



Common Bird Census resumes at Taynish NNR

Taynish National Nature Reserve ©Steve Petty

Taynish National Nature Reserve (NNR) is located on a peninsula on the western side of Loch Sween in Knapdale, Mid Argyll. Native broadleaved woodland has survived here for over 6,000yrs. Sensitive management throughout its history has allowed Taynish to remain a very special place. The reserve is a mixture of woodland, scrub, bog, foreshore, grassland and heath, which together support a rich diversity of wildlife.

I established two Common Birds Census (CBC) plots at Taynish NNR in 1990; a woodland plot and a coastal plot. A wide range of habitats are represented within each CBC plot.

The CBC methodology allows the actual number of breeding bird territories to be determined within each plot. It was the long-standing breeding bird census method used by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) until 1994 when it was superseded by the less time consuming Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). BTO staff analysed the Taynish CBC data until 1994., after which I continued the data analysis to maintain continuity and survey accuracy. Following two missed years (2013 and 2014) due to other work commitments, I resumed the CBC at Taynish in 2015, largely thanks to the encouragement and support from the Argyll Bird Club.

Bird species richness has remained high over

Interesting trends and highlights of the 2015 season

Species in *italics* and **bold** are listed amber and red respectively in Birds of Conservation Concern.

- *Redstart* reached a record level of 12 territories in 2015 (long-term average of 7 territories per year).
- **Song Thrush** reached its highest level since 2007 with 12 territories (long-term average of 8 per year).
- **Grasshopper Warbler** was at a record low level with no territories identified (long-term average of 3 territories per year).
- *Sedge Warbler* was at a record low level with 3 territories (long-term average of 8 territories per year).
- *Garden Warbler* reached an outstanding record level with 11 territories (long-term average of only 3 territories per year).
- *Blackcap* was a scarce breeding species at Taynish through the 1990s but has shown a steady increase since 2001 and reached a record level of 22 territories in 2015 (long-term average of only 6 territories per year).
- *Willow Warbler* remains by far the commonest breeding bird species at Taynish with 89 territories in the CBC plots in 2015 (long-term average of 89 territories per year). However, the Willow Warbler popula-

the 24-year period with an average of 36 breeding species per year, reflecting the rich habitat diversity.

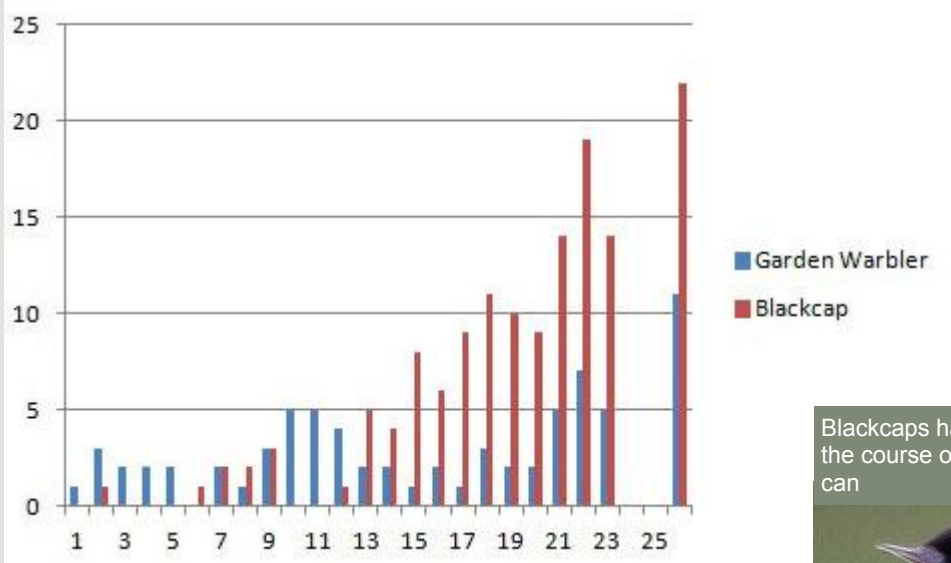
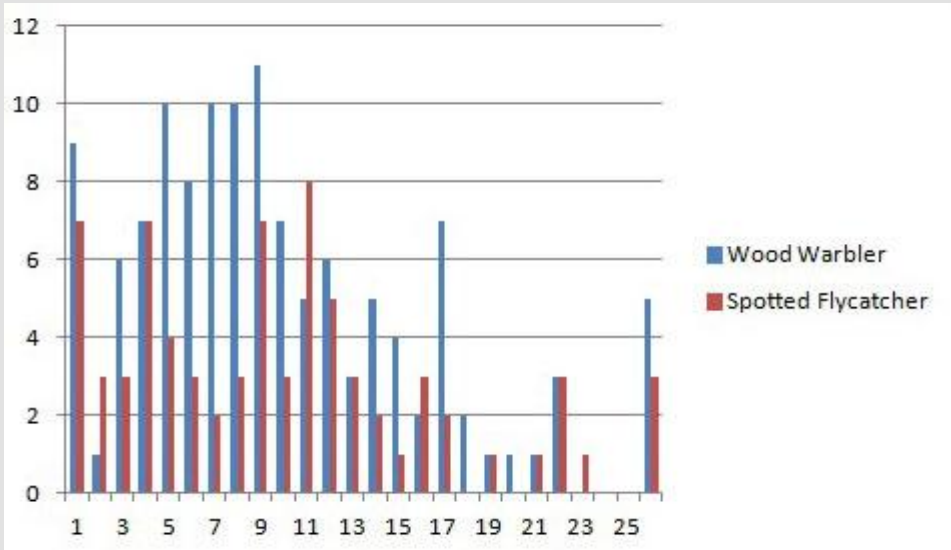
The full data set of the breeding bird populations within the Tainish CBC plots can be viewed under the 'Publications' tab at <http://argyllbirdclub.org>.

John Halliday

tion within the plots has significantly declined from the record high of 137 territories in 2011.

- **Wood Warbler** after record low levels in recent years is now showing signs of recovery from no territories in 2012 to 5 territories in 2015 (long term average of 5 territories per year).

The contrasting trends of some species at Tainish



The graphs show the number of territories from 1990 (1 on the bottom (x) axis) to 2015 (26 on the x axis). No counts were made in 2013 and 2014 (24 and 25 on the x axis).

Wood Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher (upper figure) have declined during this period. In contrast, Garden Warbler and Blackcap have shown substantial increases (lower figure).

Blackcaps have increased remarkably during the course of the study at Tainish ©Jim Duncan

