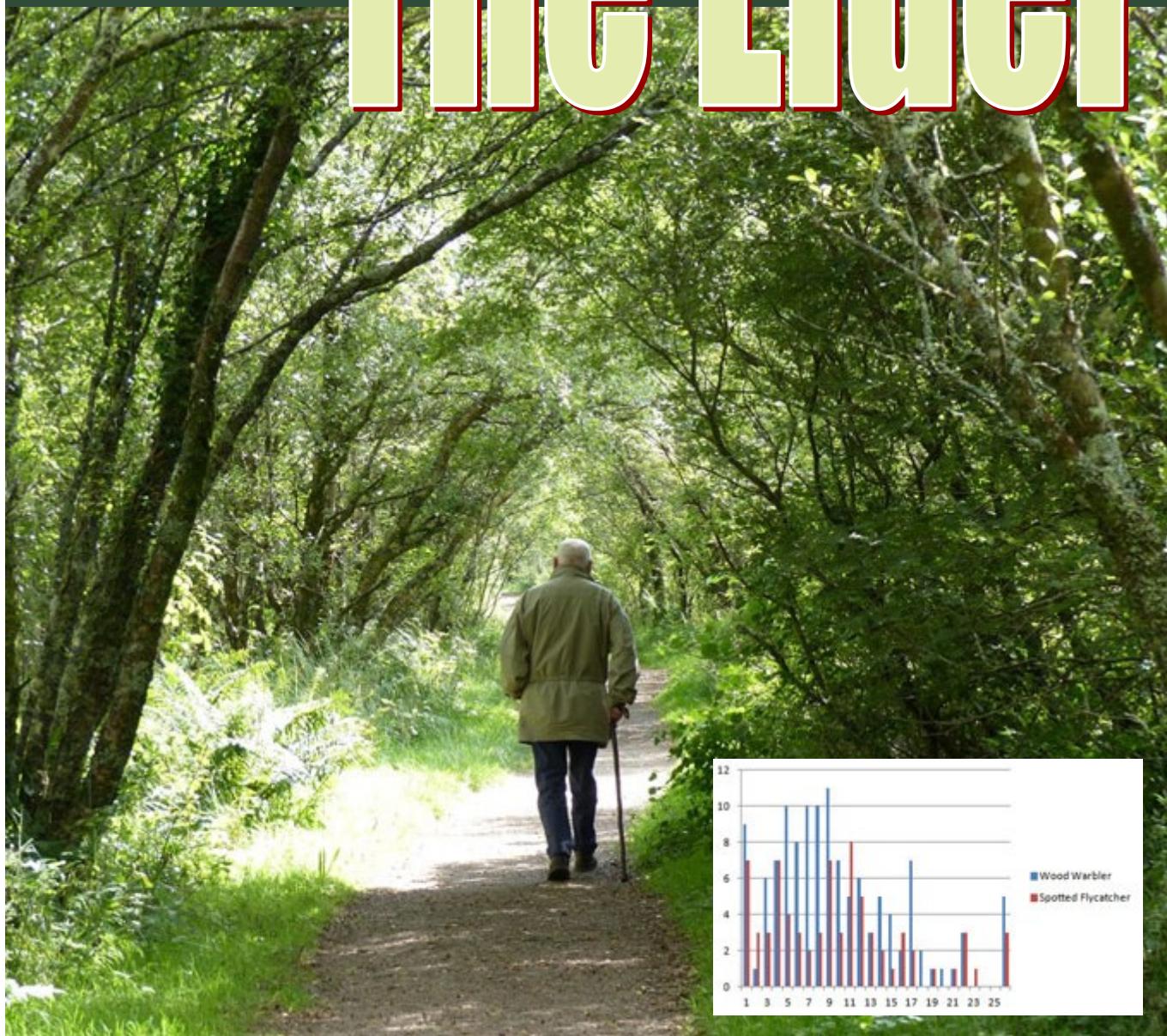


March 2016
Number 115

The Eider



Taynish Natural Nature Reserve. John Halliday gives an insight into the population trends of woodland birds in this diverse habitat (pages 6-7) ©Morag Rea

Recent bird sightings, pages 13-17

Update of Twite colour ringing at MSBO, pages 8-9

ABR 26 will be available at the spring meeting, page 4

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

Editor: Steve Petty, Cluaran Cottage, Ardentinny, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8TR

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Editorial

John Halliday's article (pages 6-7) describing his long-term census of birds of Taynish National Nature Reserve makes fascinating reading. In addition, John has kindly allowed us to put his full data set on the club's website (under the 'publications' tab). This provides the only resource available for looking at population fluctuation of woodland birds within Argyll, and also allows us to compare these to national trends. John's work highlights the valuable contribution that individual members can make to improving our knowledge of bird communities in Argyll.

