaig Islay, and the usual small breeding colony was active at Ceann a'Mhara Tìree.

Oct-Dec. At Machrihanish SBO 218 were counted flying S in 3 hrs on 22nd Sep. The only count of 10 or more birds came from Loch Caolisport with 23 on 13th Nov.

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LITTLE AUK

Alle alle Colcach bheag 0647

Scarce and irregular winter visitor, usually seen during sea-watches or after severe gales.

A typical set of records, mostly involving dead or exhausted birds. In Jan one was found dead at Ledaig Point *N Argyll* on 13th, an emaciated individual was picked up at West Hynish *Tiree* on 14th, and a set of relatively fresh wings were picked up at Hough *Tiree* on 18th. On 12th Feb an exhausted bird was found in a garden on *Coll*, and two wings were found during a beached bird survey on *Tiree* on 28th Feb.

From a boat, two were seen flying *N ca 3 km NW* of Gigha *Kintyre* on 9th Nov. After overnight gales, one appeared in a garden at Ardrishaig *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Dec. It was returned to the sea unharmed.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN (PUFFIN)

Fratercula arctica Buthaid 0654

Very localised breeding species with main colonies on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Occasionally recorded in winter.

Jan-May. One was seen offshore at Skipness *Kintyre* on 22nd Jan. In May, birds were recorded in Gunna Sound *Tiree* (3 on 5th, 2 on 9th), Saligo Bay *Islay* (3 on 21st, 2 on 25th) and Otter Ferry *Cowal* (4 on 21st). On 20th May one was seen flying SW carrying a bill full of fish just off Silvercraigs (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll*, at least 80 km from the nearest known breeding site on Sanda Islands.

Breeding. A count of 264 individuals on the sea around the Sanda Islands was made late in the season and so may be an underestimate. On the Treshnish Isles *Mull* a total of 2,659 adults were noted in late Jun (2,549 on Lunga, 110 on Sgeir a Chaisteil). This is by far the highest count in recent years (*cf* totals of 1,232 in 1999 and 1,589 in 1998) and birds were also noted at burrows on Bac Mor (Dutchman's Cap) and Fladda [TIARG]. On 5th May at least 150 birds were present at the colony sites on Staffa *Mull*.

Jun-Dec. A partial albino with white nape and collar was seen on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) in Jun. On 5th Jun, one was ashore at Pigs Paradise *Colonsay*, and 2 were seen in the Firth of Lorn 5 km S of Frank Lockwood's Island *Mull*. Up to 5 birds were seen in Gunna Sound *Tiree* during Jun and Jul. At Machrihanish SBO 12 birds were noted on 8 dates from 30th Jun-6th Sep. Birds were also seen on several occasions at Frenchman's Rocks, with 5 on 22nd Jul, singles on 5th and 6th Aug, 4 on 8th Aug, one on 18th Sep and the last on 8th Oct. Elsewhere, one was flying W at Ardnave Point *Islay* on 6th Sep and one flew past Hynish *Tiree* on 21st Sep.

ROCK PIGEON (ROCK DOVE)

Columba livia Calman creige 0665

Resident breeder except in Cowal. Large flocks often gather on arable fields outwith breeding season. Genetic integrity of most populations now in doubt because of interbreeding with feral pigeons but those on the islands probably nearest 'pure' Rock Pigeon. Feral Pigeons recorded from most areas, but no information on population size.

Jan-May. On *Islay* flocks of 50 or more birds were reported at: Smau!l RSPB Reserve (max. 150 on 1st Jan), Portnahaven (65 on 12th Jan) and Easter Ellister (74 on 26th Jan), and up to 35 were regularly recorded at RSPB L. Gruinart. On 22nd Mar a total of 140 birds were counted on *Tiree* incl. 58 at Cornaigbeg.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (*cf* 2 of 15 in 1999) and in just one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). Evidence was found of two prs nesting on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*; and on the Sanda Islands four prs

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were present and presumed to have bred (although some or all of these may have interbred with feral pigeons). Birds considered to be 'pure' Rock Pigeon were recorded in the breeding season on *Colonsay* and at 4 sites on mainland *Mull*.

Jul-Dec. Smaull RSPB Reserve regularly held over 100 birds (max. 322 on 27th Oct) and the regular flock at RSPB L. Gruinart peaked at 235 on 28th Dec. There were widespread reports of smaller flocks around *Islay* but the only other counts of 50 or more birds were at Coullabus Wood (50+ on 23rd Oct) and Braigo (84 on 9th Nov). On *Tiree*, 66 were in a newly re-seeded field at Heylipol on 23rd Jun, 55 were found around Whitehouse on 24th Sep, and a single flock at Cornaigmore on 26th Nov numbered no fewer than 130 birds.

Records of Feral Pigeons came from: *Dunoon Cowal*, *Campbeltown Kintyre*, *Connel Mid-Argyll*, *Inveraray Mid-Argyll* and *Oban Mid-Argyll*.

STOCK PIGEON (STOCK DOVE) *Columba oenas* Calman gorm 0668
Very scarce and local resident. Only regularly reported in Mid-Argyll in recent years (with just one confirmed breeding record) but with other records in Cowal, Kintyre, and Mull in the past 10 years.

Single birds were reported at Kilmartin gravel pit on 31st Mar and at Ederline Farm on 29th Jun, both within the usual area of *Mid-Argyll*. However, a single bird at Kiloran *Colonsay* on 4th Jun was the first recorded on the island for many years. Two birds seen at Baraskomill Farm *Kintyre* on 14th Jun were reported as behaving as a pair.

COMMON WOOD PIGEON (WOODPIGEON) *Columba palumbus* Calman fiadhaich 0670
Common resident breeding species except in some areas, such as Mull, where more numerous in winter. Normally absent from Coll and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. Reported in small numbers from all areas except *Coll*, *Colonsay*, *Jura* and *Tiree* with flocks of 34 at Cattadale *Islay* on 6th Jan and 95 at Loch Caolisport 21st Jan.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 12 BBS squares (33%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and 4 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (29%). Twenty birds were recorded in one Countryside 2000 1 km square in *Cowal*. More numerous than usual on *Colonsay* in Jun, when max. count of 6 was thought to be due to increased arable crops and grain provided for Pheasants.

Jul-Dec. A large influx was noted in *Mid-Argyll* from early Nov and flocks of 50 or more were feeding on the bumper acorn crop at Taynish NNR throughout the month. At least 60 were counted in Minard Woods on 8th Nov increasing to 120+ by 29th, 150 or more were at Kintallan (Tayvallich) on 20th, and 300+ were in the oak woods at Blarghour (Loch Awe) on 26th Nov. Birds were still present in Dec, though in smaller numbers, e.g. 55 at Kintallan on 16th and 50 in Minard Woods on 22nd.

COLLARED DOVE *Sreptopelia decaocto* Calman a chrios 0684
Sparse but widespread distribution throughout Argyll. Some island populations emigrate in winter.

Jan-May. There were records from *Islay* and *Tiree* throughout the winter but at Kintallan (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll*, for example, birds did not appear until Apr, and Blairmore *Cowal* had birds in Apr but not later in the year.

Breeding. Not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares or 14 Countryside 2000 squares surveyed. Three prs bred at RSPB L. Gruinart and 12 were present near the hotel on Iona *Mull* on 4th Jun. There were breeding season reports from all areas except *Coll*, *Jura* and *N Argyll*.

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Jul-Dec. Flocks of 10 or more birds were seen at Bruichladdich *Islay* (21 on 10th Jul) and Crinan Ferry *Mid-Argyll* (10 on 30th Jul).

COMMON CUCKOO (CUCKOO) *Cuculus canorus* Cuthag 0724
Common summer visitor. Main host species is Meadow Pipit.

Apr-May. Although there were reports of birds very early in Apr, no dates were provided and the first dated records were at Loch Frisa *Mull* and Bunnahabhain *Islay* on 17th Apr. There were widespread reports of calling birds in *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *N Argyll* on 22nd and 23rd Apr followed by records from *Colonsay* on 28th and *Kintyre* and *Tiree* on 29th Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 7 of 12 BBS squares (58%), (cf 9 of 15 in 1999) and 10 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (71%). A record total of 4 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2). An egg was found in a Common Blackbird's nest at Cornaigmore *Tiree* in Jun but the nest was later deserted.

Jul-Sep. A juvenile was seen at Gleann a'Chaiginn Mhoir *Mull* on 26th Jul, and a very late bird was at Milbuie *Colonsay* on 14th Sep.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba* Comhachag 0735
Scarce breeding species, but probably under-recorded. All records required.

During the year, records were received from all areas except *Coll*, *Colonsay*, *Jura* and *Tiree*.

Breeding. In *Cowal* 11 occupied sites were located and 10 of these fledged 36 young [DA, AF]. The Forest Enterprise scheme in West Argyll District found a marked increase in *Kintyre* and Knapdale compared to 1999: 17 prs occupied barrels and laid eggs and 14 prs fledged a minimum of 29 young (cf 9 occupied barrels in 1999) [Forest Enterprise: per ARSG]. Elsewhere, in *Kintyre* 20 occupied territories were identified, eggs were laid in 14 of these, and 36 young were fledged by the 13 successful prs. These included one brood of no fewer than 6 young [RAGA]. Productivity was again low on *Islay*: there were eggs at 11 of 15 occupied sites checked and at least 24 young fledged [MAO]. In Argyll as a whole, at least 127 young are known to have fledged from around 48 successful territories monitored [ARSG].

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco* Comhachag dhonn 0761
Widespread and common resident breeding bird, but absent from Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. At least 2 prs held territories in the Tiroran area of *Mull*, and a pr bred at RSPB L. Gruinart but later deserted.

Other records during the year came from: *Cowal* (2 sites), *Islay* (2 sites), *Kintyre* (one site), *Mid-Argyll* (4 sites) and *Mull* (3 sites).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* Comhachag adharcaiche 0767
Very scarce resident breeding bird and winter visitor: almost certainly under-recorded. All records required.

One was seen early on the morning of 11th Mar near Kilmory *Mid-Argyll*. Singles were seen on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 14th Mar and in the north of *Colonsay* on 22nd May.

Breeding. Confirmed at a site on *Colonsay* when two young were heard calling on 14th Jun. Birds were also seen in 3 or 4 areas of *Cowal* but no breeding attempts were recorded.

One was calling at Gruline *Mull* on 2nd Sep.

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LONG/SHORT-EARED OWL

Asio sp.

An individual of one of these species was disturbed near Shearwater Gully on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* on 26th Jun and flew out to sea.

SHORT-EARED OWL

Asio flammeus Comhachag chluassach 0768

Widespread breeder and winter visitor. Numbers fluctuate and distribution varies with abundance of small rodents, especially field voles Microtus agrestis. Some emigration in autumn. All records required.

Jan-May. One was seen in Glen More *Mull* on 19th Jan, one was hunting at Creag an Tailleur *N Argyll* on 13th Feb, and one frequenting the Heylipol/Moss area of *Tiree* was the first on the island since 1996. Birds were reported during May from RSPB L. Gruinart, Oronsay and Tayinloan.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf none of 15 in 1999) but in none of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares. In *Kintyre* a pr bred at Machrihanish Airfield and 2 or 3 prs were successful in the Glen Barr area. About 6 prs bred on the Ross of *Mull*, and of 7-8 prs located in *Cowal* during the breeding season, at least 2 prs were known to be successful [ARSG]. A pr was seen displaying in Glen More *Mull* on 30th May, but there was only one sighting during the breeding season at RSPB L. Gruinart.

Jun-Dec. One was flushed from The Reef *Tiree* on 30th Jun, 2 were seen at Knock Scalbert (nr. Campbeltown) *Kintyre* in Aug, and singles were at Loch Don on 27th Sep, RSPB L. Gruinart on 2nd Oct and the lower slopes of Ben Cruachan *N Argyll* on 30th Oct. One hunting over the moss at Moine Mhor on 15th Dec was the first seen on the reserve since 1997.

EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR (NIGHTJAR) *Caprimulgus europaeus*

0778

Very scarce and irregular summer visitor. Has bred in the past in Kintyre and Cowal.

Recorded for the first time since 1993. A bird was seen and heard calling and 'wing-clapping' near Tarbert *Kintyre* on 2nd May. It was not found subsequently. There were also unconfirmed reports of calling birds near Tayinloan and in Kilmartin Glen *Mid-Argyll* during Jun.

COMMON SWIFT (SWIFT)

Apus apus

Gobhlan mor

0795

Summer visitor, breeding only very locally on the mainland. Wandering birds in summer and passage migrants may occur in all areas.

May-Jun. The first arrival was at Scammadale *Mid-Argyll* on 10th May, followed by singles at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 12th, Dunoon *Cowal* on 15th and Blaimore *Cowal* on 22nd May. Four birds were circling over Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 27th May. Away from known breeding areas, birds were also seen at Iona *Mull* (one on 5th Jun), Taynuilt *Mid-Argyll* (3 on 5th Jun), Blarghour (Loch Awe) *Mid-Argyll* (max. 5 on 20th Jun), RSPB L. Gruinart (4 on 17th Jun), Craighouse *Jura* (3 on 18th Jun), Portsonachan (Loch Awe) *Mid-Argyll* (5 on 27th Jun), Heylipol *Tiree* (max. 6 on 29th Jun), Loch an Fhir Mhor *Islay* (2 on 28th Jun) and Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* (one on 29th Jun).

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf one of 15 in 1999) but in none of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares. Birds were reported during the breeding season at: Tarbert *Kintyre* (4 regularly during season), Connel *Mid-Argyll*, Inveraray *Mid-Argyll* (2 during Jun), Lochgilphead (max. 12 on 3rd Jul), Oban *Mid-Argyll* (max. 8 on 22nd Jul) and Dunoon *Cowal* (max. 6 on 20th Jul).

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Jul-Sep. Away from the known breeding areas, birds were reported in Jul from: Moine Mhor (2 on 2nd), Upper Killeyan *Islay* (one on 3rd), Tayinloan (one on 20th), Kilchiaran *Islay* (5 on 22nd), Oronsay (one on 22nd), Port Charlotte *Islay* (one on 22nd), RSPB L. Gruinart (one on 27th) and Blairmore (Loch Long) *Cowal* (4 on 28th). On 9th Aug 12 were circling and screaming over Lochgilphead prior to departure, and the last birds at Connel were 2 on 26th Aug. Migrant birds were seen at Tayinloan (8 on 21st Aug) and Oronsay (one on 7th Sep); and 2 very late migrants were seen at Loch Caolisport on 27th Sep.

COMMON KINGFISHER (KINGFISHER) *Alcedo atthis* Biorra cruidein 0831
Scarce but regular visitor. Most records are in autumn and winter, and may represent dispersing juveniles.

As usual Loch Etive, our most regular locality, produced one near Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Jan. In southern *Kintyre*, reports of single birds along the Breackerie Water at Dalsmirren in Jul, in Conie Glen in Aug and frequenting the Chiscan Burn in Sep could possibly have all referred to the same individual. The singles seen at Barnluasgan *Mid-Argyll* on 2nd Dec and at Caol Scotnish *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Dec were almost certainly the same bird.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops* 0846
Scarce passage migrant. Recorded in 12 of the 20 years 1980-99 with a total of about 20 records: more often in spring than in autumn.

One flushed at The Glebe, Gott Tìree on 26th Apr was initially reported as a woodpecker! The bird was correctly identified there on the following day and was seen later at Ard Beg. It was still at Ard Beg on 28th Apr (two years to the day and at the same location as the bird in 1998) but was not seen after this.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis* Snagardach 0856
Rare but recorded regularly in Cowal in recent years, as well as in Mull and N Argyll. Only confirmed breeding record Kintyre 1998. All records required.

In spring birds were heard 'yaffling' in Glen Massan *Cowal* on 28th Apr and at the Younger Botanic Gardens *Cowal* on 6th May. One was seen on 5th Dec on an oak near Blarghour *Mid-Argyll*, well away from the recent known range of this species.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major* Snagan daraich 0876
Resident breeder, widespread on the mainland and Mull. On Islay, recorded only in 1982, 1987 and 1996.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf one of 15 in 1999) and one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). Three territories were found in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2). Young were heard calling from a nest at Brainport Bay *Mid-Argyll* in Jun. In *Kintyre* birds were present during the breeding season around West Loch Tarbert, on the Largie Estate, at Torrisdale, at Carradale and in Crossaig Glen.

On 24th Oct one was seen well at Loch Ballygrant *Islay*, the first record on the island since 1996.

