

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

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The Eider



Female Shelduck, Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 26 June ©Eddie Maguire

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<http://argyllbirdclub.org/publications/the-argyll-bird-report/>

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

Inside this issue

Club news	Pages 3-4
Papers for the AGM	Pages 4-7
BTO News update <i>Nigel Scriven</i>	Page 7
Peacocks on Oronsay <i>David Jardine</i>	Page 8
ABC seabird surveying trip <i>David Jardine</i>	Pages 9-12
New SOC app. Where to watch birds in Scotland	Page 12
ABC field trip to Toward & lower Loch Striven <i>Alistair McGregor</i>	Page 13
A new moth species for Argyll <i>David Jardine</i>	Page 14
Choughs on Colonsay and Oronsay <i>David Jardine</i>	Page 14
Snowbirds of British Columbia <i>Malcolm Chattwood</i>	Pages 15
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary in Kintyre <i>Jo Goudie</i>	Pages 14-15
Book review <i>Nigel Scriven</i>	Page 16-17
Information about the ABC	Pages 18

Editorial

Jim Dickson has done a brilliant job in producing our first electronic version of the *Argyll Bird Report*. The e-version can be downloaded from the link on the front cover of this issue or from the club's website (see next page). Not only does this save the club money, but it has been published at least six months earlier than previous printed versions. The club's subscription has remained constant for very many years, and new developments like this will allow us to maintain the current rates well into the future. If you have any comments about the new report, please send them to our Secretary (contact details on the back page).

Nigel, our Chairman, has put together a very interesting programme for the Autumn Meeting at the Cairnbaan Hotel (see page 4). This meeting also includes the AGM, which gives you the opportunity to influence how the club is run. We would love to see as many of you as possible at the meeting and AGM.

Only two field trips ran in the last quarter. The trip to Taynish NNR in May was abandoned as no one turned up. The boat trip to count seabirds on the west coast of Jura (pages 9-12) and nearby areas in June provided valuable data for the national seabird census, while the trip to Cowal (page 13) in July produced a remarkable number of species, considering the poor weather conditions. On the next page are details of field trips for the next quarter. Why not join in the fun and take part in some or all of these.

The summer is often a quiet time for migrant birds. However, the Great Spotted Cuckoo in June on Iona was one exception. It was only the second Scottish record of this southern European species. In contrast, the most notable migrant in late July-early August this year was not a bird, but a butterfly—the Painted Lady. Only occasionally are the conditions suitable, in it's North African home, for populations to explode. The butterflies then migrate northwards, probably producing multiple generations on route. It's 10yrs since we last had such enormous numbers in Argyll. We were on Arran during the first week of August and they were everywhere. They were nectaring on every buddleia bush we came across, and even on the top of Goat Fell, Painted Ladies could be seen skimming across the heather on their journey northwards. An amazing sight!

Acknowledgements

Very many thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue—Anne Archer, Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Jo Goudie, Peter & Dorothy Hogbin (for photocopying & dispatching the newsletter), David Jardine, Eddie Maguire, Alistair McGregor, David Palmer, Linda Petty (proof reading), Nigel Scriven and Margaret Staley (for black & white illustrations).

Club News

FIELD TRIPS 2019

If there is a chance that adverse weather might lead to the cancellation of a field trip, please check the club's website or contact the organiser the night before or prior to setting off. Please wear suitable footwear and bring waterproof clothing if rain is forecast. There will be a safety briefing at the start of each trip.

Saturday 31 August. Campbeltown/ Machrihanish Seabird Observatory. Led by Malcolm Chattwood (phone 01546 603389, e-mail malcolmchattwood@gmail.com). Meet Malcolm in Campbeltown, at the Information Centre, which is at the top of the pier, at 11.00hrs. Car parking is on the pier or along towards the ferry terminal. After visiting good birding spots around the town, the group will head for Machrihanish Bird Observatory to be shown around by Eddie Maguire. One aim of the trip is to witness Gannets on their overland journey (see March 2019 *Eider*, pages 16-17). The trip will involve several short walks, each less than 500m. Please bring your own lunch.

Saturday 28 September. Benmore Gardens and surrounding area (Cowal). Led by Alistair McGregor (mobile phone 07754524240 e-mail alistairmcgregor@outlook.com). Meet in the Benmore Gardens Car Park (grid ref. NS142866) at 10.00hrs. Please bring your own lunch. Members of the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh are admitted free. Entrance fees for non-members are £6.30 for adults and £5.40 for concessions. The trip will include a walk of 2-3km on paths.

Saturday 26 October. Loch Laich and Lismore. Led by David Jardine (phone 01546 510200, e-mail dcjardine@btinternet.com). Meet at the Appin Village Hall car park on the A828 (grid ref. NM938459) at 10.00hrs. Please bring your own lunch. This trip will include walks of 3km and 2km on roads, tracks and paths with mostly gentle gradients.

Saturday 30 November. Loch Gilp and Add Estuary. Led by Jim Dickson (phone 01546 603967, e-mail meg@jdickson5.plus.com). Meet at 10.00hrs in Lochgilphead at the Corran Car Park, opposite the caravan park, on the A83, close to the roundabout (A83/A816) at the western end of the town. Please bring your own lunch. The trip will include several short walks (each 300m maximum) on level ground.

INDOOR MEETINGS 2019

Saturday 2 November 2019, Autumn Meeting and AGM. To be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel (www.cairnbaan.com), near Lochgilphead (phone 01546 603668). Lunches will be available in the hotel. The programme is on the

next page.

