

June 2012
Number 100

The Eider



Ring Billed Gull photographed on the front green Lochgilphead © Jim Dickson

Indoor Meetings
Common Tern usage of mussel rafts
Goldfinch Movements MSBO
Treasurer's report
Membership Report
Annual General Meeting 2011 (draft) minutes
Recent Reports

Editor

Mark Williamson: Port Ban, Kilberry,
Argyll PA29 6YD

Phone: 01880 770 162

E-mail: me47.williamson@yahoo.co.uk



Inside this issue

Editorial	2
Indoor Meetings	2
Field Trips	3
One good tern.....	3-5
Goldfinches on the move.....	5-6
Accounts	7
Treasurer's Report	7-8
Membership Report	8
AGM 2011 draft minutes	9-12
Recent Reports	13-18
ABC information	19

Editorial

This edition of the Eider will be my last as editor, as I am going to be migrating to warmer climes– well, Chester (judging by the spring weather in England I might be better buying a sou'wester and waders) . I have really enjoyed the privilege of editing this newsletter and have been amazed at the number and diversity of contributions submitted. Thank you to all the members who have given feedback and advice on the format of the newsletter and to those who have provided encouragement with their positive comments. Hopefully, a new editor will emerge shortly to continue the production of the newsletter.

On a completely different tack– it has been a strange Spring with some very early migrant records, followed by blocking weather across England and northerly winds across Scotland which seemed to hold up migration and produce a late mass migration over a very short space of time. It would be interesting to know if anyone else noticed a sudden influx of Willow Warblers and Whitethroats during the middle of May. The Swallows which nest at Port Ban were very late returning but very quick to nest and produce young. By the end of May, everything seemed to have returned to normal, except for the exceptionally dry spell of weather which has continued into June.

Autumn indoor meeting 2012

The indoor meeting and AGM will take place on 17th November 2012 and will be held at Cairnbaan Hotel. The programme for this event will be published in the September Eider

Spring Meeting 2013

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those who contributed to this edition:

John Bowler, Jon Close, Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, Bob and Sue Furness, Keith Howey, David Jardine, Eddie Maguire, Katie Pendreigh, Anand Prasad, Roger Thwaites, Graham Todd, David Warden, Pauline White.

The Spring meeting will take place on Saturday, 16th March 2013 at the Royal Marine Hotel, Dunoon.

**What is the mystery bird?
see back page for the answer**



Field Trips

24th June - Meet Katie at 10.00 at Skipness Castle Car Park for a circular walk along Campbell's Glen, following the track down to the coastal path and back to the Fish Cabin beside Skipness Castle which will be open for snack lunch etc. if wanted. Please use footwear suitable for mud and puddles.

28th July - Meet Katie at 10.00 at Clachan village hall car park for a walk beside the Clachan Burn to its estuary and along the coast past Dunskeig, to Corran and Loup and returning to Clachan by quiet country roads.

25th August - Machrihanish - Nigel Scriven

26th August - Sanda - information from Nigel Scriven

29th September - Islay Ferry - Seawatching from the Islay Ferry. Meet at 1230hrs at Kennacraig ferry terminal for the 1300hrs sailing to Port Askaig, returning to Kennacraig at 1715hrs. Contact Mike Harrison 01631 710656 or email jmharrison@iee.org

Notes



Common Terns on one of the mussel rafts, Loch Creran

One good tern deserves another

If you have sailed into Loch Creran in the last fifteen years, you can't have failed to see the mussel farm in South Shian Bay, on the south side just past Eriska, made up of a number of rafts, and some longlines. If you passed close to the rafts between May and September, you will probably have been surprised to see common terns living there, in large numbers at times. It's an interesting story

Judy and I have been farming in Loch Creran since 1984, first salmon, then mussels, then oysters, and for a short time all three, now it's just oysters. But in 1996, I had a conversation with Clive Craik, who lives locally and is a well known expert on terns, who was lamenting that the huge tern colonies on the West Coast had been decimated, or worse, by escaped mink. It was so bad that it appeared that if the trend continued, the terns might actually be wiped out in the west of Scotland. I wondered if one of our large mussel rafts could be put to a secondary use as a floating nesting area for the birds as, with luck, mink would find it impossible to reach. He was enthusiastic about the idea, and so we decked it out in plywood and laid out turf, gravel, pieces of pipe, and some crude plywood model terns. And waited. And waited

Eventually, in early May 1996 a pair of common terns arrived and to our great excitement hatched two eggs. One of these survived and fledged, and by the end of that August, the three of them headed off for better weather in West Africa. Success!

In the following years the idea turned into a project; it's gratifying how such a minor success tells you "yes it will work", and engenders the enthusiasm to carry on. The numbers of nesting terns increased, and with them the numbers of fledglings. But there were serious setbacks. In 1999 and 2001, mink managed to climb the anchor chains and destroyed every egg, despite a fence incorporating mink traps built round the colony. And there are plenty of other threats as well as that of the mink. Otters often have a go at nesting birds, though they are less agile than mink. The pieces of pipe provided hidey-holes for the very young, but even so a peregrine attacked them on one occasion and took perhaps half of the young before they were fully fledged.

We sold the mussel farm in 2002, but the new owners allowed the project to continue. There were good years and bad years for the birds: the increase in numbers was erratic; But in 2004, 55 pairs raised some 110 fledglings who survived and departed in September for Africa.

Sometimes, inexplicably, the birds completely fail to breed: no-one is quite sure why. Sometimes they arrive in great numbers, stay for a day or two and then disappear. Clive does not think that food shortage is the reason, as there is unlikely to be a shortage of all their food species at the same time. He just puts it down to tern behaviour. So in 2006, suddenly we were back at square one, and no terns stayed long enough to breed. Yet in 2010, the number of breeding pairs topped 100 for the first time, and a record 140 chicks survived. This was excellent, but this year 2011 300 pairs (that's a whopping 600 birds) decided South Shian was a good spot to start a family, and produced more than 500 fledglings. As you can imagine, these numbers are hard to count, and that figure was probably an underestimate. Anyway, the sight of 1000 irritated birds in August of this year, all taking to the air at once, was awe inspiring, and the knowledge that without Clive's and his helpers' efforts none of them would be there, makes all the hard work worthwhile.

They are long-lived birds, and they return to the same nesting area year after year. Clive ringed one bird in 1999 that was still breeding here in 2009. They breed at incredible density. The total area available to them is about 200 square metres, and at two nests per square metre and sometimes two chicks per nest, there are a lot of birds in a very small space. You can often see them squabbling with each other. "Nest" is the wrong word though: they lay their eggs, which are well camouflaged, on flat gravel or turf with no attempt at cover or protection. With little space left, I wonder what will happen if all this year's chicks return to breed in two years' time - like some of us, young terns have a GAP year before they start life in earnest.

Although common terns are fairly aggressive they are less so than their Arctic brothers. They will however, attack human intruders, and it's best to wear a hat as protection against dive bombers. Clive once watched them gang-up on a marauding peregrine, which quickly conceded defeat and was seen off in no mean fashion - quite a sight.

One of the problems with this nesting site is that the young fledglings can land on the water, but become sodden, and are unable to find the strength to take off again. In real life they would swim to a shelving beach or rock and clamber out to dry, but of course the mussel raft floats stand vertically about a metre out of the water. So it's best to keep a reasonable distance from the colony in late July and August, because if one approaches too close, the whole lot will take to the air at once, including the fledglings who perhaps fly a little earlier than they should in the general panic, and some of them inevitably finish up in the water, and drown.

Who knows what 2012 will bring? There is a dark cloud on the horizon. The farm has been sold for a second time, and the new owners have let it become derelict, to the extent that some of the moorings

have broken, and the rafts themselves are beginning to break up. As I write, the whole farm is a danger to yachtsmen and other water users, as well as to our own oyster farm. We think that it is a matter of time before the farm is closed and the owners are told to remove the derelict gear, which would include the tern colony. Moves are afoot to save the nesting site even if the farm disappears, but there are licensing issues as well as practical problems to overcome before that happens. Let's hope that this success story can be given a new lease of life and that these beautiful birds can return from Africa in future years to the place where they were reared.

