

**September 2009**  
**Number 90**

# The Eider

The resplendent Skylark– ‘herald of the morn’.



Photo © Tommy Holden 2009

**Bird Atlas 2007-11. Update.**

**Spring in the Picos De Europa, Spain**

**Jackdaws on Islay, 1979-2009**

**Recent Reports May– July 2009**

**Annual Accounts and AGM programme**

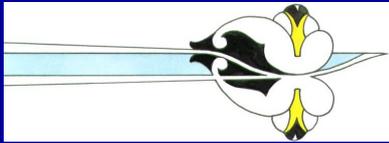
To receive the electronic version of *The Eider* in colour, ABC members should send their e-mail address to the Editor.  
Past issues (since June 2002) can be downloaded from the club's website.

**Editor**

Mark Williamson: Port Ban, Kilberry,  
Argyll PA29 6YD

Phone: 01880 770201

E-mail: me41.williamson@btinternet.com



**Inside this issue**

Editorial	2
Announcements	2
Field Trips	3
Autumn Indoor Meeting	3
Bird Atlas Update	4-6
Caption Competition Result	7
Notes and Comment	7
Notes from Spain	8-11
Jackdaws on Islay	12-13
Annual Accounts and Reports	14
Recent Reports	15-24
Poem	24
About the ABC	25

**Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to the contributors in this issue: Danielle Clark-Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, Bob and Sue Furness, Tommy Holden, David H James, Jimmy MacDonald, Lorn MacIntyre, Eddie Maguire, Mark Nelson, Katie Pendreigh, Steve Petty, Bob Swann, Michael Thomas, Simon Wellock

**Corrections**

The picture of the White-tailed Sea Eagle– Mull, in the June issue should have been attributed to Ron Stevenson.

**Editorial**

Well, I think the main topic of conversation recently amongst Argyll residents has been the weather. Paul Daw’s comment in the Recent Reports section about the wet July is interesting- this reveals something about the micro- climates created by the topography of Argyll. July at Kilberry was exceedingly dry with most of the rain passing up the east side of the Kintyre peninsular! It would be interesting, of course, to see how all of this affects breeding species. One thing is for sure– despite the deluge during August, there seems to be an abundance of fruit and berries awaiting the autumn migrants.

**ABC Website:** If you have anything to say or contribute on birding issues, why not say it on the websites **Forum**– the forum needs your input!

**Mark Williamson. Editor.**

**Announcements**

**“Studying Bewick’s Swans with Peter Scott”**

Skipness Village Hall

24th October 2009

7.30pm

An illustrated talk by Mary Matthews

There is a small charge for this event  
which includes refreshments

**Cairngorms Wildcat Project**

The project is a partnership between the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Forestry Commission Scotland, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Scottish Gamekeepers Association and Scottish Natural Heritage and aims over the course of the next few years to save the Scottish wildcat from extinction in one of its last strongholds.

Using an awareness-raising campaign branded 'Highland Tiger', the Project seeks to encourage responsible domestic cat ownership (i.e. increased neutering and vaccination) in the Cairngorms National Park and support the work of cat welfare organisations which neuter feral cats around towns, villages and farms. The Project will also work with land managers to ensure that predator control is wildcat-friendly and that the wildcat population and the extent of both hybridisation and disease are monitored with the input of land managers and the public at large.

For more information about the Scottish wildcat and the Cairngorms Wildcat Project, please visit the Highland Tiger website at [www.highlandtiger.com](http://www.highlandtiger.com).

Dr David Hetherington. Wildcat Project Manager.

## Field trips in 2009

**Skipness and Kilbrannan Sound.** Saturday, 26th September. Leaving Skipness Castle car park at 10.00 a.m. We will take a circular route through woodland and fields and return along the coastal path. Refreshment may be available at the Seafood Cabin by Skipness Castle. On the way home we may stop to check out the Kilbrannan Sound and moorland.

**Tayinloan.** Saturday, 31st October. Meet at Katie's house (The Whins, Ferry Road, Tayinloan) at 10.00a.m. We will cross a field to the beach and walk North along the rocky shore- Greenland White- fronted geese, waders and sea ducks are usually seen. We return by the same route (Katie can supply tea/coffee but please bring your own sandwiches etc) In the afternoon we will walk along the shore in a southerly direction before turning East between fields that may provide more views of geese, waders and hopefully a few thrushes - we will return by the same route.

**Island of Gigha.** Saturday, 28th November. Catch the 10.00a.m. ferry to the Island where we pick up a small people carrier (6 passengers + driver). It is hoped to be able to visit the Mill Loch near the West of the Island, however the track is often too muddy for access in which case we may either leave the vehicle and walk, or else visit the North end of the Island. We will have to decide on the day and may manage both, depending on weather and how many car journeys it takes for all to reach the starting point. Refreshments are available at the hotel.

**Katie Pendreigh**

## ABC indoor meetings 2009

### AUTUMN MEETING, Cairnbaan Hotel ([www.cairnbaan.com](http://www.cairnbaan.com))

0930	Doors open and coffee/tea	
0950 - 1000	Welcome & introduction <i>Nigel Scriven, Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club</i>	
1000 - 1015	Recent birds sightings	<i>Paul Daw, Argyll Bird Recorder</i>
1015 - 1100	100 years of Bird Ringing	<i>BTO Scotland</i>
1100 - 1130	Coffee/tea	
1130 - 1215	Wind farms and birds in Argyll	<i>ScottishPower Renewables</i>
1215 - 1345	Lunch (available in the hotel)	
1345 - 1430	Annual General Meeting	
1430 - 1515	Parrots and Penguins of Oban (NZ)	<i>Malcolm Chattwood</i>
1515 - 1545	Tea/coffee	
1545 - 1600	The funny business of Comic terns	<i>Bob Furness.</i>
1600 - 1615	Raffle and end of meeting	

Donations for the AGM raffle would be greatly appreciated.

# SPOTLIGHT

## Bird Atlas 2007-11. The halfway stage.

Fieldwork for the second summer season of the Bird Atlas ended on 31 July 2009, the halfway stage in the project, with the completion of the first two winter and first two summer seasons. This is an ideal opportunity to assess how the survey has gone so far and to plan the next two years of work to ensure we get complete coverage of Argyll by 31 July 2011.

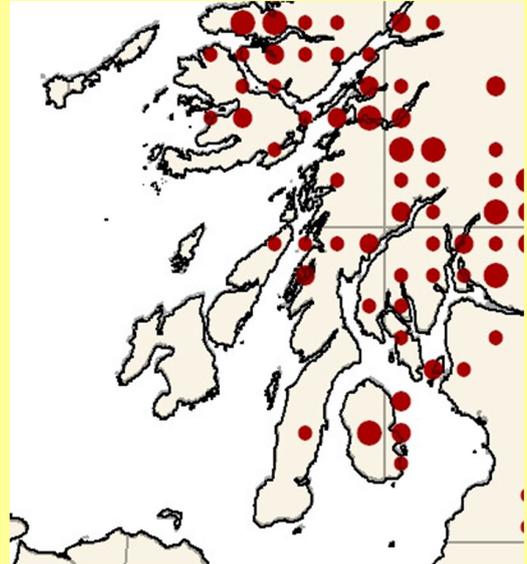
### Summer Update.

#### *Timed Tetrads Visits (TTVs).*

Although records are still trickling in, by the end of the second summer it looks as though at least 40% of the minimum number of required tetrads for the national project had received at least one visit. This is a great achievement and we are very grateful to everyone who assisted. The Royal Air Force Ornithological Society (RAFOS) team once again visited the Kintyre peninsula covering 35 tetrads. In addition several individuals have made major efforts covering large numbers of tetrads, including John Bowler, David Jardine and Roger Broad, who have all covered over 20 Argyll tetrads for breeding season TTVs. It goes without saying that every tetrad counts and whether you have done one or more we are very grateful for the support you have given this important project and hope that you will continue to help to get the job 100% completed.

#### *Roving Records.*

As well as the TTV information, we have also been receiving vast numbers of Roving Records. These are vitally important to top up the species list in each square. They are also an important way to boost the breeding evidence codes up from "possible" to "probable" to "confirmed" breeding. The **Any Square Summary** button on the [www.birdatlas.net](http://www.birdatlas.net) website has been widely used by observers to see what species are missing from a square and which species are 'under-recorded' with regard to confirmed breeding. In many cases this can be done retrospectively. During the last breeding atlas Wood Warblers were widely distributed throughout Argyll. **Figure 1** shows the distribution of Wood Warbler recorded so far during the current project - the large dots refer to confirmed breeding, the medium dots to probable breeding and the small dots to possible breeding. The map suggests a major decline in this species, but could this just be due to poor coverage? Is there any square where you could add records? Check your notebooks and help fill the gaps by adding any extra sightings via the **Roving Records** button on the website.



**Figure 1. Breeding season distribution of Wood Warbler.**

Provisional map based on all 2008 records and 2009 online records



**Wood Warbler.** Photo © Tommy Holden 2009

**Figure 2. Completed winter tetrad visits.**

Based on all records received by June 2009. A black square indicates both an early and late visit, yellow square indicates a single early visit and white a single late visit.

