

September 2013
Number 105

The Eider



Juvenile Peregrine with Oystercatcher kill, Kinloch Green, Campbeltown, 12 August ©Eddie Maguire

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

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Editorial

Nigel has put together a very interesting programme (see next page) for the autumn meeting at Cairnbaan and we hope many of you will be able to attend. This meeting also includes the Club's Annual General Meeting, which is your opportunity to have your say on how the club is being run, and how you think we could improve it in the future. There are a number of major changes underway in how the club operates due to Paul Daw and Tom Callan stepping down respectively as the Argyll Bird Recorder and Editor of the Argyll Bird Report. After much thought Jim Dickson and Malcolm Chattwood are together taking over Paul's role, an ideal combination of Jim's expertise in bird identification and Malcolm's knowledge of databases, essential for handling the volume of records being submitted by you. We are still looking for a replacement for Tom. If any of you have editorial experience and would like to help please contact anyone on the committee. And this brings me to my final point; we are short of committee members, so please consider putting your name forward for election at the AGM.

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Marine Protection Areas (MPA)—drop-in consultation events

Possible MPAs around Argyll include Loch Creran, Loch Sween, Loch Sunart to the Sound of Jura, and Upper Loch Fyne and Loch Goil. Eight open drop-in events are scheduled as follows:

Wednesday 4th September: Canna Ferry waiting room, 1pm - 3pm

Thursday 5th September: Jura, Jura Hall 1pm—8pm

Tuesday 10th September: Lochgilphead Community Centre 1pm—8pm

Wednesday 11th September: Inveraray, Loch Fyne Hotel 1pm—8pm

Thursday 12th September: Dunoon, The Braes 1pm—

8pm

Tuesday 17th September: Campbeltown, Victoria Hall 1pm—8pm

Thursday 19th September: Oban, Corran Halls 1pm—8pm

Thursday 26th September: Caignure, An Roth Enterprise Centre 1pm—8pm

More details on the consultation at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-consultation

The consultation closes on November 13th.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue—Vernon Bonarjee, John Bowler, Malcolm Chattwood, Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, Grant Edmonson, Derren Fox, Bob Furness (including photocopying & dispatch), Sue Furness, Keith Gillon, Tor Egil Matre, Eddie Maguire, Ellie Owen, Katie Pendreigh, Linda Petty (proof reading), Andy Robinson, Nigel Scriven, Jim Sim and John Stewart Smith.

Club News

Field trips

26-29 September. Hynish, Tiree. This could be a star time for migrants. The plan is for eight people in two cars to stay self-catering in Morton Boyd House (<http://www.hynishcentre.co.uk/accommodation.htm>) at the south-west corner of the island. Sailing on the 08.15hrs ferry from Oban on Thursday 26th, arriving at 12.00hrs, and back on the 13.00hrs sailing on Sunday 29th landing in Oban at 17.00hrs. Accommodation costs will be in the region of £60 for three nights, plus around £46 for the return ferry. Food is not included, but there is a good Co-op supermarket on Tiree, and we can operate a kitty, with a rota for cooking main meals and/or eat out one night. It is hoped that conditions may allow some bird ringing during our stay.

Tom Callan and I are taking cars over on Tuesday 24th, and will meet the ferry on Thursday. If anyone wishes to join us, they would be welcome. It may be possible for more than eight people to be accommodated, but this is not guaranteed, so please contact

me to register interest and/or book your place to be sure. Late bookings might also be possible, but again, not guaranteed. Contact Nigel Scriven. E-mail njscriven@gmail.com Phone 01505 706652

Saturday 26 October 2013. Ledaig Point. Meet at the north end of Connel Bridge at 10.00hrs. Park on the piece of old road accessible from the unclassified road to Bonawe (NM911348). Bring your own lunch. Contact Mike Harrison. E-mail jmharrison@iee.org Phone 01631 710656

Saturday 30 November 2013. Tayinloan & Sound of Gigha. Meet in the Gigha ferry car park at 10.00hrs. You can either bring your own packed lunch or eat in the local café. Contact Katie Pendreigh. E-mail katiependreigh@aol.com Phone 01583 441359

Saturday 25 January 2014. Ormsary. Details in the next *Eider*

Indoor Meetings

Autumn meeting 2013. Saturday 2 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead. Lunch will be available in the hotel (see programme below).

Programme for the ABC's 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
1000-1030	Recent bird sightings— <i>Jim Dickson</i> , Argyll Bird Recorder
1030-1100	Black Grouse in Argyll— <i>Douglas Shapley</i> , RSPB Grouse Officer
1100-1130	Coffee/tea
1130-1200	Technology and monitoring raptors— <i>David Anderson</i> , FC Scotland
1200-1230	BTO's What's Up Project— <i>Ben Darvill</i> , BTO Scotland
1230-1350	Lunch (available in the hotel)
1350-1420	Annual General Meeting (club members only)
1420-1450	Monitoring raptors in Argyll— <i>David Jardine</i> , Argyll Raptor Study Group
1450-1520	Logging Argyll's birds— <i>Malcolm Chattwood</i> , Assistant Bird Recorder
1500-1545	Tea/coffee
1550-1610	BTO surveys and update— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
16.10-1630	End of meeting

Spring meeting 2014. Saturday 8 March at the Three Villages Hall, Arrochar. The programme will be in the December *Eider*. Lunch will be available in the hall at £5.50 per person.

Autumn meeting 2014. It is likely to be at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead on the first or second Saturday in November 2014, but the date has yet to be confirmed.

Other Club News

Bird Recording. After 16 years Paul Daw has decided to retire from recorder duties to spend more time with his binoculars and rather less with his keyboard and PC. Such was the sterling effort that Paul applied to the post it has taken the resolve of two people to have the slightest chance of following in his footsteps. Jim Dickson has taken up the post of Recorder with Malcolm Chattwood acting as his assistant and custodian of the records database. Jim will continue to be secretary to the Argyll Bird Records Committee. Much to the relief of Jim and Malcolm, Morag Rea and Tom Callan have agreed to continue as part of the recording team to convert the large number records received from regular correspondents in Tiree, Islay and Machrihanish into our standard database format. With over 25,000 records being received annually their contribution is invaluable in allowing Jim and Malcolm to deal with the multitude of other tasks that fall to the Recorder. Paul will continue to have some involvement with the Argyll Bird Club Website continuing as an editor along with Jim and Bob Furness, and he will also continue to organise WeBS counts within Argyll for which the club is very grateful.

Whilst 25,000 records is a large number there's always room for more and it's a golden opportunity for club members to add to our knowledge of birds in Argyll, even from the comfort of their own front room. Records from many areas are still sparse and records from the ornithologically-rich area of Mull would be most welcome. It's not all about rarities or large numbers—it's just as important that we learn about distribution and breeding success. Whilst the routine sight of robins in your garden might not appear important, the presence of young birds indicates breeding locally and is worthy of a record. Further guidelines on what kind of records to send can be found on the club website under Bird Recording/Birds to Record. For those members who use Excel on their computer a recording spreadsheet form is available that was originally developed by Danielle Clark and it has been recently modified to take account of Paul's retirement. It's easy to use and we would advocate its use if at all possible as not only does it save time for you as an observer it also

makes the handling of 25,000+ records a year easier too. If you'd like to give it a try contact Malcolm at abcrecorder@outlook.com and he'll send you a copy along with guidance notes on how to complete the form. If you don't have access to a computer, don't worry you can still submit records. Contact Malcolm and he will send you some paper forms you can complete and return by post or drop them off if you come to an indoor meeting or field trip.

Malcolm will be giving an on-screen demonstration of the recording spreadsheet at the indoor meeting at Cairnbaan on 2 November. If you're not sure whether you think you'd like to use the recording spreadsheet come along and see how straightforward it is. For members who prefer to send records in using the BTO BirdTrack system please continue to do so avoiding the need to duplicate your work! The Argyll recorders have access to the BirdTrack database. Happy recording!

Editor of the Argyll Bird Report. Tom Callan has decided to step down as editor of the bird report and to resign from the committee. Over the years Tom has put in an enormous amount of work, not only editing the report, but helping with the ever increasing volume of bird records. He will be a hard act to follow and will be sorely missed at committee meetings and in his editorial role. The club thanks him sincerely for his contribution in making the club the success it is today. If you are interested in taking over the Editor's role, please contact anyone on the committee.

Argyll Bird Club website. Because of time constraints the website had become rather cluttered and some information was out of date. It has now been re-organised and brought up-to-date. If you have any of the ABC pages set as 'favourites' or 'bookmarked' on your web browser you may need to reset these following the changes. The intention is to update the 'Recent Reports' page every two or three days (or immediately for Ascension Frigatebird and the like!). Sightings and where possible photographs of interest should be sent to Jim Dickson (meg@jdickson5.plus.com) or Malcolm Chattwood (abcrecorder@outlook.com), who look forward to hearing from you!