Roger Thwaites

The above article by RHYC member Roger Thwaites was originally published in *The Royal Highland Yacht Club Journal* in January 2012 under the title "One Good Tern". Reproduced by kind permission of Roger Thwaites and Harry D Hornsby, editor: The Royal Highland Yacht Club. www.rhyc.org.uk

Goldfinches on the move MSBO 2009-2011

This short note reveals the first recorded movements of ringed Goldfinches to and from Argyll during the period 2009-2011.

A total of seven BTO ringed birds have been controlled at MSBO; one in March, three in April, one in May and two in October. In contrast, only one bird out of some 300 ringed at MSBO has been recovered elsewhere. The longest movements involved birds ringed in Suffolk (500+ km) in October (2009) and November (2008); both were controlled at MSBO during the following spring.

In: **Birds of Argyll** (ap Rheinallt et al 2007) Clive Craik revealed...

"Many Goldfinches, perhaps as many as 80% of the breeding population, leave the British Isles in winter, when overseas ring recoveries come mainly from France, Belgium and Spain. Most emigration takes place in September and October". Clive also noted that...*"very few Goldfinches are ringed in Argyll and there are no recoveries to cast light on the movements of local birds".*

Throughout the year the Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* is a regular visitor in small numbers at the MSBO feeding station. However, during March / May and September / October, the numbers swell and as many as 80 birds can be present. The Goldfinch is a classic partial migrant so obviously many of these birds are on the move.

When MSBO joined the **UK Twite Study Project** in autumn 2010 many Goldfinches were trapped along with the Twite at the nyjer feeding station; around 300 (2010-2011) have now been ringed at MSBO.

Recoveries... To date, only one of our ringed Goldfinches has been recovered.

V879613 ringed MSBO 19th August 2010.

Controlled 23rd November 2010 at Wyke, Much Wenlock, Shropshire (376 km SE).

Controls... Details of seven controls...

X901742 ringed 19th October 2009 at Flordon Road, Creting, St Mary, Suffolk.

Controlled MSBO 9th May 2010 (576 km NW).

This individual was retrapped at MSBO on 3rd September 2010.

X446539 ringed 8th November 2008 at Brandon, Suffolk.

Controlled MSBO 14th April 2009 (533 km NW).

L482288 ringed 11th December 2010 at Thorpe Marsh, Doncaster, South Yorkshire.
Controlled MSBO 15th April 2011 (364 km NW).

L175329 ringed 7th February 2010 at Island Magee, Co Antrim, Northern Ireland.
Controlled MSBO 14th October 2010 (65 km N).

X070283 ringed 2nd June 2009 at Strathclyde Country Park, Motherwell, Strathclyde.
Controlled MSBO 10th April 2010 (117 km SW).
This bird may have been breeding S.C.P.

X064531 ringed 14th November 2008 at Sutton Weaver, Cheshire.
Controlled MSBO 12th October 2010 (307 km NW).

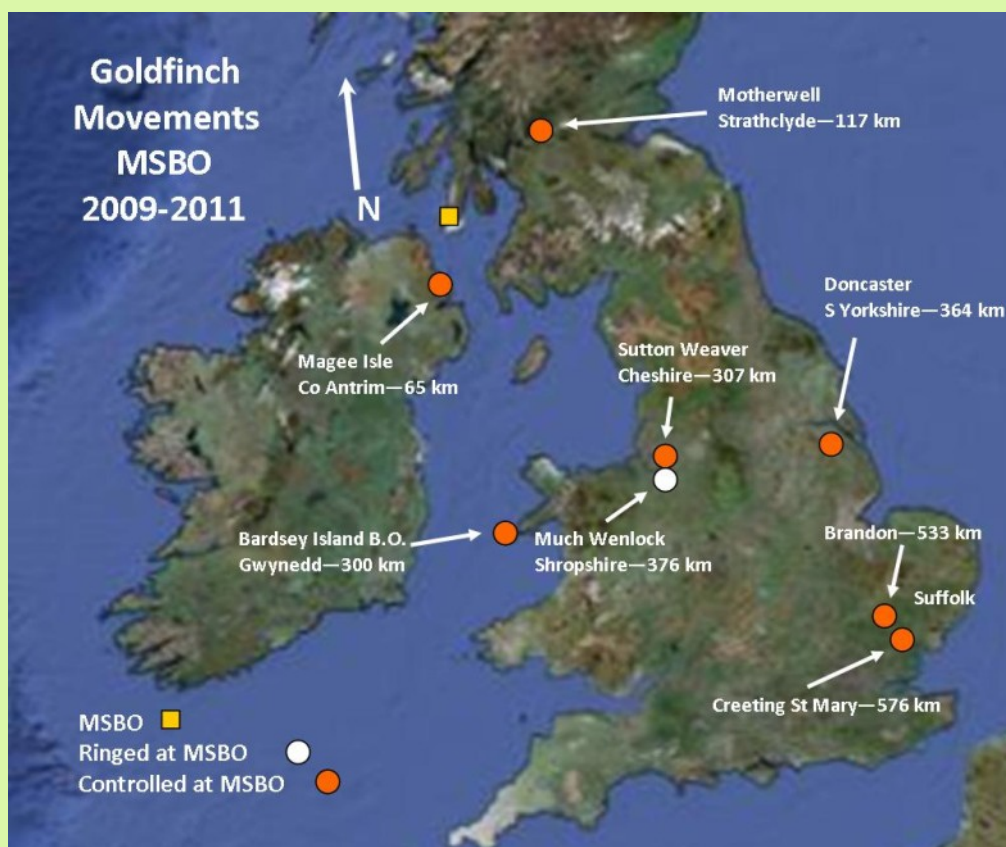
X209119 ringed 10th April 2009 at Bardsey Island B.O., Gwynedd, North Wales.
Controlled MSBO 22nd March 2011 (300 km N).

British-ringed Goldfinches abroad...

On 20th March 2010, Mark Grantham (ringer) posted a comment entitled 'Goldfinches on the move' on the BTO's Demog Blog website. He revealed the following regional statistics about foreign movements of ringed Goldfinches from Britain and Ireland...

"Interestingly, the map...shows all foreign movements of Goldfinches from Britain and Ireland, but hides the real picture. So whilst there have been 542 recoveries of English-ringed Goldfinches abroad (mostly to Spain (263) and France (176)), only two Scottish-ringed birds have moved abroad (to Belgium and Portugal)!"

The accompanying map shows the likely wintering location of our only recovery and the passage / wintering locations of seven birds controlled at MSBO.



Eddie Maguire; Warden MSBO February 2012

Argyll Bird Club Accounts

27th Year Accounts: 16 April 2011 – 13 April 2012

<i>Income</i>	2011/2012	2010/2011
Subscription	2502.23	2582.23
Sales	899.00	1092.00
Bank Interest	3.99	21.04
Other (raffles, donations, etc)	530.00	208.00
25 year dinner	0.00	825.00
Total	3935.22	4728.27
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Bird Report	2095.00	0.00
Newsletter photocopying	780.00	0.00
Postage	552.74	226.73
Bird Recorder expenses	116.14	43.41
Public meetings	668.50	840.77
Insurance	234.48	239.70
Licences/web site	443.86	81.22
Nestboxes	1569.72	0.00
Equipment	448.36	125.99
Photo competition	0.00	100.00
Grants	0.00	2663.35
25 year dinner	0.00	825.00
Refund of overpayment	0.00	50.00
Advertising	446.60	0.00
Total	7355.40	5196.17
Surplus/Deficit for year	-3420.18	-467.90
Brought forward	21,889.06	22,356.96
Assets at end of year	18,468.88	21,889.06

Treasurer's Report for financial year 2011-2012

Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £18,468.88, a reduction of £3,420.18 from the previous year. Income from book sales has decreased though remains healthy, and our stock of copies is also much reduced, with just a few boxes remaining. Income from subscriptions was very slightly lower than for the previous year.