Saturday 14 March 2020. Spring Meeting. This will be held at the Burgh Hall, Dunoon (www.dunoonburghhall.org.uk/). The programme will be given in the December *Eider*.

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

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 29 (2017)

There are still copies of *ABR* 29 for sale. These can be purchased from Dorothy Hogbin (contact details on back page) for £12.00 each including postage (UK only). Cheques should be made payable to the 'Argyll Bird Club'.

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 30 (2018)

We have discussed in the past the possibility of moving to an e-version of the *Argyll Bird Report* (*ABR*). This day has now arrived, and the latest report is available to members. This has been produced as a PDF (same as the *e-Eider*) by Jim Dickson (compiler and editor). The *e-ABR* can now be downloaded from the club's website (under the tab 'Recent Reports 2019')

We appreciate that a few members do not have access to the internet, and for those who require a printed black & white copy, this can be provided for a small charge (probably around £6). If you want a printed copy, please send your request to Peter Hogbin (treasurer, contact details on back page).

ABC FACEBOOK PAGE

The club is now on Facebook, which is open to anyone with a Facebook account.

FUNDING FOR BIRD CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN ARGYLL

The ABC is willing to fund or part fund worthwhile bird conservation projects in Argyll. For example, this included helping with the costs of field work for the last year of the Seabird Monitoring Programme (seabird counts 2015-2019). Applications for funding should be submitted to the Secretary (contact details on the back page).



Programme for the ABC's 2019 Autumn Meeting
Saturday 2 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead

Time	Session
0930	Doors open, coffee and tea
0950-1000	Welcome and introduction— <i>Nigel Scriven</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1000-1015	Recent reports and news from the committee— <i>Nigel Scriven</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1015-1100	Living with Swifts— <i>Annette Anderton</i>
1100-1130	Coffee/tea
1130-1200	Let's go snorkelling— <i>David Jardine</i> , Vice-chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1200-1245	Special investigations— <i>Mark Rafferty</i> , SSPCA
1245-1345	Lunch (available in the hotel, if required)
1345-1430	AGM of the Argyll Bird Club (members only)
1430-1500	Birds in Japan— <i>Rob Lightfoot</i>
1500-1530	Tea/coffee
1530-1545	The story of Ospreys on Bute— <i>Ian Hopkins</i>
1545-1600	Engaging young people in birds and nature— <i>Alistair McGregor</i>
1600-1615	BTO updates— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1615-1630	Raffle and closing remarks

Papers for the AGM of the Argyll Bird Club
To be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday 2 November 2019
Scottish Charity Number SC008782

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
15 APRIL 2018-14 APRIL 2019**

The Argyll Bird Club is a registered Scottish charity number SC008782. The club can be contacted through the secretary, Mrs Anne Archer, Sealladh Breagha, Gallanach Road, Oban, Argyll PA34 4PD. The club is an unincorporated association managed by a committee of members elected by the membership at the annual general meeting. The members of the committee serve as the Trustees of the charity.

The club's 33rd Annual General Meeting was held on 3 November 2018, attended by 40 members. At this meeting Nigel Scriven was re-elected Chairman, and David Jardine was re-elected as Vice-Chairman. Peter Hogbin was elected Treasurer and Anne Archer as Secretary. Dorothy Hogbin was elected as Membership Secretary. Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Gordon Holm, Steve Petty, Andy Robinson and Blair Urquhart remained on the committee. Neil Hammatt had resigned from the committee during the year,

and Alun ap Rhisiart was co-opted during the year. The club is especially grateful to Bob and Sue Furness for their many years of sterling service to the Club as Treasurer and Membership Secretary respectively, having stood down from their positions.

Management and membership

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

Our number of memberships remains around just under 200 memberships, with approximately 300 individuals rather than memberships.

Objectives and Activities

The aims of the Argyll Bird Club are to promote interest in and conservation of the birds of Argyll and their habitats. During the year the club held two indoor meetings. The autumn meeting was in the Cairnbaan Hotel in November 2018, at which invited speakers gave talks on subjects of ornithological and/or wider conservation interest. The talks covered birds, ticks and diseases, the tracking of Lesser Black-backed Gulls, the threats facing the Ardeer Peninsula, the tracking of seabirds, and wildlife crime.

The March 2019 meeting was held jointly with the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the British Trust for Ornithology at the Corran Halls in Oban, as the Scottish Birdwatchers' Conference. The talks covered the problems facing Choughs in Scotland, tracking auks in winter, Corncrakes in Scotland, Short-eared Owls, seabird ringing on the Treshnish Islands, Sea Eagles and resolving conflict, and the raptor research of Paul Haworth. The meeting was rounded off by wildlife cameraman John Aitchison, with tales and film sequences from the west coast. The meeting was the best attended ever, helped by the numerous field trips on the Sunday organised and led by club members. The raffle run by the club raised over £1000, which was donated to the Fair Isle Bird Observatory, following its loss by fire.

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

The club continued its programme of monthly field trips with nine outings over the year, visiting the Sound of Gigha, Luing, West Cowal, Benmore Gardens area, Inver on Jura, Campbeltown and Machrihanish, Loch Gilp and the Add Estuary, Kerrera and Bute. The club thanks the leaders of these trips for contributing their time and effort and to those members, often the leaders of the trips, who subsequently prepare reports of the trips for publication in the *Eider*.