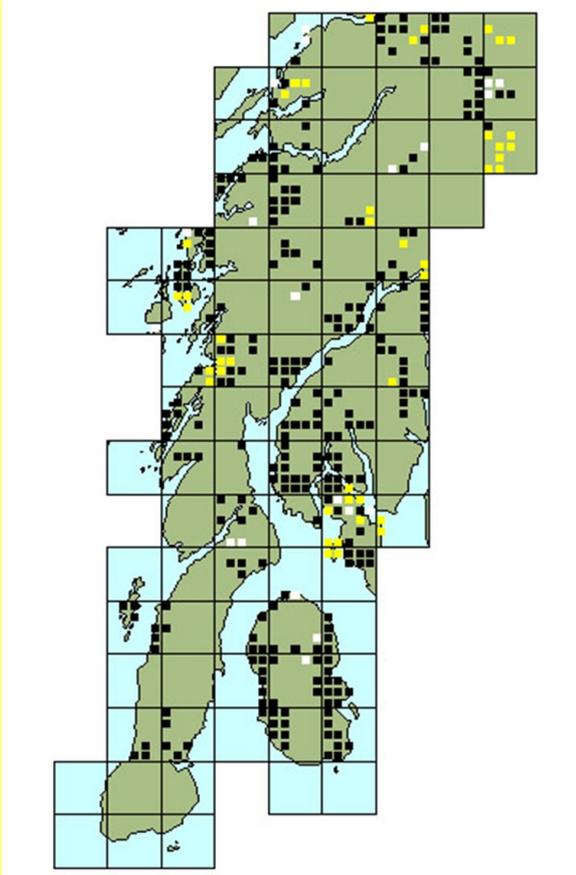


Figure 2a. Argyll Mainland winter coverage

Figure 2b. Mull winter coverage

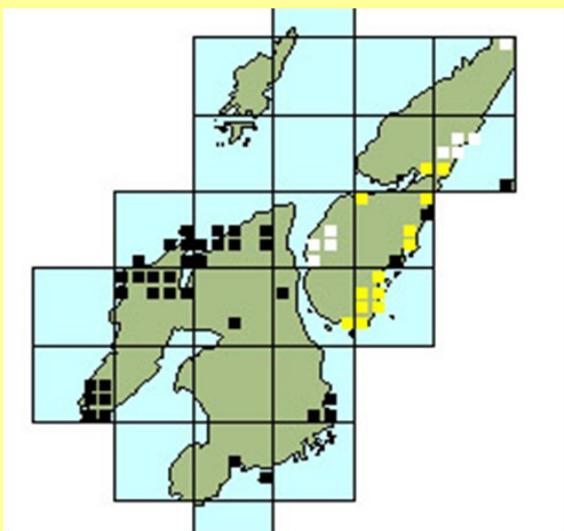
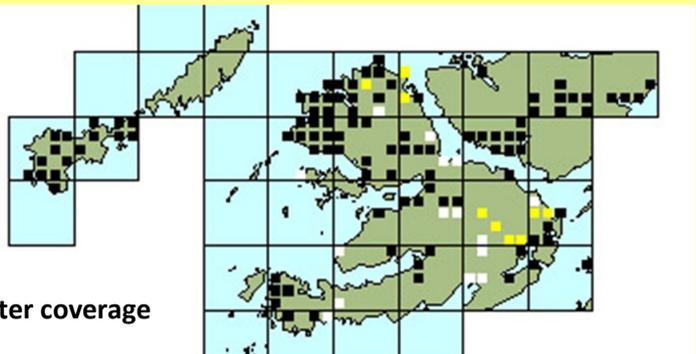


Figure 2c. Islay Jura winter coverage

**Converting records to data**

Every single atlas record requires to be checked. In practice only a tiny percentage of records are queried and most of these relate to inputting errors, mainly incorrect grid references or incorrect use of breeding evidence codes. If you do get a query flagged up on the home page of your website, we would be grateful if you deal with it by editing or deleting the record as appropriate. If a bird is a local rarity you may be asked to submit a description to Paul Daw, the local recorder. This is a standard request for all bird records in Argyll.

**Winter 2009/10.**

On 1 November 2009 the fieldwork for the third winter of the project will commence. **Figure 2 a-c** shows the situation to date with 55% of the required minimum number of tetrads covered on Mull, Coll and Tiree, 49% on mainland Argyll and 30% on Islay and Jura. There is still therefore much to do in Argyllshire, including all of Coll, Colonsay, bits of Mull, much of Islay and Jura, most of the Kintyre peninsular and many of the upland areas of the mainland.

So how can you help us achieve full coverage? If you have

been allocated tetrads that you have not yet covered please treat these as high priority for completion during the coming winter. If you think you are now unlikely to be able to survey any allocated tetrads please let your local atlas organiser know as soon as possible so that these tetrads can be re-allocated to other observers. Otherwise check the website, using the **Request a Tetrad** button to see which 10-km squares still require assistance to reach the minimum required target of 8 tetrads. Any squares where less than 8 tetrads have been allocated, should be treated as high priority. Taking on one or more of these would be very valuable. You may also wish to consider the 'Blitz Team' approach by organising a car load of atlasers for a day's surveying to a 10-km square in one of the less well covered parts of Argyll. This can lead to a super day out exploring a new part of the county, whilst at the same time collecting valuable data

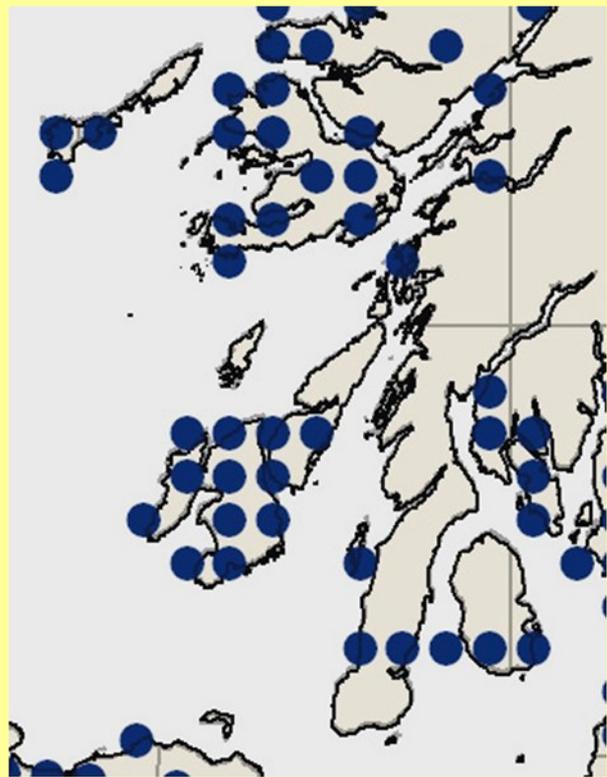
for the atlas project.

Even if you cannot assist by conducting a Timed Tetrad Visit, you can help by providing **Roving Records** for species that you have positively identified. Consider taking on some of your local 10-km squares, print out the species lists using the **Any Square Summary** button and then see if you can find and report any new species for the square. Also keep an eye or ear out for species likely to be under-recorded throughout Argyll such as Jack Snipe, Water Rail, owls and wintering warblers. In some areas even some quite common species have been overlooked like Sparrowhawk, Great-spotted Woodpecker, Treecreeper, Dipper and Grey Wagtail. There are also species like Brambling where winter distribution can vary greatly from one winter to the next. Finally there are declining species like Skylark and Yellowhammer where birds particularly on the margins of their current ranges can be easily missed. **Figure 3** shows the current winter map for Skylark. Are the gaps in distribution real or just due to lack of coverage? By submitting Roving Records you can help us produce a more accurate distribution map for this and a whole range of other species, which will be of great conservation value.

Bird Atlas 2007-11 is a joint SOC/BTO/BirdWatch Ireland project. We need every Argyll Bird Club member to do their bit to help make the atlas a resounding success within Scotland, by helping us reach our target of complete coverage of every 10-km square. Full details can be found on the [www.birdatlas.net](http://www.birdatlas.net) website, but if you do not have computer access and require any further details you can contact the Scottish Atlas Organiser on 07919 378876 or c/o SOC, Waterston House, Aberlady EH32 0PY.

**Bob Swann**

Scottish Organiser Bird Atlas 2007-11



**Figure 3. Winter distribution of Skylark.**  
Provisional map based on all records received by June 2009



**Winter Skylark.** photo© Tommy Holden

## Field Trips for early 2010

**Outings have been provisionally arranged as follows:**

**Loch Caolisport and Ormsary:**

30th January. The outing will involve a look at the area around Ormsary fish farm and the entrance to Loch Caolisport.

**River Add estuary:**

27th February. This will include a visit to the area around Bellanoch and Moine Mhor.

## Caption Competition



**Offerings for the caption competition included:**

Common Eider here and say it to my face ( Australian Eider family ).

You want how much maintenance? The kids don't even look like me!!!

## Notes and Comment

### DO YOU KNOW YOUR EIDER?

Since 2009 will be characterised by all-round belt tightening, most of us may have to curtail our travel plans somewhat. Perhaps this really is the year to get to know old friends much better.

These thoughts have been stimulated by reading Lars Jonsson's newest book BIRDS [London: Christopher Helm]. It is replete with beautiful paintings, and pages from his sketchbooks, as well as his own notes and commentaries. A linking theme throughout is the joy of staying in one place for long periods and observing individual birds.



Eider photo©Mark Nelson 2009

The EIDER is one of Lars Jonsson's favourite birds ( he lives on an island in the Swedish Baltic] and he reports that he never tires of watching them as individuals.

I quote: 'the Common Eider has always fascinated me as a subject...the male is faceless as his eye disappears in a black crown, his shape and plumage create different abstract patterns depending on the angle of observation and what he is up to. The unusual greenish hue in his flow of 'hair' has a mystical quality...it has the quality of marzipan which is caused by both feather structure and colour....The female, on the other hand, has eyes resembling currants, which radiate good-naturedness, like a fairy godmother.. Her facial expression reinforces the picture'.

So, instead of 'EIDER 6: ( 4 male, 2 female )' appearing in your notebook, stay for longer, enjoy the marzipan and the currants, the fairy godmother.

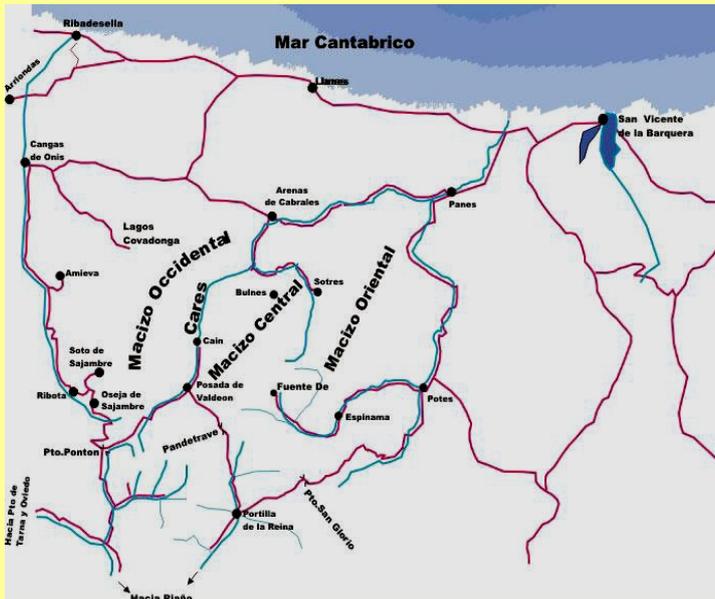
**Michael Thomas**



Eider photo©Mark Nelson 2009

## Notes from Spain

### Spring in the Picos de Europa



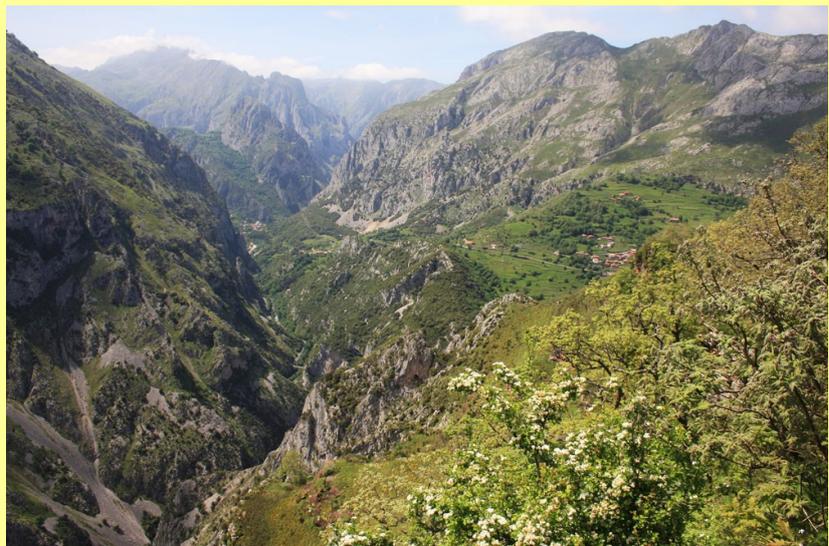
**Photo 1. Location of the three mountain massifs that form the Picos de Europa, with the Bay of Biscay to the north.**

One reason for giving up the editorship of the *Eider* was so my wife (Linda) and I could spend more time in northern Spain, in part of the Cantabrian Mountains called the Picos de Europa (photo 1). We fell in love with this area over fifteen years ago and have subsequently managed a holiday there most years, but in the past we've always been restricted to school holidays. Now, with Linda retiring last Christmas, it was possible to spend our first full spring there. In this article I hope to convey some of the natural thrills of this magnificent area.

