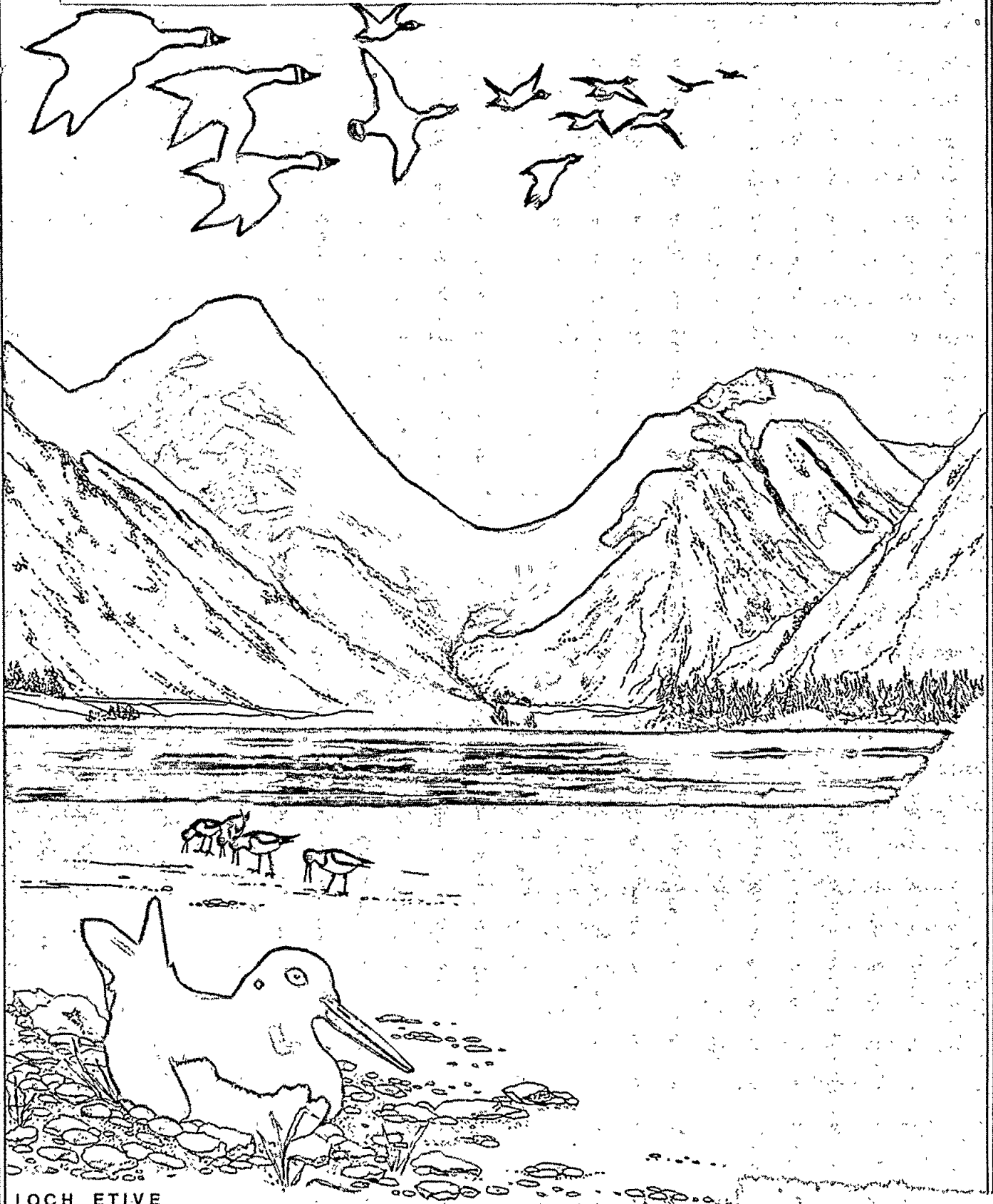


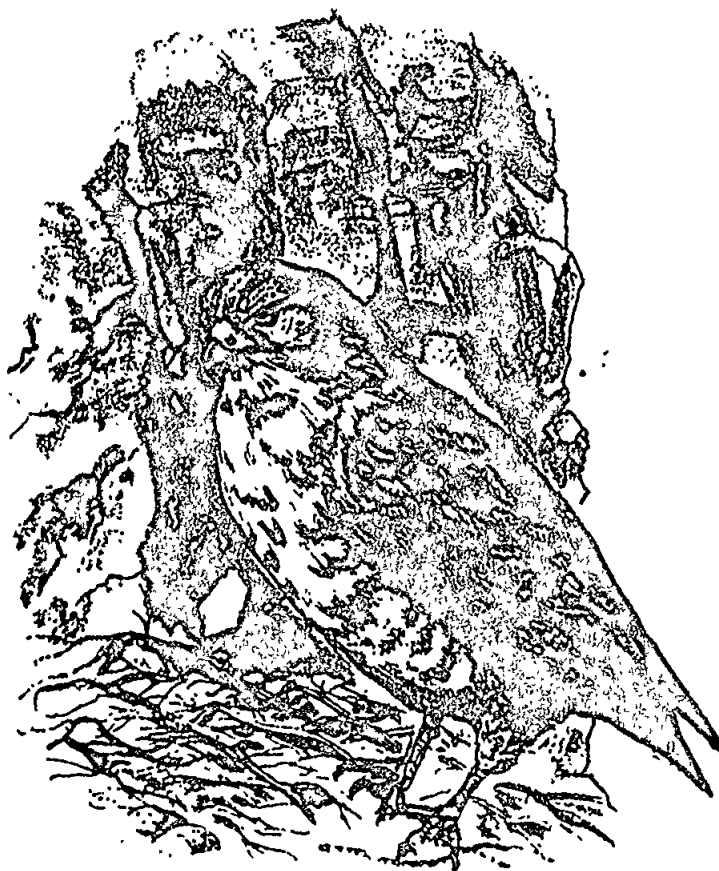
THE SECOND  
**ARGYLL BIRD REPORT**  
1984



LOCH ETIVE

THE ARGYLL BIRD REPORT

1984



PUBLISHED BY THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB

Editor : C A GALBRAITH

Assistant Editor : DR A R JENNINGS

## 1984

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## ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 1984

This, the second Argyll bird Report covers the period 1st January to 31st December 1984. Records of all species seen are included here, as is a comprehensive report on ringing activities within the area. Short papers dealing with Greenland White-fronted Goose Roost sites in Argyll, Tawny Owl breeding success and a census of Heronries then follow. Finally, an article aimed specifically at tourists and the casual ornithologist is included to point out some of the birds to be seen around the Oban area.

The species list has been compiled by Richard Coomber who has, unfortunately, left the area after many years as the County recorder. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Richard for his help in the production of this and the preceding Report and for his assistance in establishing the "Argyll Bird Club". He will hopefully remain a regular visitor to the area and help add sightings to future 'species lists'. David Stroud, Kindrochid, Sanaig, Bruichladdich, Islay has now taken over as County recorder and all records of species sightings in 1985 should be sent to him before 31st January 1986.

Production of the next Report is already underway and I would welcome offers of papers, articles, notes or letters for inclusion. Items for the 1985 Report should reach me before 31st December 1985. Prior discussion about papers for inclusion would be advantageous.

The Report is now published as part of the Argyll Bird Club's activities. The Club was formed early in 1985 and has already recruited almost 50 members. Membership is open to all who are interested in ornithology or conservation. Single membership is £3 and family £4.50. Further details are available from the Membership Secretary, Miss Jane Battrick, Roineachail, Benderloch, Oban, or any of the committee members listed below.

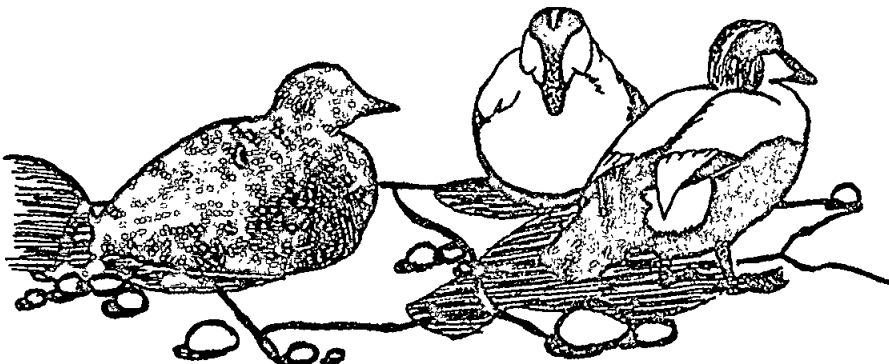
Chairman	: Colin A Galbraith, 4 Achagoil, Minard.
Vice Chairman	: Dr Clive Craik, S M B A, Dunstaffnage, Dunbeg, Oban.
Secretary	: David Stroud, Kindrochid, Sanaig, Bruichladdich, Islay.
Treasurer	: Mike Madders, c/o Lochdon Post Office, Lochdon, Mull.
Membership Secretary	: Jane Battrick, Roineachail, Benderloch, Oban.
Committee	: Roger Broad, Birch Road, Killearn, Glasgow
	: David Evamy, Islay Frigate Hotel, Tarbert.
	: Dr A R Jennings, 1 Ferryfield Drive, Connel, Oban

The Club hopes to play an active role in conservation within Argyll. This should be partly achieved by publication of subsequent reports, organising and funding of surveys and research into ecology within Argyll. The Club will also organise talks and meetings to discuss issues relevant to conservation.

Finally I would like to thank all those who helped in the production of the Report and wish everybody successful bird watching within Argyll during 1985.

- Colin A Galbraith  
Minard

1st July 1985



## ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 1984

Recorder R P Coomber

[The following format is used for each species in the systematic list.]

Numbers are Euring codes and the gaps in the sequence of numbers relate to species not recorded in Argyll this year. A list of Euring codes for species on the British List can be found in the "Birdwatcher's Year Book 1984".

The sequence of records and names in the systematic list follows Voous(1977, List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species) as published in the "British Birds" "List of Birds of the Western Palearctic" (1984).

Terms "first winter period" and "second winter period" refer to the period from January to February/early March and mid-October to the end of the year respectively.

### STATUS

These details are based on 1983 Report and are intended to give the reader an idea of the status of species in Argyll and also the areas where most likely to be seen. Obviously exceptions and additions to these details will be most welcome.

Abbreviations are:-

Resident.

Breeding species. Non-migratory, but breeding and wintering areas within Argyll differ.

Summer visitor. Breeds but does not winter.

Winter visitor. Winters but does not breed in Argyll.

Passage. Birds seen on passage at migration times but do not usually occur in summer or winter months.

Irregular refers to species that are unpredictable in the timing, location and numbers of occurrences.

Scarce species are those found in only a few sites in the County and generally in small numbers.

Rare species are annual, but only one or two individuals are involved in the whole County.

Vagrant species are not expected to be seen on an annual basis and most are rarely seen more frequently than once in three years.

### AREAS

1. KINTYRE - Mainland and inshore islets south of a line between Tarbert and West Loch Tarbert. This area includes Gigha.

2. ISLAY - also includes Jura and Colonsay plus associated areas.

3. COWAL - Mainland from a line up Glen Fyne to the old County boundary and south down that boundary, but does not include Bute.

4. MID-ARGYLL - North from the 'Kintyre area' boundary to Oban and around the coast eastwards along the southern shore of Loch Etive. From there through the Pass of Brander and around the north end of Loch Awe to Dalmally and then east along the main road to the old County boundary. From there south to the 'Cowal area' boundary.

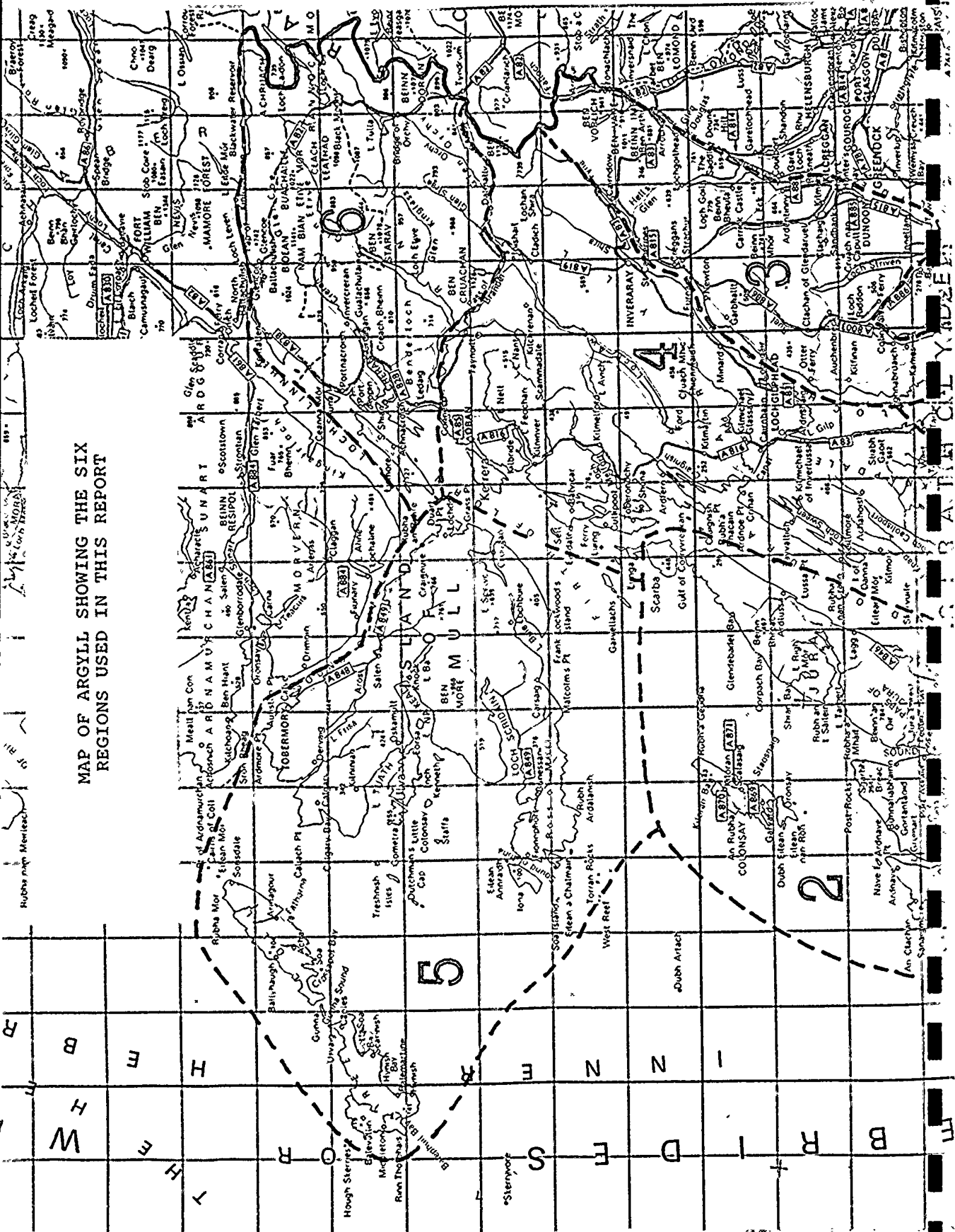
5. MULL - also includes Coll and Tiree plus the small isles of Iona, Ulva, Staffa and the Treshnish group.

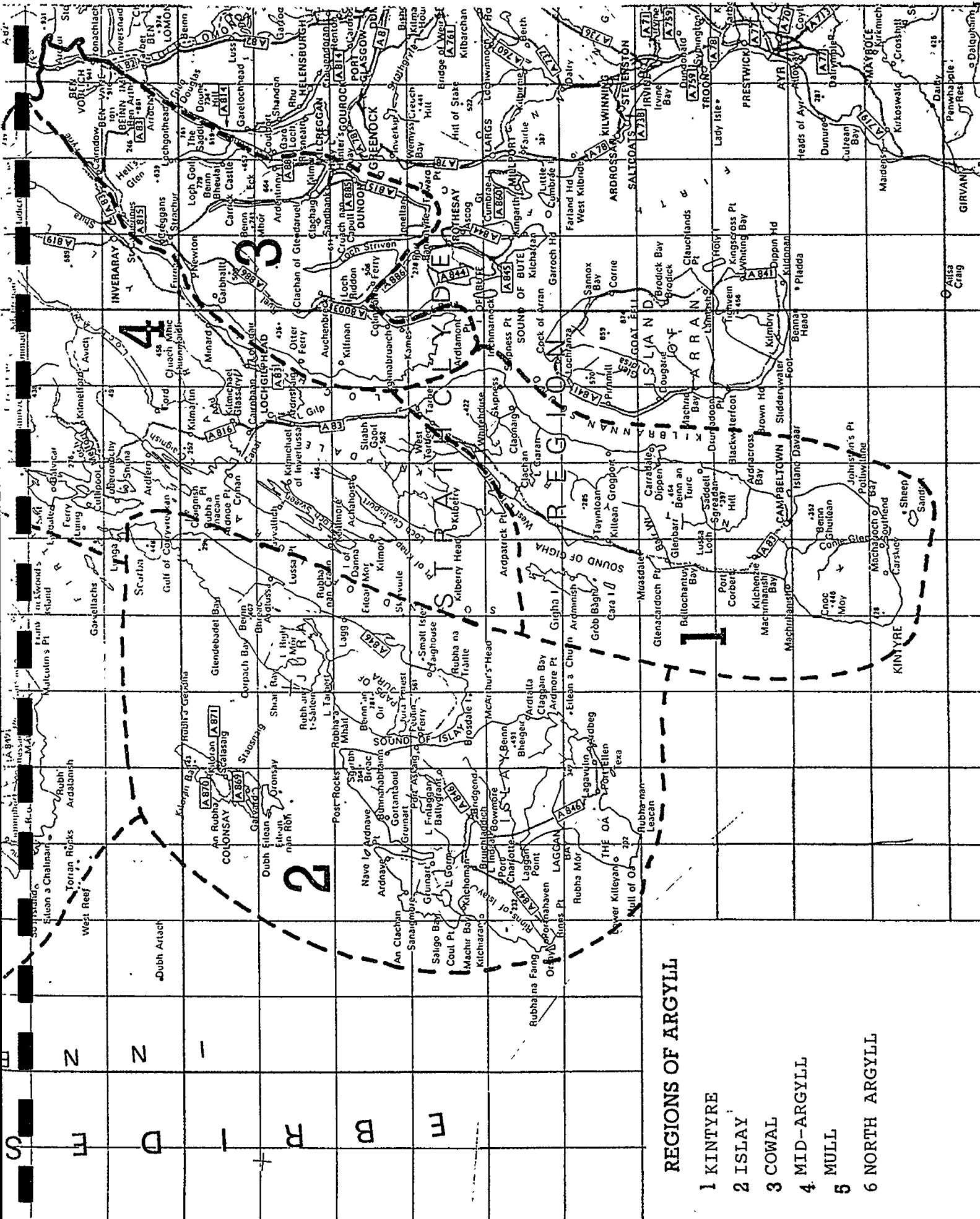
6. NORTH ARGYLL - Area north of Mid-Argyll to the south shore of Loch Leven then east to the old County boundary via the south side of the Blackwater Reservoir. Also includes Lismore, but not Morvern, which is now part of Highland Region.

[NOTE The County boundary for BTO surveys does not follow the geographical boundaries of this report. The BTO boundary follows 10km squares to avoid the problem of 'shared' squares.]



MAP OF ARGYLL SHOWING THE SIX  
REGIONS USED IN THIS REPORT







SYSTEMATIC LIST

0002

RED-THROATED DIVER Gavia stellata

[B+W+P: All areas]

No detailed reports of breeding success but with the dry summer birds should have done well. However, of two pairs in Mid-Argyll only one young was reared successfully.

Counts:

KINTYRE  
MULL

7 Cloanaig 21st October.  
11 Scallastle Bay 18th March; 8 Loch na Keal 16th December.

0003

BLACK-THROATED DIVER Gavia arctica

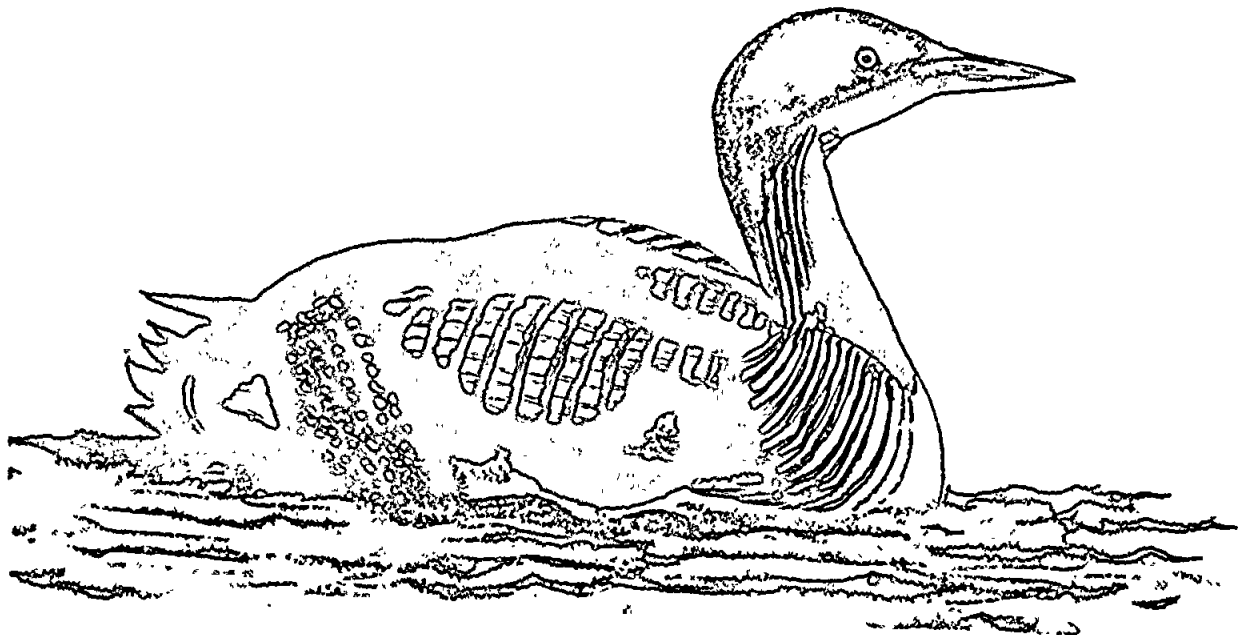
[B+W+P: All areas]

Few reports of breeding - single pair in Mid-Argyll reared one young. Scarcity of records outside breeding season may be due to lack of observers in area at this time of year.

