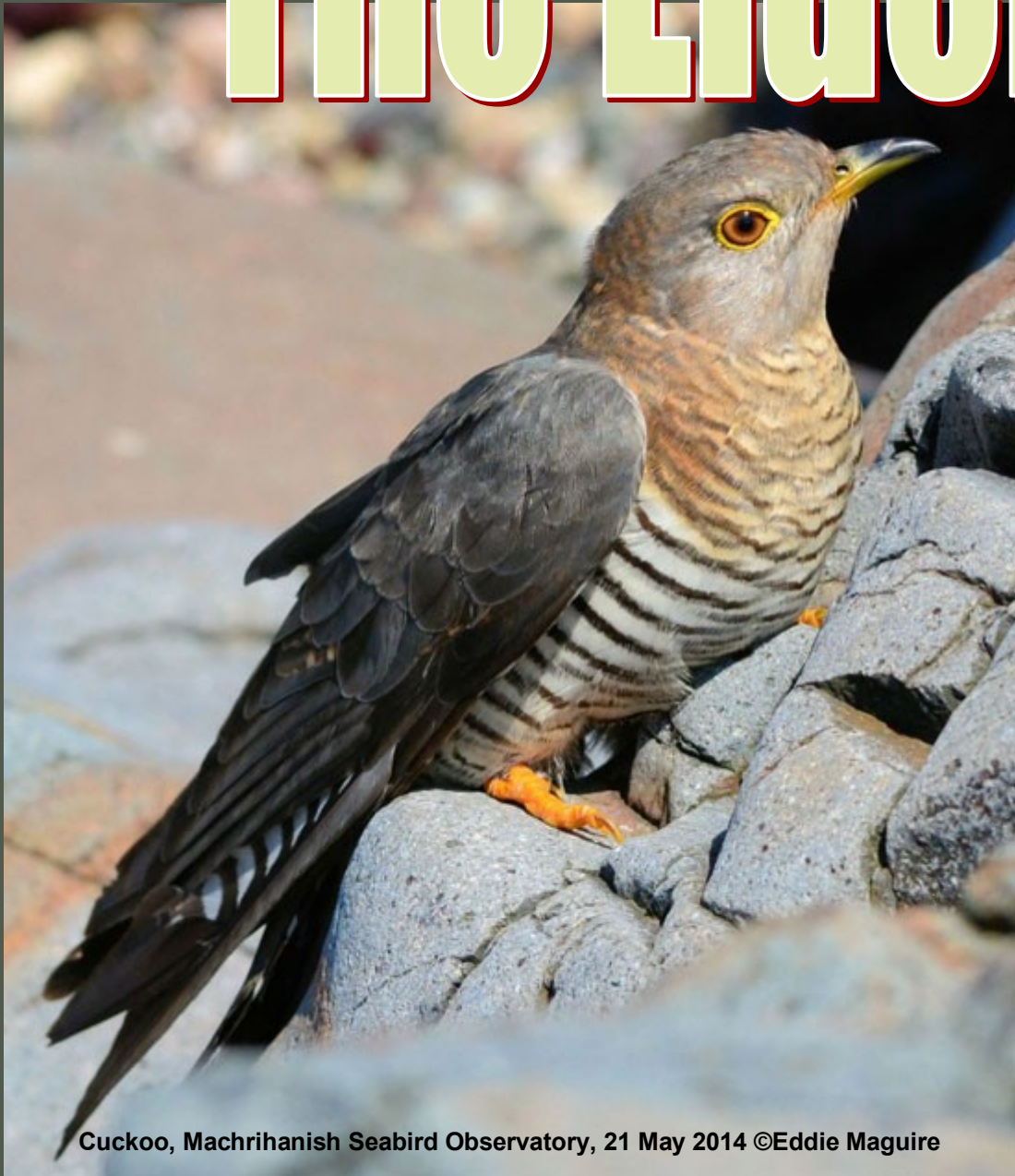


**September
2014
Number 109**

The Eider



Cuckoo, Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, 21 May 2014 ©Eddie Maguire

Wildlife around Cruachan Power Station, pages 17-20

Recent Bird Sightings, pages 22-27

Club News, pages 3-4

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Editorial

Nigel has put together a very interesting programme for the club's autumn meeting at the Cairnbaan Hotel on 22 November (page 4). So, I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend. This will also give you the chance to have your say at the AGM, in its usual slot just after lunch.

The club has undergone some major changes during the year, the most notable of which was Paul Daw's decision to retire as Argyll Bird Recorder. After relying on Paul's sterling efforts and vast experience over many years we found it difficult to imagine anyone else doing the job. So, great credit does to Jim Dickson and Malcolm Chatwood for taking over the role. Jim's knowledge of both common and scarce birds and Malcolm's database skills are providing the ideal combination. Tom Callan has been another sad loss, both as editor of the *Argyll Bird Report* and committee member. On top of that Katie Pendreigh has decided to resign as secretary at the AGM. As a result the club really does need some new committee members and a new secretary, so please consider putting your name forward at the AGM.

The committee is always keen to identify new ideas for field trips. The monthly outings to various parts of Argyll are popular and attract a reasonable number of members (see accounts of three trips in this issue). In the future, it would be good to have one or two longer-distance trips each year. Peter Roberts floated numerous ideas about a club trip Spain in the June 2013 *Eider*. Unexpectedly, no one showed an interest. Not to be deterred, Peter has refined his ideas and come forward with a more specific trip for spring 2014 in conjunction with birders on Islay (pages 14-16). This really is a good opportunity for members to be guided around some fantastic habitats in central Spain, at a cost far lower than commercial bird tours.

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This issue of the *Eider* is quite large, mainly due to the inclusion of papers for the AGM. So far I have nothing for the December issue. So, please consider putting pen to paper (or fingers to the keyboard). After such a good summer, many of you must have observations that would be of interest to us all. If it would help, I'd be happy to talk over ideas for an article with you, either on the phone, by e-mail or at the autumn meeting. You can see from this and previous issues that articles do not necessarily have to be about birds.

Acknowledgements

Very many thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue—John Bowler, Tom Callan, Jon Close, Malcolm Chatwood, Jim Dickson, David Fotheringham, Bob Furness (including photocopying & dispatch), Sue Furness, Richard Green, Mike Harrison, Eddie Maguire, Geoff Pain, Katie Pendreigh, Linda Petty (proof reading), Jonathan Platt, Bryan Raines, Peter Roberts, Andy Robinson, Craig Round, Nigel Scriven, Jim Sim and Margaret Staley.

Club News

Field trips

If there is a possibility of adverse weather leading to the cancellation of a fieldtrip, please check the club's website or contact the organizer the night before or prior to setting off.

Saturday 30 August. Seabirds from the Islay Ferry. Led by Mike Harrison (contact details: phone 01631 710656; mobile 07731 197722; email jmharrison@iee.org). Meet at the Kennacraig Ferry Terminal at 12.00hrs. The ferry departs to Islay at 13.00hrs, arriving at Port Askaig at 14.55hrs. The return ferry leaves Port Askaig at 15.30hrs arriving back at Kennacraig at 17.25hrs.

Saturday 27 September. Holy Loch Local Nature Reserve (Cowal). Led by Nigel Scriven (contact details: phone 01505 706652; mobile 07901 636353; e-mail njscriven@gmail.com). Meet in the car park at Broxwood, Sandbank at 12.30hrs.

Saturday 25 October. Bute. Led by Nigel Scriven (contact details: phone 01505 706652; mobile 07901 636353; e-mail njscriven@gmail.com). Meet at the Colintrave Ferry at 10.00hrs.

Saturday 29 November. Loch Gilp and the Add Estuary. Led by Jim Dickson (contact details: phone 01546 603967; e-mail meg@jdickson5.plus.com). Meet at 10.00hrs in Lochgilphead at the Corran Car Park, opposite the caravan park, on the A83, close to the roundabout (A83/A816) at the western end of the town.

Indoor meetings

Autumn meeting (plus AGM) 2014. On Saturday 22 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel (<http://www.cairnbaan.com>), near Lochgilphead (programme on the next page). Lunches are available in the Hotel.

Spring meeting 2015. On Saturday 7 March at the Argyll Hotel, Inveraray. The programme will be in the December Eider.

Raffle prizes. Donations of raffle prizes are always welcome for indoor meetings.

ABC Anniversary Events

The club is 30yrs old next year and the committee is considering two ways of celebrating this event.

A weekend on Mull for 29/31 May. This is in the planning stage. It is being organized by our chairman, Mike Harrison (contact details: phone 01631 710656; mobile 07731 197722; email jmharrison@iee.org). Provisional details are:

- * Arrive on Mull on Friday 29 May
- * Participants to book their own ferry and accommodation (ideally around Tobermory).
- * There will be a meal on Saturday night in Tobermory.
- * There will be three led trips (Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning).
- * Depart Mull on Sunday afternoon.

If you want to be included please contact Mike, no later than 30 November as he will need to book a restaurant for the Saturday meal.

Dinner and/or ceilidh. As part of the Autumn Meeting at the Cairnbaan Hotel. More details will be given in the December Eider.

Secretary and Committee Members wanted

Katie Pendreigh will be stepping down as secretary at the next AGM and we are looking for someone to replace her. If you are interested please contact the Chairman, Mike Harrison. Katie has done a splendid job for many years and will be sorely missed.

We also have 2-3 vacancies for committee members. So again, if you are interested, or know of someone who is, please contact Mike Harrison or any other club official.

Argyll Bird Report 24 (2012)

We have a stock of the latest report, so if anyone can suggest shops or other outlets that might be willing to stock it, please contact Bob Furness (contact details on the back page).

