

The *Eider* is the quarterly newsletter of the Argyll Bird Club (<http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>)

September 2018
Number 125

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator
www.oscr.org.uk
Charity number
SC 008782

The Eider



Kingfisher, River Eachaig, Cowal on 25 May. ©Alistair McGregor

Recent bird sightings, pages 17-21
Papers for the AGM, pages 5-8

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

Inside this issue

Club news	Pages 3-4
Papers for the AGM	Pages 5-8
ABC field trip report: West Cowal <i>Neil Hammatt</i>	Page 9
ABC field trip report: Benmore Gardens <i>Steve Petty</i>	Pages 10-11
Scottish Bird Recorders meeting <i>Jim Dickson</i>	Pages 12-14
Scottish lowland/farmland Curlew workshop	Pages 14
BTO News update <i>Nigel Scriven</i>	Pages 15-16
Recent bird sightings: May-July 2018 <i>Jim Dickson</i>	Pages 17-21
Information about the ABC	Back page

Editorial

At present the management of the club relies on very few members, all making an enormous contribution. Quite understandably, some need a break from these commitments, which means we do need others to volunteer to help out and contribute new ideas. At present we have a minor crisis as we need at least two more committee members, a treasurer and a membership secretary. In addition, a very few dedicated members organise most field trips. We often

struggle to come up with new ideas for these enjoyable outings, and sometimes the regular leaders are unavailable. So, if you would be willing to lead a trip, either to locations visited in the past or new sites please talk to a committee member. You don't need to be an expert birder. The AGM at the autumn meeting provides a chance for you to help with the above.

I would encourage you all to read Jim Dickson's article (pages 12-14) on the future direction of bird recording in Scotland, and in Argyll. The BTO are updating their bird recording system, **BirdTrack**, which also has an app that you can download to your smart phone. This provides an easy way of recording your bird sightings if you do not use the **Argyll Bird Recording** system. In addition, we may soon see the end of the *Argyll Bird Report* in its present form. It is expensive to produce and involves countless man hours in its preparation. An electronic slimmed-down version of the systematic list may be the answer, with anything else (e.g. short papers) going into the *Eider*.

Finally, You cannot fail to notice that this is quite a small issue of the *Eider*. The success of the newsletter depends on you writing articles. And, apart from the usual contributions, none have been forthcoming recently. I'm hoping this has been a result of the good weather, since the spring issue, enticing folks outside rather than sitting at a computer. So, now the weather is back to normal (!!), please try and send me some articles for the December *Eider*, which should reach me before **20 November**. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

Very many thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue—Anne Archer, John Bowler, Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Jim Duncan, Toby Green, Paul Finnigan, Bob Furness (including photocopying & dispatch), Sue Furness, Neil Hammatt, Gordon Holm, David Jardine, Eddie Maguire, Rab Morton, Alistair McGregor, Linda Petty (proof reading), Nigel Scriven and Ben Steel

Club News

FIELD TRIPS 2018

If there is a chance that adverse weather might lead to the cancellation of a field trip, please check the club's website or contact the organiser the night before or prior to setting off.

Saturday 29 September. Machrihanish Seabird Observatory and surrounding area.

Led by Eddie Maguire (e-mail msbowarden@gmail.com phone 07919 660292) and Rab Morton (e-mail san-da.bo@btinternet.com phone 01586 551568). Meet Rab Morton in Campbeltown, at the Information Centre, which is at the top of the pier, at 11.00hrs. Car parking is on the pier or along

towards the ferry terminal. After visiting good birding spots around the town the group will head for Machrihanish Bird Observatory to be shown around by Eddie Maguire. The trip will involve several short walks, each less than 500m. Please bring your own lunch.

Saturday 27 October. Sound of Gigha.

Led by Malcolm Chattwood (phone 01546 603389. e-mail malcolmchattwood@gmail.com). Meet at Ronachan Point Car Park on the A83 (grid ref. NR741548) at 10.00hrs. Lunches will be available at the tearoom adjacent to the ferry at Tayinloan. The trip will include a short (5km return) walk up the shoreside north of Tayinloan after some rough ground at Ronachan viewpoint.

Programme for the ABC's 2018 Autumn Meeting

Saturday 3 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead

Time	Session
0930	Doors open, coffee and tea
0950-1000	Welcome and introduction— <i>Nigel Scriven</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1000-1030	Recent bird sightings and photographs— <i>Jim Dickson</i> , Argyll Bird Recorder
1030-1100	Birds, ticks and diseases— <i>Rachel Steenson</i>
1100-1130	Coffee/tea
1130-1215	Tag-n-track: Lesser Black-backed Gulls— <i>Hannah Riley</i>
1215-1245	Ardeer: the unprotected jewel— <i>Tom Byars</i>
1245-1345	Lunch (available in the hotel, if required)
1345-1430	AGM
1430-1510	Seabird tracking— <i>Peadar O'Connell</i>
1510-1530	Tea/coffee
1530-1600	Wildlife Crime— <i>Paul Barr</i> , Police Scotland/Loch Lomond NP
1600-1615	BTO update, including Project Owl— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1615-1630	Raffle and closing remarks

Saturday 24 November. Loch Gilp and Add Estuary. Led by Jim Dickson (phone 01546 603967. e-mail meg@jdickson5.plus.com). Meet at 10.00hrs in Lochgilphead at the Corran Car Park, opposite the caravan park, on the A83, close to the roundabout (A83/A816) at the western end of the town. Please bring your own lunch. The trip will include several short walks (each 300m maximum) on level ground.

INDOOR MEETINGS 2018-2019

Autumn Meeting and AGM 2018. Saturday 3 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel (www.cairnbaan.com), near Lochgilphead (phone 01546 603668). Lunches will be available in the hotel. The programme is given on the previous page.

Spring Meeting 2019 (Scottish Birdwatchers Conference). Saturday 16 March 2019 in the Corran Halls, Oban. This will be a joint conference with the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, the British Trust for Ornithology and the Argyll Bird Club. There will be field trips on the following day. The programme will be included in the December *Eider*. It will include talks on Corncrakes (Bridget England), White-tailed Eagles and Livestock (Ross Lilley) and Short-eared owls (John Calladine).

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

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 28 (2016)

All members should have received their copy of ABR 28. If you haven't, please contact Bob Furness (contact details on the back page).

We are still looking for folk to help on the editorial side of future reports, including writing/collating species accounts and proof reading.

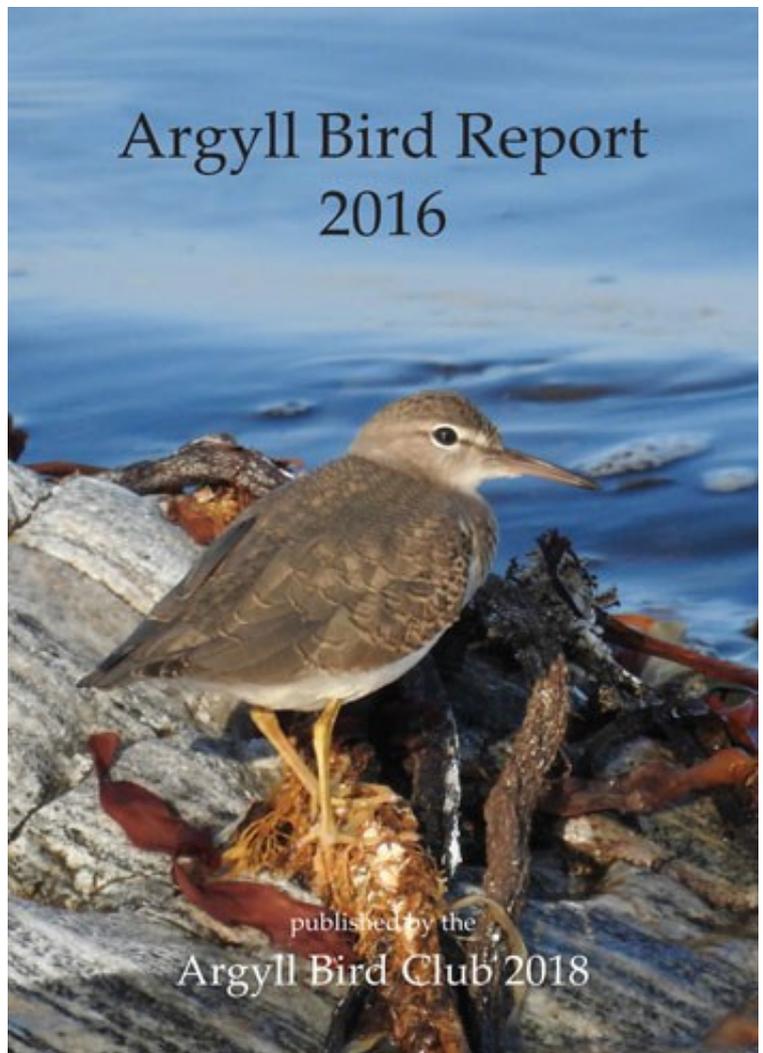
THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB'S