Counts:

KINTYRE  
COWAL  
MID-ARGYLL  
  
MULL  
  
COLL  
NORTH ARGYLL

1 East Loch Tarbert 7th February.  
1 Dunoon 7th January.  
2 Loch Sween 5th & 25th January; 3 Loch Fyne 19th January;  
2 Loch Caolisport 26th November & 30th December.  
Singles Salen Bay 13th February; Loch Tuath 15th February and  
off Aros Castle 17th December; 4 Loch na Keal 21st November;  
3 Loch Scridain 25th December.  
1 Bousd 21st October; 2 Peall Bay 21st October.  
1 Benderloch 8th January.



0004

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER Gavia immer

[W+P: All areas]

Majority of birds seen September to end May. Usually one or two summer records.

Counts:

KINTYRE

c40 off north end of Gigha 9th March; c55 West Loch Tarbert 18th March.

ISLAY  
MULL  
19 counted late October.  
22 Loch na Keal 18th March. Several records of summer plumaged adults in mid-June with the last 20th June. Count around coasts during December produced 48 with 16 in Loch Scridain.

0008 LITTLE GREBE Tachybaptus ruficollis  
[B+W: All areas]  
Breeds on many of the more fertile lochs especially Kintyre and Mid-Argyll. In Winter widespread along sheltered coasts of many sealochs.  
Counts:  
COWAL 8 Holy Loch 21st January.  
MID-ARGYLL 5 Minard 7th January. Breeding 4 known pairs.  
MULL 9 Lochdon 31st December.

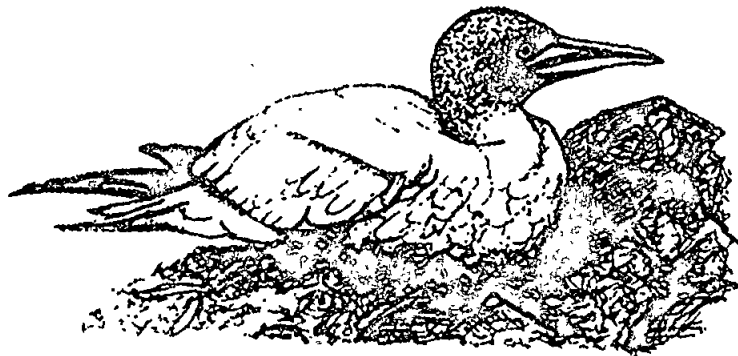
0009 GREAT CRESTED GREBE Podiceps cristatus  
[W+P: Areas 1, 2, 4 & 5]  
Irregular.  
Counts:  
KINTYRE 1 West Loch Tarbert 23rd October.  
MULL Adult in winter plumage Loch Assapol 21st February.

0010 RED-NECKED GREBE Podiceps grisegena  
[Vagrant]  
Counts:  
MID-ARGYLL 1 flew in from SW to land on loch. Loch Awe 2nd June (R J Kelly).

0011 SLAVONIAN GREBE Podiceps auritus  
[W+P: Areas 1-5]  
Regular in winter in some sealochs especially around Mull and Loch Indaal, Islay.  
Counts:  
KINTYRE 3 West Loch Tarbert 12th March.  
ISLAY 2 Loch Indaal 25th January and 4 there 9th February.  
COWAL 3 Tighnabruich 29th January.  
MID-ARGYLL Singles Loch Caolisport 4th January & 12th February; Loch Awe (freshwater) 14th March; Lochgilphead 8th December.  
MULL Singles Loch Cuin 26th January and in Sound of Mull north of Tobermory 15th November. 12 including birds displaying in Loch na Keal 18th March; 4 Loch Spelve 18th March and 2 there 26th November.

0020 FULMAR Fulmarus glacialis  
[B+W+P: Areas 1, 2 & 5]  
Apparently still increasing and extending range in Argyll.  
Counts:  
ISLAY 100 south in 30 minutes off Frenchman's Rock 23rd October.  
MULL Single "blue" Fulmar heading north seen from trawler west of Mull 23rd February. Count of birds on cliffs on west side of Dutchman's Cap and Lunga in Treshnish group were 131 and 169 respectively 23rd February.

- 0040                    GREAT SHEARWATER   Puffinus gravis  
                          [Irregular on passage mainly off Islay and Mull.]  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                   1 Loch Gruinart 7th July (R Thaxton).
- 0043                    SOOTY SHEARWATER   Puffinus griseus  
                          [P: Areas 1, 2 & 5]  
                          Regular in late summer mainly off Atlantic coasts in varying  
                          numbers as the species heads south to breed in South Atlantic.  
                          Spring records are exceptional.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                   2 seen from ferry off Port Askaig 7th September and 1 from  
                          ferry off Port Ellen 10th September.  
 MULL                   Main counts between Mull and Tiree were 14 on      20th August,  
                          32 on 25th August and 83 on 10th September.
- 0046                    MANX SHEARWATER   Puffinus puffinus  
                          [B+P: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6]  
                          Breeds in small numbers, but majority of records come from  
                          the west coast where birds breeding on Rhum are involved.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                   c20 off Frenchman's Rocks 3rd February.   1 South there 23rd  
                          October.  
 MID-ARGYLL           c400 off Garvellochs 20th July.  
 MULL                   7000+ seen between Mull and Tiree 1st August with 6830 of those  
                          between Coll and Tiree.   Number decreased to 3100 by 10th  
                          September and by 22nd September this was down to c1500.
- 0052                    STORM PETREL   Hydrobates pelagicus  
                          [Breeding birds come ashore in late May/June.   Passage August-  
                          October.]  
                          Counts:  
 COLONSAY              1 following ferry north of Colonsay 17th January.  
 MULL                   Maximum seen on trip to Tiree from Tobermory 8 on 10th September.  
 NORTH ARGYLL        Juvenile found dead Cuil Bay 15th November.
- 0055                    LEACH'S PETREL   Oceanodroma leucorhoa  
                          [Passage birds recorded off Kintyre and Atlantic coasts,  
                          generally seen during and after gales.]  
                          Counts:  
 MULL                   Only record during year were 2 between Mull and Tiree 10th  
                          September.



0071

GANNET Sula bassana

[Non-breeding birds around coasts in the breeding season are from Ailsa Craig and St Kilda. Passage birds at migration times. Comparatively few in winter with the majority of birds being adults who do not wander as far as immatures.]

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL

Birds fishing in Loch Fyne during July and August. Maximum count 120 off Ardrishaig 2nd August.

ISLAY

60 off Frenchman's Rocks 23rd October.

0072

CORMORANT Phalacrocorax carbo

[R+W: All areas]

Much less plentiful than Shag around our coasts, also occurs in small numbers on some freshwater lochs. There is evidence to suggest birds move into coastal waters in Autumn.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL

48 active nests on Carraig ad Daimh 17th June. On a ringing trip 5 pulli regurgitated eels. A 6th produced what looked like a Roach, which would indicate that the parents were collecting food from freshwater.

0080

SHAG Phalacrocorax aristotelis

[R+W: All areas]

Very common around coasts.

Counts:

KINTYRE

Approximately 690 pairs on McCormaig Isles.



0122

GREY HERON Ardea cinerea

[R+W: All areas]

Widespread on mainland and islands. Breeding reported all areas.

0152

MUTE SWAN Cygnus olor

[R+W: All areas]

Widespread but sparse breeding species.

0153

BEWICK'S SWAN Cygnus columbianus

[P: Areas 1, 2 & 4]

Irregular on passage, although occurred as a regular winter visitor to Tiree at the turn of the century. (see Baxter and Rintoul "The Birds of Scotland" 1953).

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL

4 adults spent 2 hours on Loch Shira 11 December ( C A Galbraith).

0154

WHOOPEE SWAN Cygnus cygnus

[W+P: September-early May: All areas]

Majority of birds are seen on passage. Smaller numbers winter throughout the area and occasional non-breeding birds may summer.

Counts:

ISLAY

150 on Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 11th October; 30 Bowmore 22nd October; 26 on sea in Sound of Jura then flew north 16th March.

MULL 10 resting on the sea about 1 mile west of Treshnish Point 1st April. Summering bird at Kinloch still present at end of year.

0157 BEAN GOOSE Anser fabalis  
[Irregular or vagrant on passage - records from Islay]  
Counts:

ISLAY 1 Skerrols 27th March.

0158 PINK-FOOTED GOOSE Anser brachyrhynchus  
[P+W: Areas 2, 4 & 5: September to early May]  
Mainly seen on Spring and Autumn migration flying over but occasionally birds stop-off for a few hours or days. Singles wintering with barnacle geese on Islay are not unusual.  
Counts:

ISLAY Wintering bird last reported Bridgend 21st April. Maximum 5 singles during December.

MID-ARGYLL 26 Clachan Seil 20th January; 1 Clachan, Loch Fyne 31st July might have been an escape.

MULL 1 at Fidden 24th November could possibly be the juvenile that attached itself to farmyard geese at Killiechronan, Loch na Keal 28th November to end of the year.

COLL 2 Gallanach 21st October.

00159 WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE Anser albifrons  
All birds seen in Argyll in 1984 were of Greenland race.  
[W: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6: September-May]  
Argyll is the most important wintering area for this race in Scotland with some 80+% of Scottish population.  
Argyll totals: April census 6578 (Islay - 4198); November 8194 (Islay 5256). Breeding success calculated in Autumn on 15 birds ringed on Greenland expedition in the summer 1984 on Islay October - December and another 2 seen on Coll. Islay showed 12.1% young.  
[Detailed breakdown of counts available in Greenland White-fronted Goose Study Census Reports available from David Stroud].  
November counts elsewhere:

KINTYRE 404 Kintyre, 855 Rhunahaorine.

JURA 108

MULL 65 at Loch Poit na h-I and Loch Assapol.

COLL & TIREE Counts of 575 and 620 respectively were the highest recorded from these islands.

0161 GREYLAG GOOSE Anser anser  
[B+P+W: All areas]  
Large numbers seen on passage. The main wintering areas are Cowal and Mid-Argyll, with small number regularly on Islay, Coll and Tiree. Breeds on Coll and Tiree and occasionally elsewhere.  
Counts:

KINTYRE 55 Tarbert 5th January; 400 Machrihanish 14th January; 250

ISLAY Clachan 24th January.  
 COLONSAY 89 was the highest figure since 1982 19th January.  
 COWAL 26 Kiloran Meadow 8th January.  
 MID-ARGYLL 25 Auchenlochan 20th January; 1110 Toward Point 21st January.  
 24 Connel 21st January; 400 Poltalloch 31st January; 200 Drimvore  
 21st November; 30 flying South of Danna 26th December.  
 MULL 5 with a single barnacle goose Treshnish Isles 9th June.  
 NORTH ARGYLL Pair bred rearing 3 young.

0163

SNOW GOOSE Anser caerulescens

A feral flock of snow and "blue" phase snow geese was established on Treshnish Estate, Mull in 1950's and persists. In Autumn 1983 this flock moved en masse to winter on Coll and repeated the exercise in 1984. It is possible that records of single snow geese might come from this flock but the arrival of snow geese with wintering geese and whooper swans to Islay might be genuine vagrants.

Counts:

ISLAY Adult that arrived in mid-October 1983 was still present in March.  
 MID-ARGYLL Adult present on Crinan Moss in February/March.

0166

CANADA GOOSE Branta canadensis

[B+W+V: Areas 1, 2 & 4]

Small breeding population on Colonsay. Vagrant winter visitor of small races to Islay might well be genuine trans-Atlantic vagrants.

Counts:

ISLAY 'hutchinsonii' type present until at least 8th April.  
 COLONSAY 18 7th January.  
 NORTH ARGYLL Pair Loch Etive 24th April.

0167

BARNACLE GOOSE Branta leucopsis

[W: Areas 1, 2, 4 & 5: October-April]

Large numbers winter on Islay but are rarely in excess of 500 elsewhere.

Counts:

ISLAY Maximum count 17345 19th December.  
 COLONSAY 90 Oronsay 7th January.  
 MID-ARGYLL 500 Isle of Danna 5th January; 13 with Greylags Drimvore November/December.  
 MULL 60 Inch Kenneth 2nd February; 54 Loch Tuath 14th February; under 200 Treshnish Isles 26th April; 1 with Greylags Sgeir an Eirionnach 9th June.  
 COLL 1 on offshore islet, Gallanach Bay 3rd July.

0168

BRENT GOOSE Branta bernicla

[W+P: September-May: Areas 1, 2, & 5]

The majority of birds seen in Argyll are the light-bellied race, Branta bernicla horta which breeds in north-east Greenland and Arctic Canada. Most birds are reported from Islay and these are birds passing to or from their main wintering quarters in Ireland. One seen on Islay in May 1979 wore a neckcollar and originated on Bathurst Island, Canada 76 N, 99 W, where it was marked in July 1975. In 1975 and 1976 it was seen in Ireland. Less frequently seen are the dark-bellied brents B b bernicla from Arctic Russia.

Counts:

ISLAY

2 Loch Indaal 19th January; 18 Loch Indaal and 104 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 21st April; 1 feeding with other geese near Cattadale 9th February showed characteristics of Black Brant Branta b nigrans (R F Coomber) (Subject to acceptance by British Birds Rarities Committee).

In Autumn there was an unusually high passage through Loch Gruinart.

COLONSAY

1 10th January.

0173

SHELDUCK Tadorna tadorna

[B+W: All areas]

Widespread as a breeding species around suitable coasts and sealochs. Most birds have left by late July and begin to return during November. Occasionally one or two, generally juveniles, remain throughout Autumn.

Counts:

ISLAY

313 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 9th March.

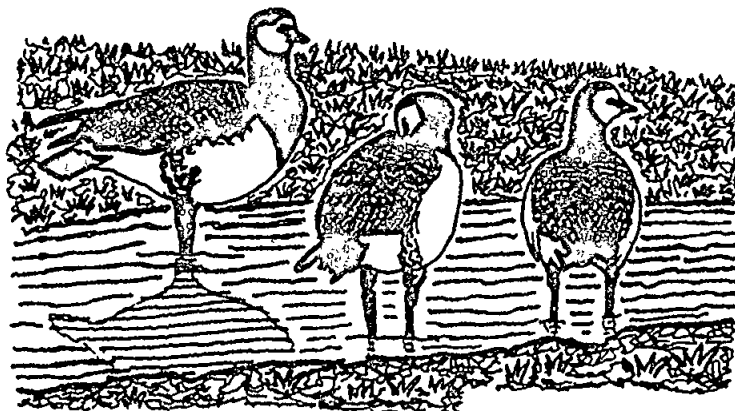
MID-ARGYLL

Pairs bred Loch Fyne, Lochgilphead, Port-Ann and Minard.

First young seen Port-Ann with 9 ducklings 25th May.

MULL

First young seen Lochdon, Pair with 14 ducklings 21st May.





0179

WIGEON Anas penelope

[B+W: All areas]

Scarce or irregular breeding species. Common in winter mainly by salt water.

Counts:

KINTYRE

210 West Loch Tarbert 7th September increased to 288 23rd October and to 450 10th November.

ISLAY

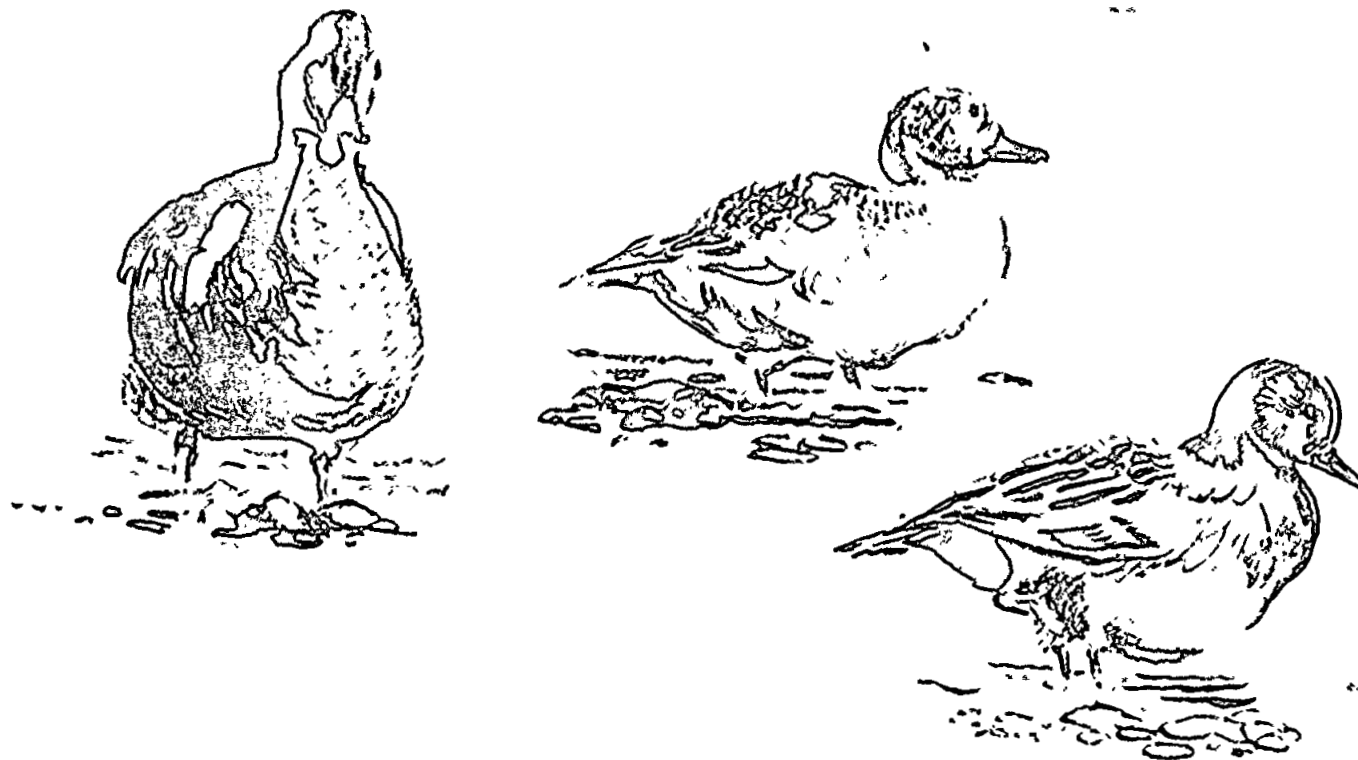
250 Loch Indaal 22nd October; 299 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 15th November.

MID-ARGYLL

245 Loch Crinan 19th October; 140 Lochgilp 21st November.

MULL

Single drake 19th June; 185 Lochdon 31st October.



0182

GADWALL Anas strepera

[W+P+?B: Areas 2 & 5]

Irregular in winter/passage. May breed.

Counts:

MULL

Singles from Mishnish Lochs 24th February and Loch Assapol 13th April were the only reports from whole of County this year.

0184

TEAL Anas crecca

[B+W: All areas]

Widespread breeding species. Plentiful on fresh water and tidal areas in winter. Green-winged race Anas crecca carolinensis occurs as vagrant.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL

Breeding reported from several hill lochs.

ISLAY 300 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 18th October; 120 Bridgend 23rd October.

MULL 130 Lochdon 15th August - first returning birds increased to 104 by 31st August. Green-winged Teal drake present Lochdon 12th February (R F & Mrs E M Coomber). Same or another individual present from 25th November to the end of year (M Madders). These records are subject to acceptance by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

COLL 50 Loch Cliad 21st October.

0186 MALLARD Anas platyrhynchos  
[B+W: All areas]  
Very common as breeding and wintering species.  
Counts:  
KINTYRE 120 West Loch Tarbert 23rd October.  
ISLAY 500 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 10th October.  
COWAL 65 Loch Ridden 30th July decreased to 30 by 22nd October.  
MID-ARGYLL 26 Loch Sween 4th January and 28 there by 21st November.  
COLL 75 Loch Cliad 21st October.

0189 PINTAIL Anas acuta  
[(B)+W: Areas 2, 3, 4 & 5]  
One of two pairs may breed annually. In winter records away from Islay are very few and far between.  
Counts:  
ISLAY 10 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 19th February; 7 Easter Ellister 22nd February; 12 Loch Indaal included 5 drakes 9th April.  
MID-ARGYLL 8 Kilmelford 11th January (C Fergusson).

0194 SHOVELER Anas clypeata  
[(B)+W+P: Areas 2, 4 & 5]  
Status is very similar to pintail with possibility of annual breeding and most records in winter coming from Islay.  
Counts:  
ISLAY 13 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve; 18 Bridgend 22nd February.  
MULL Report of female and 6 ducklings at Ease Forse waterfall was unfortunately unconfirmed.

0198 POCHARD Aythya ferina  
[B+W: All areas]  
Very scarce breeding species and wintering flocks are usually small.  
Counts:  
ISLAY 33 present in Scaup flock in Loch Indaal 9th February.  
JURA 64 during Winter Atlas Survey 23rd February.  
MID-ARGYLL 22 Loch Awe 4th February; 30 there 24th December; 3 pairs Eredine Loch, Ford 9th May.  
MULL 38 including 33 drakes Loch Assapol 14th February.  
NORTH ARGYLL 10 Barcaldine 5th March.

0200

RING-NECKED DUCK Aythya collaris

[Vagrant]

The most regular Nearctic species recorded in Argyll with records in three of the four years from 1981.