Other records during the year came from: Blairmore, Dunoon and Glendaruel *Cowal*, Tayinloan *Kintyre*, Blarghour, Glen Airigh (Kilmichael Forest), Moine Mhor, Oban and Torran (Loch Awe) *Mid-Argyll*, Loch Ba, Lochbuie and Salen *Mull*, and Benderloch *N Argyll*.

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SKY LARK (SKYLARK) *Alauda arvensis* Uiseag 0976
Widespread breeding species, common in some areas. Many emigrate in winter, with remaining birds mainly in coastal and low-lying localities.

Jan-Apr. On *Islay*, monthly maxima were: at RSPB L. Gruinart, 126 on 31st Jan, 214 on 29th Feb and 164 on 1st Mar; and at Smaull RSPB Reserve, 19 on 14th Jan, 250 on 27th Feb and 373 on 15th Mar. The only other flock of 50 or more birds reported was at Ardlarach (Loch Indaal) (70 on 16th Jan).

Breeding. Recorded in 6 of 12 BBS squares (50%), (cf 7 of 15 in 1999 & 11 of 16 in 1998) and 6 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (43%). Found in 3 of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares. For the first time no territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 3). A sample survey at RSPB L. Gruinart found 93 territories in 279 ha (0.33 prs per ha) in 2 moorland compartments. Elsewhere, birds were present and breeding on *Coll RSPB Reserve*; 4 singing birds were holding territories on Lunga and one on Fladda (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in Jun; and 5 prs were located (possibly under-recorded) on Sanda Islands (cf 8 in 1999).

Sep-Dec. Monthly maxima at RSPB L. Gruinart were 97 on 19th Sep, 113 on 5th Oct and 83 on 14th Nov. The only other localities with counts of 50 or more birds were Comaigmore *Tiree* (max. 140+ on 24th Sep) and Upper Killeyan *Islay* (max. 61 on 28th Sep).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia* Gobhlan gainmhiche 0981
Summer visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon and localised breeding species. All breeding records required.

Mar-May. An earlier-than-usual arrival. One was seen at Southend *Kintyre* on 19th Mar and by 24th Mar 4 were at Moine Mhor and singles were at Easter Ellister *Islay* and RSPB L. Gruinart. A flock of 20 were at Carnain (Loch Indaal) on 29th Mar, and 12 were at Kilmartin gravel pit *Mid-Argyll* on 31st Mar. By the end of May, birds had also been reported from *Colonsay, Cowal, Mull, N Argyll* and *Tiree*.

Breeding. The species was recorded in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). No counts were received for the large, regularly monitored colony at North Connel sandpit *N Argyll* but Kilmichael Glen woodyard *Mid-Argyll* had approx. 80 occupied nest holes (as in 1999) in Jun. There were also counts from several smaller colonies on *Mull* including: Crannich (4 AON in sandy bank + 24 AON in quarry), Gorten (35 AON) and Torosay (30 AON). Birds also bred at: Laggan Estuary *Islay* (6 AON), at a coastal site near Ballure *Kintyre* (10-20 AON), at Ardchnonell *Mid-Argyll* (no count) and at Amod by the River Breackerie *Kintyre* (no count).

Aug-Sep. Birds of passage were seen at Loch an Eilein (2 on 2nd Aug) and Tayinloan (4 on 12th Aug and 5 on 29th Aug); and the last one was seen at Moine Mhor on 15th Sep.

BARN SWALLOW (SWALLOW) *Hirundo rustica* Gobhlan gaoithe 0992
Widespread and common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Apr-May. The first birds of the year were singles at Imeraval and Carnain *Islay* on 29th Mar. There was then a gap until singles were seen at Glen Lonan lake *Mid-Argyll* and Bruichladdich *Islay* on 6th Apr followed by birds at Lochgair *Mid-Argyll* on 8th, Tayinloan on 9th, Appin *N Argyll* on 11th, Southend *Kintyre* on 13th and Connel and Barloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 14th Apr. The main arrival occurred during the week 16th-23rd Apr, when birds were widely reported from sites in *Colonsay, Cowal, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree*.

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Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 12 BBS squares (33%), (*cf* 3 of 15 in 1999) and 8 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (57%). Breeding records were received from most areas, including a pr with b/4 at the lighthouse on Sanda Island. A barely fledged juv. was seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 11th Sep.

Jul-Nov. Birds were already moving south at the end of Jul and approx. 2,000 were at a reedbed roost at Machrihanish Water *Kintyre* on 31st Jul-1st Aug. 180 were counted at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Aug and 'hundreds' were passing through Tayinloan on 29th Aug. At many sites, local birds were gathering prior to departure from 17th-26th Sep and most had gone by 1st Oct. Late birds were still at the farm at Ifferdale *Kintyre* on 16th Oct. The last migrants seen were singles at Ardnave *Islay* on 22nd Oct and Ballygrant *Islay* on 25th Oct with 3 at Bridgend *Islay* also on 25th, and the very last, a juv, at Campbeltown on 7th Nov.

HOUSE MARTIN

Delichon urbica Gobhlan taighe 1001

Summer visitor breeding commonly on the mainland. Less numerous on the islands and no recent breeding records from Colonsay, Tiree and Coll.

Apr-Jun. The first birds recorded were 3 at Benderloch *N Argyll* on 15th Apr and the main arrival appeared to take place soon afterwards with several birds on *Islay* on 21st, and at Dunoon on 22nd, Beinn Ghuilean (Campbeltown) *Kintyre* on 22nd, *Tiree* on 23rd, RSPB L. Gruinart on 28th and Minard *Mid-Argyll* on 29th April. Single birds were seen on Oronsay, where the species is seldom recorded, on 6th May and 2nd Jun; and one was at Kilchattan *Colonsay* on 5th Jun.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* one of 15 in 1999) and in one of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). Birds were present during the breeding season in *Cowal* (confirmed breeding), *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* (confirmed breeding), *Mull* and *N Argyll*.

Aug-Sep. Many migrant birds were passing through Tayinloan on 29th Aug and 30 were counted at Glendaruel *Cowal* on 3rd Sep. Some local birds were still present in *Mid-Argyll* in late Sep but the last birds reported were 2 at Kintallan *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Oct, one at Campbeltown on 7th Oct and, more surprisingly, a flock of 40 near Kilchurn Castle *Mid-Argyll* on 9th Oct.

TREE PIPIT

Anthus trivialis Riabhag 1009

Summer visitor breeding commonly on the mainland. Also widespread on Jura and Mull, but very scarce on Islay.

Apr-May. The first reported was one at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Apr, followed by one at Brainport Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd Apr. Birds were more widely reported in *Cowal*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *N Argyll* from 27th Apr and into the first week in May. The only record from *Islay* concerned 2 singing near Claggain Bay on 13th May.

Breeding. Recorded in 5 of 12 BBS squares (42%), (*cf* 6 of 15 in 1999) and 6 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (43%). A record total of 17 territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 13).

Aug-Sep. Five migrant birds were seen near Dunoon on 15th Aug; and a late straggler was recorded at RSPB L. Gruinart on 5th Oct.

MEADOW PIPIT

Anthus pratensis Snathag 1011

Abundant breeding species. Most leave the higher ground in winter, and significant flocks occur on passage. Those remaining in Argyll occur mainly in coastal and low-lying localities.

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Jan-Apr. Small winter flocks were recorded at RSPB L. Gruinart with a maximum count of 48 on 24th Feb. A minimum of 200 birds were estimated to be present on *Tiree* on 22nd Mar.

Breeding. Recorded in 9 of 12 BBS squares (75%), (*cf* 13 of 15 in 1999); one of only four species recorded in 75% of BBS squares in Argyll. It was also recorded in 11 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (79%) and found in all of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares. Some indication of population density in suitable habitat is shown by the maximum counts obtained in single 1 km squares of 109 birds (BBS) and 100 (Countryside 2000). Thus, in these three surveys combined, the species was found in 26 of the 32 squares surveyed (81%) and a total of 777 individuals were recorded (30 per occupied square). At Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, there were a record 10 territories in the coastal CBC plot (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 5); but on Sanda Islands only 14 prs were located (*cf* 20 in 1999). The species was reported as breeding widely on Lunga and Fladda (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*, and birds were noted on territory on Bac Mor (Dutchman's Cap).

Aug-Dec. Birds were noted moving south from mid-Aug and AJL considered that there were probably 'several thousand' birds present at times on *Tiree* during the month. A single flock of 150+ was at West Hynish *Tiree* on 28th Aug. The only other flock of 100 or more birds reported was 140 at the head of Loch Fyne *Mid-Argyll* on 4th Sep. Smaller flocks of up to 10 birds were reported in Nov-Dec from: Dunoon, RSPB L. Gruinart, Oronsay and East Kames (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll*.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus* Gabhagan 1014
Common resident breeding species on coasts, sea lochs and islands. Scarce passage and winter visitor elsewhere.

A minimum of 130 birds were recorded during the complete coastal survey of *Tiree* during 14th-20th Jan.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* 2 of 15 in 1999). A total of 27 prs were found on the Sanda Islands (*cf* 24 in 1999). A minimum of 14 prs were recorded around Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* and birds were also noted on Bac Mor (Dutchman's Cap), Fladda, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Sgeir a Chaisteil.

The only counts of 10 or more birds were: 13 at Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* on 15th Mar, 10 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 24th Oct, and 10 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 27th Oct.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* Breacan buidhe 1017
Scarce and less-than-annual passage migrant; recorded in 13 of the 19 years 1980-98. Birds of the Blue-headed race M. f. flava occur from time to time, and there has been at least one record of the Grey-headed race M. f. thunbergi (in 1985).

One at Bleachfield (The Laggan) *Kintyre* on 30th Jun was an unusual date for this species. One flying S on 15th Sep at Machrihanish SBO more typical.

BLUE-HEADED (YELLOW) WAGTAIL *M. f. flava*

An individual seen at Colonsay House *Colonsay* on 26th Apr was considered to be of this sub-species.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea* Breacan bain tighearna 1019
Widespread resident breeding species; some emigration in winter.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* one of 15 in 1999), 2 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%) and found in one of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares.

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Confirmed breeding records included a pr with b/3 at Kilchiaran *Islay*, a nest at Lochdon with two successive broods b/5 and b/4, an adult feeding recently fledged young at Knock *Mull*, and a family party at Carsaig Bay *Mull*.

Also reported from: *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (9 other sites), *Jura* (one site), *Kintyre* (3 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (10 sites), *Mull* (9 other sites) and *N Argyll* (one site).

PIED WAGTAIL

Motacilla alba yarrellii Breach an t-sil 1020

Widespread and common breeder. Emigration from most areas in winter. Returning birds generally arrive late Feb to early Mar; departure Aug-Oct.

Jan-Apr. Birds, mostly in ones and twos, were recorded during Jan at: Blairmore (Loch Long) *Cowal*, Skipness *Kintyre*, Imeraval *Islay* (9 on 6th), RSPB L. Gruinart, Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll*, Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay*, Balevullin *Tiree* and Oban. A small flock of 16 birds was noted on the shore at Ormsary (Knapdale) *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd Feb, 12 were at Tayinloan on 20th Mar, and 15 were at Ardskenish *Colonsay* on 23rd Apr. A minimum of 70 birds were considered to be on *Tiree* on 22nd Mar.

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 12 BBS squares (25%), (cf 5 of 15 in 1999) and 3 of 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%). Four prs were found (but only one pr fledged young) on Sanda Islands (as 1999), and a pr with 3 juvs were found on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in Jun. Breeding prs were also reported from Oronsay and from Auchindrain, Blarghour, Kintallan (Tayvallich) and Minard *Mid-Argyll*.

Jul-Dec. Small flocks reported during Jul and Aug included 10 at Tayinloan on 11th Jul and 12 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 15th Aug. Numbers really built up from late Aug with ca 60 in Gott Bay on 29th Aug, 48 between Bruichladdich and Bridgend *Islay* on 10th Sep, 45 in Gott Bay also on 10th, and 34 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 25th Sep. Smaller groups were still present later in the year including 20 at Killinallan *Islay* on 23rd Oct, 25+ at Machir Bay *Islay* on 24th Oct and 20 at Tayinloan on 12th Nov. Five birds were still at Tayinloan on 30th Dec.

WHITE WAGTAIL

M. a. alba

Passage migrant, usually recorded in spring. Extent of autumn passage obscured by identification difficulties.

Apr-May. On 9th Apr 2 were seen at Tayinloan and singles were at Killinallan Dunes and Blackrock *Islay*. Thereafter up to 3 were reported from various locations on *Islay* until 20th Apr, when 10 were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart. From 21st Apr-3rd May birds were seen almost daily at RSPB L. Gruinart, with 5 on 21st Apr increasing to 30 on 24th and 25 on 25th, falling to 7 on 2nd May and 2 on 3rd May. The last bird was a single on 12th May. Starting with one at Sorobaidh Bay on 18th, many were also recorded on *Tiree*: numbers there peaked on 24th Apr when 34 were counted in Vault Bay. Then smaller numbers were seen until the end of Apr, 8 were at Loch an Eilein on 2nd May and a few singles were present until mid-May.

There were regular sightings at Tayinloan starting with 3 on 20th Apr, followed by 8 on 27th Apr, 7 on 30th Apr and one on 1st May. Oronsay had 2 on 22nd Apr and 10 on 23rd, while 2 were at Ardskenish *Colonsay* on 23rd Apr and 3 were there on 6th May.

As usual, there were regular sightings at Machrihanish SBO but numbers there peaked rather later, with a maximum count of 41 on 11th May.

Breeding season. A pale-grey-backed bird was feeding young on 14th Jun at Carsaig Bay *Mull*, and a male bird of this race, holding territory at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* from 5th-16th Jun, was seen once in association with a female Pied Wagtail. One present at Machrihanish

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SBO on 2nd-3rd Jun was the first Jun record for this site.

Aug-Sep. The only Aug records concerned a single at RSPB L. Gruinart on 15th and 3 at Tayinloan on 17th Aug. Then there were 7 at Machrihanish SBO on 2nd Sep, 2 at Colintrave Cowal on 3rd, 4 at Loch Crinan on 7th, and a total of 14 from Portnahaven-Port Wemyss and 12 from Bruichladdich-Bridgend Islay on 10th Sep. On 30th Sep a total of 30 were counted in the Uisaed-Machrihanish Kintyre area. Apart from 10 at Loch a'Phuill and Sorobaidh Bay on 9th, only small numbers were seen in Oct, including 5 at Port Fada Tìree on 24th; 6 on the shore at Balnabraid Glen Kintyre on 30th Oct were the last reported.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING (WAXWING) *Bombycilla garrulus* Canarach dearg 1048
Irruptive winter visitor in varying numbers; not seen every year.

There were no records in the earlier part of the year, but what was to become the largest influx to Argyll since 1996 was first signalled when 3 were seen in Loch Gair Mid-Argyll on 25th Dec. Birds soon appeared elsewhere with 30 or more in a garden in Campbeltown on 26th, one at Whitehouse Kintyre on 27th, one at Rubha a'Mhail Islay on 28th, and 3 at Loch Beg Mull on 29th Dec. A flock of 24 which dropped briefly into a bush at Loch Skerrols Islay, also on 29th, before flying S was the largest single group ever recorded on the island. On 30th Dec 2 were seen at Port Charlotte with a male Blackcap for company, and one was at Pennygael Mull; and by 31st there were widespread reports in Mid-Argyll with one at Tullochgorm (Minard), 4 at Connel and 5 in Albert Lane, Oban.

The influx continued into early 2001, and details will be given in the Systematic List for that year in ABR 18.

WHITE-THROATED DIPPER (DIPPER) *Cinclus cinclus* Gobha uisge 1050
Widespread resident breeder, though scarce on Islay and Colonsay and absent from Tìree and Coll.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (cf one of 15 in 1999) and in just one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). The only confirmed breeding record was from Knock Mull, where an adult was seen with recently fledged young on 7th Jun. Birds were also reported regularly, including during the breeding season, from the Lusragan Burn at Connel Mid-Argyll and from the River Sorn Islay.

During the year, birds were also reported from Islay (2 other locations), Kintyre (one location), Mid-Argyll (8 other locations) and Mull (8 other locations).

One flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 8th Oct was an unusual sight.

WINTER WREN (WREN) *Troglodytes troglodytes* Dreathann donn 1066
Very common resident breeder, although numbers fall following hard winters.