WEBSITE

Don't forget to visit our website (www.argyllbirdclub.org) to find out about up-to-date arrangements for meetings, recent sightings of birds, including photographs, and lots more.

TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY REQUIRED

After many years of efficiently managing the club's accounts and membership data, Bob and Sue Furness are stepping down at the next AGM. So, we need someone to take over from this November. If you are interested, please contact Bob who will be more than willing to explain what the jobs involve. There are many advantages in just one person or a couple taking on both posts.



Argyll Bird Report 28 (2016). Additional copies can be purchased from Bob Furness (contact details on the back page). The cost is £12 including P&P. Cheques should be made payable to the Argyll Bird Club.

Papers for the AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

To be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday 3 November 2018

Scottish Charity Number SC008782

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 15 APRIL 2017-14 APRIL 2018

The club can be contacted through the Secretary, Mrs Anne Archer, 2 The Meadows, Toward, By Dunoon, Argyll PA23 7UP. The club is an unincorporated association managed by a committee of members elected by the membership at the annual general meeting. The members of the committee serve as the trustees of the charity.

The club's 32nd Annual General Meeting was held on 4 November 2017, attended by 34 members. At this meeting Mike Harrison stood down as Chairman to be replaced by Nigel Scriven the Vice Chairman, and David Jardine was elected as the new Vice Chairman. Bob Furness was re-elected Treasurer and Anne Archer as Secretary. Sue Furness was re-elected as Membership Secretary, but she is not a committee member. Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Gordon Holm, Katie Pendreigh, Steve Petty, Andy Robinson and Blair Urquhart remained on the committee, and were joined by Neil Hammatt.

Management

During the year the committee managed the club in accordance with the amended constitution of the club which was adopted at the Annual General Meeting held on 23 October 1999. The committee met in Inveraray on four occasions during the year. The operational focus of the committee continues to be on the club's meetings, field trips, bird report, newsletter and website while ensuring that these activities are underpinned by sound finances and that the club's charitable status is maintained.

Objectives and Activities

The aims of the Argyll Bird Club are to promote interest in and the conservation of the birds of Argyll and their habitats. During the year the club held two indoor meetings, at the Cairnbaan Hotel in November 2017 and at the Inveraray Inn, Inveraray in March 2018, at which invited speakers gave talks on ornithological or wider conservation interests.

Talks at the November meeting covered bumble bees in northern Scotland, the birds of Colonsay and Oronsay, the underwater life of Loch Sunart, birdwatching in Costa Rica, and the results of the club's recent rookery survey.

In March the programme suffered some last-minute changes due to the combined impact of the 'Beast from the East' and storm Emma causing travel disruption affecting two speakers who were unable to attend and were substituted at short notice. The topics covered were butterflies and moths of Argyll, wildlife of Argentina, wildlife in Patagonia, surveying Woodcocks, and a study of three crow species on Colonsay.

The club thanks the speakers and organisers for their contribution to the success of these meetings, and the members who write up the talks for publication in subsequent editions of the *Eider*.

The Club continued its programme of monthly field trips with ten during the year, visiting Benmore Gardens (in Cowal), the RSPB's reserve at Loch Lomond, Colonsay and Oronsay, Tiree, the Sound of Gigha, Clachan and Skipness in Kintyre, Loch Gilp, Ormsary in Knapdale, and Loch Laich and Port Appin. The club thanks the leaders of these trips for contributing their time and effort, and to those members, often the leaders of the trips, who subsequently prepared reports of the trips for publication in the *Eider*.

The Club newsletter, the *Eider*, continues to thrive under the editorship of Steve Petty, with four editions published during the year. These contained news, views, articles, reports of club activities and recent bird sightings. It is published in both paper and electronic formats; the latter enabling substantial savings in printing and postage costs.

The club's website provides a contact point for the club and is one of our principal tools for promoting an interest in the birds of Argyll. Details of forthcoming field trips and indoor meetings are posted too, together with information about the club and its publications. The feature which draws most visitors is the 'Sightings' page where the latest reports and images of the bird life of

Argyll can be found. The substantial effort put in by Jim Dickson and his helpers to keep the site up to date is much appreciated by users.

The club's activities towards promoting the conservation of the birds of Argyll generally fall into three areas—recording the occurrence of birds, publishing those records, and supporting fieldwork and conservation activities relating to birds.

The recording team, ably led by Jim Dickson, receives around 30,000 individual records from more than 450 contributors annually for processing and entry into the database. Most records come through the club's own recording system, but increasingly through the BTO Bird-Track system. Aside from requests for data extracts from commercial organisations and academic researchers, the main vehicle for publishing these data is the *Argyll Bird Report*, compiled by a small team currently led by Jim Dickson. Volume 28 of the report, covering 2016, was published in February 2018 and distributed to members either by post or in person at the Spring Meeting in Dunoon. Sales of the report are an important source of revenue for the club.

The club thanks all who are involved in ornithological recording in Argyll including the Argyll Bird Records Committee, the Argyll Bird Recorder and his team, especially Morag Rea, Ian Brooke Peter Hogbin and Dorothy Hogbin who spend countless hours preparing records for entry into the database, the observers and organisations which submit records to the database and the writers who assist in the preparation and publication of the *Argyll Bird Report*.

Fieldwork and conservation activities this year included financial support to Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, which is an important source of information on migrant birds, especially seabirds, waders and finches, along the Argyll coast. The club is also supportive of similar-minded organisations, especially the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the British Trust for Ornithology. This includes the promotion of numerous volunteer field surveys, and planning has commenced for a joint conference in Oban in March 2019 (see page 4). The club carried out a rookery survey in 2017-2018, the first survey for a number of years. The results were reported in *Argyll Bird Report 28*.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2017-2018

The cash balance at the end of the year stood at £11,303.36, a decrease of £781.27 from the previous year. Overall, the deficit is mainly due to awarding more grants this financial year, and not having income from gift aid (because we do not claim annually). Income from subscriptions was marginally higher than in the previous year, at £2,601.23. Fluctuations in subscription income arose due to changes in numbers of members, but also from late payments from members who forgot to renew in January. These often arrive around the end of the financial year in early April so may fall in one year or the next. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contributed items to be raffled. Income from 'raffles and donations' increased to £405.00 thanks to anonymous donations in addition to our normal raffle income of £195 across the two indoor meetings. Sales were mostly of the latest *Argyll Bird Report*. We have very few copies of the book remaining to sell so our sales income in future may decline further unless we take steps to increase sales of the bird report. We reclaimed Gift Aid during 2016-17 for a period of three years, so this income only appears every few years in the accounts; a claim for 2017-18 will be due during next the financial year. As anticipated in the previous year's report, income from data provision has been relatively low, reflecting the lower current level of developments in Argyll (especially wind farm proposals) that require information on local bird populations.