Counts:

ISLAY

Drake present with other wildfowl at Easter Ellister from 24th January to at least 11th March (Mrs J Dawson et al). (Subject to acceptance by British Birds Rarities Committee).

0202

TUFTED DUCK Aythya fuligula

Widespread breeding species but most plentiful on Kintyre and Cowal. Absent from some islands except as non-breeding or winter. In winter in varying numbers on suitable lochs.

Counts:

COLONSAY  
MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

Drake Loch Fada 18th July.  
2 pairs bred, but success unknown; 8 Loch Seil 6th February.  
13 Loch Assapol 14th February; 6 Loch Poit 27th June.

0204

SCAUP Aythya marila

[W+P: All areas]

Large wintering flock off Bowmore, Islay, but scarce elsewhere by comparison.

Counts:

KINTYRE  
MULL  
NORTH ARGYLL

10 Bellochany Bay 29th February.  
1 Loch Assapol 21st February and drake in eclipse there 3rd-6th August. 1 Loch Poit 2nd October.  
1 Loch Etive 18th March.

0202

EIDER Somateria mollissima

[B+W+P: All areas]

Nesting in all areas, commonly on small offshore islands.

Nesting:

Colonies reported in Loch Fyne, 110 pairs; Loch Etive, 35 pairs; Loch Linnhe, 70 pairs. Nesting success generally very poor in all areas.

Counts:

COWAL  
MID-ARGYLL  
  
MULL  
  
NORTH ARGYLL

Loch Ridden 136, February; 130 in April; 217 July; 34 October.  
Loch Shira peak of 120 July; Loch Gilp peak of 135 in September;  
Loch Sween peak of 140 in August; Oban Bay peak of 133 in February declining to nil by June, with a second peak of 101 in October.  
Loch Spelve peak of only 33 birds in March - well down on 1983 figures.  
Loch Etive peak of 158 in April; Loch Creran peak of 193 in March, numbers declining over the Summer rising again to 209 in October; Loch Leven peak of 89 in September.

0212

LONG-TAILED DUCK Clangula hyemalis

[W+P: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 &amp; 6]

Uncommon wintering visitor, with Loch Indaal, Islay and possibly Coll being the only regular wintering sites.

Counts:

ISLAY

1 Loch Indaal 31st January with 6 there 9th February and 8 on 4th March; 3 on 22nd October were the only records from Loch Indaal in second winter period.

MULL

1 Loch Assapol 26th October.

COLL

3 drakes Feall Bay 21st October.

0213

COMMON SCOTER Melanitta nigra

[B+W: All areas]

Very rare breeding species, possibly not annually. Scarce winter visitor. Most birds to be found off Tayinloan and Islay.

Counts:

KINTYRE

25 off Cloanaig 19th February.

ISLAY

18 off Bowmore 9th February; c25 off Bruichladdich 3rd March.

MID-ARGYLL

6 off Isle of Danna 27th March; 2 Loch Caolisport 30th December.

MULL

1 Loch na Keal 12th February and another there 20th-28th November.

0214

VELVET SCOTER Melanitta fusca

[W: Areas 1, 2 &amp; 4]

Very scarce winter visitor.

Counts:

ILSAY

1 Loch Indaal 9th February.

MID-ARGYLL

2 Lochgilphead 21st January.

0218

GOLDENEYE Bucephala clangula

[W: All areas]

Common winter visitor to both sea and freshwater lochs. Possibly increasing over recent years. Display frequently seen from February to departure in April. Some birds stay into May but the majority leave March/April. Some birds seen from July/August onwards but no significant arrivals until October.

Counts & Arrivals:

MID-ARGYLL

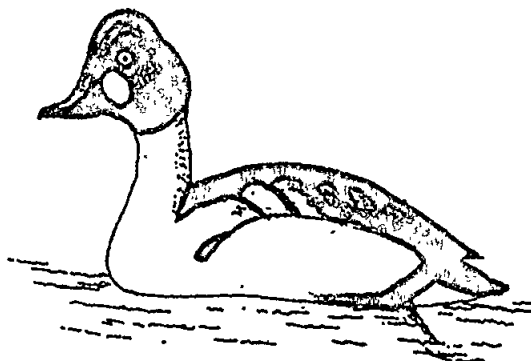
24 Ardfarn 9th March.

MULL

Adult female Mishnish Lochs from 2nd August; 1 at sea off Bloody Bay 13th August.

NORTH ARGYLL

49 Barcaldine 5th February increased to 75 by 14th March.



- 0220                      SMEW   Mergus albellus  
 Very rare winter visitor.  
Counts:  
 COWAL                    A drake in Loch Pyne at Cairndow 10th February.  
 ISLAY                    "Red-head" Loch Indaal 2nd November.
- 0221                      RED-BREASTED MERGANSER   Mergus serrator  
 [B+W: All areas]  
 Common breeding and wintering species. Moulting flocks of up to 200 are sometimes encountered in mid-Summer. These flocks are mainly drakes in eclipse but include some ducks.  
Counts:  
 ISLAY                    63 drakes Bruichladdich 21st June; 51 Kilnaughton Bay 24th October.  
 MID-ARGYLL              133 Loch Gilp 6th September.  
 NORTH ARGYLL            90 Ardmucknish Bay 6th September.
- 0223                      GOOSANDER   Mergus merganser  
 [B+W: All areas]  
 A scarce breeding species generally confined to the larger rivers on the Mainland. Small numbers in winter months are rarely away from freshwater.  
Main Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL              17 during survey organised by Durham University 14th March;  
                              8 on River Awe 16th September.
- 0239                      RED KITE   Milvus milvus  
 [Vagrant]  
Counts:  
 ISLAY                    1 over Easter Ellister 17th March (Mrs J Dawson).
- 0243                      WHITE-TAILED EAGLE   Haliaeetus albicilla  
 Formerly bred. This magnificent predator is currently the subject of a re-introduction programme by the NCC on Rhum, where birds are being released from Norway. All birds are ringed and those up to and including 1981 were also fitted with colour rings. However, these became brittle with age and were lost. Since then wingtags have been used with the added benefit of being easier to see in the field. Those released in 1982 have orange tags; those 1983 have yellow and 1984 birds have white tags.  
Counts:  
 ARGYLL                    Records of wandering birds from Rhum have come from several islands and from the Mainland north of Kintyre. Details of all birds are required including wingtag and numbers plus any obvious characters such as missing primaries etc.

- 0261                    HEN HARRIER   Circus cyaneus  
                          [B+W+P: All areas]  
                          Widespread - preferring young forestry plantations and moorland.  
                          Some Autumnal movement off islands such as Mull.  
                          Counts:
- ARGYLL                No significant counts received.
- 0267                    GOSHAWK   Accipiter gentilis  
                          Irregular, generally seen during Spring and Autumn passage.  
                          Counts:
- COWAL                Male, Glen Fyne 27th October.  
 MULL                 Female Lochdon 16th December.
- 0269                    SPARROWHAWK   Accipiter nisus  
                          [B+W+P: All areas]  
                          Widespread but as it can be secretive is under-recorded.  
                          Counts:
- COLL                 Migrant Gallanach 14th October.
- 0287                    BUZZARD   Buteo buteo  
                          The most abundant raptor in our area and frequently mis-  
                          identified by visitors - hence "the Tourists Eagle".  
                          Counts:
- ARGYLL                Many reported throughout the County.  
 ISLAY                Continued increase probably due to lessening of persecution  
                          by estates.
- 0290                    ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD   Buteo lagopus  
                          Very rare Autumnal migrant and winter visitor. Sometimes  
                          Common Buzzards are misidentified as this species as they can  
                          frequently be seen hovering or hanging on the wind.  
                          Counts:
- MULL                 1 seen well in good sunlight near Craignure 4th October  
                          (R F Coomber).
- 0296                    GOLDEN EAGLE   Aquila chrysaetos  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Widespread. Golden eagles are very susceptible to disturbance  
                          which should be avoided throughout the breeding season. People  
                          wishing to see eagles would do better to watch in September/  
                          October when the birds are far more in evidence than earlier in  
                          the year. Some wandering by immatures in Autumn and Winter.  
                          Counts:
- ARGYLL                Figures from Argyll Study Area show that of 20 pairs 11 were  
                          successful and reared 13 young.  
                          Elsewhere in the County of 23 pairs, 9 were successful and  
                          reared 10 young.

0301

OSPREY Pandion haliaetus

[P: All areas]

Mainly seen as passage migrant and could be seen anywhere.  
Occasionally non-breeding birds summer.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

1 Loch a Phearsain 5th April.  
1 Loch Uisg 27th April.

0304

KESTREL Falco tinnunculus

[B+W+P: All areas]

Widespread in varying numbers. Generally population increases  
in Autumn with birds moving into area.

Counts:

ARGYLL

Usual Autumnal increase noted in many areas.

0309

MERLIN Falco columbarius

[B+W+P: All areas]

Very scarce and declining breeding species as elsewhere in  
country.

Counts:

ARGYLL

Of three reported pairs, two were successful in rearing 4  
young but outcome at other site unknown.

COLL

One seen from ferry flying eastwards towards Mull 13th August.

0320

PEREGRINE Falco peregrinus

[B+W+P: All areas]

Widespread but not common.

Counts

ARGYLL

Widespread reports in autumn and both Winter periods.



- 0329                    RED GROUSE   Lagopus lagopus  
                          [R: All areas]  
                          Fairly common but locally distributed. Local decreases due  
                          to habitat loss to forestry.  
                          Counts:  
 COLONSAY              1 27th June.
- 0330                    PTARMIGAN   Lagopus mutus  
                          [R: Areas 3, 4, 5 & 6]  
                          Local on mountains generally above 2,400' above sea level.  
                          Under-recorded by birdwatchers.  
                          Counts:  
 ARGYLL                Birds reported from mountains on Mull, Mid and North Argyll.
- 0332                    BLACK GROUSE   Tetrao tetrix  
                          [R: All areas]  
                          Widespread.  
                          Counts:  
 ARGYLL                Possible reduction on Kintyre, Mid and North Argyll.  
 ISLAY                  9 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 8th March.  
 MULL                   Female Garmony 15th April. First reliable record for many years  
                          (M Madders).
- 0367                    GREY PARTRIDGE   Perdix perdix  
                          [R: Areas 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6]  
                          Most records probably relate to birds put out for shooting, but  
                          those introductions may not produce viable populations. Few  
                          records most years. Considered now to be extinct on Coll.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                  1 reported Glencastle Loch 22nd April was only record received.
- 0394                    PHEASANT   Phasianus colchicus  
                          [R: All areas]  
                          Widespread and common especially in vicinity of estates where  
                          put out for shooting. Very common on Islay and Coll.  
                          Counts:  
 ARGYLL                Reported from all areas.
- 0396                    GOLDEN PHEASANT   Chrysolophus pictus  
                          A small feral population exists in the grounds of estates at  
                          the head of Loch na Keal, Mull.  
                          Counts:  
 MULL                   Only records for Argyll in 1984 came from Loch na Keal area.



- 0407                    WATER RAIL   Rallus aquaticus  
                          [?B+W+P: Areas 2, 5 & 6]  
                          Rare migrant and winter visitor. Doubtless under-recorded.  
                          Some may stay to breed.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                    Singles Bridgend 5th February and Portnahaven 21st February.
- 0408                    CORNCRAKE   Crex crex  
                          [S: Areas 1, 2, 4 & 5]  
                          Corncrakes were once common in Argyll and many people still  
                          tell tales of being kept awake by the persistent "crekking".  
                          The species had declined dramatically through changes in  
                          farming practise ie early grass-cutting for silage and from the  
                          spread of power and communication cables throughout Western  
                          Europe. The Corncrake is a low-flying migrant and suffers  
                          accordingly.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                    Continuing decline with recent reseeded and pasture 'improvement'  
                          in main stronghold of Kilchoman/Coul.  
 MULL                    One calling Fracadil 14th June was some 50 yards into a wet  
                          meadow. It was called up using voice and 10 minutes and a  
                          very sore throat later it was running around roadside verges  
                          in full view of a minibus load of birdwatchers.  
 COLL                    Birds calling by 6th May. Census in mid-Summer produced 25  
                          calling individuals.
- 0424                    MOORHEN   Gallinula chloropus  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Absent as breeding species on some islands.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                    17 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 28th November.  
 MID-ARGYLL            2 pairs bred Feorlin Loch.  
 MULL                    2 Aros Park had increased to 4 by 18th March - the most seen  
                          at one time in 10 years.
- 0429                    COOT   Fulica atra  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Uncommon breeding and wintering species.  
                          Counts:  
 MULL                    2 Loch Assapol 14th February.  
 NORTH ARGYLL           c4 Lismore 16th November.
- 0450                    OYSTERCATCHER   Haematopus ostralegus  
                          [B+W+P: All areas]  
                          Widespread and common around coast although some sections  
                          deserted in winter months. Some birds move inland in Spring  
                          to breed by rivers and larger lochs with gravel and pebble  
                          shores.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                    1014 Loch Indaal 28th February; 568 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve  
                          13th April.

COWAL  
MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

700 Holy Loch 21st January.  
597 Lochgilphead 12th February and 450 there 21st November.  
Many migrants over Tobermory during heavy nocturnal wader  
passage in mist and rain 31st August. Absent during a similar  
night of activity 29th August.

0470

RINGED PLOVER Charadrius hiaticula

[B+W+P: All areas]

Widespread breeding species around all coasts with suitable  
habitat but unfortunately suffer badly in places through  
disturbance from tourists and their dogs. Inland nesting  
around reservoirs and large lochs reported.

Counts:

KINTYRE  
ISLAY

94 Rhunahaorine Point 9th December.  
163 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 28th September; 64 nr Killinallan  
22nd October.

COLONSAY  
MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

91 10th January.  
55 Loch Gilp 21st November.  
Many birds heard at night over Tobermory during heavy wader  
passage in mist and heavy rain 29th August. Few 31st August.  
57 Cliad Bay 8th August; c70 Breachacha 16th October.  
c350 Gott Bay 25th August.

COLL  
TIREE

0575

KILLDEER Charadrius vociferus

Vagrant from North America.

Counts:

COLONSAY

1 7th-8th January (R Pitts, D C Jardine). This was a just  
reward for the two observers who were storm-bound for several  
days on a visit to cover the island for the BTO Winter Atlas  
Survey. One bird might have been involved in an interesting  
chain of records starting in the Outer Hebrides 30th-31st  
December 1983, Colonsay 7th-8th January, Ayrshire 20th January  
and London 31st January-1st February. Nowhere was it seen for  
more than 48 hours. FIRST RECORD FOR ARGYLL. (Subject to  
acceptance by British Birds Rarities Committee).

0485

GOLDEN PLOVER Pluvialis apricaria

[B+P+W: All areas]

Southern race breeds in small numbers on upland areas but may  
be decreasing through forestry encroaching onto breeding  
habitat. Passage birds in coastal areas are often of Northern  
race. Uncommon during winter months and most of these leave  
when first snows and frosts hit lowland areas.

Counts:

ISLAY

100 Ardnave 20th January; 143 there 24th September; 240 Loch  
Gruinart RSPB Reserve 28th October.

MID-ARGYLL  
TIREE

Breeding reported.  
A flock on the Reef stretched for half a mile and must have  
run into thousands. Impossible to count. 9th-10th March.

0486

GREY PLOVER Pluvialis squatarola

[P+W: Areas 1, 2, 5 & 6]

Uncommon passage migrant in Autumn. Rare in Winter or on Spring passage. Probably under-recorded.

Counts:

ISLAY

6 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 28th October.

MULL

2 calling over Tobermory during heavy wader passage in mist and rain 0012hrs 30th August.

IONA

2 on 23rd December.

COLL

1 Ciliad 14th October.

0493

LAPWING Vanellus vanellus

Widespread breeding and wintering species. Some areas vacated after breeding season and other birds leave at onset of hard weather in winter.

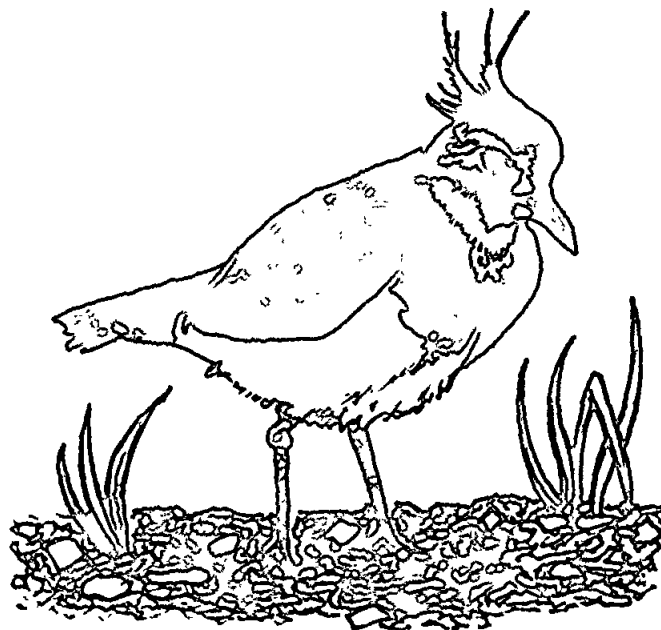
Counts:

ISLAY

c1000 Port Charlotte 24th February and 1886 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 9th March.

COLL

c300 Breachacha 16th October.



0496

KNOT Calidris canutus

[P+W: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6]

Occurs mainly as an Autumnal migrant with fewer records from Spring passage and during Winter months.

Counts:

KINTYRE

2 Rhunahaorine Point 6th May.

ISLAY

300 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 12th October.

MID-ARGYLL

11 Loch Gilp 7th September.

MULL

8 Lochdon 11th September.

NORTH ARGYLL

80 Ledaig Point 6th September.

0497                    SANDERLING   Calidris alba  
                          [P+W: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6]  
                          Mainly passage migrant with some wintering birds and  
                          occasionally summering (non-breeding).  
                          Counts:

MULL                    Flock heard over Tobermory during heavy wader passage in mist  
                          and rain 0051hrs 30th August.  
 TIREE                    c150 Gott Bay 25th August.

0502                    TEMMINCK'S STINT   Calidris temminckii  
                          Vagrant  
                          Counts:

COLL                    3 Bousd Bay 7th August (M Checker).

0507                    PECTORAL SANDPIPER   Calidris melanotos  
                          Vagrant - most are Autumn records.  
                          Counts:

MULL                    1 Lochdon 18th September (R A Broad, P J Robinson, T D Dick) was  
                          seen again 27th September (R F Coomber et al).

0509                    CURLEW SANDPIPER   Calidris ferruginea  
                          Uncommon Autumn migrant  
                          Counts:

ISLAY                    3 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 26th September and 2 there 28th  
                          September.

0510                    PURPLE SANDPIPER   Calidris maritima  
                          [W+P: All areas]  
                          Almost certainly far more plentiful and widespread than most  
                          records suggest. Very much a bird of rocky shores and skerries.  
                          Most frequently seen along the 'splash' line.  
                          Counts:

ISLAY                    Maximum 20 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 9th March.  
 COLL                    1 in summer plumage Crossapol 5th-7th May.  
 TIREE                    3 at sea off NE Tiree flew East under bows of ferry 27th  
                          August.  
 NORTH ARGYLL           15 Ledaig Point 3rd March.

0512                    DUNLIN   Calidris alpina  
                          [B+P+W: All areas]  
                          Breeds locally in areas 2, 4 & 6. Majority of birds seen are  
                          migrants. Small numbers winter in all areas.  
                          Counts:

ISLAY                    300 Bridgend 22nd February; 480 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve  
                          15th November.  
 COLONSAY               27 on 10th January.  
 MID-ARGYLL            30 Kilberry 8th January.

MULL 46 Lochdon 29th January and 24 there 24th November. Many heard over Tobermory during heavy wader passage in mist and rain from 2340hrs 29th August. Few 31st August in similar movement.

IONA c40 at Bay at the Back of the Ocean 31st May.  
 COLL Song and display 6th May.  
 NORTH ARGYLL 36 Connel 18th February.

0517 RUFF Philomachus pugnax  
 [P: Areas 1-5]  
 Irregular Autumnal migrant liable to turn up anywhere on suitable habitat.  
Counts:

ISLAY 1 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 27th August.  
 MULL Juvenile Ardallanish 5th-6th August.  
 TIREE 2 Balephetrish 26th August.

0518 JACK SNIFE Lymnocyrtus minimus  
 [W+P: Areas 2, 4 & 5]  
 Appears to be uncommon but no doubt badly under-recorded.  
Counts:

ISLAY 1 Ardnave 8th April.  
 MID-ARGYLL 3 Tayvallich 3rd January; 1 Isle of Danna 28th January; 1 nr Oban 4th February.  
 COLL 1 Cillad 8th April.

0519 SNIFE Gallinago gallinago  
 [B+W+P: All areas]  
 Widespread and locally common throughout in suitable habitat but unfortunately declining through drainage and other land 'improvement' schemes.  
Counts:

ARGYLL Breeding reported throughout County.

0529 WOODCOCK Scolopax rusticola  
 [B+W+P: All areas]  
 Locally common in suitable habitat. Large numbers can occur during periods of severe cold weather. Under such condition birds are more frequently seen feeding in the open in daylight and will even come into gardens.  
Counts:

ARGYLL Breeding reported from all areas.

0532 BLACK-TAILED GODWIT Limosa limosa  
 [P: Areas 2 & 5]  
 Irregular on Spring and Autumn passage in small numbers. Possibly under -recorded.  
Counts:

ISLAY 1 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 16th-19th November.  
 TIREE 1 Loch Bhasapol 26th August.

0534

BAR-TAILED GODWIT Limosa lapponica

[P+W: Areas 1, 2, 3, 4 &amp; 5]

Regular passage migrant but only a few winter away from Islay and Tiree. Non-breeding birds on Islay throughout Summer.

Counts:

ISLAY

130 Loch Indaal January; 70 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 14th February.

COWAL

1 Holy Loch 5th September.

MULL

Only 1 heard during heavy wader movement in mist and rain over Tobermory 29th August.