Journals for disposal

I have a run of the *Ibis* (journal the British Ornithologists' Union) from the 1950s until recently,

which I no longer have room for. If any ABC members would like these, please contact me. I can bring them to the autumn meeting if anyone is

interested. They are free of charge—all they need is a good home! **Steve Petty, Editor.**

Programme for the ABC's Autumn Meeting	
Saturday 22 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel, Cairnbaan, by Lochgilphead	
Time	Session
0930	Doors open, coffee and tea
0950-1000	Welcome and introduction— <i>Mike Harrison</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1000-1030	Recent bird sightings and photographs— <i>Jim Dickson</i> , Argyll Bird Recorder
1030-1100	Big Garden Birdwatch— <i>David Jardine</i>
1100-1130	Coffee/tea
1130-1200	On resolving a wildlife conflict— <i>Ross Lilley</i> , SNH
1200-1230	Bird diversity and forest management— <i>John Calladine</i> , BTO Scotland
1230-1400	Lunch (available in the hotel, if required)
1400-1430	Argyll Bird Club's AGM
1430-1500	Loch Lomond RSPB Reserve— <i>Paula Baker</i> , RSPB
1500-1510	Why birds use garden feeders more some days than others— <i>Euan Furness</i>
1510-1540	Tea/coffee
1540-1600	Ups and downs of a BBS square, or two— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1600-1615	BTO surveys and updates— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1615-1630	Raffle and closing remarks

Papers for the AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

To be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on 22 November 2014

Treasurer's report for the financial year 2013-2014

Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £10,260.24, a reduction of £3,897.15 from the previous year (table on next page). Income from subscriptions was very slightly higher than for the previous year. Income from bank interest was zero as Treasurer's Accounts no longer get interest. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contribute items to be raffled.

Expenditure included printing of two *Argyll Bird Reports* and associated postage and envelope costs. This is the first time that we have pub-

lished two bird reports within the same financial year. Insurance costs included insurance of the club's telescope and binoculars now available for monthly field trips, as well as third party cover for club activities. Grants made during 2013-14 represent a contribution to RSPB towards costs of buying data loggers for deployment on seabirds on Colonsay as part of the RSPB FAME project (now re-branded STAR project). Members who attended the talks by Tessa Cole about the seabird tracking at Colonsay will appreciate that this study is strategically important in understanding likely interactions between seabirds and marine renewable developments in Argyll,

and is producing very interesting results.

The committee agreed to raise Expenditure above Income in order to make best use of the club's healthy bank balance, and to follow guidance from the Charity Commissioners that bank balances held by charities should not normally greatly exceed about two years' income. However, running a deficit cannot be sustained indefinitely and we may need to consider ways to increase income at some point in future if we are to continue to spend at the present level. This is further brought into focus by our having moved from biennial bird reports to annual bird reports, production of which represents a major item in our expenditure. Having said that, I can report that our bank balance has now increased to £12,000 (as of August 2014) which is the same level it was at in autumn 2012, thanks to recovery of back-dated tax refunds from HMRC and recent income from data provision.

Bob Furness, 19 August 2014

Membership Secretary's Report for the financial year 2013-2014

Our number of memberships has remained almost exactly the same as last year's total. In July 2014 we had a total of 215 memberships, including a good number of family memberships, though (as usual) a few members have not yet responded to a request for subscription renewal, so may lapse. We have approximately 300 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships. The number of new members joining this year has been small, and it may be worth looking at ways to raise the profile of the club locally. There is little evidence to suggest that many of our new members have joined as a result of finding our web page. Possibly advertising the club through local newspapers might be a more productive approach, but at present most new members join as a result of personal recommendation from existing members.

Sue Furness, 19 August 2014

Accounts for the 29th year of the Argyll Bird Club 16 April 2013 to 15 April 2014		
INCOME	2013/2014	2012/2013
Subscriptions	2648.23	2467.23
Sales	369.30	300.00
Bank Interest	0.00	0.00
Raffles	462.50	217.00
TOTAL	3480.03	2984.23
EXPENDITURE		
Bird report	3946.00	0.00
Newsletter photocopying	84.00	0.00
Postage	1024.72	197.19
Public meetings	1000.90	1865.90
Insurance	233.63	232.63
Licenses/website	0.00	0.00
Envelopes	56.93	0.00
Grants	1031.00	5000.00
TOTAL	7377.18	7295.72
Surplus/deficit for year	-3897.15	-4311.49
Brought forward	14157.39	18468.88
Assets at end of year	10260.24	14157.39



Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club
held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday 2nd November 2013

1. Apologies: Helen and John Anderson, Lilly Cregeen, Paul Daw, Ian Hopkins, Dougie Menzies, Steve and Linda Petty and Andy Robinson.

2. Minutes of the 2012 AGM: approval was proposed by David Jardine and seconded by Rab Morton.

3. Matters arising not covered in the following items: None.

4. Chairman's report: To summarise the Club's activities over the last year, I will begin with last year's autumn meeting, which had a varied programme. Christine Urquhart brought us up to date with the importance and fortunes of geese in Argyll. Adam Cross gave us a flavour of his research using digital photography to grapple with the difficulties of monitoring the numbers of Puffins on their breeding grounds. David Jardine's talk on his long-term studies on Colonsay and Oransay revealed an intricate relationship between some birds and their island environment. BTO Scotland's James Bray stood in for Chris Wernham to present the situation on differences in population trends between Scotland and England. Gemma Jennings returned to tell us the conclusion of her studies on the Common Tern colony in Leith Docks, following their foraging ecology and the effects of predation. The meeting concluded with a lighter review of the delights of birdwatching in the Western Cape of South Africa by Bob Furness.

This year's spring meeting in Dunoon had an excellent programme which circumstances conspired to prevent my attendance, much to my regret, although I had seen some of the talks before. Ron Forrester's Bute Bird Atlas was a great example of what can be achieved on a relatively small island with enough keen birders to get complete coverage at a tetrad level, and to produce an extremely attractive and useful book on Bute's birds. Dawn Thomson's research was on the ecology of Yellowhammers, now red-listed, and declining in many areas. She found food availability, and the changes in farming practices, seem to be the nub of the problem. Tessa Cole's research with the RSPB, based on Colonsay, involved fitting tracking devices to Shags, Guillemots, Razorbills

and Kittiwakes to see where they forage over a period of several days, after which the birds are re-caught to retrieve the devices. Data downloaded from them reveals how far the birds go to feed during their breeding season, information vital to understanding how they might be protected. The club had contributed £1000 towards the project. James Grecian's work on Gannets on Grassholm was a similar project with a much bigger bird, involving a much larger area, but shedding light on the birds we see around Argyll's coast. Back to dry land with Cat Barlow's talk on Hen Harriers on grouse moors at Langholm, gave us some of the details of this controversial study, which unfortunately has done nothing to help Hen Harriers south of the border. To finish up, Bernie Zonfrillo showed us not only what sport can be had in catching ducks, but also how interesting the results of ringing them can be.

The field trips continue to be an integral and regular part of the club's activities, taking place in most months, and inevitably in all weathers. In December Jim Dickson found a window in the wintry weather to lead a successful trip to Loch Gilp, the Add estuary and Ulva. In February Ian Hopkins hosted a party of 15 on a trip to Bute, facilitated by the use of a minibus, and visiting all the island's hotspots, including the Kingarth Hotel for lunch. On 6th April Paul Daw led a trip to the Sound of Gigha. On 20th April Nigel Scriven led a trip to Loch Laich estuary in Appin, preceded by a talk on John Muir, in recognition of John Muir Day, and the 175th anniversary of his birth, and linking in with the Appin community fundraising for the Jubilee Bridge there. On 25 May Katie Pendreigh led a trip to Clachan and West Loch Tarbert. The planned trip to Sanda on 22 June had to be cancelled as public landings at the pier have been stopped by the island owners. Tom Callan led the Loch Gilp, Crinan and Add trip on a sunny 27 July, and Nigel Scriven led the Holy Loch trip on 31 August. The end of September saw a trip to Tiree with members staying at the Hynish Centre for several days in the excellent accommodation run by the Hebridean Trust. Mike Harrison led a trip to Ledaig on the 26th Octo-

ber.

The club's *Eider* Newsletter went through a transition during the course of the year with Stuart Crutchfield having taken up the reins last September, steering us through three issues, until Steve Petty resumed the editorial helm for June this year. Thank you to Stuart, and to Steve for their sterling efforts in keeping this important part of the club's activities going. Thanks also to all contributors, and please keep the copy coming. This year we did try an experiment with the *Eider Duckling*, as an email news sheet, as a quick means to communicate between the cycle of the *Eider* with important items that had missed one *Eider*, and couldn't wait for the next. There were positive and negative responses to it, so it might only be repeated when there is a very strong need.

The 22nd *Argyll Bird Report*, for 2010 and 2011, appeared earlier this year, and thanks go again to the team of compilers led by recorder Paul Daw and editor Tom Callan. Paul and Tom stood down from their roles in the spring, having given plenty of notice, but leaving with some uncertainty about succession. This did rather concentrate the minds of the committee, and fortunately Jim Dickson and Malcolm Chattwood have stepped forwards as Recorder and Assistant Recorder. The club owes a huge debt for the commitment and effort that Paul has given us over the last 15 years as recorder, and I'm sorry that he can't be with us today so that I can thank him publicly in person on your behalf.

I'm pleased to report that the writing of the 24th *Argyll Bird Report* for the single year 2012 is well underway, and there will be space to incorporate some papers and project reports. If you have anything appropriate, please send it to Jim, who is leading the team.

In terms of bird recording, it is noted that there has been a drop in records being submitted, although, BirdTrack records have increased. However Birdtrack records are sometimes just a list, without numbers, which is not nearly so useful from our point of view, although Birdtrack can also cope with counts. The club's recording system is much preferred also because it is more geographically defined with the grid reference system. Additionally, using the BTO breeding codes is very useful for breeding season records. Lastly, a plea to send in records from everywhere, especially under-recorded places such as most of

North Argyll.

The club's website continues to be an important feature of the way we do things. The team of administrators (Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, and Bob Furness), help share the load of keeping it fresh and they are to be thanked for that. The frequency of recent report postings do give it real currency, and have encouraged me to check it on a near-daily basis.

Clive Craik's Loch Creran tern raft project has achieved national press coverage, featuring on BBCs Landward programme as a nominee for the RSPBs Nature of Scotland Awards. I am very pleased to hear that Clive won the Species Champion Award at the recent award ceremony in Edinburgh on 30th October. The club has financially supported this work, which has plenty of potential yet, and Clive is working on another raft in Ardfarn.

The club's support for the establishment of a Local Nature Reserve on the Holy Loch has run into the sand, in the form of the Council's legal department, and its designation is now more likely to be early in 2014.