Expenditure under most headings was similar to that in the previous year. Printing of the *Argyll Bird Report* and postage costs represent our main expenditure. The other major recurring expense is indoor meetings. Costs of meetings included room hire, and refunding of speakers' expenses. Insurance costs were third party cover for club activities. The expenditure of £39.98 on 'club equipment' was for extra data storage capacity (a memory chip). Expenditure on copying the newsletter increased slightly this year due to the larger number of pages, but is likely to decline in the long term as increasingly members opt to receive the *Eider* as a full colour PDF by email. This year we provided grant

**Accounts for the 32nd year of the Argyll Bird Club
15 April 2017 to 14 April 2018
Scottish Charity Number: SC008782**

	2017/2018	2016/2017
INCOME		
Subscriptions	2601.23	2522.23
Sales	749.00	933.00
Raffles & donations	405.00	185.00
Data fees	112.00	0.00
HMRC Gift Aid	0.00	710.71
TOTAL	3867.23	4350.94
EXPENDITURE		
Bird report	1568.00	1390.00
Newsletter photocopying	398.80	324.95
Postage	548.62	570.36
Meetings	880.10	798.75
Insurance	113.00	113.00
Grants	1100.00	250.00
Club equipment	39.98	0.00
TOTAL	4648.50	3447.06
Surplus/deficit for year	-781.27	903.88
Brought forward	12084.63	11180.75
Assets at end of year	11303.36	12084.63

funding to support Twite ringing, sponsorship towards publication of the *Birds of Colonsay and Oronsay*, support for the common bird census at Taynish, and towards the costs of Machrihanish Seabird Observatory. The larger grant funding in 2017-18 is the main reason for the accounts showing a deficit. However, with our balance close to the upper threshold set by the Committee, we will continue to aim for a small deficit over the next few years to align the balance with our target of no more than three-times annual income. The accounts have been audited by Dr Bernie Zonfrillo.
Bob Furness, 24 April 2018

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

The number of memberships has shown a small increase, with 208 paid memberships as on 24 April 2018, about eight more than at the same time in 2017. We have approximately 300 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships. A high proportion of members now pay by Standing Order. At the moment 192 pay that way, which greatly simplifies administration of memberships.
Sue Furness, 24 April 2018

MINUTES OF THE 32ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ABC HELD AT THE CAIRNBAAN HOTEL ON SATURDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 2017

34 members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Anne Archer, Malcolm Chattwood, Neil Hammett, Alan Hawkins, Janet Jardine, Doug Menzies, Norman [and Morag] Rae, Jackie Scott-Mandeville and Callum Skinner

2. Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting held on 12 November 2016 had been published in the September 2017 issue of the *Eider*. Acceptance of the minutes as a true record of the meeting was proposed by Ian Hopkins and seconded by David Palmar.

3. Matters arising not covered in the following items

There were no matters arising from the minutes which would not be covered by the items on the agenda.

4. Annual report and accounts

The annual report and accounts were prepared for the year ending 14 April 2017 in accordance with the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR) and were approved by the committee at their meeting on 10 August before being published in the September edition of the *Eider*. The report and accounts were being offered for adoption by the membership at

the AGM before being sent to OSCR.

Chairman Mike Harrison commented that the report contained a good summary of the activities of the club and thanked a number of people for their work over the year under consideration. He took the opportunity presented by the AGM to thank in particular Jim Dickson for his work as recorder, editor of the *Argyll Bird Report* and principal poster of recent sightings on the club website.

No issues were raised by the members present regarding the annual report. Commenting on the accounts, Treasurer Bob Furness highlighted that the club had recorded a surplus in the year in question, and the total funds held by the club were currently above the upper limit specified in the club's financial reserves policy. A grant to the Sanda Island Bird Observatory to allow the purchase of a small boat for easier access to the island and a recording expedition to an under-recorded area of Argyll were suggested by members as projects which could be supported using the funds available. Adoption of the annual report and accounts was proposed by Iain Gibson and seconded by Gordon Holm.

5. Election of office bearers and committee members.

Retiring Chairman, Mike Harrison, proposed Nigel Scriven as chairman for the coming year. Nigel indicated he was willing to stand, albeit reluctantly and for one year, as it would be his third term as chairman and he would like to see others coming forward to take on this role. Nigel's nomination was seconded by Ian Hopkins. There were no other nominations and Nigel Scriven was confirmed as Chairman.

For the post of Vice Chairman Nigel Scriven proposed David Jardine who indicated his willingness to stand for this position. This proposal was seconded by Ron Forrester. There were no other nominations and David Jardine was confirmed as vice-chairman.

Apart from Mike Harrison all other office bearers and committee members had indicated that they were willing to stand for re-election. For the posts of Treasurer and Secretary respectively, Bob Furness and Anne Archer were proposed by Mike Harrison and seconded by Nigel Scriven. There were no other nominations and Bob Furness and Anne Archer were con-

firmed as Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Bob indicated that he would stand down at the 2018 AGM.

The seven remaining committee members Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Gordon Holm, Katie Pendreigh, Steve Petty, Andy Robinson and Blair Urquhart were proposed en bloc for election to the committee by Mike Harrison and seconded by John Anderson. Mike Harrison proposed that Neil Hammatt be elected to the seat he had just vacated. This was seconded by Nigel Scriven. There were no other nominations to the committee and the eight candidates were confirmed as committee members.

For the post of Membership Secretary, Sue Furness was proposed by Mike Harrison, seconded by Robin Harvey and elected unopposed. Sue indicated that she would stand down at the 2018 AGM.

6. A.O.C.B.

David Jardine noted that the club would be joining with the SOC and BTO to promote the Scottish Birdwatchers' Conference in Oban on 16 March 2019.

The next AGM was expected to be held in November 2018 at Cairnbaan.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 14.30 hours.

Agenda for the 33rd AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

The AGM will be held on Saturday 3rd November 2018 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, Lochgilphead.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2017 AGM
3. Matters arising not covered in the following items
4. Annual report and accounts
5. Election of office bearers and committee members

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

6. A.O.C.B.

ABC field trip to West Cowal—27 May 2018



Castle Lachlan on Loch Fyne ©Gordon Holm

Nine members met at the Inver Restaurant for coffee overlooking Castle Lachlan on Loch Fyne in the sunshine and a strong wind. Common Sandpipers were whizzing from bank to bank.

We then walked on to Kilmory Chapel where we watched Treecreepers in the trees surrounding the graveyard. We slowly walked towards the ruined castle just about hearing Wood Warblers above the din of wind in the trees. By the castle, a Blackcap was singing in the trees alongside a Blackbird.

Undeterred by the strong wind, we drove to the extremely busy Oystercatcher Pub, which stopped taking food orders just after we placed ours because of the sheer number of people about on a

sunny bank holiday. With all the hubbub surrounding an RNLi event, the usual birds had relocated further out into Loch Fyne.

We then drove on to the peace of Loch Melldalloch where an Osprey was sitting in a tree, Sand Martins were catching insects over the water and a Meadow Pipit objected to our presence in typical, scolding fashion.

Our birding attempt at Kilbride Farm and Ostel Bay was abandoned due to the huge numbers of cars and people about.