Argyll Bird Report 24 (2012). This is a repeat of the request in the last *Eider*. Preparation of the next report will start this autumn. It is likely to be for just 2012, unlike the two-year reports of recent years. Do you have any good quality, unedited photos (jpeg format) taken in 2012 that could be used? They don't have to be of rarities. Please contact Jim

Dickson if you can help (contact details above and on back page). One advantage of going back to single-year reports is that there will be room for short papers, a feature of earlier reports. If you feel you could produce a suitable paper, please get in touch with Jim Dickson.

Other Notices

BBC 2 'Landward' presenters and film crews in Kintyre. Landward presenters and film crews were on the peninsula for 12-14 August filming and highlighting a selection of interesting 'things to do' that Campbeltown and surrounding areas have to offer visitors. The programme's main presenter Dougie

Vipond and film unit visited Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 13 August. A short feature about the observatory was filmed and will be included in the programme to be aired at 19.00hrs on 25 October 2013. This 30min programme is entirely about Kintyre.

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory 20th Anniversary. To mark the anniversary of the MSBO at Uisead Point, Kintyre, which opened on 11 September 1993, there will be a barbeque on Saturday 21 September starting around 13.00hrs. Argyll Bird Club members are warmly invited.

Report of the ABC field trip on 27 July to the Add Estuary

Moine Mhor was like a golden fleece rippling in the breeze as Jim Dickson greeted six other members at the parking place by Islandadd Bridge.

Three species of gull were easily seen over the river and there was no shortage of Canada Geese. A pair of Mute Swans glided slowly down the river as the tide started to ebb. Mallard and Red-breasted Merganser could be seen on the sandbanks downstream of the bridge while, on the moss, Stonechat and Whinchat families, and their observers, moved between the road and the verge as passing traffic dictated. Swallow, Sand and House Martins were easily spotted feeding over the river near the bridge; Curlew, Mallard and Eider were further down the estuary and were only found through the heat haze using telescopes. Seven pairs of eyes and ears do not miss much. An Osprey was spotted crossing the estuary towards Duntrune followed almost immediately by a male Hen Harrier hunting over the moss towards Dunadd and a Redshank was heard calling on the river. The weather by now was sending mixed messages with short spells of hot sunshine between heavy clouds and a breeze which was not cold but not particularly warm either. With umbrellas, waterproofs and sun cream, we set off for Crinan Woods.

We could still see the estuary as we walked along the canal towpath towards Crinan; Shag and Cormorant were added to the list, while Willow Warbler and Woodpigeon came from the woods across the canal. The Osprey had returned from Duntrune and was hovering over the river. The clouds had by now cleared away to leave a sunlit scene of boats and their crews in the basin at Crinan. We resisted the temptations of the coffee shop and pressed on up



ABC members enjoying the sunshine along the Add Estuary ©Jim Dickson

the hill, hearing Lesser Redpoll calling as they flew overhead and several Siskins feeding in the tree-tops. A Spotted Flycatcher was feeding from an oak tree while, higher up, a Great Tit foraged through the leaves. A Raven croaked as it flew along the top of the forest and a young Buzzard called incessantly, and annoyingly, to its parent as we walked back to the cars.

Back at Islandadd Bridge for lunch we noticed a creche of Red-breasted Merganser chicks. When the lone female in charge set off down the river and the ducklings were strung out in a line we could count an astonishing 43, or 41, or 44. You can try counting them yourself in Jim's photo at the top of the next page. After lunch we set off for Crinan Ferry. Jim's local knowledge soon delivered a Whitethroat and, better still, a good sighting of a Grasshopper Warbler carrying food to its youngsters hidden in the



An enormous crèche of young Red-breasted Mergansers with a lone female in front ©Jim Dickson

bracken. Down at the ferry with the tide now well out we scanned the mudflats but turned up nothing new.

On to Duntrune and a different set of mudflats. A line of about 60 Curlew contained one bird which was clearly smaller than the others. A Whimbrel perhaps? After a few minutes observation hawk-eye Jim identified it as a Bar-tailed Godwit—not as exciting as a Whimbrel perhaps, but not bad. We parked and walked through the woodland to the gardens. A Song Thrush was added to the list, though we still had not seen a Blackbird, and a Coal Tit announced its presence in the treetops. While some of us were admiring the plants and shrubs Jim found a Tree-creeper. Back at the cars a chipping Crossbill was found in the treetops to bring the day's total to 49 species, and still no Blackbird. Not that this was just a species-bagging trip of course. Having thanked Jim for showing us round his patch and finding some excellent birds for us we set off back to the bridge.

Round the first bend and there was a Blackbird, making 50 species and a most enjoyable day!

Species List. Great Cormorant, European Shag, Grey Heron, Mute Swan, Greater Canada Goose, Common Shelduck, Mallard, Common Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Hen Harrier, Common Buzzard, Osprey, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Bar-tailed Godwit, Eurasian Curlew, Common Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Woodpigeon, Skylark, Sand Martin, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Meadow Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Robin, Whinchat, Common Stonechat, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Grasshopper Warbler, Common Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Eurasian Treecreeper, Hooded Crow, Common Raven, Common Starling, Common Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Lesser Redpoll, Common Crossbill

Mike Harrison

Winter Thrush Survey—Second Winter

During the first winter, 1600 volunteers covered 3300 locations, making over 12600 visits. This quantity of data provides a significant resource for learning more about these birds. There were 400 sites covered in Scotland, but it fair to say Argyll was under-represented. Not all is lost though. Another winter is looming, so there is a second chance to be part of this survey.

It will start again in September. If you are at all hesitant about taking on a one kilometre square to survey, be reassured that this is the ideal BTO survey to start with. You can even do it on your home patch, by choosing your own square. The species are very easy to identify, and the forms are very straight-forward. If you are interested, go to www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/winter-thrushes

You can do as many visits as you like to as many squares as you like. If you want to do one of the priority core-squares, these have been randomly selected for special analysis, so please contact your lo-

cal organiser, so that it is officially allocated to you.

For Argyll Mainland: contact Nigel Scriven: njscriven@gmail.com

For Islay, Jura or Colonsay contact John Armitage: jsa@ornquest.plus.com

For Mull, Coll, Tiree & Morvern contact Arthur Brown/Rod Little: pamartbrown@btinternet.com or r1tt6@aol.com



Redwing ©Jim Dickson

Ascension Frigatebird (*Fregata aquila*) at Bowmore, Islay on 5 July 2013



Not all residents were happy to see the frigatebird! ©Vernon Bonarjee

With only one previous record of Ascension Frigatebird (Fregata aquila) in the Western Palearctic (an exhausted bird caught in a net on Tiree in 1953) any further occurrences were well off most bird-watcher's radar.

The unexpected happened on the morning of 5 July 2013 with the sighting of a very strange seabird on the harbour wall in Bowmore, Islay. With such a large and peculiar looking bird in such a location it was not surprising that even non-birdwatchers were trying to figure out what this bird was, and this was the case for at least two lots of folk who independently 'discovered' this bird.

The first known sighting was made by Tor Egil Matre during breakfast at the Harbour Inn Hotel in Bowmore at about 08.10hrs. He noticed a bird with a very large wingspan land on the harbour wall. Tor and his brother-in-law Dr. Vernon Bonarjee, both on holiday from Norway, collected their cameras and went out and took some photos (see above and the next page). The bird was being mobbed by a few gulls but stayed put until it flew off around at 08.40hrs. At the time Vernon thought it could be some kind of large juvenile seabird, perhaps an albatross! The following day they showed their photos to some people at an RSPB stand on the Arran ferry.

However, word had already reached the 'birding' world well before this, helped by efforts of more non-birdwatchers at the harbour! At around 08.25hrs two Islay fishermen, Tom Redman and Jim Brown also saw the bird sitting on the harbour wall. Realising it was something quite different they called over to Jim Sim who was also on the pier. Jim was on holiday from Renfrewshire, but not being a birdwatcher he was unsure what he was looking at but he did fetch his camera and managed to take six photos. Later that morning Jim showed the photos to Mary McGregor, the manager at RSPB Gruinart Reserve, who in turn emailed them to her colleague David Wood at the RSPB Oa reserve. David identified the bird as a juvenile frigatebird with initial thoughts of Great Frigatebird and put the news out to various bird groups. Shortly afterwards John Bowler on Tiree e-mailed back to confirm the identity, not as Great, but rather a very similar plumaged Ascension Frigatebird—almost 60yrs to the day since the first record on Tiree!