Breeding. Recorded in 9 of 12 BBS squares (75%), (cf 11 of 15 in 1999); one of only four species recorded in 75% of BBS squares in Argyll. It was the most widely recorded species during the Countryside 2000 survey, being found in 13 of the 14 squares (93%), and was found in 4 of the 6 Carradale Kintyre BBS squares. Numbers of breeding prs at the monitored sites maintained the high levels recorded in 1999. There was an outstanding total of 76 territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll (cf 1990-2000 av. of 51), 5 were singing in the NW wood at Moine Mhor in Apr, and numbers on the Sanda Islands also held up well at 19 pairs (cf 18 in 1999). On the Treshnish Isles Mull, 11 territories were found along the east coast of Lunga in Jun.

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HEDGE ACCENTOR (DUNNOCK) *Prunella modularis* Gealbhoonn nam preas 1084
Widespread and common resident breeder, except on some islands.

Breeding. Recorded in 5 of 12 BBS squares (42%), (cf 4 of 15 in 1999), in 7 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (50%) and in one of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares. A total of 5 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 4) and 5 prs were found breeding on Oronsay.

No records were submitted from *Coll* or *Jura*; and a lone bird seen at Balemartine in Mar-Apr and again in Oct (when it was ringed) was the only record received from *Tiree* during the year.

EUROPEAN ROBIN (ROBIN) *Erithacus rubecula* Bru dhearg 1099
Widespread and common resident breeder. Immigration in winter and noticeable autumn passage in some years.

Breeding. Recorded in 9 of 12 BBS squares (80%), (cf 9 of 15 in 1999); one of only four species recorded in 75% of BBS squares in Argyll. During the Countryside 2000 survey it was found in 12 of the 14 squares; one of only three species to be recorded in 86% of squares and exceeded only by Wren (93%). Numbers at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* reached a record level, with a total of 31 territories in the CBC plots (cf 1990-2000 av. of 21). It was also a good year nationally for Robins: territories found in CBC plots increased by 13% from 1999.

One pr produced fledged young on the Sanda Islands, and a pr bred on Oronsay. Confirmed breeding records were also received for *Colonsay* and for other sites in *Mid-Argyll*.

Sep-Dec. An obvious influx was noted on *Islay* in mid-Sep and 18 were counted between Portnahaven and Port Wemyss on 12th. A group of 11 birds near the Mull of *Kintyre* Lighthouse on 5th Nov included one individual showing characteristics of the continental race *rubecula*. After heavy snow fall on 29th Dec, 16 birds were counted in the woods along the shores of Loch Fyne between Minard Castle and Minard Village *Mid-Argyll*.

COMMON REDSTART (REDSTART) *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Ceann dearg 1122
Summer visitor, locally common in relatively open woodland. Recorded on Colonsay, Islay, Tiree and Coll only as a scarce passage migrant.

Apr-May. The first bird of the year reported was at Brainport Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 24th Apr, was followed by one at Appin *N Argyll* on 28th and one at Dhiseig (near Gruline) *Mull* on 30th.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf one of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). A total of 6 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 6).

Nine boxes were occupied at Bonawe *N Argyll*, the most since the scheme began in 1988. Three were predated by Pine Marten *Martes martes* as eggs or small young and one clutch of 5 eggs was deserted. From the 5 successful boxes, a total of 33 young were fledged (6.6 young/successful nest, 3.67 young/laying pr).

There were no records from any of the islands (apart from *Mull*) during the year and no reports of autumn migrants. In fact there were very few records of this species at all and observers are encouraged to report all sightings.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra* Gocan 1137
Widespread and common summer visitor.

Mar-May. A female recorded at Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* on 19th and 20th Mar was exceptionally early for this species and possibly the earliest ever for Argyll. Before this, the

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earliest record since 1980 was one on *Colonsay* on 29th Mar 1989. One on *Oronsay* on 5th Apr was also early for a species that is usually not found until mid-Apr. The next records were not until 22nd Apr when one seen in Kilmichael Glen *Mid-Argyll* was still considered early. By the end of Apr birds had been widely reported, including records from *Colonsay*, *Islay* (where 22 were seen at Easter Ellister on 28th), *Kintyre* and *Mull*.

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 12 BBS squares (25%), (cf 5 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). On *Colonsay* (inc. *Oronsay*), 7 pairs were located (cf total of 8 prs in 1999). There was evidence of successful breeding by at least 2 prs at Moine Mhor, and other records of singing males in suitable habitat or adults with young came from: *Bolsay* and RSPB L. *Gruinart Islay*, *Auchindrain*, *Ardanaiseig* (*Loch Awe*) and *Gleann nan Laogh* (*Knapdale*) *Mid-Argyll*, *Crannich* and *Glen More Mull* and near *Loch Tulla N Argyll*.

Aug-Sep. A female and juv were passing *Carsaig Mid-Argyll* on 21st Aug, and late juvs were near *Moy Castle Mull* on 1st Oct and at RSPB L. *Gruinart* on 5th Oct.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata* Clacharan 1139
Widespread resident breeding species, but population can decline dramatically after severe winters. Some emigration may take place in winter.

Jan-Apr. A minimum of 12 birds were present in prs on *Tiree* on 12th Jan.

Breeding. Recorded in 5 of 12 BBS squares (42%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and in 4 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (29%). On *Colonsay* (inc. *Oronsay* 4 prs), a total of 39 prs was located (cf total of 27 prs in 1999). At least 3 prs are thought to have bred on *Sanda Islands*; an estimated 10 prs were breeding on *Tiree* in May; and a count over a 279 ha sample of moorland at RSPB L. *Gruinart* found 9 territories. Prs feeding recently fledged young were seen at *Coll RSPB Reserve*, *Moine Mhor* and *Tayinloan*; and, in addition to the above, birds were reported during the breeding season from *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (2 sites), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (5 sites) and *Mull* (5 sites).

Oct-Dec. At least 20 birds were recorded on *Tiree* during the goose count in Aug, 7 were in reeds on *Oronsay* on 25th Sep, and 8 were in the *Ulva Lagoons* (*Loch Sween*) *Mid-Argyll* area on 13th Oct.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (WHEATEAR) *Oenanthe oenanthe* Bru gheal 1146
Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Mar-Apr. As usual, early arrivals appeared in mid-Mar, with the first at *Southend Kintyre* on 13th followed by singles on *Oronsay* on 15th and, in *Kintyre*, at *Campbeltown* on 16th, *Kildonald Bay* on 19th and *Ballochgair* on 20th. The first *Islay* record was one at *Ardnave* on 20th Mar. In the following week birds were reported widely, including records from *Cowal*, *Mull* and *Tiree*. Curiously, the first report from *Mid-Argyll* was not until 24th Apr, when one was at *Taynish NNR*.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 12 BBS squares (33%), (cf 4 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%) and in 3 of the 6 *Carradale Kintyre* BBS squares. There was a single territory in the coastal CBC plot at *Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll*, the first since 1997. On *Lunga* (*Treshnish Isles*) *Mull* 13 territories were identified in late Jun (cf 8 in 1999), and among 54 birds trapped and ringed there were 4 retraps of birds ringed locally in 1997-99. At least 15 prs were located on *Sanda Islands* (cf 13 in 1999) and a minimum of 22 prs were found at 17 locations on *Iona Mull*. Elsewhere, birds were reported during the breeding season from *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (one sites),

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Kintyre (3 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (5 sites), *Mull* (5 sites), *N Argyll* (one site) and *Tiree* (one site).

Sep-Oct. On 28th Aug 10 birds were seen together at Beinn Hough *Tiree*, and 24 were counted between Portnahaven and Port Wemyss *Islay* on 12th Sep (see 'Greenland' Wheatear below). The species was still widespread on *Mull* and in *Kintyre* during the last week in Sep, but after this there were only singles at Tayinloan on 1st Oct, Ballochgair *Kintyre* on 2nd, RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd and Port Charlotte *Islay* on 4th and Vaul *Tiree* on 12th Oct.

'GREENLAND' WHEATEAR

O. o. leucorhoa

Apparently rare passage migrant, but probably under-recorded.

Spring. On *Tiree*, 18 *leucorhoa* type birds were found during a wader survey on 27th Apr, and smaller numbers were seen there until the end of the month.

Autumn. Among the many Wheatears present on the Rhinns of *Islay* on 12th Sep, at least 12 were considered to be of this race; and an adult male *leucorhoa* was present at Machrihanish SBO on 3rd Oct.

RING OUZEL

Turdus torquatus Dubh chreige 1186

Summer visitor breeding very locally in upland areas. More widespread, though still very scarce, on migration. All records required.

Jan-Apr. Two males and 2 females on Creag an Fhithich (Glen Noe) *N Argyll* were possibly passage birds.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares (cf one of 15 in 1999), but was found in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%).

Sep-Oct. One at Beinn Dorain *N Argyll* on 10th Sep and a juv flying in off the sea at Machrihanish SBO on 22nd Sep were the only autumn records received.

COMMON BLACKBIRD (BLACKBIRD) *Turdus merula* Lon dubh 1187

Widespread and common resident breeding species. Immigration in winter and noticeable autumn passage in some years.

Breeding. Recorded in 6 of 12 BBS squares (50%), (cf 4 of 15 in 1999), in 7 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (50%) and in one of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares. A total of 7 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 5). An island survey of *Tiree* found a minimum of 49 singing males/prs on territories; and 2 prs were found breeding on Oronsay.

Sep-Dec. In late Oct migrant birds were noted among arriving flocks of winter thrushes including 6 with Fieldfares and Redwings at Dunoon on 26th Oct, 10 with similar flocks at Minard *Mid-Argyll* on 29th Oct, and 15 on Oronsay on 2nd Nov. On *Tiree* a minimum of 150 birds was estimated to be present on 3rd Nov. A flock of 12 flew over Minard with other thrushes on 13th Nov; and 14 (mostly males) were in a garden in Dunoon on 31st Dec.

FIELDFARE

Turdus pilaris Liath thruisg 1198

Passage migrant and winter visitor. Abundant in autumn but relatively few winter and spring.

Jan-May. There were more birds about during Jan than usual, including counts of 54 at Kilmoluaig *Tiree* (being harassed by a Hen Harrier) on 12th, 70 at Southend *Kintyre* also on 12th and max. 75 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 31st. Most of the high counts during Feb came from *Islay* with max. 140 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 14th, max. 100 at Easter Ellister on 19th

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and 60 at Loch nan Cadhan on 20th. The only significant flocks elsewhere were 40 at Kilberry (Knapdale) *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd and 80 at Moine Mhor on 7th. Smaller flocks were reported in Mar, including 65 at Easter Ellister on 4th, 28 at Moss Tìree on 11th and max. 55 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 19th, but numbers increased briefly in Apr with 90 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd and ca 100 in Glen Lonan *Mid-Argyll* on 16th. Apart from flocks of 25 at Loch Gruinart on 18th Apr and 27 at Easter Ellister on 19th, only a handful of birds were recorded in the latter half of Apr, with 4 at Lochbuie Mull on 27th and singles at Scarinish Pier Tìree and at Loch Gruinart on 28th and at Easter Ellister on 29th.

Oct-Dec. Autumn arrivals were apparently later than normal and none were reported until late Oct. The first were 5 at Tayinloan on 24th Oct, followed by 2 at Blairmore Cowal on 26th, 40 at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 29th, 'small flocks' at Ardfenaig Mull on 29th and 2 on Oronsay on 30th Oct. Although an estimated 100 or more birds were on Tìree on 3rd Nov, in general a steady stream of relatively small flocks was reported rather than a major influx. Throughout Nov and Dec, flocks of 20-30 birds were reported from Cowal, Kintyre, *Mid-Argyll*, Mull and Tìree. Apart from 23 at Upper Killeyan on 6th Nov, the only record from Islay concerned 3 at Smaull on 30th Dec.

SONG THRUSH

Turdus philomelos Smeorach 1200

Widespread and common resident breeding species. Some immigration in winter.

Breeding. Figures from regularly monitored sites in Argyll showed that this was an excellent breeding season for this 'Red-listed' species. It was recorded in 9 of 12 BBS squares (75%), (cf 7 of 15 in 1999), one of only four species recorded in 75% of BBS squares in Argyll. During the Countryside 2000 survey it was found in 12 of the 14 squares, one of only three species to be recorded in 86% of squares, exceeded only by Wren (93%); and it was found in 2 of the 6 Carradale Kintyre BBS squares. At Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* there was a record total of 15 territories in the CBC plots (cf 1990-2000 av. of 7). It was also a good year nationally for Song Thrushes in CBC plots, with a 17% increase in number of territories found since 1999. A census on Tìree revealed a minimum of 22 singing males or prs on territories; 3+ pairs were found on Sanda Islands, and 12 prs were breeding on Oronsay. There were also confirmed breeding records from Coll, Islay and Mull.

Sep-Dec. Small numbers accompanied other immigrant thrushes from mid-Sep onwards, with 15 at Balemartine Tìree on 18th Sep, 10 or more at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 29th Oct, and 15 on Oronsay on 2nd Nov. In Dec the wintering population of Tìree was estimated at around 100 birds.

REDWING

Turdus iliacus Sgiath dhearg 1201

Passage migrant and winter visitor. Abundant in autumn but relatively few winter. Occasional individuals recorded in late spring. Bred on Mull in 1991.

Jan-May. Unlike Fieldfares, there were relatively few Redwings about in Jan and Feb. The highest counts were 25 between Hynish and Sorobaidh Bay Tìree on 14th Jan and 45 at Balemartine Tìree on 18th Feb. Elsewhere groups of 12-15 were seen in Campbeltown in Jan, up to 10 were at RSPB L. Gruinart, and 7 were at Minard *Mid-Argyll* on 6th Feb.

Numbers increased somewhat in Mar with flocks reported at: Balevullin Tìree (max. 80 on 11th), Heylipol Tìree (65 on 18th), Tayinloan (20 on 19th) and Balemartine (55 on 30th). By 8th Apr numbers at Balemartine had fallen to 20 and to 6 on 16th, after which there were only singles at Easter Ellister Islay on 19th and 30th and one with an injured wing at An Airidh Tìree on 13th May.

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Oct-Dec. The first autumn arrivals were 8 at Aros Moss *Kintyre* on 7th Oct followed by 2 at Balnabraid Glen *Kintyre* on 8th, a 'small flock' at Moine Mhor on 10th, 5 at Heylipol on 11th, 30 at Lochdon on 12th and 13 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Oct. Again in contrast to Fieldfares at this time, Redwing numbers built up considerably in late Oct/early Nov. On 15th Oct 150 were seen with mixed thrush flocks at Loch na Cille *Mid-Argyll* and a noticeable arrival took place on *Tiree* on 21st when 100 or more were seen. Flocks of 50 or more were recorded flying over Linne Mhuirich (Loch Sween) and RSPB L. Gruinart on 22nd Oct and by 26th 'thousands' were flying over Dunoon and 181 were counted in a garden at Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll*. Approximately 100 were at Tayinloan on 27th and on 28th; and 'thousands' were seen flying over Loch Awe *Mid-Argyll* during the day. In the early days of Nov, flocks of 30-70 were seen at Southend *Kintyre*, Oronsay, Tayinloan and Upper Killeyan *Islay*, and on 3rd an estimated 3,000 were present on *Tiree*. Flocks of up to 100 were widely reported through the remainder of Nov but numbers fell sharply in Dec, with 12 at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 30th the highest single count.

MISTLE THRUSH

Turdus viscivorus Smeorach mhor 1202

Widespread but thinly distributed resident breeding species. Flocks sometimes seen on passage.

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 12 BBS squares (25%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). There were 2 territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1.5) and adults with recently fledged young were seen at Blarghour (Loch Awe) and Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll*.

Jun-Dec. On 22nd Jun a flock of 25 or more, apparently all juvs, were seen at Ardchnonnell *Mid-Argyll* and one landed on the observer's car. In late Jul small flocks appeared at various locations including Rubha Riabhach (Appin) *N Argyll* (13 on 19th increasing to 30 by 20th), Tayinloan (9 on 21st) and Connel *Mid-Argyll* (10 on 27th). Larger gatherings were seen in Sep, with ca 40 at Aros *Mull* on 6th, ca 40 at Grasspoint *Mull* on 7th and 14 at Foreland *Islay* on 11th. On 28th Sep large numbers were seen flying in loose groups along the Crinan Canal at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll*, landing every 100 m or so; in all, 153 birds were counted passing through in about 20 mins.