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

The club website provides a contact point for the club and is one of our principal tools for promoting interest in the birds of Argyll. Details of forthcoming field trips and indoor meetings are published here together with information about the club and its publications. The feature which draws most visitors, however, is the 'sightings' page where the latest reports and images of the bird life of Argyll can be found. The substantial effort put in by Jim Dickson and his helpers to keep the site up to

date is much appreciated by users.

An innovation this year was the instigation of a Facebook Group, started on 27 November, and which by August 2019 has over 320 members drawn from club members and the wider public, within and beyond Argyll. It has provided an instant platform for the club to interact with the group members, and for group members to interact. That recent sightings can be uploaded by group members has reduced the volume of images fielded by the website managers.

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

The recording team, ably led by Jim Dickson, receives around 30,000 individual records from more than 450 contributors for processing and entry into the database. Most records come through the club's own recording system, but increasingly through the BTO Birdtrack system. Aside from requests for data extracts from commercial organisations and academic researchers, the main vehicle for publishing this data is the *Argyll Bird Report*, compiled by a small team currently led by Jim Dickson. Volume 29 of the report, covering 2017, was published in February 2019 and distributed to members by post. Sales of the report are a source of revenue for the club.

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

Fieldwork and conservation activities this year included financial support to Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, which is an important source of information on migrant birds, especially seabirds, waders and finches, along the Argyll coast. The club is also very supportive of similar-minded organisations, especially the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the British Trust for Ornithology. This includes the promotion of numerous volunteer field surveys.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2018-2019

The accounts to be presented to the AGM in November will cover a 17-month period as the committee decided to extend the 'financial year'. We receive membership subscriptions mostly in January but, where members have joined later in the year, small numbers of standing orders trickle into the account until the summer. By extending the reporting period to 30 September, all of the late payments are recorded as income in the current financial period. Any subscriptions received in the last three months of the year will be added to the next year's ac-

counts, which brings the membership year and the financial year into line. There has been a slight fall in membership over the past year with income reducing from £2601 to £2564—not a massive decline but one we would like to reverse. A full report on the club finances will be given at the November AGM. Peter Hogbin

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2018-2019

As of the end of July, we have 206 membership subscriptions. Most members now pay by standing order, which simplifies the record keeping. Thank you. Twelve people have not renewed their subscriptions this year and we need to find ways of attracting more (and younger) people to join the club. The committee has started to prepare an updated leaflet to attract new members and it should be available for distribution at the November meeting.

Please remember to tell me if you have moved house or changed your email address, probably the last thing on your mind but necessary if you want to stay connected! Dorothy Hogbin

MINUTES OF THE 33RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ABC HELD AT THE CAIRNBAAN HOTEL ON SATURDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2018

40 members were present

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ron Forrester, Douglas Menzies, Gordon Holm, Janet Jardine.

2 Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the 32nd Annual General Meeting had been published in the September 2018 issue of the *Eider*. Acceptance of the minutes as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Malcolm Chattwood and seconded by Mike Harrison, was unopposed.

3 Matters arising not covered in the following items

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

4 Chairman's report

Nigel Scriven summarised his report, which was published in the September 2018 issue of the *Eider* (pages 5-6).

5 Treasurer's Report for the Financial Year 2017-18

Bob Furness presented his report which had been published in the September issue of the *Eider*. The balance was very similar, at £11,303.36, down by £781.27, mainly because of a grant for Twite ringing. As usual the main expense was the Argyll Bird Report. The subscription rate remained unchanged.

6 Election of office bearers and committee members

The Treasurer and Membership Secretary were

stepping down, but otherwise all office bearers and committee members had indicated that they were willing to stand for re-election.

For the post of Chairman, Nigel Scriven was proposed by Bob Furness, seconded by Malcolm Chattwood and elected unopposed.

For the post of Vice-Chairman, David Jardine was proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by Ian Hopkins and elected unopposed.

For the post of Secretary, Anne Archer was proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by Steve Petty and elected unopposed.

For the post of Treasurer, Peter Hogbin was proposed by Steve Petty, seconded by Bob Furness and elected unopposed.

For the post of Membership Secretary, Dorothy Hogbin was proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by David Jardine and elected unopposed.

For election to the committee, Alistair McGregor was proposed by Nigel Scriven and seconded by Anne Archer.

Retiring committee members Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Gordon Holm, Steve Petty, Andy Robinson and Blair Urquhart were proposed en bloc for election to the committee by Nigel Scriven and seconded by David Jardine. No other nominations were made and, as the number of nominations did not exceed the maximum number of committee members, the seven nominees were confirmed as committee members.

7 Any Other Committee Business

Jim Dickson suggested that free membership should be extended to those under 21. Hayley Douglas suggested under 25 and Steve Petty suggested 25 and under. This would be considered by the committee.

8 Any Other Business

There was discussion of an ABC Facebook page versus an Eider Duckling (a more frequent, but briefer, *Eider*). It was felt that both were possible. The Facebook page would initially be open. Neil Hammatt felt that open would be best, but warned that it would need careful managing. He asked how many people outside Argyll belonged to ABC. Sue Furness said there were quite a lot.

The Chairman had mentioned in his report that there had been some involvement by the committee in the objections to the Sound of Gigha fish farm expansion. Mike Harrison said that he did not support doing this, because the club does not have the resources to consult the membership. It would be better if concerned individuals responded in a personal capacity, as several had done. Neil Hammatt felt that the club should alert members to cases like this. Malcolm Chattwood agreed with Mike Harrison, but Helen Anderson said she was glad that the committee had written. George Newell said that "we would want the committee to do this."