Relationships with the Hebridean Trust, who run the Hynish Centre on Tiree, have continued to develop. After a reconnaissance trip in May, we ran a residential trip at the end of September, which was well attended, and went well. While birding was the main focus, catching and ringing birds in this windy place is a challenge, but we learnt a lot. There is scope for planting shrubs in part of the garden, which will make it more sheltered and attractive to migrants, with the optimistic hope of rivalling John Bowler's garden, which would be difficult.

As ever, I am grateful to our committee members for the significant contributions they make to the running of the club. I have found it a privilege to work with them and have very much enjoyed our committee meetings and the support they have given me. Particular thanks go to Bob and Sue Furness for managing our financial and membership business. My special thanks to Katie Pendreigh, not only for her prompt production of minutes, but also the numerous other things that make such a difference. **Nigel Scriven**

5. Secretary's report: This year our committee meetings covered a wide range of items to be discussed, decisions to be reached and appropriate actions/tasks allocated.

The club's Public Liability Insurance was renewed

for a further year, which also covers the club's telescope and the Scottish Charitable Regulator accepted our accounts, which allow the ABC to maintain its charitable status for a further year. As usual I would like to thank Nigel and Mike who, together with Bob and the rest of the committee, helped to keep me on the right tracks, especially regarding the dreaded minutes! Our meetings this year were in February, April, August and October and took place in the stables of the Argyll Hotel at Inveraray (no horses present, just tea/coffee and biscuits). After a brief chat to allow for late comers and those who had dined at the George Hotel to let their meal get down, we started meetings promptly at 7 o'clock and with minutes of the previous meeting approved (or not) proceeded to work through the items on the agenda. They mainly comprised matters pertaining to the *Argyll Bird Report*, the website and spending of the club's funds. Decisions made usually involved follow up action to be taken by volunteers from amongst the committee members. Nigel kept us informed regarding the situation on Sanda and the progress (or lack of it) with Argyll and Bute-Council re Broxwood becoming an official Local Nature Reserve. Also, as no volunteer has come forward to represent the BTO interests in Argyll, Nigel updated us about forthcoming surveys etc. Meetings usually end once arrangements have been agreed for the next club and committee meetings as well as the monthly outings.

During the course of this year Stuart Crutchfield, had found it necessary to give up editing the *Eider* and stand down from the committee, it was fortuitous that Steve Petty was available to be co-opted on to the committee and welcomed to the April meeting as the new editor of the *Eider*—all be it having to work on it remotely from Spain at times—thank goodness for the internet.

Having sent out information on the actual tasks involved in being the Argyll Bird Recorder, followed by requests for a volunteer to take on the role there had been no positive response, and in February Paul notified the committee that he was unwilling to continue indefinitely and would 'wind down' as soon as *Argyll Bird Report 23* was published. After much agonising and discussion over several weeks, a workable solution was arrived at, involving Malcolm Chatwood who kindly offered to use his IT skills to manage the large volume of data, and work with the Argyll Bird Recorder to lighten the task. With this assistance Jim Dickson felt the role would be more manageable for him

and took on the position.

The August meeting brought the sad news that Tom Callan had found it necessary to resign from the committee and, although he expressed his willingness to continue to write species reports as in the past (thank goodness), he resigned from the editorship of the *Argyll Bird Report*—his friendly help and co-operation will be very much missed. Thankfully Neil Brown was willing to be co-opted on to our now depleted committee and was welcomed to the October meeting and other possible members are being encouraged to put their names forward for election. **Katie Pendreigh**

6. Treasurer's report for the financial year 2012-2013: Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £14,157.39, a reduction of £4,311.49 from the previous year. Income from subscriptions was very slightly lower than for the previous year. Income from book sales has decreased, and our stock of copies is also much reduced, with just a few boxes remaining. Income from bank interest fell to zero. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contribute items to be raffled. The much lower income from raffles in 2012-13 compared to 2011-2012 is mainly because the raffle at the joint meeting with BTO/SOC in 2011-12 raised far more than any of our normal raffles.

Expenditure was deliberately increased this year to try to make best use of the income we obtained from the book, so our expenditure includes both normal activities plus extra ones. No bird report was published in 2012/13, and few copies of *Birds of Argyll* were ordered by post, so postage costs were lower than in the previous year. The unusually high public meeting costs include the Oban joint meeting with BTO/SOC which although held in the previous financial year, appears in the 2012-13 accounts because our payment to the BTO conference costs appears in this year's accounts (which also explains the relatively low expenditure on public meetings in 2011-12). Insurance costs included insurance of the club's telescope now available for monthly field trips, as well as third party cover for club activities. We provided £5000 towards the costs of developing the common tern nesting platform in Loch Creran. This project has been carried forward by a team led by Clive Craik, and has been spectacularly suc-

successful in providing predator-free nesting habitat for Common Terns. In 2012, the colony fledged more young terns than any other site in the west of Scotland.

Having now invested in nest boxes for Pied Flycatchers and Kestrels, and a nesting raft for Common Terns, we continue to look for sensible ways to use the cash that has been accumulated by the club over the last decade. **Bob Furness, 1 July 2013**

7. Membership Secretary's report: Our number of memberships has declined very slightly from last year's total. In June 2013 we had a total of 214 memberships (8 down on the previous year), including a good number of family memberships, though (as usual) a few members have not yet responded to a request for subscription renewal, so may lapse. We have approximately 300 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships. **Sue Furness, 1 July 2013**

8. Election of office bearers and committee members: The usual procedure was followed and the committee stood down en bloc. Nigel had previously indicated that, although willing to serve on the committee, he was unwilling to continue for a further year as chairman and Mike Harrison agreed to take on the position. He was proposed by Nigel and seconded by David Merrie. Nigel, being proposed by Malcolm Chattwood and

seconded by Robin Harvey, undertook to serve as vice-chairman. Having agreed their willingness to continue in their previous positions if requested by the membership, Bob Furness was proposed as Treasurer and seconded by Ron Forrester, Sue Furness, a non-committee member, was proposed as membership secretary by Nigel and seconded by Rab Morton, Katie Pendreigh proposed as secretary by Malcolm Chattwood and seconded by Norman Rea. Voting for committee members proceeded as follows—Jim Dickson (Argyll Bird Recorder) proposed by Nigel Scriven and seconded by David Jardine, Malcolm Chattwood (assistant Argyll Bird Recorder) proposed by Nigel and seconded by Mike Harrison, Steve Petty (editor of the Eider) proposed by Nigel and seconded by Rab Morton, Andy Robinson (RSPB representative) proposed by Nigel and seconded by Bob Furness, Neil Brown proposed by Nigel and seconded by Rab Morton and Blair Urquhart proposed by Bob Furness and seconded by Nigel

9. A.O.C.B. It was proposed that ABC should retain £10,000 in funds, but that £2000-£3000 would be a more realistic figure for the longer term especially bearing in mind the club's charitable status. It was pointed out that the membership fee had remained unchanged for several years and consideration could be given to raising it if necessary.

Agenda for the 29th AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

The AGM will be held on Saturday 22 November 2014 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, Lochgilphead.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2013 AGM
3. Matters arising not covered in the following items
4. Chairman's report
5. Secretary's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Membership Secretary's report
8. Election of office bearers and committee members

The current office bearers and committee members are listed on the back page. A maximum of 12 members can be elected and nominations are invited.

9. A.O.C.B.

Report of the ABC trip to the Add Estuary and Taynish NNR on 31 May

A glorious sunny and warm morning on the last day of May was a bonus for the ten bird club members who met near the Islandadd Bridge at Bel-lanoch. This trip was planned to combine estuary birding at the Add with some woodland birding at Taynish National Nature Reserve near Tayvallich.

New bird club member Ewan Halley was welcomed to his first Argyll Bird Club trip and then Stuart Crutchfield kindly volunteered to keep tally of the species seen on the day. Telescopes were then set up at the ready with some of the group looking out over the merse and mud while others were looking out over the Moine Mhor moss.

As usual the number of species being called out by the group mounted up very quickly, initially with Redshank, Oystercatcher, Red-breasted Merganser, Canada Goose, Mallard and then various gulls being seen on the estuary, while Skylark, Meadow Pipit, Whinchat, Hoodies and Raven were seen over the moss. It was clear that a few species were with young and several broods of Canada Geese were noted with chicks of varying size. This species appears to be increasing significantly here year on year. At least three broods of Shelduck were also noted numbering seven, nine and five. No young Redshanks or Oystercatchers were seen, however with some birds alarm calling, chicks could have been hidden in grass on the islets.

We then walked up to the Islandadd Bridge which is often a good vantage point, and from there Common Sandpipers were seen flying down river and a Cormorant flew overhead. Next stop was along the canal footpath towards the new bird hide. Several Willow Warblers were heard singing along with a couple of Blackcaps. An Osprey was spotted flying nearby which made a brief hover over the river before flying off east. Near the hide a warbler that alighted just in front of us turned out to be a Garden Warbler that gave terrific views and was a bonus for some of the group not very familiar with

Cuckoo, Moine Mhor on 5 June ©Jim Dickson



this species. We noted that the most notable features were its lack of notable features! The new hide looks like it has been quite well constructed and more likely to survive a storm than the last one, which blew away in May 2011.

Looking out over the mud, which was exposed by the low tide, Stuart managed to pick out some very distant waders through the telescope and they were identified as a group of Ringed Plover with a single Dunlin. It looked like the unusually large flocks of both these species, which were at this spot numbering several hundreds the week before, had eventually moved north. There was no sign of the Little Egret that had spent a week here and was last seen a few days earlier.

Some car sharing was sorted out and we then headed down to Taynish in the hope of adding a few more warblers to our list. On the track down to the car park we heard Wood Warbler singing and got a glimpse of a Redstart. At the car park, bird song was still going strong despite the time approaching mid-day and Blackcaps were in particularly good voice.