Smaller numbers were still passing through in Oct and Nov, the most being at Loch Gorm *Islay* where 12 were seen on 14th and 21 on 15th.

COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER (GRASSHOPPER WARBLER)

Locustella naevia Ceileiriche leumnach 1236

Summer visitor breeding locally in all areas; good densities may occur in young conifer plantations. Numbers fluctuate from year to year.

Apr-May. The first reeling bird was heard at Torran (Loch Awe) *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd Apr and was followed by birds at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, Kilmichael Glen *Mid-Argyll* and Easter Ellister *Islay* on 23rd, Dunoon on 24th and Rubha Riabhach (Appin) *N Argyll* on 27th Apr. By late May records had also been received from *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Kintyre* and *Mull* and birds were widely distributed.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf one of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). There were 2 territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2); 4 singing males were found on *Colonsay* (cf 2 in 1999) and a minimum of 2 singing males were present at RSPB L. Gruinart. There were also reports of males singing during the breeding season from *Cowal* (2 sites), *Islay*

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(13 sites), *Kintyre* (3 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (2 sites), *Mull* (one site) and *N Argyll* (one site).

Aug-Sep. The last record concerned one seen and heard reeling at Balliveolan (Lismore) *N Argyll* on 1st Aug.

On the whole a good year for this species, especially on *Islay*, but with fewer records from *Mull* than usual.

SEDGE WARBLER

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus Glas eun 1243

Summer visitor and locally common breeding species.

Apr-May. The first bird was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 23rd Apr followed by singing birds at Easter Ellister *Islay* on 24th, Oronsay and *Colonsay* on 28th, Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 29th and Loch Bhasapol on 30th Apr. Most areas had reported birds by the end of May.

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 12 BBS squares (25%), (*cf* 4 of 15 in 1999), in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%) and in one of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares. A total of 8 territories were recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 9). The total of 60 singing birds found on *Colonsay* was the highest since surveys began there: a further 12 prs were breeding on Oronsay, producing an impressive total of 72 breeding prs (*cf* total of 51 singing males in 1999 and 29 in 1998). Breeding numbers on Sanda Islands increased to 5 prs (*cf* 2 prs in 1999) due to more suitable nesting habitat. On *Tiree*, 19 singing males were counted at Loch Bhasapol in May but only 10 were found in Jun. Elsewhere, singing males were reported from *Islay* (3 sites), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (6 sites), *Mull* (5 sites) and *Tiree* (one site). Like 1999, this appears to have been another excellent year for Sedge Warblers, with record counts in places.

Aug-Sep. The only records of probable migrants were of 2 at Tayinloan on 29th Jul and 2nd Aug and one at Heylipol *Tiree* on 3rd Sep.

LESSER WHITETHROAT

Sylvia curruca Gealan coille beag 1274

Rare passage migrant, with only 9 records in Argyll during 1980-99. It has been recorded in every month (except July) from May-Nov.

One was seen and heard at Torr-an-tuire *Colonsay* on 4th May [DCJ]*. In autumn one was seen in the garden of the *Colonsay* Hotel *Colonsay* on 14th Sep [JD]*.

COMMON WHITETHROAT (WHITETHROAT)

Sylvia communis Gealan coille 1275

Summer visitor, breeding widely but patchily. Numbers appear to fluctuate from year to year.

Apr-May. There appears to have been a 'broad front' arrival with first records at Connel *Mid-Argyll*, Glen More *Mull*, Achnacreebeag *N Argyll* and Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* all on 24th Apr. On 29th Apr, one was one at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* and 2 were at Easter Ellister *Islay*.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* 5 of 15 in 1999) and in 5 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (36%). On *Colonsay* 23 pairs were located (*cf* 17 prs in 1999). A total of 8 territories were recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 7); and singing males on *Colonsay* increased again, to 23 (*cf* 17 in 1999 and 10 in 1998). Only one pr was found on Sanda Islands. Elsewhere, singing males were reported during the breeding season from Coll (one site), *Cowal* (4 sites), *Islay* (3 sites), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (10 sites), *Mull* (3 sites) and *N Argyll* (one site). On the whole this would appear to indicate a good season for Common Whitethroats.

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Aug-Sep. The last records were of one at Seil Island *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Aug and 2 at Tayinloan on 28th Aug.

GARDEN WARBLER

Sylvia borin Ceileiriche garaidh 1276

Summer visitor and scarce breeding species.

Apr-May. The first bird was heard and seen at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 27th Apr and arrivals were noted at Moine Mhor on 8th May, Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 9th and Tullochgorm *Mid-Argyll* on 13th May.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* none of 15 in 1999), but in none of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares. Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* again had an excellent year with a total of 5 territories in the CBC (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2). Apart from one at Colonsay House Gardens *Colonsay* on 3rd Jun, reports of singing birds were all in *Mid-Argyll*: near Knipoch (Loch Feochan) on 15th May, Minard Woods on 11th Jun, Moine Mhor on 15th Jun, Ardfern on 16th Jun, Castlesween on 21st Jun, Kilmore (Oban) on 22nd Jun and Blarghour (Loch Awe) on 23rd Jun.

Aug-Sep. The only autumn records concerned one in a garden in Oban on 8th Aug and one seen with the Lesser Whitethroat in *Colonsay* Hotel garden on 14th Sep.

BLACKCAP

Sylvia atricapilla Ceann dubh 1277

Scarce summer visitor and regular passage migrant, especially in autumn. Increasingly numerous in winter.

Jan-May. There were no reports of wintering birds early in the year. The first migrant reported was a female in a rubbish dump with no trees or bushes nearby, at Ardnave *Islay* on 28th Apr. This was followed by a singing bird at Taynish NNR on 30th Apr, one at The Manse, Scarinish *Tiree* on 1st May, one singing at Knock *Mull* on 3rd, 2 prs in Bridgend Woods *Islay* on 4th and one singing in Minard Woods *Mid-Argyll* on 6th May.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* none of 15 in 1999) and in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). There were again no territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 3 in 1998) but 3 were singing in Colonsay House Gardens *Colonsay* in Jun and a total of 6 singing birds were found in Bridgend Woods *Islay* on 20th May. Elsewhere, from mid-May to Jul, singing males were heard at one site in *Cowal*, 2 on *Islay*, one in *Kintyre*, 3 in *Mid-Argyll* and one in *N Argyll*. There were no summer records from *Mull*.

Sep-Dec. Singles at 3 locations on *Tiree* on 30th Sep would have been migrants as would a male at RSPB L. Gruinart on 14th Oct. Birds were recorded in gardens (usually at bird tables) during Nov and Dec as follows: male at Ballochgair *Kintyre* on 2nd Nov, male at Arle *Mull* on 11th Nov, male at Imeraval *Islay* 12th Nov-4th Dec, male at Ballure *Kintyre* on 26th Nov, one at Ardfenaig *Mull* in late Nov, one at Croig *Mull* on 6th Dec, a male at Bonawe *N Argyll* on 20th Dec, a male at Kirn (Dunoon) on 27th Dec and a male in Oban on 30th Dec. A male with 2 Bohemian Waxwings at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 30th Dec made an exotic sight.

WOOD WARBLER

Phylloscopus sibilatrix Ceileiriche cille 1308

Summer visitor, common in suitable woodlands.

Apr-May. Once again Taynish NNR had the first record, with one on 23rd Apr. Later in Apr, birds were reported from Minard Woods *Mid-Argyll* on 24th, Lochbuie *Mull* on 27th, Kiloran *Colonsay* on 28th and, on *Islay*, at Loch Ballygrant and Easter Ellister on 29th Apr. One was seen singing in Sutherlands Grove *N Argyll* on 3rd May.

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Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf none of 15 in 1999) and in 3 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%). Territories in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* fell once again, to 5 (cf 1990-2000 av. of 8). Further breeding season records came from *Colonsay* (one site), *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (4 sites), *Mull* (8 sites) and *N Argyll* (2 sites).

No birds were reported after late Jun.

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF (CHIFFCHAFF) *Phylloscopus collybita* Cailean 1311
Summer visitor and uncommon breeding species, scarce on the islands. More frequent on passage on some islands. Occasional records in winter.

Mar-May. An early bird at Kames *Cowal* on 23rd Mar was followed by singing birds at Dunbeg *Mid-Argyll* on 27th Mar, Lower Ardtun *Mull* on 29th and Oban on 30th Mar. By the end of Apr Common Chiffchaffs had also been reported from *Colonsay*, *Kintyre*, *N Argyll* and *Tiree*.

Breeding The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) nor in any of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares. Singing birds were reported during the breeding season on *Colonsay* (3 singing males at one site), *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (2 sites), *Kintyre* (one site), *Mid-Argyll* (2 sites) and *Mull* (2 sites). Some of these could have been late passage migrants. One singing at Balemartine *Tiree* on 4th May was almost certainly on passage.

Sep-Oct. One was singing briefly at Cumloddan (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* on 19th Sep; and at Balemartine one was present on 24th Sep and an individual was trapped on 2nd Oct. A single bird was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 6th Oct; and very late birds were seen on *Tiree*, at An Fhadhail on 2nd and at The Reef on 3rd Nov.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus* Crionag ghiuthais 1312
Widespread and abundant summer visitor.

Apr-May. As usual the first arrivals were found on *Islay*, with singing birds at Easter Ellister on 8th and Bowmore on 9th Apr. They were followed by singing birds at Campbeltown on 10th, Kiel Crofts (Appin) *N Argyll* on 11th and Lochbuie *Mull* on 13th Apr. The main arrival took place during 17th-23rd Apr, when birds were very widely reported.

Breeding. Recorded in 8 of 12 BBS squares (67%), (cf 11 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares. During the Countryside 2000 survey it was found in 12 of the 14 squares, one of only three species to be recorded in so many (86%) of the squares and exceeded only by Wren (93%). Another good season for the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* with 93 territories identified (cf 97 in 1999 but only around 50 in the early 90s). At least 2 prs bred on Oronsay, and at least 12 prs were located on Sanda Islands (cf 8-10 in 1999). The species is only a localised breeder on *Tiree*.

Aug-Oct. One at Baugh *Tiree* on 7th Aug may have been a migrant, and by mid-Aug migrants were passing through *Kintyre* and *Mid-Argyll*. There were only two records in Sep, one at Gruline *Mull* on 8th and at Balemartine *Tiree* on 10th.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus* Crionag bhuidhe 1314
Common breeding species and passage migrant. Scarce on Coll and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. A small influx occurred on *Tiree* on 21st Mar, when up to 15 birds were present on the island, and 2 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 24th Mar were presumably also migrants. The cliffs at Ceann a'Mhara *Tiree* were an unusual location for the bird seen there on 17th Apr.

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Breeding. Recorded in 6 of 12 BBS squares (50%), (*cf* 6 of 15 in 1999), in 2 of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares and in 6 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (43%). Two territories were recorded in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 1).

Sept-Dec. One was at Greenhill, Middleton *Tiree* on 12th Oct.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata* Breacan glas sgiobalta 1335
Summer visitor breeding widely but sparsely.

Apr-May. One seen at Tainish NNR on 30th Apr was the first Apr record for the reserve and the earliest record for Argyll, certainly since 1980 and possibly ever. Other early arrivals were at Bridgend Woods *Islay* on 4th May and Ballimore *Cowal* on 5th May; and from 13th-16th May there were further records from *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *N Argyll* and *Tiree*.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares (as in 1998 & 1999) but was found in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). At Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll* there was a record total of 8 territories in the CBC plots (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 8). Confirmed breeding records came from Ballochgair (2 broods raised) and Tayinloan *Kintyre* and from Blarghour, Fearnoch, Minard and Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll*. Additional breeding season records came from *Colonsay* (one site), *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (6 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (2 sites) and *Mull* (2 sites).

Aug-Sep. An adult at Kintallan (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Aug and one at Port Wemyss *Islay* on 9th Sep were the only autumn records.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca* Breacan glas 1349
Summer visitor and passage migrant breeding very locally in oak woods. Increase in breeding population in recent years is attributable to the Argyll Bird Club nest-box scheme, but numbers may now be declining.

Apr-May. A singing bird was reported from Dalavich Woods *Mid-Argyll* on 8th May and 2 were singing in Glasdrum Wood (Loch Creran) *N Argyll* on 13th May.

Breeding. Near Bonawe *N Argyll* 12 prs occupied boxes, the most since the scheme began in 1988. One clutch was deserted, and 5 boxes containing eggs (5,8) and medium to large chicks (5,6,6) were predated by Pine Marten. Prs in the 6 successful boxes fledged 1, 3, 3, 5, 6 & 7 young (4.17 young/successful nest, 2.08 young/pair laying). There were no breeding attempts in the boxes at Ardgenavan (near Inveraray) *Mid-Argyll* and no birds were seen.

Sept. One was seen at Beinn Hough *Tiree* on 4th Sep and one at Tighnahoran (Loch Caolisport) on 27th Sep.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus* Ciochan 1437
Widespread and common resident breeding bird on mainland; local on some islands and rare on Colonsay, Tiree and Coll.

Jan-Apr. One was heard calling at Kinuachdrachd in the north of *Jura* on 5th Feb; and on *Colonsay*, where the species is rare, 2 or 3 were present in the woods at East Loch Fada on 22nd Apr.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares (as in 1998 & 1999) but was found in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). Two territories were recorded in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 10).

Jun-Dec. About 40 birds in groups of 10 or so were on the outskirts of Dunoon on 19th Jun, possibly disturbed by tree felling nearby. Elsewhere, flocks of 10 or more were

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reported from RSPB L. Gruinart (10 on 7th Oct), Connel *Mid-Argyll* (17 on 13th Oct), Kinuachdrachd (24 on 14th Oct), Dunoon (15 on 14th Nov), Bridgend Woods *Islay* (16 on 21st Nov) and Doire Darach *N Argyll* (10 on 8th Dec).

COAL TIT *Parus ater* Smutag 1461
Widespread and very common resident breeding bird, except on Tiree and Coll. Some dispersal noted in autumn.

Breeding. Recorded in 5 of 12 BBS squares (42%), (*cf* 5 of 15 in 1999) and in 6 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (43%). The total of 5 territories found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* was the lowest on record (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 9).

Flocks of 10 or more birds were recorded in Dunoon (10-12 during Aug) and Glen More Mull (10 or more on 22nd Sep). There were records from *Islay*, *Colonsay* and *Mull* but again none from *Coll* or *Tiree*.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus* Cailleachag ceann ghorm 1462
Widespread and very common resident breeder, but rare on Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* 5 of 15 in 1999) and in 3 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%). There were 23 territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 20). Near Bonawe *N Argyll* only 8 boxes were occupied, the lowest proportion since the scheme began in 1988 and a 76% reduction from 33 in 1999. One clutch was deserted, and 2 clutches were predated by Pine Marten. Prs in the 5 successful boxes fledged 5, 6, 7, 10 & 12 young (8.0 young/successful nest, 5.0 young/pair laying).

There were records from *Islay*, *Colonsay* and *Mull* as well as on the mainland, but none from *Coll* or *Tiree*.

GREAT TIT *Parus major* Currag bhain tighearna 1464
Widespread and very common resident breeder, but absent from Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 12 BBS squares (33%), (*cf* 5 of 15 in 1999) and in 5 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (36%). The number of territories in CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* fell back to 12 after the record total of 16 in 1999 (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 10).

Near Bonawe *N Argyll* 7 boxes were occupied. One brood of 9 large young was predated by Pine Marten; the other 6 gave 5, 5, 7, 8, 8 & 8 young (6.83 young/successful nest, 5.86 young/pair laying).

There were records from *Islay*, *Colonsay* (where it was described as 'uncommon') and *Mull* as well as on the mainland, but none from *Coll* or *Tiree*.

EURASIAN TREECREEPER (TREECREEPER) *Certhia familiaris* Snaigear 1486
Widespread and common resident breeder, except on Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (*cf* none of 15 in 1999) but found in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). A record 6 territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 4).

There were records from *Islay*, *Colonsay* and *Mull* as well as on the mainland, but none from *Coll* or *Tiree*.

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EURASIAN JAY (JAY) *Garrulus glandarius* Sgraicheap 1539
Locally distributed breeder, on the mainland only. Some immigration in autumn.
All records required.

Jan-Apr. Birds were seen regularly at Blairmore (Loch Long) Cowal and there were also records from Crinan Ferry, Eredine and Minard Woods *Mid-Argyll* and from Dunoon Cowal.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* none of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). There were records during the breeding season from Dunoon and Gairtean Croft (Loch Fyne) Cowal, Blarghour, Brainport Bay, Caol Scotnish, Kilberry and Kilmichael Forest *Mid-Argyll* and Rubha Riabhach (Appin) *N Argyll*.