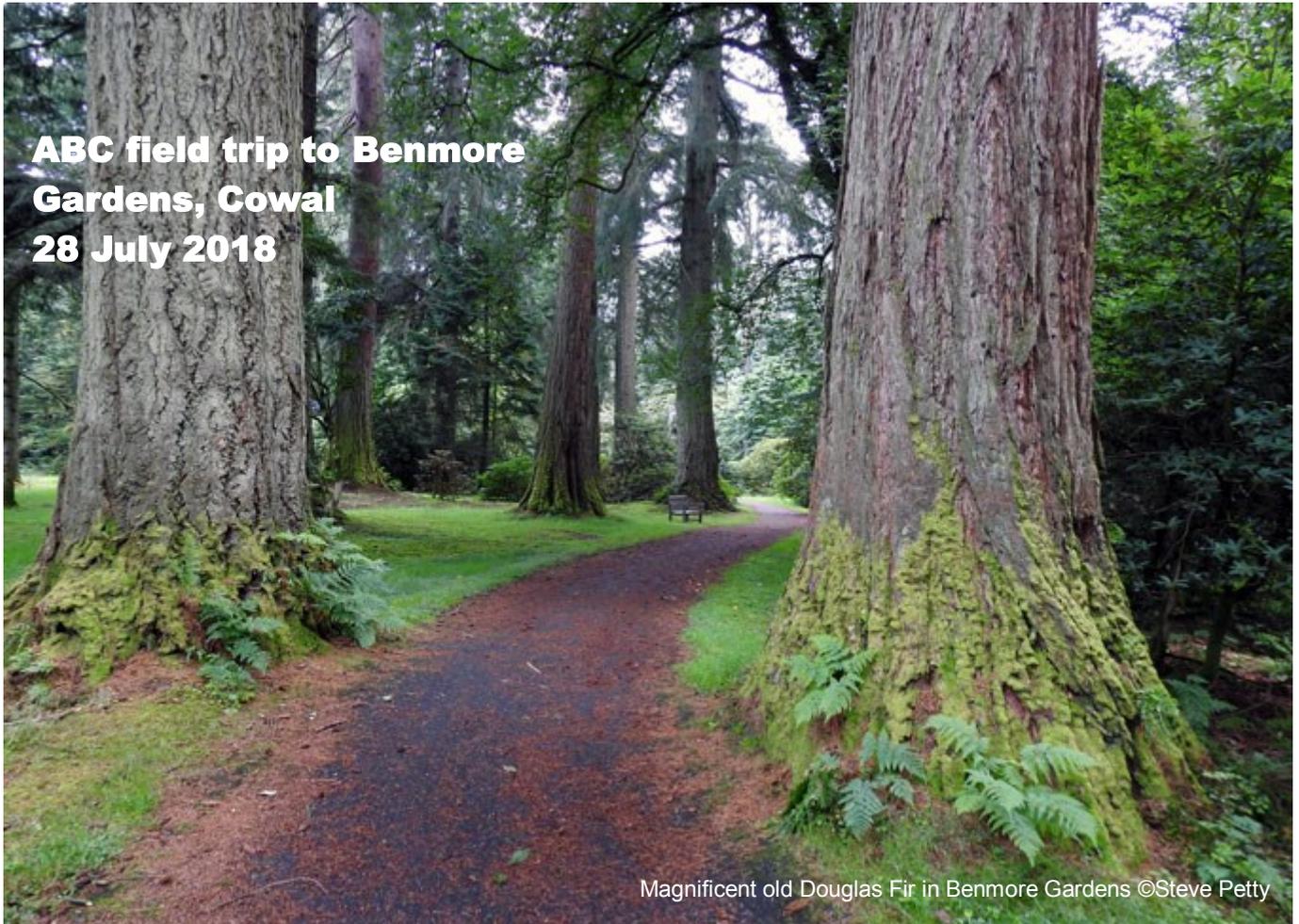
Forty-four species were logged on the day, but we missed some obvious targets due to it being too busy with wind and humans.

Neil Hammatt



Common Sandpiper and a flock of Canada Geese seen during the trip ©Gordon Holm

**ABC field trip to Benmore
Gardens, Cowal
28 July 2018**



Magnificent old Douglas Fir in Benmore Gardens ©Steve Petty

After such a fantastic spell of weather during spring and early summer, it was inevitable that the good spell would break sometime, as it did around the time of this field trip. A few days before the forecast was grim, but as it turned out we did experience a few dry interludes during the day. However, the forecast must have put most folks off, as only four members turned out.

Soon after setting off we ran into parties of tits (Blue, Great and Coal), which included numerous juveniles and some Tree Creepers and Goldcrests at the start of the magnificent Giant Sequoia avenue. These trees are over 150 yrs old and most are taller than 50m. We then headed for the new squirrel hide. Unfortunately it was still locked. Nevertheless, Red Squirrels seemed to be everywhere in the vicinity and one member said she'd never seen so many for years (photo opposite). It's not unusual to have 6-7 squirrels around the hide, which has proved to be very popular with visitors. Another regular at the bird feeders is Nuthatch, but not today! On our next visit, a few days later, one was present for a considerable time, but

having to wait for Red Squirrels to vacate the feeders (photo, next page).



Red Squirrel
on bird feeder
in Benmore
Gardens
©Steve Petty



Nuthatch, Benmore Gardens, 6 August ©Steve Petty

Recently fledged Buzzards were heard calling for food and Great Spotted Woodpeckers were heard but not seen. Generally bird sightings were pretty scarce, not surprising considering the weather. We headed to the highest point in the gardens, a viewpoint looking out towards Holy Loch and Dunoon. From here we had three species of hirundine (Swallow, and House and Sand Martin) hawking for insects overhead. We then descended through the newly created Chilean section of the garden, which includes a large area of Monkey Puzzle trees. On the way we admired a Chilean inspired refuge, built mainly of oak with wooden pegs holding it together.

We next visited the splendidly restored Victorian fernery, containing over 30 species of fern, including some magnificent tree ferns. On our way back we ventured past the recently renovated Golden Gates, which even in the gloom, shone out brilliantly. At this time of the year, trees

and shrubs in flower are pretty scarce, but we did find a few late-flowering Rhododendrons and some Eucryphias just starting to flower. Overall, the bird count was definitely on the low side, with just 19 species seen.

After a welcome lunch, sat outside at the Benmore cafe, we decided to go to the nearby Broxwood bird hide at Sandbank, which overlooks the Holy Loch Nature Reserve. It was just about high tide when we arrived. None of the wintering ducks had arrived yet. Sizable flocks of Widgeon and Teal can be found here a little later in the year. The most notable sighting today was a flock of at least 80 Curlew roosting in the grass at the edge of the water. It was difficult to count them accurately as many were hidden by the tall vegetation. This site usually holds a good number of Oyster Catcher, and we were not disappointed today, with a count of over 200 (photo below). The only other wader seen was Redshank, but only two individuals. We saw few ducks, just 25 mallard and a flotilla of 20 Red-breasted Mergansers quite far out in the loch. Just outside the hide my wife, Linda, spotted some yellow and black Cinnabar Moth caterpillars feeding on a Ragwort plant.

Steve Petty

Bird list Benmore Gardens. Grey Heron, Common Buzzard, Herring Gull, Wood Pigeon, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sand Martin, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Goldcrest, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Tree Creeper, Hybrid Crow, Hooded Crow, Chaffinch (19 species).

Bird list Broxwood Hide. Cormorant, Grey Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Oyster Catcher, Redshank, Curlew, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Carrion Crow, Hybrid Crow (17 species)



Part of a large flock of Oyster Catchers, Holy Loch, 28 July ©Steve Petty

Scottish Bird Recorders Meeting—21 July 2018

Jim Dickson (SOC Argyll Bird Recorder) and Malcolm Chattwood (SOC Assistant Argyll Bird Recorder) both attended the Scottish Bird Recorders Meeting held in Stirling. This meeting was organised by Stuart Rivers the newly appointed 'Birding Officer' at the Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC) and was attended by most of the bird recorders from the 21 recording areas across Scotland, as well as representatives from the BTO, the RSPB and from the UK Rare Breeding Birds Panel. The last meeting was back in 2009 and since then bird recording has moved on, with changes in how data is gathered, a huge increase in records submitted and increasing pressures on regions producing timely annual bird reports. Jeremy Wilson (RSPB) and vice chairman of the SOC opened the meeting stating that folk submitting their observations is the single most important thing that birdwatchers can do and the principal role of the SOC to manage and coordinate these in Scotland.