COLL

19 Criad 14th October.

0538

WHIMBREL Numenius phaeopus

[P: All areas]

Passage birds throughout County with majority seen in May.

Counts:

KINTYRE

23 Machrihanish 7th May.

ISLAY

5 North off Ardnave Point 21st April; 11 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 3rd May.

COLONSAY

1 Colonsay 12th January (D C Jardine).

MULL

1 summered at Fidden

COLL

Small parties (up to 4) in several places 5th May.

0541

CURLEW Numenius arquata

[B+W+P: All areas]

Common around coasts and breeding in suitable habitat. Numbers continually declining as a breeding species through improvement to agricultural land and loss of habitat to forestry schemes.

Counts:

COWAL

211 Holy Loch 21st January.

ISLAY

500 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 18th October.

0546

REDSHANK Tringa totanus

[B+W+P: All areas]

Widespread breeding species with wintering birds to be found in small numbers on muddy and rocky shores.

Counts:

ISLAY

65 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 13th April.

MULL

54 Fidden 20th July. Many birds over Tobermory during heavy nocturnal wader passage in mist and heavy rain 29th August.

0548

GREENSHANK Tringa nebularia

[B+P+W: All areas]

Breeds in very small numbers. Majority of records are from migrants with a few records of wintering birds.

ARGYLL

Confirmed breeding from two areas.

Counts:

ISLAY

4 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 28th October & 15th November.

JURA

2 Loch Tarbert in February.

COLONSAY

4 Oronsay 7th January.

MULL

1 Dervaig 6th January; 9 Fidden 20th July; 5 Lochdon 24th November.

- 0553                    GREEN SANDPIPER Tringa ochropus  
                          [P: Areas 1, 2, 5 & 6]  
                          Rare passage migrant.  
                          Counts:  
 MULL                    1 near Lochdon 8th August; 2 heard over Tobermory during heavy  
                          nocturnal wader passage in mist and rain 29th August.  
 NORTH ARGYLL        1 Keil Croft 9th September.
- 0554                    WOOD SANDPIPER Tringa glareola  
                          Very rare migrant. Possibly non-breeding bird summering.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                   1 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 28th-30th September.  
 COLL                    1 singing 7th June.
- 0556                    COMMON SANDPIPER Actitis hypoleucos  
                          [B+P+W: All areas]  
                          Common breeding wader throughout our area arriving mid-April  
                          and leaving again during August. Occasional winter records.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL            1 Lochgilphead 7th March.  
 MULL                    First arrival Loch Ba 15th April, 1 singing Fladda, Treshnish  
                          Isles 28th May - unusual here.  
 NORTH ARGYLL        First arrival 15th April.
- 0561                    TURNSTONE Arenaria interpres  
                          [W+P: All areas]  
                          Widespread along rock coasts and seaweedy areas of tidal flats.  
                          Almost certainly under-recorded in most years. Some records of  
                          summering birds.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                   84 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 15th January.  
 MID-ARGYLL            25 Ardrishaig 30th March; 36 Loch Gilp 23rd October; 49 Minard  
                          2nd November.  
 MULL                    Heard at night over Tobermory during heavy wader passage in  
                          mist and rain from 2340hrs 29th August.  
 NORTH ARGYLL        65 Ledaig Point 17th November.
- 0566                    POMARINE SKUA Stercorarius pomarinus  
                          [P: Areas 2, 4 & 5]  
                          Uncommon passage migrant in Spring and Autumn. Possibly  
                          under-recorded.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL            1 flying down Firth of Lorne in very rough conditions on  
                          28th August.  
 MULL                    1 chasing gulls. Seen from ferry West of Mull 27th August.  
 COLL                    Single dark phase bird heading North Peall Bay 5th May.

0567

ARCTIC SKUA Stercorarius parasiticus

[S+P: Areas 1, 2, 4 & 5]

Breeds Jura and Coll. Passage birds in Spring and Autumn along Atlantic coasts and through Firth of Lorne and Sound of Mull.

Counts:

MULL  
COLL

24+ seen from Ferry to Tiree 1st August.  
Census produced about 50 breeding pairs.

0569

GREAT SKUA Stercorarius skua

[P: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6]

Passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor to West sea coasts, firths and sounds.

Counts:

KINTYRE  
ISLAY  
MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

2 South off Machrihanish 19th September.  
2 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 22nd September.  
1 Flying NE up Firth of Lorne into Loch Linnhe 21st September.  
1 Flying North across Ross of Mull at Loch Assapol 20th July.  
Maximum seen on ferry trip to Tiree 9 on 9th September.

COLL

First report of year was one seen on sea-angling trip East of Coll 23rd April. Singles Boud 15th October & Breachacha 21st October.

NORTH ARGYLL

1 dead Ledaig Point 21st June - had been ringed Orkney 1983.  
Juvenile off Ledaig Point 9th August.





- 0578                    LITTLE GULL   Larus minutus  
                          [P: Areas 4 & 5]  
                          Uncommon passage migrant. Possibly under-recorded.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL           1st Winter in Oban harbour 17th January (Possibly same bird  
                          as was seen in November 1983).  
 MULL                   Adult in full summer plumage off Grass Point 8th-15th August.  
                          Juvenile off Quinish 6th September.  
 TIREE                  Juvenile Gott Bay 10th September.
- 0579                    SABINE'S GULL   Larus sabini  
                          Vagrant  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL           Adult off Doide Bay, Loch Sween 3rd January (T P Daniels).
- 0582                    BLACK-HEADED GULL   Larus ridibundus  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Common breeding species, although absent from some likely  
                          areas eg Mull. More widespread outside breeding season.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                  600 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 8th March.  
 MID-ARGYLL           Colony at Minard increased from 120 to 130 pairs.
- 0589                    RING-BILLED GULL   Larus delawarensis  
                          Vagrant with likelihood of more to come with first and second  
                          in Argyll records coming in consecutive years.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL           Adult Lochgilphead 26th March (R A Hume). (Subject to  
                          acceptance by the British Birds Rarities Committee).
- 0590                    COMMON GULL   Larus canus  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Widespread and common breeding species with smaller numbers  
                          wintering.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                  470 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 13th October.  
 COWAL                  600 Holy Loch 21st January.  
 MID-ARGYLL           300 Kilmelford 7th February. Decrease reported from Crarae  
                          Loch Fyne possibly due to increased human disturbance.
- 0591                    LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL   Larus fuscus  
                          [B+P: All areas]  
                          Common summer visitor; March-October although bulk of population  
                          present April-September. Uncommon in Winter - many records  
                          resulting from mis-identification.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                  Adult Kintra 10th March.  
 MID-ARGYLL           3 Clachan Seil 7th January. First in Oban Harbour 14th March.

0592

HERRING GULL Larus argentatus

[B+W: All areas]

Common breeding bird with numbers increased by birds from NE England and the Clyde. (Colour-ringed birds). Colour-ringing also being carried out on Argyll rubbish dumps especially Lochgilphead and Oban.

Counts:

ARGYLL

Breeding reported from all areas.

0598

ICELAND GULL Larus glaucoides

[W: All areas]

Regular winter visitor, especially to fishing harbours. Larger than usual numbers occurred in January 1983 following severe gales when up to 22 were reported. A similar weather pattern prevailed in January 1984 resulting in 29 birds being seen.

Counts:

KINTYRE

5 East Loch Tarbert 7th February had increased to 6 by 1st March. 1 remained 20th April; 2 Campbeltown 13th February.

ISLAY

1 Port Charlotte 20th February; 2 on Farmland near Errobus 22nd February present to at least 26th March; Singles Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 5th-6th February; 20th March; 14th April. 1 Clachan, Loch Fyne 29th January-4th February; 4 Oban Harbour 6th February; 1 in Firth of Lorne 25th February.

MID-ARGYLL

MULL

5 Tobermory Harbour 19th-21st January; 1 there 30th April-4th May; 1 West off Langanmull 23rd December.

NORTH ARGYLL

3 with other gulls feeding at mink farm near Castle Stalker 5th February; 1 Port Appin 19th February.

0599

GLAUCOUS GULL Larus hyperboreus

[W: All areas]

Regular winter visitor in small numbers, especially to fishing harbours. Most years more plentiful than Iceland Gull but January 1983 and January 1984 were exceptions.

Counts:

KINTYRE

2 East Loch Tarbert 7th February; 3 Campbeltown 13th February.

ISLAY

7 counted around the Island 10th January; 1 still present Loch Indaal 21st April.

MID-ARGYLL

3 Oban Harbour 16th January; 1 Inveraray 6th February; 1 Firth of Lorne 25th February.

MULL

Long staying adult in Tobermory Harbour present through into April and returned for short period from 10th September. However with no fishing boats using the harbour due to reconstruction of Tobermory Pier there was little to keep it about for the Winter. 2 additional birds present 19th January.

COLL

1 Cornaig 20th April.

TIREE

1 at sea SE of Tiree near Skerryvore 23rd February.

NORTH ARGYLL

2 with other gulls at mink farm near Castle Stalker 5th February; 1 Cuil Bay 5th February.

- 0600                      GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL   Larus marinus  
                              [B+W: All areas]  
                              Common  
                              Counts:  
 ISLAY                      160 Loch Gruinart 31st August.  
 COLONSAY                  106 Traigh nam Barc 24th July.  
 MID-ARGYLL                149 Loch Feochan 6th February.
- 0602                      KITTIWAKE   Rissa tridactyla  
                              [B+P: Areas 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5]  
                              Breeds mainly Islay, Colonsay, Tiree and Treshnish Isles.  
                              Can generally be seen off west coasts and in firths and sounds  
                              where large numbers can occur. Quite often found bathing and  
                              preening at mouths of rivers after breeding season and in  
                              Winter some birds join other gulls in fishing harbours.  
                              Counts:  
 ISLAY                      2000 South of Frenchman's Rocks in 45 minutes 23rd October.  
 COWAL                      15 Toward Point 8th January.  
 COLL                        c2500 off East coast 20th August.
- 0611                      SANDWICH TERN   Sterna sandvicensis  
                              [P: Areas 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6]  
                              Irregular passage migrant. Possibly under-recorded.  
                              Counts:  
 COWAL                      2 Loch Ridden 30th July.  
 MID-ARGYLL                2 off Kerrera 10th May; 12 Loch Gilp 6th September.  
 MULL                        2 off Grasspoint 8th August.
- 0614                      ROSEATE TERN   Sterna dougallii  
                              [P: Areas 5 & 6]  
                              Annual status uncertain but may breed some years in 'comic'  
                              tern colonies in Firth of Lorne and Loch Linnhe.  
                              Counts:  
 MULL                        1 off Grasspoint 27th June.
- 0615                      COMMON TERN   Sterna hirundo  
                              [S+P: All areas]  
                              Widespread in fluctuating numbers. Subject to increasing  
                              pressures from tourists getting into less accessible areas.  
                              Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL                First of year Loch Feochan 3rd May.
- 0616                      ARTIC TERN   Sterna paradisaea  
                              [S+P: All areas]  
                              Widespread and common but as with Common Tern subject to  
                              increased disturbance during breeding season.  
                              Counts:  
 COLL                        Birds well established and displaying 5th May.  
 NORTH ARGYLL              First seen in Loch Etive 7th May.

0624

LITTLE TERN Sterna albifrons

[S: Areas 1, 2 & 5]

Scarce breeding species mainly confined to Islay, Coll and Tiree. Considerable human disturbance at some sites.

Counts:

COLL  
TIREE

Birds well established and displaying by 5th May.  
1 fishing Gott Bay 10th September.



0634

GUILLEMOT Uria aalge

[B+W: All areas]

Breeds on suitable cliffs. Main colonies on Colonsay and on the Harp Rock, Lunga, Treshnish Isles.

Counts:

ISLAY  
COWAL

1000+ South in 45 minutes off Frenchman's Rocks 23rd October. Two interesting records are of birds in Glen Fyne. The first was of two flying South down the Glen on 7th October. They were at about 2000' when first seen and dropped down as they approached the sealoch. On 27th October one flew inland up Glen Fyne.

0636

RAZORBILL Alca torda

[B+W: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6]

Common breeding species on suitable cliffs. Can be found well up sealochs in late winter.

Counts:

ARGYLL

No reports received of unusual numbers etc.

0638

BLACK GUILLEMOT Cephus grylle

[B+W: All areas]

Widespread and frequently seen further up sealochs than other auks. Breeds on old wooden piers as well as in rock sites. First birds in summer plumage in January and some adults back into winter plumage by late August.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL

No change at Eilean Aoghainn with 20 pairs breeding. 101 birds counted around Corr Eilean 6th July.

0647

LITTLE AUK Alle alle

[W: All areas]

Irregular winter visitor in varying numbers and generally associated with severe winter gales.

Counts:

KINTYRE

Singles at Tarbert 28th January and 29th February; 1 Skipness 9th November.

ISLAY

1 Port Charlotte 6th January; 1 found dead Machrie 8th February.

COLONSAY

5 seen from ferry to Colonsay 4th January.

MID-ARGYLL

1 Firth of Lorne 4th January and another Sound of Kerrera 17th January. Remains of one found Loch Awe 11th February.

MULL

One Rossal and 2 Bunessan in January; remains of a headless bird found in an eagle pellet in February. 1 off Duart Castle 25th February.

NORTH ARGYLL

1 inland at Letter Walton 21st January; singles dead North Connel 18th February and Keil Crofts 1st March.

0654

PUFFIN Fratercula arctica

[B+P: Areas 1, 2 &amp; 5]

Scarce away from main colonies except on passage. Reliable winter records are very few. Birds start arriving off colonies during April but main build up takes place in May. Numbers fall away quickly as breeding season finishes during second half of July. Most colonies deserted by 10th August and records of birds at sea from ferries are few from beginning of September. Largest colony is on Treshnish Isles.

Counts:

ISLAY

2 Port Charlotte 25th January; 1 off Frenchman's Rocks heading north 9th February.



- 0665                    ROCK DOVE   Columba livia  
                          [R+W: Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6]  
                          Pure birds are common in the Inner Hebrides and remote coasts  
                          on the mainland. Few feral birds occur in these parts. Collects  
                          into large post-breeding flocks.  
                          Counts:  
 IONA                    Largest reported flock was c250 on Iona 18th September.
- 0668                    STOCK DOVE   Columba oenas  
                          Status uncertain. Areas 1, 4 & 5.  
                          Counts:  
 ARGYLL                No reliable reports received.
- 0670                    WOODPIGEON   Columba palumbus  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Common breeding species throughout Argyll but not surprisingly  
                          it is absent from Coll and Tiree.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL            c250 Inveraray 10th December.  
 NORTH ARGYLL        c500 Benderloch 23rd January.
- 0684                    COLLARED DOVE   Streptopelia decaocto  
                          [R+P: All areas]  
                          Well established. Migrants in late Spring suggest continued  
                          colonisation.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                5 Rhinns 16th March was highest count.  
 COLL                2 flew over the sea from South nr Caoles 7th May.
- 0724                    CUCKOO   Cuculus canorus  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Common throughout area with Meadow Pipit being the main host  
                          species.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL            FIRST Castle Sween 22nd April; several in Glen Lonan area by  
                          26th April but considered late Minard 1st May.  
 NORTH ARGYLL        Benderloch 23rd April, LAST 20th July.

0735

BARN OWL Tyto alba

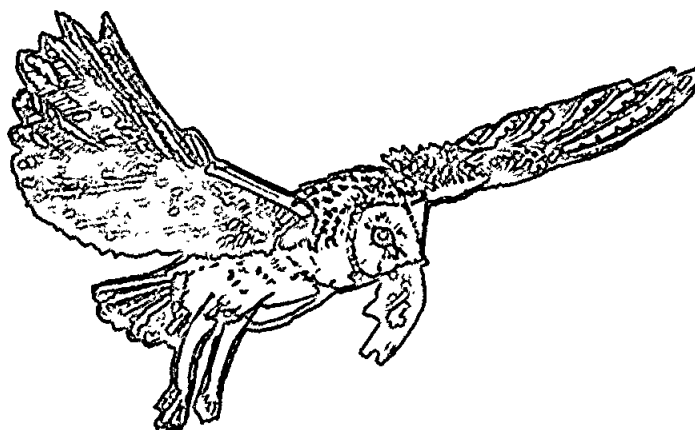
[B+W: All areas]

Possible under-recorded but nowhere common. Increase in records during winter.

Counts:

KINTYRE  
ISLAY  
MID-ARGYLL

Singles Tarbert 4th January; Skipness 28th February.  
Singles Port Charlotte and Bridgend in January.  
Singles Dunstaffnage 24th January; Tayvallich 7th February;  
Loch Feochan 8th February.



0761

TAWNY OWL Strix aluco

[R: All areas]

Widespread in suitable habitat but absent Coll and Tiree.  
Not uncommonly seen in daylight.

Counts:

ARGYLL  
MULL

See paper by Steve Petty later in this report.  
Adult flushed from 2 eggs in short burrow in wood near Salen  
15th April.

0767

LONG-EARED OWL Asio otus

[B+W: All areas]

Very scarce breeding species but undoubtedly under-recorded

Counts:

COLONSAY  
MULL  
NORTH ARGYLL

Pair with 2+ fledged young 17th July.  
Juvenile seen near Salen 15th June.  
2 Connel 2nd February; 1 Barcaldine 10th February.

0768

SHORT-EARED OWL Asio flammeus

[B+W: All areas]

Widespread, fluctuating numbers from year to year. Some  
emigration out of Argyll after the breeding season.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

Bred but success unknown.  
Good breeding season with several large broods reported.

0795

SWIFT Apus apus

[S+P: All areas]

Fairly common in towns with suitable breeding sites. Birds use natural sites on Kintyre. Absent as breeding species from most islands where Swifts occur on passage in varying numbers.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL  
MULL  
NORTH ARGYLL

Bred Inveraray and Oban.  
17 Scarisdale 8th July.  
FIRST 12th May; LAST 8th September.

0831

KINGFISHER Alcedo atthis

[?Bred ?Vagrant: Areas 2, 3, 4 & 5]

Most records probably relate to wandering juveniles. 1984 shows an increase on reported sightings.

Counts:

ISLAY

Probable breeding was reported from River Sorn during Summer.  
1 Bowmore 2nd November.

COWAL  
MULL

1 at Mouth of River Loin 25th November.  
1 Reported from Aros River in July and another present Lochdon from 25th November to end of year.

0846

HOOPOE Upupa epops

Irregular, generally as a spring overshoot.

Counts:

ISLAY

1 Ardtalla 8th June (C G Booth).

0848

WRYNECK Jynx torquilla

Vagrant or very rare migrant.

Counts:

COLL

1 Bousd 13th October (M Checker).

0856

GREEN WOODPECKER Picus viridis

[B+V: Areas 2, 4 & 5]

Green woodpeckers are slowly expanding northwards in Scotland but have yet to become permanently established in Argyll.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

1 possibly 2 Glen Rolloch 20th April.  
1 Loch Spelve 3rd May.

0876

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER Dendrocopos major

[B+W: All areas]

Widespread in suitable woods and sometimes comes to birdtables in Winter. Comparatively recent colonists to Argyll with breeding first reported from Ardentinny in 1921. Oban was reached by 1945 and they crossed to Mull the following year.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL

Birds last bred Castle Sween 1982 but have not been seen subsequently.



0976

SKYLARK Alauda arvensis

[B/S+P+W: All areas]

Widespread and common but is losing suitable habitat with spread of forestry. Many skylarks leave Argyll completely after breeding season. Occasional large flocks in Winter.

Main counts:

KINTYRE  
ISLAY  
COLL

70 Bellochantuy 28th February.  
80 Port Charlotte 27th January.  
c80 Cliad Farm in mid-October.

0981

SAND MARTIN Riparia riparia

[S+P: All areas]

Widespread and common where there are suitable sites. Decreasing locally due to increasing disturbance generally through commercial exploitation of sand. This does not take into account the dramatic population crash through the Sahel drought 1983/84.

Counts:

ARGYLL  
MULL  
NORTH ARGYLL

Much later arriving than usual and very scarce throughout area.  
LAST REPORTED 31st August.  
FIRST REPORTED 2nd May.

0992

SWALLOW Hirundo rustica

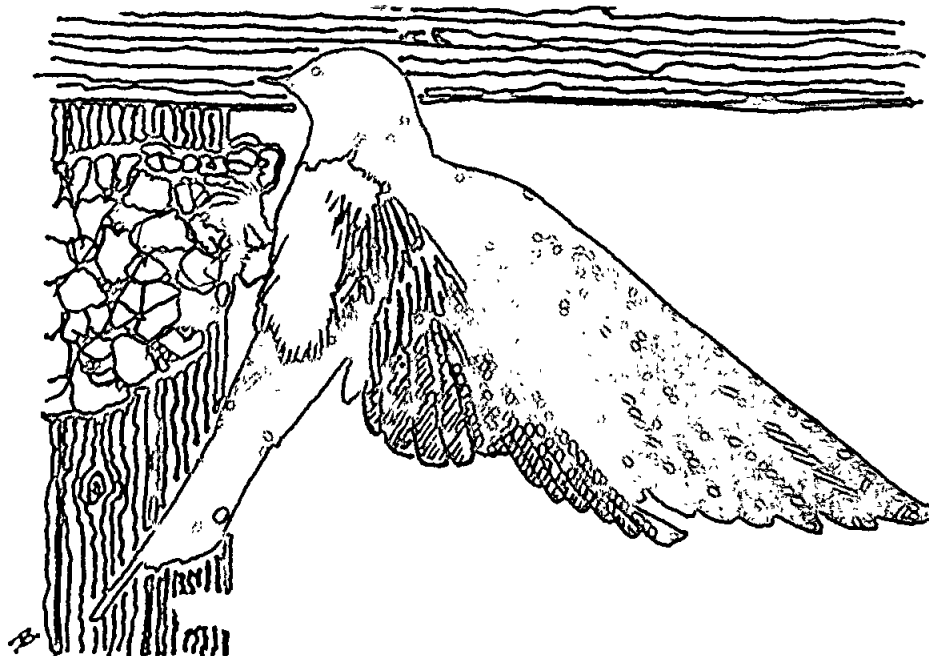
[S+P: All areas]

Widespread.