Aug-Dec. Six were seen together flying over the outskirts of Dunoon on 25th Aug. There was an autumn influx into *Mid-Argyll* from mid-Oct onwards. Up to 4 birds were recorded at 8 sites in *Mid-Argyll* from 14th Oct to 30th Nov. Elsewhere, there were records from Dunoon and Kilmun Cowal in Sep and from Torrisdale Kintyre in Dec.

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE (MAGPIE) *Pica pica* Cadhag 1549
Local resident breeder in Cowal, rare elsewhere. All records required.

Up to 5 birds were seen throughout the year at Dunoon and up to 3 at Blairmore (Loch Long) Cowal. On the mainland away from Cowal, the only records were of 2 at Cairndow (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* on 13th Mar and singles at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 9th Apr and Achnacreebeag *N Argyll* on 16th Apr. The most unusual record involved a bird seen at Loch Beg Mull in early Apr and, presumably the same individual, at Torness (Glen More) Mull on 28th Apr. This is the first Magpie reported on Mull since 1992.

RED-BILLED CHOUGH (CHOUGH)

Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax Cathag dhearg chasac 1559
The Argyll islands hold almost all of the Scottish population. Islay is the stronghold, with smaller numbers on Jura and Colonsay and a so far unsuccessful pair on Mull.
All records away from Islay required.

Breeding. On Colonsay there were 11 definite plus one possible occupied sites. Three nests failed at the egg stage, 8 prs were seen feeding young, and 2 fledged broods totalling 6 or more young were found. Adults with recently fledged young were seen on Islay but no count was undertaken during 2000. The pr on Mull was again unsuccessful and there was no information from Jura.

The largest concentration of birds on Islay was in the Kilchoman/Rockside area where the peak count early in the year was 48 on 12th Jan. Numbers there peaked in Jul when 65 were counted on 23rd and there were 38 birds on the dunes at Machir Bay on 25th Oct. Maximum counts at other sites on Islay included 20 at Lossit on 19th Mar, 16 at Upper Killehan on 20th Apr, 18 at Sanaigmore on 30th Apr, 20 at Lossit Point on 13th May, 20 at Knocklearoch on 15th Jul, 32 at Smaull on 15th Sep and 26 at Ardnave on 17th Oct. Over 30 birds were present on Oronsay throughout Dec with a peak count of 38 on 17th.

EURASIAN JACKDAW (JACKDAW) *Corvus monedula* Cathag 1560
Resident breeding bird, common throughout much of Argyll, but scarce on Mull and does not breed on Tiree or Coll.

Jan-Apr. The only records for Tiree during the year concerned 2 at Balevullin and (possibly the same) 2 at Crossapol throughout Mar. The maximum count at Loch Gruinart

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RSPB Reserve was 184 on 14th Feb, and 43 were at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 12th Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in one of the 12 BBS squares (8%), (*cf* one of 15 in 1999), and in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%).

Aug-Dec. The highest count on *Islay* was 750 or more with Rooks at Neriby on 28th Oct. Numbers at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve built up from 125 on 12th Aug to a peak of 200 on 2nd Sep. The only other significant count was 270 at Colintrave Cowal on 3rd Sep.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus* Rocas 1563
Locally common resident breeding bird, but scarce on Mull and does not breed on Colonsay, Tiree or Coll. Post-breeding influx of juveniles to some islands, e.g. Mull and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. Twelve of the group of birds that arrived on *Tiree* in Dec 1999 remained at Cornaigbeg on 15th Jan. The highest at count at RSPB L. Gruinart *Islay* at this time was just 98 on 15th Feb. No other sites reported counts of 50 birds or more.

Breeding. Not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (*cf* one of 15 in 1999) nor in any of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares. A total of 347 nests were recorded at 8 active rookeries on *Islay* (*cf* revised figures of 326 nests in 1999 and 353 in 1998) [MAO]. On 5th May 33 nests were counted at a rookery on *Iona Mull*.

Aug-Dec. The peak count at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve was *ca* 500 on 2nd Sep. The only other flocks of 100 birds or more reported were also on *Islay*: 108 at Upper Killeyan on 19th Oct and *ca* 750 at Neriby on 28th Oct.

HOODED CROW *Corvus corone cornix* Feannag 1567
Widespread and very common resident breeding species.

Jan-Apr. The only count of 20 or more birds was at Kilchoman *Islay* (max. 34 on 20th Apr).

Breeding. Recorded in 7 of 12 BBS squares (58%), (*cf* 7 of 15 in 1999) and in 6 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (43%). Three territories were recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2). After a control programme was carried out, only 4 prs were found on *Colonsay* (*cf* 5 in 1999); and one pr with 4 recently fledged young were found on *Sanda Islands*.

Aug-Dec. Counts of 20 or more birds were made at: Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* (max. 30 on 1st Sep), Upper Killeyan *Islay* (max. 37 on 9th Oct), Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* (20 incl. 4 *corone* type on 7th Dec) and Beinn Gott rubbish tip *Tiree* (max. 36 on 17th Dec).

CARRION CROW *C. c. corone*

Most crows in Cowal are this form and it is also spreading into Kintyre and Mid-Argyll.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* one of 15 in 1999), in 4 of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares and in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%).

Away from the main breeding areas, birds showing wholly *corone* characteristics were seen at Machir Bay *Islay* (one on 26th Mar), Bridgend Merse *Islay* (2 on 10th Apr), Kiloran *Colonsay* (2 on 24th Apr) and Glassard Dump *Colonsay* (2 on 5th Jun).

COMMON RAVEN (RAVEN) *Corvus corax* Fitheach 1572
Common resident breeding bird. Large flocks may occur, especially in winter.

Jan-Mar. Reported counts of 20 or more birds all came from rubbish tips, with 37 at Tobermory *Mull* on 10th Mar, 50 at Ardlarach *Islay* on 14th Apr and max. 65 at Beinn Gott *Tiree* (additional to breeding prs) on 25th May.

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Breeding. Recorded in 5 of 12 BBS squares (42%), (*cf* 4 of 15 in 1999), in one of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares and in 3 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%). Ravens in all areas were more productive than in 1999. At least 8 prs attempted to breed on *Colonsay* and 18 young were reared by the 6 that were successful [DCJ, JJ]; and one pr fledged 4 young on Sanda Islands. On *Cowal* 35 active nests were found and 28 of them were fully monitored: 54 young fledged from the 18 that were successful [DA, AF]. In SW *Mull* 15 territories were occupied and 53 young were fledged from the 16 sites known to be successful [PHa]. A pr was seen with 3 juveniles on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late May [TIARG], and a pr in Kilmichael Glen *Mid-Argyll* fledged 3 young. Six territories monitored elsewhere produced 14 young, giving a total of 63 occupied territories in Argyll that produced at least 149 fledged young [ARSG + other data]. On *Tiree* 8 breeding prs were known to have fledged young [AJL].

Jul-Dec. Numbers at Beinn Gott rubbish tip peaked at 52 on 29th Aug, 21 were soaring and diving around the ridge at Imeraval *Islay* on 27th Oct, and 90 were counted flying to roost over a period of one hour at Bridgend *Islay* on 25th Dec.

COMMON STARLING (STARLING) *Sturnus vulgaris* Druid 1582
Locally common resident breeding bird, except on Mull where a localised post-breeding influx of juveniles occurs. Numbers boosted by winter visitors.

Jan-Apr. Numbers at the roosts in Campbeltown during Jan-Mar peaked at *ca* 3,500 birds. Counts of 100 or more on *Tiree* included: 285 at Ruaig on 14th Jan, 475 at Heylipol on 18th Feb and 300 around Heylipol Farm on 20th Apr. Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* had a peak count of 160 on 19th Jan but, unusually, no large gatherings were recorded at RSPB L. Gruinart.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 12 BBS squares, (*cf* 3 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). As these figures indicate, Starlings are absent from many areas. However they can be very numerous on the islands *e.g.* 145 were recorded during late May in a single 1 km square on *Tiree* during the Countryside 2000 survey. A record 4 territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2). Of 23 noted on Dutchman's Cap (Bac Mor) Treshnish Isles *Mull* on 25th Jun, nearly 50% were juvs.

Jun-Dec. Sizeable flocks were apparent on *Tiree* from early Jul and 400 were attracted to a field cut for hay/silage at Cornaigmore on 9th Jul. Also in Jul, 150 were at Tayinloan on 21st and 725 were counted at roost on Oronsay on 22nd. Numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart peaked in Sep with an estimated 1,000 birds on 21st, while Smaull RSPB Reserve had a peak count of 401 on 5th Oct. Elsewhere on *Islay*, 450 were counted at Ardnave on 17th Oct. Later counts on *Tiree* included a minimum of 635 in Balephetrish Bay on 28th Sep, 400 at Heylipol on 5th Nov and 295 at Cornaigmore on 28th Nov. Tayinloan had 200+ on 21st Dec, and the roosts in Campbeltown during Oct-Dec peaked at an estimated 4,500 birds.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus* Gealbhonn 1591
Resident breeding bird commonly associated with human habitation, so distribution rather localised in sparsely inhabited areas.

Jan-Apr. Flocks of 20 or more birds were reported from: Tayinloan (max. 20 during Jan), Cornaigbeg *Tiree* (max. 42 on 9th Jan), RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 50 on 13th Jan), Heylipol *Tiree* (max. 28 on 4th Mar) and Oronsay (20 on 15th Mar).

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (*cf* one

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of 15 in 1999), but was found in 3 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%).

Jun-Dec. Counts of 20 or more birds were made at: Heylipol (50 on 27th Jun), Tayinloan (max. 100+ on 25th Jul), RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 45 on 15th Aug), Oronsay (64 on 16th Aug), Kintallan *Mid-Argyll* (20 on 24th Aug), Ruaig *Tiree* (82 on 29th Aug), Cornaigbeg (40 on 30th Aug), Machrihanish SBO (max. 75 on 30th Aug), Whitehouse *Tiree* (max. 122 on 24th Sep), Ruanaich (Iona) *Mull* (150 or more on 25th Sep) and Portnahaven *Islay* (35 on 10th Dec).

CHAFFINCH

Fringilla coelebs Breacan beithe 1636

Abundant resident breeder, except on Tiree and Coll. Foraging flocks gather outwith the breeding season, their numbers augmented by winter visitors.

Jan-Apr. The only counts of 100 or more birds were made on *Islay* where flocks of ca 100 were seen at Lagavulin on 15th Feb and at Cluanach on 20th Feb. On *Tiree*, there were 3 at Kenovay on 14th Jan, 2 at Crossapol on 15th Feb and a single bird was flushed from a garden at Balemartine on 26th Mar.

Breeding. Recorded in 7 of 12 BBS squares (58%), (cf 9 of 15 in 1999), in 3 of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares and in 11 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (79%). A total of 31 territories were recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 27).

Sep-Dec. At least 100 birds were present at Tayinloan on 7th Oct and on 5th Nov. A single bird was at An Aifridh *Tiree* on 30th Sep and 3 were there on 2nd Oct. In addition lone birds were on *Tiree*, at Vaul on 9th Nov and at Balemartine on 20th Dec.

BRAMBLING

Fringilla montifringilla Bricein caorainn 1638

Uncommon winter visitor in varying numbers. Occasional summer records.

Once again there were very few records.

Jan-May. On *Islay*, one was at Ballinaby on 2nd Jan, 5 (incl. 2 males) were at Cluanach on 20th Feb and a male was at a peanut feeder at Imeraval on 16th Mar. The only other record involved one with a small flock of Chaffinches at Aros *Mull* on 24th Apr.

Summering birds. There were no summer records.

Oct-Dec. The only records were in Oct when 8 were seen at Machrihanish SBO on 5th and a male was at Rockmountain *Islay* on 15th.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH (GREENFINCH)

Carduelis chloris Glaisean daraich 1649

Locally common resident breeding species. Scarce on some islands.

Jan-Apr. Counts of 10 or more birds were reported as follows: 15+ in a garden at Imeraval *Islay* during Jan, max. 12 at Tayinloan in Jan, 20 at Kilchoman *Islay* on 13th Jan, 17 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd Feb, 22 in one garden at Balemartine *Tiree* on 9th Feb and 18 in a garden at Balephetrish *Tiree* on 21st Mar.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) but was found in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). A pr at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 28th May were, amazingly, the first record for the reserve.

Jun-Dec. The highest counts at this time were on *Islay* where 40 were seen at Rockmountain on 15th Oct and 30 at Braigo on 23rd Nov. Other groups of 10 or more birds were found in a garden at Dunoon (12 on 23rd Jun), at Imeraval *Islay* (max. 15 on 14th Jul), Tayinloan (15 on 29th Aug), Tiroran *Mull* (12 on 13th Oct) and 20 at Loch Gorm *Islay* on 15th Oct.

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EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (GOLDFINCH) *Carduelis carduelis* Lasair choille 1653
Localised resident breeder. Absent as a breeding species from Colonsay, Tiree and Coll. Some emigration in autumn.

Jan-Jun. Outwith its normal breeding range, there was one at Balinoe Tiree on 9th Jan, 3 at Balevullin Tiree on 15th Jan, and singles on Oronsay on 13th Feb, 9th Apr and 6th May. On Colonsay 2 were seen in late Apr at Colonsay House and 3 were at Scalasaig Hotel on 4th May. A lone bird was at Balemartine Tiree on 28th Apr and at Kenovay on 1st May. There was something of an influx on the east shore of Loch Fyne in early May and 10 were seen in the Otter Ferry-Lephinmore area on 4th.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (cf one of 15 in 1999) nor in any of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares. Only one territory was found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1). A pr with recently fledged young were seen at Kintallan (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 26th Jun. Other breeding season records came from: Cowal (2 sites), Islay (3 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (6 sites), Mull (one site) and *N Argyll* (one site).

Jul-Dec. Unusually large numbers appeared widely from late Aug through to mid-Oct (see also Common Linnet flocks at this time). Flocks reported included 25 at Tayinloan on 28th Aug, 122 at Aros Moss Kintyre on 1st Sep, 49 at Colintrave Cowal on 3rd Sep, 30 at Tayinloan on 18th Sep, 36 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 21st Sep, 32 at East Kames *Mid-Argyll* on 24th Sep, 38 at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Sep, 55 at Lochgair *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Oct, 46 at Slockavullin *Mid-Argyll* on 7th Oct and 40 at Moine Mhor on 10th Oct. On 20th Dec, 9 were found roosting at Balemartine.

As we are near the northern limit of the European range of this species and there is no evidence that Continental migrants comprise a significant proportion of the autumn flocks seen in Scotland (Thom, 1986), these unusually large and widespread flocks in Argyll presumably indicate a good breeding season locally.

EURASIAN SISKIN (SISKIN) *Carduelis spinus* Gealag bhuidhe 1654
Resident and locally common breeding species but absent from Tiree and Coll. Numbers fluctuate from year to year.

Jan-Apr. Apart from one or two birds in Oban, Connel and Dunoon in Jan, there were few reports of birds at garden feeders until late Feb/early Mar. There were no reports of flocks of 10 or more birds at this time.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 12 BBS squares (33%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and in 6 of the 13 Countryside 2000 squares (43%). There were no territories in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1). There were widespread records of birds during the breeding season, including sites in Colonsay, Cowal, Islay, Kintyre, *Mid-Argyll*, Mull and *N Argyll*.

Jul-Dec. Flocks of 10 or more were recorded at: Gruline Mull (up to 20 in first week in Sep), Ardnadrochit Mull (25 on 23rd Sep, Laggan Mull (45 on 26th Sep), Lochdon (16 on 29th Sep), RSPB L. Gruinart (16 on 30th Sep), Bridgend Woods Islay (max. 18 on 21st Nov), Minard *Mid-Argyll* (35+ on 26th Nov), Blarghour *Mid-Argyll* (max. 300 on 29th Nov) and Glen Orchy *N Argyll* (120 on 8th Dec).

A bird found dead at Kilmore (Oban) *Mid-Argyll* in Jul was a male in its second year and had been ringed at Bidston, Wirral (363 km SSE) on 6th Mar 2000.

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COMMON LINNET (LINNET) *Carduelis cannabina* Gealan lin 1660
Localised resident breeder. Flocking in autumn and winter.