We then set off along the track and headed for the old watermill and around the path adjoining Loch Sween. Numerous damselflies were seen but no dragonflies, as perhaps it was a bit early in the season. Butterflies were also in short supply. Once we had adjusted to woodland birding mode we started to get to grips with seeing what was about, with a Wood

Warbler eventually being pinned down by Malcolm Chattwood, and it gave good views although never came as close as we would have liked. Several other singing males were heard later. Tree-creeper, Spotted Flycatcher and a pair of Redstarts were seen, and through the trees high above, an Osprey was seen heading up Loch Sween. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was heard alarm calling and an untimely Tawny Owl gave out a brief quivering hoot! As the wood opened out to the south a few Tree Pipits were first heard singing then seen. The path carried on down past the old piggery and we had a look at the sea around the Ulva Islands. Three Shags were noted on an Islet and a brief distant cooing Eider Duck call was heard but we decided not to count this. Several Lesser Redpolls were calling overhead and Common Whitethroats appeared to be in good numbers. A very brief snatch of a Sedge Warbler was heard but again we did not count this as a two-second burst of song, not heard by most of the group, was stretching things too much!

On the last section of our walk back to the car park we had another Great Spotted Woodpecker, two Treecreepers, Redstart, several Wood Warblers, Blackcaps, Tree Pipits, Linnet and more good views of Garden Warblers. Overall I believe we had a very successful trip with the group seeing most of the target species for the day and a good total of 52 species recorded. Many thanks to all those who came along.

Jim Dickson

Species recorded: Chiffchaff, Wood Warbler, Garden Warbler, Willow Warbler, Common

A Drinker Moth larvae photographed during the meeting (©Richard Green) and below what the adult moth looks like (©Steve Petty)



Whitethroat, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Meadow Pipit, Tree Pipit, Rock Pipit, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Robin, Wren, Goldfinch, Chaffinch, Pied Wagtail, Linnet, Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher, Lesser Redpoll, Skylark, Whinchat, Treecreeper, House Martin, Swallow, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Tawny Owl, Wood Pigeon, Cuckoo, Cormorant, Shag, Raven, Hooded Crow, Osprey, Buzzard, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Gull, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Redshank, Oystercatcher, Common Sandpiper, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Shelduck, Canada Goose, Grey Heron.

Report of the ABC trip to Skipness (Kintyre) on 29 June

The weather was warm and sunny, and no one minded waiting for those catching the Portavadie to Tarbet Ferry to arrive at our meeting place in the Skipness Castle Car Park.

The time was put to good use as we took a short walk in the surrounding woods which produced a profusion of Robins (both juvenile and adult), good numbers of Chaffinch, and Great Tit as well as Coal Tit, Wren, Dunnock, Tree Creeper and a Great Spotted Woodpecker. With the expected

number of the group complete, we set off along the Campbell Glen where Blackbirds and Song Thrushes were quickly added to the list for those who had not already seen them, but we were surprised by the general lack of birds—no wagtails (Pied or the hoped for Grey Wagtail) were in evidence and our usual Kestrel was noticeable by his absence. Moving on, we were rewarded by sightings of Siskin, Blue Tit, Common Crossbill, Lesser Redpoll, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler amongst the trees. In the nearby fields Mistle Thrushes were feeding with Pied Wagtails darting about amongst them catching insects while Swallows were hawking overhead. As we progressed down the path beside a tall dry

stone dyke, a distant solitary Heron was fishing at the edge of the sea. We also noted Hooded Crow, Wood Pigeon, Starling, Raven and a Buzzard, while a cock Pheasant headed for cover. After negotiating a stile over the dyke without much difficulty, Skipness Castle (and most importantly the Seafood Cabin) could be seen in the distance. On the way Meadow Pipits were observed but, unusually for this location, no Rock Pipits. On looking out to sea there were several Gannets fishing as well as a Red-throated Diver, Red-breasted Merganser, Cormorant, Shag, Black Guillemot, Oystercatcher, Greater Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Sandpiper and Ringed Plover.

After a delicious and welcome late lunch we headed back to the car park where a female Bullfinch was added to the bird list. On the way home we stopped at Claonaig Bay where the following species were added to the list—House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Greenfinch, House Martin, Sand Martin, Common Gull, Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Eider, Collared Dove, Rock Dove and Rock Pipit.

Katie Pendreigh

Enjoying the weather and birds at Skipness ©Katie Pendreigh



List of birds seen in the order of sighting: Great Tit, Chaffinch, Robin, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Wren, Dunnock, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Tree Creeper, Wood Warbler, Siskin, Pied Wagtail, Mistle Thrush, Swallow, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Heron, Hooded Crow, Wood Pigeon, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Common Buzzard, Raven, Twite, Pheasant, Rook, Starling, Lesser Redpoll, Goldcrest, Common Crossbill, Gannet, Oyster Catcher, Greater Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Red-throated Diver, Black Guillemot, Shag, Spotted Flycatcher, Bullfinch, Meadow Pipit, Common Sandpiper, Goldfinch, Cormorant, Linnet, Red-breasted Merganser, Ringed Plover, House Sparrow, Jackdaw, Greenfinch, House Martin, Common Gull, Sedge Warbler, Reed Bunting, Lesser-black Backed Gull, Eider, Collared Dove, Rock Dove and Sand Martin.

Report of the ABC trip to Clachan (Kintyre) on 26 July

The weather, although not exactly promising, was mild, any breeze was light and it was not raining! The group set off from the village hall car park at the pre-arranged time of 10.00hrs and proceeded along the track beside the Clachan Burn.

Swallows, House and Sand Martins were all quickly spotted as they hawked for insects over the fields and above the burn. Also in evidence were members the crow family, namely Raven, Rook, and Hooded Crow, and Starling all making use of the surrounding fields and trees. Further down stream a Grey Wagtail provided some excitement (being in short supply this year locally). Pied Wagtails and Meadow Pipits were about throughout the walk but alas, no Dippers. Before reaching the estuary, Blue and Great tits were in evidence,

together with Willow Warbler, Goldcrest, Blackcap and, at last, a Spotted Flycatcher! Walking along the shore line Buzzard and more Ravens couldn't be missed as they noisily soared above the cliff. Lower down, Song Thrushes and Blackbirds foraged for food amongst the shrubs and sodden grass. On looking out to sea as we continued along the path, Eider and Mallard were present. Gannets were seen to be fishing in the middle distance while a Grey Heron was quietly fishing at the edge of some rocky pools. The previously light rain was becoming a little more pronounced by now and, with dark clouds looming, we stopped and enjoyed our packed lunches in relative comfort. Sitting on convenient rocks, and between mouthfuls of sandwich etc., we pointed out to each other Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Sanderling, Dunlin and Curlew. Gulls, including Black-headed, Common, Lesser black-backed and Herring were noted here, as well as European Shag. With rain now

becoming heavier, we got to our feet (somewhat stiffly) and proceeded along the track where Common Redstart and Stonechat helped to re-charge our batteries! Rock Doves, Collared Doves and Skylarks braved the rain and further on as it abated a little, Wren, Dunnock and Robin flitted amongst the stunted trees. Towards Corran Farm, Northern Wheatear, and Sedge Warbler were observed and a large flock of House Sparrows as well as many Chaffinches were making use of the farm surroundings. As we made our way back to Clachan along the quiet B road, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll and Reed Bunting were present in the bordering fields while a single Bullfinch was spotted in a small copse of trees at the edge of the road.

Katie Pendreigh

List of birds spotted in the order they were seen: Swallow, House Martin, Sand Martin, Raven, Rook, Hooded Crow, Starling, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Willow Warbler, Goldcrest, Blackcap,

Braving the weather at Clachan! ©Katie Pendreigh



Spotted Flycatcher, Song Thrush Blackbird, Eider, Mallard, Gannet, Grey Heron, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Sanderling, Dunlin, Curlew, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, European Shag, Common Redstart, Stonechat, Rock Dove, Collared Dove, Skylark, Robin, Wren, Dunnock, Northern Wheatear, Sedge Warbler, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll, Reed Bunting and Bullfinch.

BAWC



Imagine what we could achieve if every time we went into the field to look for birds we were looking out for wildlife crime as well?

<http://birdersagainst.org>

Birders Against Wildlife Crime (BAWC) is an independent, volunteer-led, campaign group set up in 2014 by a group of experienced birders and conservationists who, just like you, are sick of the number of crimes being committed against wildlife. We want to fight back by making the processes of Recognising, Recording, and Reporting wildlife crime as easy as possible (an initiative we term 'the Three Rs').

The group is run by an organising committee and admin team who are responsible for policy and strategy. As well as campaigning to raise awareness of wildlife crime through our 'Three Rs' initiative, our aim is to campaign to protect and strengthen legislation that protects wildlife from crime and to campaign for proper sentencing of those convicted. As a group we have taken the decision not to be dragged into debates on issues that fall outside the scope of wildlife crime.

BAWC is not a membership-based 'club' or society. All their information is openly available to anyone who wants it. So how can you support BAWC?

BAWC is a campaign group. It is also a new way of birding. BAWC want to make taking the The Three Rs (Recognise, Record, Report) into the field as automatic as taking binoculars and a camera.

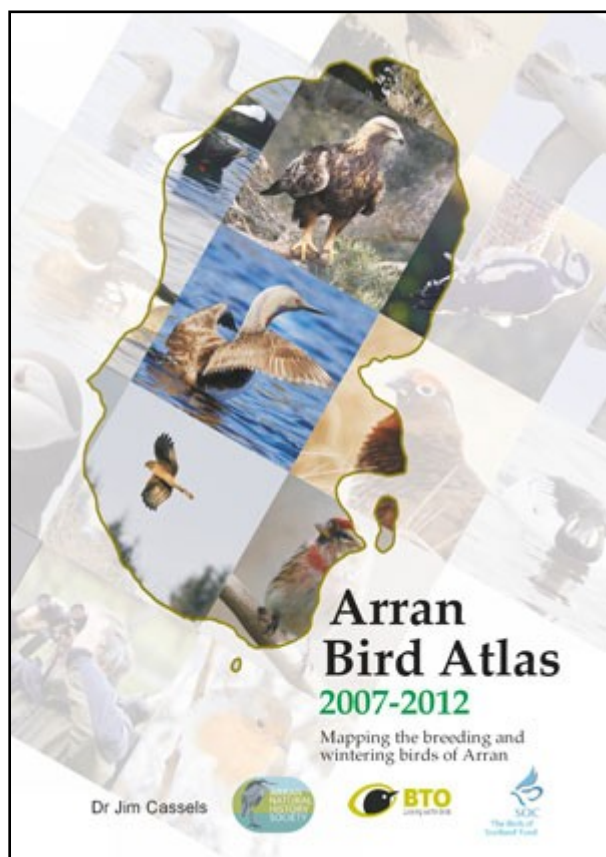
It's not just about birds. It's about all wildlife crime: badgers, bats, deer, newts etc.