Income from bank interest fell further, with the reduction in the Treasurer's Account interest rate to zero early in this financial year. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contribute items to be raffled. The 2011-12 accounts include the income from the Oban raffle, mostly non- members of Argyll Bird Club, which raised a record sum of £340. This will partly offset the relatively high cost of that indoor meeting (which will not appear in the accounts until 2012-13 as the payment to BTO had not been cashed during this financial year).

Expenditure was deliberately increased this year to try to make best use of the income we obtained from the book, so our expenditure includes both normal activities plus extra ones. A bird report was published in 2011/12 and photocopying costs for the Eider include costs for all the issues last year as well as those photocopied this year, so both these items of expenditure should be averaged over the two-year period. Although the cost of the Bird Report is the largest item of expenditure on the balance sheet, the report is clearly valued by members and we intend to continue to produce this as a printed biennial report with colour photographs for the years 2010-2011. The cost is likely to remain similar, as we very much value our relationship with our printer, J. Thomson of Glasgow who have been very helpful. Postage rates have increased, and we now routinely have issues of the Eider sent as large letters rather than under the lowest postal category as our newsletters tend to have more pages now than has been typical in previous years. Although many members receive the Eider by email, we still post out about 120 copies per quarter. In addition we had the cost of posting the Bird Report to all our membership and to various libraries and exchange partners. Public meeting costs do not include the Oban joint meeting with BTO/SOC which will fall into next year's accounts. Insurance costs included insurance of the club's telescope and binoculars now available for monthly field trips, as well as third party cover for club activities. Web site registration costs in 2010/11 were lower than normal because web site registration for last year fell into this financial year, increasing the 2011/12 costs. But in addition, we transferred the web site to a new host which required purchase of overlapping periods of web site rental in order to ensure that no important content was lost as the site was transferred from one system to a very different one. We also paid for specialist services in making the transfer of the web site to a new system that can now be more easily edited by several club committee members and so kept up to date more easily. We spent £1569.72 on nestboxes and materials for nestboxes, including material for boxes for kestrels and woodcrete boxes for pied flycatchers. Equipment purchases included repair parts for the club's computer, and purchase of external hard drive facilities to allow backing up of important files (after a salutary lesson when the club's laptop drive failed). The considerable expenditure on 'advertising' included printing of publicity cards that are being distributed throughout Argyll to try to recruit new members, and printing of two roller banners to advertise the club at suitable events (these were proudly displayed for the first time at the Oban meeting in March).

We continue to look for sensible ways to use the cash that has been accumulated by the club over the last decade, this financial year being the first in which we have spent a significant amount of the large bank balance that has built up.

Bob Furness, 19 April 2012.

Membership Secretary's Report

Our number of memberships has declined very slightly from last year's total. In April 2011 we had a total of 222 memberships (3 down on the previous year), including a good number of family memberships, though (as usual) a few members have not yet responded to a request for subscription renewal, so may lapse. We have approximately 340 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships. The relatively static situation with memberships has led us to produce advertising cards to put on display at libraries etc around Argyll, with the aim to recruit interested people who are not aware of the club.

Sue Furness, 19 April 2012.

AGM 2011 Draft Minutes

(Draft) Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club held at the Argyll Arms Hotel, Inveraray on Saturday, 5th November, 2011

1. Apologies: Nigel Scriven (chairman), Malcolm and Sue Chattwood, John and Helen Anderson, Lilly Cregeen, David and Heddy Merrie

2. Minutes of the 2010 AGM: These had been published in *The Eider* and their adoption was proposed by Ian Hopkins and seconded by Tom Callan.

3. Matters arising not covered in the following items: As Nigel Scriven (chairman) was unable to attend; Mike Harrison (vice chairman) ran the meeting and all present wished Nigel a speedy recovery. It was reported that while all the woodcrete nest boxes had now been deployed, further specific requests for more would be considered.

4. Chairman's report: (Mike delivered the report prepared by Nigel)

It scarcely seems a year since I wrote a report that looked back over the first 25 years of the Club. We have been as busy as ever this last year.

Last year's autumn meeting on 6th November in Cairnbaan, had a biodiversity theme, in recognition of the 2010 Year of Biodiversity, and coinciding with the revision of the Argyll and Bute Biodiversity Action Plan. After the roundup of recent sightings from Paul Daw, what better way to start the talks than have Marina Curran-Colthart bring us up to speed on Biodiversity in Argyll, followed by an outline on the Club's planned contributions to the Action Plan. This was followed by Clive Craik's long running story of the battle against mink predation of seabirds in Argyll. To say that the war is being won would be premature, but there are encouraging signs that with persistent action by trapping and mink-proof nesting rafts, significant gains are possible. After lunch and the AGM, James Bray from the BTO gave us a progress report on the Bird Atlas in Argyll and Scotland, in the run up to the final year of fieldwork. This will give a great new benchmark on avian biodiversity in Argyll. Alison Phillip gave an overview of the Black Grouse in Argyll, one of the Species with its own Biodiversity Action Plan, and doing OK in some areas and not so well in others. Finishing up, Mark Williamson showed us what practical measures had worked for him in enhancing biodiversity in his backyard, which served to encourage us all to have a go ourselves. A memorable day was celebrated with the cutting of the 25th birthday cake and then later in the evening, the silver anniversary dinner, with our founding father, Colin Galbraith and his wife as guests of honour. This event was very well supported, and it was suggested that it could be repeated, though not necessarily an annual event.

The spring meeting, on 12th March in Dunoon, was a tense event on my part. The weather forecast was not great, so I was relieved that all the speakers were able to arrive despite the onset of a snowstorm just when members would be travelling to the meeting. Unfortunately many people were put off making the journey, and missed a good meeting. We heard about notable recent sightings from Paul Daw, then Andy Robinson outlined the approach that the RSPB take when considering the issues involved in wind turbine proposals. To warmer climes, Ron Forrester transported us to Africa by documenting his many trips to various parts of Africa over several decades. Chris Waltho's *Eider* story summed up the many years of data on the Clyde Eider population, and considered the many factors involved in the ups, and more recently, the downs in their numbers. Gemma Jennings from Glasgow University told us about her study on the unique tern colony in Leith docks, showing that an unnatural industrial setting can be great for bird conservation.

The monthly field trips have continued to attract regular attendances, from 4 up to 15, in all weathers. To my mind this has become a significant feature of our activities and contributes to the friendly

atmosphere that the Club has. Venues covered this past year have included Tayinloan, Ormsary & Ardpatrik, Appin, Dunoon & Ardyne, Sound of Gigha, Skipness, Clachan & West Loch Tarbert, Islay ferry, and Largiebaan in Kintyre. My thanks go to the trip co-ordinators. We are always looking for new ideas, so let us know if you have any suggestions.

The Club's 200 durable woodcrete nest boxes have now been deployed and we can look forward to hearing how they have been used. The Club has also part funded the materials for the construction of some Kestrel boxes by David Warden, which we hope may help this species. The Seil Natural History Group is reporting today on their Mink Control Project, which we have been supporting. The SAMS tern raft project run by Clive Craik has been very successful in Loch Creran, although there are issues with the Crown Estate that are on-going.

The Club's Eider Newsletter has thrived under the editorship of Mark Williamson. It has become the main route of communication with members, and I thank him on your behalf for brightening up the email inbox (or doormat if you still get yours posted). Thanks also to the contributors of text and images that make it what it is. Please keep sending your copy in.