Apart from the spectacular scenery and fantastic walking, the rich birdlife was initially one of the main attractions for me (see an earlier article on the area in the December 2006 *Eider*, pages 18-20). But, during the last few years I have become increasingly fascinated by the overall

wealth of natural diversity in such a small area. Prior to this year, our holidays had been restricted to Easter, July and October. Thus, we missed some of the best months for flowering plants, particularly the orchids, of which there are around 50 species. We aimed to make up for it this year by spending six weeks there from mid-May. Such a long trip was made easier for us as we had recently bought a small house (casa) in a mountain village on the eastern edge of the Picos de Europa National Park (photo 2).

In previous trips in April, many summer migrants had not arrived and by our July visits most of the passerines were far less vocal, so it was exciting to arrive this year in mid-May, just at the time when most of the migrants had arrived and were in full song or displaying. Blackcaps are probably the commonest warbler, but I was surprised to find that Bonelli's Warbler were far more abundant than previous trips in July had indicated. This delightful little bird is mainly restricted to higher-elevation forests of Pyrenean Oak and the evergreen Holm Oak. It fills a very similar niche in these forests to the Wood Warbler in Argyll. Chiffchaffs were reasonably common. However, there was a range of song types present, with some more typical of Common Chiffchaff while others sounded more like Iberian Chiffchaffs. The majority had intermediate song



**Photo 2. The limestone gorge that forms the eastern boundary of the Picos.**

types.

From our small patio we often saw and heard the local pair of Red-backed Shrike alarm calling and diving at Jays as they foraged through adjacent scrub and it was a delight to wake up each morning to the sound of up to three male Wrynecks calling. Mostly these are quite secretive birds, but their far carrying 'kew kew kew...' call makes locating them much easier. During the last few days of our trip, recently fledged young were seen near the house, indicating that at least one pair had bred successfully. In villages, Common Redstarts are as frequent, if not more abundant than Black Redstarts. We had a male Common Redstart singing from the roof of an adjacent house for the whole six weeks of our holiday, but we never saw a female! A morning coffee on the patio often resulted in good views of Cirl Bunting and a pair of Serin were busy building a nest in our cypress tree,



**Photo 4. Painted Lady on Common Valerian, an important nectaring plant for many species of butterfly.**

while flocks of Red-billed Choughs regularly fed in nearby fields. By 11 o'clock thermals were starting to build over the valley and for the next hour or two there was an almost continual stream of raptors overhead – Griffon (photo 3) and Egyptian Vultures, Common Buzzard, Black Kites, Short-toed and Booted Eagles and our first pair of Honey Buzzards- the last of the migratory raptors to arrive- was displaying over the house on 21<sup>st</sup> May after their long journey from Africa.

Birds were not the only visitors from Africa. Soon after our arrival it was obvious there was a vast movement of Painted Lady butterflies heading north. Even on cool days large numbers were on the move. In fact, it was by far the commonest butterfly seen on every day of our six weeks in Spain. In mid-May, many individuals were worn and tattered suggesting these had come directly from Africa, while by the end of June, fresher (Spanish bred?) individuals were beginning to appear (photo 4). Such an abundance was even more notable as we had seen no Painted Ladies at all during five holidays to the Picos in 2007 and 2008. The last good year in northern Spain and Argyll was 2006.



**Photo 3. A Griffon Vulture, the most frequently seen raptor in the Picos.**

The Picos is a fantastic area for butterflies, with 155 species recorded in an area about the size of greater London. In comparison we have just 36 species in Scotland! One of the joys of being there in May and June was that hay meadows were at their best. These habitats contain such a profusion of flowering plants (Greater Yellow Rattle, Ox-eye Daisy, milkworts,

the commonest butterfly seen on every day of our six weeks in Spain. In mid-May, many individuals were worn and tattered suggesting these had come directly from Africa, while by the end of June, fresher (Spanish bred?) individuals were beginning to appear (photo 4). Such an abundance was even more notable as we had seen no Painted Ladies at all during five holidays to the Picos in 2007 and 2008. The last good year in northern Spain and Argyll was 2006.



**Photo.5. Hay meadows are some of the richest in Europe. Here, Pink Butterfly Orchid is surrounded by Greater Yellow Rattle.**



**Photo.6. Marsh Fritillary on Fragrant Orchid.**



**Photo.7. Black-veined White on Common Valerian.**



**Photo.8. A female Adonis Blue (*ceronus* form).**

clovers, vetches, orchids etc., photo 5) that it's no wonder butterflies (and other invertebrates) are so abundant. I've become more interested in butterflies over the last two years, and now spend quite a bit of time trying to photograph and identify the species around our village. Using a digital camera makes it possible to obtain images that are good enough to identify most species, with the help of field guides (photos 6, 7, 8). Some of the more abundant species this spring included numerous 'blues' (Adonis, Common, Holly, Langs Short-tailed, Little, Short-tailed and Turquoise etc.) and fritillaries (Glanville, Heath, Knapweed, Marsh, Meadow, Pearl-bordered, Provençal, Small Pearl-bordered and Spotted) as well as Clouded Yellow, Cleopatra, Brimstone, Black-veined White, Marbled White, Sooty Copper and Brown Argus, to name just a few! We saw over 60 species during our holiday.

In the centre of the Picos de Europa, the cable car at Fuent De (see photo 1) takes you up to 1,800m in a matter of minutes, where you step out into nature's rock garden. The alpine flowers were superb this spring. Spring and Trumpet Gentians (photo 9) were everywhere, together with a vast array of other alpine plants, many of which were restricted to the Cantabrian Mountains and the Pyrenees. From here you get staggering views of the higher mountains and the forested valleys below. You are invariably greeted by flocks of Alpine Chough looking for a free meal while Griffon Vultures soar past at very close range. You don't have to walk far before running into some of the special birds of these alpine habitats. Alpine Accentors forage in the boulder scree, Snow Finches flit overhead and a little time spent around the base of some of the nearby crags often produces fantastic views of Wall Creepers. The Butterflies are pretty special too. This spring we saw many Apollos and Gavarnie Blues (photos 10-11). The latter has a very restricted range in Europe with subspecies *asturensis* only found in the Picos. A lot of snow had fallen during the winter and much was still present on our first trip in the cable car. It was interesting to see Snow Vole burrows being exposed as snow patches melted, while groups of Southern Chamois were using these patches to cool themselves during the midday heat.

In contrast, the fast flowing rivers in the valley bottoms reminded us of habitats in Argyll. Here Dipper and Grey Wagtail abound while the locals spend much time fishing for Brown Trout and Atlantic Salmon. The forests are extensive too- temperate in nature on the more sheltered, lower slopes, but more mediterranean in



**Photo 9.** Trumpet Gentians were very abundant in early June.



**Photo 10.** Apollo, a butterfly of alpine habitats.



**Photo 11.** Gavarnie Blue subspecies *asturensis*, which is only found in the Picos de Europa

origin on the drier, south facing slopes, where evergreen oaks thrive. Beech occurs mainly at higher altitudes where it graduates into open heath and alpine pastures (photo 12. Red Squirrel, Roe Deer and Wild Boar thrive in these forests. A small isolated and endangered population of Brown Bear inhabits the Cantabrian Mountains and the Wolf population is slowly increasing in Northern Spain, but I have not yet been lucky enough to see either species! Woodpeckers flourish in these large forests with Green, Great Spotted, Middle Spotted and Lesser Spotted the commonest, while Black Woodpeckers are somewhat scarcer. And, it always amazes me to see Crested Tit in what are predominantly broadleaved forests!

Unfortunately, our six weeks in the Picos went far too quickly, and after arriving back to what was predicted to be a 'barbeque summer', we are already looking forward to our next stay in this wonderful part of 'green' Spain. If you are tempted to follow in our footsteps, a friend (Teresa Farino) runs week-long tours in the Picos, in early June for flowers and early July for moths and butterflies . Details can be found at <http://www.iberianwildlife.com/teresa-farino.htm>. Teresa is an excellent all-round naturalist and we had three memorable days with her this year looking at flowers, which included over 20 species of orchid.

**Steve Petty**

**Photos in this article©Steve Petty 2009**



**Photo 12.** High-elevation Beech forest, with summer grazing for cattle below the forest.

## Jackdaws on Islay, 1979-2009

My first visit to Islay was in 1971 at Kilchoman. In this and subsequent visits, I studied the Chough population, but I also became intrigued by the distribution of the other species of Corvids on Islay. In the south of the island, Rooks were numerous, nesting and feeding in and around Port Ellen. In the centre of the Island, Rooks and Jackdaws occurred together, whilst on the west coast, going down the Rhinns of Islay, Rooks were absent and Jackdaws were found nesting, chiefly above cliffs, often association with sea bird colonies. In 1977, I covered the whole island to map out the distribution of these three species and to make some estimate of numbers. I then started my first study which was to count Choughs, Jackdaws and Rooks on west Islay. My method was to walk the length of the coastline from Ardnave in the North to Octofad in the south via Portnahaven, counting the birds I saw. Although this gives only an estimate of the 'true' number of birds present, repeated counts were reasonably consistent, and given the small numbers, statistical analysis was not appropriate. I also counted the nests of the Rookeries at Guinart and Port Charlotte.