Topics discussed included: **Bird record submission** and the importance placed on individuals submitting their records to local recorders and on systems such as BirdTrack. Difficulties were expressed from recorders of receiving bird records from various organisations, particularly from publicly funded bodies, which are obliged to share records. However, this does not always appear to be the case or are often given reluctantly or very late. **Record storage** and **archiving** were discussed as well as data ownership. The **Scottish Online Bird Report** was highlighted by Ian Andrews and it was decided that this very useful resource should be better promoted (see below for more information). **Local Bird Reports** were discussed, led by Stuart Rivers, and the difficulties encountered in producing these where help is often increasingly limited. Some regions are many years behind with report production, whereas other areas are increasingly moving towards 'e-editions' in the form of PDFs as a way of overcoming some of these difficulties. These are not always ideal for folk that prefer traditional paper copies. However, such e-reports are free to produce, can reach a much larger audience and can al-

ways be printed out individually if preferred. The BTO **BirdTrack** record input system was discussed with Stephen McAvoy and the latest upgrade (which is still in development) was demonstrated by him. This should be available later in the year and will hopefully overcome some of the problems of inaccurate boundaries and difficult record validation processes in the current version (see below for more details). The UK **Rare Breeding Bird Panel** (RBBP) publishes a yearly account of species concerned in the *British Birds* journal. Dawn Balmer from RBBP led the discussion and a request was made to encourage folk to be vigilant for the possibilities of such species breeding locally and to submit records (see below for more information). Some recorders had difficulty in being able to use the RBBP input system, including the sheer amount of work involved each year. Finally, there was a call from one recorder that more use should be made of bird data collected at a local and Scottish level towards active conservation projects. It was also noted that local branches and bird clubs don't always actively get involved in conservation projects.

Bird Reports Search (online) from all over Scotland using the SOC website

Extract from the SOC: Online Scottish Bird Report (oSBR) puts hundreds of local bird reports (and over 100,000 species accounts) at your fingertips. Want to know where to find Corn Buntings in Fife, or where to look for Smew in Dumfries and Galloway? Or are you researching Black-browed Albatross sightings around Scotland? It's easy to use and is free: just select the species you're interested in (plus the regions and the years if you want).

The **Digital Scottish Bird Report Project** was led by the late Ray Murray, with the technical assistance of Ian Andrews and Stephen Hunter. The basic idea was to enable 'readers' to access all the species accounts, for each of the Scottish recording areas and for any year, via the online Scottish Bird Report (www.the-soc.org.uk/about-us/online-scottish-bird-report). Rather than trying to compress a huge number of records into a 100–200 word account

for each species, the readers can see all the 'raw' species accounts that were previously edited down for the old-style paper *Scottish Bird Report*.

A high percentage of historical reports are now available online, and new reports are added periodically by Ian and Stephen. The online coverage page (www.the-soc.org.uk/online-scottish-bird-report/sbro-coverage) allows you to see what is already posted on the site. We have undertaken not to upload new local reports to the site until we have permission from the local branch/club that publishes the report. In many cases this will be a year or two after the publication date of the local report.

Data have been compiled either from the original computer files that were forwarded to the printers by local bird report editors, or by scanning old copies from the days before local reports were computerised. While bound copies of all local reports are available at Waterston House, scanning is simpler and more accurate when unbound copies are used.

Scanning and the subsequent process of optical character recognition is not always 100% accurate, so some allowances have to be made for mistakes that occur at this juncture. This is especially the case with place names, particularly those in Gaelic where spell-checking software is at a real disadvantage. Similarly, some of the oldest reports, printed by what are now very crude copying techniques, have caused problems. Every effort has been made to maintain accuracy, to the extent of correcting errors in the original publications!

BTO BirdTrack

Many of you will already be familiar with using the BirdTrack system to input your own bird sightings using your PC but also increasingly using mobile phones via the BirdTrack app.

For birdwatchers in Argyll, the Argyll Bird Recording System was developed a few years ago as a quick means to enter your own bird records onto a spread sheet format which was compatible with the Argyll bird database, from which the *Argyll Bird Report* could be produced, and data made available for other projects or surveys. To date only a dozen or so club members regularly use this system (out of 300+ members!) inputting around 17,000 records each

year. However, year on year more use is being made of BirdTrack with around 15,000 records received in 2016, although most are from visiting birders to Argyll. In addition, 3,000+ records are received from the Wetlands and Estuaries Counts and around 4,000 from RSPB reserves/officers in Argyll.

In future it is likely that records coming from BirdTrack will be our main source of records and of course the BTO have the staff and technology to be able to fully analyse the data in ways that local bird clubs cannot. As such, anyone wishing to regularly record their sightings is strongly encouraged to use the BirdTrack system, although folk preferring the Argyll bird club recording system should continue to do so if they wish. Please have a look on the BTO website under BirdTrack and 'taking part'. It is easy to register, and there is an excellent level of help and instruction. For those familiar with the current input system there are new changes in the pipeline (later this year) with BirdTrack Global and an overall improved operating system.

The Rare Breeding Bird Panel

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel collects breeding data on the rarer species of birds breeding in the United Kingdom. In particular the records submitted allow the production of annual totals of breeding pairs for each species on its list. On their website (www.rbbp.org.uk) you can find information about the panel and its work, and in future there will be more detailed information about the status of each species and how numbers are calculated.

You can contribute to the work of the panel by submitting your bird records to the local bird recorder. For more information on record submission, see Data Submission on the RBBP website.

The Panel collects data on almost 200 species of rare and scarce breeding birds in the UK. Reporting rare breeding birds in this way keeps local bird recorders informed and allows them to place the record in context with their local situation. Using all the data received for each species for a particular year, bird recorders then submit an annual report to the Panel.

Records for each species should wherever possible include totals of breeding pairs in the

three categories of confirmed, probable or possible breeding (based on European Bird Census Council definitions).

RBBP collects and archives all breeding season records for the rare and scarcer breeding birds of the UK. This includes all species with a UK population of fewer than 2,000 breeding pairs, and a few species which exceed this figure, but which historically have had lower populations. Most species on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 are included. In addition, the panel would like to receive any breeding records for the rarer non-native (introduced or escaped) species such as Eagle Owl, some parakeets, rare pheasants and other gamebirds, and the rarer non-native wildfowl such as Black Swan and Egyptian Goose. A list of the principal species for which data are requested is in the Excel spreadsheet on their website, but full details on any other rare breeding species, including those attempting to nest in the UK perhaps for the first time,

should also be submitted.

Final word

Please help to make your 'birdwatching' count towards 'bird recording' which in turn may provide useful data towards future species knowledge and their conservation. If you haven't tried using the BTO BirdTrack before then please give it a try. Just visit the BTO website and register for free. Full explanation is given on their site and record entry is simple and there will be more improvements soon. For anyone with a bit of time to help out with various bird recording activities in Argyll we would love to hear from you and perhaps join the small team of folk who kindly input records onto spread sheets for the Argyll bird database or compile species accounts from spread sheets into written accounts for the *Argyll Bird Report*.

Jim Dickson

Scottish Lowland/Farming Curlew Workshop—27 September 2018

This workshop will be held at Battleby House, Perth, PH1 3EW (10.00-16.30hrs). It is organised by Mary Colwell. We would like to invite you to discuss the future of the Eurasian Curlew in Scotland.

Both breeding and wintering populations of Curlew are declining at an alarming rate throughout the British Isles and the species has recently been added to the Red List of endangered species and is considered Near Threatened, having already vanished as a breeding bird from large parts of the lowlands. Changes in farming practices, predation and human disturbance are the most commonly highlighted factors. This workshop will bring together various interested parties (farmers, landowners, field workers, conservation professionals, planners) to hear what is happening in different nesting areas in Scotland, specifically in farmed/lowland landscapes, and to find practical ways to conserve and extend the range of this genuinely iconic and widely-loved species.