The Bird Report for 2008 & 2009 has been a longer time coming than we had hoped. There have been various reasons for this. The BTO Bird Atlas has been a big factor here, not only in generating a lot more records, but much of Paul Daw's time as Recorder has been taken up with the validation process. In reaction to this the team of compilers has been expanded to help Paul, and Editor Tom Callan, to produce the species accounts for the Report. We are aiming to have it complete for the spring meeting in 2012. Thanks to Paul, Tom and the team for their on-going work. How we deal with future reports is very much an issue that the committee are grappling with as the volume of records, and the nature of their generation continues to develop. The Club's own recording system based on Excel spread sheets is the main conduit, but as the BTO's Bird Track gains in usage in this part of the world, change is inevitable.

The Club's website is becoming a greater feature of the way we do things. It has evolved once more, moving to a new platform which is less technically demanding, and that can be shared by more administrators, which helps share the load of keeping it fresh. Paul Daw, Mark Williamson, and particularly Bob Furness and his son Jamie, have been instrumental in setting up the new website, retaining much of the previous content, so it might not seem too different from how it was before.

Once more I am grateful to our committee for the significant contributions they make to the running of the Club. Richard Allan stood down this year as regional rep for the BTO, and from the Committee, deserving a well-earned rest after the Atlas organising. My thanks also go to Bob and Sue Furness for managing our financial and membership business. My special thanks to Katie Pendreigh, not only for her prompt production of minutes, but also the numerous other things that make such a difference. Nigel Scriven

5. Secretary's report: I always understood that committee meetings were dull and boring affairs but I have not found this to be true of the bird club ones when I glean all sorts of extra bits of bird related information. Since the last AGM we have met four times - in February, April, August and October at the Argyll Hotel, Invererary where we have, as usual, been comfortably accommodated in the old stables and given tea or coffee on arrival - most welcome for those who have had to travel a considerable distance.

At each of these meetings there has been discussion regarding the Website and, for those of you who use it, I am sure you will agree that the changes made have been positive. I would encourage anyone who has internet connection to make use of this helpful and useful facility which is still undergoing further improvements.

Another regular topic throughout the year has been matters pertaining to the Argyll Bird Report which involves a vast amount of work for Paul and Tom. They have to collect and collate the information received, as well as chase up records not yet received but known to be in the pipeline, and then edit the volume before passing it to the publisher for printing. Some people are learning how to assist by

doing species reports, and, while those like Bob whose continuous help with this over several years have built up considerable expertise, I fear I have recently added to the headaches of the editor but hopefully will improve!

At each meeting this year, time on the agenda has been dedicated to the most prudent way of spending Club Funds - it is always a pleasure to discuss the best way to spend money, and the outcome has resulted in the Club lending its support to the suitable and relevant projects already mentioned (by Nigel). Richard has consistently kept us up to date with news from the BTO and it is with great sadness that we are losing him from the committee after this meeting, although he certainly deserves a rest. I do hope we shall continue to see him on our bird watching outings as well as at Club meetings.

The Swarovski telescope with tripod and digi-scoping adaptor for use by club members, and the Club's Public Liability Insurance were renewed for further year with Golden Valley Insurance Services and our accounts were accepted for another year by The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

It remains for me to wish Nigel a speedy recovery and to thank him, as well as the rest of the committee, for all their help and support, and especially to Mike, who kindly sends me his meeting 'notes' which are a considerable help as my concentration diminishes towards the end of meetings.
Katie Pendreigh

6. Treasurer's report for financial year 2010 - 2011: Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £21,889.06, a reduction of £467.90 from the previous year. However, the income from the book has decreased considerably, and our stock of copies is also much reduced, with just a few boxes remaining. Income from subscriptions was slightly lower than the record level of 2009/10, with few new members and several leaving the club. Income from bank interest fell further, with the reduction in interest rates to minimal levels. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contribute items to be raffled. Income labelled as "25th year dinner" represents payments made by club members for the special dinner at the Cairnbaan Hotel to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the club.

Expenditure was deliberately increased this year to make best use of the income we obtained from the book, so our expenditure includes both normal activities plus extra ones. No bird report was published in 2010/11 and photocopying costs for *The Eider* in this year were carried forward to the next financial year so have yet to be included in accounts. Postage rates have increased, and we now routinely have issues of *The Eider* that have to be sent as large letters rather than the lowest postal category as our newsletters tend to have more pages now than had been typical in previous years. But with fewer books to post to purchasers, the overall expenditure on postage was reduced this year, and also took advantage of a surplus of 1st and 2nd class stamps built up in previous years at prices before those were increased. Public meeting costs were particularly high in 2009-10 due to the fact that there were three meetings that fell into that financial year as the spring 2009 meeting on Islay was in April. Meeting costs in 2010/2011 were much lower. Insurance costs included insurance of the club's telescope now available for monthly field trips, as well as third party cover. Web site registration costs also fell partly outside the financial year for these accounts so this year's sum is unusually low. We spent £125.99 on purchase of a PA system for use at indoor meetings, and £100 in prizes for the club's photographic competition. A substantial grant was given for repair and enlargement of tern nesting rafts on Loch Creran, and a much smaller grant for equipment for mink control at Seil. Expenditure on the 25th anniversary dinner was simply to facilitate paying the hotel with a single payment for the meal, club members having paid the cost to the club in advance. The refund of £50 was to a member who paid for the dinner but was forced to cancel.

We continue to look for sensible ways to use the cash that has been accumulated by the club over the last decade. Bob Furness, 1 May 2011

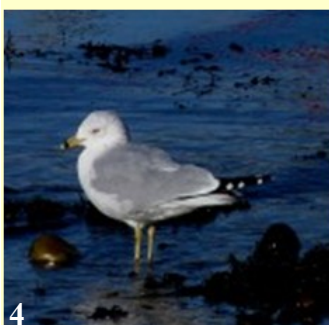
7. Membership Secretary's report: Our number of memberships has declined slightly from last year's highest on record. At the end of the financial year 2010-11 (April 2011) we had a total of 225

memberships, including a good number of family memberships, though a few members have not yet responded to a request for subscription renewal, so may lapse. However, the majority of members now pay by standing order which greatly simplifies administration. We have approximately 340 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships. The decline in numbers of new members joining this year is slightly unexpected and it is unclear why this has occurred although it may simply indicate that quite significant numbers of people had joined the club on a short-term basis in order to buy "Birds of Argyll" at the reduced rate for club members. It should be noted that the photographic competition, although held in association with a local newspaper, apparently did not lead to any noticeable increase in new memberships. (Sue Furness, 1 May 2011)

8. Election of office bearers and committee members: The committee members and office bearers stood down en block and members present were encouraged to volunteer any new names in order to allow proposals to be put forward for the coming year. Nigel had previously indicated his willingness to continue as chairman if there were no other volunteers, and in that event his name was proposed by Janet Palmer and seconded by Bob Furness. No new volunteers came forward for the positions of vice-chairman, treasurer and secretary and, having previously indicated their willingness to continue for another year, Mike Harrison, Bob Furness and Katie Pendreigh were proposed by Ron Forrester and seconded by Roger Broad. Also, having agreed to continue for a further year as membership secretary, Sue Furness was proposed by Mike Harrison and seconded by Robin Harvey. With the exception of Richard Allan, the seven remaining committee members had agreed to serve for a further year and were proposed by Mike Harrison and seconded by David Palmer. As no further nominations to serve on the committee were forthcoming, it was decided to proceed with ten members at this time, instead of a possible twelve.

9. A.O.C.B. The BBC's "Things to Do" on line section of Autumn Watch was promoted by a member as being both of possible interest to fellow members, and as a route for publicising the Club's activities. Also, the re- issue and sale of the ABC car stickers, for £1, each was mooted. They had proved to be a successful and popular advertising tool in the past but many members who had displayed one had since changed their car.