It was not long until various groups of Islay birders were on the trail trying to relocate the bird. It was last seen flying off into Loch Indaal being mobbed by gulls. Despite a couple of unconfirmed reports from locals the bird was not seen again that day. This caused a dilemma for the potential 1,000+ UK twitchers who would almost certainly descend on

Ascension Frigatebird, Bowmore, Islay on 5 July ©Tor Egil Matre



Islay should the bird settle somewhere. With the bird not 'settled' and by all accounts 'gone', nevertheless the following day, around 30 birders arrived in hope on the early ferry, with most having driven overnight from the south of England. Apparently a few more also arrived by plane! There was no great sense of optimism due to the fact that a few Islay birders had been out searching for the bird from early morning without any luck and as the day went on all reasonable hope of seeing the bird faded.

Four days later on 9th July at around 19.00hrs there was a very plausible description of the same bird flying around and dip-feeding just off-shore from Point Sands Caravan Park near Rhunahaorine Point, Kintyre. This behaviour is apparently typical of this surface-feeding species, which being unable to dive, plucks fish from the water. Unfortunately no photographs were taken and despite further searches the following day the bird has not subsequently been sighted.

To put this record into context, other than the previous

juvenile on Tiree in 1953, there has only been one confirmed record more than a few hundred miles from Ascension Island and that was from western Africa. However, post fledging dispersal out at sea is poorly documented. The journey to Islay would be at least 4,000 miles for a bird not normally known as an ocean wanderer. There have been several other reports of frigatebirds from the UK and Ireland before, with less than 10 unidentified to species and two identified as Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*). Therefore, for Argyll to play host to the only two confirmed records of Ascension Frigatebird in the Western Palearctic is truly remarkable.

The difficulty with identification arises because there are five species within the genus *Fregata*; Ascension, Magnificent, Great, Christmas Island and Lesser Frigatebirds, which all have similar immature plumages. As birds age from juvenile over several years to breeding plumage, each stage can look quite different, and as birds wander the oceans before returning to breed as adults, some of the plumages have not been well studied until fairly recently. The excellent paper describing the Tiree Ascension Frigatebird as new to the Western Palearctic (Walbridge, Small & McGowan 2003) describes the juvenile plumages of each species well and how the Tiree bird was originally mis-identified as Magnificent and then confirmed as Ascension after their review some 50 years later.

After identifying this Islay bird to genus the main features confirming the specific identity were sorting out the very similar Great from Ascension by looking at the position, extent and shape of the breast band, the absence of any russet on the head, the presence of an axillar spur and a sharp cut off between the white of the head and the dark mantle. All these features do appear exactly as described for the Islay bird to be confirm as a first-stage juvenile Ascension Frigatebird. Without the excellent photographs, including flight shots, this sighting would surely just have gone down as yet another 'unidentified frigatebird' in British waters—providing the birding community were convinced a frigatebird had really been involved! So well done to a sufficiently interested group of 'non-birdwatchers' for taking an interest and 'obtaining' the evidence!

We can only hope the population of this species on Boatswainbird Islet and Ascension Island (see photo opposite) recovers from past cat and rat

Immature Ascension Frigatebird on Boatswainbird Islet
©John Stewart Smith



predation, and Argyll birdwatchers don't have to wait another 60 year for the next sighting!

Jim Dickson

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Jim Sim, Dr. Vernon Bonarjee, David Wood, Mary McGregor, Dr. Malcolm Ogilvie, Dr. John Bowler, Ian Brooke and Eddie Maguire for their help with this account.

References

Walbridge, G., Small, B. & McGowan, B.Y. (2003). Ascension Frigatebird on Tiree—new to the Western Palearctic. *British Birds* **96** (2) 58-73



Ascension Frigatebird in flight, Islay ©Jim Sim

Nestbox notes updated

You will remember, I am sure, from the June edition of the *Eider*, that our Blue Tits at the beginning of May were visiting the nest box regularly to bring fresh nest material. Given that we have had them fledge in the last week of May in past years we were concerned that nothing else seemed to be happening. However, the female had been carefully covering the eggs before leaving the nest and there were four by the time we first saw them on 15 May. The clutch was complete on 17 May with six eggs being incubated. On the morning of 31 May, bang on schedule, the eggs hatched. So far, so good, but the weather was still cold.

We were away at the beginning of June but were relieved to see six apparently healthy chicks when we returned on Friday 7 June. Alas, I had not been keeping detailed notes

and on Monday I noticed there were only four. On Tuesday there were two, one of which was much larger than the other was monopolising the food supply. At this stage the adults were only occasionally visiting the box to bring in very small caterpillars—nothing like the regular, almost frantic, feeding that we have seen in past years. Sadly, by Wednesday morning, 12 June, the last chick was dead and the adults, after failing to get a response when they visited the box, went elsewhere.

We assume the chicks starved due to the late spring restricting the availability of suitable food. As I mentioned in the last article, nestbox cameras do not always show happy endings.

Mike Harrison

Review—The wildlife gems of Islay DVD

The names Gordon Yates and Islay are no strangers to each other, or to most folk that have been visiting Islay over the last 40 years. Though based in Lancashire, Gordon has made well over 80 visits to the island, and has been making his own wildlife films for most of that time. This DVD is a compilation of the best of his footage from Islay, including over 90 species of birds together with otters, deer, seals, butterflies and flowers in all seasons of the year.

If any of you have been lucky enough to see any of Gordon's films before, you will know the quality of his photography. If you haven't, then the £15 for this hour long DVD is excellent value, and will be one of your prized possessions that you will watch time and again. His commentary is well informed, and is an excellent complement to the images and soundtrack.

I bought my copy from the Roy's bookshop in Bowmore (aka The Celtic House), but if you can't find it elsewhere, it can be mail ordered from Gordon Yates (www.gordon-yates.com).



Recent Bird sightings—June to August 2013



Female Red-breasted Merganser with brood ©Jim Dickson

Presented here are a wide range of rare and unusual species as well as counts and movements of more common species recorded in Argyll during this period. Many thanks to everyone who sent in records.

(Note: MSBO=Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre. ABRC=Argyll Bird Records Committee, BBRC=British Birds Rarities Committee).

Swans, ducks, geese & gamebirds

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE. One at Loch an Eilein, Tiree on 6 June was a late spring record (Keith Gillon).

BARNACLE GOOSE. Two near An Talla, Crossapol, Tiree included one with a damaged wing on 7 June (Keith Gillon). A late bird at Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay on 8 July (per Ian Brooke).

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE. Five late birds at Traigh Ghrianaidh, Tiree on 13 June (Toby Green).

WIGEON. Seven at Loch Gilp on 23 August were early returning/passage birds (Jim Dickson).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL. One drake at An Carn, Ormsary, Colonsay on 4 June (Mike Peacock). First ever report from these islands.

GARGANEY. A pair at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 4 June (John Bowler).

GREATER SCAUP. A female at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree was a bit unseasonal on 30-31 July and 4 August. (John Bowler).

COMMON SCOTER. A total of 118 going S on ten dates in June at MSBO, Kintyre during 3-29 June including 66 on 3 June. A total of 48 headed N on four dates during 8-27 June including 26 on 18 June. A well above average June showing with some atypical northerly movements (Eddie Maguire). Counts of about 120-140 birds in the Sound of Gigha when looking at the Surf Scoter at end of June (Jim Dickson, David Kent). Fifteen birds around the spit at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 2 July (Tom Callan).

SURF SCOTER. A near adult drake was found with the flock of Common Scoters along with a single drake Velvet Scoter at the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre (off West Coast Salmon) on 26 June (David Kent) (photo at the top of the next page). It was seen again the next day (Jim Dickson, Katie Pendreigh) and also present on 10 July (Jim Dickson) and 11 July (David Jardine).

VELVET SCOTER. A drake in the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre on 26 June and into July (David Kent *et al.*). Two off West Hynish, Tiree 5 July (John Bowler).



Surf Scoter (right of the female Common Scoter) amongst a flock of Common Scoters, Sound of Gigha, 26 June ©Jim Dickson

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE. One reported at Little Ganavan, near Oban on 17 June (Paul Bower) was the only report received.

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

SOOTY SHEARWATER. Two flying past West Hynish, Tiree on 2 August, seven past there 3 August and one off Aird, Tiree on 9 August (John Bowler).

MANX SHEARWATER. Only small numbers seen going S throughout June at MSBO, Kintyre (Eddie Maguire). The best movement was 450 in 5hrs on 20 June including a loose pack of 140. From the Oa, Islay 590 were counted in 3hrs on 25 July (per Ian Brooke). Off Tiree there were feeding groups of up to 1900 on 31 July (John Bowler). First autumn movements noted MSBO, Kintyre with c.200 going S in 3hrs—about 3 weeks later than usual. (Eddie Maguire). A spectacular 21,350 headed west off Aird, Tiree in WNW6 in 1hr on 12 June (John Bowler).