Jan-May. The largest flock reported during this period was at Bruichladdich *Islay* where 300 were present on 15th Jan. At Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* numbers peaked in Mar and 100 were present on 5th, while at RSPB L. Gruinart the peak count was 63 on 17th Mar. The only other flocks of 30 or more birds reported were also on *Islay*, at Gartbreck (30 on 14th Apr) and Ardnave Loch (50 on 17th Apr). Smaller flocks were reported from *Kintyre*, *Oronsay*, *Mull* and *Tiree*.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). There were a record 5 territories of this 'Red Listed' species in the coastal CBC plot at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2), a minimum of 10 prs bred on *Tiree*, and 10-15 prs are estimated to have bred on Sanda Islands (cf ca 10 prs in 1999). Common Linnets also bred on *Oronsay*, at An Airidh *Tiree* and at the RSPB reserves on *Coll* and at Loch Gruinart. There were additional records of birds during the breeding season in *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (5 sites) and *Mull* (5 sites).

Jul-Dec. During the same period that large flocks of European Goldfinches were occurring in Argyll, there were also unusual numbers of Common Linnets. Flocks of 30 or more birds were reported from: Springbank *Islay* (170 on 13th Jul), Sanda Island (flocks of 40+ during Aug), Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* (max. 70 on 3rd Aug), Machrihanish SBO (max. 140 on 16th Aug), RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 300 on 25th Aug), Mulindry *Islay* (max. 120 on 25th Aug), Upper Killeyan *Islay* (max. 100 on 1st Sep), Torosay *Mull* (40 on 8th Sep), Dun I (Iona) *Mull* (200+ on 24th Sep), *Oronsay* (max. 30 on 25th Sep) and Crossapol *Tiree* (max. 65 on 29th Sep). A mixed flock of Common Linnets and Twite at Tayinloan numbered at least 300 on 15th Sep. There were still flocks of 100-200 at RSPB L. Gruinart in late Sep/early Oct and a flock of 76 on 12th Oct was the last of the year reported there.

It is thought (Thom, 1986) that Continental migrants comprise only a small proportion of the autumn flocks seen in Scotland, so these unusually large and widespread flocks in Argyll presumably indicate a good breeding season locally.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris* Gealan beinne 1662
Localised resident breeding species, found especially on the islands. Flocking in low-lying arable and coastal areas, Aug onwards. Some evidence to suggest emigration from Argyll in autumn, although there may also be an influx of wintering birds to some areas.

Jan-Apr. A total of 102 birds were counted in 3 flocks around cattle-feeding areas on *Tiree* in early Jan and 38 were counted in one flock at Crossapol on 29th Feb. Other reports of flocks of 30 or more birds were all from *Islay*: a regular flock at Smaull RSPB Reserve numbered 100 on 2nd Jan and 93 on 1st Mar, and the maximum count at RSPB L. Gruinart was 43 on 16th Mar. There were still 25 at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 19th Apr. Smaller numbers were recorded at Kiloran *Colonsay*, *Oronsay*, Tayinloan and Lismore *N Argyll*.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). A survey on *Colonsay* (without *Oronsay*) produced a total of 33 prs (cf 37 prs in 1999), while a (possibly incomplete) count on *Oronsay* found 7 prs. On Treshnish Isles *Mull*, in late Jun at least 3 prs were found on Lunga (+ 5 juvs) and 2 family parties (inc. 4 juvs) as well as a nest with c/6 were found on Fladda. There were 10-12 prs on Sanda Islands with good numbers of fledged young seen; and Twites were common and widespread on *Tiree* with family parties noted from 20th Jun onwards. Twites

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also bred at *Coll* RSPB Reserve, and they were recorded during the breeding season on *Islay* (2 sites) and *Mull* (10 sites).

Aug-Dec. The first large migrant flock reported was at Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* where 130 were counted on 3rd Aug. These were followed by 45 at Grasspoint *Mull* on 19th Aug, 48 at Vaul *Tiree* on 29th Aug and 90 at Loch a'Phuill on 30th Aug. Flocks of 30 or more birds were widespread in Sep including: up to 90 at Machrihanish SBO, up to 80 at Crinan Moss *Mid-Argyll*, total of 120 in Portnahaven area *Islay* on 9th, 35 or more at Aird of Kinloch *Mull* on 10th, max. 98 at Loch a'Phuill on 11th, max. 150 at Upper Killeyan *Islay* on 13th, ca 100 at Loch Crinan on 17th, max. 52 on Oronsay on 21st and an estimated 500 birds on the whole of Iona *Mull* on 25th Sep. A mixed flock of Common Linnets and Twite at Tayinloan numbered at least 300 on 15th Sep.

Numbers peaked at Machrihanish SBO in early Oct when a flock of 190 were present on 4th. Also at this time there were flocks of 40 at An Airidh *Tiree* on 2nd, 60 on Oronsay on 2nd, 70 at Upper Killeyan *Islay* on 4th, max. 87 at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 5th, and 102 at The Reef *Tiree* on 12th Oct. The largest single flock of the year totalled 333 at The Reef on 2nd Nov and there were still 250 there on 5th Dec. Apart from 30 in mid-Nov at Machrihanish SBO and 30 at the top of Glen Shira *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Nov, most of the larger flocks recorded later in the year were on *Islay* and included 63 at Upper Killeyan on 1st Nov, 70 at Braigo on 23rd Nov and 31 at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 12th Dec.

LESSER REDPOLL (REDPOLL) *Carduelis flammea* Dearcan seilich 1663
Localised resident breeder. Numbers fluctuate from year to year. Flocking occurs in autumn and winter.

Jan-May. No flocks of any significance were recorded in the early part of the year and the only unusual record was of one flying over Oronsay on 4th May.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 12 BBS squares (33%), (cf one of 15 in 1999), in 2 of the 6 Carradale *Kintyre* BBS squares and in one of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (7%). After a record year in 1999 (7 territories), numbers at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* were down to normal levels with a total of 4 territories in the CBC plots, (cf 1990-2000 av. of 4). During the breeding season the species was present at RSPB L. Gruinart, but there was no definite evidence of breeding; and it was also reported at single sites on *Islay*, *Kintyre* and *Mull* and at 2 sites in *Mid-Argyll*.

Jul-Dec. The only locations reporting flocks at this time were: Java Point (Craignure) *Mull* (10 on 22nd Jul), RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 15 on 14th Aug), Auch (Bridge of Orchy) *N Argyll* (35 on 10th Sep), Kiloran *Colonsay* (25 on 16th Sep), Gortan *Mull* (12 on 27th Sep) and Connel *Mid-Argyll* (ca 60 on 6th Nov).

NB. As from Jan 2001, Redpoll is treated as two separate species viz. Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret* and Mealy Redpoll *C. flammea* (latter includes 'Mealy' Redpoll, 'Iceland Redpoll' and 'Greenland' or Greater Redpoll). All records submitted should distinguish between these two new species.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra* Cam ghob 1666
Numbers, distribution and breeding season vary depending on abundance of conifer cone crops. Highly irruptive species with large flocks sometimes moving to locate a new seed area, usually in summer.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 12 BBS squares (8%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999). A family party

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was seen at Fishnish Mull on 19th Jul. Responses to a tape lure played in Fearnoch Forest Mid-Argyll on 8th Dec indicated that breeding pairs were present. (This is quite early, even for this species. Its breeding season often lasts from Jan to Jul, depending on availability of cone crops.)

Jan-Jul. The only records during this period concerned 13 flying W at Ballygrant Quarry Islay on 6th Jan, 7 in the woods at Moine Mhor on 24th Jan, 3 in Glen Forsa Mull on 18th Mar and 12 at Saddell Kintyre on 8th Jul.

Sep-Dec. Again very few records, with 6 at Cairnbaan Mid-Argyll on 24th Sep, 2 in woodland at Fishnish Mull on 24th Sep, 2 or more at Loch Glashan Mid-Argyll on 17th Oct, 12 in alders near Laganbuidhe Farm (Dalmally) N Argyll on 12th Nov, and 2 near Loch Sron Mor (Glen Shira) Mid-Argyll on 25th Nov being the only birds reported.

COMMON BULLFINCH (BULLFINCH) *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Corcan-coille 1710
Locally common resident breeder. Absent from Tiree, Coll and Colonsay and irregular on Gigha.

Jan-Apr. Up to 4 birds were widely reported but the only flock noted comprised a remarkable 50 birds feeding on a forestry track in pre-thicket Sitka Spruce *Picea sitchensis* at Cruach Eachd (Glen Orchy) N Argyll on 23rd Jan. However a single female at An Airidh from 16th-18th Apr was equally remarkable, as the first authenticated record for Tiree.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 3 of 15 in 1999) and in 2 of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (14%). A total of 3 territories were recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2). Recently fledged young were seen at Tullochgorm (Minard) Mid-Argyll in Jun, and birds were also reported during the breeding season from Cowal (2 sites), Islay (2 sites), Kintyre (one site) and Mid-Argyll (9 sites).

Jul-Dec. Up to 6 birds widely reported but no flocks of any size.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Gobhach 1717
Very rare visitor. Only 3 Argyll records during 1980-99: one at Ardanaisig (Mid-Argyll) in Apr 1985, 4 at Loch Gruinart in Feb 1986 and one at Arinagour (Coll) in Mar 1988.

One found in a garden at Achnacreebeag N Argyll on 22nd Apr, identified as a male bird, stayed until 24th Apr and was seen by a few fortunate observers [Claire Watson/DCT/ARJ/JMH]*. This is the first confirmed record of Hawfinch in Argyll for 12 years. There have been other claims in recent years but, although distinctive, this is a very rare species in Argyll and a detailed description is required before records can be accepted.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR (LAPLAND BUNTING) *Calcarius lapponicus* 1847
Less-than-annual passage migrant. Most frequent in autumn, less so in spring, and very rarely recorded in winter.

Another good year for this species with three records (as in 1999), all in the latter part of the year. All involved single birds which were seen at Port Wemyss Islay on 12th Sep, Ardnave Loch Islay on 1st Oct and, unusually, on 4th Dec over Ben Hynish Tiree.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* Gealag an t-sneachda 1850
Varying numbers on passage and in winter. Has bred N Argyll in the past.

Jan-Apr. The only significant flocks reported were of 14 birds on Oronsay on 16th Jan and 17 at Sorobaigh Bay on 15th Mar. The remaining records all involved 7 birds or less and

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included regular reports on Oronsay from 6th Jan-3rd Apr (the last of winter/spring), and several from the Ardnave/Loch Gruinart area of *Islay* between 9th Jan and 19th Mar. Elsewhere, records came from Smaull RSPB Reserve and Upper Killeyan on *Islay*, from Carnach Mor and Cruach na Capull *Cowal*, from Gott Bay and Salum Bay *Tiree* and from Auch Gleann *N Argyll* and Dun Da Ghaoithe (nr Craignure) *Mull*.

Breeding. No evidence of breeding in *Argyll* was reported.

Sep-Dec. The first returning bird was at Whitehouse *Tiree* on 17th Sep. This was followed by one on Oronsay on 20th, 4 at Balevullin *Tiree* on 23rd, 6 on the beach at Traigh Hough *Tiree* on 24th and 6 at The Reef *Tiree* on 29th Sep. The first record on *Islay* was not until 28th Oct, when a male was at Ardnave and 2 birds were seen there on 1st Nov. The few recorded later in the year included one or more near the Mishnish Lochs *Mull* on 18th Nov, 3 at Traigh Nostaig *Islay* on 19th Nov and singles at Loch Gruinart on 19th Nov, on Beinn Buidhe *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Nov and over The Reef *Tiree* on 28th Nov.

YELLOWHAMMER

Emberiza citrinella Buidheag bhealaidh 1857

Localised resident breeding species. Birds forage in cut hay and silage fields outwith breeding season. Population seems to be in decline and all records are welcome.

Jan-May. Visitors to gardens included one or two in Jan & Feb at Connel *Mid-Argyll* and 7 at Southend *Kintyre* on 12th Mar. On *Islay*, 6 were on the quay at Port Ellen on 16th Jan and between one and 3 birds were reported from 6 other sites at this time. Elsewhere, singles were seen at Loch Tarbert *Jura*, Lochbuie *Mull* and at Sron nam Boc *Mull*, 3 were on Lismore *N Argyll* on 3rd Apr, 6 were at Grasspoint *Mull* on 22nd Apr and a pr were at Knockvologan *Mull* on 23rd Apr.

One at Colonsay Hotel *Colonsay* on 3rd May was presumably a migrant.

Breeding. The species was not recorded in any of the 12 BBS squares surveyed, (cf one of 15 in 1999) nor in any of the 14 Countryside 2000 squares and there were no breeding birds at RSPB L. Gruinart. A pr with 3 recently fledged young were observed at Ulva Ferry *Mull* in Jun and singing males or territorial birds were reported during the breeding season from: *Islay* (3 sites), *Jura* (3 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (3 sites) and *Mull* (4 sites).

Aug-Dec. Widespread records on *Islay* (mostly of one or two birds) included birds at the following locations: Bridgend Woods, Cluanach (8 on 2nd Nov), Coullabus Wood, Doodilmore River, Finlaggan, Kilchoman (3 on 24th Sep), Killinallan Dunes (7 on 30th Jul), Rockmountain, RSPB L. Gruinart, Saligo Bay, Sunderland Farm and Upper Killeyan. On *Mull*, 1-4 birds were reported from: Ardfenaig, Grasspoint, Kilpatrick and Torosay. Elsewhere, single birds were at 2 locations in Appin *N Argyll* and at Tayinloan, birds were seen regularly in a garden at Coshandrochaid (Loch Sween) and ca 10 were at Kinuachdrachd *Jura* on 16th Oct.

REED BUNTING

Emberiza schoeniclus Gealag loin 1877

Locally common resident breeding species. Small flocks sometimes gather outwith the breeding season.

Jan-Apr. Flocks were recorded regularly at RSPB L. Gruinart until mid-Mar, numbers peaking at 48 on 15th Feb. Elsewhere counts of 10 or more birds came from: Tayinloan (40+ during Jan), Kames Golf Course *Cowal* (48 on 24th Jan), Campbeltown Loch (max. 12 on 23rd Feb) and Carn (Port Charlotte) *Islay* (10 on 4th Mar). Smaller groups were recorded at various locations on *Colonsay*, in *Mid-Argyll* and on *Tiree*.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 12 BBS squares (17%), (cf 2 of 15 in 1999) and in 3 of

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the 14 Countryside 2000 squares (21%). On *Colonsay* (inc. *Oronsay*), 10 prs were located (*cf* 8 in 1999). Only one territory was located at *Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll*, in the coastal CBC plot (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2); and up to 3 prs were located on *Sanda Islands* (*cf* 2 prs in 1999). Prs also bred at RSPB L. *Gruinart* and on *Coll RSPB Reserve*. Elsewhere, birds were found during the breeding season at 3 sites on *Colonsay*, 2 on *Islay*, one in *Kintyre*, 3 in *Mid-Argyll* and single sites on *Mull*, *N Argyll* and *Tiree*.

Jul-Dec. The only flocks of 10 or more reported were at *Portnahaven Islay* (12 on 24th Oct) and *Upper Killeyan Islay* (22 on 26th Dec). Smaller groups were recorded elsewhere, at *Tayinloan* (regularly) and on *Colonsay*, *Islay*, *Mull* and *Tiree*.

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza melanocephala* 1881
Vagrant. Five previous records all of single males during May-Jul.

A single male bird was seen at a garden bird table at *North Connel N Argyll* on 15th Jun and stayed long enough for the neighbour to be called to see it [Claire Watson/Jane Shepherd]*. A similar bird reported at *Bonawe N Argyll* on 13th Jun was probably the same individual.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra* *Gealag bhuathair* 1882
Resident species, almost extinct in Argyll. Recent records on Tiree only.

A single bird seen at *Heylipol Tiree* on 4th Mar may well have been a migrant. Otherwise there was only an unconfirmed report of one singing at *Ruaig* in May. It seems that the resident *Argyll* population may finally have become extinct.

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ESCAPES AND INTRODUCTIONS

This section includes species which are not on the British list or whose occurrence in the UK is EXCLUSIVELY within Categories B, D or E (see definitions of categories on p.20). Other species, whose occurrence in Argyll arises partly or wholly from introduced birds which may not or do not form self-sustaining breeding populations, include White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Barnacle Goose, Mandarin, Red Kite, Red-legged Partridge, Grey Partridge and Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon). These are dealt with in the main systematic list.