During the 1980's and 90's there was a significant fall in Jackdaw numbers. The first colony to disappear was at Ardnave, nesting in rabbit burrows on the dunes. The last birds were seen there in 1982. The next colony to disappear was at Port Caol, south of Octofad, the birds having nested in burrows above low cliffs. The birds were last seen here in 1985. The next colony to disappear was above a steep rocky inlet on the west coast at Clèit, north of Portnahaven. The birds would fly to feed in the fields around that village. Jackdaws were last seen at Lossit Bay in 1990, where the birds had nested in burrows, the last birds at Kilchiaran were seen in 1994 where again the birds had nested in burrows and rocky clefts above the low cliffs on the south of the bay. The colony of Jackdaws at Caol Point also disappeared at this time. They had nested above a steep rocky cleft at Rèidh a' Bhuirg.

Table 1 shows that during the decade 1985 to 1995, breeding Jackdaws had disappeared from much of the west

	1979	1981	1982	1985	1987	1990	1992	1994	1997	1999	2002
Port Caol NR207531	11	22	2	9							
Clèit NR169547	10	20		9	31	2					
Lossit NR178557	19	28	40	5		13	20				
Kilchiaran NR198599	16	50	12	2	82	31		26			
Kilchoman NR217629	120	130	180	60	86	56		38	3	8	11
Rèidh a' Bhuirg NR191649	4	25		20	6	16	6		1		
Dùn nan Nighean NR211692	18	16	12	6		31	20	10	12	14	12
Ardnave NR282739 NR292737	18	26	5								
Tayovullin NR287724						8	4	7	8	4	11

**Table 1 Jackdaws counted on the West Coast of Islay 1979-2002**

coast of Islay. There were two remaining colonies, at Kilchoman and to the north of Saligo Bay. Kilchoman had been the location of the biggest colony of Jackdaws with counts of between 120-180 birds. These numbers were clearly only estimates of the flock size. But it was a large and flourishing colony, breeding chiefly in the high cliffs above Kilchoman, at Creag Mhòr. There was a continuing and significant decline in numbers during the decade 1985-1995, the remaining birds transferring their main breeding site to the cliffs west of Creag Mhòr, at Cnoc nan Uan. The colony of Jackdaws north of Saligo Bay was the only colony studied which did not appear to decline in numbers. It breeds in the stones of Dùn nan Nighean, perched inaccessibly above high sea cliffs, near to sea bird colonies. The birds also fly to feed on the dunes above Saligo Bay and on the fields around Ballinaby. Birds appeared to return to the Ardnave area, breeding in ruined cottages at Tayovullin, though I cannot be sure that

they were not present there prior to my first seeing them in 1990. Breeding also appears to have been recently established in the farm buildings at Killinallen.

This change in the Jackdaw population of west Islay prompted me to start a second study looking at Jackdaw numbers more generally on Islay. This involved visiting areas where I had seen Jackdaws during the breeding season and counting the birds present. Again this provides only a guide as to actual numbers but the counts give an indication of the size of the colony, though additional colonies were discovered as the study progressed. The Jackdaws breeding inland do so chiefly in chimneys and ruined buildings, in dispersed groups depending on the availability of nesting sites. These scattered groups come together to feed and roost.

The counts shown in Table 2 indicate that the size of the colonies of inland breeding Jackdaws on Islay have remained constant from 2002-2009. My own informal observations for the years prior to 2002 lead me to think

	1977	2002	2004	2005	2009
<b>Kilchoman</b> Creag Mhòr NR217629 Cnoc nan Uan NR219631		11	10 21	15	12
<b>Saligo</b> Dùn nan Nighean NR211692 Ballinaby NR221671		18 8	10 10	14 8	15 14
<b>Sunderland</b> NR246646		1			7
<b>Tayovullin</b> NR287724		11	6	6	8
<b>Gruinart</b> Erasaid NR294653 Gruinart Flats NR285668 Craigens NR297675 Bushmill NR276677 Gruinart Farm NR278683 Leckgruinart NR277695		6 4 4 5	5 6 8 29 2	2 18 6 6 10 4	3 8 18 6
<b>Killinallen</b> NR312719					28
<b>Bridgend</b> Uiskentuie NR298631 Blackrock NR305631 Carnain NR318630 Islay House NR335628 Skerrols NR351639 Monechorrie NR360644		2 4 10 6	4 1 8 4 4	18 4 5	4 12 8
<b>Bowmore</b> Pennycraig NR329610 Gartnatra NR326604 Bowmore NR327604 Cruach NR323586	6 14	5 4	5 5	7 11 2	16 5
<b>Island House</b> NR309568				10	20
<b>Ballygrant</b> Village and Quarry NR396662 Esknish NR368648 & 377657 Knocklearoch NR399649	50		45 2	41	17 20
<b>Keills</b> Village NR417686 Port Askaig NR431694 Caol Ila NR429699		20	30	19 5 10	22 10 7
<b>Port Ellen</b> NR360458	8			3	4

that the inland colonies of Jackdaws did not suffer the significant decline found in the coastal colonies. Counts of Jackdaws made during a visit in 1977 are very similar to those found in 2002-2009.

Habitat changes could be a cause of decline; fewer sheep are now found grazing above the cliffs during the breeding season in the southern part of the Rhinns resulting in coarser vegetation. But the farming practices around Kilchoman and Kilchiaran have not noticeably changed. Predation would appear to be a more likely cause for such a marked and relatively rapid fall in the Jackdaw population. Mink numbers have increased during the period. The one colony that did not decrease, at Dùn nan Nighean, nests in a particularly inaccessible location, probably out of the reach of ground predators. Man-made sites are safer from ground predators, and there is an interesting parallel between the increased use of buildings for nesting both by Choughs and Jackdaws. (Finnie, S.K. and Jardine, D.C., 2003, 'The distribution and status of the Red-billed Chough in Scotland in 2002', *Scottish Birds* 24:11-17.).

David H James

Table 2 Jackdaws counted on Islay 2002-2009; with some figures from my visit in 1977

### Treasurer's Report for financial year 2008-2009

Our assets at the end of the year stood at £27,875.92, thanks to excellent sales of "Birds of Argyll". However, the income from the book has begun to diminish, as the rate of sales has fallen quite quickly since the initial rush at publication. Also we now have relatively few copies of the book remaining, and so further income from book sales will continue to decline next year, and will probably finish by 2011.

**Income from subscriptions** was slightly down on the highest record in 2007-08, reflecting a small drop in memberships. Some of these represent prudent purchasers of the book, taking advantage of the reduced price for members by joining for one year but not renewing.

**Income from bank interest** fell dramatically with the recent reduction in interest rates. In an attempt to mitigate this we opened a new account (a charities investment account) with Abbey, which offered 30 times the interest rate given by the Bank of Scotland treasurer's current account; most of our savings were transferred to Abbey but the BoS account remains open to receive subscription income and for routine expenditures. However, the Abbey have now reduced their interest rate also to a negligible level so that the income next year from bank interest will be even less.

**Income Tax refunds** resulting from Gift Aid declarations provided by many members, paid by IR in this financial year, include backdated payments for the past 4 years.

**Expenditure** follows the typical pattern for the club, but this year includes the costs of printing a 2-year bird report. The postage costs were much lower than in 2007-08 as we had far fewer copies of the book to post; most continuing sales are now to bookshops within Argyll where we are able to distribute by hand from remaining stocks held by committee members. Newsletter photocopying costs have been met by Glasgow University and have not been charged to the club for this year or last.

**Bob Furness, 15 May 2009.**

## ARGYLL BIRD CLUB

*Scottish Charity Number SC008782*

### 24<sup>th</sup> Year Accounts:

**16 April 2008 – 15 April 2009**

Bob Furness. Treasurer

<i>Income</i>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2007/2008</b>
Subscription	2394.23	2574.73
Sales	7489.50	14,865.00
Bank Interest	211.58	466.55
Other (raffles, donations, etc)	105.00	150.00
IR Tax refund	1326.02	0.00
Field Trips	0.00	280.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,526.33</b>	<b>18,336.28</b>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Bird Report	1986.00	0.00
Newsletter photocopying	0.00	0.00
Postage	818.43	1568.00
Bird Recorder expenses	125.73	109.36
Public meetings	829.90	813.15
Publicity	0.00	574.55
Data handling developments	0.00	1297.26
Insurance	110.00	110.00
Field Trips	0.00	320.00
Returned payments	0.00	155.00
Licences/web site	88.05	212.01
Packaging materials	0.00	445.32
Printing of "Birds of Argyll" book	0.00	17,728.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,958.11</b>	<b>23,333.57</b>
Surplus/Deficit for year	7568.22	-4997.29
Brought forward	20,307.70	25,304.99
Assets at end of year	27,875.92	20,307.70

### Membership Secretary's Report

At the end of financial year 2008-09 (April 2009) we had a total of 204 fully paid up memberships (about half of these being Family members) plus about 10 memberships where renewal payments have not yet been received. So we have approximately 350-400 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships.

Our number of paid up memberships is slightly down on the previous year, reflecting the normal turnover of memberships plus a small number of people who joined the club to be able to buy "The Birds of Argyll" at the reduced members' rate but have not renewed. A few subscriptions for this year are still outstanding.

**Sue Furness, 15 May 2009.**

## Recent Reports

May - July 2009

Paul Daw

(Tel. 01546 886260)

e-mail:

[monedula@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:monedula@globalnet.co.uk)

The latest news on bird sightings in Argyll is available on the Argyll Bird Club website at [www.argyllbirdclub.org](http://www.argyllbirdclub.org) See 'Click here for latest bird reports' on the home page.

This report is a selection from the sightings already published on the club website (see Latest Reports 84 to 86 on the website for full details of sightings during this period).



Laughing Gull. 2nd June. Sorisdale, Coll. photo@Simon Wellock

After reasonable weather in May and a sunny and warm June, things went down hill in July with more rain than usual (and don't even mention August! 330mm at Ormsary). However it has been a surprisingly good breeding season for some species groups (e.g. terns - see below) and the many records received seem to indicate that Spotted Flycatchers, now a Red Listed species of Conservation Concern, were more numerous than usual in Argyll.

**Rare or unusual species:** A cracking adult **Laughing Gull** in breeding plumage was photographed on the beach at Sorisdale, Coll on 1 June from 1200 onwards (Simon Wellock). On 4 June a dark morph **Honey-buzzard** was seen from Machrihanish Seabird Observatory over the hills at Ballygroggan, Kintyre (Eddie Maguire). A male (red-spotted) **Bluethroat** at Kilkenneth, Tiree on the morning of 1 June was the first record for the island and only the third for Argyll (Elaine Harper per JB). Lastly, a first year male **Common Rosefinch** in song was seen at the entrance to the Bunnahabhainn Distillery, Islay on 23 June

(Peter Roberts per John Armitage). It was seen there again, singing loudly, on 27 June (Chris & Tony Johnson).