Counts:

ISLAY  
MULL  
NORTH ARGYLL

FIRST one Mull of Oa 8th April, first recorded elsewhere from 16th April.  
LAST one Lochdon 27th October.  
10th October - last seen here.



- 1001                    HOUSE MARTIN   Delichon urbica  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Common breeding species where there are suitable sites and  
                          the birds are undisturbed. Recently constructed 'kit'  
                          houses used in places but no reports of natural sites being  
                          used.  
                          Counts  
 NORTH ARGYLL           c100 South Connel 28th August.
- 1009                    TREE PIPIT   Anthus trivialis  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Common in suitable breeding habitats. Benefits from  
                          cleared forestry plantations.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL           Possible increase in Castle Sween area.  
 MULL                    FIRST one found in exhausted condition Croggan 25th March was  
                          exceptionally early. Elsewhere arrivals from 22nd April.  
 NORTH ARGYLL           LAST 3rd September.
- 1011                    MEADOW PIPIT   Anthus pratensis  
                          [B+P: All areas]  
                          Very common breeding species in upland and lowland moors.  
                          Flocks in Autumn with many birds leaving Argyll for Winter.  
                          Counts:  
 COWAL                   227 Toward Point 21st January.
- 1014                    ROCK PIPIT   Anthus spinoletta  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Common breeding species around all coasts.  
                          No unusual records.  
                          WATER PIPIT   Anthus spinoletta spinoletta  
                          Vagrant  
                          Counts:  
 COLONSAY              1 in summer plumage Poll Gorm, Strand 23rd July (D C Jardine).
- 1019                    GREY WAGTAIL   Motacilla cinerea  
                          [B+P+W: All areas]  
                          Widespread in breeding season with many birds leaving Argyll  
                          in Autumn. Particularly vulnerable to a severe Winter.  
                          Counts:  
 NORTH ARGYLL           First returning birds 23rd March.  
 COLL                    1 Gallanach 14th October - unusual on Coll.

PIED/WHITE WAGTAIL Motacilla alba

[B+W: All areas]

Common breeding species although many birds leave Argyll in Autumn. White wagtails pass through in varying numbers in Spring and Autumn.



1048

WAXWING Bombycilla garrulus

[W: All areas]

Irregular winter visitor in varying numbers.

Counts:

KINTYRE

1 Tarbert 16th December (M J P Gregory)

1050

DIPPER Cinclus cinclus

[B+W: All areas]

Widespread along rivers with many birds moving down to tidal river mouths and loch sides in Autumn. Perhaps less common than one would expect. Absent from Coll and Tiree.

1066

WREN Troglodytes troglodytes

[B+W: All areas]

Very common and found in virtually all habitats from sealevel to 200m+. Remarkably resilient to severe winters.

- 1084 DUNNOCK Prunella modularis  
[B+W: All Areas]  
Common  
Counts:
- MULL Birds present again this year on Lunga, Treshnish Isles, but not thought to have bred.
- 1099 ROBIN Erithacus rubecula  
[B+P: All areas]  
Common throughout area with numbers augmented by passage birds in Autumn.
- 1122 REDSTART Phoenicurus phoenicurus  
[S+P: All areas]  
Common breeding species especially in oak woods. Passage birds could turn up anywhere.  
Counts:
- NORTH ARGYLL FIRST Barcaldine 13th April; LAST REPORTED 22nd August.
- 1137 WHINCHAT Saxicola rubetra  
[S+P: All areas]  
Common breeding species benefitting from the early years of forestry plantation and again after timber has been cleared.  
Counts:
- COLL FIRST 1 Arnabost 7th April was earlier than usual. Elsewhere arrivals from 23rd April; LAST Arinagour Plantation 21st October.
- NORTH ARGYLL LAST REPORTED 1st September.
- 1139 STONECHAT Saxicola torquata  
[B+P+W: All areas]  
Widespread but numbers can fall dramatically after severe winters and can take 2-3 good breeding seasons to recover. Many birds winter south of Argyll leaving during the Autumn. Comparatively few overwintering.  
Counts:
- ARGYLL Generally scarce throughout.  
COWAL More than usual present along tidelines in late January during blanket snow cover inland.
- 1146 WHEATEAR Oenanthe oenanthe  
[S+P: All areas]  
Common breeding species often using rabbit burrow sites where rock and wall sites not available. Birds of Greenland race frequently seen on Spring passage.  
Counts:
- MID-ARGYLL FIRST Glen Shira 25th March.  
MULL LAST Fidden 8th October.

- 1186                    RING OUZEL   Turdus torquatus  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Not as common as one would expect with all the upland areas in  
                          Argyll.  
                          No arrival or departure dates received.
- 1187                    BLACKBIRD   Turdus merula  
                          [B+P: All areas]  
                          Very common breeding species and passage migrant in considerable  
                          numbers in November.  
                          Counts:  
 MULL                    c20 flying south down Island Arle 21st November.
- 1198                    FIELDFARE   Turdus pilaris  
                          [P+W: All areas]  
                          Mainly occurs as passage migrant with smaller numbers wintering.  
                          Counts:  
 COWAL                   195 Toward Point 21st January.  
 MID-ARGYLL            198 Seil 6th February.  
 MULL                    LAST REPORTED 1st April.  
 NORTH ARGYLL          FIRST 80 Connel on 17th October.
- 1200                    SONG THRUSH   Turdus philomelos  
                          [B+P+W: All areas]  
                          Widespread and very common throughout with passage birds in  
                          Spring and Autumn.
- 1201                    REDWING   Turdus iliacus  
                          [P+W+?B: All areas]  
                          The majority of redwings pass through Argyll to winter further  
                          south. Numbers sometimes very spectacular. Comparatively few  
                          birds winter. Spring passage birds can stay quite late and  
                          song often heard. However birds may hold territory eg Dalmally  
                          June 1978.  
                          Counts:  
 COWAL                   1016 Toward Point 21st January during blanket snow cover inland.  
 NORTH ARGYLL          FIRST 7th October; LAST 19th April.
- 1202                    MISTLE THRUSH   Turdus viscivorus  
                          [B+P+W: All areas]  
                          Common breeding species throughout, although absent on Coll and  
                          Tiree where only passage birds seen. Post-breeding flocks of  
                          up to 30 seen. Few winter and remainder return February  
                          onwards.

- 1236                    GRASSHOPPER WARBLER Locustella naevia  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Locally common breeding species. Migrants could turn up  
                          anywhere.  
                          Counts:  
 NORTH ARGYLL           FIRST Benderloch 25th April.
- 1243                    SEDGE WARBLER Acrocephalus schoenobaenus  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Common but local. Migrants could turn up anywhere.  
                          Counts:  
 ISLAY                   FIRST singing Loch Gorm 23rd April.  
 MULL                    LAST REPORTED Loch Assapol 22nd August.
- 1259                    ICTERINE WARBLER Hippolais icterina  
                          Vagrant - ? spring overshoot.  
                          Counts:  
 MID-ARGYLL            1 singing in garden at Taynuilt 12th or 13th June to 28th  
                          June. (K D Connor). Mr Connor had the fore-sight to make  
                          a recording of the song. (Subject to acceptance by the  
                          British Birds Rarities Committee).
- 1275                    WHITETHROAT Sylvia communis  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Widespread and common.  
                          Counts:  
 MULL                    Fewer present than usual.  
 NORTH ARGYLL           FIRST Connel 1st May.
- 1276                    GARDEN WARBLER Sylvia borin  
                          [S+P: All areas]  
                          Scarce breeding species. Can turn up anywhere on migration  
                          when it sometimes can be found feeding on elder berries in  
                          Autumn.  
                          Counts:  
 ARGYLL                   No arrival or departure dates received.  
 COLL                    1 Singing Gallanach in July was thought to be unusual.
- 1277                    BLACKCAP Sylvia atricapilla  
                          [S+W+P: All areas]  
                          Scarce breeding species but some years more blackcaps seen on  
                          birdtables in Winter than during Summer.  
                          WINTER RECORDS:  
 KINTYRE                   1 Tarbert 6th January.  
 COLONSAY               1 on 11th January.  
 MID-ARGYLL            1 Oban 12th December 1983 to 18th February 1984; 1 Lochgilphead  
                          7th February.  
 NORTH ARGYLL           1 Connel 21st January.

Migrants & Summer Records:

ISLAY  
MID-ARGYLL  
MULL  
NORTH ARGYLL

1 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 16th November.  
2 Lochgilphead 4th-5th October; Minard 17th November.  
Singing at 4 sites - more than usual.  
FIRST Spring migrant 1st May.

1308

WOOD WARBLER Phylloscopus sibilatrix

[S+P: All areas]

Common in oakwoods.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL  
MULL

FIRST singing Inveraray 26th April.  
Bird nest building 3rd May - early.

1311

CHIFFCHAFF Phylloscopus collybita

[S+P: All areas]

Scarce. November records not unusual.

Counts:

MULL  
COLL  
NORTH ARGYLL

1 showing characteristics of Siberian race Tobermory 3rd and 23rd December.  
1 Gallanach 17th October.  
FIRST Connel 7th April.

1312

WILLOW WARBLER Phylloscopus trochilus

[S+P: All areas]

The commonest warbler in Argyll.

Counts:

NORTH ARGYLL

FIRST 11th April. Return passage through area noted 9th-15th August.

1314

GOLDCREST Regulus regulus

[B+W+P: All areas]

Common breeding species and one of the few to have benefitted from forestry.

1335

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER Muscicapa striata

[S+P: All areas]

Widespread breeding species in small numbers. Passage birds until about mid-September.

Counts

MULL  
NORTH ARGYLL

LAST West Ardhru 13th September.  
FIRST 8th May.

1437

LONG-TAILED TIT Aegithalos caudatus

[B+W: All areas]

Widespread. Suffers from severe winters.

1461

COAL TIT Parus ater

[B+W: All areas]

Common and in some plantations abundant. Doubtless has benefitted from spread of forestry.

1462

BLUE TIT Parus caeruleus

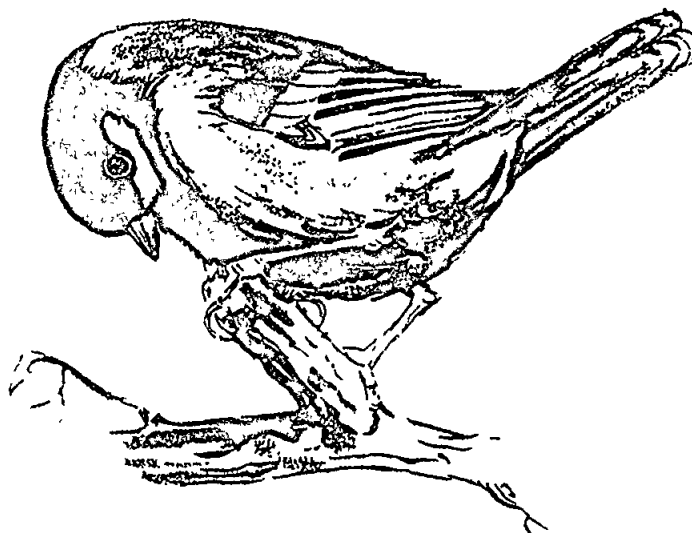
[B+W: All areas]

Very common but absent from some islands.

Counts:

COLL

Birds present Spring and Summer but breeding not proved.



1464

GREAT TIT Parus major

[B+W: All areas]

Common throughout area but less plentiful than Blue Tits. Absent from Coll and Tiree as breeding species.

Counts:

COLL

Birds were present on Island during the breeding season but breeding not proved.

1486

TREECREEPER Certhia familiaris

[B+W: All areas]

Common in suitable habitat but obviously absent from Coll and Tiree.

1520

GREAT GREY SHRIKE Lanius excubitor

[W+P: All areas]

Irregular winter visitor and passage migrant.

Counts:

MID-ARGYLL

1 Kilberry 4th February.

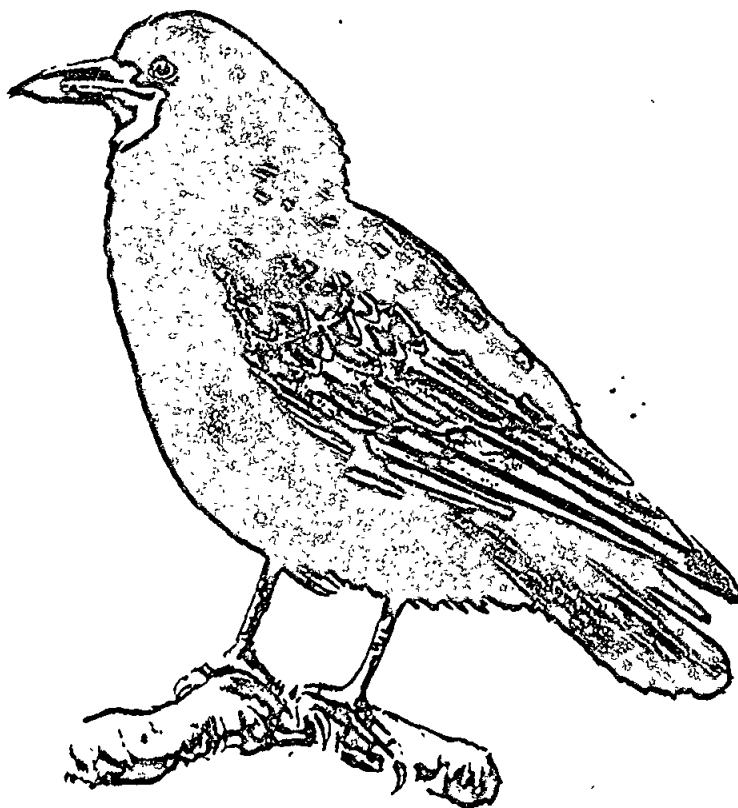


- 1539                    JAY   Garrulus garrulus  
                          [B+W: Areas 1, 3, 4 & 6]  
                          Local but common in some places. Absent from islands.  
                          Counts:
- MID-ARGYLL           More records than usual during first winter period was probably due to influx of Jays from Continent into Britain in Autumn 1983.
- 1549                    MAGPIE   Pica pica  
                          [B: Areas 1, 2, 3 & 4]  
                          Considered to be rare outside Cowal but spate of records in Spring suggests possibility of colonisation further north in County.  
                          Counts:
- KINTYRE               1 Skipness 28th February.  
 COLONSAY             Unconfirmed reports of 1 in June.  
 MID-ARGYLL           1 Crinan Moss 14th February and 1 or the same Kilmartin 22nd February.  
 MULL                  1 Glen Aros 26th May.
- 1559                    CHOUGH   Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax  
                          [B+W: Areas 1 & 2]  
                          Islay is the main stronghold in Scotland and there are smaller populations on Mull of Kintyre, Jura and Colonsay.  
                          Counts:
- ISLAY                  39 was highest count on RSPB Reserve at Loch Gruinart 28th September.  
 COLONSAY             11 on 15th January.
- 1560                    JACKDAW   Corvus monedula  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Very common throughout area although notably absent as breeding species from Coll, Tiree, Treshnish Isles and most of Mull, where it only breeds at West of Ross and on Iona. Increase in numbers during Winter.  
                          Counts:
- COLL                   2 present in April and May.
- 1563                    ROOK   Corvus frugilegus  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Very common though absent as breeding species from Coll and Tiree where there is a lack of trees and more surprising from most of Mull. Increase in numbers in Winter. In 1975 the National Census showed 78 rookeries in Argyll with a total of 3217 nests giving an average of 41.2 nests per rookery and a density of 0.40 per km<sup>2</sup>. This made Argyll the third lowest density in Scotland with only Sutherland at 0.39 and Shetland with 0.08 having lower densities. (See M E Castle in Scottish Birds Vol 9 p327).

Counts:

KINTYRE

212 Campbeltown 7th August.



1567

CARRION/HOODED CROW Corvus corone

[B+W: All areas]

The Hooded Crow is the predominant subspecies in the Northern part of Argyll and on most islands but Carrion crows are spreading slowly up through Cowal to Mid-Argyll and Kintyre. It is becoming increasingly frequent in traditional Hoodie areas and consequently hybrids can be seen in varying numbers anywhere. One is tempted to speculate on the distribution picture in 50 years time.

Counts:

ISLAY  
MID-ARGYLL

Carrion crow showed signs of an increase since 1983.  
c350 Loch Feochan 27th October included several hybrids.

1572

RAVEN Corvus corax

[B+W: All areas]

Very common throughout with birds often frequenting refuse tips eg up to 50 at certain times of the year at Tobermory tip.

1582

STARLING Sturnus vulgaris

[B+W: All areas]

Abundant, although not as common during the breeding season as on Coll and Tiree. Frequently found using natural sites such as seacliffs on Treshnish Isles. Resident population swollen in Winter with immigrants from Northern Europe.

- 1584                    ROSE-COLOURED STARLING   Sturnus roseus  
                          [V: Areas 1, 4 & 5]  
                          With almost annual records 'vagrant' might be an overstatement.  
                          Counts:
- MULL                   Adult Fidden 13th June (R F Coomber et al). (Subject to acceptance by the British Birds Rarities Committee).
- 1591                    HOUSE SPARROW   Passer domesticus  
                          [R: All areas]  
                          Generally very plentiful and associated with habitation and agriculture. Scarce on some islands.
- 1598                    TREE SPARROW   Passer montanus  
                          [W+P+?B: Areas 1, 4 & 5]  
                          Very uncommon but possibly under-recorded. All records required to determine exact status.  
                          Counts:
- KINTYRE                5 Skipness 20th January; 3 Tarbert 7th February.  
 MID-ARGYLL            5 Kilberry 25th February; 2 Stonefield 6th June.
- 1636                    CHAFFINCH   Fringilla coelebs  
                          [B+W+P: All areas]  
                          Abundant, often forming large flocks of both sexes in Winter.
- 1638                    BRAMBLING   Fringilla montifringilla  
                          [W+P: All areas]  
                          Winter visitor in fluctuating numbers. Apparently absent some Winters.  
                          Counts:
- ISLAY                   6 Port Askaig 8th April; 1 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 3rd May.  
 COWAL                   80 Cairndow 29th January.  
 MID-ARGYLL            120 nr Oban in January; c50 nr Loch Tromlee 14th March.  
 NORTH ARGYLL        Up to 200 in Benderloch area January. Last seen 12th March.
- 1649                    GREENFINCH   Carduelis chloris  
                          [B+W: All areas]  
                          Patchy distribution although plentiful in some areas. Increase in Winter.

1653

GOLDFINCH Carduelis carduelis

[B+W: All areas]

Becomes scarce in the North and on some islands. Absent as breeding species on Colonsay, Iona, Coll and Tiree. Very local Islay, Jura and Mull.

Counts:

ISLAY

25 Port Charlotte 22nd October.



1654

SISKIN Carduelis spinus

[B+P+W: All areas]

Common breeding species where suitable habitat. Absent as breeding species on Colonsay, Iona, Coll and Tiree and local on Islay and Jura. Sometimes found in large flocks in Autumn feeding on thistles and grass seeds. Few winter but there are numerous records of birds coming to red peanut bags.

1660

LINNET Carduelis cannabina

[B+P+W: All areas]

Locally common. Few winter records.

1662

TWITE Carduelis flavirostris

[B+P+W: All areas]

Locally common but scarce in Cowal and Mid-Argyll. Some decrease on Mull over recent years. Few large flocks in winter.

Counts:

ISLAY  
COLONSAY  
MULL

264 Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve 28th September.

40 11th January.

25 Salen 19th February (only Winter Atlas record from island).

- 1663                      REDPOLL   Carduelis flammea  
                               [B+P+W: All areas]  
                               Common but local breeding species. Absent as a breeding species from Iona, Coll and Tiree.  
                               Counts:  
                               c250 Ardnadrochit 11th September.  
                               35 Connel 11th February.
- MULL  
 NORTH ARGYLL
- 1666                      CROSSBILL   Loxia curvirostra  
                               [B+W: All areas]  
                               Population fluctuates dramatically with cone crop in forestry plantations.  
                               Counts:  
                               Good reports throughout County, although possibly not as high as in 1983.  
                               4 Kildalton 2nd July was unusual.  
                               1 found dead in July.  
                               Largest reported flock was c15 near Loch Tromlee 14th March.  
                               Largest reported flock was 27 on 17th April but most plantations where 'common' in 1983 were deserted.
- ARGYLL  
 ISLAY  
 JURA  
 MID-ARGYLL  
 MULL
- 1710                      BULLFINCH   Pyrrhula pyrrhula  
                               [B+W: All areas]  
                               Common breeding species in habitats ranging from forestry plantations to extensive shrubberies. Absent from Coll and Tiree and irregular on Colonsay and Gigha. Can be found in flocks in Winter but is possibly vulnerable to severe winters.  
                               Counts:  
                               Some local flocks considered to contain birds of northern ssp 21st January.
- NORTH ARGYLL
- 1850                      SNOW BUNTING   Plectrophenax nivalis  
                               [P+W+?B: All areas]  
                               Occurs in varying numbers on passage. Some winter flocks. Some years some birds may breed on the high tops.  
                               Counts:  
                               45 Clachan 18th January.  
                               20 Portnahaven 19th January.  
                               22 Clachan Seil 20th January.  
                               25 Glen More 2nd February and 10 there 6th April. Also 21+ on 12th November.
- KINTYRE  
 ISLAY  
 MID-ARGYLL  
 MULL
- 1857                      YELLOWHAMMER   Emberiza citrinella  
                               [B+W: All areas]  
                               Local but common in places. Seen away from breeding areas in winter.

1877

REED BUNTING Emberiza schoeniclus

[B+W: All areas]

Common in suitable habitat. Flocks with finches and Yellow-hammers found around farms in winter.

Counts:

ISLAY

30 Port Charlotte 19th January.

1882

CORN BUNTING Miliaria calandra

[R+P: Areas 1 & 5]

Very local breeding species with regular breeding only from Coll and Tiree, and may do so on Gigha. Elsewhere birds appear at migration times suggesting some movement, although this might be only on a 'local' basis.