The day will consist of a series of short presentations on Curlew projects, followed by targeted panel discussions on specific issues, where the

audience will be encouraged to take part. Practical ideas and solutions will be recorded and distributed after the meeting. A simple buffet lunch will be provided.

We would value your presence at this workshop, which is a vital step towards reversing the declining trend of Curlews in Scotland.

For further details see: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/scottish-lowlandfarmland-curlew-workshop-tickets-46527402714>



BTO news update

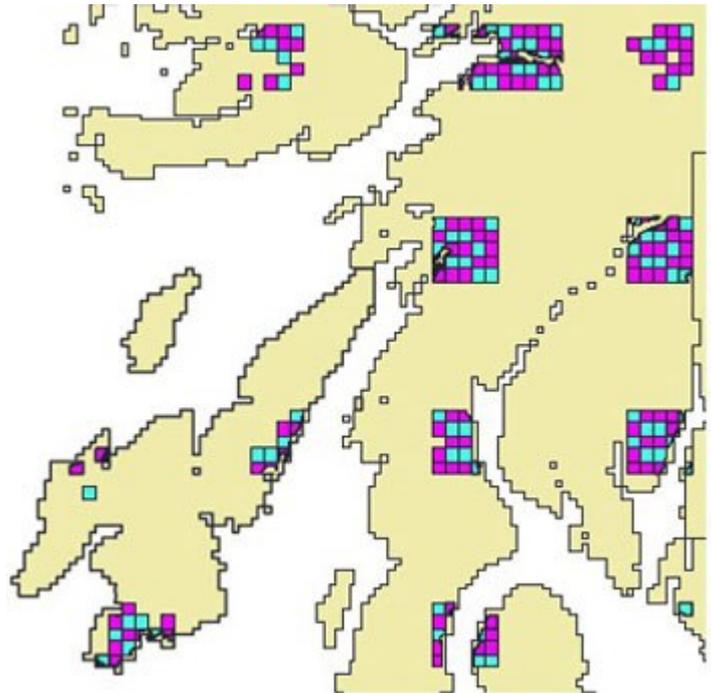
There are two Tawny Owl surveys starting this autumn. They are:

BTO Tawny Owl Point Survey in Argyll

The survey period starts on 15 August, lasting until 15 October. The sampling area is based on a specified tetrad (2km x 2km square), with each survey point being the centre of the tetrad. Each tetrad should get two visits (three allowed), consisting of two consecutive 10mins point counts of calling owls. Ideally the two visits should occur within a two-week period. The counts should be within the two hours following sunset. The weather should be calm and dry. The number of hooting birds (males) should give an indication of the number of territories.

The map opposite shows where the survey tetrads for Argyll are distributed. As can be seen from the map, help is particularly needed in the areas of Dunoon, Loch Etive/Lismore, Kilmelford, Erines, Grogport, Ardgarten/Cairndow, Bridge of Orchy and the islands of Islay, Jura and Mull.

To take part, find project owl in the volunteer surveys part of the BTO website at www.bto.org To take part you must be registered as a BTO volunteer to get a username and password for logging in. Request a square online and it will be allocated by your regional organizer (to avoid duplica-



tion). Data should be submitted online. More information and instructions can be found on the Project Owl pages of the BTO website.

TOCS Tawny Owl Calling Survey

Anyone can help by taking part in the survey, and listening for Tawny Owls in your garden or local green space or any other place that can be visited repeatedly. All you need to do is to listen for Tawny Owls for 20mins on one evening a week from 30 September to 31 March (see more details below). Although the more weeks you listen the better, you'll be able to do as many or as few weeks during the survey period as you feel able.

TAWNY OWLS

You're more likely to hear owls call during a **full moon** and when there is less cloud cover.

57% The probability of hearing owls increases from 57% on a cloudy, dark night in spring to 92% on a clear, warm evening in autumn.

92%

Temperature plays a part, too: you're more likely to hear a Tawny Owl call on a warmer night.

You have the most chance of hearing an owl in **AUTUMN** when the young are dispersing, especially between August and November.

for more information visit www.bto.org/owl-surveys

BTO news update (continued)

Seabirds Count 2015-2019

The decline in the productivity and population size of our seabirds has been followed for many years, based on data from selected colonies monitored every year. The last complete census of all colonies was from 1998-2002, and this attempts to document a more complete picture of these changes.

The national census of breeding seabirds began in 2015, but was only properly organized from 2018, once funding was found for national organization and a network of volunteer local organisers. Data are needed on all known current and former breeding sites of seabirds, both coastal and inland. If you have any information on any colonies that have been abandoned, this will also be very useful, so that they are given less priority for checking next year.

The master spreadsheet for Argyll has 620 locations. This is being split into manageable geographic chunks for local fieldwork to be collated by interested parties, then incorporated into the Argyll database. If you haven't been contacted yet, and feel that you can contribute, please contact the Argyll Organiser, Nigel Scriven (contact details on back page).

Recording sightings of upland birds

Have you considered submitting sightings of upland birds? While all sightings are valuable, for the 'What's Up?' project we are particularly interested in birds seen in upland habitats. Where you go and what you record is up to you (although see below for information about priority species).

Even if you only submit records of a single species (e.g. Ptarmigan) this is still of use. Please enter as many records as possible! Your sightings can help us to

better understand where different upland bird species occur and how these distributions change over time. This is valuable information which can help conservation science.

Priority species for casual recording

While all bird sightings are useful there are certain species for which additional information would be particularly valuable. These include species which are less common or more specialist, cryptic or nocturnal, or are species of current conservation concern. The top priorities at any given time will vary from season to season and you can read detailed guidance on the BTO's website.

During the breeding season we would be particularly grateful for records of the following species—Goosander, Whinchat, Common Sandpiper, Ptarmigan, Grey Wagtail, Wheatear, Curlew, Golden Plover, Lapwing and Dipper.

How to submit your sightings

We aim to make this as easy as possible, so your initial records can be submitted by email (include the species, number seen, date, name of location and grid ref). When providing a grid reference, please be sure to include the relevant two-letter code (e.g. NN, NM) in addition to the six digit number.

Ideally we would like you to use the BirdTrack system, online or via phone app. This ensures that your sightings are processed quickly, accurately and efficiently.

Nigel Scriven



Common Sandpiper. One of the species that the BTO is keen to get records for ©Jim Duncan

Recent bird sightings May to July 2018



Juvenile male Ruff, Machrihanish SBO on 16 August ©Eddie Maguire

Presented is a summary of records of rare and unusual species, including high counts and movements of more common species recorded in Argyll during the period. I wish to thank everyone who sent in records and apologise for any errors or omissions. Ideally records should be submitted using the Argyll Bird Recording system or by using the BTO BirdTrack system. For information about either scheme please email:

abcrecorder@outlook.com

A more detailed and up-to-date account of recent sightings, including a list of spring migrant arrival dates, is available on the Argyll Bird Club website.

Notes: MSBO = Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre. Some records are pending acceptance by the various rare bird committees (Argyll, Scottish & British).

Congratulations to Machrihanish SBO, which is 25 years old on 11 September 2018.

Swans, ducks, geese & game-birds

WHOOPER SWAN. Still up to six at Loch a' Phuill on Tiree, remained during Jun.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE. Mull; there was a late report of a 'Greenland race' bird at Salen on 18 Jun.

BARNACLE GOOSE. Coll; a late report of two at Cor-naigbeg on 13 Jun.

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE. Islay; a peak count of 61 were off Bridgend on 2 May.

GADWALL. Kintyre; two eclipse males arrived at Machrihanish SBO on 29 Jun and stayed until 2 Jul (photo below). (This is an uncommon species away from Is-



Eclipse male Gadwall, Machrihanish SBO on 29 June ©Eddie Maguire

lay/Tiree)

GREEN-WINGED TEAL. Colonsay; a male at Ardskenish on 6 May, and presumably the same bird was at East Loch Fada on 7 May. Islay; a male at RSPB Gruinart Reserve was seen infrequently during May.