Helen Anderson thanked the committee for its work over the year.

AGENDA FOR THE 34TH AGM OF THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB

The AGM will be held on Saturday 2nd November 2019 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, Lochgilphead.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM
3. Matters arising not covered in the following items
4. Annual report and accounts
5. Election of office bearers and committee members

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

6. A.O.C.B.

BTO update—September 2019

If you haven't visited www.bto.org since 1st May you will see that the site has had a major make-over. Everything is still there, but it takes a little time to get used to finding it if you are used to the previous version. First time viewers should find it generally better than the old version. I like it.

Breeding Bird Survey Report for 2018

Over the UK, the number topped 4000 for the first time, boosted by the Upland Rover and Upland Adjacent squares schemes. A total of 557 squares contributed data for Scotland, enabling trends for 69 species to be calculated. Over the 22yrs, from 1995 to 2017, the top five increasing and decreasing species are shown in the table opposite.

Some of these species are not particularly common in Argyll, such as Tree Sparrow, but others do seem to be conforming to this pattern in Argyll. Another interesting group that has declined over this period includes species feeding on pastures, such as Starling (-28%), Rook (-37%) and Hooded Crow (-40%). It is unclear if these declines are linked to pasture management. For all BBS reports go to:

<https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/bbs/bbs-publications/bbs-reports>

Gardenwatch

Those of you who watched the BBC Springwatch TV programmes will have seen the launch of the Gardenwatch citizen science project, which is supported and hosted by the BTO. Information about how to take part can be found on the Gardenwatch website:

	Winners	% increase	Losers	% decrease
1	Chiffchaff	780	Greenfinch	66
2	Blackcap	451	Curlew	61
3	Great Spotted Woodpecker	417	Kestrel	59
4	Tree Sparrow	389	Swift	59
5	Goldfinch	219	Lapwing	55

<https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/gardenwatch>

Young Bird Observatory Volunteers Programme

Each year the BTO provide a number of grants of up to £200, to support young people looking to visit one of the accredited British and Irish Bird Observatories. Priority is given to applicants aged 21 or under who are able to get fully involved in fieldwork and general observatory activities. Terms and conditions apply. Further details can be found at:

<https://www.bto.org/how-you-can-help/take-part-project/young-bird-obs-volunteer-fund>

Nigel Scriven





An early record of Indian Peafowl in Argyll

Male Peacock, Oronsay Farm, August 2017 ©Steve Petty

The June issue of *British Birds* carried an article by Anthony Cheke about a feral population of Indian Peafowl (Peacock) in Oxfordshire which included a brief survey of the species in Britain. The birds at Gruline Estate, Mull were the only Peacocks in Argyll that are included in the Appendix of known sites in Britain.

This was of interest to me as there are Peacocks at Oronsay Farm, Colonsay, and following correspondence with the author, I set out to find out when they were introduced. While on Colonsay this summer I was able to establish that the Peacocks there were introduced by Duncan and Margaret MacDougall some time between 1984 and 1991. They have remained there since that introduction. It was interesting to hear from Duncan that while he had lost ducks and hens at the farm to otters, he had never lost a Peacock, presumably because of

their size.

I thought this was the end of this 'story', but a few weeks later I was in Crieff and visited Innerpefferay Library, the oldest lending library in Scotland. It was a fascinating place where you were able to read 18th century and older books; I asked to see Thomas Pennant's *Tour of the Hebrides* (1774), excerpts of which I had read but had never seen 'in the flesh'. He visited Oronsay on 6 and 7 July 1762. Imagine my surprise when I read:

'peacocks thrive well in the farm at oronsay so far north has this Indian bird been naturalized.'

It is remarkable to think that they have been in Argyll for over 250 years. It would be interesting to know about other places in Argyll where Peacocks are present?

David Jardine



Juvenile Starlings, Add Estuary, 30 June ©Jim Dickson

ABC seabird surveying outing—1 June 2019



The team ©David Palmar www.photoscot.co.uk

The seabirds throughout the British Isles have been censused on three occasions. Initially during the ground-breaking Operation Seafarer in 1969-70 (Cramp, Bourne & Saunders 1974), again in 1985-87 (Lloyd, Tasker & Partridge 1991) and again during Seabird 2000 (1998-2002) (Mitchell *et al.* 2004). A series of sites (including some in Argyll) are part of the annual Seabird Monitoring Programme (SMP) which provides details of short-term trends. The SMP has limited coverage, in terms of species and sites, which is overcome through the periodic comprehensive surveys throughout the country. Seabirds Count is the latest in this series with national coverage and has the following aims:

1. To undertake a complete census of all species of seabirds breeding in Britain and Ireland.
2. To determine whether population trends recorded at local levels by the SMP are representative of national trends.
3. To identify long-term (last 45 yrs) national trends by comparison with the previous three censuses,
4. To determine the level of change recorded since Seabird 2000, a period when the populations of some seabird species of the Britain and Ireland are predicted to have undergone dramatic change.

Good progress has been made in censusing the main seabird colonies in Argyll—Sanda, Colonsay, the Treshnish Isles and Tiree, but coverage of much of the long coastline of Argyll for Seabirds Count has been limited. With this in mind, a special Argyll Bird Club visit was organised, with a subsidy from club funds,

to cover some of the 'harder to cover' areas—the north-west coast of Jura, Scarba and the Garvellachs. The rest of the west coast of Jura was covered during the coverage of Islay by another boat-based survey organised by David Wood.