Support BAWC—support our wildlife—by becoming 'eyes in the field'. One poisoning, one illegal killing, one hare coursed or badger baited is one too many. All of us want change. We need to be that change.

The website is a great reference source on all aspects of wildlife crime, from hunting seasons to the different types of traps and how they should or should not be used.

Support BAWC by telling friends and colleagues—or more importantly by explaining why it's so important that we all become 'eyes in the field', helping the police and investigation officers to tackle wildlife crime. You know it makes sense.

Arran Bird Atlas 2007-2012



This book describes the mapping of the birds of Arran for the first time.

Under the direction of Dr Jim Cassels, the bird recorder for the Arran Natural History Society, over thirty volunteers conducted fieldwork over five years covering the whole of the island. In addition almost seven hundred people contributed bird sightings during these five breeding seasons and five winters.

The data collected contains over thirty six thousand records on one hundred and seventy-seven species. It is an outstanding effort by residents and visitors, who share a passion for the birds of Arran. Adding to this community effort, at the publication stage over thirty photographers agreed to the use of their images.

The work involved in this project was recognised nationally when the Marsh Local Ornithology Award was presented to the Arran Natural History Society in October 2013 by the Marsh Trust and the British Trust for Ornithology.

The key features of the resulting full-colour publication are:

- 168 pages
- More than 400 maps
- More than 200 photographs
- On 177 birds.

With the support of funds from the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the Arran Trust, the Arran Natural History Society has kept the cost to an affordable £8.00.

The publication gives an insight into the distribution of Arran's birds and provides a source of information for future land management. It is a must for all with an interest in Arran.

The publication is available from shops and other outlets throughout the island or can be ordered directly from Alan and Jill Hollick of High Kildonan alanandjillhollick@gmail.com

Spring birding in Extremadura and the Gredos Mountains—April-May 2015

Islay bird-watcher Peter Roberts has put together an exciting itinerary for a short trip to this region of central Spain next spring. He is a very experienced bird tour leader over many years throughout the world and this is an ideal opportunity for Argyll Bird Club members to participate in this trip at cost price. So far there is strong interest from some Islay birders, but there may be a few places for ABC members on a first come first served basis. If there is a lot of interest then it would be possible to increase the number of places available. If you are interested please contact Jim

Dickson on 01546 603967 for an up to date availability. See also Peter's article in the June 2013 *Eider* No. 104 pp 10-11

Jim Dickson

The main points of interest of this tour will be:

- The Gredos Mountains with a localized population of Bluethroats and Citril Finches along with Spanish Ibex and higher elevation species such as Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush, Crested Tit, Ortolan Bunting, and Western Bonelli's Warbler.

Bee-eater—just one of the spectacular birds to be seen ©Peter Roberts



□ Monfrague Natural Park with a good variety of breeding raptors including Eurasian Griffon, Egyptian and Cinereous (Black) Vultures, Spanish Imperial Eagle (an Iberian endemic), Black-shouldered Kite, Golden, Bonelli's, Booted and Short-toed Eagles, Red and Black Kites. Other birds special to this area of cliffs and scrubby maquis hillsides include Black Stork, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Red-necked Nightjar, Pallid Swift, Iberian (formerly Azure-winged) Magpie—now split into an Iberian endemic, Red-rumped Swallow, Crag Martin, Blue Rock Thrush, Alpine Swift and Rock Bunting.

□ The surrounding open pasture land, plains and steppe is one of the best areas in Spain to see Great and Little Bustards. Commonly seen in this area are European Roller, Great Spotted Cuckoo, Montagu's Harrier, Lesser Kestrel, White Stork, Tawny Pipit, Spanish Sparrow, Calandra and Crested Larks and the possibility of Greater & Lesser Short-toed Larks and Pin-tailed and Black-bellied Sandgrouse. Wetlands here hold the usual egrets and herons, Little Bittern, Purple Swamphen, Black-winged Stilt, Penduline-Tit, Savi's, Cetti's and Great Reed Warblers and Zitting Cisticola.

□ Many of the other more widespread and classic Mediterranean/Spanish species can be found—warblers such as Sardinian, Subalpine and Western Orphean, Wryneck, Golden Oriole, Woodlark, Short-toed Treecreeper, Nightingale, Woodchat Shrike, Black Redstart, Rock Sparrow, Serin, European Bee-eater, Hoopoe, Spotless Starling and a lot more.

□ It might be possible to make a longer day excursion

to a site for White-headed Duck where other interesting birds can include Red-crested Pochard, Yellow-legged Gull, Black-necked Grebe, Greater Flamingo, Kentish Plover, Gull-billed and Whiskered Terns.

Outline Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Madrid, pick up hire vehicle and drive to the Gredos Mountains.

Day 2: Full day birding in the Gredos area looking especially for Bluethroat, Citril Finch, Spanish Ibex and the first of many of the more common Mediterranean bird species.

Day 3: Depart the Gredos area and drive the fairly short distance to Extremadura and the edge of Monfrague NP, birding en route.

Days 4, 5, 6: Local birding in Monfrague NP and environs.

Day 7: Birding the Monfrague area until a return to Madrid for a homeward flight.

Based on a group of seven in one self-drive minibus the tour would cost c.£675 per person, twin-sharing. Single rooms can be arranged at a small extra charge. Note: Nature-trek (considered to be one of the less costly specialist bird tour companies) is offering a Gredos and Extremadura eight-day tour at the same time in 2015 for £1,295 excluding flights—a daily rate of £161 compared to this tour at £96 per day.

The tour cost includes full board accommodation for six-nights (two in the Gredos and four in Extremadura) in very pleasant, small "birder-friendly" hotels producing good food with wine included; transport in a spacious and comfortable self-drive 9-seat minibus (I'd be happy to drive or share driving with anyone who wants to) and fuel. I'll provide all participants with a bird checklist and trip report. Not included are travel/flights to and from home to Madrid. These can be anything from £150 - £250 return depending on what we buy and when we go.

What to do next

1. I will check and get more exact prices to give you.
2. I will check out likely inexpensive flights from Glasgow or Edinburgh.
3. You decide in principle if you wish to sign-up and let me know.
4. You let me know if you have any preferred dates within the time frame 28th April—15th

May.

Once points 1-4 above have been ironed out it will be time to commit, confirm and book.

I can make all hotel and car hire bookings and confirm the exact cost.

I can investigate and suggest suitable flights. It

is better that we all arrive into and depart from Madrid on the same flights if possible.

Peter Roberts, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay

Phone: 01496 850673, Mobile: 07919941750

Carl Zeiss Award 2014

The Carl Zeiss Award, was introduced in the December 1991 issue of *British Birds*, where it was announced that 'Carl Zeiss, sponsor of the Rarities Committee, is offering an annual prize of Carl Zeiss 10×40 B/GAT Dialyt or 7×42 B/GAT binoculars to the photographer who supplies the most helpful, interesting and instructive photograph of a rarity, taken in Britain. The photograph (a colour print, black-and-white photograph or transparency) must have been submitted in the usual ways. The winning photograph may be big, bright, sharp and beautiful, or be small, dull, fuzzy and admired only by the committee, but it will have added to ornithological knowledge of the species' identification, ageing or sexing criteria.'

The aim was to encourage the submission of potentially useful photographs for the purpose of record assessment, subsequent reference material and possible publication.

First prize this year has gone to Jim Sim for his series of photographs taken at Bowmore Harbour, Islay on 5th July 2013 of the Ascension Frigatebird. Jim's images won by a large majority of the judges and was well deserved. Although Jim is not a birdwatcher he was curious enough to take photos of this extraordinary species and 'birding event' and share these with Islay birders that day. It was from the photos that the bird was eventually identified to genus then species level and to then be added to the record books. Only the second for Argyll and the Northern Hemisphere! This was all the more relevant as no 'birder' managed to actually see this bird during its all too brief 40 min-



Upper: One of Jim's photos of the Ascension Frigatebird on Islay ©Jim Sim

Lower: Jim with his prize at Rutland Water ©Andy Robinson



ute rest on the harbour wall and could easily have escaped detection. Jim was presented with his prize at the British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water on 15th August.

Jim Dickson



Birds and other wildlife around Cruachan Power Station, Loch Awe

A power station may seem an unlikely birding destination—but then Cruachan Power Station is a bit out of the ordinary. Located beside Loch Awe, Cruachan is well known as the 'Hollow Mountain' as the pumped storage power station's generators are housed inside an enormous man-made cavern excavated a kilometre into the rock.

However, the station's physical boundary, although relatively small (around 90ha), encloses a wide range of habitats—from the reservoir on the slopes of Ben Cruachan that supplies water to power the station's turbines, to the office and visitor centre gardens by the banks of Loch Awe.

Management and staff at Cruachan recognise they operate in a special, high-quality landscape. The station is adjacent to the Coille Leitire Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)—a large area of mixed broadleaved woodland that runs along the northwest edge of Loch Awe. The SSSI is also a component in the Loch Etive Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC)—considered to be one of the finest old Sessile Oak woodlands in the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, the Loch Etive and Glen Fyne Special Protection Area (SPA), designated in 2010 for

Golden Eagles, includes the entire Ben Cruachan range and area to the south, enclosing Cruachan Reservoir.

The station has operated a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) since 2005 to encourage the habitats and wildlife species at the site. The Cruachan BAP was reviewed recently and objectives were updated to enhance habitats throughout the station's landholdings, encourage key species and continue annual monitoring of the wildlife that finds a home at the power station.

For the past six years, I have carried out this monitoring work, based around an annual Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and casual surveillance of mammals, insects and plants. Although the entire landholding is included, four key locations in particular have been identified following initial fieldwork as having 'High Biodiversity Potential'. These are:

1. Rocky ledges at Cruachan Reservoir that support arctic-alpine plants, such as Starry Saxifrage and Yellow Saxifrage, and an upland pond that is home to dragonflies, aquatic beetles and Palmate Newts.
2. The wildflower-rich margins of the reservoir access road that feature carpets of Bird's-foot Trefoil that attract Common Blue butterflies and other nectaring insects, while Viviparous Lizards bask by the roadside.
3. Cruachan Substation, near Dalmally, is also included in Cruachan's BAP in recognition of its

importance for woodland birds such as Mistle Thrush and Tree Pipit, and heathland insects such as the Green Hairstreak butterfly.