BLACK SWAN

Cygnus atratus

Category E*.

One reported at Small Isles Bay *Jura* on 10th Apr may have been there for some time and was still present on 23rd Jul. Subsequently one was reported in Loch Fyne, near Ardrishaig *Mid-Argyll*, in mid-Aug and was present at the head of Loch Gilp on 22nd Aug. A further sighting of an individual at Achnamara *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Aug may have referred to the same bird. Indeed it is quite possible that all these records relate to the same individual.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE

Anser indicus

Category E*.

A flock of 15, all apparently adults, were seen with Greylag Geese at the head of Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 14th Aug. The increasing numbers of records of this frequent escape from wildfowl collections must raise the possibility of feral breeding at some time in the future.

ROSS'S GOOSE

Anser rossii

Category E*.

A single adult seen with the Bar-headed Geese at the head of Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 14th Aug was still present on 28th Sep.

EMPEROR GOOSE

Anser canagicus

Category E*.

A single bird seen with Greylag Geese at the head of Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 14th Aug was at Loch Nell *Mid-Argyll* on the following day.

MUSCOVY DUCK

Cairina moschata

Category E*.

One was seen on the shore near Innellan Pier *Cowal* on 30th Jun and one was in Tarbert Harbour *Kintyre* on 20th Nov.

WOOD DUCK (CAROLINA DUCK)

Aix sponsa

Category E*.

A female was present in the West Bay at Dunoon from 27th Sep until the end of the year.

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LIST OF REJECTED RECORDS, PENDING RECORDS AND RECORDS FOR WHICH DETAILS ARE STILL AWAITED

Please note that the records below are listed for information purposes only, and do not form part of the data set for the years in question.

The following records of species on the ABRC, SBRC or BBRC lists have been rejected since the publication of *ABR* 16.

Black Stork	<i>Mull</i>	16/05/00	BBRC
Smew	<i>Islay</i>	25/10/00	ABRC
Lesser Scaup	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	13/10/00	BBRC
Hobby	<i>Kintyre</i>	02/09/00	ABRC
Semipalmated Plover	<i>Kintyre</i>	05/07/00	BBRC
Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull*	<i>Kintyre</i>	01/04/94	SBRC
Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull*	<i>Kintyre</i>	16/08/95	SBRC
Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull*	<i>Tiree</i>	11/02/00	SBRC
Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull*	<i>Islay</i>	09/10/00	SBRC

* The situation regarding the status of Yellow-legged Gull is still under review by the BOU. It currently seems possible that it will eventually be considered as two (or more) separate species. For this reason no claims of records of this species will be accepted unless a very detailed description is provided (especially of wing-tip pattern) so that individuals may subsequently be assigned to the correct new species.

Most records are rejected not because the committee in question is convinced that a mistake has been made, but because the evidence provided is insufficient to establish the identification.

The following records of species on the BBRC, SBRC or ABRC lists are currently in circulation around the relevant committees. In some instances, a decision has been delayed pending the receipt of additional details.

Little Shearwater	<i>Kintyre</i>	07/09/00	BBRC
Black/Red-headed Bunting	<i>Colonsay</i>	08/06/00	BBRC

There are no 2000 records currently in circulation with the ABRC or SBRC.

Full descriptions of the following claimed 2000 records of species on the BBRC, SBRC and ABRC lists have not been received.

Goshawk	Lochdon	<i>Mull</i>	0/08/00	?
Red-backed Shrike	Balvicar, Seil	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	16/09/00?	NM7616
Pectoral Sandpiper	Ardmaddy Bay	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	20/09/00	
Black Tern	Oronsay	<i>Colonsay</i>	13/05/00	
Booted Warbler	Cuan, Seil	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	21/09/00	

Anyone who saw any of these birds is encouraged to send in details. The records will not be referred to again in future reports unless full descriptions have by then been forwarded to ABRC, BBRC or SBRC.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The entire text of the systematic list was compiled by myself, and any errors in transcription are solely my responsibility.

I am indebted to all those who submitted records. A full list of contributors appears below, with apologies to anyone whose name has been inadvertently omitted. I am particularly grateful to observers who sent me comprehensive reports or regular series of observations for specific areas, especially: Clive Craik for information on breeding seabird colonies, John Halliday for records from the Taynish and Moine Mhor National Nature Reserves, Roger Broad (RSPB) for information on Raptors and Rare Breeding Species, Mike Raven of the BTO for BBS data, Rab Morton for information from the Sanda Islands, John Hodson and Simon Walker of the Treshnish Isles Ringing Group, Alan Leitch (RSPB) for copies of his monthly report on Tiree birds (including results of the Tiree coastal survey carried out in Jan 2000), James How and Mike Peacock (RSPB) for detailed reports of birds on Oronsay, Charlie Self (RSPB) for information on the birds of Coll, David Jardine for detailed information regarding Colonsay, and David Wood and Margaret MacKay at SNH for Goose count data. Special thanks are due to Eddie Maguire for a draft copy of the Machrihanish Seabird & Wildlife Observatory Report for 2000/2001, which was the source of the great majority of data for Machrihanish and for much information on Kintyre in general. Also to Malcolm Ogilvie for providing his Islay database and for copies of WeBS count forms. Malcolm Ogilvie's database was the source of most of the information about the birds of Islay used in this report.

I am grateful to Tristan ap Rheinallt, David Jardine, Eddie Maguire and Malcolm Ogilvie for commenting on a draft version of the text.

NB: *The Islay Bird and Natural History Report for 2000* is available from: Islay Natural History Trust, Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay, PA48 7TX; price £2.00 including p&p.

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Bird Recording in Argyll - Guidelines for Observers

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What should you report?

Bird records come in all shapes and sizes. They come by post, by telephone, by word of mouth, by e-mail or even (quite often) as rumours. They may be printed out in systematic order from a PC or written on small scraps of paper in almost illegible handwriting. Sometimes they include beautiful sketches or photographs and even camcorder footage has been submitted in evidence recently.

Every report is gratefully received but there is no doubt that some are more useful than others. The following, which is partly in response to requests from observers, is an attempt to provide some practical help and advice on what birds to report and how to record them.

This is only a guide – if you keep comprehensive records of the birds recorded in your garden or at your ‘local patch’ please do feel free to send them in. It is better to have too many records than too few and even lists of common birds provide useful background information – provided they include dates and numbers of birds seen. It is difficult to make much use of just a list of species seen during a fortnight’s holiday. **Conversely if you do not have time to send in all the records that fit these criteria please send in your selected highlights.** It is better to have something than nothing!

Confidentiality.

With certain rare species you may have concerns about having details of their occurrence/breeding published and the information leading to some form of persecution of the birds. However it is nearly always in the best long term interests of the birds for there to be some permanent record of their presence/breeding. If you are concerned about the safety of the birds please include a note with your record and only the most general comment will be made in the *Argyll Bird Report* or, if you wish, the record will not be published at all. No details will be released to other organisations without your express permission.

General advice to contributors

When submitting records, sightings should be listed in Voous order (as in this report) and should include the following details:

EURING Code No. - if possible but not essential (helps to speed up computer input).

Species name. The commonly used English name is usually sufficient (The *British Birds List of English Names of Western Palearctic Birds* versions are acceptable if preferred) but scientific (Latin) name is helpful if reporting sub-species.

Date. Please give exact date whenever possible (rather than ‘June’ or ‘spring’) as this makes the record much more valuable and enables us to relate it to other records.

Grid reference if known (six figure ref. preferred but a four figure ref. is often sufficient).

Location. Used in conjunction with the above to avoid ambiguity *e.g.* there are umpteen

Loch Dubhs in Argyll, but mistakes can also occur with grid refs!

Number of individuals. Precise number whenever possible or, failing this, an estimate. Even a rough estimate is more useful than 'many', 'large flock', 'several' or 'few', which are too subjective to have much value

Sex and age if known.

Other interesting comments are always welcome e.g. indications of breeding, behaviour, food, interactions with other birds/animals etc. Individual anecdotes add value to what can otherwise be rather a 'dry' report

Rare birds

Details of rarities should be sent in as soon as possible after the sighting, if possible on a standard form (available from Recorder). You may submit them by post or by e-mail. They will be judged locally by the Argyll Bird Records Committee, sent on to the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC), or sent on to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC), as appropriate. The observer is always informed personally as to the decision made.

All species (or races) named in **bold type** will require a written description (appropriate forms are available from the Recorder by post or e-mail). Those also marked with an asterisk (*) are national rarities and will be adjudged by the British Birds Rarities Committee. For species not listed, all records are required and a description will usually be needed. No record of any of these species and races will be published unless adequate supporting details (including a description) are provided and are accepted by the appropriate records committee. In addition, brief details may be requested for occurrences of scarce species not on the list where the circumstances appear to warrant this. The following list includes all species for which there are more than 3 confirmed records for Argyll.

What to record about individual species

- A =** All records (But use your discretion – see notes below)
- B =** Breeding records (including 'probable' or 'possible' breeding – see notes below)
- C =** Counts or Flocks (see notes below)
- F/L =** First and last dates (of summer or winter migrants – see notes below)
- Is =** All island records (see notes below)
- M =** Movements – migration or weather (see notes below).
- S =** All summer records (i.e. from May to July inclusive).
- W =** All winter records (i.e. from November to February inclusive).

'New'/'Old' Names. Where an element has been added to the 'old' name to create the 'new' name this element is given in brackets e.g. (Black-billed) Magpie for Magpie. Where the name has changed the 'new' name is given first followed by the old equivalent in brackets e.g. Yellow-billed Diver (White-billed Diver).

0002	Red-throated Diver	B, C (>4)
0003	Black-throated Diver	A
0004	Great Northern Diver	A
0005	Yellow-billed Diver (White-billed Diver)	A
0007	Little Grebe	A
0009	Great Crested Grebe	A
0010	Red-necked Grebe	A

0011	Slavonian Grebe	A
0012	Black-necked Grebe	A
0022	Northern Fulmar (Fulmar)	B, C (>19), M
0036	Cory's Shearwater	A
0040	Great Shearwater	A
0043	Sooty Shearwater	A
0046	Manx Shearwater	A (except at regular sea-watching locations where C>19)
0046	Balearic Shearwater (formerly Mediterranean Shearwater)	A
0052	European Storm-petrel (Storm Petrel)	A
0055	Leach's Storm-petrel (Leach's Petrel)	A
0071	Northern Gannet (Gannet)	B, C (>9), M
0072	Great Cormorant (Cormorant)	B, C (>4)
0080	European Shag (Shag)	B, C (>9)
0095	Great Bittern (Bittern)	A
0104	Black-crowned Night Heron (Night Heron) *	A
0119	Little Egret	A
0121	Great Egret (Great White Egret) *	A
0122	Grey Heron	B, C (>4)
0136	Glossy Ibis *	A
0144	Eurasian Spoonbill (Spoonbill)	A
0152	Mute Swan	A (for Colonsay & Kintyre only otherwise B, C (>4))
	Black Swan (Category E)	A
0153	Tundra Swan (Bewick's Swan)	A
0154	Whooper Swan	A
0157	Bean Goose	A
0158	Pink-footed Goose	A
0159	Greater White-fronted Goose (Greenland)	F/L, C (>49 - <u>except</u> Islay where C>999)
0159	Greater White-fronted Goose (European)	A
0161	Greylag Goose	A (<u>except</u> Coll & Tiree where C>99)
0163	Snow Goose (inc. feral birds)	A
0166	Canada Goose	A
0167	Barnacle Goose	A (<u>except</u> Islay where C>999)
0168	Brent Goose (Light-bellied)	A
0168	Brent Goose (Dark-bellied)	A
0173	Common Shelduck (Shelduck)	B, C (>19) + All records Aug to end Oct
0178	Mandarin Duck (Mandarin)	A
0179	Eurasian Wigeon (Wigeon)	B, C (>19), S
0180	American Wigeon *	A
0182	Gadwall	A
0184	Eurasian Teal (Teal)	B, C (>19), M
	Green-winged Teal	A
0186	Mallard	B, C (>19), M

0187	American Black Duck (Black Duck)	A
0189	Northern Pintail (Pintail)	A
0191	Garganey	A
0192	Blue-winged Teal *	A
0194	Northern Shoveler (Shoveler)	A
0198	Common Pochard (Pochard)	A
0200	Ring-necked Duck	A
0203	Tufted Duck	A
0204	Greater Scaup (Scaup)	A
0206	Common Eider (Eider)	B, C (>49)
0207	King Eider *	A
0212	Long-tailed Duck	A
0213	Black Scoter (Common Scoter)	A
0214	Surf Scoter	A
0215	Velvet Scoter	A
0218	Common Goldeneye (Goldeneye)	C (>9), F/L, S
0220	Smew	A
0221	Red-breasted Merganser	B, C (>19)
0223	Goosander	A
0225	Ruddy Duck	A
0231	European Honey Buzzard (Honey Buzzard)	A
0239	Red Kite	A
0243	White-tailed Eagle	A
0260	Eurasian Marsh Harrier (Marsh Harrier)	A
0261	Hen Harrier	A
0267	Northern Goshawk (Goshawk)	A
0269	Eurasian Sparrowhawk (Sparrowhawk)	B, C (>1)
0287	Common Buzzard (Buzzard)	B, C (>4)
0290	Rough-legged Buzzard	A
0296	Golden Eagle	A
0301	Osprey	A
0304	Common Kestrel (Kestrel)	B, C (>1), W
0309	Merlin	A
0310	Eurasian Hobby (Hobby)	A
0318	Gyr Falcon *	A
0320	Peregrine Falcon (Peregrine)	B, C (>1)
0329	Willow Ptarmigan (Red Grouse)	A
0330	Rock Ptarmigan (Ptarmigan)	A
0332	Black Grouse	A
0335	Western Capercaillie (Capercaillie)	A
0358	Red-legged Partridge	A
0367	Grey Partridge	A
0370	Common Quail (Quail)	A
0394	Common Pheasant (Pheasant)	B, C (>4)
0396	Golden Pheasant	A

0407	Water Rail	A
0408	Spotted Crake	A
0421	Corn Crake	A
0424	Common Moorhen (Moorhen)	A
0429	Common Coot (Coot)	A
0433	Common Crane (Crane)	A
0450	Eurasian Oystercatcher (Oystercatcher)	B, C (>19)
0470	Ringed Plover	B, C (>9)
0482	Eurasian Dotterel (Dotterel)	A
0485	European Golden Plover (Golden Plover)	A
0486	Grey Plover	A
0493	Northern Lapwing (Lapwing)	A
0496	Red Knot (Knot)	A
0497	Sanderling	A (<u>except</u> Islay & Tiree where C (>9), M,S)
0501	Little Stint	A
0502	Temminck's Stint	A
0507	Pectoral Sandpiper	A
0509	Curlew Sandpiper	A
0510	Purple Sandpiper	A
0512	Dunlin	B, C (>9), M
0516	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	A
0517	Ruff	A
0519	Common Snipe (Snipe)	B, C (>4)
0529	Eurasian Woodcock (Woodcock)	A
0532	Black-tailed Godwit	A
0534	Bar-tailed Godwit	A
0538	Whimbrel	A
0541	Eurasian Curlew (Curlew)	B, C (>19), M
0545	Spotted Redshank	A
0546	Common Redshank (Redshank)	B, C (>9)
0548	Common Greenshank (Greenshank)	A
0553	Green Sandpiper	A
0554	Wood Sandpiper	A
0556	Common Sandpiper	B, C (>4), F/L, M
0561	Turnstone	C (>4), F/L, S
0564	Red-necked Phalarope	A
0565	Grey Phalarope	A
0566	Pomarine Skua	A
0567	Arctic Skua	A
0568	Long-tailed Skua	A (description required for all but adults)
0569	Great Skua	A
0575	Mediterranean Gull	A
0578	Little Gull	A
0579	Sabine's Gull	A
0582	Black-headed Gull	B, C (>19), M