### Unexpected breeding records:

1. **Eurasian Tree Sparrow.** Two pairs were found breeding on the Oa peninsula, Islay by Andy Schofield. He saw the first bird on 25 May but only returned from a spell on Shetland recently and on 6 July discovered that the pair at Kinnabus had 3 fledged juvs and the Upper Killeyan birds were still attending the nest. On 9 July Jim Dickson found at least 2 fledged young and at least 2 adults at Upper Killeyan (there may have been more!) as well as the Kinnabus birds. The last known breeding Tree Sparrows in Argyll were in the Kilchrist area near Campbeltown where one was seen during



Juvenile Tree Sparrow, Upper Killeyan. July. photo@Jim Dickson

Breeding Bird Atlas work in 1990. On Islay, small numbers may have bred in the early 1970s but since then only occasional migrants have been recorded. Although there is a small breeding population in Ayrshire- the nearest breeding birds to Islay are in Northern Ireland where George Gordon (NI Bird Recorder) tells me there is still a thriving population e.g. in the Lough Foyle area.

2. **Shoveler.** Katie Pendreigh has been seeing Shovelers regularly near Tayinloan this spring and on 17 July she found a female with 7 well- grown juveniles. This is the first confirmed breeding record on the mainland since 1992 when they were found at Westport Marsh near Machrihanish. They may have bred there for two or three years subsequently but the marsh was drained in 1995.

3. **House Martin.** A pair nest building at Loch an Eilein on 30 June represent the first recorded breeding attempt on Tiree (John Bowler).

4. **Puffin.** A pair of Puffins were seen attending a presumed nest-site at Ceann a' Mhara on 12 June. On 30 June they were seen at Ceann a' Mhara with a juvenile in attendance. This is the first confirmed breeding record for Tiree (John Bowler/ Andy Robinson/ Martin Scott).

#### **Wildfowl (and Gamebirds):**

A **European White-fronted Goose** was found at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 02 June. Unlike Greenland White-fronted Goose, this race is rare in Argyll (JB). A flock of 60 **Brent Pale-bellied Brent Geese** appeared on Loch Gilp at 10:15 on 8 May, presumably forced down by cross- winds from the depressions active at the time (Simon Lawrence) and a total of 48 **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were at Gott Bay, Tiree on 29 May (Keith Gil-

lon). An all white **Greylag Goose** was with a flock of 25 normal plumage birds at Loch Crinan on 17 July. So not a Snow Goose this time! (JD). The annual duckling counts between Machrihanish Water and the Seabird Observatory on 13 June found totals of 45 **Common Shelducks** (five broods including one of 14 day old young) and 58 **Common Eiders** (EM). A female **Mandarin Duck** with 5 or more small ducklings was seen along the River Cur at the head of Loch Eck, Cowal on 24 May (Peter Woods). At least three broods of young **Eurasian Wigeon** were found at Loch Tulla, North Argyll on 5 July (BA). This is one of the very few Wigeon breeding sites in Argyll. A drake **Green-winged Teal** was found by Bob Grove on flooded fields at the north end of Loch Nell near Oban late on 10 May and was seen there again the following day. It had apparently gone by 12 May, along with the flood water. This is the **first mainland record** for a species which has only previously been seen in Argyll on Islay and Tiree (Bob Grove/BA). Three **Tufted Ducks** (2 male and a female) were an unexpected visitors at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 May (EM). Female **Pintails** with broods of nine and six young were found at a site on Tiree 16 – 18 May (JB). On 1 July a fresh-looking female type **Pintail** was found amongst the local drake **Mallards** at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory and an unexpected passage of **Common Scoters** occurred, with a total of 26 flying S during the morning; the majority (24) were adult drakes (EM).

Two male **Long-tailed Ducks** were in Calgary Bay, Mull on 30 May (Anand Prasad). A crèche of approx. 25 **Red-breasted Merganser** chicks was seen at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 20 July (JB).

A **Common Quail** was calling at

Arileod, Coll at about 22:00hrs on 17 May (Simon Wellock) and a **Common Quail** heard calling by several observers/listeners in the Treshnish area of Mull through May and June was last heard on 21 June (Anand Prasad). It had either found a mate or given up in despair! There are still no proven breeding records for Argyll. The only other fairly recent record on Mull was 14 June 1997 at Glen Forsa. Another **Common Quail** was heard calling at Barrapol, Tiree on 12 June (JB/ Andy Robinson/Martin Scott).

#### **Seabirds – divers, grebes, shearwaters, herons etc (and other seawatch species):**

On 1 May 19 **Great Northern Divers** were counted off the pier at Scalasaig, Colonsay (JD) and five **Red-throated Divers**, a **Black-throated Diver** and 9 **Great Northern Divers** were seen from the Port Askaig–Kennacraig Islay ferry (TC). A total of 31 **Great Northern Divers**, many in breeding plumage, was counted off Tiree on 10 May, including 25 off Balemartine (Ross Ahmed per JB) and a gathering of 16 **Great Northern Divers** (most in breeding plumage) and two **Black-throated Divers** in non-breeding plumage were present during the afternoon of 01 June at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (EM). A **White-billed Diver** was reported again at Laggan Bay on Mull on 19 May\* (Alan Gately et al per JD) and three small **Little Grebe** chicks were seen on the gravel pit at Benderloch, North Argyll (Robin Harvey). (\* no description has been received for this sighting: please contact Jim Dickson if you have any details.)

Persistent, very peculiar, pleading calls coming from the sea off Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 15 July alerted them to the presence of 2 **Black-throated Divers**

well out in the Bay. One was a juvenile which was later seen being fed by the adult (EM). A **Cory's Shearwater** was reported off Scarinish, Tiree on the evening of 28 July (Carl Mitchell per JB). Seabirds flying S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 17 June included: 270 **Northern Gannets**, 190 **Manx Shearwaters** and 28 **European Storm-petrels** (EM) and a total of 72 **Manx Shearwaters** flew past the N end of Gigha in 2 hours on 17 July (Stephen Welch). A sea-watch from Hynish, Tiree (in wind SSE5 with rain, 17.20-18.20hrs) on 31 July found 36 **Fulmars**, one **Sooty Shearwater**, 335 **Manx Shearwaters**, 19 **European Storm-petrels**, and 376 **Northern Gannets** (JB).

A **Little Egret** was feeding in a pool near the gatehouse at Bridgend on the edge of Loch Indaal, Islay on 13 June. Apparently it had been about a few days but no one had had good views. It was seen again on the 14 and 15 June at the same place. (Chris & Tony Johnson). (Photo by Ina Brooke). Sixty **Shags** were counted at the Mull of Cara south of Gigha on 14 July, with 20 more on Craro Island (Stephen Welch) and a notable southerly movement of 75 **Shags** took 2 minutes to pass the point at Machrihanish on 18 July (EM). A gathering of 30 **Grey Herons** in a muddy inlet just S of Castle Stalker, North Argyll on 27 July included several juvs. (BA).

#### Raptors, rails etc.:

A puzzling, very dark raptor seen from Machrihanish Seabird Observatory over the hills at Ballygroggan, Kintyre between 10:00 and 11:00 on 4 June, was finally identified as a dark morph **Honey-buzzard**. It was seen again on 8 June. There are only about a dozen previous Argyll records of Honey-buzzard, from 1875 to 2003, including four in June (EM).



**Female Hen Harrier. Somewhere in Kintyre. photo©Jimmy MacDonald**

While fishing on Loch Awe on 16 May, John McNally watched a **White-tailed Eagle** launch itself off the trees at Haricamish point and fly over the forest in the direction of Arinechtan. The pronounced white tail indicated an adult bird. There were other reports of a White-tailed Eagle in the area, including over Loch Avich, at about this time. An adult **White-tailed Eagle** flew just in front of and above the ferry in the Sound of Mull, N of Craignure on 17 May (Anne-Lise Dickie) and an immature **White-tailed Eagle** flew quite low over Bridgend (nr Lochgilphead) on 3 June (Malcolm Chattwood). On 22 May, a radio tagged juvenile male **White-tailed Eagle**, from the re-introduction programme in Northern Ireland, was tracked flying north over Kintyre and Mid-Argyll. At 12:00 hrs it was just S of Kilchenzie (near Campbeltown), at 13:00 it was just S of Loch Garrasdale, Kintyre, by 14:00 it was SW of Ardrishaig and the final Argyll report was at

Loch Scammadale S of Oban at 15:00. It kept heading north and eventually made it to Westray, Orkney before turning back south to the Kyle of Tongue. Many thanks to Allan Mee for all this information. Curiously an immature **White-tailed Eagle** was seen near Oban between 11:54 and 13:30 on the same day but the times do not seem to fit the radio tagged bird (Dave Walker) and there were reports of two **White-tailed Eagles** flying around the Add Estuary at Bellanoch the same morning (Jim Hatton per Lynsey Gibson). A male and a female **Marsh Harrier** were present at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 17 May. The female drifted E over Gott Bay on 18 May and the male was seen again on 22 May (BA/ Anne-Lise Dickie/JB/ John McOwat). Increasing numbers of **Marsh Harriers** in Argyll in spring could be a portent of things to come. George Gordon (Northern Ireland Bird Recorder) tells me that a pair bred in Northern Ire-

land this summer – for the first time since 1840! Three pairs of **Hen Harriers** and two pairs of **Common Kestrels** were noted on Colonsay during the first week of May (JD). An odd, pale buff-coloured, female **Hen Harrier** was at Balephuill, Tiree on 4 June. It was also seen, and photographed, on 8 June (JB). Lynsey Gibson was just congratulating herself on attracting 8 Goldfinches to her garden bird feeder in Lochgilphead on 18 June, when suddenly, out of nowhere, the local **Sparrowhawk** swooped down and caught two of them. Lynsey was not sure whether it managed to hold on to them but it flew off over the Leylandii hedge and out of sight, still with both in its talons. An **Osprey** was seen by Ian McKellar at Loch Riddon, Cowal eating a fish on 14 May. One, and sometimes two Ospreys were seen in this general area on several dates in May and until at least 24 June. Could this be the prelude to the long awaited first Osprey breeding in Cowal? Jim Dickson took some photos of the rings on the **Ospreys** at Ford on 8 June. With their help, Roy Dennis has identified both birds. They were ringed as chicks in 1994 so they should have been around and breeding somewhere for a good few years prior to 2009. The female was ringed at nest near Nethybridge, Speyside by Roy Dennis on 02/07/94 and the male was originally ringed by Mick Canham at a Forestry Commission platform near Dalavich, Loch Awe. The latter was one of a brood of three chicks on 12/07/94 (per Roger Broad).