Katie Pendreigh 1/2/12



Some Spring Highlights

1. Green-winged Teal. Loch Gruinart (Jim Dickson)
2. Magpie. Keills, Tayvallich (Jon Close)
3. Corncrake. Iona (David Warden)
4. Ring-billed Gull, Oban (David Jardine)
5. Snow Bunting. (Graham Todd)



Recent Reports

March to May 2012

Paul Daw

(Tel. 01546 886260)

e-mail:

monedula@globalnet.co.uk

The latest news on bird sightings in Argyll is available on the Argyll Bird Club website at www.argyllbirdclub.org

Recent Sightings and Spring Migrants 2012

Stop Press

Eastern Subalpine Warbler: A male was found and photographed in John Bowler's garden at Balephuill on Tiree 28 May. This, if accepted by the BBRC, will be the first record for Argyll. John has now added no less than six new species to the Argyll list from his garden in seven years (Western Bonelli's, Marsh, Blyth's Reed and Northern Parula Warblers and Brown Shrike)....well done! Amazingly later that evening John also saw a female **Golden Oriole** and Argyll's second **Marsh Warbler** at this site!

Arctic Redpoll: a description and photos have been submitted of a bird of the Greenland race 'Hornemann's Redpoll' seen at Sanaigmore Bay, Islay on 10 April (Hilary & Guy Mackenzie). There are only two previous accepted records of the species in Argyll, both of the N European race *exilipes*.



Eastern Subalpine Warbler
Tiree 28.5.12 (John Bowler)

The pattern of arrival of spring migrants in Argyll has been very odd this year. Some very early arrivals appeared in March and the first week or two of April, including our earliest ever Barn Swallow and early Northern Wheatears and Common Cuckoos. There followed a distinct hiatus, probably due to some extent to the prevailing N/NE winds, until late April/early May. There were odd concentrations of Northern Wheatears at the end of the first week in May (see below), as though their movement northwards had been delayed. Several species (e.g. terns, Common Swift, Whinchat, Sedge Warbler), were noticeably later than usual.

You will see that a relatively small number of observers account for the bulk of records in this report. The recording of arrival dates of spring migrants is something that all club members can contribute to and it would have been good to have heard from more of you.

Night movements of Whooper Swans.

On the evening of Saturday 17th March, Simon Lawrence observed groups of **Whooper Swans** flying north over Lochgilphead: 19 at 18:12; 60 at 22:00 and 22 at 22:30. Then on Thursday 22 March, as his son was trying to photograph various planets through the telescope, their view was repeatedly interrupted by more flocks of Whooper Swans moving N, including 22 at 20:50 and a similar sized group at 21:10. As has been noted in the past a good deal of spring migration of Whooper Swans seems to take place after dark and on fine nights they can be seen and often heard calling, as they fly over. There appears to be a favoured flight line passing N over Lochgilphead and sometimes Minard.

It would be interesting to know which way they go from here – any other observations?

a flock of 43 Whooper Swans were resting on Loch Gilp on 25 March (Jim Dickson). **Pink-footed Goose:** a large movement was noted in mid April with flocks reported from Tiree and over Cairnbaan (nr Lochgilphead) but not, curiously, from Islay (John Bowler/Jim Dickson). **Red-breasted Goose:** One was found at Loch Riddon, Cowal on 5 June by Graham Clark-debisschop. This is only

the second ever in Argyll since the last one on Tiree in 2001 and returned the following two winters. This year has seen several of this species in the UK and the likelihood is that the bird is wild.



Red-breasted Goose L Riddon 5.6.12 (Jim Dickson)

NORTHERN EIDER: John Bowler noted a male *borealis* Common Eider at Traigh Bhi on Tiree 7 April which will be the first of this race for Argyll if accepted by the BBRC.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL: A dark has been showing well from the hides at Loch Gruinart RSPB reserve from at least 17th March. There was an earlier bird on Tiree at Loch a' Phuill in Feb (John Bowler) and possibly the Islay bird turned up there on 27th April (John Bowler).

Great Northern Diver: a bird in breeding plumage was seen in Campbeltown Loch on 20/21 May (Steve & Sue Walker). **Slavonian Grebe:** an impressive count of 41 was made in Loch Indaal, Islay (mostly near Blackrock) on 28 March (Jim Dickson). Sadly it appears that regular WeBS Counts are no longer being made there. **Garganey:** A pair on Oronsay on 14 April (David Jardine). Following records: 27 April: a drake at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree (John Bowler).

Common Quail: One was reported calling at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay on 20 April (Crystal Maw per I. & M. Brooke) and another at Dunadd Fort on 7th June (John Halliday). Following records: 27 May: one on Oronsay (Mike Peacock per David Jardine).

Red Kite: one was seen flying over near Kennacraig, Kintyre on the afternoon of 16 April (Valerie Wells). 26 May: a wing-tagged bird (L=yellow, R=white No.7) was at Treshnish Farm, Mull on (Anand Prasad per Jim Dickson). **Marsh Harrier:** an immature was seen at Fidden Farm on the Ross of Mull on 30 May (David Warden). **Northern Goshawk:** One was reported in the Southend area of Kintyre on 4th April by Hugh Nicol.

Osprey: Another very early arrival was an Osprey perched close to the nest site in West Loch Tarbert on 14 March (Eddie Maguire/Iomhar McMillan). Apparently some Ospreys had arrived in Wales in the latter part of February.

Following records: 28 March: a pair appeared at a traditional nest site at Loch Awe, Mid-Argyll (Delys Marks).

19 April: Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart).

20 April: Loch Riddon, Cowal (per Tom Callan).

24 April: Two at nest near Tayvallich, Mid-Argyll and one near Add Bridge (Moine Mhor), Mid-Argyll (Tom Callan/Daphne Campbell).

25 April: one seen at Colintrave, Cowal, with subsequent sighting during following month (Graham & Danielle Clarke).

1 May: flying N along the coast at Sandaig, Tiree (Christian Versraate and Ann-Lisbeth de Zegher from Belgium per John Bowler).

23 May: one over Machrins, Colonsay (David Jardine).

Spotted Crane: one heard calling at Coullabus, Islay on 3 May (Crystal Maw). **Corn Crane:** The first so far was on 13 April on Colonsay (David Jardine).

Following records: 15 April: One on Coll (Ben Jones per John Bowler).

19 April: Kenovay, Tiree (John Bowler).

1 May: one at Portnahaven, Islay (Mary McGregor).

2 May: in the evening at least 4 Corncrakes calling Mannal, Tiree and 3 at Hynish - obvious arrival now the N winds have abated (Simon Wellock).

12 May: first heard at a site near the mouth of Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll (John Aitchison).

Also on 12 May one was calling persistently at Dunaverty golf course, Southend, Kintyre (adjacent to Brunerican Farm) (Donald Brown *et al* per Eddie Maguire).

Common Cranes are not really traditional spring migrants in Argyll but two birds were seen over Uig, Coll on 13 April (Peter Isaacson), followed by three reported by Ali and Kenny Little south of Skipness, Kintyre on 21 Apr - flying high and



Common Cranes Loch Goil 17.5.12 (Keith Hoey)

east towards the Isle of Arran before they were lost sight in a heavy hail shower. Then one was reported flying W over Moine Mhor on the afternoon of 5 May (Norrie McDonald) and another two were seen and photographed together flying up Loch Goil and over Drimsynie on 17th May (Keith Hoey). **Dotterel:** the first reported so far was at The Reef, Tiree on 18 April (John Aitchison per John Bowler).

Following records: 11 May: two on the Oa at Kinnabus, Islay (Mark Shields per David Wood).

15 May: three on Oronsay (Mike Peacock per Jim Dickson).

27 May: one near summit of Ben More, Mull (Dr Neil Cowie).

Little Stint: two were seen briefly in the SW corner of Loch a' Phuill on the evening of 29 May (John Bowler).

Pectoral Sandpiper: One was found at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay on 26 April (James How per Jim Dickson) and one was on a small pool near Heylipol Church, Tiree on the afternoon of 14 May (John Bowler). **Curlew Sandpiper:** two at Hough Bay, Tiree at lunch-time on 25 May included a nice sum-plum male (John Bowler). **Black-tailed Godwit:** One was in the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 16 April (Jim Dickson).

Following records: 22 April. A total of 101 at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree included a colour ringed bird (John Bowler) and 27 at Loch an Eilein, Tiree (Simon Wellock).