Early on 1 June a group of 12 members gathered at Crinan Harbour where they joined Sandy Campbell of Venture West (photo below) who was to take them on the long day at sea on his rib (almost 100km). The party was split into groups, each of which counted a group of species. The type of count depended on the species and how they behaved—for some it was apparently occupied nests or sites (AON, AOS) and for others it was individuals.

It had rained all of the previous day so the party was thankful that it was dry as they left under leaden skies, after a safety briefing from the skipper, and headed over towards Kinuachdrachd in north-east Jura. For counting, the coastline had been split into sections and the section number was shouted out when transition was made from one section to the next. The



The Venture West boat at Crinan ©David Palmar www.photoscot.co.uk



Top left photo. A raised beach on the west coast of Jura

Middle left photo. Lesser Black-backed Gulls on Eilean Mòr, Jura

Lower left photo. Corrieveckan Whirlpool

Right photo. White-tailed Eagles on Scarba

All photos ©David Palmar www.photoscot.co.uk

first section held only a single Great Black-backed Gull and three Herring Gulls, but the purpose of the survey was also to record absence and declines. A compensation in this area was good views of White-tailed Eagles, four of which were seen during the day.

Once round through the Gulf of Corryvreckan, which was reasonably calm, both Eilean Beag and

Eilean Mor were circumnavigated. These small islands in the mouth of Corryvreckan had small colonies of breeding Kittiwakes and Razorbills during Seabird 2000, so it was disappointing not to find either species present. However, a pair of Canada Geese were on each of the islets, including a brood on Eilean Mor, demonstrating how far this invasive breeder has now penetrated to the remoter corners of Argyll.

As there was a moderate south-westerly breeze, after covering these islets, the rib sped down past Jura to Rubh' an t-Sailein on the north western corner of Loch Tarbert and then worked north east up the coastline to help improve conditions for the counters. On the trip down there was a short shower, but this was the last challenge the weather would provide and it improved thereafter; indeed it was bright sunshine by the time the party returned to Crinan. One bonus of the poor weather off Loch Tarbert was the only sighting during the day of a small party of Manx Shearwaters.

Very few breeding seabirds were found on the north-west coast of Jura (Table); there were no Fulmars and the large colony of gulls and terns at Shian Bay was much reduced in size. Arctic Skuas formerly bred inland on Jura, but they were not seen during the survey. However, sightings through the summer around the Great

Race and at the Colonsay sea-bird colonies suggest that there may still be a few breeders to be found there.

The party arrived back at Corryvreckan around noon, where lunch was taken before checking the south-west corner of Scarba, where formerly there were reasonable numbers of large gulls nesting. These colonies have completely disappeared, with only single pairs of Great Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls being noted on this island.

On the way over to the Garvellachs many Guillemots, Razorbills and Kittiwakes were seen, presumably from the colonies on Colonsay along with a single Puffin, another of which was seen later east of Corryvreckan. More seabirds were found during the circumnavigation of the limestone cliffs of the Garvellachs, with a reasonable colony of gulls at the southern end of

Table. Summary of seabird counts during the ABC outing on 1 June 2019

Species	F	S	CG	GBBG	HG	LBBG	AT	R	BG
Location	(AOS)	(AON)					(Prs)	(Ind)	(Ind)
Jura	-	14	2 ind	31 ind 1 AON	51 ind 6 AON	1 ind	1	-	14
Eilean Beag	-	-	-	1AON	8 ind	-	-	-	2
Eilean Mor	-	2	-	15 ind	9 AON 24 ind	1 AON	-	-	-
Scarba	-	-	-	1 AON	1 AON	-	-	-	3
Eilean an Naoimh	7	10	-	7 ind+ 3 AON	66 ind+ 1 AON	2 ind+ 1AON	-	-	5
A' Chuli	-	9	-	5 ind+ 1AON	7 ind	-	-	-	1
Garbh Eileach	-	4	-	2 ind	2 ind	-	-	1	2
Dun Chonnuill	-	-	-	1 ind	-	-	-	-	2
Eilean an t' Struith	-	-	-	1 AON	1 AON	-	-	-	-
Garbh Reisa	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Eilean nan Cille	-	-	-	11 AON	234 ind	27 ind	-	-	-
Eilean nan h-Eairne	-	9	1 AON	1 AON	29 AON	2 AON	-	-	-
Eilean nan Coinean	-	-	-	-	5 AON	-	-	-	-

Abbreviations: F=Fulmar, S=Shag, CG=Common Gull, GBBG=Great Black-backed Gull, HG=Herring Gull, LBBG=Lesser Black-backed Gull, AT=Arctic Tern, R=Razorbill, BG=Black Guillemot, AOS=apparently occupied sites, AON=apparently occupied nests, prs=pairs, ind=individual.

Notes: Counts do not include birds seen on the sea, or obviously loafing birds (except Black Guillemot, where all birds were counted). The Jura count is from Rubh an t'Sailein (NR5082) to Aird of Kinuachdrachd (NR7098)

Eilean an Naoimh, a few Fulmars on its northern cliffs and a single Razorbill was seen entering a crack on Garbh Eileach. There were three pairs of Greylag on these islands and one pair of Canada Geese. The highlight here was the sighting of an eagle on A' Chuli being mobbed by Ravens; careful scrutiny proved it to be an adult Golden Eagle.