A juvenile **Osprey** sitting on the shore at Ulva Lagoons, Loch Sween with a large thick (*ca* 66cm long) salmonid type fish was being harassed by 2 Hooded Crows, 2 Great Black-backed Gulls, and a Buzzard on 28 July. It appeared

that the fish escaped back into the water. The Osprey flew up, then dived down and got it or another fish, but couldn't lift off again. So it did an osprey version of the butterfly swimming stroke, holding on to the fish under the surface (the Osprey seemed perfectly calm and relaxed - unlike Bill who thought it was going to drown for a second!). It got to the shore whereupon the fish escaped again! The Osprey finally gave up and headed off N shortly thereafter (thanks to Bill Allan for the graphic account of the event). A description and excellent photos have been received of a **Hobby** seen at Port Charlotte, Islay on 28 June (Mark Johnson per JD).

A **Spotted Crake** was heard calling persistently at Port Ann, Mid-Argyll at around 18:30 on 20 May (Karen Judd – SNH). A recording was made of the calls the following night. Interestingly, another **Spotted Crake** was reported on the same day, near Bridgend, Islay (Michal Sur per JD). There was also a report of one calling on Coll (per JD). The Port Ann bird was subsequently heard by several observers until at least early June (JD/BA). A **Spotted Crake** was calling at a site in West Tiree during the Corncrake census 3 June and was heard again on 7 and 11 June (JB).

**Corn Crakes:** The final island total of calling birds on Tiree was 392 (*cf.* 408 in 2008), and a **Corn Crake** first heard calling near the mouth of Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll on 20 May was heard regularly until at least the end of May and even seen once! (Mary-Lou Aitchison/Bob Foskett). A national survey of Corn Crakes is taking place this year.

An adult **Moorhen** was seen with three large young at Loch Crinan on 23 June (TC), an adult and juvenile **Moorhen** were found on Mill Loch, Gigha on 12 July, an adult

with two young were found at Duimyeonbeg, Gigha on 16 July (Stephen Welch) and a pair of **Moorhens** with a brood of 3 young was seen on Crosshill Loch, Campbeltown on 28 July (Martin & Leticia Conway per EM).

A **Coot** was an unexpected visitor at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 May (EM).

#### **Waders:**

A male **Dotterel** was seen with European Golden Plovers on Oronsay today on 21 April and again on 23 April (Mike Peacock). Four **Dotterels** (2 male/2 female) were present at The Green, Tiree on 6 and 7 May (JB). An adult **Little Ringed Plover** was seen flying past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 17 July (EM). This is only our third record of what is only a rare passage migrant in Argyll. A group of 7 **Black-tailed Godwits** at Heylipol, Tiree on 6 May included a leg-flagged bird that had been ringed as a chick in 2008 in SW Friesland, the Netherlands - i.e. a nominate-race *limosa* bird - **according to Birds of Scotland this would appear to be the first confirmed record of a bird of this race in Scotland!** Moreover, of the godwits in this group, 3 (including the leg-flagged bird) appeared to be nominating race whilst 4 were typical *islandica* race birds. John presumes the nominate-race birds had tagged along with the *islandicas* as they headed north.... (JB). An all island count on Tiree on 10 May produced 110 **Whimbrels** (a high count for Tiree) and 35 **Black-tailed Godwits** (Ross Ahmed per JB). One of the **Whimbrel** seen at Machrihanish SBO on 11 May showed characteristics of the North American race *hudsonicus* also known, confusingly, as Hudsonian Curlew (EM). An adult **Greenshank** flying S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 21



**Black Tailed Godwit. MSBO, 24 July. photo©Eddie Maguire**

June was an unusual record for June (EM) and a **Green Sandpiper** on 1 June was also an unusual visitor there (EM). Migrant waders started to appear in some numbers on 21/22 July. After overnight rain on 20 July Loch a' Phuill, Tiree held 75 **Dunlin**, 2 **Sanderlings**, 6 adult **Red Knots**, 7 **Black-tailed Godwits**, 2 **Whimbrels** and 4 **Greenshanks** (JB). two **Red Knots**, 15 **Eurasian Curlews**. 2 **Greenshanks** and 3 **Common Sandpipers** were in the Add Estuary (JD) and waders at Otter Ferry included 22 **Ringed Plovers** and the first returning **Turnstones**: 16 still in breeding plumage (TC). Migrant waders flying S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 22 July, included 60 **Oystercatchers**, 8 **Dunlins**, a **Common Snipe**, 15 **Redshanks** and 10 **Ruddy Turnstones** (EM). A few showers before and just after dawn at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 July produced a fall of waders including an early autumn peak of 360 **Oystercatchers**, 28 **Ringed Plovers**, an adult **Red Knot**, 60 **Sanderlings**, 18 **Dunlins**, a **Common Snipe**, a striking adult sum-

mer-plumaged **Black-tailed Godwit**, 30 **Redshanks** and 15 **Ruddy Turnstones**. All eventually flew S. A single **Whimbrel** was present for the 7<sup>th</sup> day running (EM). Widespread wader passage continued on 26 July. Good numbers appeared after an overnight weather front had passed over Tiree, including 55 **Ringed Plovers**, 91 **Dunlin**, 9 **Sanderlings**, 21 **Eurasian Curlews**, 6 **Greenshanks** and 3 **Turnstones** at Loch a' Phuill and a **Grey Plover** at Mannal (JB). Many were grounded at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory by heavy rain including: 60 **Oystercatchers**, a superb pack of 102 adult **Red Knots**, 110 **Sanderlings**, 60 **Dunlins**, 8 **Black-tailed Godwits** (only one juvenile), 20 **Ruddy Turnstones**, and a **Greenshank** (EM). And a small group of waders that dropped in briefly at Keills, Loch Sween included a juvenile **Dunlin**, 2 **Common Redshanks** (1 juvenile) and 6 **Greenshanks** (4 juvs.) and six juvenile **Dunlin** were in the River Add near Islandadd Bridge (BA). A **Wood Sandpiper** found at Sandaig, Tiree on 30 May was later seen on a pool at Bar-

rapol and single **Black-tailed Godwits** were at Loch an Eilein and Loch a' Phuill (Keith Gillon). The first returning **Ruddy Turnstone** (a juvenile) was logged at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 8 July (EM). A female **Red-necked Phalarope** was seen at Gott Bay, Tiree on 18 May with 1,100 **Sanderlings** (JB/Richard Marks) and a female **Ruff** (reeve) was behaving as if it had a nest nearby at a site on Tiree (JB). Amazingly another splendid female **Red-necked Phalarope** found on Tiree on 13 June. It was not seen subsequently and was probably just a late migrant (JB/ Andy Robinson/ Martin Scott). **Red-necked Phalaropes** are very scarce passage migrants in Argyll.

**Skuas (see also 'Seabirds'), gulls, terns and auks:**

#### **A successful year for Argyll's breeding terns.**

Clive Craik's tern raft at South Shian (an adapted mussel raft) had to be expanded in June. The terns had overflowed and started laying all over another raft - one without a fence (Clive and his team put a fence around the original one to stop the chicks falling into the sea and dying) and with dozens of huge holes in the boards through which all the chicks would have fallen. So, in June they spent a day putting a fence round it and patching the holes in the floor with plywood- in shifts so that the terns weren't kept off their eggs for more than an hour at a time. It worked brilliantly- the terns kept laying and altogether on both rafts over 100 pairs (approx) fledged (Clive thinks) over 150 young. The team was there on 10 August ringing the latest chicks and there were still lots of clutches to hatch. Not a sniff of any predator, fingers crossed. Last year a mink and a

raptor between them got all the late chicks. But this year the numbers of pairs and fledged young are higher than ever before. The scheme started with one pair in 1995! (per Clive Craik).

On Tiree, it was an excellent breeding year for **Arctic Terns** for once, with at least 87 birds fledging from six colonies around the island from 21 July onwards. It was **also** a very good breeding season for **Little Terns**. Some 16 young fledged from 14 nests at one site (with the last chicks fledging at the end of July), whilst at least 26 birds fledged from 34 nests at another site at the start of the month with 34 birds feeding at Traigh Bhagh on 10 July (JB). At least 12 adult and 8 large young **Common Terns** were on the 'dolphins' at the NATO jetty in Campbeltown Loch on 27 July (PD).

Three adult **Pomarine Skuas** were seen briefly on the beach at Gott Bay, Tiree on 28 May (Keith Gillon). A dark-morph **Arctic Skua** was seen off Craignure, Mull on 24 May (BA/Anne-Lise Dickie), and two dark morph **Arctic Skuas** were harassing **Common, Arctic** and **Sandwich Terns** at Machrihanish on 1 June (EM). Another dark morph adult **Arctic Skua** flew S over the point at Machrihanish on 22 July (EM).

A **Great Skua** was seen over Rubh' Ardalanish, Ross of Mull on 19 May (Anand Prasad), and a **Great Skua** was seen flying out of Calgary Bay, Mull and around Treshnish Point on 10 July (Anand Prasad). Two pairs of **Great Skuas** were present on Tiree during June but with no evidence of breeding (JB). At midday on 7 July, a summer-plumaged adult **Mediterranean Gull** (ghostly-looking with full black hood) flew S, low over the point at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory - the 10<sup>th</sup> Observatory record of this species (EM). A

second-summer (3rd calendar year) **Laughing Gull** was photographed on the beach at Sorisdale, Coll on 2 June from 1200 onwards. Sadly it had disappeared by the following day (Simon Wellock). Our first record since the 2005/2006 influx). A second-summer **Laughing Gull** was seen on Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 13 June - presumably the Coll bird? (JB/Andy Robinson/Martin Scott). A 1st summer (second calendar year) **Iceland Gull** was on the shore near the R.C. Cathedral in Oban on the afternoon of 8 June. It was present there for at least two further days (BA). Two second calendar year **Glaucous Gulls** were at Hough Bay, Tiree on 7 May and an **Arctic Skua** was at Caolas and possibly the same two birds were at Ruaig on 17 May (JB). Three **Sandwich Terns** were seen at Skipness Point, Kintyre on 3 May (Malcolm Chattwood) and four were seen at Colintraive, Cowal the following day (Graham & Danielle Clark). Many **Sandwich Terns** were seen at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during May but 80 on 24 May was exceptional and a record count for this site (and probably for Argyll as a whole) (EM). In general **Sandwich Terns** have been becoming more numerous in Argyll in recent years both at migrants and non-breeding visitors. Fourteen **Sandwich Terns** were seen at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 14 June and about 5-6 pairs of **Common Terns** and 15-18 pairs of **Arctic Terns** were nesting at Big Scone Island. At least 26 **Sandwich Terns** flew past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 30 June included 6 immature birds (EM). Roosting on the buoy to the N of the spit at Otter Ferry on 28 May were 28 **Common Terns**, with up to 10 others fishing nearby (TC). A 1st-summer **Little Tern** and a 1st-summer **Arctic Tern** were at The

Reef, Tiree on 8 June. First summer terns are very unusual in Britain. A ringed adult **Little Tern** was at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (a scarce passage visitor here) on 14 July (EM). A sea-watch from Hynish, Tiree on the evening of 31 July found 26 **Kittiwakes**, 33 **Arctic Terns**, 57 **Puffins**, and 33 large auks (JB).