0589	Ring-billed Gull	A
0590	Mew Gull (Common Gull)	B, C (>19), M
0591	Lesser Black-backed Gull	B, C (>19), F/L, M
0591	Lesser Black-backed Gull (races <i>fuscus</i> or <i>intermedius</i>)	A
0592	Herring Gull	B, C (>49)
	Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull	A
0598	Iceland Gull	A (specify age)
0599	Glaucous Gull	A (specify age)
0600	Great Black-backed Gull	B, C (>19)
0602	Black-legged Kittiwake (Kittiwake)	B, C (>49) + All mainland records
0604	Ivory Gull *	A
0611	Sandwich Tern	A
0614	Roseate Tern	A
0615	Common Tern	B, C (>4), F/L, M
0616	Arctic Tern	B, C (>4), F/L, M
0624	Little Tern	A
0627	Black Tern	A
0634	Common Guillemot (Guillemot)	B, C (>49), M
0636	Razorbill	B, C (>49), M
0638	Black Guillemot	B, C (>9)
0647	Little Auk	A
0654	Atlantic Puffin (Puffin)	A
0665	Rock Pigeon (Rock Dove)	B, C (>19) + All mainland records
	Feral Pigeon	B, C (>9)
0668	Stock Pigeon (Stock Dove)	A
0670	Common Wood Pigeon (Wood Pigeon)	B, C (>19), Is
0684	Eurasian Collared Dove (Collared Dove)	A
0687	European Turtle Dove (Turtle Dove)	A
0724	Common Cuckoo (Cuckoo)	A
0735	Barn Owl	A
0761	Tawny Owl	B, C (>1), Is
0767	Long-eared Owl	A
0768	Short-eared Owl	A
0778	European Nightjar (Nightjar)	A
0795	Common Swift (Swift)	A
0831	Common Kingfisher (Kingfisher)	A
0840	European Bee-eater (Bee-eater)	A
0841	European Roller (Roller) *	A
0846	Hoopoe	A
0848	Eurasian Wryneck (Wryneck)	A
0856	Green Woodpecker	A
0876	Great Spotted Woodpecker	A
0976	Sky Lark (Skylark)	B, C (>9), M
0981	Sand Martin	A

0992	Barn Swallow (Swallow)	B, C (>19), F/L, M + all uninhabited Is
1001	House Martin	B, C (>9), F/L, Is (<u>except</u> Islay), M
1009	Tree Pipit	B, C (>4), F/L, Is (<u>except</u> Mull), M
1011	Meadow Pipit	B, C (>19), M, W
1014	Rock Pipit	B, C (>4), M
1017	Yellow Wagtail	A
1017	Yellow Wagtail (races other than <i>flavissima</i>)	A
1019	Grey Wagtail	B, C (>2), W
1020	Pied Wagtail	B, C (>9), M, W
1020	'White Wagtail' (race <i>alba</i>)	A
1048	Bohemian Waxwing (Waxwing)	A
1050	White-throated Dipper (Dipper)	A
1066	Winter Wren (Wren)	B, C (>4)
1084	Hedge Accentor (Duncock)	B, C (>4), Is (<u>except</u> Islay & Mull), M
1099	European Robin (Robin)	B, C (>4), M
1106	Bluethroat	A
1121	Black Redstart	A
1122	Common Redstart (Redstart)	B, C (>4), F/L, Is, M
1137	Whinchat	B, C (>4), F/L, M
1139	Stonechat	B, C (>4), M
1146	Northern Wheatear (Wheatear)	B, C (>4), F/L, M
1146	'Greenland' Wheatear (race: <i>leucorhoa</i>)	A
1186	Ring Ouzel	A
1187	Common Blackbird (Blackbird)	B, C (>9), M
1198	Fieldfare	B, C (>9), F/L, M, S
1200	Song Thrush	B, C (>9), M
1201	Redwing	B, C (>9), F/L, M, S
1202	Mistle Thrush	B, C (>4), M
1236	Common Grasshopper Warbler (Grasshopper Warbler)	A
1243	Sedge Warbler	B, C (>4), F/L, Is (<u>except</u> Islay), M
1251	Eurasian Reed Warbler (Reed Warbler)	A
1259	Icterine Warbler	A
1273	Barred Warbler	A
1274	Lesser Whitethroat	A
1275	Common Whitethroat (Whitethroat)	B, C (>4), F/L, Is (<u>except</u> Islay & Mull), M
1276	Garden Warbler	A
1277	Blackcap	A
1300	Yellow-browed Warbler	A
1308	Wood Warbler	B, C (>4), F/L, Is (<u>except</u> Mull), M
1311	Common Chiffchaff (Chiffchaff)	A
1312	Willow Warbler	B (counts), F/L, M
1314	Goldcrest	B, C (>9), Is (<u>except</u> Islay & Mull), M
1315	Firecrest	A
1335	Spotted Flycatcher	A

1349	Pied Flycatcher	A
1437	Long-tailed Tit	B, C (>4), Is, M
1461	Coat Tit	B, C (>9), Is (<i>except</i> Islay & Mull), M
1462	Blue Tit	B, C (>9), Is (<i>except</i> Islay & Mull), M
1464	Great Tit	B, C (>9), Is (<i>except</i> Islay & Mull), M
1479	Wood Nuthatch (Nuthatch)	A
1486	Eurasian Treecreeper (Treecreeper)	B, C (>2), Is (<i>except</i> Islay & Mull), M
1508	Eurasian Golden Oriole (Golden Oriole)	A
1515	Red-backed Shrike	A
1520	Great Grey Shrike	A
1539	Eurasian Jay (Jay)	A
1549	Black-billed Magpie (Magpie)	A
1559	Red-billed Chough (Chough)	A (<i>except</i> Islay where C (>9))
1560	Eurasian Jackdaw (Jackdaw)	B, C (>19), Is (<i>except</i> Colonsay & Islay)
1563	Rook	B, C (>19), Is (<i>except</i> Islay)
1567	Hooded Crow	B, C (>19)
1567	Carion Crow	A
1572	Common Raven (Raven)	B, C (>9)
1582	Common Starling (Starling)	B, C (>49), Is (<i>except</i> Islay), M
1584	Rosy Starling (Rose-coloured Starling)*	A
1591	House Sparrow	B, C (>19) + all records away from human habitation
1598	Eurasian Tree Sparrow (Tree Sparrow)	A
1636	Chaffinch	B, C (>49), Is (<i>except</i> Colonsay, Islay, Jura & Mull), M
1638	Brambling	A
1649	European Greenfinch (Greenfinch)	B, C (>9), Is (<i>except</i> Islay, & Mull), M
1653	European Goldfinch (Goldfinch)	B, C (>4), Is (<i>except</i> Islay), M + all records North Argyll
1654	Eurasian Siskin (Siskin)	B, C (>9), F/L (at bird tables), Is (<i>except</i> Islay, Jura & Mull), M
1660	Common Linnet (Linnet)	B, C (>4), Is (<i>except</i> Colonsay & Islay), M
1662	Twite	B, C (>4), M + all mainland records.
	Lesser Redpoll	A
1663	Mealy Redpoll (including races <i>rostrata</i> & <i>islandica</i>)	A
1666	Common Crossbill (Crossbill)	A
1679	Common Rosefinch (Scarlet Rosefinch)	A
1710	Common Bullfinch	B, C (>4), Is, M
1717	Hawfinch	A
1847	Lapland Longspur (Lapland Bunting)	A
1850	Snow Bunting	A
1857	Yellowhammer	A
1877	Reed Bunting	B, C (>4), M
1881	Black-headed Bunting*	A
1882	Corn Bunting	A

NOTES:

A = All Records: Exceptions are indicated for areas where the species is more common but experienced observers should use their discretion when reporting species which they know to be regular at their local patch. A general comment such as 'regular – maximum of 5 individuals present' or, e.g. for the winter flock of Turnstones in Oban Harbour, 'winter flock peaked at 22 on 15th Dec' will suffice.

B = Breeding: To include all breeding categories including 'probable' or 'possible'. If possible, use Rare Breeding Birds Panel definitions:

Possible = breeding season records of one or more birds in suitable nesting habitat or 'singing' males.

Probable = pair in suitable habitat in breeding season, permanent territory established (i.e. song *etc* on 2 occasions at least a week apart), courtship, visiting probable nest site, agitated behaviour of adults, nest building or brood patch on adult.

Confirmed = adult distraction display, apparently occupied nest, adults carrying faecal sac or food for young, current year's used nest, fresh eggshells, recently fledged or downy young, or nest with eggs or young. If available, the number of eggs or young is useful information. These are expressed as e.g. c/4 for clutch of 4 eggs or b/3 for brood of 3 young. But do not cause unnecessary disturbance (which may in any case be illegal) to obtain this information.

C = Counts or flocks: Flocks are self explanatory but 'count' means the total birds at any one time at a given location. The minimum size of flock worth reporting is indicated; (>9), for example, means a flock or count of more than 9 birds *i.e.* 10 or more birds.

F/L = First and last dates: First and last dates are for both summer and winter visitors and should include the dates of main arrival/departure, when noted, as well as of the earliest and latest individuals.

Is = All island records: These comprise all records of birds seen on any island not directly connected to the mainland (*i.e.* excludes Seil *etc.*) unless specific islands are mentioned as excluded.

M = Migration or weather movements: These will normally be flocks of bird seen (or in some cases heard) on the move but may include any sudden increase in numbers (as when winter thrushes arrive).

N.B. Unusual behaviour by any species is always worth reporting and helps add interest to the annual bird report. This would include birds seen in unusual habitats e.g. Blue Tit in open moorland. If you are unsure whether the behaviour is unusual or not, report it anyway.

Other Categories

Escapes and introductions: All records of birds which fall into BOURC Categories D & E (see p.20 of this report for definitions) are also welcome. A good many species on the British List first started off as introductions or escapes.

Races: Records of specific races (sub-species) identifiable in the field (or found in the course of trapping and ringing) are also welcome. A supporting description may be required in these cases and is essential for all races recorded 20 times or less in Scotland.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* on Islay, 13 August 2000 – the first Argyll record

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INTRODUCTION

In view of its geographical location and good mix of habitats, it is not surprising that Argyll has produced records of several North American wader species over the years. Indeed, Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* and Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* are now seen fairly regularly in autumn. In addition, the following vagrants were recorded up to the end of 1999: Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*, American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*, Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*, Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*, Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*, Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* and Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*.

Of the remaining Nearctic waders on the Scottish list, White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* is by far the most frequently recorded on this side of the Atlantic. With the Outer Hebrides reporting its sixth record in 1999 (Murray, 2001), the species seemed to be one of the most likely potential additions to the Argyll list. This note gives details of the first accepted record, at Loch Gruinart (Islay) on 13 August 2000.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF OBSERVATION

The following notes have been adapted from the author's submission to the *British Birds* Rarities Committee:

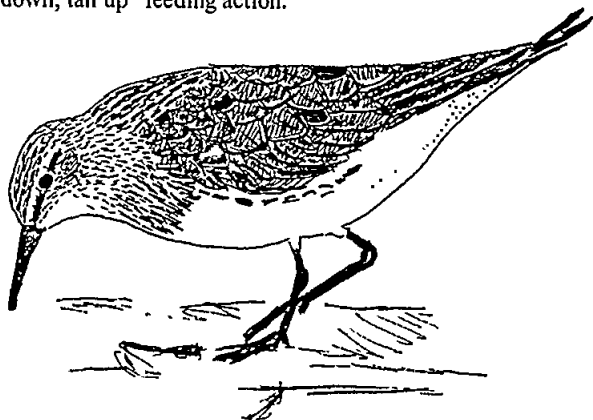
On the morning of 13 August 2000 I decided to search for waders at the head of Loch Gruinart, a sealoch and estuary that drains at low tide to expose about 9 km² of sand, shingle and mud. I parked my car at the southeastern end of the loch and walked out onto the estuary as the tide was starting to fall. A few hundred metres downstream from Craighens Cottage, at approximately NR291683, I spotted a small group of Dunlin *Calidris alpina* and Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* roosting at the top of the shore among some seaweed-covered stones. While scanning these birds through my telescope at a distance of about 100 m, I saw a strange-looking wader that immediately stood out from the Dunlin due to its very grey appearance and completely white belly. The bird looked quite fat and dumpy and I did not immediately realise what it was, especially as I was unable to see where the wingtips fell relative to the tail. However, as soon as I saw the streaks on the flanks I realised that it was a White-rumped Sandpiper – a potential first for Argyll, and one that I had long anticipated finding at this site.

A couple of minutes later all the waders took off and joined a large group of 300 to 400 Dunlin that refused to settle for the next 20 minutes or so. In the meantime, Clive McKay had arrived in response to my phone call. Together, we scanned through the various sub-flocks and finally relocated the bird. We then had it in view more or less continuously for the next two hours. During this period we did not try to approach the bird too closely for fear of flushing it before other local birders had arrived. Eventually the flock flew off down

the estuary and was lost to sight. Andrew Whitehouse had close views of the bird on the rising tide that evening, but there were no further sightings.

DESCRIPTION

General impression: A slim grey wader, about the size of a small Dunlin, with a short bill and long legs. The state of its plumage showed that it was a moulting adult. It had a very distinctive "head down, tail up" feeding action.



Drawing of White-rumped Sandpiper (based on author's field sketch)

Size and structure: The bird was about the same size as the smallest Dunlin present. When first seen, it looked surprisingly dumpy, presumably because it was huddled up and roosting. When feeding, however, it gave a completely different impression, with a slender body, no obvious belly, and very long-looking legs – overall very unlike Dunlin. The wingtips extended well beyond the tail, so that the back end looked particularly slim and attenuated.

Plumage: At a distance, the head, neck and upper breast looked uniformly "soft" dark grey, with this uniformity being broken only by the pale supercilium and white chin. At closer range fine streaking could be seen, which became coarser lower on the breast. Also, the ear coverts were slightly darker than the rest of the face. The neat supercilium was of more or less even width. Although not particularly conspicuous, it was accentuated by dark lores and a dark eyestripe, visible at close range. The crown looked plain. Even in good light, no warm tones could be seen – the colour remained basically grey.

The lower breast, belly and vent were strikingly white. However, there was distinct streaking down the flanks, visible even at a distance. Close up, I could see only one row of streaks on the left side but about three rows on the right.

The mantle was finely and uniformly streaked, with no white "braces", although it did show a couple of small white spots towards the front edge. At close range, the streaked mantle contrasted with the plainer crown and nape. Some scapulars and coverts were intense black, others dark grey, with narrow whitish edges. They generally looked rather scruffy and worn. The tertials were also dark with narrow whitish edges. The primaries were blackish.

Bare parts: The bill was short, black and more or less straight. It was probably shorter than the (very variable) bills of all the Dunlin present, although there may have been a small

degree of overlap. The legs were black and, perhaps because of the slim body, seemed relatively long. In reality, they were probably no longer than a Dunlin's legs.

In flight: Good flight views were difficult to obtain as the bird took off without warning among large numbers of Dunlin. However, a distinct white rump, contrasting with the dark tail, was seen on several occasions by myself and by other observers. It seemed less extensive than on Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*.

Behaviour: The feeding action was much like a Dunlin, with a steady walk and rapid pecks at the sand/mud. Like a stint, however, the bird tended to cover more distance than the Dunlin it was with, whilst at the same time remaining in the flock. It also sometimes fed with more of a "stop-start" action. At all times while feeding, it adopted a very distinctive posture, with its head down and its tail up. With the bird's bill in the sand/mud, this reminded me of a mosquito engaged in sucking blood. The posture was more or less invariable, and emphasised the pure whiteness of the belly and vent. As a result, the bird could be picked out remarkably easily among a flock of several hundred Dunlin.

DISCUSSION

In Scotland and the UK generally, 2000 was an exceptionally good year for White-rumped Sandpiper. Six individuals were recorded in the Outer Hebrides, two in Orkney, two in Northeast Scotland and one in Shetland. Although the majority of these records were in September and October, the Orkney and Shetland birds occurred in July (Rogers *et al.*, 2001). Like the Islay individual, they were adults; juveniles do not migrate until later in the autumn (Hayman *et al.*, 1986).

The Islay White-rumped Sandpiper record was the result of a deliberate effort to monitor the flocks of small waders that occur on Loch Gruinart in the autumn. In previous years, these flocks have received relatively little attention, largely because there are no regular high-tide roosts that would allow close observation. In autumn 1999, however, the discovery of a Baird's Sandpiper and a Buff-breasted Sandpiper in early September (Daw, 2000) prompted the realisation that waders at this location are best viewed by walking out onto the sand on a rising or falling tide. In 1999, this approach led to the discovery of two Semipalmated Sandpipers later in the same month (Daw, 2000). Interestingly, although a large Dunlin flock was again present in autumn 2000, numbers of small waders in autumn 2001 seemed much more variable and on the whole rather low. The reason for this is not known.

White-rumped Sandpiper was one of two new species added to the Argyll list in 2000, the other being Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*. By the end of the year, the total number of species recorded in Argyll had risen from 318 (ap Rheinallt and Daw, 2000) to 320.

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