Having completed the count the rib sped back to the north end of Scarba, passing through the tidal race at the Grey Dogs, before heading down the east coast of the island. During a brief stop at the north end, when the engines were cut, a Pheasant was heard calling and a Tree Pipit sang from a tree-top.

As good time had been made during the day, the opportunity was taken to count the seabirds on some of the smaller islands en route back to Crinan (Reisa an t'Struith, Garbh Reisa, Eilean na Cille, Eilean na h-Eairne and Eilean nan Cionean). Surprisingly these islands had the largest colonies of gulls throughout the day, perhaps reflecting that gulls may be finding more of their food ashore than from fishery discards than they previously did.

While the outing did not find large numbers of seabirds it collected invaluable data for the na-

tional Seabirds Count census and despite never landing saw a reasonable diversity of species (35):

Species list. Canada Goose, Greylag, Shelduck, Eider, Pheasant, Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Heron, Gannet, Shag, Cormorant, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Buzzard, Oystercatcher, Common Sandpiper, Kittiwake, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, (Arctic) Tern, Guillemot, Razorbill, Black Guillemot, Puffin, Rock Dove, Woodpigeon, Hooded Crow, Raven, Swallow, Wheatear, Tree Pipit, Rock Pipit, Chaffinch

David Jardine

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Lloyd, C., Tasker, M.L. & Partridge, K. (1991) *The Status of Seabirds in Britain and Ireland*. T & A D Poyser, London.

Mitchell, I.P., Newton, S.F., Ratcliffe, N. & Dunn, T.E. (2004). *Seabird Populations of Britain and Ireland*. T & A D Poyser, London.

SOC app—where to watch birds in Scotland

Nearly three years in the making, the Scottish Ornithologists' Club is delighted to announce the launch of *Where to Watch Birds in Scotland*, the club's free mobile app for Apple and Android devices.

For the first time ever, you can now download an app to discover the best places to birdwatch around Scotland, and the bird species likely to be found at these sites. Some will be well-known locations, others may be less familiar.

This unique resource (no digital or up-to-date printed resource like this currently exists) will bring Scotland's birds to a new generation of birdwatchers and appeal to beginners and seasoned birders, as well as general nature and wildlife watchers.

The app has launched with details of nearly 400 of Scotland's top birdwatching spots, but new sites will continue to be added and existing ones updated as far as possible. The app includes many sites in Argyll.

About the app

The guide displays the following information about each birdwatching site, including:

- * directions to the site by public transport or car
- * the best season to visit
- * how to navigate the site
- * what birds to look out for on a seasonal basis

- * recent sightings in the area as uploaded to BirdTrack

- * rare/unusual species previously recorded at the site

- * how to submit bird sightings to the Local Bird Recorder and/or to BirdTrack

- * other notable wildlife spectacles to look out for

The app will help birdwatchers visiting Scotland from across the UK and overseas, drawn to these shores by the country's internationally-important seabird colonies, wader and wildfowl populations, as well as its iconic and exciting upland species. The built-in search facility will tell users where particular bird species are likely to be seen as well as allowing them to tap into detailed species information from the SOC's award-winning publication, *The Birds of Scotland*.

Visit the SOC's website (www.the-soc.org.uk) to download the app to your mobile phone.



ABC field trip to Toward on Lower Loch Striven on 27 July



Some of the party ©Richard Wesley

The weather on the morning didn't look too promising, with thick black clouds producing heavy showers. But, on arrival at the meeting place, the rain began to ease.

When all had arrived, six in total, we walked along the shore from Toward School towards a small bay close to Toward Lighthouse. We got off to a good start with the help of Jim Dickson who spotted numerous seabirds in the Clyde, including Manx Shearwater, Common and Black Guillemot.

Gannets were seen diving, but the numbers were down on previous visits to this area by myself. The shoreline produced numerous waders with notable numbers of Turnstone, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Oystercatcher and the odd Curlew.

A single Greenfinch was observed feeding amongst the seaweed, as House Martin and Swallow hawked for insects overhead.

We then travelled to Ardyne Point where numerous gulls were present, along with Dunlin, Ringed Plover, and a single Sanderling. A short walk to the river that runs in to the sea here

produced Spotted Flycatcher, Common White-throat, Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Goldcrest, along with the usual finches and tits.

We then headed into Loch Striven with the weather becoming increasingly cloudy, but we still managed to spot some other species including Peregrine Falcon, Stonechat, Lesser Redpoll, Little Grebe and Moorhen.

The weather began to close in by mid afternoon when we decided to call it a day. Surprisingly, the final species count was 61.

I would like to thank all members who came on the day, and I'm looking forward to the next field trip in Cowal (Benmore area) on 28 September 2019

Alistair McGregor



Numerous parties of Eider were seen during the visit together with the occasional Sandwich Tern (above) ©Jim Dickson

Four-spotted Footman in Argyll

I caught a male Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra* (photo opposite) at Kilmartin on 20 July. It was the first record of this moth for Argyll and, at the time, only the fifth in Scotland (three from the Solway and another in Easter Ross). Around the same time as David's record, Four-spotted Footman were recorded at a number of sites away from their normal range in southern England. And, in late July-early August a further two individuals (at least) were recorded on Bute on numerous occasions (Dawn & Glyn Collis, *Scottish Moths Yahoo Group*).