#### **Doves, owls, woodpeckers etc.:**

A **Red and Green Macaw** perched on a garden fence at Crinan on 1 July was an unexpected sight. It looked as though it must be stuffed - until it moved! Apparently the woman who owns it takes it for walks perched on her shoulder... (PD).

A **Stock Dove** was seen in the park at Strachur House, Cowal on 21 May - a first for this site (Peter Woods). Seven, probably migrant, **Collared Doves** at Balephuil, Tiree on 31 May included a partially leucistic bird (JB). A very pale **Collared Dove** has been visiting a garden in Lochgilphead. It has all the marking of a Collared Dove apart from most of the grey/beige parts being white, although there are a few grey/beige feathers here and there. It looks very similar to the bird photographed recently on Tiree by JB (Lynsey Gibson). Perhaps these leucistic birds are not uncommon? We would be interested to hear from anyone else who has seen pale plumaged Collared Doves in Argyll.

A **Turtle Dove** at Ruaig, Tiree on 25 May was the first Argyll record of the spring (Andy Musgrove per JB) and a **Turtle Dove** last seen at Moss, Tiree on 2 July had been there since 28 June when 2 birds were present (JB). A probable 7-8 **Common Cuckoo** territories were identified on Colonsay during the first week of May (JD). On the mainland, several observers have commented on the dearth of calling Cuckoos so far this spring (PD).

Three **Common Cuckoos** were present near Treshnish Old Schoolhouse, Mull on 10 May (Anand Prasad). A **Common Cuckoo** was at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 31 May. **Common Cuckoos** were heard calling at Moine Mhor and Glenshallach Oban on 1 June. (BA) and 3 **Common Swifts** at Carnan Mor were the first on Tiree this year (JB). A **Barn Owl** was seen at the head of Loch Feochan near Oban (Bob Grove). A **Barn Owl** was seen at Kinerarach, Gigha at 23:00hrs on 16 July. The local farmer's wife said she had regularly seen it around but didn't know about nesting. The barns are derelict and not used much (Stephen Welch). A **Barn Owl** was on an overhead wire at the fish farm at Largiemore, Loch Fyne, Cowal on 24 (TC) and a dead **Barn Owl** was found at the edge of a copse at Bennan, Calgary, Mull on 29 July (Anand Prasad).

A **Short-eared Owl** at Balevullin, Tiree on 31 May was a possible

migrant (JB), but a **Short-eared Owl** was seen on a glorious evening at Moine Mhor on 4 June could well have been breeding there (JD). Two **Short-eared Owls** were hunting over Moine Mhor, about 1km apart on 27 July (TC). A single **Common Swift** flew over Oban on 10 May and two more were seen later over Glen Euchar (BA) and four were over Connel the following day (Mike Harrison). A first **Common Swift** of the year appeared at Glassary Primary School, Kilmichael Glassary on 16 May. Lynsey tells us they have been nesting in the roof of the school for at least 30 years (Lynsey Gibson). Two **Common Swifts** were over Milton, Tiree on 31 May and one was over Crossapol (Keith Gillon). A total of 25 **Common Swifts** over Campbeltown in the early evening of 2 June were probably local breeders (Derek Goods per EM). Eight **Common Swifts** were seen together over Oban on 15 June – there

seem to have been fewer there this year (BA). A flock of 21 **Common Swifts** over Inveraray on 30 June were almost certainly wanderers from elsewhere (PD). A group of ten **Common Swifts** flying S past Treshnish Point, Mull on 2 July was the highest number recorded there (Anand Prasad) and at least 6 **Swifts** were 'screaming' over Dalmally, Mid-Argyll on 10 July (Stephen Welch). An early evening assembly of 40 **Common Swifts** over Burnside Square, Campbeltown on 27 July was the peak count this year (Derrick Goode per EM). A **Common Kingfisher** was reported at Clachan of Glendaruel, Cowal by Gordon Harrison on 6 June (per Graham & Danielle Clark) and one was seen twice during the day at Otter Ferry on 5 July. The first recent Kingfisher record for the latter location (TC). There was a report of a **Green Woodpecker** at Fearnoch nr Loch Leathan (Kilmichael Glen) on 12 May (Jamie Wright per JD). Although Jamie is not a regular birdwatcher he described it well i.e. larger than the Great Spotted that are there regularly, green above paler below and with red cap. Interestingly there was another report of a **Green Woodpecker** in Mid-Argyll; this time at Long Walk near Moine Mhor on 27 May (Phil Wright per JD). There have been occasional reports of Green Woodpeckers in this general area of Argyll in the past and it is at least possible there is a small population breeding there. For such large and striking birds they are surprisingly easy to overlook unless you hear the 'yaffling' call.

#### Passerines:

The following records are an attempt to give a taste of the range and numbers of species that can be found during Timed Tetrad survey work for the current Bird



Juvenile Cuckoo and host photographed this August by Jimmy MacDonald

**Atlas. Birds found on visits for the latter part of the breeding season included:**

At Auchindrain (near Inveraray) on 8 June: 5 **Tree Pipits**, a **Common Stonechat**, 2 **Sedge Warblers**, a **Common Whitethroat**, two **Spotted Flycatchers** and 2 **Lesser Redpolls** (Paul Daw).

At Ardachuple, Loch Riddon on 14 June: 4 **Tree Pipits**, 41 **Wrens**, 2 **Whinchats**, 21 **Song Thrushes**, 5 **Grasshopper Warblers** and 69 **Willow Warblers** (TC).

At Creag an Daimh (near Otter Ferry) on 25 June: a **Sand Martin** colony with 32 AOBs, 2 **Common Stonechats**, 2 **Sedge Warblers**, 6 **Common Whitethroats**, 28 **Willow Warblers** and 3 **Lesser Redpolls** (Tom Callan).

At and around Inveraray Castle on 30 June: a **Tree Pipit**, a **Dipper**, 4 **Blackcaps**, 3 **Garden Warblers**, a **Wood Warbler**, no less than 5 **Spotted Flycatchers**, a recently fledged **Eurasian Treecreeper** and a pair of **Reed Buntings** (Paul Daw).

At the north end of Loch Awe on 10 July: 16 **Sand Martins** were feeding over the plain near Kilchurn Castle, Loch Awe and 27 **Sand Martins** were counted at Stronmilchan. Other species found included 8 **Tree Pipits**, 3 **Common Redstarts**, 2 **Blackcaps**, a family of **Wood Warblers**, two families of **Spotted Flycatchers** and another adult, one female/imm. **Pied Flycatcher**, a family party of **Eurasian Treecreepers** and a total of 26 **Twites** (Stephen Welch).

**Common Crossbill influx. An apparent influx of continental Crossbills to Scotland, which included flocks of birds in the Western Isles, occurred from late June/early July. The following were noted in Argyll at this time:**

- 02 July. Two were seen calling near Auchindrain, Mid-Argyll (PD)

and a group were heard calling in the vicinity of Otter Ferry with "crossbilled" cones found scattered underneath a larch (Tom Callan).

- 05 July. Several groups noted around Loch Awe in the past week, the largest being *ca* 35 seen at Fincharn today (Roger Broad).

- 13 July. A flock of 16 were over Kames, Cowal (Steve Petty).

- 14 July. A flock of 8 or 9 flew SE over Tigh-na-Tulloch calling at 10:20 and *ca* 20 flew S overhead calling at 11:35 (PD). Five were at Carnan Mor, Tiree (John Bowler).

- 16 July. Four at Achnabreac (near Lochgilphead) and odd one or twos in the area during the previous two weeks (JD). Flock of 19 over Kames, Cowal (Steve Petty).

- 19 July. Flock of 25 at Kames, Cowal (Steve Petty).

- 25 July. Two or more at Otter Ferry, Cowal (Tom Callan).

29 July. A flock of 14 flew over Otter Ferry, Cowal. There was much evidence of cone feeding in the area (Tom Callan).

Record numbers of **Sand Martins** have been present at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree this year and 160 were counted there on 8 May (JB). A pair of **House Martins** were nest-building at Island House, Loch an Eilein on 30 June. The first documented breeding attempt for Tiree - although not so surprising given the large numbers recorded here this spring (JB). Three pairs of **House Martins** were still nest building near Clachan, Lismore on 16 July (TC). A male (red-spotted) **Bluethroat** was showing elusively in a streamside marsh at Kilkenneth, Tiree on the morning of 1 June. The first record for the island and only the third for Argyll (Elaine Harper per JB). Jim Dickson and Bill Allan found a male **Common Redstart** in the woods next to Loch Nell (near Oban) on 12 May. They soon realised it was getting frantic as its mate was

trapped inside a disused Landrover. The female inside also appeared distressed until they opened the door and released her.