BALEARIC SHEARWATER. One past West Hynish, Tiree on 2 August (John Bowler).

STORM PETREL. A total of 17 going S in 4hrs on 15 June and one flying S on 23 June at MSBO, Kintyre (Eddie Maguire). The first sightings this year, and typically, during periods of rain and poor visibility. Off Tiree one was seen in Gunna Sound on 20 June and six noted offshore on 31 July (John Bowler). Fifteen plus were feeding off Loch Cuin, Mull on 12 July (Ewan Miles), five off Caliach Point, Mull on 17 August (David Jardine) and six between Mull and Tiree 20 August (John Bowler).

ASCENSION FRIGATEBIRD. A first-stage juvenile at Bowmore, Islay on 5 July. (Tor Egil Matre, Dr.

Vernon Bonarjee, Jim Sim *et al.*). A full account appears on pages 7-9. This will be, if accepted by the BBRC, only the second record of this species in the Western Palearctic. The other record was also in Argyll! An unconfirmed report of what was almost certainly the same bird off Point Sands, Kintyre on 9 July (George Stevenson per Eddie Maguire).

BLACK STORK. A 'possible' was seen by an Islay visitor at Coullabus, on 10 June. Coming so soon after the first Argyll record from Mull at the end of May this is a significant sighting. However, the finder (Alan Harris) has not been back in touch with further details.

Raptors to rails

HONEY BUZZARD. An adult was seen 'drifting' over Balephuil, Tiree on 28 July (John Bowler). If accepted by the ABRC this will be only the second record for Tiree.

PALLID HARRIER. An adult male was seen near Drimfern north of Inveraray, Mid-Argyll on 4 June by Dan Brown. A description is still awaited and would be only the third for Argyll if accepted by the BBRC.

OSPREY. Two were seen flying from Sanaig in the direction of Loch Gruinart, Islay on 18 July (George Jackson).



Osprey with a fish, Add Estuary, 1 August ©Jim Dickson

Single birds have been seen during the spring/early summer this year on Islay.

CORNCRAKE. The final total of calling male Corncrakes on Tiree was 348, a little down on the 2012 figure of 371 (John Bowler).

SPOTTED CRAKE. A male was heard calling on Tiree in June (John Bowler).

COOT. One Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll on 9 June (John Halliday). This is John's first record for the loch in 24 years! A young bird, on Gigha on 10 August, was presumably reared on the Island (David Jardine), and is the first breeding record in Argyll since 1998.

Waders

DOTTEREL. On 1 June, Martin Armstrong had been out on the hills at the south end of Islay and thought he had a possible sighting of some Dotterel, could they be nesting out there? (per Ian Brooke). There was a confirmed breeding record from North Argyll on 19 June.

GOLDEN PLOVER. Returning flocks of 400 on Tiree on 30 July and 450 at Loch a' Phuill on 21 August were the largest count in this period. (John Bowler).

GREY PLOVER. Two in breeding plumage at the head of Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 3 June (Jim Dickson) and another seen at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on the same day (John Bowler).

RED KNOT. Six in non-summer plumage at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 10 June with one there on 28 June (John Bowler). Also 43 at Loch a' Phuill during the third week of July (Toby Green). Four adults at Loch Gilp on 25 July (Jim Dickson) and 43 adults at Loch na Keal, Mull on 6 August (Bryan Rains).

SANDERLING. On Tiree a peak of 400+ birds on 11 June included 310 at Gott Bay, 60 at Traigh Ghrianal and smaller groups elsewhere on the island. In July a peak of 326 was counted at Loch a' Phuill on 31st (John Bowler).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Southend, 3 August ©Grant Edmondson



Lapwing, early June, Tiree ©Andy Robinson



At MSBO, Kintyre a flock of 17 was on the point on 1 June. On 4 June 90 birds arrived from the NW and rested briefly on the point before flying off N. Followed by a flock c.30 heading N on 9 June, a flock c.20 going S on 12 June, one going S on 14 June and a flock of 16 breeding-plumaged birds going S on 23 June (Eddie Maguire). At Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll there were record numbers on 3 June with 41 birds (Jim Dickson, David Jardine).

BLACK-WINGED STILT. A report was received of a bird flying over Tobermory Harbour, Mull on 1 July (Nigel Judson). A description has been sent to BBRC and would be a first record for Argyll if accepted.

LITTLE STINT. Four adults were at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 30 May with two on 2 June and one on 28 June (John Bowler). An adult was seen at Gott Bay, Tiree on 10 and 22 Aug (Nick Wall).

CURLEW SANDPIPER. One adult was at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 5 June (Jim Dickson, David Jardine).

DUNLIN. A peak of 655 at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree 31 July was the largest count in this period. (John Bowler).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER. One at The Reef, Tiree on 3 June was chased around incessantly by Ringed Plovers (John Bowler). An adult was seen and photographed at Brunerican Bay, Southend, Kintyre on 3-4 August (Grant Edmondson) (photo this page). These records, in addition to the earlier bird on Islay in May, comprise an unusually high number of reports for the spring/summer.

RUFF. One female was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 4-6 June (John Bowler, Keith Gillon).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT. One at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 5 June with two there on 6th and three on 10 June. Returning birds at Loch a' Phuill with 10 from 13 July, also 54 at Loch a' Phuill and 35 at Balemartine on 21 August (John Bowler). The first returning birds at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll included one on 14 August and four on 18 August (all juveniles) (Jim Dickson). Two at Torosy, Mull on 17 August (David Jardine).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT. Fifty counted at Blackrock, Islay on 7 July (Peter Roberts), with 17 at Gruinart reserve, Islay on 24 July (James How), 17 juveniles at the Add Estuary on 18 August (Jim Dickson) and 20 at Ballinaby, Islay on 22 August (per Ian Brooke).

WHIMBREL. Four birds rested at MSBO, Kintyre on 1 June. One was at Gott Bay, Tiree, one at Loch Riaghain, one at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree all on 5 June and one at The Reef, Tiree on 26 June. Returning birds included five at Loch A' Phuill, Tiree from 1 July (John Bowler). Singles were noted in the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll and Loch Crinan on 25 July and 18 August (Jim Dickson) and two and three noted on Islay on 21 July. A single was at Balvicar, Seil Island on 14 August (David Jardine).

GREEN SANDPIPER. One heard calling then seen flying down the river at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 3 June (Jim Dickson). One at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 30 June and another there on 13 July (John Bowler).

GREENSHANK. An early bird was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 20 June with a peak of 12 there on 31 July (John Bowler). One was in the Add Estuary on 25 June with max. of two on 13 July and 1 August and max. of three at Loch Gilp on 31 July (Jim Dickson, David Jardine). Max. of three at Otter Ferry, Cowal at the end July (Tom Callan) and two Loch Caithlim,

Bonaparte's Gull, Tiree, 18 June ©John Bowler



Seil Island 14 August (David Jardine). Small numbers were also noted on Islay and Mull.

WOOD SANDPIPER. One was at the Gruinart Reserve, Islay 29 May (per Ian Brooke), one was seen at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 30 May (John Bowler) and four birds were found together and photographed at Westport Marsh, Kintyre on 24 July (Rory Whytock). This could well be our first record of more than two birds together. One was seen flying around and calling in mist at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 15 August (John Bowler).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE. A migrant male was amongst other waders grounded in mist at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 28 June (John Bowler).

Skuas, gulls, terns & auks

POMARINE SKUA. On 15 June a loose bunch of five arrived from the NW and continued ESE into Machrihanish Bay, Kintyre. Two were judged as sub-adults types while the others were considered first-summer types. A single sub-adult flew past MSBO, Kintyre on 9 August (Eddie Maguire) (photo below).

BONAPARTE'S GULL. A second-year bird was a surprise find at Traighnan Gilean, Tiree on 18 June (photo above), which then flew to Loch a' Phuill, but was not seen subsequently (John Bowler). This will be the fifth Argyll record if accepted by the BBRC.

LITTLE GULL. One at Killechronan, Mull on 3 June (Geoff Pain). A first-summer bird at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 6-8 June, then at several other localities on Tiree to 28 June, then again on 9, 11 and 23 August (John Bowler, Keith Gillon, David Bryant).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL. An adult was flying over the roof of the bird hide at the MSBO, Kintyre on 11 July (Eddie Maguire). A moulting adult was seen at the Craignure Ferry Terminal, Mull on 3 August (Roy Atkins) and this, or another was flying west past Port Langamull, Mull on 7 August (Ewan Miles).



Pomarine Skua, Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, 9 August ©Eddie Maguire



Ring-billed Gull, Tiree, 5 June ©Keith Gillon

RING-BILLED GULL. A third-year bird was at Balephetrish Bay, Tiree on 5 June (Keith Gillon) (photo above) and was there again on 7 and 8 June. The record has been submitted to the ABRC.