GARGANEY. Islay; a pair were at RSPB Gruinart Reserve on 30 May (James How).

RING-NECKED DUCK. Islay; regular sightings of the drake at Loch Finlaggan were made until mid-Jun. (Presumably the returning drake from previous years)

COMMON SCOTER. Islay; a peak count of 119 was made in outer Loch Indaal in early May. Kintyre; a total of 45 flew past Machrihanish SBO in Jun, with a max of 30 males flying past on 6 Jun. In the Sound of Gigha a peak count of 51 on 26 Jun comprised mostly males.

VELVET SCOTER. Islay; two males were seen with Common Scoters in outer Loch Indaal on 3 May. A male was at Easter El-lister Lochan with two Common Scoter from 4 Jun.

QUAIL. Islay; one was heard calling at Kin-nabus, the Oa on 10 Jul. Tiree; one was calling at Balephuill on 31 May.

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

WHITE-BILLED DIVER. Mull; a report of a summer adult photographed in flight off NW Mull on 5 Jun (per BirdGuides). (Unfortunately no further details have been provided.)

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER. Kintyre; a raft of 19 birds was off Machrihanish SBO on 10 May. Tiree; still 30 birds remaining around the island on 2 Jun.

PIED-BILLED GREBE. Mid-Argyll; the long-staying male was present at Loch Feorlin throughout this period.

SOOTY SHEARWATER. On Tiree in July, three were off Gunna Sound on 14th, 12 headed SW off Hynish in 1hr on 26th and six headed SW off Hynish in 1hr on 31st.

STORM PETREL. Coll; two at sea between

Mull and Coll on 24 May and three on 27 May. Mull; a maximum count of 60 at sea off NW Mull on 6 Jun. Tiree; a maximum count of six between Tiree and Coll on 3 Jun.

LITTLE EGRET. Cowal; one was at Kames Bay (Tighnabruaich) on 4 Jun. Islay. One was at the RSPB Gruinart Reserve on 23 May, and one also at the Bridgend Merse on 30 May.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE. Mid-Argyll; one was at Loch Gilp on 11 May. (A rarity there)

SLAVONIAN GREBE. Mull; one still at Loch na Keal on 1 Jun.

Raptors to rails

HONEY BUZZARD. In Mid-Argyll an adult female in a weak condition was picked up by tourists near Dalavich, Loch Awe on 15 Jun (photo below). It was taken by Mark Rafferty (SSPCA) to Paul Finnigan at Finn Falconry, Taynuilt to recuperate, but it unfortunately later died. The corpse has been sent for analysis.

BLACK KITE. Coll; a 'probable' was photographed near Arinagour on 15 Jun (Paul Brooker).

MARSH HARRIER. Tiree; a female flew south at Sandaig towards Loch a' Phuill on 24 Jun (John Bowler).

MONTAGU'S HARRIER. Kintyre; a female was flying SW at Strath Farm (The Laggan) on 12 May. The rec-



A very dark female Honey Buzzard
Mid Argyll, 15 June ©Paul Finnigan

ord has been submitted to the SBRC and would be a first record for Argyll if accepted (Eddie Maguire).

GOSHAWK. Mull; a 'possible' was reported near Bunessan on 25 Jun (Paul Brennan).

Waders

GREY PLOVER. Islay; one was with Golden Plovers at Ballinaby on 1 May. Tiree; one was at Gott Bay on 4 Jun.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER. Tiree; a moulting adult was found at Sandaig on 18 Jul (photo opposite), then seen around Barrapoll and Loch a' Phuill until 23 Jul (Toby Green/John Bowler).

RED KNOT. Islay; a peak count of 23 at Loch Indaal on 3 May. Kintyre; adults moving S at Machrihanish SBO included 2 on 18th, 5 on 22nd and 3 on 26 Jul.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER. Islay; one was at Ardnave Point on 4 May (James Butcher).

LITTLE STINT. Islay; an adult was at Saligo on 31 May. Tiree; an adult was at Gott Bay on 27 and 28 May and another was there on 10 Jun, an adult was at Vault Bay 30-31 May and an adult at Loch a' Phuill on 31 May.

CURLEW SANDPIPER. Islay; one was at RSPB Gruinart Reserve on 7 May, with two there on 10 May. Tiree; a 2CY (second calendar year) bird was at Sorobaidh Bay on 25 May, with two birds there 29th and one remaining until 31 May. One, and perhaps two adults at Loch a' Phuill on 31 May and an adult at Loch a' Phuill on 26 Jun.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT. Tiree; last bird noted at Loch an Eilein on 9 Jun and the first returning single noted from 9 Jul.

JACK SNIPE. Mid-Argyll; one was at Braevallich (Loch Awe) on 3 May. Mull; one was reported from Ben More on 21 May.

WHIMBREL. Islay; a peak count of 162 birds around the north of the island on 3 May with a peak flock count of 67 at Ardnave on 3 May. At Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre there was a peak count of 43 on 5 May. Also 30 at the entrance to West Loch Tarbert on 4 May. Tiree; peaks of 14 at Traigh Bhi on 16 May and 15 near Salum on 28 May.

GREEN SANDPIPER. Islay; one was by a pool

at Bolsay, near Port Charlotte on 31 Jul.

WOOD SANDPIPER. Islay; one was at the RSPB Gruinart Reserve on 20 May.

Skuas, gulls, terns & auks

POMARINE SKUA. Islay; one was reported off Lagavullin on 12 Jun. Tiree; three adults were off Gunna Sound on 4 May and five adults were off Hynish later the same day.

LITTLE GULL. Mid-Argyll; an adult was at Loch Gilp on 5 May. Mull; one was at the Sound of Mull on 8 May, an adult was on the sea off NW Mull on 24 May and a 2CY was at Grasspoint on 30 May. Tiree; two adults >E past Hynish on 29 May and a 2CY was at Loch a' Phuill on 31 May.



Upper photo. American Golden Plover (right) with Golden Plover. Sandaig, Tiree on 18 July ©Toby Green

Lower photo. Bonaparte's Gull. Tiree on 31 May ©Ben Steel



BONAPARTE'S GULL. Tiree; a 2CY bird at Barrapol later flew to Loch a' Phuill on 31 May (Ben Steel) (photo last page) and was seen again briefly on 1 Jun (John Bowler).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL. Kintyre; a 2CY was at Machrihanish SBO on 22 May and an adult was there on 1 Jun (Eddie Maguire).

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL. Mid-Argyll; a 2CY was at Loch Gilp on 17 May (Jim Dickson, photo below). (Only the third record for Argyll.)

ICELAND GULL. Colonsay; a 2CY was at Kiloran during May and on Oronsay on 1 Jul. Islay; a peak of four birds on 3 May (3 x 2CY and a 3CY). Kintyre; a 2CY arrived at Machrihanish SBO on 15 Jun and remained until 22 Jun. Mull; a 2CY was at Tobermory from 18 May to end of Jun and a 2CY was at Bloody Bay on 30 May. Tiree; three (2 x 2CY and a 3CY) during the last week of May.

GLAUCOUS GULL. Islay; a peak of two (2CY) birds on 3 May. Mull; a 2CY showing some hybrid features was at Tobermory on 4 Jun. Tiree; a 3CY feeding on a dead Minkie Whale at the Green on 3-4 May and a 3CY (same?) was at Kenovay on 27 May.

BLACK TERN. Mull; a report of one at Loch na Keal on 14 Jun. (Unfortunately there are no supporting details as yet for this rare species to Argyll)

Doves, cuckoos, owls, swift, king-fisher & woodpeckers

COMMON SWIFT. Kintyre; first arrival of four over Campbeltown on 8 May and peaks of 12 there on 30 May and 20 on 21 Jul.