4. And while survey work identified that conditions at the Visitor Centre and Site Offices had little to attract species, the station has started to create mini meadows through appropriate grassland management to promote the proliferation of native wildflowers and attract insects, such as the Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Birds at Cruachan

A total of 71 species have been recorded since the BBS began at Cruachan in 2009, with new species being added to the list every year (including Yellowhammer and Common Whitethroat in 2014). This is considered a substantial total for such a small area, but one that reflects the wide range of high-quality habitats present.

A total of 14 Red Data List species (those of highest conservation concern) have been recorded, along with 23 Amber Data List species that are of medium concern. All but four of the Red Data list species have been recorded in at least four out of the six years of the BBS.

The upland area at Cruachan Reservoir (NN081287), at 340m above sea level, holds some iconic species. Extending over about 80ha (although most of this is the reservoir itself), habitats are mainly semi-improved acid grassland and marsh, with small patches of unimproved grassland, marsh and flush supporting the typically vegetative communities that exist in acidic podzols and peat.

A male Ring Ouzel is present most summers, often singing from the dam structure itself (photo below), and breeding has been proven in 2009 and 2012 when a pair was present with juveniles around the dam wall. Twite breed annually although it has proven impossible

to confirm if this takes place on Cruachan's landholding. In late summer, family parties are often seen feeding on seed heads beside the access tracks at the dam.

Common Buzzard is regularly seen but other raptors are not common—although Peregrine, Eurasian Sparrowhawk and Common Kestrel have been occasionally recorded. Golden Eagle has been seen just once in approx. 200hrs of observation over six years—a sub-adult that drifted west over the Cruachan Horseshoe. Combined with the apparent lack of prey (no Mountain Hare, Red Grouse or Ptarmigan have ever been found in the survey) it suggests the reservoir area is likely marginal for the eagles' requirements.

Northern Wheatear and Meadow Pipit are the most common species in summer, with around a dozen pairs recorded on the two BBS transects that have been established to the west and south of the reservoir. Meanwhile, the Allt Cruachan and other burns have Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail and Common Sandpiper. A surprise in the initial years of the survey was the discovery of a colony of Sand Martins, with between 8-12 apparently occupied nests (AON), in a steep embankment beside the reservoir access road at 320m above sea level—sadly this was lost in 2011 due to erosion but it's hoped the martins may return.

The reservoir is reached by a 5km track that snakes up through the hillside and oak woodland from Lochawe village. It is a pleasant walk on a summer's day and one that is rewarded by species such as Wood Warbler (max count of 3 AOT) (photo on next page), Tree Pipit (5 AOT), Common Redstart (2 AOT) and other more common migrants and resident species.

There is limited landholding at the Site Offices/Visitor Centre (NN080267) but the banks of Loch Awe have breeding Grey Wagtail and Common Sandpiper each year, while the garden grounds have common nesting birds, helped by a nestbox scheme that started in 2014. In 2013, Spotted Flycatcher, Barn Swallow and Pied Wagtail all nested between 20-40m inside the tunnel that leads to the turbine hall inside the

Male Ring Ouzel at Cruachan ©David Fotheringham





Wood Warbler in the oakwoods around Cruachan ©David Fotheringham

mountain. Other occasional breeding birds include Garden Warbler, Willow Warbler, Blackcap and European Goldfinch.

Other species are associated with Loch Awe. Ospreys are regular visitors and have been seen hunting in front of the visitor centre while there have been single records of Black-throated Diver (2009) and Red-throated Diver (2010).

The Substation at NN142 293 is approx 7km north-east of the power station, just off the B8077 secondary road that serves the hamlet of Stronmilchan. It is now operated by Energy Networks but the 4ha compound was originally the site used by contractors involved in Cruachan's construction. The habitat here includes remnants of a Sitka Spruce plantation with a heath ground layer, and the site supports up to three pairs of Spotted Flycatcher along with Tree Pipit (1 AOT), Lesser Redpoll (1-3 AOT) and Mistle Thrush (2 AOT) annually. Other breeding species have included European Bullfinch, Whinchat and Common Snipe, plus a range of common woodland



Beautiful Demoiselle at Cruachan ©David Fotheringham

species.

The annual average number of species recorded in the BBS is 51.4, partly skewed by the lowest total (45) in 2009, with a maximum of 56 in 2010. Of these, 33 species have been recorded in every year, suggesting that conditions at Cruachan are stable and not changing to their detriment.

Mammals at Cruachan

Cruachan Visitor Centre doesn't only attract tourists (50,000 per year). In recent summers it has become an excellent place to see Pine Marten during daylight hours as up to two adults plunder bird tables for food. In July and August 2014, there have been almost daily late-afternoon sightings—with the martens often arriving when the centre is busy with people, giving those lucky visitors exceptionally close encounters with this fabulous species.

Red and Roe Deer are seen annually while Red Squirrel was first sighted in 2013, making an apparent return to the area after several years' absence.

Invertebrates at Cruachan

As part of Cruachan BAP, wildflowers are being encouraged at the site to help the local population of the threatened Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Bluebell and Bugle, both important spring nectar plants, have been planted and are being encouraged to spread by appropriate grassland management. Sixteen species of butterflies have been recorded along with several uncommon moths such as Buff Ermine (2014), Clouded Magpie (2014), Pine Beauty (2013), Red Sword-grass (2012), Mother Shipton (2011), Lunar Hornet Moth (a first for Argyll Mainland) and Clouded Buff (both 2010).

Dragonflies are found throughout the site, with key species including Beautiful Demoiselle (recorded for the first time in June 2014—photo opposite), Golden-ringed Dragonfly, Common Hawker and Four-spotted Chaser. An emerald-type dragonfly has been seen twice, but not positively identified, while three species of damselfly occur in wet places near the reservoir.

More than 60 species of hoverfly have been recorded—including some extreme Scottish rarities such as *Criorhina ranunculi* (2014), *Pipiza luteitarsis* (2013) and *Criorhina berberina* (2012), which are the first records in Argyll (based on Hoverfly Recording Scheme datasets).

In June 2014, a *Microdon* species, probably *M. mutabilis*, was found next to the reservoir access road—possibly only the third site for this enigmatic species in the UK (with others in Mull and Inverness-shire).

Other 'first' records for Argyll Mainland (based on NBN Gateway datasets) include the Tachinid flies *Erithorix rufomaculata* (2011), *Gymnocheta viridis* (2012) and *Phasia hemiptera* (2013), the brightly-coloured horsefly *Hybomitra distinguenda* (2012) and the picture-winged fly *Rivellia syngenesiae* (2011).

Insect recording is carried out on a casual basis but new, exciting species are being found every year— even every visit.

All records from Cruachan are submitted to national recording schemes each year and contained in an annual report for the station's management that is distributed to key stakeholders such as SNH, SEPA and the local community, while progress towards the site BAP is monitored annually via internal audits.

There are long-term BAP projects to create an area of native woodland beside the Allt Cruachan, south of the dam, using seedlings captured from the station grounds, and to improve marginal vegetation at upland ponds. Meanwhile, the visitor centre wildflower meadow is improving with each passing year since it was initiated in 2012, attracting a wide range of invertebrates.

It is a pleasure to be involved with delivering biodiversity reporting at Cruachan, and great credit goes to the staff and management at the power station for their efforts and the support given by ScottishPower.

David Fotheringham

David is a journalist and corporate communications consultant based in Renfrewshire. A former editor of the *Fife Bird Report* (1997-2001), he is one of Scotland's most active dipterists. He formed Blue Leaf Nature in 2008 to deliver biodiversity services to a number of Scottish companies.

The Hen Harrier debate heats up!

Hen Harriers (HH) are in trouble. There is little question about that. That grouse shooting estates are mainly responsible is also without doubt. The issue in England is particularly acute, with their near extinction as a breeding species: three pairs this year. In Scotland too there are large tracts of very suitable habitat with shooting estates, and no harriers. The Clyde Muirshiel moors are now one of these areas, despite being an HH Special Protection Area. Any breeding surpluses from good habitat elsewhere in Scotland disperse outside the breeding season and disappear into 'black holes' somewhere from which they never return. Guess where that might be.

John Armitage, based on Islay, proposed a licensing of driven

grouse moors, as a step towards better regulation of the industry. Estates that contravened wildlife laws might then risk losing their license and other grants/ agricultural/development support from government. John's e-Petition exceeded the 10,000 signature threshold to trigger an official response from Defra. Mark Avery described this response it as an "off-hand, badly argued, pathetically arrogant response." It concluded with the statement: "While a small minority is prepared to kill birds of prey, and where possible these people are brought to justice, this demonstrates that the policies in place to conserve these species are working." This was just days before the 20+ kites and buzzards were found in a 2 square mile area of the Black Isle. That is not what I, and many thousands of others, would equate with "working."

Hen Harrier—and increasingly rare sight on grouse moors ©Jim Dickson



After years of sitting on the fence in respect of field sports the RSPB have now been moved to take a more active stance, and are supporting the licensing proposal. Their position is well described by their Conservation Directors blog:

Grouse Moor Licensing Proposals—Martin Harper's RSPB blog

So what might a licensing system look like?

Any licensing system should help address the current gulf between government ambition, policy and what is happening on the moors such as Walshaw. We think that it should be based on the following principles.

1. All driven grouse shooting should operate under a licensing system.
2. Hunting should be subject to a transparent planning and reporting process, which should include commitments to meet agreed quotas of grouse shot and to meet statutory obligations for protected species, habitats and areas.
3. Licensing should include an expectation of reasonable access for monitoring purposes.
4. Licensing should require implementation of the management necessary to deliver the site conservation objectives of any protected area a grouse moor is responsible for managing.
5. Any breach of license conditions or existing environmental legislation should lead to the license being revoked
6. A licensing system should be cost neutral to the State.

As I have written previously, good driven grouse estates should have nothing to fear from this system. I look forward to debating these principles with politicians as they finalise their manifestos over the coming months.