COMMON TERN. There were counts of 80 on 14 August and 100 on 16 August at Eilean, Musdile, North Argyll (David Jardine) and 18 in Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 7 August (Jim Dickson).

ARCTIC TERN. A large count of 470 including 300 first-summer birds at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree 30 June was exceptional (John Bowler).

PUFFIN. 350 birds were counted offshore at west Tiree on 17 July (John Bowler).

BRUNNICH'S GUILLEMOT: An additional report to the May records noted in the last *Eider* was rather exceptional and has now been submitted to the BBRC. One seen off the north end of Iona, Mull on 5 May in poor weather (Colin Bradshaw). There is a previous record of a dead bird found in Argyll at Loch Caolisport in 1969.

Doves, cuckoos, owls, swift, kingfisher & woodpeckers

TURTLE DOVE. Two seen and photographed at Crosapol, Tiree on 12 June (Toby Green) and one at Manal, Tiree 19 June (John Bowler).

COMMON SWIFT. Five flew in off the sea at Portnahaven, Islay on 5 July (Jim Dickson). At least 15 including a group of eight was at Balephuill, Tiree on 8 July, 30 over the Oa, Islay on 10 July (per Ian Brooke) and up to 14 over the 'meadows' N of Lochgilphead, Mid-

Argyll at the end July (Jim Dickson). A flock of 25, possibly up to 30, over Oban on 24 July (Michael Anderson).

GREEN WOODPECKER. One was seen at close range on Innis Chonain, near Loch Awe Village on 1 August (per Alan Grey). A report via BirdTrack of a bird seen at 'Loch Melfort', Mid-Argyll on 12 June. It would be good to have a bit more information on this record if the finder can get in touch.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER. Possible breeding for the first time on Islay this year with up to three birds seen together at Ballygrant on 6 July (Peter Roberts).

Passerines (larks to buntings)

MAGPIE. One was at Tobermory, Mull on 26 June (Celia McIntyre, Danny Lamont) and another reported from there, on 10 June, of a bird seen at the back of the doctor's surgery during the last fortnight (Mrs Charlesworth). One was seen in Tarbert, Mid-Argyll on 17 July (Steven Black).

NUTHATCH. One on peanuts at Tullochgorm, Minard, Mid-Argyll on 1 August was the first ever seen there. It appeared again regularly until 3 August (Paul Daw) —a long awaited garden addition for Paul!

MISTLE THRUSH. Twenty-five birds including some juveniles at Drum Farm, Cowal on 30 June was the highest count in this period (Tom Callan).

TREE SPARROW. Two seen at Upper Killeyan, Islay on the Oa RSPB Reserve 25 July (David Wood) were the first noted on the Oa this year.



Arctic Terns, Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, 3 July ©Eddie Maguire



Nuthatch, Tullochgorm, Minard, 1 August ©Paul Daw

BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL. A male '*flava*' was found on a pool to the north of Tayinloan, Kintyre on 5 June (David Jardine). Only our third report of a *flava* wagtail this year.

WHITE WAGTAIL. Small numbers were recorded in June with a peak of eight at MSBO, Kintyre on 7 June (Eddie Maguire). Anand Prasad at Treshnish, Mull noted a male during the summer that could have been paired with a female Pied. A single bird noted on Gigha on 10 August (David Jardine).

ROCK PIPIT. A count of about 100 birds Gartbreck, Islay on 6 July (Bob Davison).

COMMON REDPOLL. One pair seen daily at Balephuill, Tiree all month and nearby at Carnan Mor, indulging in display/song-flights. One male was at The Glebe, Tiree on 5 June (Keith Gillon). Also on Tiree, one redpoll was at the Manse and two were at Balinoe, both 6 June (Keith Gillon) were probably this species.



Common Crossbill, Crinan, 2 July ©Jim Dickson

CROSSBILL. There was a noticeable influx during June and July with reports from across Argyll and into the islands. One female type flew north from the bushes at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 12 June and one juvenile was in a garden at Balephuill, Tiree on 30 June. At least five were seen there on 1-13 July (John Bowler). Three individuals, two males and one female, on 23 and 24 June then a flock of 10 on 25 June at Kilmahumaig, Crinan, Mid-Argyll (Mike Murray) with the same flock noted in the area into early July (Jim Dickson, Tom Callan) (photo below). Two or more were seen in the Colonsay House Gardens on 11 June increasing to 14 on 17 June (David Jardine). Tom Callan noted four in his garden near Otter Ferry on 2 July and reports of "many" at Largiemore, Cowal (feeding on Larch cones). Stuart Crutchfield saw six at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll on 9 July.

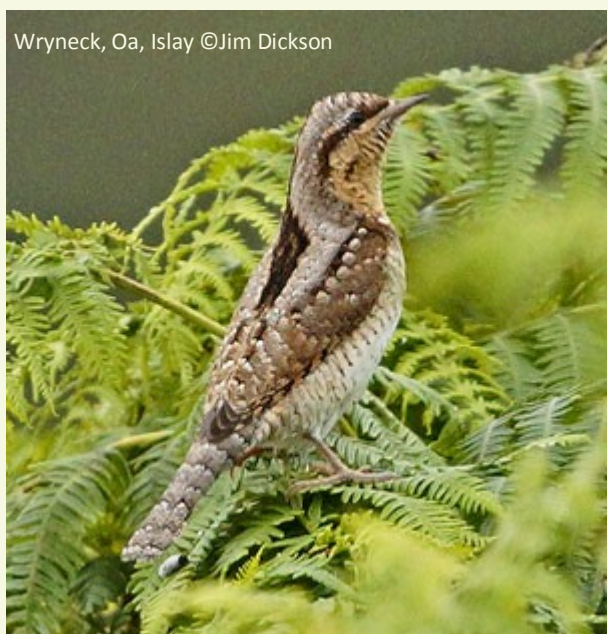
Others Reports

A dead SPERM WHALE on the shore at Knochangle Point, Islay on 25 June. (Ian Brooke *et al.*). Bob Davison counted over 160 GREY SEAL loafing on the sands at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 17 July. 'Hundreds' of BASKING SHARK were reported around Skerryvore off Tiree by a helicopter pilot on 6 August (per John Bowler). Off Scarinish Pier, Tiree there were 40 COMMON DOLPHINS feeding close in and 20 off SW Coll on 20 August (John Bowler).

Jim Dickson

STOP PRESS

A WRYNECK was seen and photographed near Port an Eas on the Oa, Islay 25 August (Martin Armstrong), and was present for the next two days. A PECTORAL SAND-PIPER was at Loch Crinan on 29 August (Jim Dickson)



Wryneck, Oa, Islay ©Jim Dickson

A visit to the Loch Creran tern rafts, 19 July 2013

As reported in a previous edition of the *Eider* (No.100, June 2012), the tern rafts in Loch Creran have been a great success. Given protection from predation by mink, Common Terns that had been displaced from other colonies have found the rafts to be the perfect breeding ground and have nested there in increasing numbers. Much credit is due to Clive Craik and his team of helpers for the work they have put into this project funded in part, by the proceeds of the Argyll Bird Club's book *Birds of Argyll*.

The arrival of terns this year was heralded by the appearance of large numbers of Common Terns in nearby Loch Etive. About 50 were feeding in the turbulence of the flood tide at the Falls of Lora on 30 May and a similar number near to Eilean Mor at the entrance of the loch the following day. Having seen about 100 feeding near Lady's Rock, south-west of Lismore, on 4 June I resolved to go and have a look at the rafts sometime this summer.

The rafts are not easily visible from the shore, but I do have a boat which I moor not far away in Dunstaffnage Bay. Given a spare day with nice weather and favourable tides I decided to go and see for myself how the terns were faring this year. Encouragingly, we could see large shoals of

sandeels in the shallows of Dunstaffnage Bay as we paddled the dinghy out to the boat. We were further encouraged as we sailed up the Lyn of Lorn by the sight of terns carrying food back towards Loch Creran from the direction of Lady's Rock. When we turned into the bay at South Shian we were greeted by the typical sound of a tern colony and could see that the rafts were well populated. Three rafts are decked and fenced, a fourth has bare beams. Birds were coming and going to the fenced rafts, where some chicks were visible amongst the vegetation. The unfenced raft was covered by resting/preening/loitering birds. We sailed slowly past the rafts at a distance which would not cause disturbance but which unfortunately proved to be somewhat beyond the capability of my camera,. We then picked up a nearby mooring and watched the comings and goings of the colony for a while.

