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RECENT REPORTS December 2015



31 December: At 11:15 on 12 December 2015, a **White-tailed Eagle** with turquoise wing tags with a white 'X' was seen on the shore near Minard Castle, Mid-Argyll by Reinold Gayre. A radio tracking device could also be seen. The information was passed to Roger Broad who recognised it as a bird originally released on the East Coast Scotland in 2009. It has been sighted at several places in Argyll, most recently at Loch Awe on 9 Feb 2015. Roger in turn passed the details on to Rhian Evans who has been monitoring the dispersal of the East coast birds.

He responded as follows: "...I am delighted to read that you have seen this bird which, as Roger said, is an East Scotland released bird from 2009 (male). He attempted to breed in 2014 in Perthshire but failed to return to territory again this season, so I had feared the worst. The female has since paired with a much younger west coast male. I have spent quite a bit of time looking for "turquoise X" this year by radio tracking, including a few days in Argyll with John Taylor from FCS, but didn't pick up any signals from him. That's not to say his transmitter isn't working though – it might have been that that he was just out of range. This bird has visited Argyll several times before – usually between January and March before returning to Perthshire during the breeding season, and then spending November-December/early Jan on Loch Leven in Kinross! It's a very usual pattern of behaviour! I'd be very grateful if you had any more sightings of this bird..." (Reinold Gayre/Roger Broad/Rhian Evans).

28 December: Six cock **Black Grouse** in the field above the farm at Stroneskar (north end of Kilmichael Glen) this afternoon around 3.00pm. They weren't lekking as such, just feeding, but there was a little aggression every now and then. They were just in the field by the gate, thought I might flush them when I had to go through but they stayed put! A male **Hen Harrier** flew across the hill at the back of Glen Gobhain, Kilmichael Glen and at least one **Brambling** with the Chaffinches coming into feeders there (Jonathan Platt).



Black Grouse - Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll 28 Dec (Jonathan Platt)

A count of 37 **Bar-tailed Godwits** and 1 **Red Knot** at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll and a further 5 **Bar-tailed Godwits** at Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

27 December: A **Blackbird** that visited a Connel (Mid-Argyll) garden from 21-25 December was wearing a Norwegian ring. After taking countless photographs the complete ring number was assembled and has now been submitted. (Mike Harrison).



Blackbird with ring – Connel, Mid-Argyll 24 Dec (Mike Harrison).

26 December: Five **Greenland White-fronted Geese** at Barsloisnoch today (David Jardine).
One **Green-winged Teal** at RSPB Gruinart reserve, Islay today (James How).

24 December: At RSPB Gruinart reserve, Islay today, a report of a drake **American Wigeon** and 2 drake **Green-winged Teals** (Gary Turnbull per Angus Murray).

22 December: At Bowmore, Islay today, a report of 7 **Waxwings** (Gary Turnbull per Ian Brooke).

A male **Hen Harrier** at the Moine Mhor this morning (Jim Dickson).

19 December: A **Twite** colour ringed at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre during autumn 2014 (August-November) was photographed by Kieran Nixon at Blakeney, Norfolk on 14th December 2015. *The second MSBO Twite found in Norfolk* (Eddie Maguire).

On the Isle of Gigha today: **Water Rail**, **Jack Snipe** and 2 juv **Iceland Gulls** (David Jardine).

At Otter Ferry spit, Cowal this morning: 14 Knot, 35 Dunlin, *ca* 40 Turnstones and *ca* 20 Ringed Plover. There were also 11 Teal at the Little Spit (Tom Callan).



Twite - Blakeney, Norfolk 14 Dec 15 (Kieran Nixon).

18 December: At Westport marsh, Kintyre, Eddie Maguire counted 1,000 **Lapwings** and also a **Peregrine** and male **Hen Harrier** there.

16 December: At Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll today: a **Slavonian Grebe** and 2 **Great Northern Divers** (David Jardine).

15 December: One juv. **Iceland Gull** still in Oban Bay, Mid-Argyll today and at the head of Loch Feochan a single **Greenshank** and 3 Rock Doves (Jim Dickson). A **Green-winged Teal** was at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay (Mary Redman).



Iceland Gull- Oban, Mid-Argyll 15 Dec (Jim Dickson).



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14 December: Noted an **Oystercatcher** with a yellow colour-ring (L leg T82) with roosting birds at the Loch Gilp pier, Mid-Argyll. Probably a bird ringed at Ballater, Aberdeenshire with 82 other birds on 29 Mar 2014 and awaiting confirmation. (Jim Dickson).

From Harry Scott: "Yes Jim, that's most certainly one of our mid-Deeside birds! ;-)

Originally caught and ringed near Ballater on 29/03/2014 - it then disappeared and wasn't re-sighted till the spring of this year, back at the original catch site, where it was observed at the Ballater spring roost on 5 evenings between 14–31st March. The birds then dispersed, after which it was then sighted once amongst a group of 34 pre-breeding bird up a local glen (Glen Gairn) but it hasn't been seen since... till now! ;-)

So... at last, we finally know where it's wintering – we now just need to locate its nesting grounds next summer?