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/community/ourwork/b/martinharper/archive/2014/07/06/principles-for-licensing-driven-grouse-shooting.aspx>

Now that Mark Avery doesn't work for the RSPB, he can say what

he thinks, without having to consider his employer's position. In fact he does this every day, and often twice a day on his blog, which is always worth reading as it is informative, humorous and opinionated:

<http://markavery.info/blog/>

Mark now proposes a ban on driven grouse moors. His e-Petition has just reached 16,000, and you can sign it yourself here, if you haven't done so already:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/65627>

There was a very successful Hen Harrier day on 10th August with rallies at four locations in England, attended by thousands of birders. This publicity drew attention to the plight of harriers, and no doubt has boosted the campaign, as did Mark's appearances at the Rutland Birdfair.

The 10,000 signature threshold to trigger a Defra response was reached some weeks ago, but there is still no indication of when this response might come. Their previous shaky position looks so precarious that they must be having to think very hard what to say. The new minister, Liz Truss, does not encourage much optimism with the resumption of Badger culling imminent. Watch this space.

Nigel Scriven

RSPB ditches Hopetoun House as the Scottish Bird Birdfare venue

After being committed to a 3-year contract to use Hopetoun House, the RSPB is looking for a new venue for next year. The link between Hopetoun House and the Leadhills Estate has been controversial, as the Leadhills Estate has seen a number of raptor poisoning incidents, and both are owned by Lord Hopetoun, although he maintains the management of Leadhills is leased to a shooting syndicate, and is not his responsibility! Has he really not heard of lease conditions?

Notable boycotters of the Scottish Birdfair have been Keith Brockie, Mark Avery and the Scottish Raptor Study Group. If it is in a better place I might even volunteer to help next year, and attend for the first time.

Nigel Scriven

Recent bird sightings

**May to
the end
of July
2014**



Rose-coloured Starling, Mull, 12 June
2014 ©Bryan Raines

Presented here are a wide range of rare and unusual species as well as counts and movements of more common species recorded in Argyll during this period. This list is not comprehensive but a selection of interesting reports. Many thanks to everyone who sent in records. Observers' names are given in brackets for 'rare bird description species'.

(MSBO = Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre. ABRC = Argyll Bird Records Committee, BBRC = British Birds Rarities Committee)

Swans, ducks, geese and game-birds

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE. A late individual was on the beach at Killail, Otter Ferry, Cowal on 28 Jun (photo on next page).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE. Three late birds flew SW over The Reef, Tiree on 8 May.

WIGEON. An early returning bird at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 14 Jul.

AMERICAN WIGEON. The drake from April reappeared at Loch an Eilein, Tiree on 8-9 May, near Heylipol on 13-18 May (photo on next page), Loch Bhirceapol on 19 May and finally back at Loch a' Phuill on 10 Jun (John Bowler).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL. A drake at RSPB Gruinart reserve, Islay on 22-23 May was possibly the same bird that was there in Mar. (James How *et al.*).

GARGANEY. A pair were on the sea to the south of Toberonochy, Isle of Luing on 10 May. Two males were on Oronsay on 11 May, a pair were at RSPB Gruinart Reserve, Islay on 15 and 23 May and a drake was on floods SE of Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 18 May.

POCHARD. A late drake was seen at Loch an Eilein, Tiree on 19 May.

LONG-TAILED DUCK. Two flew east at Baugh, Tiree on 3 May.

COMMON SCOTER. A total of 62 headed south past MSBO, Kintyre in May. A count of 150 were at Loch Indaal, Islay on 10 May.

VELVET SCOTER. A drake was on a loch near Easter Ellister, Islay on 19 May and seen later 'associating' with a female Common Scoter into Jun.

GOLDENEYE. Three female-types flew south past MSBO, Kintyre on 2 Jul.

PTARMIGAN. A single bird seen half way up

Benmore, Mull on 8 May was apparently 'fearless'. Eleven adults were seen on Stob a' Choire Ordhair, North Argyll on 27 Jun.



Upper photo: American Wigeon, Tiree, 15 May ©John Bowler

Middle photo: Pink-footed Goose, Otter Ferry, 28 June ©Tom Callan

Lower photo: White-billed Diver, MSBO, 17 May ©Eddie Maguire

COMMON QUAIL. One calling at Salum, Tiree on 27 May, one calling Nerby, Islay on 6 Jun, one calling in a field close to the Roundhouse, Coll on 31 May and one calling at Loch Ba, Mull on 30 Jun.

Seabirds (divers, grebes, shearwaters, petrels also egrets and herons)

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER. Highest count noted was of 42 off Greenhill, Tiree on 28 May.

WHITE-BILLED DIVER. One seen and photographed flying north past MSBO, Kintyre on 17 May (Eddie Maguire, Steve Holloway) (photo opposite).

SOOTY SHEARWATER. One seen flying west past Hynish, Tiree on 6 May.

MANX SHEARWATER. High counts noted: 3000+ feeding off Coll on 16 Jul and c.2,000 per hour heading south off Hynish, Tiree on 30 Jul.

STORM PETREL. Singles seen off Tiree at Hynish on 14 Jul and West Hynish on 30 Jul.

LITTLE EGRET. A breeding plumaged adult found at the Head of Loch Melfort on 16 May (David Jardine *et al.*). A bird in non-breeding plumage at Loch Crinan then at the Add Estuary 18-22 May (Jim Dickson *et al.*). An adult in breeding plumage, perhaps the Loch Melfort individual was seen at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 19 May (Jim McNally) and later Loch a' Phuill and Loch Bhirceapol (John Bowler).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE. A single bird in breeding plumage was seen and photographed past MSBO, Kintyre on 3 May.

PIED-BILLED GREBE. One was found on a small lochan near Minard, Mid-Argyll from 30 May for about a week by bird survey workers, possibly the same bird that had been in Renfrewshire during April. This is only the third record for Argyll if accepted.

Raptors to rails

HONEY BUZZARD. One was seen flying north over Lismore, North Argyll on 3 May (David Jardine) and a different individual seen and photographed by bird survey workers in Kintyre on 8 Jun.



Left photo: Black Kite, near Lochgilphead, 3 May ©Jonathan Platt



Right photo: Curlew Sandpipers, Tiree, 9 June ©John Bowler

RED KITE. One seen near Aros, Mull on 23 Jul.

BLACK KITE. One was seen and photographed flying over Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll on 3 May (Johnathan Platt *et al.*, photo above). This will be the third Argyll record if accepted.

HOBBY. Single birds were seen during bird survey work during Jun in Kintyre and near Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll.

SPOTTED CRAKE. One heard calling at the north end of Iona, Mull on several dates from 20 May and one also heard calling at Ardentiny, North Argyll on 16 Jun.

CORNCRAKE. On Tiree a preliminary island total of 391 calling males from three rounds of survey work—nicely up on the finalised total of 348 in 2013 and in Jul a finalised Tiree island total of 396 calling males. On the mainland two, probably migrants, were heard calling near Brunerican Farm, Southend, Kintyre on 3 May and a single male calling at Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll on 28 May.

Waders

RINGED PLOVER. Good numbers were on Tiree during May with highest site counts being 395 at Loch a' Phuill on 1 May, 280 at Ruaig on 6 May and 480 at Gott Bay on 15 May. A high count of 82 birds were at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 18 May.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER. One reported via BirdTrack from near Bellochautuy, Kintyre on 20 May, however more details are required please.

DOTTEREL. A female bird was seen on Oronsay on 5 May.

GREY PLOVER. Single birds were noted at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 8 May, Ardnave, Islay on 12 May, the Strand, Colonsay on 20 May and at Salum, Tiree on 7 Jun.

RED KNOT. Three adults were at Loch a' Phuill and six at Balepheterish, both Tiree, on 4 May. In July on Tiree, an adult bird at Loch a' Phuill on 20th and five at Gott Bay on 31st.

SANDERLING. High numbers on many bays around Tiree in May with the largest count being 1,200 at Gott Bay on 7 May. A total of some 27 different leg-flagged/colour-ringed individuals recorded included nine ringed in Portugal, three in Spain, four at Hayling Island England, ten in Iceland and one in Greenland. Of the Icelandic-ringed birds, five had wintered in France, one in Northern Ireland and one in Northumberland. At MSBO, Kintyre the maximum number noted off passage was c.100 birds on 22 May.

LITTLE STINT. One at Traigh nam Barc, Colonsay on 20 May and one at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 28 May.

TEMMINCK'S STINT. One was at RSPB Gruinart Reserve, Islay on 22-23 May (James How, Jim Dickson). The first Argyll record since May 2000.

CURLEW SANDPIPER. One was at Gott Bay, Tiree on 6 May, one at the Add Estuary, Mid-

Argyll on 20 May, one at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 22 May. Two were at Heylipol Church Pool, Tiree on 12 Jun and one seen off MSBO, Kintyre on 22 Jul.

DUNLIN. Strong passage in May, with a record count at Gott Bay, Tiree of 4,320 and an island record of at least 4,810 on 6 May. There were 1,450 at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 8 May and a record spring count at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll of 370 on 18 May. A pair were confirmed as breeding, having produced two chicks,



Upper photo: Redshank, Loch Gruinart, 23 May ©Jim Dickson

Lower Photo: Arctic Skua, Sound of Jura, 17 June ©Jon Close

near Loch Ba, Mull on 30 Jun.

RUFF. One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 27 May.

JACK SNIBE. One was reported from the Blackmount Estate, North Argyll on 3 May.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT. The highest counts were 23 at The Green, Tiree on 1 May, 15 at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 22 July and ten at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 25 Jul.

WHIMBREL. The heavy passage from late Apr continued into May with highest counts being 107 going north at MSBO, Kintyre on 2 May, 126 at Loch Indaal, Islay on 2 May and 42 at Blackmill Bay, Isle of Luing on 10 May.

GREEN SANDPIPER. One was seen at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll on 14 May and one at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 20 Jul.

GREENSHANK. Highest counts reported were five at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 14 Jul, 13 at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 27 Jul and five at Loch Caithlim, Seil Island, Mid-Argyll on 30 Jul.