Birds on the water in the vicinity of the rafts were mainly bathing rather than feeding. Birds returning to the rafts with food were coming from further into Loch Creran (the tide was flooding and the birds were feeding in the turbulence east of Sgeir Caillich), from the head of the bay at South Shian (and possibly through the



One of the Loch Creran tern rafts ©Mike Harrison

channel south of Eriska) and through the main entrance to the loch from the Lynn of Lorn. For a rather crude estimate of feeding effort I counted about 40 returning birds in ten minutes. I will leave others to calculate how much biomass is in 240 sandeels per hour and how many young Common Terns that can support. Subsequent prolonged scrutiny of the photographs suggests that there were at least 90 birds on the fenced rafts and over 120 on the bare one. The birds we saw were almost exclusively Common Terns; as we left I saw one Arctic Tern standing on a buoy nearby. However, with so many birds about I confess I did not check each one. I also saw one bird which looked like a juvenile. It flew off the raft with an adult and landed in the water nearby. After bathing for a few minutes they returned to the rafts. Given that there were plenty of downy young on the rafts I was puzzled by the age range which this might represent.

After a very pleasant sojourn and with the tide

turning in our favour we cast off the mooring and headed out of Loch Creran, leaving the terns to continue their coming and going. Long may they continue!

Mike Harrison

Editor's footnote. Clive Craik will be giving more details of this highly successful project in the December *Eider*. Clive has also commented that the BBC filmed at the South Shian tern rafts in July. During their visit, a peregrine attacked the colony but was chased off by several hundred angry terns defending their young. This spectacular event was captured on film and hopefully will appear in the programme. The piece is due to appear in the "Landward" programme in September (sorry, but the date is not known yet). In addition to his article above, Mike has also placed a video of his trip around the tern rafts on YouTube (<http://youtu.be/i3jFL4meyEU>)

Swallows saved

Dramatic intervention by neighbour

EXCLUSIVE

REPORT by MIKE HARRISON
(mike@NotTheObanTimes)

There were dramatic scenes in a quiet Connel development recently after a deadly predator was seen attempting to break into the last refuge of some young birds. A swallow's nest, built high in the gable of a modern villa (pictured) and still sheltering the summer's second brood, was attacked by a Sparrowhawk, which while under continuous harassment from the parent Swallows, was seen clinging to the harling next to the nest. In a dramatic intervention a resident ran from his house and frightened away the attacker. Having saved the day, he reported that the hawk then perched on the ridge of the roof above the nest for several minutes while the Swallows continued their attempts to drive it off, in which endeavour they finally succeeded. The parent birds continued to patrol the area during daylight hours. Though neighbours reported having seen the hawk in the area several times before the attack, it was not seen

again before the youngsters successfully fledged from the nest a few days later. An expert on ornithological matters, Mr Concise B.W. Palearctic stated that, though Sparrowhawks mainly take adults and fledglings, they do also occasionally take nestlings. Thus the recent drama, though unusual, is unlikely to be unique.



Swallow's nest © Mike Harrison

Seabird tracking and research in Argyll

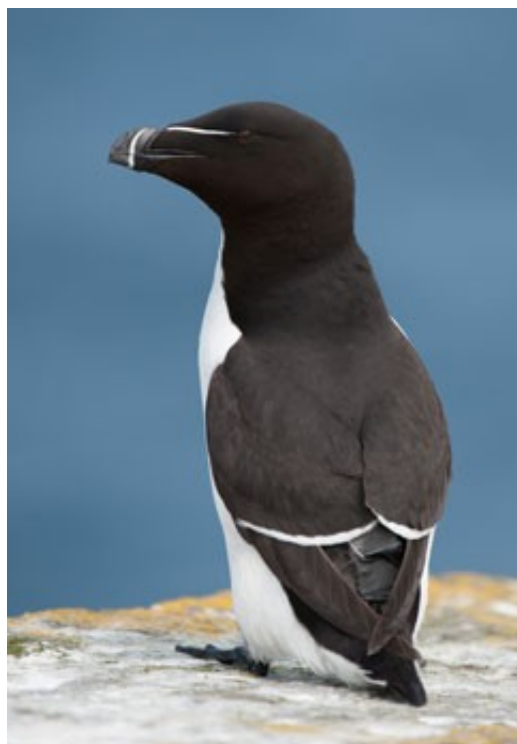
The RSPB has been carrying out seabird tracking and research (STAR) this year as a continuation of the Future of the Atlantic Marine Environment (FAME) project which I came to speak about at the spring 2013 ABC meeting. This work monitors and tracks five species of seabird in the UK (Shag, Kittiwake, Fulmar, Razorbill and Common Guillemot) in an attempt to identify where they are feeding to ensure these areas are adequately protected.

We'd like to thank the Argyll Bird Club for their contribution of Temperature Depth Loggers (TDRs) to our equipment for research on the Isle of Colonsay this year. These loggers record depth every 1sec to an accuracy of 1m so we can see how deep these birds are diving to feed and for how long. We can then link this with the tracks we receive from the Global Positioning System (GPS) tags that are deployed at the same time, to create a 3D map of where the bird is feeding.



The GPS and TDR tag are attached together to the back of the bird using cloth backed tape. This means the tag falls off within a week if the bird is not recaptured ©Ellie Owen

This year was a difficult year for seabirds on Colonsay; they arrived late at the colony, breeding at least 2wks later than normal if at all. There were large numbers of birds loafing on the cliffs, meaning the



Razorbill with GPS tag ©Derren Fox

breeding birds were more wary than usual which made our job of trying to capture them quite difficult. We did however manage to deploy 16 TDR's on Common Guillemots, 13 on Razorbills and two on Shags, retrieving 6, 9 and 2 of these tags respectively.

Shags are relatively shallow divers, with those on Colonsay feeding at a depth of up to 30m mainly off the South West coast of the island. Razorbills dive to a similar depth, often visiting the Great Race between Jura and Scarba where fish are pushed close to the surface by the turbulent waters. Common Guillemots breeding on Colonsay dived to depths of up to 85m this year, half the depth of the maximum known recorded dive. We had quite a few GPS tracks from Common Guillemots feeding in Loch Linnhe, North of Oban. This area was used by birds in 2011, but not in 2010 or 2012. Further research and analysis will inform us whether this is due to a relatively small sample size or whether there is only food in this area in certain years due to variables such as sea surface temperature. We will keep you updated with our results.

Tessa Cole (Senior Research Assistant)

Report of the ABC field trip to Loch Laich on Saturday 20 April

This trip coincided with a community event to raise money for the restoration of the Jubilee Bridge across the salt marshes at Loch Laich, Appin.

The day kicked off in Appin Village Hall with an introduction by Biodiversity Officer, and local resident, Marine Curran-Coulthard.

Part of the purpose of the day was also to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the birth of the Scottish conservation pioneer John Muir, whose birthday was 21st April. With coffee and home baking to sustain the audience, a presentation on the life and achievements of John Muir was given by Nigel Scriven.

After an early lunch the participants transferred to the bird hide on the south shore of the Laich Estuary. A photocall with a local reporter from Oban Times recorded the occasion. This was followed by the birding. The usual estuary waders were seen, along with wildfowl and gulls. The notable exciting species were Iceland Gull and Peregrine.

Nigel Scriven



Loch Laich hide (right) ©Nigel Scriven



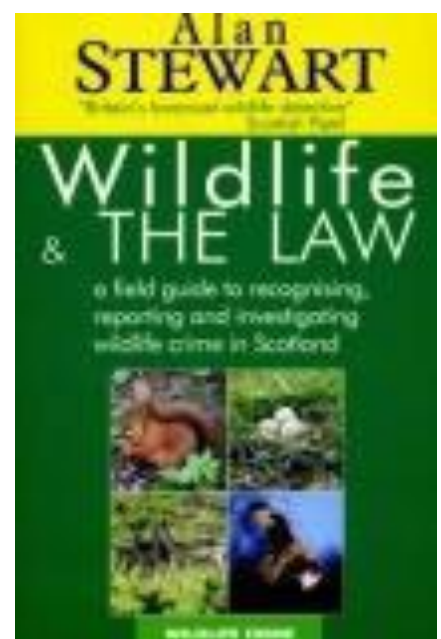
Iceland Gull on right of group ©Nigel Scriven

Review—Wildlife and the law

Published in paperback by Argyll Publishing at £9.95. ISBN 978 1 908931 15 3

The sub-title of the book is “a field guide to recognising, reporting and investigating wildlife crime in Scotland.” The publication is timely, as wildlife crime is still very much an issue, not only in relation to raptor persecution, but to many other forms of wildlife. It is shameful that such a book is needed, and we have never had more wildlife legislation than now, but the statistics speak volumes. There has been recent progress, and there are success stories, but there has also been new legislation in the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, so an up-to-date guide will help interested parties.