23 April: Four at Ardnave Loch, Islay, with 8 there the following day (Jim Dickson).

24 April: twelve near Portnahaven, Islay (Jim Dickson).

26 April: eight seen at Lossit farm on the Rhinns of Islay (Jim Dickson).

27 April: a flock of 18 at Loch an Eilein, Tiree (John Bowler).

Whimbrel: The first reported so far were four at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre on 20 April (Eddie Maguire).

Following records: 22 April: Four at Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

23 April: An obvious arrival of at least 20 on Tiree included 6 at Loch a' Phuill and 13 at The Reef (John Bowler) and three were at Mannal (Simon Wellock).

24 April: seven at Keillbeg (Loch Sween), Mid-Argyll (Tom Callan/Daphne Campbell).

26 April: five seen on Laggan, Islay (Jim Dickson).

27 April: 37 in one flock feeding in field at Craigfad Farm (Nerabus), Islay (Jim Dickson).

2 May: 8 flying north at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (Eddie Maguire) and 40 at Coultorsay, Islay (per I. & M. Brooke).

3 May: 13 at Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh) and 10 flying north at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (Eddie Maguire).

5 May: 12 at West Coast Salmon, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

6 May: 12 near Duntrune Castle, Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll (Fiona Dickson).

7 May: 9 at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll a.m. (Jim Dickson) and a flock of 142 at Hough machair, Tiree had increase to 156 by the following day - quite unprecedented numbers for Tiree (John Bowler). Large numbers also on Islay where 107 were at Port Charlotte (George Jackson per I. & M. Brooke).

13 May: 16 on Shinty pitch at Lochgilphead School plus 3 in Loch Gilp (Jim Dickson). **Green Sandpiper:** one was flushed up from a ditch on the morning of 27 April at Balephuill, Tiree – a rare spring bird in these parts (John Bowler). **Wood Sandpiper:** one was photographed at Loch Don, Mull on 3 May (David Hatfield per Alan Spellman). **Common Sandpiper:** The first so far was on 13 April at Dhiseig, Mull (Alan Spellman).

Following records: 15 April: on Colonsay (David Jardine).

18 April: Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson). Otter Ferry, Cowal (Tom Callan). River Add, Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart).

21 April: Two at Lochgilphead were already mating (Andrew Stevenson).

22 April: Four at Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh) and two at Portnahaven, Islay (Jim Dickson).

29 April: two pairs seen at Benderloch Gravel Pits, North Argyll (Robin Harvey).

Arctic Skua: the first reported so far were two at Traigh nan Gilean, Tiree on 1 May (Christian Versraate and Ann-Lisbeth de Zegher per John Bowler). **Pomarine Skua:** three over Scarinish, Tiree on 3 May (Annelise Dickie & Bill Allan per Jim Dickson) and two between Jura and Colonsay on 17 May (David Jardine). **Long-tailed Skua:** an adult was off Craignure, Mull on 12 May (Matt Eade).

The adult **Ring-billed Gull** was showing well in Oban during March and a second-winter, or perhaps third-winter bird was found in with the Common Gulls off the front green in Lochgilphead 13 March (Dan Brown).

Iceland Gull: after the major influx in January/February there are still odd individuals being reported including one in the Moine Mhor area up to early May (Jim Dickson). A full account of this extraordinary phenomenon appears in the May issue of *British Birds*. It involved not only hundreds of birds in north and northwest Britain but an estimated 5,000 or more in the Faroe Islands! **Little Tern:** the first reported so far was one at Gott Bay, Tiree on 17 April (John Bowler).

Following records: 23 April: Two at Loch Gruinart and two at Blackrock, Loch Indaal, Islay (Jim Dickson).

2 May. Two were at Baugh/Crossapol and 2 at Mannal, Tiree (Simon Wellock) and two at Ardnave Loch, Islay (Mary McGregor). **Sandwich Tern:** the first sighting reported so far was one at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre (MSBO) on 25 March (Eddie Maguire).

Following records: 5 April: seen in the morning at Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

8 April: two at Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

17 April: one at Gott Bay, Tiree (John Bowler).

23 April: two at Kilnaughton Bay, Islay (Jim Dickson).

25 April: two at Dunoon, Cowal (Tom Callan).

27 April: 2 seen at Bruichladdich, Islay (Jim Dickson).

2 May: two at Nave Island, Islay (Mary McGregor).

Common Tern: the first sighting reported so far was one at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre (MSBO) on 18 April (Eddie Maguire).

Following records: 4 May: four near Big Scone Island, Machrihanish, Kintyre (Eddie Maguire).

22 May: six feeding in Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

Arctic Tern: the first reported so far was on 1 May when one was at Balephetrish Bay with 6 more at Traigh Bhagh in the evening (Christian Versraate and Ann-Lisbeth de Zegher from Belgium per John Bowler).

Following records: 2 May: four at Hynish, Tiree (Simon Wellock) and one at Balephetrish Bay (John Bowler).

4 May: single near Big Scone Island, Machrihanish, Kintyre (Eddie Maguire).

Turtle Dove: one was reported on Oronsay on 15 May (Mike Peacock per Jim Dickson) and one at the top of Beinn Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree on 29 May (James Phillips per John Bowler).

Common Cuckoo: another early arrival. A Cuckoo was calling on open moorland a mile west of Cladich (Loch

Awe), Mid-Argyll at 14:00 on 5 April (Delys Marks). Apart from one on Coll in late March 2003 this is the earliest for some years.

Following records: 14 April: One seen at Spion Cop (nr. Kennacarig) Kintyre (and heard following day) (Valerie Wells). Kilmore (nr Oban), Mid-Argyll (Richard Wesley). Tayvallich, Kintyre (per John Halliday).

18 April: Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (earliest record here) (Blair Urquhart) and one calling at Foreland, Islay (Malcolm Ogilvy per I. & M. Brooke).

20 April: Loch Eck, Cowal (Nigel Scriven). Barr Laggan (nr Otter Ferry), Cowal (Tom Callan. Nr Campbeltown, Kintyre (Paul Daw).

21 April: Several in forestry above Ardrishaig, Mid-Argyll (Andrew Stevenson).

24 April: two seen at Moine Mhor, Mid-Argyll (Peter Hilton).

29 April: heard at Carsaig, Mid-Argyll (Jon Close).

2 May: heard at Balephuill, Tiree (John Bowler).

3 May: heard at West Loch Tarbert, Kintyre (Barbara McMillan).

Golden Oriole: BirdGuides reported one near Lephinchapel (nr Otter Ferry), Cowal on 25 May (per Jim Dickson). No details of observer were given. If anyone has any further information on this record please let myself or Jim know.

Following records: 25 May: a female or young male type on the Oa reserve, Islay (per David Wood).

28 May: an immature/female was in John Bowler's garden (!) at Balephuill, Tiree.



Red-backed Shrike Mull 26.5.12
(Anand Prasad)

Red - backed Shrike: a female was at Treshnish Farm, Mull on 26May (Anand Prasad per Jim Dickson).

Magpie: Jon Close found and photographed a Magpie near Keills, past Tayvallich on 23 Mar. Still an unusual sighting in Argyll away from parts of Cowal. A long staying bird has also been on Islay near Port Ellen.

Common Swift: the first reported so far was a single over Burnside Square, Campbeltown at 17:40hrs on the late date 14 May (Iomhar McMillan *et al* per Eddie Maguire).

Following records: 21 May: 7 over the square in Campbeltown (Eddie Maguire).

22 May: two at Argyll & Bute Hospital, Lochgilphead (Jim Dickson) and two at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree (John Bowler).

25 May: one over The Oa, Islay (per I. & M. Brooke).

27 May: five over Balephuill/Carnan Mor (John Bowler) and 11 over Campbeltown (Eddie Maguire).

29 May: two over Ardnave, Islay (Bob Young per Jim Dickson). **Sand Martin:** the first reported so far was one at Frachadil (nr Calgary), Mull (Andy Mortley) on 20 March followed by one at Reudle Schoolhouse, Mull on 25 March (Anand Prasad).