Your sighting represents a new area for our birds to be wintering in so please keep your eyes open for any others which may be hidden away down there? These 83 darvic'd birds have certainly revealed a lot more wintering grounds over the last two winters than we had recorded from 4-500 metal ringed birds over the last 6-7yrs!

Great sighting! Many thanks indeed for taking the time to report it!"

On the Holy Loch, Cowal WeBS counts: 8 Mute Swan, 55 Wigeon, 61 Teal, 61 Mallard, 99 Eider, 1 Goosander, 12 Cormorant, 6 Shag, 5 Grey Heron, 4 Little Grebe, 1 **Great-crested Grebe**, 194 Oystercatcher, 4 Lapwing, 38 Curlew, 9 Redshank, 10 Turnstone, 21 Black-headed, 16 Common, 110 Herring and 27 Great Black-backed Gulls (George Newall).



Oystercatcher (T82)-Ballater, Aberdeenshire Mar 15 (Harry Scott).

13 December: On Loch Indaal, Islay, WeBS counts today: **Great Northern Diver** 58 , Red-throated Diver 25, **Common Scoter** 36, Eider 2, Shag 10, Red-breasted Merganser 11, Common Gull 59, Common Guillemot 6. Interestingly, at dawn 08:30 onwards divers and scoters were flying into Loch Indaal from further out at sea, flat calm conditions and a good sunrise made conditions ideal to observe (Mike Peacock). Four **Bullfinch** at Gearach, Islay and male Hen Harrier (Val Peacock).

Three adult & two juv **Whooper Swans** across the field this morning towards Dunamuck, Bridgend, Mid-Argyll (Malcolm Chattwood).

12 December: A juv. **Iceland Gull** at the Ormsary fish farm, Mid-Argyll again this morning (Stu Crutchfield).

At Cairnbaan today, in the garden: 85 Chaffinches, 6 Great Tits, 8 Blue Tits, 7 Long-tailed Tits and 2 Jays. At The Add Estuary 2 Otters at the Islandadd Bridge (Jim Dickson).



Otter - Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll 12 Dec (Jim Dickson)



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11 December: **Tree Sparrow** again at Balephuill today with *ca* 40 House Sparrow and 1 Greenfinch (John Bowler).

A Juv. **Glaucous Gull** at head of Loch Fyne, Mid-Argyll this morning (David Jardine).

10 December: On Tiree: a juv. **Glaucous Gull** at Rubha Chraiginis, 2 Fieldfare at Hynish, 7 Goldfinch at Balephuill, 2 **Pink-footed Geese** and 1 Shelduck at Cornaigmore (John Bowler). The juv. **Glaucous Gull** still at Arrochar, Cowal/Clyde at 10 a.m. today in high tide roost at the old pier (Alexander Nicol).

09 December: On Tiree: 12 Fieldfare and 1m Hen Harrier at Caoles, 1 **Long-tailed Duck** in Gunna Sound, 4 Shelduck at Ruaig, 1 **Snow Bunting** and 2 Goldfinch around cattle feeders at Gott Tip, 12 Goldfinch at The Reef and *ca* 400 Redwing around the island in groups of up to 50 (John Bowler).



Jay- Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll 9 Dec (Jim Dickson).

06 December: At Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll a third-winter **Little Gull** and 9 Red Knot (Jim Dickson).

The juv **Iceland Gull** still showing at Oban Times Slipway, nr Columba Hotel, Oban, Mid-Argyll (Bill Allan).

A new juv **Glaucous Gull** at Traigh Bhi, Tiree today (John Bowler).



Little Gull - Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll 6 Dec (Jim Dickson).



Little Gull - Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll 6 Dec (Jim Dickson).



Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll 6 Dec (Jim Dickson).

05 December: An **Iceland Gull** feeding among the seaweed by the slipway to the north of the Columba Hotel, Oban, Mid-Argyll near about 1200 today (Mike Anderson).
At Arrochar, Cowal/Clyde the juv **Glaucous Gull** still present, since 26 Nov (Anne-Lise Dickie).

04 December: A high count of 4 **Moorhen** at Westport Marsh, Kintyre...also present, a drake Goldeneye, 20 Wigeon and a drake **Gadwall**. At Kilmichael floods ca. 400 Wigeon and 40 Lapwing (Eddie Maguire).

03 December: A **Tree Sparrow** again at Balephuill, Tiree, also 12 Goldfinch, 1 Dunnock and 3 Water Rails calling there (John Bowler).

02 December: 1m and 1f Hen Harrier at Balevullin, Tiree plus 40 Redwing there (John Bowler).

01 December: 14 Purple Sandpipers at the mouth of the Killail Burn, Cowal were all roosting while Turnstones and Ringed Plovers (in much higher numbers) were rushing around feeding. (Tom Callan).

A **Jack Snipe** and 30+ Common Snipe at Balinoe, Tiree (John Bowler).



Iceland Gull - Ormsary, Mid-Argyll 1 Nov (Errol Crutchfield).