HOOPOE. Cowal; one visited a garden in Tighnabruaich on 30 May (Jean Irvine).

KINGFISHER. Cowal; a pair bred and fledged young on the River Eachaig in May/Jun. Scattered records

elsewhere. (This is only the third confirmed breeding record in Argyll. The previous ones were in Carradale, Kintyre in 1993 and 1994)

GREEN WOODPECKER. Cowal; one was seen and heard on at least two dates near Benmore Botanical gardens in early Jun (Alistair McGregor).

Passerines (larks to buntings)

GREAT GREY SHRIKE. Islay; one reported at Ardnave on 17 Jun (Ian and Margaret Haigh). (Unfortunately the information given does not consider or rule out Lesser Grey Shrike, which is perhaps more likely in summer)

WOOD WARBLER. Tiree; one migrant was at Carnan Mor on 6 May. (Apparently there were good breeding numbers in Mid-Argyll this year)

LESSER WHITETHROAT. Colonsay; one was reported just north of Scalasaig on 10 May, however a description is still awaited. Islay; one was at Rockside on 16 May (Bob Davison).

SUBALPINE WARBLER. Tiree; a male, probably of the 'eastern' race was seen briefly in a garden at Torosa (Cornaigbeg) on 9 Jun (Keith Gillon).

GARDEN WARBLER. Tiree; one migrant was at Balephuill on 28 May.

MARSH WARBLER. Tiree; a non-singing bird showed well at Balephuill on 3 Jun (John Bowler).

EURASIAN REED WARBLER. Tiree; an unstreaked *Acrocephalus* warbler thought to be this species was at Manna on 3 Jun (Ben Steel). One was at Balephuill on 6 Jun (John Bowler).

NUTHATCH. Several reports from across mainland Argyll indicated a continuing range expansion. (Please send in all your sightings)

ROSY STARLING. Coll; a report of one at Clabhach on 6 Jun (visitors per David Andrews) and this or a different bird was at Sorisdale on 21-22 Jun (Iain Fergus/Ben Jones). Islay; an adult was at Ardnave from 12 Jul until at least 30 Jul (L & P Gunfield *et al.*). Mid-Argyll; an adult was seen briefly at Leckuary, Kilmichael Glen on 23 Jul (Christine & Rob Blackwell) with another that day seen at Ardferrin, which was also seen on 26 Jul (Colin Smith per Ju Randall). Mull; one



Yellow-legged Gull, Loch Gilp
17 May ©Jim Dickson



Tree Sparrow (left, male House Sparrow right) at Balephuill, Tiree on 15 May ©John Bowler

was in a private garden at Bunessan on 7 Jun. Tiree; one was seen briefly at Hynish on 6 Jun (Keith Gillon) then another (female) at Meningie, Loch a' Phuill on 17th and on 27th Jul was joined by a male on 23 to 27 Jul and again at Traigh Bhi on 23 to 31 Jul when another male appeared with all three birds seen at Traigh Bhi on 27 Jul (Sue & Ian Atkins/John Bowler/Andy Robinson). (A remarkable run of records reflecting a significant irruption experienced elsewhere in the UK and western Europe. Perhaps as many as eight or more in Argyll)

FIELDFARE. Tiree; a late individual at Balephuill on 3 May.

REDWING. Tiree; a late individual was at Baugh on 2 Jun and Gott Bay on 12 Jun.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER. Tiree; good passage from 13 May with a high peak of up to 16 on the island on 30 May and 9 Jun. (Breeding birds were slow to arrive, but good numbers in breeding areas generally about three weeks later than usual)

PIED FLYCATCHER. Kintyre; a male was in song at Torrisdale Castle Estate on 13 May, a male was seen briefly at High Ugadale, near Saddell on 15 May and a male was at Keil Point, near Southend on 27 May. Tiree; one was at Hynish on 28 May, then single females at Carnan Mor on 5th and at Balephuill on 9 Jun.

COMMON REDSTART. Tiree; a migrant male was at Balephuill on 27 May.

BLACK REDSTART. Islay; a fem/2CY was at Claggain Bay on 13 May (George Newall).

TREE SPARROW. Islay; four were at Kilchoman on 9 May increasing to six on 14 May. Kintyre; singles were at Glen Breakerie, near Southend on 15th and 19-20 Jul. Mull; two were at Treshnish House on 15-16 May. Tiree; one was at Balephuill on 15-16 May.

COMMON REDPOLL. Islay; one, probably two were at Gortainaid in Jun. Mull; two were at Treshnish Farm,

NW Mull on 16 May. Tiree; up to eight birds on the island at the end of May and likely breeding noted in Jun with several fledged juveniles seen during Jul.

COMMON ROSEFINCH. Tiree; a 2CY male was in song at Balephuill on 28 May (John Bowler).

HAWFINCH. Tiree; a female was at Balephuill on 10-12 May and two females together there on 13-14 May (John Bowler, photo below).

SNOW BUNTING. Tiree; a female was at Traigh Bhagh on 4 May.

Jim Dickson, Argyll Bird Recorder



Hawfinch
Balephuill
Tiree
15 May
©John
Bowler

Stop Press

LITTLE EGRET. One at the Holy Loch, Cowal on 3-4 Aug.

POMARINE SKUA. One off Hynish, Tiree on 6 Aug.

GREAT SHEARWATER. One from the Kennacraig to Islay Ferry on 9 Aug.

LITTLE STINT. A juv at Gott Bay, Tiree on 13 Aug.

RING-BILLED GULL. An adult at Hough Bay, Tiree on 14 Aug

MEDITERRANEAN GULL. Two juvs at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 19-20 Aug and two juvs at Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll on 23 Aug.

ROSY STARLING. An adult at Kenovay, Tiree until at least 22 Aug.

Articles for the December issue of the *Eider* should with the editor before the 20th November 2018

Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2017/2018)

Chairman: Nigel Scriven, 14 Taylor Avenue, Kilbarchan, Johnstone PA10 2LS (*phone* 01505 706652)

Vice Chairman: David Jardine, The Old Schoolhouse, 26 Kilmartin, Lochgilphead, Argyll (*phone* 01546 510200)

Secretary: Anne Archer, 2 The Meadows, Toward, by Dunoon, Argyll PA23 7UP (*phone* 01369 870273)

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

Membership Secretary: Sue Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Dunbartonshire G83 7DG (*phone* 01301 702603, *e-mail* sue.cnoc@gmail.com)

Committee: Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilphead), Jim Dickson (Cairnbaan), Gordon Holm (Strone), Steve Petty (Ardentinny), Andy Robinson (Stirling), Blair Urquhart (Kilmichael Glen)

Editor of the Argyll Bird Report: Jim Dickson (contact details under Argyll Bird Recorder below)

Editor of the Eider: Steve Petty, Cluaran Cottage, Ardentinny, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8TR (*phone* 01369 810024)

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

Argyll Bird Records Committee

Jim Dickson (Secretary, contact details below), John Bowler, David Jardine, Malcolm Ogilvie & Andy Robinson

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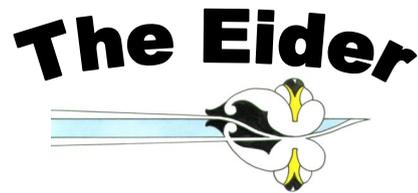
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The *Eider* is the quarterly newsletter of the **Argyll Bird Club**. The editor welcomes articles about birds, wildlife conservation and ecology in Argyll, including articles of a wider natural history interest, notices of forthcoming events, book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

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

The *Eider* is published during the first week of March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor **before** the 20th day of the month prior to publication. However, it greatly helps if material can be submitted well before these deadline dates. Contributions are accepted in the order they are received, which may result in some late submissions being held over until the next issue.

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

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

More about the Argyll Bird Club

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

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

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

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