Counts

COLL

3 singing males 18th June.

# RESULTS OF BIRD-RINGING IN ARGYLL IN 1984

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P.O. Box 3, Oban, Argyll PA34 4AD.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1984, five resident ringers licensed to ring all bird species were operating in Argyll. Four of these held A-permits while one held a C-permit. Together they were responsible for ringing 4177 birds, 94% of the county total (respectively 3104, 390, 301, 228 and 154 birds). 101 birds (2%) were ringed by two Argyll residents with restricted permits licensing them to ring single species as part of wider scientific studies. These species were Eider and Golden Eagle. The remaining 182 birds (4%) were ringed by four visitors to the county (two holidaymakers, one RSPB staff member, and the Glasgow University Gull Study Group).

Among foreign recoveries in 1984 of Argyll ringed birds, perhaps the most exciting have been four recoveries of terns in various parts of Africa (see below).

## II. RINGING TOTALS

The totals of each species ringed in Argyll in 1984 (as notified to me by the end of February 1985) are given in Table 1.

In Table 2, an attempt is made to place these totals in a national perspective. The national totals for each year do not become available until December of the following year and consequently the 1984 national totals are not available at the time of writing. The 1984 Argyll totals

have therefore been expressed as percentages of the 1983 national totals for each species (Mead & Hudson 1984). The species for which this exceeds 15% are given in Table 2.

Most of the species in Table 2 are ringed in these relatively large numbers because they are the subjects of detailed studies by individuals resident in Argyll. However, all the Short-eared Owl were ringed by a visiting holiday ringer.

Long-term studies utilising ringing, primarily in Argyll, are being carried out by the following individuals.

Eider	C.A. Galbraith (Department of Zoology, Aberdeen University) 4 Achagoil, Minard, Inveraray, Argyll.
Golden Eagle	M.J. Gregory, 10 Kilmory Road, Lochgilphead, Argyll.
Common Tern	J.C.A. Craik, Scottish Marine Biological Association, P.O. Box 3, Oban, Argyll.
Arctic Tern	
Common Gull	
Chough	E. Bignal, Quin Hill, Clachan, Tarbert, Argyll.
Greenland Whitefronts	D.A. Stroud, Kindrochid, Sanaig, Bruichladdich, Islay, Argyll.



TABLE 1.

## 1984 ARGYLL RINGING TOTALS

Species	Fully grown	Chicks	Total
Fulmar	3		3
Manx Shearwater	1		1
Shag	5	300	305
Mute Swan	2		2
Shelduck		2	2
Eider	97		97
Sparrowhawk	1	10	11
Buzzard		2	2
Golden Eagle		17	17
Merlin		4	4
Peregrine		9	9
Oystercatcher	4	51	55
Ringed Plover		27	27
Golden Plover		4	4
Lapwing		24	24
Dunlin	2		2
Curlew	1	3	4
Redshank	4	8	12
Common Sandpiper	2	21	23
Black-headed Gull		86	86
Common Gull	4	482	486
Lesser Black-backed Gull	7	10	17
Herring Gull	80	239	319
Great Black-backed Gull	11	34	45
Common Tern	8	985	993
Arctic Tern		192	192
Razorbill	1		1
Black Guillemot		11	11
Puffin	3		3
Tawny Owl	10	45	55
Short-eared Owl		10	10
Skylark		9	9
Sand Martin	42		42
Swallow	1	22	23
Tree Pipit	6	10	16

Meadow Pipit	52	9	61
Rock Pipit	1	4	5
Pied Wagtail	5	6	11
Wren	10		10
Dunnoek	27		27
Robin	72	5	77
Redstart	1	32	33
Whinchat		6	6
Wheatear	9	20	29
Blackbird	42		42
Song Thrush	19		19
Redwing	1		1
Grasshopper Warbler	1		1
Sedge Warbler		1	1
Whitethroat		5	5
Garden Warbler	2		2
Blackcap	7		7
Wood Warbler	2	21	23
Chiffchaff	1		1
Willow Warbler	77	14	91
Goldcrest	11		11
Spotted Flycatcher	19	4	23
Long-tailed Tit	16		16
Coal Tit	21		21
Blue Tit	154	80	234
Great Tit	116	64	180
Treecreeper	7		7
Chough		38	38
Jackdaw	1		1
Crow ssp.	1		1
Starling	1		1
Chaffinch	466		466
Brambling	33		33
Greenfinch	18		18
Siskin	33		33
Linnet	7		7
Redpoll	1		1
Bullfinch	2		2
Reed Bunting	1	2	3

Totals

1532

2928

4460

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TABLE 2. SPECIES FOR WHICH ARGYLL MAKES SIGNIFICANT  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO U.K. NATIONAL RINGING TOTALS

Species	Argyll 1984 Total	U.K. 1983 Total	%
Eider	97	468	21
Golden Eagle	17	61	28
Common Gull	486	3209	15
Common Tern	993	2032	49
Short-eared Owl	10	64	16
Chough	38 <sup>*</sup>	67	57

\* A further 16 Chough were ringed with colour rings only: these are not included in Table 1.

### III. RECOVERIES AND SPECIES REPORTS

The following is a selection of the 1984 recoveries of which I was notified by the end of February 1985. Ringing details are given on the first line and recovery data on the second line. The age when ringed is given according to the EURING Code (note that these figures do not represent age in years):

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | nestling or chick                                  |
| 2   | fully grown, year of hatching unknown              |
| 3   | hatched during year of ringing                     |
| 3J  | ringed in juvenile plumage (age 3)                 |
| 4   | hatched before year of ringing, exact year unknown |
| 5   | hatched in previous year                           |
| 6   | hatched before previous year, exact year unknown   |
| M,F | Sex  |

The manner of recovery is coded as usual:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| v | caught or trapped and released with ring |
| + | shot or killed by Man                    |
| x | found dead                               |

Shag Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Large-scale ringing of shags has been carried out in recent years by Eric Bignal at colonies in mid-Argyll. As a result, ten recoveries were reported in 1984, of which two involved distances of under 10 km, with four of 10-50 km. Those over 50 km are given below.

1179352	1	6.7.83	Eilean nan Coinean: 56°0'N 5°40'W (Argyll)
	+	13.3.84	South end of Tiree: 56°30'N 6°45'W (Argyll)
			87 km 310 deg 251 days (shot)
1179402	1	6.7.83	Eilean nan Coinean
	×	12.7.84	Calva, Iona: 56°20'N 6°23'W (Argyll)
			58 km 310 deg 372 days
1179421	1	6.7.83	Eilean nan Coinean
	+	24.4.84	Connel, Oban: 56°28'N 5°23'W (Argyll)
			55 km 19 deg 293 days (fish farm nets)
1179425	1	6.7.83	Eilean nan Coinean
	×	4.6.84	<u>Near</u> Hynish, Tiree: 56°26'N 6°53'W (Argyll)
			89 km 303 deg 334 days

Shag and, to a much lesser extent, cormorant, are the principal species implicated in damage to farmed salmon and trout in sea-cages on the west coast of Scotland. The extent of the problem in terms of percentage of stock damaged and loss of profit to fish farmers has never been documented. It is therefore particularly welcome that a NERC-financed research student from Edinburgh University (Mr D. Carss) started a project on this topic in late 1984.

Mute Swan Cygnus olor

Argyll and neighbouring counties are fortunate in that their swan populations have not suffered the catastrophic decline that has occurred in southern Britain as a result of ingestion of lead shot from discarded fishing tackle. Mr Doug Trigg (4 Crown Meadows, Lower Broadheath, Worcester) has been ringing this species and recording its distribution during his regular visits to Argyll in recent years. An outbreak of swan-shooting by vandals near Oban, and the consequent destruction of a ringed bird, prompted a letter

from Mr Trigg to the "Oban Times" newspaper (see issues of 13 December 1984 and 21 February 1985). Sustained interest by visiting ringers in species such as Mute Swan, which are not studied by local ornithologists, is most welcome.

248787	6M	7.8.82	Oban: 56°25'N 5°27'W (Argyll)
	+	5.12.84	Oban: 56°25'N 5°26'W (Argyll)
			1 km 90 deg 851 days (shot)
247699	4M	16.8.81	Bonawe, L. Etive: 56°28'N 5°17'W (Argyll)
	v	14.2.83	Connel, L. Etive: (released from wire netting and transported to Oban: released)
	x	20.3.84	Achnacree Beag, L. Etive: 56°28'N 5°21'W (Argyll)

White fronted Goose Anser albifrons flavirostris (Data for this section contributed by D.A. Stroud)

The Darvic ringing Scheme of the Greenland White-fronted Goose Study co-ordinated by David Stroud (Islay) (Department of Biological Sciences, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth) is continuing to yield fruitful and fascinating results. In 1979, 96 Greenland Whitefronts were ringed on their breeding grounds in western Greenland. By early 1985, 62 had been seen or recovered outside Greenland. Of these 32 were on Islay, and six at sites in Kintyre; a further two were seen at both localities, and two were on Coll. Outside Argyll, 12 were in Caithness, and small numbers at Loch Lomond, Loch Ken, and in Ireland and Iceland. One of the birds seen on Islay subsequently appeared in the Netherlands. These results clearly demonstrate the crucial importance of Islay as the principal wintering ground for this species. Other intriguing features to emerge are the remarkable fidelity of individual birds to particular wintering areas (seven of the above birds were in a small area of Islay in five successive winters, 1979/80 to 1983/84) and the depressing amount of shooting carried out by the invincibly ignorant, whose only response to birds of a beautiful and threatened species is to destroy them (13 of the 62 were shot).

In summer 1984, a second expedition to the same area of Greenland ringed a further 88 geese. Three of the birds ringed in 1979 were found there again in 1984, two of which had not been seen in the interim. There have been 22 recoveries outside Greenland of the 1984-ringed birds at the

time of writing (to 13 February 1985): 14 on Islay, six in Ireland and two (shot) in Iceland.

The rings made of white plastic (Darvic) are legible at a distance and read (upwards) LETTER-DIGIT-DIGIT. In 1979 rings were placed on the right leg, in 1984 on the left leg. Anyone seeing birds with these rings is requested to report ring number, date and place to David Stroud, Kindrochid, Sanaig, Bruichladdich, Islay, Argyll.

The Irish Forest and Wildlife Service placed similar visibly numbered collars on the necks of 44 Whitefronts at Wexford in spring and 140 in autumn 1984. These are either orange (180) or white (4) and read upwards DIGIT-LETTER-LETTER(e.g. 7JF). David Stroud would also welcome reports of these birds, and will forward sightings to the FWS. A full analysis of both ringing Schemes will be given in the 1985 Argyll Report.

Eider Somateria mollissima (This section contributed by C. Galbraith)

During 1984, Aberdeen University's study of the feeding ecology and movements of Eider on the west coast of Scotland continued. A total of 95 birds were ringed this year, bringing the grand total for the first two seasons of this study to 204.

Details of birds ringed during the 1984 nesting season were as follows:

<u>Place</u>	<u>Females Ringed</u>	<u>Wing-Tag Colour</u>
Loch Etive	2	Only one tagged. Orange with black numbers.
Burnt Islands - Bute	17	Blue with white numbers.
Loch Fyne	38	Yellow with black numbers.
Loch Linnhe	19	White with black numbers.

In addition to these, 19 birds (7 adult males, 9 adult females, 1 first winter male and 2 first winter females) were ringed and tagged orange with black numbers at L. Shira, Mid-Argyll, during December.



Recoveries: No birds were recovered during 1984. However, records of three birds recovered dead in 1983 are now available.

<u>Tag Number</u>	<u>Ringed</u>	<u>Found</u>	<u>Distance (km)</u>
White No 1	L. Linnhe (25.5.83)	Benderloch (9.9.83)	40
White No 20	L. Linnhe (25.5.83)	Caol, Ft. William (19.9.83)	1
Yellow No 30	L. Etive (19.5.83)	Benderloch (22.9.83)	7

Over 200 sightings of tagged birds have been reported to date (January 1985). It is hoped that a full report and analysis of these will appear in the 1985 report. Some general trends in movement are apparent at this stage.

After nesting, females may move considerable distances with their young; up to 20 km was recorded for one female within one week of hatching her brood in 1983. After nesting, there appears to be a split in the population, certainly for L. Fyne, L. Etive and L. Linnhe. Some birds were seen to move out of the nesting loch, while others remained over winter. Most birds moving appear to head southwards, with the Clyde estuary and basin being a major wintering ground. Several marked birds, particularly from Loch Fyne, have been recorded wintering in the Clyde estuary. This movement is possibly in response to the abundant food supply in the estuary at this time.

The study will continue throughout 1985 with a further ringing programme planned.

Details of any sightings of tagged Eiders giving date, place, tag colour and tag number should be sent to:

C.A. Galbraith, Culterty Field Station, Newburgh, Ellon,  
Aberdeenshire, AB4 0AA.

#### Sparrowhawk Accipiter nisus

EH96922	1F	27.6.84	Strachur: 56°8'N 5°3'W (Argyll)
	×	15.9.84	Linlithgow: 55°59'N 3°37'W (Lothian)
			90 km 101 deg 80 days

#### Peregrine Falco peregrinus

GK70182	1	4.6.84	Near Lochgilphead <u>ca.</u> 56°N 5°W (Argyll)
	×	30.8.84	Dunure: 55°22'N 4°45'W (Strathclyde)
			90 km 152 deg 87 days

Lapwing Vanellus vanellus

DN28524	1	10.6.83	Gribun, Isle of Mull: 56°26'N 6°8'W (Argyll)
		20.9.84	Unknown circumstances: ring found loose in Darlington mail sorting office.

This "recovery" is included as an example of the consequences of (presumably) inadequate packaging of a mailed ring! What happened to the accompanying letter and envelope?

Common Gull Larus canus

EK72649	1	15.6.84	Connel: 56°28'N 5°21'W (Argyll)
	x	26.7.84	Bridge of Gaur, Rannoch Station: 56°40'N 4°26'W (Tayside) 60 km 68 deg 41 days

Herring Gull Larus argentatus

Eight recoveries involving distances over 100 km were reported in 1984 of chicks ringed at colonies near Oban during 1980-1984. These generally confirm the pattern of recoveries reported in the 1983 Argyll Bird Report.

GJ41646	1	19.6.82	Eilean Dubh, Eriska: 56°32'N 5°26'W (Argyll)
	x	12.4.84	Barrhead, Glasgow: 55°48'N 4°24'W (Strathclyde) 104 km 142 deg 663 days
GJ41948	1	21.6.82	Eilean na Cloiche, Lismore: 56°29'N 5°31'W (Argyll)
	v	24.7.84	Bishopbriggs, Glasgow: 55°54'N 4°14'W (Strathclyde) 102 km 129 deg 765 days
GJ71034	1	23.6.82	Eilean na Cloiche, Lismore
	x	28.7.84	Knott End, Fleetwood: 53°56'N 3°0'W (Lancs.) 325 km 151 deg 766 days

GJ71141	1	30.6.82	Eilean Balnagowan, L. Linnhe: 56°33'N 5°20'W (Argyll)
	×	12.12.84	Kilmuir, North Kessock: 57°31'N 4°13'W (Highland) 117 km 34 deg 896 days
GJ71320	1	19.6.83	Eilean Dubh, Eriska: 56°32'N 5°26'W (Argyll)
	×	31.5.84	Letterkenny, Donegal: 55°11'N 7°59'W ( <u>EIRE</u> ) 219 km 227 deg 347 days
GJ71369	1	21.6.83	Eilean nan Gamhn, Lismore: 56°29'N 5°32'W (Argyll)
	×	4.5.84	Ardrossan: 55°39'N 4°49'W (Ayrshire) 103 km 154 deg 318 days
GJ99253	1	6.7.84	Liath Eilein, L. Caolisport: 55°53'N 5°40'W (Argyll)
	×	17.10.84	St Austell: 50°20'N 4°48'W (Cornwall) 619 km 175 deg 103 days
GJ99312	1	22.7.84	Sligneach Mor, L. Sunart: 56°40'N 5°59'W (Argyll)
	+	13.9.84	Hamilton, Glasgow: 55°45'N 4°3'W (Strathclyde) 157 km 130 deg 53 days (shot)

Common Tern Sterna hirundo

This and the following species breed in Argyll in small scattered colonies, usually of under 50 pairs. Both species are the subject of a continuing study by J.C.A. Craik. An early objective was to develop methods by which small chicks of the two species could be distinguished (see 1983 Argyll Bird Report). These methods are now being used to investigate differences between the species in aspects of breeding biology. Results so far have indicated a very large variation from year to year in numbers breeding and in numbers of chicks ringed. For example, Table 3 shows the numbers of chicks found at six colonies in the Oban area over a five year period. In Argyll as a whole, Common Tern had a very successful breeding season in 1984 with very low chick mortality. However, few Arctic Terns attempted to breed and a high proportion of their chicks died. The reverse was observed in 1983, with Common Tern chicks suffering high

mortality, but most Arctic Tern chicks fledging successfully. The reason for this species difference is not understood, but adverse weather (including high temperatures for Arctic Tern) and local or temporary food shortages may play a part.

At one Argyll colony, 554 Common Tern chicks were ringed in 1984 and four of these were recovered in the same year. These are shown in Fig. 1. These recoveries confirm the known migration route and wintering area of British-bred Common Terns (Spencer & Hudson, 1982). However it is unusual for the route to be adumbrated so clearly by recoveries from one colony in a single year. The details of these four recoveries are as follows.

XRO7314	1	7.8.84	Near Oban: ca. 56°N 5°W (Argyll)
	x	7.10.84	Parentis-en-Born, Landes: 44°21'N 1°4'W ( <u>FRANCE</u> )
			1389 km 166 deg 61 days
XRO7081	1	24.7.84	Near Oban
	x	28.12.84	Sidi Ifni: 29°24'N 10°12'W ( <u>MOROCCO</u> )
			3032 km 187 deg 157 days
XRO7208	1	31.7.84	Near Oban
	x	26.11.84	Casamance: 12°40'N 16°45'W ( <u>SENEGAL</u> )
			4963 km 191 deg 118 days
XRO7281	1	31.7.84	Near Oban
	v	10.11.84	off Takoradi: 4°55'N 1°45'W ( <u>GHANA</u> )
			5742 km 176 deg 102 days
			(caught after landing on trawler)

#### Arctic Tern Sterna paradisaea

XS62750	1	20.7.83	Dunstaffnage, Oban: 56°28'N 5°25'W (Argyll)
	x	9.10.84	Cape Town: 33°56'S 18°25'E ( <u>SOUTH AFRICA</u> )
			10300 km 167 deg 447 days

The Arctic Tern undertakes a longer annual migration than any other bird species. Its main breeding range is in the Arctic region (to 83°N) but it spends the northern winter among the ice floes of Antarctica (to 74°S) (Salomonsen, 1967). Birds do not usually return to the northern hemisphere

TABLE 3. VARIATION IN NUMBERS OF CHICKS FOUND AT SIX  
TERN COLONIES IN ONE AREA OF ARGYLL (240 km<sup>2</sup>)  
(Dash denotes colony not checked)

SITE	SPECIES	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
A	Mainly Arctic	0	146	61	42	37
B	Common	0	130	77	19	0
C	Mainly Common	-	22	113	68	0
D	Mainly Arctic	0	101	49	40	19
E	Common	-	70	1	0	0
F	Common	0	0	0	35	118
<u>Total Common</u>		0	222	184	148	119
<u>Total Arctic</u>		0	247	117	56	55

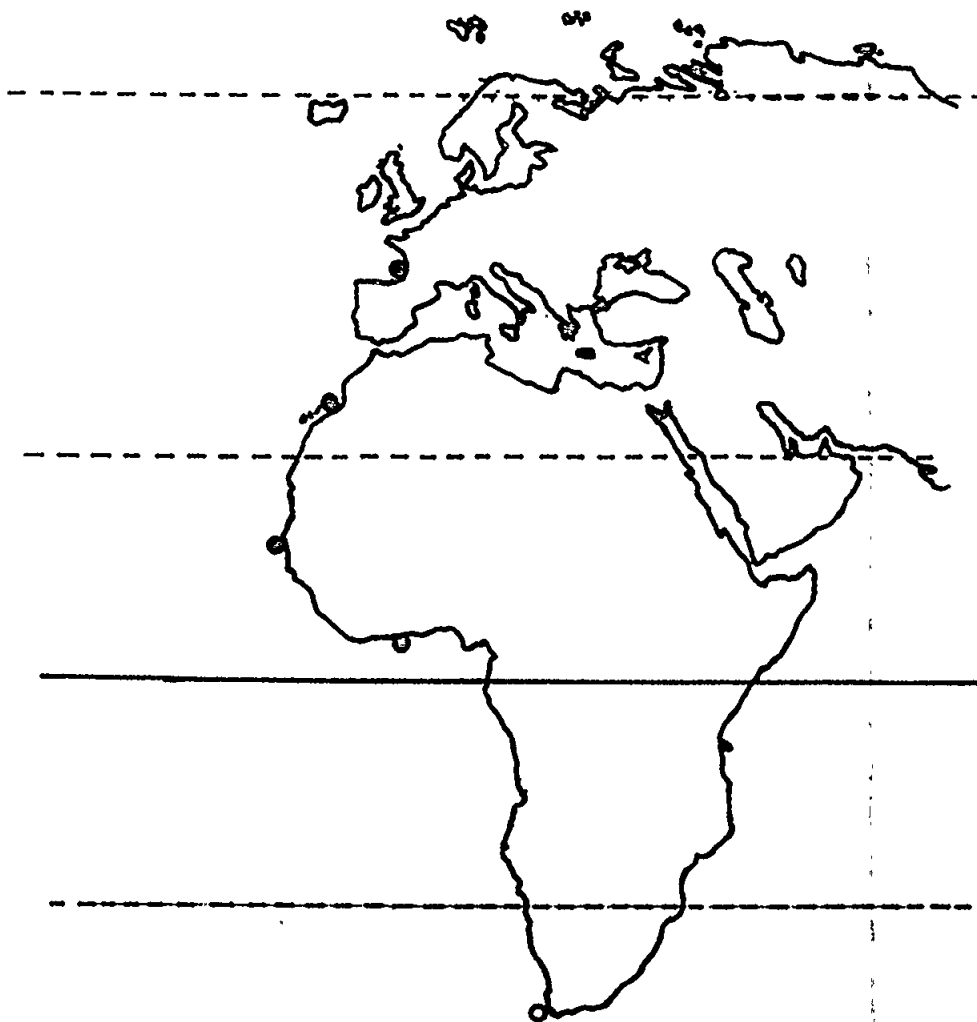


Fig. 1. Recoveries in 1984 of terns ringed as chicks in Argyll.