WOOD SANDPIPER. Single birds were at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 12 May, on pools near the Ringing Stone, Tiree on 29 May and at RSPB Gruinart Reserve, Islay on 12 May.

TURNSTONE. A count of 20 at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 30 Jul.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE. One was at Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay on 22 May and this or another was there on 9 Jun.

Skuas, Gulls, Terns and Auks

POMARINE SKUA. Single birds noted off NW Mull on 12 and 13 May.

ARCTIC SKUA. One to three birds noted off Tiree, MSBO, Kintyre, Sound of Jura (photo opposite) and Mull between 3 May and 31 Jul.

GREAT SKUA. Single pairs recorded at SW Tiree and on Oronsay in May.

LITTLE GULL. One off Colonsay on 18 May, a 2 calendar-year (CY) bird 'hawking' over Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 7 Jun and a 3CY bird there on 27 Jul.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL. A 2CY bird was seen and photographed near An Talla, Crossapol, Tiree on 29 Jul (John Bowler) and a juvenile bird was seen and photographed at the Add Estuary also on 29 Jul (Jim Dickson).

ICELAND GULL. An adult was seen at the RSPB Oa Reserve, Islay on 8 and 27 May.

GUILLEMOT. On the Ceann a' Mhara cliffs, Tiree a count of 1,127 birds on 20 May but many eggs were washed away by heavy rains on 17 and 18 May.

RAZORBILL. On the Ceann a' Mhara cliffs, Tiree a count of 206 on 20 May with some birds on eggs.

Doves, Cuckoos, Owls, Swift, Kingfisher and Woodpeckers

TURTLE DOVE. One feeding with Collared Doves at Kenovay, Tiree on 17 May with another, first seen at Balinoe, Tiree on 30 May, which later moved to Balephuill. One was seen at Strath Farm near Campbeltown, Kintyre on 4 Jun.

COMMON SWIFT. First arrivals were noted on 7 May with four birds at Campbeltown, Kintyre, one at Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll and four over Dunoon, Cowal. High counts, possibly including passage birds, on 22 Jul with 10+ over Lunga Island, Mull and 50+ over Oban, Mid-Argyll.

KINGFISHER. One reported from Aros Bridge, Mull on 28 Jul.

BEE-EATER. One seen briefly and photographed in Glen Aros, Mull on 27 May and observed catching bees. (Craig Round, photo above).

GREEN WOODPECKER. A report of one heard calling in woods along the Grasspoint Road, Mull on 30 Jun.

Passerines (Larks to Buntings)

RED-BACKED SHRIKE. An adult male seen and photographed at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 26 May (John Bowler).

MAGPIE. Two birds seen in Campbeltown in early May were later found to be nesting and produced chicks. The long-staying bird at Tobermory, Mull built a nest in May. One at Appin, North Argyll on 3 May.

CHOUGH. A single bird seen at Treshnish, Mull on 2 May and possibly the same bird on Iona on 7 May.

SAND MARTIN. A count of 120 at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 8 May.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW. One was found migrating with House Martins and Barn Swallows at Ceann a' Mhara on 20 May (John Bowler). This is only the second record for Argyll if accepted.

LESSER WHITETHROAT. An elusive singing

Bee-eater, Aros, Mull, 27 May ©Craig Round



male at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 11 May followed by another singing male there on 27 and 28 May (John Bowler).

MARSH WARBLER. One was in a private garden at Mannal, Tiree on 28 May (John Bowler).

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING. An adult seen and photographed in a private garden at Bunesan, Mull on 11 to 14 Jun (Rev. John Collard *et al.*) was followed by another adult also photographed at Port Ellen, Islay on 22 to 23 Jun (David Livingstone *et al.*).

RING OUZEL. One on the north slopes of Beinn a Bheithir, North Argyll on 2 May, one at Stob a' Choire Ordhair, North Argyll on 27 Jun and a single bird seen at Cruachan Dam, North Argyll in Jun.

REDWING. A very late bird was in full song at Balephuill, Tiree on 28 May.

FIELDFARE. A late bird was on the Ross of Mull on 10 May.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER. Our first Argyll spring records, with two separate birds on Tiree. A female or 2CY male was at Carnan Mor on 6 Jun and a male was at Balephuill on 19 Jun. Both photographed (John Bowler).

PIED FLYCATCHER. A male was seen near Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll on 8 May and a female at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 6 Jun.

COLLARED FLYCATCHER. A stunning adult male seen and photographed at Carnan Mor, Tiree on the evening of 27 May (John Bowler). This will be a new species for Argyll if accepted.

WHEATEAR. Highest counts noted were 15 at Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree on 21 May and 30 MSBO, Kintyre on 7 May. Small numbers of 'Greenland-type' birds were noted with a max. of six at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 1 May.

Stop Press

REED WARBLER. One caught at Aros Moss, Kintyre on 9 Aug (Neil Brown)

BALEARIC SHEARWATER. One past Aird, Tiree on 11 Aug (John Bowler).

LEACH'S PETREL. Three past MSBO on 17 Aug (Eddie Maguire).

LITTLE EGRET. One at Kennacraig 10-13 Aug (Sylvia & Allen Duckworth), and was still there on 29 Aug (Jim Dickson)

GREY PHALAROPE. One at Machir, Bay, Islay on 20 Aug (James Cadbury).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL. A small influx with one juv at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll through-

out Aug, two juvs at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 12 Aug, a juv past MSBO, Kintyre on 2 and 4 Aug, a 2CY bird on Tiree on 10 Aug, a 2CY bird at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll on 13 Aug and a 1CY bird past Gogport, Kintyre on 27 Aug.

LONG-TAILED SKUA. A juvenile seen from the Kennacraig to Islay ferry on 24 Aug (Mark Lewis)

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER. One reported from Isle of Coll on 25 Aug (Alex Mackintosh)

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL. An adult bird reported from the Isle of Coll at the end of Aug (Alex Mackintosh)

Rustic Bunting, Iona, 27 May ©Geoff Pain



TREE SPARROW. One reported from a Carradale garden on 1 May (Steve Redwood).

WHITE WAGTAIL. Highest count noted was ten at Balephuill, Tiree on 8 May.

COMMON REDPOLL. Up to four birds at Balephuill, Tiree in May and nesting thought to have occurred at Balemartine (John Bowler). One was seen and photographed on the Isle of Ulva Mull on 8 Jul (Stuart Gibson).

COMMON ROSEFINCH. An immature male briefly at Balephuill, Tiree on 28 May (John Bowler).

HAWFINCH. One seen at a bird feeder in Kil-



White-throated Sparrow, Otter Ferry, Cowal, 19 June © Tom Callan

liechronan, Mull on 6 and 7 May (Jan Fuller) and one seen at Kilchoman Schoolhouse, Islay on 7 May (Mary Redman).

RUSTIC BUNTING. A female/imm male found at Balephuill, Tiree on 21 May (John Bowler). Another found on Iona, Mull on 27 May (Geoff Pain, photo above) and a third, this time an adult male, at Balephuill was singing there on 2 and 3 Jun (John Bowler). Three records in one year are exceptional. There are only two previous Argyll records, from Islay in May 1980 and Tiree in Jun 1987.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW. One was discovered in a garden near Otter Ferry, Cowal on the 19 Jun (Tom Callan *et al.*) (photo above). This is the first record of this North American 'bunting' and an incredible bit of good fortune for Tom. The bird was very obliging and was on his doorstep at times! Unfortunately the bird only stayed for one day.

Jim Dickson, Argyll Bird Recorder

Articles for the December issue of the *Eider* should with the Editor before the 24th November 2014

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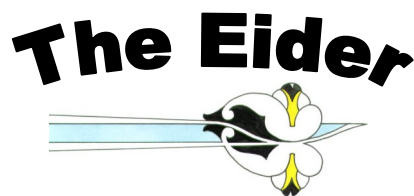
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The *Eider* is the quarterly newsletter of the **Argyll Bird Club**. The editor welcomes articles about birds, wildlife conservation and ecology in Argyll, including articles of a wider natural history interest, notices of forthcoming events, book reviews, press releases and letters. Whenever possible, contributions should be submitted to the editor as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word or rtf format. But, this should not deter potential contributors, as hand-written scripts are also acceptable. If in doubt about whether an article is suitable, please contact the editor for advice.

Suitable illustrations greatly enhance the attractiveness of the *Eider*, and artists and photographers are encouraged to submit artwork and unedited digital photographs (jpeg files preferred) of birds and their habitats to the editor. Please do not embed digital images in word files. Digital photographs of Schedule 1 species taken at or near the nest will not be accepted for publication unless the photographer was covered by an appropriate SNH licence.

The *Eider* is published during the first week of March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor **before** the 24th day of the month prior to publication. However, it greatly helps if material can be submitted well before these deadline dates. Contributions are accepted in the order they are received, which may result in some late submissions being held over until the next issue.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author/s and not necessarily those of the **Argyll Bird Club**.

Advertising rates: £80 for a full page, £20 for a quarter page, 7p per word for smaller adverts. Payment must accompany adverts, with cheques made payable to the **Argyll Bird Club**. Contact the Editor for further information.

More about the Argyll Bird Club

The club was established in 1985 and has around 400 members. Its main role is to encourage an interest in wild birds and their habitats in Argyll; an area of outstanding natural beauty and biological diversity.

The club endeavours to provide a friendly and sociable forum for members of all ages, to meet and enjoy their common interest. This in itself provides a challenge as the human population of Argyll is relatively small and widely dispersed. The club hosts two one-day meetings each year, in spring and autumn. The venue of the spring meeting is rotated between different towns, including Dunoon, Oban and Lochgilphead. The autumn meeting/AGM is held in a convenient central location, usually near Lochgilphead. The club organises field trips for members. It publishes the *Argyll Bird Report*. Additional or past copies can be purchased from the Treasurer. Your annual subscription entitles you to one copy of the *Argyll Bird Report*, four issues of the *Eider* and free admission to the two indoor meetings. New members are always welcome, whether you live in Argyll or not. Membership categories and rates are:

Ordinary	£10
Junior (under 17)	£3
Family	£15
Corporate	£25

Subscriptions are due on 1st January and can be paid by cheque or standing order. New members joining after 1st October are covered until the end of the following year. Further information can be obtained from the Membership Secretary (see the box opposite).