This is the largest of a number of footman species that occur in Europe. Its name derives from the four spots on the wings of the female (photo below). This species regularly breeds in southern England. On the continent numbers fluctuate greatly from year to year. In peak years, dispersing immigrants are recorded well



Female Four-spotted Footman, northern Spain ©Steve Petty



Male Four-spotted Footman, Kilmartin on 20 July
©David Jardine

outside their normal range

The Four-spotted Footman is extending its range northwards in the British Isles, probably due to climate warming, but it still has a long way to go before it becomes established in Argyll. Many species of footman, including the Four-spotted, feed on lichens and algae growing on trees, scrubs and rocks. The abundance of these plants in woodlands in Argyll may be the main reason why a number of other footman species have colonised, or are in the process of colonising Argyll. One of the recent arrivals is Buff Footman *Eilema depressa*. The first record for Mainland Argyll (Vice County 98) was in 2012. Now, it seems to be widespread in parts of Argyll.

David Jardine

A new publication of Red-billed Choughs in Argyll

Jardine, D., Peacock, M., Vaughan, M. & Fisher, I. (2019) Choughs on Colonsay and Oronsay, 1984-2018. *British Birds* 112 (7) 390-398.

Abstract: A long-term study of Red-billed Choughs *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* on the islands of Colonsay and Oronsay, in Argyll, showed an increase in population from the mid

1980s to 2005. Since then, a significant decline is evident, caused by poor survival of first-year birds. Changes in food supply are believed to be the principal cause of this poor survival and are thought to have resulted from changes in habitat, agricultural practices and weather, exacerbated by the low genetic diversity of the population.



If you look through the index of any field guide to the birds of Canada you won't find "Snowbird" listed!

However, there are eleven of them in Canada, although only nine are likely to be seen at any one time. Like many birds, they have two wings and an impressive display flight, but that's as far as the similarity goes because these Snowbirds are a part of the aviation and not avian world. Their wings are fixed, they are powered by jet engines and they are an aerobatic team and act as ambassadors of the Canadian Forces, performing spectacular displays throughout North America—a role similar to the Red Arrows in the UK.

Whilst visiting family in Vancouver during July I'd spotted that an airshow was being held at Boundary Bay Regional Airport which is in Delta, an agricultural area to the south of Vancouver. As well as a promising flying display including the Snowbirds, there was also the prospect of spotting a Northern Harrier hunting over the fields whilst travelling down on the bus. That would usefully add another raptor to my list of bird sightings which was gradually increasing as the holiday progressed.

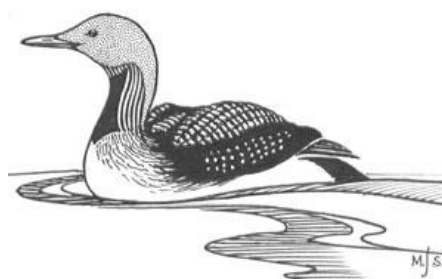
But, it wasn't to be—there was no sign of a Northern Harrier during the journey, although whilst waiting for the air display to start I did see a pair of Red-tailed Hawks in the distance mobbing a Bald Eagle which had obviously been encroaching on their territory. The Bald Eagle subsequently reappeared during the air display alongside a partner, soaring at a height well above the manoeuvring aircraft and possibly wondering why the aircraft were rushing about in strange patterns rather than just positioning themselves for landing or taking off.

Following the display involving aircraft as diverse as heritage planes from the Second World

War to the latest jet fighter the finale was to be the nine Snowbirds demonstrating their stunning routine of fast, exciting and precision flying. This involved an impressive succession of manoeuvres including one where the aircraft headed line abreast towards the crowd, smoke trailing, and then each aircraft breaking into a seemingly random corkscrewing path. Of course it wasn't random and involved flying skill of the highest order and probably with a factor of safety higher than crossing West Georgia Street in Vancouver.

As most of the crowd stood open-mouthed at the expertise exhibited by the pilots involved in performing this daring feat, at least one member of the crowd noticed a large, long-winged bird rising from the ground just beyond the airfield boundary, disturbed briefly by the Snowbirds zooming overhead. It was only visible for a few seconds before it settled back down but that was long enough for this Argyll Bird Club member to raise his binoculars to his eyes, finely adjust the focus and to confirm the distinctive ringed tail which confirmed that a Northern Harrier could be added to the holiday list. It was a day when avian and aviation interests combined to make a memorable day out.

Malcolm Chattwood



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Tod Hill, Kintyre

Tod Hill is located by Kildavie Farm about 4km to the north-east of Southend village in southeast Kintyre, Argyll.

On 1 June 2019 I was surprised to find two Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Boloria selene* there. The first sighting was on the top of Tod Hill at NR723116, where it was observed flying over heather. The ground on the top of the hill (186m ASL) is a peat bog and home to plants and flowers necessary for this butterfly's life cycle. The bog is also a rich breeding ground for many moth species, and many were disturbed. But, it would require further study to ascertain the species present. Easy to spot was the large caterpillar of the Drinker moth of which several were seen.

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary prefers damp, grassy habitat and moorland. It lays eggs on buttercup, bugle and heather, but the main food plant for caterpillars is the Common Dog Violet and Marsh Violet, which can be seen on the peaty top of Tod Hill along with Heath Spotted Orchid. After emerging from the pupa, the butterfly feeds on the nectar on Spear Thistle and Bramble.