So who is the book aimed at? Pretty much anyone in Scotland can be affected by wildlife laws, and so would benefit from this book. This includes not only police officers, but also land and wildlife managers, naturalists and conservation organisations. Even hill-walkers, homeowners and developers could be affected by nesting birds or bat roosts.



This book brings together the plethora of diverse legislation into a single book. Its readable format is in considerable contrast to the actual wording in the Acts of UK and Scottish Parliaments, making it sorely needed, and accessible to the average reader.

Alan Stewart needs little introduction, having been a police wildlife crime officer for many years, the author of three previous books on the subject, and a touring lecturer. The book is not like your usual Collins field guide. It has a central section of good colour photographs, like field guides used to have,

but these are the only illustrations. The 18 chapters cover police powers, reporting crime to the police, the use of traps and snares, wild birds, wild mammals, pearl mussels, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, plants, and introductions. Poaching, cruelty, dogs, and trade in endangered species all have their own chapters. Particularly useful and interesting for the general reader is the 'frequently asked questions' section. This is an excellent and inexpensive addition to a birder's bookshelf.

Nigel Scriven

Marsh Fritillary wokshop—Saturday 7 October in Oban

To be held in the Atlantis Leisure Centre, Dalriach Road, Oban, 10.30—16.00hrs. This butterfly workshop aims to train recorders in survey methods to enable accurate assessment of Marsh Fritillary populations.

The workshop will be led by Dr Tom Brereton, Head of Monitoring, from Butterfly Conservation HQ and Dr Tom Prescott, Species Conservation Officer, Butterfly Conservation Scotland. It will consist of a classroom session covering the butterfly's life-cycle, identification, the range of survey methods used to monitor Marsh Fritillary and how the data is used in conservation and research, and will be followed by an outdoor session at a nearby site to put theory into practice! This will include actual monitoring of the butterfly's distinctive larval webs covering practical methodological issues for each survey technique i.e. butterfly transects, timed counts and larval web searches.

By attending this workshop you will gain a full understanding of the different Marsh Fritillary monitoring techniques and be equipped to take part in future monitoring of this species and thus contribute data to the world-renowned UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. Data from this scheme is used locally in site conservation management and more broadly to compile national statistics on the health of butterfly populations and of the environment in general. It is also hoped that as a result of this workshop an increase in Marsh Fritillary monitoring will allow a robust national Scottish index to be calculated. This will allow the annual fortunes of this high priority species to be accurately assessed as well as help determine the effect of management advice that has been targeted at Marsh Fritillary in Argyll and the islands.

This is a free event but booking is essential as places are limited. Tea and coffee will be provided on arrival from 10.00hrs. Butterfly books and charts will be

available to buy as well as free butterfly and moth leaflets to take away. Please bring a notebook and pen/pencil, packed lunch, stout walking shoes/boots and a good sense of humour! For further details and to book your place, please contact: Tom Prescott either by E-mail: tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org Tel: 01540 661469 or Mobile: 07979 785665.

Directions

The Atlantis Leisure Centre is located on Dalriach Road, in the centre of Oban, postcode PA34 5JE. Driving south into Oban on the A85, turn left just after the King's Knoll Hotel and the leisure centre is ahead of you. Walking from the centre of town/station, walk up George Street keeping Oban Bay on your left. Turn right at Craigard Road and then left onto Dalriach Road, the centre is two minutes ahead. Parking is free and is situated on both sides of the building.

For a map visit www.atlantisleisure.co.uk/find-us-contact-us

Transport to and from the afternoon's site visit will be provided for those arriving by public transport.



Marsh Fritillary on Fragrant Orchid ©Steve Petty

Argyll Bird Club

Treasurer's report for the financial year 2012-2013

Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £14,157.39, a reduction of £4,311.49 from the previous year. Income from subscriptions was very slightly lower than for the previous year. Income from book sales has decreased, and our stock of copies is also much reduced, with just a few boxes remaining. Income from bank interest fell to zero. 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 much lower income from raffles in 2012-13 compared to 2011-12 is mainly because the raffle at the joint meeting with BTO/SOC in 2011-12 raised far more than any of our normal raffles.

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. No bird report was published in 2012/13, and few copies of *Birds of Argyll* were ordered by post, so postage costs were lower than in the previous year. The unusually high public meeting costs include the Oban joint meeting with BTO/SOC which although held in the previous financial year, appears in the 2012-13 accounts because our payment to the BTO towards conference costs appears in this year's accounts (which also explains the relatively low expenditure on public meetings in 2011-12). 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. We provided £5000 towards the costs of developing the common tern nesting platform in Loch Creran. This project has been carried forward by a team led by Clive Craik, and has been spectacularly successful in providing predator-free nesting habitat for common terns. In 2012, the colony fledged more young terns than any other site in the west of Scotland.

Having now invested in nest boxes for pied flycatchers and kestrels, and a nesting raft for common terns, 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 July 2013.

Accounts for the 28th year of the Argyll Bird Club 14 April 2012 to 15 April 2013		
INCOME	2012/2013	2011/2012
Subscriptions	2467.23	2502.23
Sales	300.00	899.00
Bank Interest	0.00	3.99
Raffles	217.00	530.00
TOTAL	2984.23	3935.22
EXPENDITURE		
Bird report	0.00	2095.00
Newsletter photo-copying	0.00	780.00
Postage	197.19	552.74
Bird recorder expenses	0.00	116.14
Public meetings	1865.90	668.50
Insurance	232.63	234.48
Licenses/website	0.00	443.86
Nestboxes	0.00	1569.72
Equipment	0.00	448.36
Grants	5000.00	0.00
Advertising	0.00	446.60
TOTAL	7295.72	7355.40
Surplus/deficit for year	-4311.49	-3420.18
Brought forward	18,468.88	21,889.06
Assets at end of year	14,157.39	18,468.88

Membership Secretary's report

Our number of memberships has declined very slightly from last year's total. In June 2013 we had a total of 214 memberships (8 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 300 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships.

Sue Furness, 1 July 2013.

Minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday 17th November 2012

1. Apologies: Heddie and David Merrie, Steve and Linda Petty, David and Janet Palmar, Andy Robinson.
2. Minutes of the 26th AGM (2011) were proposed by Malcolm Chattwood and seconded by Douglas Barker and adoption of the accounts, which were published in the *Eider*, was proposed by David Jardine and seconded by Mike Harrison.
3. Matters arising not covered in the following items: none
4. Chairman's report: All too soon the time has arrived to sum up the past year of Club activities, and I am able to report in person this year, after missing the AGM last year.

After the previous year's autumn meeting theme of biodiversity, last year's was more of a monitoring theme. The Argyll Beaver project has been an interest in the Club since it was first proposed, and Simon Jones brought us up to date on progress. James Bray presented the web-based BTO Birdtrack project, which has evolved to become a valuable contribution to bird recording, and is boosting our knowledge of birds nationally and in Argyll. Trapping the mink on Seil is one of Richard Wesley's vocations, and contributes to bird protection in a very practical way, with some support from the Club. It was helpful to hear how this was progressing. The fruits of David Palmar's photography are enviable, and getting to St.Kilda equally so, making it such a very special place to visit, and a privilege to see. Paul Daw's recent sightings, and identification tips are always highlights of the day, and an encouragement to get out more.

This year's spring meeting was a new venture in that it combined with the SOC/BTO Scottish Birdwatchers' Conference. It brought a bigger audience from far and wide to Oban to fill the Corran Hall, to see some excellent speakers on a west coast theme. Richard Evan's work on White-tailed Eagles has

watched its population expand, arising many questions about their future. Eric Bignal has been monitoring Islay's Choughs for many years, and their recent problems of immature survival have been revealed and addressed in an experiment in supplementary feeding, aided by a youthful Caitlin Bignal. Renewable energy is a major feature of Argyll's environment and development focus in now including offshore situations, having implications that are still to be discovered. Nienke van Geel from SAMS, reviewed what is known at the moment, and what needs to be known, in order to better predict the impact of marine renewable proposals. New technology is proving an indispensable tool in following birds at sea, and Chris Thaxter looked at new discoveries on where seabirds are when we can't see them from the shore. The focus of John Calladine's fieldwork has been on how upland bird populations have responded to increasing afforestation on our hills. The long saga of Clive Craik's study of mink and seabirds continues to develop, with the success of the mink-proof raft proving a lifeline to Argyll's tern population. Geese flocks are a major draw for birders in Argyll, and Christine Urquhart's talk looked the changing situation of Greylag and Whitefront and the implications for conservation and management. Looking out to the Uists, Rob Fuller showed how the important wader populations there have changed over 30 years. The Raffle was bigger and better than usual, and helped offset the extra expense to the Club in contributing to this joint meeting. SOC President Ken Shaw summed up the proceedings, and brought the successful day to a close.