- Four Common Terns ringed in 1984
- One Arctic Tern ringed in 1983

See text for details.

until they are two years old but thereafter they make this prodigious journey every year. The above bird had therefore probably followed the usual pattern of spending its second year in the southern hemisphere.

Puffin Fratercula arctica

EF75449	4	24.6.76	Lunga, Treshnish Is: 56°29'N 6°25'W (Argyll)
	x	2.7.84	Lunga, Treshnish Is.
			0 km 2930 days
			(presumed killed by Great Black-backed Gull)

Sand Martin Riparia riparia

B571378	3J	13.7.82	North Connel: 56°28'N 5°23'W (Argyll)
	v	11.7.83	Oost-Vlaanderen: 51°2'N 3°48'E ( <u>BELGIUM</u> )
			853 km 135 deg 363 days

Blackbird Turdus merula

XJ27232	6M	20.1.80	Barcaldine: 56°31'N 5°19'W (Argyll)
	x	28.3.80	Alford: 57°15'N 2°48'W (Aberdeenshire)
			173 km 62 deg 68 days

Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus

3E6915	4F	4.5.83	Formby: 53°34'N 3°5'W (Lancs.)
	v	12.5.84	Benderloch: 56°30'N 5°23'W (Argyll)
			357 km 336 deg 374 days

Starling Sturnus vulgaris

XJ27349	3M	20.12.80	Oban: 56°23'N 5°27'W (Argyll)
	x	13.6.82	Cockermouth: 54°42'N 3°16'W (Cumbria)
			232 km 144 deg 540 days

Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs

B581847      2F      11.9.83      Ardentinny: 56°3'N 4°55'W (Argyll)  
              ×      21.1.84      Invergarry: 57°5'N 4°48'W (Highland)  
                                 115 km   4 deg   132 days

Siskin Carduelis spinus

A811068      4F      23.6.80      Barcaldine: 56°31'N 5°19'W (Argyll)  
              v      11.11.80      West-Vlaanderen: 51°10'N 2°58'E (BELGIUM)  
                                 804 km   138 deg   141 days

B078637      6M      27.2.83      Golspie: 57°58'N 3°59'W (Highland)  
              v      16.4.84      Barcaldine: 56°31'N 5°19'W (Argyll)  
                                 180 km   206 deg   414 days

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## A STUDY OF TAWNY OWLS IN COMMERCIAL SPRUCE FORESTS IN THE UPLANDS

- Steve Petty

The Tawny Owl is probably the most abundant bird of prey in the United Kingdom and it is the largest of the owls that breed regularly in Britain. It has previously been studied in lowland broadleaved woodland, mainly at Wytham Wood near Oxford, by Dr H N Southern. This is probably the type of habitat in which Tawny Owls evolved, although today there are only fragments left of these formerly extensive lowland forests. In the vast conifer forests of Northern Europe, the Tawny Owl is replaced by the much larger Ural Owl. Tawny Owl prey comprises mainly small mammals and in rich lowland woods the bank vole and wood mouse provide the bulk of its diet although other species such as moles, rabbits, birds and invertebrates are also taken. Bank voles and wood mice show large annual population fluctuations and Tawny Owls respond to these changes by varying their reproductive performance. In years when small mammals are abundant a high proportion of Tawny Owls breed and successfully rear young. At the other extreme, after small mammal populations decline, a large number of pairs fail to breed and the few that do have small clutches and broods. In these lowland woods Tawny Owls are highly sedentary and defend small territories. After fledging, young owls have a long period in the natal territory when they are still dependent on their parents for food. They usually become independent from August onwards after which they have to find a vacant territory, caused by the death of a previous occupant, if they are to survive their first winter.

The object of this project was to investigate how Tawny Owls have adapted to a new totally different man-made environment; the commercial spruce forests that have been planted in the uplands and now form the largest single forest type in Britain. Reading some of the more popular bird books one gains the impression that Long-eared Owls are as common if not more abundant than Tawny Owls in this habitat. However, while Long-eared Owls sometimes occur during the early afforestation stage, providing nest sites are available in such places as old shelter belts, they rarely persist once the forest matures and Tawny Owls become established. Tawny Owls spread into these forests once the canopy has closed and openings begin to occur with the forest from windblow, thinning or clear felling.

Two study areas were chosen, both in mature spruce forests where second rotation fellings have been underway since 1968; these were Glenbranter Forest in Argyll and Kielder Forest in Northumberland. The aim was to locate around 50 pairs of Tawny Owls in each study area and then to monitor their annual performance by providing two to three nest boxes in each owl's territory. To date, nest boxes have not increased Tawny Owl density but they have encouraged a high proportion of the resident population to switch from their traditional sites. Tawny Owls use a variety of natural sites including crags, stick nests of birds and squirrels, tree holes, buildings and they also regularly nest on the ground in spruce forests. In these situations they can be extremely difficult to locate whereas nest boxes allow contents to be easily checked, young to be ringed and adults to be caught to gain data on mortality, recruitment and movements. Catching adults in this way is perfectly safe, providing it is restricted to the period when chicks are in the nest. Tawny Owls very easily desert during incubation whether they are caught or just flushed from the nest.

The food taken by Tawny Owls is determined by analysing pellets and recording prey items and remains found in nest boxes. Results so far show that the field vole is their main prey and that wood mice and bank voles, their main diet in the lowlands, rarely occur. Small mammal trapping is being used to determine annual changes in the relative abundance of field voles in each study area so that this can be compared to the reproductive performance of the Tawny Owls. Previous studies in the uplands have shown that field voles have cyclic populations with pronounced peaks occurring at three to five year intervals.

TABLE 1. TAWNY OWL BREEDING PERFORMANCE: A COMPARISON BETWEEN GLENBRANTER AND KIELDER IN 1984.

<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Glenbranter</u>	<u>Kielder</u>
Number of clutches	21	42
Start of incubation (mean date)	22nd March	15th March
Clutch size (mean + 1SD)	2.90 $\pm$ 0.62	3.44 $\pm$ 0.93
% of eggs laid that failed to hatch	14.8	8.11
% of chicks hatched that failed to fledge	34.6	2.9
% of pairs laying which fledged young	76.2	93.9
Fledged brood size (mean + 1SD)	1.62 $\pm$ 1.16	3.07 $\pm$ 1.16
Vole trapping index	4.18	18.99

A vole trapping index was calculated from nearly 1000 trap nights in each study area; this showed that in 1984 field voles were over four times more abundant in Kielder than in Glenbranter (Table 1). In a year in which the weather was about as perfect as it could be for a nocturnal raptor, significant differences in reproduction between areas appear to be related to vole abundance. Tawny Owls in Glenbranter, laid later, laid smaller clutches, lost more eggs due to non-hatching and desertions and lost many more chicks due to starvation. These differential losses in each study area accentuated the initial differences in clutch size to produce brood sizes that were about twice as large in Kielder.

Past data on breeding performance combined with information from the 1984 season on vole abundance suggests that in the Kielder study area vole numbers are increasing. Glenbranter appears to be at the opposite end of the vole cycle with a population that is decreasing and if this continues, 1985 will be an even poorer year. This note provides a brief introduction to a field study which will continue for at least another two seasons.

- Steve Petty  
Oakenshaw  
Ardenfield  
ARDENTINNY  
Argyll

- D A Stroud

### Introduction

Greenland White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*) have a long association with peatland areas. Their traditional feeding and roosting habitat seems to have been the extensive peatlands on the west and northern coasts of Scotland, coastal west Wales and Ireland. However, in many areas of Scotland and to a lesser extent Ireland, habitat loss and reclamation of moorland areas to rough pasture has resulted in progressive movement onto farmland to feed during the day, with the geese returning to the traditional roosts on remote bogs at night.

Thus, in Scotland, there seem to be few areas where this race of geese still feed extensively on bogs throughout the winter (although there are notable exceptions such as Claish and Kentra Mosses, and possibly some sites in Caithness), although the roosts of nearly all farmland feeding flocks are near extensive peatland areas.

These mires, and the edges of the bog-pools where the birds sleep, contain a range of plants known to be eaten by the geese, including White-beaked Sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*), Cotton Grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), White Water Lily (*Nymphaea alba*) and Deergrass (*Tricophorum cespitosum*).

Development pressures from commercial forestry, domestic and commercial peat-cutting and drainage have lead to unprecedented and continuing losses of peat-bogs throughout the winter range of the geese. Many bogs are particularly sensitive to drainage, and local peat-cutting or arterial drainage can have wider effects on the hydrology of a whole site. Rutledge & Ogilvie (1979) in their review of the status and distribution of Greenland White-fronted Geese in Britain considered the loss of traditional peatland habitat to be the principal cause of the population decline from an estimated 17,500 - 23,000 birds in the late 1950's to an estimated 14,300 - 16,000 birds in the 1970's. Such habitat loss continues unabated in Ireland (Reynolds 1984; Ryan & Cross 1984) and it is now doubtful if even a representative selection of sites can be adequately conserved before all known examples are destroyed. In Britain, development of peat as a resource has been intensively promoted, but the current tax benefits from commercial forestry has meant increasing pressure on all types of hill ground. In many areas of Scotland, rapid expansion of hill forestry is inevitably affecting the survival of many areas of high conservation interest.

On Islay, permission was given in 1984 by the Secretary of State for Scotland for Scottish Malt Distillers Ltd to cut commercially peat from the most important Greenland White-fronted Goose roost in Britain called Eilean na Muice Dubh. It is becoming increasingly apparent that all remaining roost sites need urgent identification so that statutory protection can be given to the most important.

Argyll is the stronghold of the Greenland White-fronted Goose in Britain holding in the order of 80% of the British population and probably half the world population. The main wintering areas are on Islay, but there are other important concentrations on Coll, Tiree, Lismore, Machrihanish and at Rhunahuarine together with scattered flocks elsewhere (Stroud 1984).

The aim of this paper is two-fold; firstly to summarise present knowledge of Greenland White-front roosts in Argyll, and secondly to seek further information. The author would be indebted to anyone for information on numbers of geese using (either currently or at some time in the past) roost sites mentioned here, or of sites not included in the list. More detailed information and site maps, for some of the roosts mentioned here, are available on request. It is hoped to update this list at intervals. Criteria of 'national' and 'international' importance relate to regular use by 75 and 150 geese respectively (Scott 1980), and SSSI refers to Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

## ROOST SITES OF IMPORTANCE IN ARGYLL

### ISLAY

1. Loch and adjacent bog at Claddich (NR 166538). NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Little information, but probably used by up to 100 birds in the Claddich and Wester Ellister flocks.
  2. Bog area between Ballimony and Gleannogaidh (NR 2054) ['Valley of the geese']. Much of the area has been recently deep-ploughed for forestry, but the name of the nearby Cnoc nan Geoidh ['Hill of the geese'] indicates the area may be a traditional roost. Used since at least 1974/75. Up to 100 birds?? No recent information.
  3. Loch a'Bhogaidh (NR 225575). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. An area of poor-fen and reedswamp of SSSI quality botanically, used by up to 200+ (?) birds from the Port Charlotte area.
  4. Loch Treunaidh (NR 256636). Small lochan and fringing fen/schwingmoor of SSSI quality. No information on numbers, but maybe 50+, possibly irregularly.
  5. Loch Gorm, NE corner (NR2366). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Northern bank and peninsula of Rubha Mor irregularly used by birds feeding to the South of Loch Gorm. The loch is used in early Autumn and late Spring as a midday roost by up to 800+ birds from Kilchoman, Rockside and Sunderland. In very severe weather, the area seems to be used as an alternate to the Feur Lochain roosts.
  6. Loch Corr (NR 2269). NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Used (as part of the Feur Lochain complex below) by probably 100-150 birds. The SSSI quality fen and bog areas at the SW end are especially important.
  7. Glac na Criche (NR 226709). NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. An oceanic mire botanically described by Lindsay, Riggall & Bignal (1983). Used by up to 150 birds as part of the Feur Lochain complex. Recently notified as SSSI.
  8. Feur Lochain (NR 2469, 2569), including Loch an Fhir Mhor (NR 264693). Up to 300+ birds regularly fly into the west side of Feur Lochain, and probably in excess of 550 birds regularly use the whole area. Roost usage was studied in 1981/82 and it was found that usage of pools on the bog varies both within and between the years. Recently notified as an SSSI. After Eilean na Muice Dubh, it is probably the most important roost area in Britain.
  9. Moine nam Faoileann (NR 2568).
  10. Lag Dearg (NR 2570).
- These three sites, together with Glac na Criche and Loch Corr, are of outstanding INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE.
11. Lochs Laingeodail and Loch Laingeodail Beag (NR 2671). No information, but these lochs are probably roosts.
  12. Loch an Raoin (NR 2764 & NR 2864). Thought to be a roost for birds in the Uisgeantsuidhe/Gruinart area, but few good counts are available. Probably used by in excess of 100 geese. This area is a botanically interesting bog and would repay further investigation.
  13. Loch a' Gheoidh (NR 257658) ['Loch of the geese']. Despite its name, this small loch seems an unlikely roost site and there has been little evidence of recent use. Conditions may well have been different in the past however.
  14. Bog to the southwest of Loch Sibhinn (NR 322650). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Used by birds in the Bridgend/Eorrabus area. This area was evidently heavily shot over in the past. Used by up to 300 birds. Contains Eriophorum angustifolium dominated pools in old flooded peat-cuttings.

15. Bogs and pools near Loch Leathan (NR 344680), Loch Leoig (NR 349692) and Abhainn Ghlas (NR 339687). Several bog areas with active Sphagnum surfaces. Many pools were covered with droppings during the January 1985 freeze. No counts, but this general area could well turn out to be significantly important. Roosting birds probably come from Scarrabus/Balole areas.
16. Loch Pinlaggan (NR 3867). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Counts of up to 400 birds using the site from a catchment area including Balole, Duisker, Ballimartin and Kilmeny.
17. Loch Fada and Loch Leathann (NR 4063). Reportedly a site used by birds from Glen and Knocklearach. No counts.
18. Loch Nigheadaireachd (NR 282558). Possibly a roost but no information available.
19. Eilean na Muice Dubh (NR3225). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. A very important site with regular counts of over 600 birds. Planning permission has recently been given for commercial peat-cutting over much of its surface. Used as a roost by birds feeding on Laggan, Tallant and especially the Glen area.
20. Leorin Lochs (NR 3748). Reputed to be a roost for birds in the Cornabus/Leorin area but there was no evidence of use in 1981/82 and the lochs appear generally unsuitable.
21. Bog area West of Cragabus (NR 316445). NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Undoubtedly a major roost of probable INTERNATIONAL importance. Used by Cornabus/Leorin birds but few good counts (up to 200 ???).
22. Loch Kinnabus (NR 2942 & NR 3042). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Roost for birds feeding in the Giol, Kinnabus and Killeyan areas with 300+ birds using the loch and adjacent fields.

#### TIREE

1. Loch a' Chapuill (NM 028458) and Loch Caol (NM 030454). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. A roost for birds feeding on the Reef and near the airport. At least 70 birds used the lochs in April 1984, but probably 200 - 300 regularly use the area. Other lochs in the upland block to the East of the Reef are probably used at night also with maybe 400+ birds in the whole area. There used to be carefully controlled shooting at some of these lochs.
2. Loch a' Phuill (NL 954424). Probably a roost for the small flock of c50 birds that regularly feed on the northern side of the loch.
3. Locha' Chlair (NL 984445). This area is used if birds are disturbed from the Reef and may also be a roost for up to 100 birds. The nearby Loch an Eilein (NL 9843) may also be used.
4. Loch Bhasapoll (NL 968472). Probably a roost for up to 60 birds).
5. Loch Riaghain (NM 0347). Probably a roost for up to 90 birds, especially on the northern bank which grades into an interesting bog area used for feeding. The nearby Loch na Gile (NM 026481) would also repay further investigation.

#### COLL

1. Loch Boidheach (NM 202578). Probably a roost for birds feeding in the Kilbride and Acha areas.

2. Loch nan Cinneachan (NM 1856) and Loch Anlaimh (NM 1855). NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Probably a roost for birds feeding in the Lonban/Ballard area. Up to 100 (?) birds.
3. Druim Fishaig (NM 2360). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Roost of up to 200 birds feeding the Acha/Arnabost/Cliad/Arinagour areas. This area of upland lochans is botanically important and worthy of SSSI designation on several criteria.

#### GUNNA

Possibly a roost for birds feeding in the Caoles area of SW Coll. There is no information on its use by Greenland White-fronts although Atkinson-Willes (1963) implies it is used as a 'refuge for geese'.

#### MULL

1. Loch Assapol (NM 401203). A small flock of up to 46 feed near the loch and have been seen roosting on both the southern and western shores.
2. Loch Poit Na H-I (NM 3122). A flock of up to 90 feed on farmland at Fidden and roost on the west shore of the loch.

#### LISMORE & ERISKA

Up to 150 birds regularly winter on Eriska (NM 9043) and Lismore Island (NM 84). Recent observations suggest regular movements between sites and within Lismore, but as yet there is no definite information on the location of the roost used by these flocks. Bernera Island (NM 7939) has been suggested as suitable and indeed droppings have been found here. The nearby Moss of Achnacree (NM 9135) looks like a classic Greenland White-front bog, and would be worth investigating as a possible roost area.

#### MOINE MHOR

This raised bog (NR 8293) holds a small flock of up to 60 birds. Although most sightings of the flock are on nearby farmland at Drimvore, the flock evidently still feeds and roosts on the adjacent bog. Most of the bog is now SSSI and much has been purchased as a NNR.

#### DANNA

1. Ulva Islands/An Grianan (NR 7182). NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. Up to 100 birds roost on the saltings, islands and inter-tidal areas in and near Ulva Lagoon to the North of Danna. This seems to be the main roost for the Danna flock.
2. Rubha Bhreatanich (NR 710804). NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. This seems to be an alternate roost to Ulva Lagoon and is similar in habitat.
3. Danna shore (NR 6877). The flock will often roost along the shore if undisturbed and may use some of the offshore McCormaig islands and other islets if disturbed from any of the other roosts. There are no good counts of birds using these

islands, nor is there information to show whether this use is just a response to disturbance or a regular phenomenon. Roost movements of this flock seem complex!

#### COLONSAY

Loch an Sguid (NR 383947). The small flock of c60 geese which feed near Loch Fada roosted on this Loch and adjacent bog (with open water) during March 1983, but the site appeared unused in November of that year. During November Dubh Loch (NR 372946), Fionn loch (NR 366945), Loch Sholtaire (NR 387972) and Turrainan Loch (NR 392953) were all checked but no geese or signs of use were found. There may therefore thus be undiscovered roosts on the island.

#### JURA

1. Loch a'Chnuic Bhric (NR 445732). A small flock of up to 70 birds feed on fields near this loch and may roost on the loch also. The flock is not known well, and they may fly to roost in nearby hill ground. However, a suitable area in Gleann Astaile (NR 490715) south-east from the loch contained no droppings or other signs of use in April 1983.
2. Loch nam Breac (NR 562762). The south-west corner of the loch was used as a roost during 1981/82, and evidence of bog feeding was found nearby at Leac Phola (NR 564769). This is probably the roost for birds feeding at Lowlandmans Bay, and locals report regular roost flights in the direction of the loch. However, no evidence of the use of this loch was found in April 1983.
3. Loch a' Mhuilinn area (NR 606843). This highly patterned oceanic mire showed evidence of use by White-fronts in February 1983 and a flock of c30 flushed from the area in December 1984. The bog may well be an alternative roost or feeding site for the Lowlandmans Bay flock. Botanically, the site is of high SSSI quality and should be given high priority as an important site for conservation.

#### KINTYRE

1. Loch nan Gad (NR 7857). This small loch near Clachan is an SSSI on botanical grounds. Small groups of up to 50 White-fronts have been seen feeding nearby, and remains of sedges at the loch indicate it is used as a feeding site and probably a roost site also.
2. Loch Garasdale (NR 7651). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. This loch is the main roost for birds feeding at Tayinloan/Rhunahaorine, and is used by in excess of 400 birds regularly. Much of the southern, western and eastern margins of the loch have been afforested in the last 20 years. Observations in March 1984 suggest the geese were roosting on the northern bank of the loch.
3. Loch Lussa (NR 7029). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE.
4. Tangy Loch (Nr 6928). INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. SSSI.

These two sites comprise the main roost for Greenland White-front flocks feeding to the south of Machrihanish. In late March 1984, c600 birds were counted in, mainly onto Tangy Loch. Rutledge & Ogilvie (1979) said the lochs were shot over sporadically but not heavily and disturbance tended to shift birds from Tangy Loch to Loch Lussa temporarily.

In late March 1984, I Hopkins and J Rhead undertook a survey of Greenland White-fronts in Kintyre, concentrating particularly on roost sites. They checked the following sites and found no evidence of use as roosts (droppings or vegetation remains) : Loch a' Ghatha (NR 7751); Loch Ciaran (NR 7754) - although birds found during the day; Loch Romain (NR 8253); Loch nan Eun (NR 8052); Loch nan Geadh (NR 816530) ['Loch of the Geese']. A Forestry Ranger reported that geese roosted on Aucha Lochy (NR 7222) and Loch Arnicle (NR 7135). These are probably White-fronts, but the species using these sites requires confirmation.