On 4 June, a pair of **Common Redstarts** at the Poltalloch gatehouse (near Lochgilphead) were feeding young and at least 5 **Whinchat** territories were noted around Moine Mhor (JD). Three female **Northern Wheatears** at Otter Ferry on 25 July were probably migrants (TC), a juv. **Northern Wheatear** showing characteristics of the Greenland race was on the point at Machrihanish on 26 July (EM), approx. 15 migrant **Northern Wheatears** were around the Danna/New Ulva area of Loch Sween on 29 July, together with flocks of **Linnets**, **Goldfinches** and **Common Starlings** (mostly juvs) (BA) and large numbers of juv. **Northern Wheatears** were also present at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 29 July: about 35 birds came in-off-the-sea from the NW between 08:50-09:35hrs. They were big, rusty-looking birds and very probably of the Greenland race (EM). On 1 May, **Grasshopper Warbler**, **Sedge Warbler** and **Common Whitethroat** were all noted singing on Colonsay and 40 or more **Twite** were seen on Oronsay (JD). An obvious influx of warblers on Tiree on 10 May included a **Lesser Whitethroat** and six **Willow Warblers** at Carnan Mor and 4 reeling **Grasshopper Warblers**, 6 male **Sedge Warblers** and a **Common Chiffchaff** at Balephuill (JB). Another **Lesser Whitethroat** was seen near Kilbride, Coll (Simon Wellock). Good numbers of warblers at Bonawe, Loch Etive, North Argyll on 12 May included at least 5 singing **Garden Warblers**, 3-4 **Wood Warblers**, and two **Common Whitethroats**. **Spotted Flycatcher** and several **Common Redstarts** were also present (JD/BA). On 13 May a **Garden Warbler**

was singing on and off for much of the day at the foot of a garden at Eredine, Loch Awe (Karl Pipes). A **Lesser Whitethroat** was at Vaul, Tiree on 18 May with two **Common Chiffchaffs**. A **Lesser Whitethroat** seen later at Balephetrish may have been the same individual (JB/John McOwat/BA). A **Sedge Warbler** was singing near a garden in Muasdale, Kintyre on 22 May (Maggie Young) and two pairs of **Sedge Warblers** were feeding young at Keillmore, Loch Sween on 27 July and 14 **Twite** were seen nearby (TC). Following the first at Carnan Mor on 18 May there were **Spotted Flycatchers** on Tiree at Cornaigbeg, Vaul and Carnan Mor (JB) on 19 May. Another **Spotted Flycatcher** was seen at Kildunan Cottage, Tiree on 21 May (BA) and a **Spotted Flycatcher** at Haunn, Mull on 23 May was the first local record (Anand Prasad). A recently fledged young **Spotted Flycatcher** was seen near Scoor, Mull on 25 July and newly fledged **Sand Martins** were near a nest site at Loch Assapol (Anand Prasad). A male **Pied Flycatcher** was found at Colintrave, Cowal on 18 May (Grace Rogerson). Two **Magpies** were seen in the park at Strachur House, Cowal on 21 May (Peter Woods). A **Rose-coloured Starling** was photographed on the Dervaig road, above Tobermory, Mull on 29 May (Steve Brown per Alan Spellman). A **Magpie** seen perched on a lamp-post just outside Mid-Argyll Swimming Pool, Lochgilphead on the morning of 12 July was seen again there subsequently. An outbreak of vandalism in the same area has been traced to a rogue **Hooded Crow**. For reasons best known to itself it has taken to ripping off car windscreen wipers. Locals have taken to wrapping them in plastic bags for protection! (Lynsey Gibson). The Lochgilphead **Magpie** was re-found nearby at Achnabreac on 25 July (JD). A large flock of **Linnets** at

Loch na Cille, Loch Sween numbered approx. 80 birds on 26 July (BA). Five **Lesser Redpolls** were on bird feeders in the garden at Colintrave, Cowal (Graham & Danielle Clark) on 2 May and a male **Whinchat** was seen in Glen Euchar, near Oban (BA) 20 June. Yet another report of **Lesser Redpolls** coming to garden bird feeders. The first were seen in a garden at Creich (nr Fionnphort), Mull in early May. Since then numbers feeding on nyger seeds, and occasionally peanuts, have increased to a minimum of 3 males and 3 females and more recently some juveniles (one of which had a metal ring on its right leg). Goldfinches (up to 12 or more), Siskins and Yellowhammers also visit the garden (thanks to Bob Lawson for these details). Even the feeding station at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory is now attracting **Lesser Redpolls** – a male was photographed there on 30 June together with a colour-ringed **Twite** (EM). Large groups of **Lesser Redpolls** were flying around birch scrub at the new Portavadie Marina, Cowal on the morning of 18 July and similar flocks were seen at Loch Fyne Oyster Bar on 15 July (Steve Petty). A **Common (Mealy) Redpoll** was at Balephuill, Tiree on 18 May (JB). Numbers of **Siskins** recorded for Garden Bird Watch at West Loch Tarbert, Kintyre reached an impressive total of 36 during the week beginning 3 May (Barbara McMillan). A singing **Common Rosefinch** seen near bird feeders at Kellan Lodge Mill (just east from Killiechronan), Mull on 16 June was thought to be a juvenile male. Up to 22 **Siskins** were seen in the same garden (Ben Dickinson per Alan Spellman). A first year male **Common Rosefinch** in song was seen at the entrance to the Bunnahabhainn Distillery, Islay on 23 June (Peter Roberts per John Armitage). It was

seen there again, singing loudly, on 27 June (Chris & Tony Johnson). A female **Hawfinch** reported at Frachadil House, Calgary at 13:15 on 15 June (Andy and Helen Mortley per Alan Spellman) was a 'first' for Mull. A late male **Snow Bunting** was found at Port Haunn, Mull on 10 May and what was presumably the same bird was seen and photographed at Burgh (near Treshnish), Mull on 16 May (E & J. Gibson/Ruth Fleming per Anand Prasad).

#### Other sightings:

Two **Otters** were cavorting in Kilbrannan Sound near Grogport Picnic Site, Kintyre approx. 100m from shore on 03 May (Malcolm Chattwood).

A remarkable observation was made of a **Mink** seen in the Marine Research Laboratory bay at Machrihanish on 26 July. It was in the sea and confidently swam a distance of some 200m between two points towing a rabbit! One has to admit that, rather than hauling the rabbit overland, transporting this rather substantial prey item by sea appeared to be an ingenious energy saving tactic (thanks to Eddie Maguire & Derrick Goode for this story).

At least a dozen **Painted Lady** butterflies were found in W. Coll on 13 May (Simon Wellock), but the real invasion came at the end of the month and in early June with hundreds (probably thousands) of **Painted Lady** butterflies on Tiree on 29 May as well as the first **Large Whites**, **Peacock Butterflies** and **Large Red Damsel Flies** (JB). Similar numbers of **Painted Lady** butterflies were seen on Coll (Simon Wellock) and there were widespread records (although mostly not in such large numbers) on the mainland. Hundreds (500+) of **Painted Lady** butterflies flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Obser-

vatory on 30 May, many well out over the sea! Most had gone by the following day (EM) and at least 15 **Painted Lady** butterflies were seen flying along the shore of Loch Fyne at Otter Ferry in one hour on the same day (Tom Callan). Three **Pearl Bordered Fritillaries** (a very scarce butterfly species) were photographed near Blarghour Farm, Loch Awe on 4 June. Four Orange-tips were also present (Karl Pipes). At least 50 **Beautiful Demoiselle damselflies** were at the head of Loch Nell on 14 June (BA).

A **Minke Whale** was showing well for all on the Paddle Steamer Waverley day-trip to Tiree on 1 June and there were "many, many" **Basking Sharks** off Tiree and Coll (BA/Anne-Lise Dickie).

About 8 **Bottle-nosed Dolphins** were in Machrihanish Bay on 9 June (EM) and approx. 20 **Bottle-nose Dolphins** were seen close to the fish cages at Portavadie, Cowal on 12 June (Tom Callan).

On 14 June, a dead **White-beaked Dolphin** was found at Traigh Bhi, Tiree (JB/ Andy Robinson/Martin Scott) and a **Basking Shark** was off Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (EM)

#### **New species for the Argyll list:**

The description of a **Black-browed Albatross** seen flying N off Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 27 October 2008 by Eddie Maguire has recently been accepted by BBRC. This brings the Argyll total to 335 species, with at least one further species currently awaiting a decision by BBRC.

Observers full names in brackets except: BA = Bill Allan, JB = John Bowler, TC = Tom Callan, PD = Paul Daw, JD = Jim Dickson and EJM = Eddie Maguire.

**Paul Daw**



**Osprey -taken in June by Jim Dickson. See notes in this report relating to the rings on this bird.**

#### **Osprey Nest, Loch Awe**

It's like a Victorian peep-show on the promenade at Wigan. The next busload queues at the telescope to pay to view the saucy dame, legs feathered as if wearing bloomers, in her boudoir on the pylon across the loch. Today at two it will put on a show, diving from the sticks to trawl the trout from the floating farm, too fast for the latest digital. Back on the nest, it tears the prey in beak and talon. At the 'scope, a voyeur watches for the mating.

**Lorn Macintyre**

**Articles for the December issue of the  
*Eider* should with the Editor before the  
24th November 2009**

**Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2008/2009)**

**Chairman:** Nigel Scriven, 2 Allt na Blathaich, Loch Eck, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8SG (*phone* 01369 840606 & 01505 843679)

**Vice Chairman:** Position vacant

**Secretary:** Katie Pendreigh, The Whins, Ferry Road, Tayinloan, Argyll PA29 6XQ (*phone* 01583 441359)

**Treasurer:** Bob Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Arrochar, Dumbartonshire G83 7DG (*phone* 01301 702603)

**Membership Secretary:** Sue Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Dumbartonshire G83 7DG (*phone* 01301 702603)

**Committee:** Richard Allan (Oban), Tom Callan (Otter Ferry), Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilphead), Danielle Clark-De Bisschop (Colintraive), Paul Daw (Minard), Mike Harrison (Connel), Ian Hopkins (Bute), (Andy Robinson (Partick), David Warden (Kilfinan) and Mark Williamson (Kilberry).

**Editor of the *Argyll Bird Report*:** Tom Callan, Corra, Otter Ferry, Tighnabraich, Argyll PA21 2DH (*phone* 01700 821212)

**Editor of the *Eider*:** Mark Williamson, Port Ban, Kilberry, Argyll PA29 6YD (*phone* 01880 770201)

**ABC Website:** <http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>

**Webmaster:** Danielle Clark

*phone* 01700 841284

*e-mail* [dany@condorjourneys-adventures.com](mailto:dany@condorjourneys-adventures.com)

**Argyll Bird Recorder**

Paul Daw, Tigh-na-Tulloch, Tullochgorm, Minard, Argyll PA32 8YQ

*phone* 01546 886260

*e-mail* [monedula@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:monedula@globalnet.co.uk)

**BTO Regional Representatives in Argyll**

**Argyll South, Bute & Gigha:** Richard Allan  
*phone* 01852 300 359

*e-mail* [r.allan13@btinternet.com](mailto:r.allan13@btinternet.com)

**Argyll North—Mull, Coll, Tiree & Morvern:** Sue Dewar  
*phone* 01680 812594

*e-mail* [sue.dewar@btconnect.com](mailto:sue.dewar@btconnect.com)

**Islay, Jura & Colonsay:** John Armitage  
*phone* 01496 860396

*e-mail* [jsa@ornquest.plus.com](mailto:jsa@ornquest.plus.com)



**T**he *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 digital photographs (jpeg files preferred) of birds and their habitats to the editor. 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. 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 annual *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).