The second sighting was lower on the sheltered slope of the hill at NR716118 where the bracken starts to appear again and the ground is less boggy. Here there were thistles in abundance, which the butterfly was feeding on. The photograph opposite was taken here.

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary is listed on the Butterfly Conservation Biodiversity List and is classed as a status of High Priority. Since the 1970s this species has declined by 34% and sightings have been few in Kintyre. The areas this butterfly requires for its life cycle are becoming rarer, due to afforestation, increased drainage, and peat



being stripped for garden use. Scottish peat bog areas are under threat, so much so that Butterfly Conservation Scotland has created a Bog Squad Project to ensure such areas are protected and maintained. These areas are increasingly valued for their biodiversity, and the 'ecosystem services' they provide, such as flood prevention and carbon storage. Hopefully, more observation of this area will be possible in the near future.

Jo Goudie

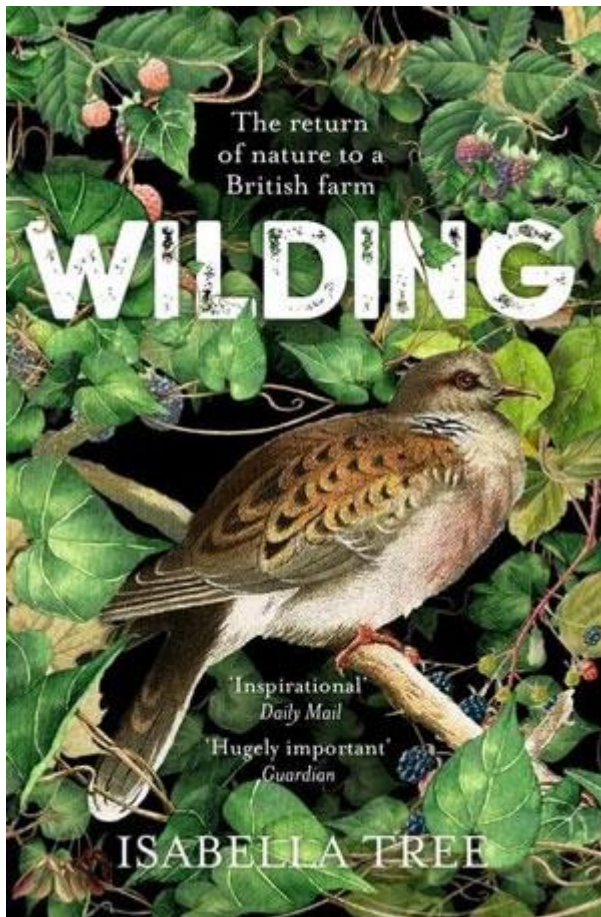
Book review

Wilding by Isabella Tree (2018). Publisher, Pan Macmillan. Price £9.99. ISBN 9781509805105. 384 pages

That the world is in a biodiversity crisis will not have escaped the notice of bird club members. What can be done about it is closely linked to the problem of climate change. What to do about both is the most pressing problem facing all of us, although most of our politicians are pre-occupied with re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic that is Brexit. So, it's hard to rely on them to sort it out. However, perhaps we can just do what we can do, and at least feel we haven't abandoned our own responsibilities.

To an extent, this is what this book is about. The 1600 acres of Knepp Estate in Sussex came into the Burrell family in 1787, and has been farmed by the same family since then. When the current owner inherited in 1987 the farm was losing money. A period of intensification and diversification followed, but after 12 years, profit was still elusive. The decision was taken to abandon dairy farming and put out the arable to contract. What followed is the intriguing narrative of the book.

The former deer park was re-established with the introduction of Fallow Deer. Other areas of intensively managed pasture became low input



pasture, grazed by a small herd of Longhorn Cattle. Without giving away too much of the story, the process of re-wilding had begun, with a return of a wide range of wildlife. An advisory board of ecologists, foresters and conservationists guided the process, and over the succeeding years the monitoring of the site has revealed some unexpected rewards. One example is that from zero in 2002, there were 34 Nightingale territories in 2012. In 2015 Knepp held the largest colony of Purple Emperor butterflies in the UK. In 2017 there were 16 male Turtle Doves recorded. Similar increases were found in many other taxa. This is a stark contrast to much other farmland, where wildlife continues to decline. So, should there not be a rethink on how we manage farmland, and especially where high inputs are required for marginal benefits, to the detriment to wildlife and ecosystem services?

While this is one of many examples of re-wilding projects now happening across the UK, the story told is a very readable personal account, with much information on the context and the process that has led to a remarkable achievement. Knepp is still evolving, with some way to go yet, but pioneering a new approach to management of our countryside. An informative and inspiring read, and highly recommended.

Nigel Scriven



Articles for the December *Eider* should with the editor before the 20th November 2019

Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2018/2019)

Chairman: Nigel Scriven, 14 Taylor Avenue, Kilbarchan, Johnstone PA10 2LS (*phone* 01505 706652 *email* chairman@argyllbirdclub.org)

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Committee: Alun ap Rhisiart (Clynder), Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilphead), Gordon Holm (Strone), Alistair McGregor (Dunoon), Steve Petty (Ardentinny), Andy Robinson (Stirling) & Blair Urquhart (Kilmichael Glen)

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Argyll Bird Records Committee

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

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

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

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

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

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

More about the Argyll Bird Club

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

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

Ordinary	£10
Age 25 and under	free
Family	£15
Corporate	£25

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