## DISCUSSION

Habitat and other details of confirmed roosts are characterised in Table 1. Greenland White-fronts show a strong preference for freshwater lochs with adjacent peatland, usually at a low (<250') altitude. Such a roost site would provide two main requirements: easy escape onto water in the event of disturbance during the night and access to bog plants for night-time supplementary feeding. Such a review of habitat selection is crude but it does confirm the close association of this goose with peatlands. Over 78% of roost sites were on or near large areas of bog or fen vegetation.

Table 1: Habitat details of confirmed Greenland White-front roosts in Argyll.

ALTITUDE (feet)	HABITAT TYPE				Total
	Pool complex in blanket/ patterned or raised bog	Freshwater loch with adjacent peatlands.	Freshwater loch with no adjacent peatlands	Intertidal Saltmarsh or sea loch	
0 - 50	1	4	3	3	11
51 - 100	1	2			3
101 - 150	3	3			6
151 - 200	4	3	1		8
201 - 250	1	3	1		5
251 - 300		1	1		2
301 - 350	2	1			3
351 - 400					
401 - 450		2			2
451 - 500		1			1
501 - 550					
551 - 600					
601 - 650		1			1
TOTAL	12	21	6	3	42

The roost section of Kintyre is complex. Rutledge & Ogilvie (1979) discuss the roosts of Rhunahaorine feeding birds thus:

"The White-fronts use at least four roosts, often splitting up at evening flight time and departing in different directions. Up to 100 use Loch Garasdale, in the hills about 6-8km east, together with neighbouring lochs. A few sometimes fly as far as Tanga Loch, about 25km south and the principal roost of the Machrihanish flock. It is not known whether birds do this on a regular basis or only when changing their



feeding grounds. At times, especially under the moon, the geese will roost on very shallow pools on the moss adjacent to their feeding fields, while in calm weather they may roost on the grass fields or on the relatively sheltered sea close by."

Most of Kintyre is now afforested, and already geese have probably had to change roosts in some areas due to this. Further survey work in this area is urgently needed.

Results of this preliminary survey of Greenland White-fronted Goose roost sites in Argyll show that several areas are of International importance and many more of National importance. Continued loss of peatland habitat due to drainage, peat-cutting and afforestation is making the future of this species within Argyll uncertain. Further surveys of roost areas are urgently required if loss of important sites is to be avoided.

#### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

It must be stressed that this list of roost sites of a preliminary nature and many sites remain to be found throughout Argyll. Roosts can be discovered either by watching back feeding flocks at dusk or by systematic searching in suitable habitat. The banks of roost pools or lochans often have many large piles of droppings where birds have slept. Extensive remains of feeding can often be found. Greenland White-fronts feed on Cotton-grass by uprooting plants and eating roots and base of the stem. The leafy shoot is then discarded and can be found (often in large numbers) floating at the edges of pools where the geese have fed at night.

I would be particularly grateful for any additions or corrections to this list and can supply recording forms to anyone in a position to monitor a roost site. It is hoped to publish a more detailed analysis of roost use by Greenland White-fronts at a later date.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The information presented here derives from the monitoring of the British Population Greenland White-fronted Geese started in 1982 by the Greenland White-fronted Goose Study. Many people have supplied information presented here and I am grateful to them all for their help and comments.

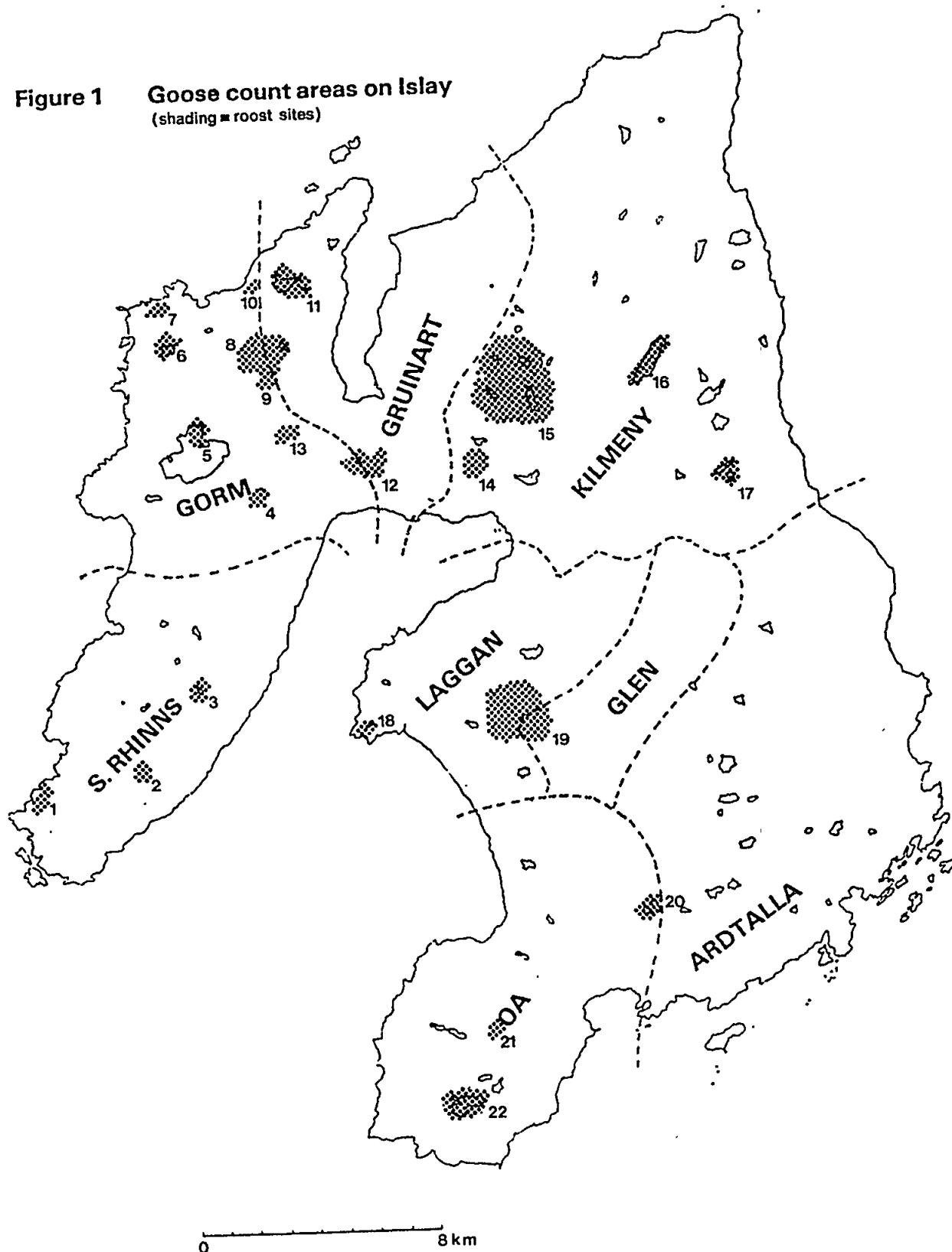
S Benn; Dr E M Bignal; S Bignal; M Bignall; Brathay Exploration Group; R A Broad; Dr R Cockeril; R F Coomber; R Dawson; T D Dick; Dr N Easterbee; A D Fox; Rev & Mrs Duncan-Jones; I S Francis; L Fox; I Gillies; A G Gordon; M Gregory; I Hopkins; D Jackson; Dr A R Jennings; M Madders; C A Miller; J G Murray; S F Newton; Dr M A Ogilvie; S Percival; R Quick; J Rhead; L Street; Dr J M Stroud; R Thaxton; P M Thompson; J Uttley; K Verrall; P Wormell.

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**Figure 1** Goose count areas on Islay  
 (shading = roost sites)



- David A Stroud  
 Kindrochid  
 Sanaig  
 Bruichladdich  
 Islay  
 Argyll

## THE B.T.O. HERONRIES SURVEY 1985

During 1985 the British Trust for Ornithology is carrying out a survey of all known Heronries in Britain. The survey will also help document previously unknown or uncounted nesting sites.

The number of Herons seen appears to vary greatly over even a short number of years hence it is important that regular checks are made to quickly identify major changes in the level of population.

This fluctuation in numbers is thought to relate to the severity of weather conditions over the Winter period. Herons attempting to feed on small inland pools or even on sea loch habitats are affected by prolonged periods of frost.

While feeding in fresh water areas Herons will take small fish, toads, frogs and various invertebrate species. Small mammals such as rats and mice may also be taken on occasion. Birds feeding on intertidal areas may take Gobies, Butterfish, other small fish and invertebrates. One can frequently see Herons feeding along the shorelines of sea lochs in Argyll. Indeed, it presently seems to be a very common bird in the area.

Information on the status of the Heron within Argyll over the past Century is rather scant. However, a few interesting details have been documented; Hugh Boyd-Watts list of Scottish Heronries 1908-14 shows Argyll and the Inner Hebrides having 30 Heronries. This figure does, however, only indicate Heronries having more than 4 nests. The following figures for Mid and South Argyll were also given in the 1908-14 list.

Lossett House, Machrihanish	1 - 2 nests
Ellery, Ardrishaig	4 - 5 nests
Killellan, Campbeltown	3 nests

Other Heronries at Largie Castle, Loch Sween, Inveraray and Saddel were also mentioned but details of numbers were not given. Incidentally, the largest known Heronry in Scotland around the turn of this Century was at Dunvegan, Skye which contained around 200 nests. Previous surveys in 1888 at this site found only 30 to 40 nests. It is interesting to note that Elizabeth Garden's list of Heronries published in 1958 and the B.T.O.'s "Breeding Birds of Great Britain and Ireland", published in the mid 1970's, both mention all the Heronries documented above. Heronries appear therefore to be used consistently over very long periods of time.

Results of the 1985 survey obtained so far indicate that even with the many volunteers involved, some sites in Argyll may be missed, particularly those which may be situated in heavily wooded areas. It would, therefore, be extremely useful to recruit more volunteers. Anyone having information on Heronries, either recent or historic, could also help by forwarding this to me.

Hopefully by the end of the survey we will have a much better picture of the numbers and distribution of Heronries within Argyll.

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Bird Study 1958, No 5 (2)

- Dave Evamy  
B.T.O. Representative for South Argyll  
Tarbert  
Argyll

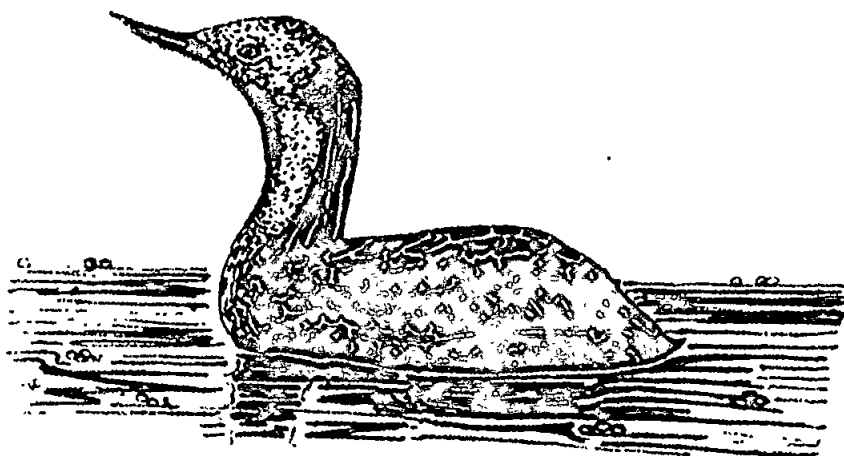
## SOME BIRDS OF THE OBAN AREA

- Dr A R Jennings

This short article is written to tell the visitor to the Oban district something about the birds of Lorne. It is not a comprehensive catalogue of species present; for such detail the systematic list in this Report should be consulted. It does, however, give some indication of the status of some of the more common species and of the area where they are most likely to be seen. Included also is some information on some of the less common species which the keen bird watcher may hope to see. A good map of the area, a pair of binoculars and one of the several good field guides to bird identification will ensure an enjoyable and instructive holiday for those prepared to make a little effort.

Oban is a central point in an area rich in birdlife. Landward the bay is ringed by low well wooded hills; seaward lie the Firth of Lorne, the Sound of Mull and Loch Linnhe. Deep sea lochs split the coastline and penetrate inland to give the peninsulas of Benderloch and Appin. Several Forestry Commission woods lie in the area. There are fresh water lochs in the hills, fast flowing streams, rough pastures, improved grazings and mixed woodlands, all resulting in a rich diversity of habitat which is reflected in its avifauna.

For the casual birdwatcher or the enthusiastic sea watcher the sea lanes from Oban provide ample scope. There are regular sailings to Mull, Colonsay, Coll, Tiree, Lismore and beyond to the Outer Isles. Even a short sea trip on any of the regular ferries will result in a good list of seabirds. Throughout the year Herring Gulls, Black-headed Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls are always present in numbers. Another regular is the Common Gull; up to 500 at a time have been seen off Lismore. A common and numerous Summer visitor is the Lesser Black-backed Gull, present between March and October. Fairly regular Winter visitors are Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. Rare and vagrant gulls which may occur in the sea lanes include Ring billed Gull, Little Gull and Sabine's Gull. Sea trips at suitable times of the year should produce Arctic and Great Skua and, much less frequently, Pomarine. Spectacular diving displays by Gannets are commonplace and the graceful sweeping glides of Fulmar are to be seen on every trip. Kittiwakes are often around fishing boats and easily recognised by their black wing tips and dipping, light flight. Great Northern divers winter off the coasts and may be close inshore in bad weather. The numbers of these birds may be a surprise to the casual visitor.



Shags are very common around the coasts; much less common is the Cormorant. Sea duck include the ubiquitous Eider, the most common breeding and wintering species. An uncommon winter visitor is the Long tailed Duck and a much scarcer one is the Velvet Scoter; more frequently seen is the Common Scoter.

In the Summer months Common and Arctic Terns breed on many of the small islets. Much less common is the Little Tern mainly confined as a breeding species to Islay, Coll and Tiree. Razorbills and Guillemots breed on suitable cliffs and large 'rafts' may sometimes be seen from the deck of the interisland ferries. Puffins are not common except inland near the main colonies, the Treshnish Isles being one of the best places to see these attractive little birds. Black Guillemots are widespread and present throughout the year. Usually two or three can be seen in Oban Bay from one or other of the piers.

Storm Petrels breed on some of the small offshore islands off Mull and elsewhere. Leach's Petrel may be seen off the coast especially after gales. Manx Shearwaters can usually be seen on ferry trips to the islands and sometimes rafts of several hundred birds may be seen floating on the sea. Sooty Shearwaters are fairly regular in the late Summer between the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

The long sea lochs of Etive and Creran contain a wealth of birdlife. Eider and Red-breasted Merganser are common breeding species, as is the Mallard. Teal, another resident breeder, is increased in Winter by an influx of Teal from elsewhere. Wigeon come in numbers in the Autumn as do Goldeneye. The shores of the lochs from mid April to August/September are the territories of Common Sandpipers. Equally obvious and demanding attention is the black and white Oystercatcher with its bright red bill. In suitable areas along the lochside and around the coast the Ringed Plover is a common breeding bird with its numbers increased during the Spring and Autumn migrations. Rock Pipits are plentiful and Turnstones are usually to be seen on the shores busily turning over pebbles and seaweed in search of Sand Hoppers and other small prey items. Less often seen along the shoreline are Dunlin accompanied by the occasional Sanderling.



Many of the small rivers and burns running into the loch have their resident Dippers; the lovely Grey Wagtail, with its long tail and neat dapper appearance is a common waterside bird. Amongst the Alders, Redpolls and Siskins are often present especially in the Spring and Autumn. Away from the burnside, amongst the Willow and Hazel leading up to mixed woodland are agile, acrobatic Great, Blue and less often Coal Tits. The latter, with Goldcrests, are often abundant in conifer plantations. In Oak woodlands, Wood Warblers are not uncommon; Redstarts, Treecreepers, the ubiquitous Wren and, in the clearings, Tree Pipits are all to be seen and heard in the same habitat. Everywhere in glens and woodland in the Spring and Summer may be heard the lovely song of the Willow Warbler. It is by far the commonest Warbler of the Western Highlands. Its close relative, the Chiffchaff, is a much scarcer bird, local in distribution and to be found in amongst the Rhododendrons and Brambles in the lower canopy. Whitethroats, unlike the Lesser Whitethroats, are common. Blackcap and Garden Warbler are scarce breeding species. In suitable areas of reed beds and swampy thickets the harsh churring song of the Sedge Warbler is to be heard.

On the hills and open moorland Meadow Pipits are everywhere; Skylarks are much less common and often absent for much of the year. Ring Ouzels are not common despite an abundance of apparently suitable habitat and are very local in distribution. Wheatears, one of the earliest of the Spring migrants, are widely distributed and to be seen on every field trip. Less common, but by no means rare, are Whinchat and Stonechat.

Argyll is one of the strongholds for birds of prey. The Buzzard is the one most often noted and several are usually to be seen on every field trip. They vary greatly in colour, from very dark birds to much paler ones with a good deal of white beneath the wings. They soar in circles for long periods taking advantage of thermals and will often hover in the wind so that a quick glance at a distant bird may suggest a Kestrel despite the very obvious differences in size and silhouette between the species. Kestrels, in fact, despite being widespread are much less common than Buzzards.

Sparrowhawks are not scarce but they are seldom seen by the casual observer. Often their presence is first denoted by finding a 'plucking post' - some favoured spot where the bird's prey is partially defeathered and dismembered. Hen Harriers are most often encountered in the Autumn and Winter months. A resident breeder, the birds often move to coastal areas in the Winter. Ospreys, not often recorded, are to be seen chiefly in the Spring and Autumn passage often staying for some days at some remote hill loch or perhaps on a larger loch such as the Awe.

Lorne has several pairs of Golden Eagle but unless the visitor makes an effort to get well into the hills he or she is unlikely to see one of these birds. It is, however, quite distinctive with its large size and slow majestic flight and once seen is unlikely ever again to be confused with the Buzzard. The Peregrine, although a scarce bird of prey, is widely distributed and hence may be seen almost anywhere but perhaps it is most often to be seen hunting along the coast line.

- Dr A R Jennings  
1 Ferryfield Drive  
CONNEL  
Oban  
Argyll

## CLUBS AND SOCIETIES IN ARGYLL

1. Kintyre Antiquarian and Natural History Society  
Secretary - Mrs E Morrison, Killean Place, High Street, Campbeltown.  
  
Monthly meetings held throughout the Winter with outdoor meetings and treks in the Summer.
2. Kintyre Photographic Club  
Secretary - Mrs E Morrison, Killean Place, High Street, Campbeltown.
3. Cowal Natural History Society  
Secretary - Nigel Scriven, c/o Ardentinn Outdoor Centre, Ardentinn, by Dunoon.  
  
Monthly indoor meetings are held along with outdoor meetings, helping with surveys and field work. The aim of the Society is to promote study of natural history within the Cowal Peninsula.
4. Natural History and Antiquarian Society of Mid Argyll  
Secretary - Miss A T Lewis, Rock Bank, Glenburn Road, Ardrishaig.  
  
Monthly meetings and lectures throughout the year with field meetings during the Summer months.
5. Scottish Wildlife Trust - Lorne Members Group  
Hon Secretary - E Douglas Potter, "Strathyre", Pulpit Hill, Oban.  
  
Monthly meetings throughout the year with visits to local sites of wildlife interest. The SWT's aims are broadly the conservation of Scottish Wildlife in all its forms from plants to mammals.
6. The Argyll Bird Club  
Secretary - David Stroud, Kindrochid, Sanaig, Bruichladdich, Islay.  
  
The aim of the Club is to play an active role in the promotion of ornithology and conservation within Argyll. One day meetings are held twice a year when talks of scientific interest are presented along with the opportunity to discuss fully their relevance to Argyll. Infrequent talks and meetings are organised throughout Argyll when topics of interest are discussed.

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### ARGYLL BIRD CLUB - MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I/WE WISH TO JOIN THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB AND I/WE ENCLOSE THE APPROPRIATE FEE.  
(£3.00 SINGLE : £4.50 FAMILY)

NAME : .....

ADDRESS : .....

.....

.....

RETURN TO Miss Jane Battrick, Roineachail, Benderloch, Oban.

Members will receive a newsletter and entry to all talks and meetings at a reduced fee.

OWN SPECIES LIST

DATE

SPECIES

NUMBER SEEN

LOCATION

Return 1985 records to: David Stroud, Kindrochid, Sanaig, Bruichladdich,  
Islay, Argyll by 31st January 1986.



## Acknowledgements

Production of this report would not have been possible without the help of many people over the past year. A list of contributors to the report is given below.

Thanks are due to Richard Coomber for compiling the detailed species list and to Dr Clive Craik for the ringing report. David Stroud, Steve Petty, Dr Arthur Jennings and Dave Evamy have put considerable effort and time into producing their papers and articles for inclusion in the report.

Mr Archie Marshall and Ms Jane Battrick deserve special thanks for their time and effort in producing the excellent sketches and drawings specifically for inclusion in this report. These add greatly to the overall content and presentation.

I would like to thank Argyll and Bute District Council (Department of Tourism, Leisure & Recreation) for photocopying this report and to the Nature Conservancy Council for providing equipment to bind the report.

I would also like to thank Arthur Jennings for his help in editing this report, Sandra Johnston for typing the report and Iain MacKinnon for help with compilation.

Note: Despite page 56 being blank, no information has been omitted.

C A Galbraith  
July 1985

## Contributors to the 1984 Argyll Bird Report: (apologies for any omissions)

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Mrs S Carmichael	J T McEwen
K A H Cassels	K S MacGregor
M Checker	M Madders
Clyde Bird Study Group	P Moore
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T & R Coomber	R Pitts
C A Craik	Miss C Pollock
R J Cruise	E D Potter
T P Daniels	P Raine
D F Davidson	P J Robinson
Mrs J Dawson	R S P B
Dr J de Mournay	Mrs E M Russell
T D Dick	N J Scriven
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