Following records: 29 March: 10 at Loch Ederline on (David Jardine).

30 March: two at Strathmore (Moine Mhor), Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson) and 6 at Loch Melldalloch, Cowal (Tom Callan).

1 April: approx. 12 seen over Dunaverty Links, Southend, Kintyre (per Donald Brown *et al*).

2 April: Inveraray, Mid-Argyll (Richard Wesley).

5 April: Loch Leathan, Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart).

17 April: six at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree (John Bowler).

18 April: at least 50 at colony at Millhouse, Cowal (Tom Callan). **Barn Swallow:** One Swallow doesn't make a summer of course but a very early Barn Swallow was seen at 15.25 on Monday 12th March at Bridgend, Kilmichael Glassary (nr. Lochgilphead) by Lynsey Gibson. This is 5 days earlier than our previous first Swallow in Argyll (17th March 2007). According to *Birds of Scotland* the earliest ever date for a Swallow in Scotland is 7th March.

Later Swallow arrivals have been reported as follows: 27 March: The Oa, Islay (per James How).

31 March: Balinoe, Tiree (John Bowler).

1 April: two seen at Southend, Kintyre (per Donald Brown *et al*).

8 April: Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

10 April: Tayinloan, Kintyre (Jim Dickson).

11 April: Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart).

13 April: Two at Loch Laich, North Argyll (Simon Pinder).

15 April: Bridgend (nr. Lochgilphead), Mid-Argyll (Malcolm Chattwood).

16 April: Balvicar, Seil, Mid-Argyll (Richard Wesley). One at Glenbranter, Cowal (Willie Harrison).

18 April: Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson). Ardkinglas (Loch Fyne), Mid-Argyll (Glyn Toplis). Slockavullin (nr Lochgilphead), Mid-Argyll (Brian John).

22 April: Killail (nr Otter Ferry), Cowal (Tom Callan).

House Martin: the first so far was on 29 March at The Oa, Islay (per David Wood).

Following records: 11 April: Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart).

18 April: Ardkinglas (Loch Fyne), Mid-Argyll (Glyn Toplis).

20 April: Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre (Eddie Maguire).

24 April: Bridgend (nr Lochgilphead), Mid-Argyll (Sue Chattwood).

25 April: Loch Gruinart, Islay (Jim Dickson).

29 April: two at Hynish, Tiree (Simon Wellock).

2 May: two at Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

6 May: one at Bruichladdich, Islay (George Jackson).

7 May: 6 at Slockavullin, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

18 May: one at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree (John Bowler).

Tree Pipit: the first was at Taynish NNR on 12 April (John Halliday).

Following records: 18 April: Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll

(Blair Urquhart).

20 April: near Campbeltown, Kintyre (Paul Daw).

21 April: Several in forestry above Ardrishaig, Mid-Argyll (Andrew Stevenson)

23 April: Tullochgorm (Minard), Mid-Argyll (Paul Daw).

27 April: singing in Glen Nant, Mid-Argyll (Simon Pinder).

1 May: ten singing at Taynish NNR (Jim Dickson).

8 May: two at Crinan Ferry, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

Yellow Wagtail: a passage migrant was seen on Iona in fields with cattle near the golf course on 21 May (Steve Hack) and one was on the rugby pitch at Garmony, Mull on 29 May (Ken Reeves). **White Wagtail:** the first of the year was at MSBO, Kintyre on 25 March (Eddie Maguire).

Following records: 4 April: Balephetrish Bay, Tiree (John Bowler). Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor), Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

10 April: Nine at A' Chleit (nr Tayinloan), Kintyre (Jim Dickson).

13 April: Three at Tralee beach, North Argyll (Simon Pinder).

22 April: Five at Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

24 April: a total of 27 in one field at Ardnave Loch, Islay (Jim Dickson).

30 April: a group of 14 was part of a remarkable passage of 120 in 5 hours at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (Eddie Maguire).

9 May: 21 at Balephetrish Bay, Tiree (John Bowler).

Common Redstart: the first report so far was a male at Ballimeanoch (Loch Awe), Mid-Argyll on 22 April (Andrew Stevenson).

Following records: 1 May: two at Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

7 May: one at Crinan Ferry, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson) and a female at Balephuill, Tiree (John Bowler).

27 May: a male at Balephuill/Carnan Mor (John Bowler).

Whinchat: the first report so far was of a pair at Crinan Ferry (Moine Mhor), Mid-Argyll on 1 May (Jim Dickson).

Following records: 2 May: males at Balephuill, Tiree (John Bowler) and Strone Farm (nr Otter Ferry), Cowal (Tom Callan).

3 May: three at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay (James How).

8 May: nine (7 male/2 females) in the Crinan Ferry/ Barsloisnoch, Moine Mhor area (Jim Dickson). At least 7 territories identified later in the month – more than usual here (Jim Dickson). **Northern Wheatear:** the first Wheatear we've heard about so far was seen by Mary McGregor (Senior Warden at RSPB L. Gruinart) at Claddach Croft (near Portnahaven) Islay at ca 10.00 on Saturday 17 March: it was there again on Sunday 18th.

Following this, Wheatear were also reported on 18 March: Tayinloan, Kintyre at 10.30 (Katie Pendreigh).

22 March: a female at Killail, Otter Ferry at ca 12.00 was the first for Cowal (Tom Callan). Two males were at Sandaig, with another at Beinn Hough, Tiree (John Bowler).

25 March: the first Wheatear at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre (Eddie Maguire) Two males on Sanda Islands, Kintyre (Nigel Scriven).

26 March: Corraigmore, Tiree (John Bowler).

27 March: Ormsary, Mid-Argyll (Stuart Crutchfield).

No less than 8 between Keills Chapel and Ulva Lagoons (Loch

Sween) (Jim Dickson).

31 March: Ellenabeich, Seil Island, Mid-Argyll (Richard Wesley).

11 April: Rhudle Glen (nr Kilmartin), Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart).

6 May: 20 at Strone Farm, Cowal with a similar number still there on 9 May (Tom Callan).

8 May: 16 counted in the Crinan Ferry/ Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) area included at least one Greenland type (Jim Dickson).

Grasshopper Warbler: the first heard reeling so far was near Campbeltown on 21 April (Paul Daw).

Following records: 21 April: one along Crinan Canal between Ardrishaig - Oakfield, Mid-Argyll (Andrew Stevenson).

23 April: one heard reeling (somewhere) on Coll (Ben Jones).

27 April: heard reeling near Otter Ferry, Cowal (Tom Callan) and at Glen Nant, Mid-Argyll (Simon Pinder).

30 April: one heard reeling at Balephuill, Tiree (John Bowler).

1 May: one reeling at Crinan Ferry (Moine Mhor), Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

3 May: five singing at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay (James How). **Sedge Warbler:** the first report was of one singing at Machrihanish Water, Kintyre on 27 April (Eddie Maguire).

Following records: 28 April: one seen at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll (Errol Crutchfield) and one singing on Gigha, Kintyre (David Jardine).

1 May: one at Balephuill, Tiree (John Bowler).

3 May: three singing at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay (James How).

6 May: one at West Coast Salmon, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

8 May: two at Crinan Ferry, Mid-Argyll and 3 at Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) (Jim Dickson). **Marsh Warbler:** one was singing in John Bowler's garden at Balephuill, Tiree. Only our second record – in exactly the same place as the first! **Blackcap:** early records of Blackcaps are always complicated by the presence of overwintering birds but birds at Bellanoch (Moine Mhor) Mid-Argyll on 8 April (John Halliday) and at Balephuill, Tiree on 9 April (John Bowler) were probably arriving migrants.

Following records: 12 April: Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll (John Halliday).

13 April: Seil Island, Mid-Argyll (David Jardine).

Taynuilt, Mid-Argyll (Simon Pinder).