While field trips were occasional in the early days of the Club, they have become an integral and regular part of the Club's activities, taking place almost every month, and in all weathers. November's trip

to Connel was a case in point, with curtains of wind-driven rain making it a shorter day than usual. Other trips during the year fared better and included visits to Appin, Ormsary and Loch Caolisport, Sound of Gigha, Stratheck and Glen Massan in Cowal, Taynish, Skipness, Clachan in Kintyre, Machrihanish, Sanda Island, and the Islay Ferry sea watch. Our thanks go to the trip co-ordinators, and I reiterate that we welcome new ideas and volunteers to lead trips.

The Club's *Eider* newsletter has thrived under the editorship of Mark Williamson, but he has unfortunately, for us, had to move out of the area, and has resigned over the summer. I thank him on your behalf for his spell at the helm. Stuart Crutchfield has taken up the reins in the interim, for which I am very grateful. I hope that contributors keep sending your copy in to help maintain the standard that has been set.

While a long time in coming, the *Argyll Bird Report* for 2008/2009 appeared earlier this year, thanks to the enlarged team of compilers together with recorder Paul Daw and editor Tom Callan. Plans are underway to write a report for 2010/2011, with the hope that we can catch up and then return to an annual report and include papers and project reports. It has been noted that records have diminished since the end of Atlas fieldwork, but the need for records has not, so please keep sending them in. This can be by the club's own recording system based on Excel spread sheets or via the BTO's Bird Track system, which also finds its way back to the recorder for inclusion in our database.

The club's website continues to be an important feature of the way we do things. It is now looked after and updated by a team of administrators (Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, and Bob Furness), which helps share the load of keeping it fresh.

News from Clive Craik's Loch Creran tern raft has been very positive, with a further increase in the number of pairs using it for successful breeding. The Club has contributed £5000 towards the costs of establishing this extremely worthwhile project. The committee are looking at ways to expand this concept to other parts of Argyll. The Club has also been active in supporting the establishment of a Local Nature Reserve on the Holy Loch, and its designation by Argyll & Bute Council is slowly inching closer. Contact has been made with the Hebridean Trust who runs the Hynish Centre on Tiree with a view to visits during migration times, to trialling a plot for a bird seed crop, and for bird ringing activities, to which they are supportive.

As ever, I am grateful to our committee for the significant contributions they make to the running of the Club. 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: To start with, I would like to thank Nigel and the committee for all their help and support throughout the year and especially Mike for furnishing me with his 'meeting notes' which have become invaluable as I try to make a reasonable and accurate record of the proceedings.

This year, in February, April, August and November the Committee met at the Argyll Arms Hotel in Inveraray to discuss the business of running the Club. Usually on arrival, having enjoyed a cup of coffee or tea with a biscuit and a quick catch-up chat, Nigel called us to order at 7.00 o'clock then we made a start on the Agenda. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved (or not) and the items, regular at all four of our meetings this year, were discussed. These items included the *Argyll Bird Report*, the website and the spending of club funds and after discussion, decisions were reached and actions apportioned to volunteers.

It was at the April meeting that Mark Williamson made it known that the June *Eider* must be his last and, when we were unable to suggest anyone to replace him, Bob generously agreed to edit the September magazine. However, it was with huge relief that Stuart Crutchfield indicated his willingness to take on this task for September, and he would possibly continue while he remains living in Argyll. (This meant that we could keep Bob for a later emergency). Also Paul offered help with the website once he retires from being the Argyll Bird Recorder.

Nigel kept us up to date with the current situation regarding the Island of Sanda and the willingness of its owners to co-operate with birding interest, and he also updated us regularly regarding the on-going work to establish as a Local Nature Reserve, the site at Broxwood, where in the past ABC had made a donation towards the bird hide.

Insurance for the club's telescope, digiscoping adaptor and tripod as well as for Public Liability have been renewed for a further year, and The Office of the Scottish Charitable Regulator have accepted the accounts thus allowing ABC to maintain its charitable status.

This year, as well as losing Mark from the committee, David Warden has found it necessary to resign which means that out of a possible committee of 12

members we are now reduced to eight, and, although the quorum for meetings is five members, I would encourage anyone considering it, to put their name forward for election on to our well-functioning committee and join in with the running of the club. Meetings are invariably stimulating and informative and frequently entertaining! You don't know the fun you are missing! **Katie Pendreigh**

6. 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 during 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 not members of Argyll Bird Club and 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 *Argyll 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 with the cost 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* 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. 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 in-

clude 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 nest boxes and materials for nest boxes, 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.**

7. 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 (three 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.**

8. Election of office bearers and committee members. As usual, committee members and office bearers stood down en bloc and club members present at the meeting were asked to put forward proposals for the coming year. Earlier, Nigel had indicated his willingness to continue as chairman for a further year if there were no other volunteers, but after that, while willing to remain a committee member, he wanted to stand down as chairman. No one volunteered and Nigel was proposed as chairman by Ian Hopkins and seconded by Malcolm Chattwood. There were no new volunteers for the positions of vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer and membership secretary who all agreed to continue to serve for a further year if that was the wish of the membership. Voting took place as follows:

Vice chairman—Mike Harrison, proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by Tom Callan.

Treasurer—Bob Furness, proposed by Mike Harrison, seconded by Malcolm Chattwood

Secretary—Katie Pendreigh, proposed by John Anderson, seconded by Mike Harrison

Membership secretary—Sue Furness, proposed by Paul Daw, seconded by Nigel Scriven

Committee members Tom Callan, Paul Daw and Andy Robinson were voted for en bloc being proposed by Nigel Scriven and seconded by Mike Harrison. Although unable to attend the meeting, Stuart Crutchfield, who is editing the *Eider* while living in Argyll, had previously agreed to going on the committee and was proposed by Nigel Scriven and seconded by Paul Daw. It was agreed that any other member of the club, willing to serve on the committee but not present at the AGM, could be co-opted on to the committee during the year as appropriate.

9. A.O.C.B. Paul Daw intimated his intention to stand down as Argyll Bird Recorder. He pointed out that he has worked in this position for fifteen years and asked for anyone who would be willing to continue with this interesting and rewarding work to contact him. He thought that a team approach may be practicable with the recorder acting as team leader, and highlighted the work already being carried out by Tom Callan and Morag Rae with Jim Dickson managing the rarities reports and Malcolm Chattwood assisting with I.T. matters. David Jardine gave a vote of thanks to Paul for his enormous contribution.

Agenda for the 28th AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

The AGM will be held on Saturday 2 November 2013 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, Lochgilphead.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2012 AGM
3. Matters arising not covered in the following items
4. Chairman's report
5. Secretary's report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Membership Secretary's report
8. 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.

9. A.O.C.B.



Articles for the December issue of the *Eider* should with the Editor before the 24th November 2013

Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2013)

Chairman: Nigel Scriven, 14 Taylor Avenue, Kilbarchan, Johnstone PA10 2LS (phone 01505 706652 & 01369 840606)

Vice Chairman: Mike Harrison, 8 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, Dunbartonshire G83 7DG (phone 01301 702603)

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

Committee: Tom Callan (Otter Ferry), Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilthead)*, Jim Dickson* (Cairnbaan), Paul Daw (Minard), Steve Petty* (Ardentinny), Andy Robinson (Partick) (*co-opted during year)

Editor of the Argyll Bird Report: Position vacant

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

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

Argyll Bird Record's Committee

Jim Dickson (Secretary, contact details below), John Bowler, Roger Broad, David Jardine, Malcolm Ogilvie & Simon Pinder

Argyll Bird Recorder

Jim Dickson, 11 Pipers Road, Cairnbaan, Lochgilthead, Argyll PA31 8UF

phone 01546 603967

e-mail meg@jdickson5.plus.com

Assistant Bird Recorder

Malcolm Chattwood, 1 The Stances, Kilmichael Glasary, Lochgilthead, Argyll PA31 8QA

phone 01546 603389

e-mail abcrecorder@outlook.com

BTO Regional Representatives in Argyll

Argyll Mainland, Bute & Gigha: Position vacant

Argyll North—Mull, Coll, Tiree & Morvern: Arthur Brown/Rod Little

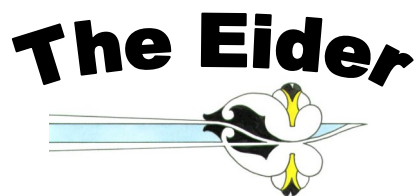
phone 01688 400515/01688 700315

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Islay, Jura & Colonsay: John Armitage

phone 01496 860396

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

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

The *Eider* is published during the first week of March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor before the 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 and has around 400 members. Its main role is to encourage an interest in wild birds and their habitats in Argyll; an area of outstanding natural beauty and biological diversity.

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

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

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