14 April: Taynish NNR (Richard Wesley).

15 April: Fernoch, Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll (John Halliday). Duntrune Castle (Moine Mhor), Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

16 April: Ardkinglas (Loch Fyne), Mid-Argyll (Glyn Toplis).

18 April: Kilmory (Lochgilphead), Mid-Argyll (Malcolm Chattwood) and Bridgend, Islay (Peter Gill).

21 April: Three along Crinan Canal from Ardrishaig - Oakfield, Mid-Argyll (Andrew Stevenson).

24 April: Several singing at Bridgend Wood, Islay (Jim Dickson). Ten were among a fall of migrants at Balephuill/

Carnan Mor (John Bowler).

1 May: at least 12 singing at Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

Garden Warbler: the first report was of one singing at Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll on 27 April (David Jardine).

Following records: 3 May: one singing at Inveraray, Mid-Argyll (Paul Daw).

4 May: one singing at Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll (Tom Callan).

8 May: one singing at Barnluasgan Loch, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

20 May: one singing at Cairnbaan (nr Lochgilphead) (Jim Dickson). **Wood Warbler:** the first report was of one singing in Glen Nant, Mid-Argyll on 27 April (Simon Pinder).

Following records: 1 May: three singing at Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

2 May: one at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve (Michel Sur).

8 May: one at Barnluasgan Loch, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

24 May: at least 7 singing in oak woodland at Lephinmore (nr Otter Ferry), Cowal (Tom Callan). **Lesser Whitethroat:** one was singing on Seil Island, Mid-Argyll on 18 May (Terry Robilliard per Richard Wesley). **Common Whitethroat:** the first report was of one singing at Oakfield, Crinan Canal, Mid-Argyll on 3 May (Katie Pendreigh).

Following records: 4 May: one singing at Ballochroy, Kintyre (Tom Callan/Daphne Campbell).

8 May: a pair at Crinan Ferry, Mid-Argyll and three singing at Barnluasgan Loch (Jim Dickson).

11 May: one at Port Charlotte, Islay (per I. & M. Brooke).

18 May: one female at Balephuil, Tiree (John Bowler).

Common Chiffchaff: one singing at Sandbank, Cowal on the morning of 23 March was the first Chiffchaff reported so far (Nigel Scriven).

They were soon more widespread, with singing birds reported as follows:

24 March: Kilkerran (Campbeltown), Kintyre (Nigel Scriven) and Port Askaig, Islay (Chris & Tony Johnson).

25 March: Crarae (Minard), Mid-Argyll at 09:40 (Paul Daw). Balephuil, Tiree (John Bowler).

Ellenabeich, Seil Island, Mid-Argyll (Richard Wesley).

26 March: Aros Park, Mull and Connel, Oban and Seil, Mid-Argyll (David Jardine).

Ormsary, Mid-Argyll (Stuart Crutchfield).

Balephuil, Tiree (John Bowler).

Inver Cottage (Strathlachlan), Cowal (Tom Callan).

27 March: Ardkinglas (Loch Fyne) and two south of Tayvallich, Mid Argyll (Jim Dickson).

4 April: Cairnbaan (nr Lochgilphead), Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

10 April: Ardkinglas, Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson). Kilmory Castle Woods (nr Lochgilphead) (Blair Urquhart).

11 April: Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart). Barcaldine, North Argyll (Robin Harvey).

13 April: Glen Nant, Mid-Argyll (Simon Pinder).

16 April: Kilmory (Lochgilphead), Mid-Argyll (Malcolm Chattwood). Poltalloch Woods, Moine Mhor, Mid-Argyll (Brian John).

18 April: Loch Awe village, Mid-Argyll (Delys Marks).

Willow Warbler: the first report was of one was seen singing at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll on 27 March (Stuart Crutchfield).

Following records: 28 March: Lussa River, Jura (per I. & M.

Brooke).

10 April: singing at Otter Ferry, Cowal (Tom Callan).

11 April: singing in evening at Balephuil, Tiree (John Bowler).

12 April: Seil Island, Mid-Argyll (David Jardine), Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll (Blair Urquhart) and Barcaldine, North Argyll (Robin Harvey).

13 April: Glen Nant, Mid-Argyll (Richard Wesley and Simon Pinder).

Colonsay (David Jardine). Duntrune Castle (Moine Mhor), Mid-Argyll (Jim Dickson).

15 April: Ardkinglas (Loch Fyne), Mid-Argyll (Glyn Toplis) and Tayinloan, Kintyre (Katie Pendreigh).

16 April: Kilmory (Lochgilphead), Mid-Argyll (Malcolm Chattwood).

Nuthatch: One was at the feeding station at Glenbarr garden centre on 13-14th April (Peter Sinclair & family). This will be the first Kintyre record if accepted.

Spotted Flycatcher: the first records were single birds at Carnan Mor, Tiree (John Bowler) and Kilchoman, Islay (per I. & M. Brooke) on 19 May.

Following records: 20 May: one or more around Taynuilt, Mid-Argyll (Simon Pinder).

24 May: one at Lephinmore (nr Otter Ferry), Cowal (Tom Callan).

25 May: four Spotted Flycatchers at Balephuil / Carnan Mor, Tiree (John Bowler).

27 May: one at Ormsary, Knapdale, Mid-Argyll (Stuart Crutchfield). **Pied Flycatcher:** the first report was of a male at Balemartine, Tiree on 2 May (Simon Wellock).

Following records: 9 May: a male at Balephuil, Tiree (John Bowler).

11 May. A male at Carnan Mor was still present on 12 May (John Bowler) and 2 at Bridgend Woods, Islay (per I. & M. Brooke).



**Hawfinch Arinagour, Coll
13.4.12 (Pauline White)**

Hawfinch: One behind the cafe in Arinagour on Coll 13-14 April (Pauline White)

Snow Bunting: an adult male Snow Bunting in winter plumage was photographed on Baugh beach, Tiree on 12th April by Graham Todd. A male in full breeding plumage was seen at West Hynish, Tiree on 29th April (John Bowler).

Paul Daw May 2012

Articles for the September issue of the *Eider* should with the Editor before the 24th August 2012

Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2011/2012)

Chairman: Nigel Scriven, 2 Allt na Blathaich, Loch Eck, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8SG (phone 01369 840606 & 01505 843679)

Vice Chairman: Mike Harrison Ferryfield Drive, Connel, Oban. PA37 1SP (phone 01631 710656)

Secretary: Katie Pendreigh, The Whins, Ferry Road, Tayinloan, Argyll PA29 6XQ (phone 01583 441359)

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

Membership Secretary: Sue Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Arrochar, Dumbartonshire. (phone 01301 702603)

Committee: Tom Callan (Otter Ferry), Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilphhead), Paul Daw (Minard), Andy Robinson (Partick), David Warden (Kilfinan) and Mark Williamson (Kilberry).

Editor of the Argyll Bird Report: Tom Callan, Corra, Otter Ferry, Tighnabruaich, Argyll PA21 2DH (phone 01700 821212)

Editor of the *Eider*: Mark Williamson, Port Ban, Kilberry, Argyll PA29 6YD (phone 01880 770 162)

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

Argyll Bird Recorder

Paul Daw, Tigh-na-Tulloch, Tullochgorm, Minard, Argyll PA32 8YQ

phone 01546 886260

e-mail monedula@globalnet.co.uk

BTO Regional Representatives in Argyll

Argyll North—Mull, Coll, Tiree & Morvern: Arthur Brown
phone 01688400415

e-mail pamartbrown@btinternet.com

Rod Little

phone 01688400315

e-mail rltt6@aol.com

Islay, Jura & Colonsay: John Armitage

phone 01496 860396

e-mail jsa@ornquest.plus.com

The mystery bird is a Redpoll



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 digital photographs (jpeg files preferred) of birds and their habitats to the editor. 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 24th 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. Its main role is to encourage an interest in wild birds and their habitats in Argyll; an area of outstanding natural beauty and biological diversity.

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

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

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