Bird census work can be extremely rewarding. It allows you to really get to know your birds, and the areas you choose to census. John used the Common Bird Census method in Taynish. This was the first technique developed by the BTO for monitoring breeding bird populations, particularly those of songbirds. This has now been superseded by the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), which Nigel describes on page 5. More volunteers are required to cover the randomly-generated 1km squares in Argyll. At present less than 50% of squares are covered. Nigel would like to hear from you if you feel you can help.

If you worry about whether you have the skill to undertake census work, why not attend one of the training courses run by the BTO. The upcoming ones (below) in Scotland are in superb birding locations too!

Sat 12th March. [Skills and techniques for BTO bird surveys: Lochinver](#) Lochinver Village Hall, Assynt.

Sat 2nd April [Skills and techniques for BTO bird surveys: Skye](#) Breakish Hall, Skye.

Sat 16th April [Skills and techniques for BTO bird surveys: Isle of Mull](#) An Roth Centre, Craignure, Isle of Mull.

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ABC field trip report—Add Estuary	Pages 11-12
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Sat 23rd April [Skills and techniques for BTO bird surveys: Dalry](#) Dalry Town Hall, Dumfries.

All data collected from such surveys feed into assessments of how birds are performing nationally. This allows species to be highlighted for conservation action when their populations are in decline or threatened. Nigel describes the latest assessment of bird conservation status on pages 10-11.

So, by taking part in surveys YOU will make an important contribution to conservation. Think about it!

This issue of the *Eider* is substantially smaller than the last issue. So, this is a plea for more articles for the June issue—please!

Acknowledgements

Very many thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue—Malcolm Chattwood, Stuart Crutchfield, Jim Dickson, Jim Duncan, Bob Furness (including photocopying & dispatch), John Halliday, Mike Harrison, Eddie Maguire, Jimmy Maxwell, Katie Pendreigh, Linda Petty (proof reading), Julia Randall, Morag Rea and Nigel Scriven

Club News

FIELD TRIPS 2016

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

Saturday 2 April. Sound of Gigha. Led by Malcolm Chattwood (Phone: 01546 603389. E-mail: malcolm.chattwood@lineone.net) and Mike Harrison (E-mail: jmharrison@iee.org. Phone: 01631 710656). Meet at Ronachan Point Car Park on the A83 (grid ref. NR741548) at 10.00hrs. Lunches will be available at the hotel on Gigha.

Saturday 30 April. Tarbet and Ardkinglas Woodland Garden. Led by Bob Furness (E-mail: bob.furness@glasgow.ac.uk. Phone: 01301 702603). Please phone Bob on Friday 29 April to confirm meeting details as this will depend on the weather conditions. If it is calm and dry we will meet at The Cnoc, Tarbet G83 7DG at 09.00hrs and catch

birds by mist net. We will then move to the Loch Fyne Brewery for lunch, followed by a walk through Ardkinglas Woodland Garden after lunch.

Saturday 28 May. Loch Gilp, the Add Estuary and Taynish NNR. Led by Jim Dickson (Phone 01546 603967. E-mail: meg@jdickson5.plus.com). Meet at 10.00hrs in Lochgilphead at the Corran Car Park, opposite the caravan park, on the A83, close to the roundabout (A83/A816) at the western end of the town.

Sunday 26 June. Skipness. Led by Katie Pendreigh (E-mail: katiependreigh@aol.com. Phone: 01583 441359. Meet in the car park beside the entrance gate to the castle at 10.00hrs. The Sea Food Cabin will be open for lunch.

INDOOR MEETINGS 2016

Spring Meeting. Saturday 5 March 2016 in the Seil Island Community Hall, Ellenabeich, Seil. See the programme below, which has

Programme for the ABC's Spring Meeting	
Saturday 5 March at the Seil Island Community Hall, Ellenabeich, Seil, Argyll	
Time	Session
0930	Doors open, coffee and tea
0950-1000	Welcome and introduction— <i>Mike Harrison</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1000-1030	Recent bird sightings and photographs— <i>Jim Dickson</i> , Argyll Bird Recorder
1030-1100	Blubber and birds— <i>Conor Ryan</i> , Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust
1100-1130	Coffee/tea
1130-1200	The use of DNA in raptor studies— <i>Phil Whitfield</i> , Natural Research
1200-1230	Looking after birds in the forests of Argyll— <i>John Taylor</i> , Forest Enterprise Scotland
1230-1400	Lunch (soup & sandwiches available in the hall)—local birdwatching tips available
1400-1440	Using social media to encourage wildlife recording— <i>Richard Wesley</i>
1440-1520	Wildlife and landscape in Namibia— <i>David Merrie</i>
1520-1540	Tea/coffee
1540-1555	BTO surveys and updates— <i>Nigel Scriven</i> , BTO Regional Representative, Mainland Argyll, Bute & Gigha
1555-1610	Raffle and closing remarks

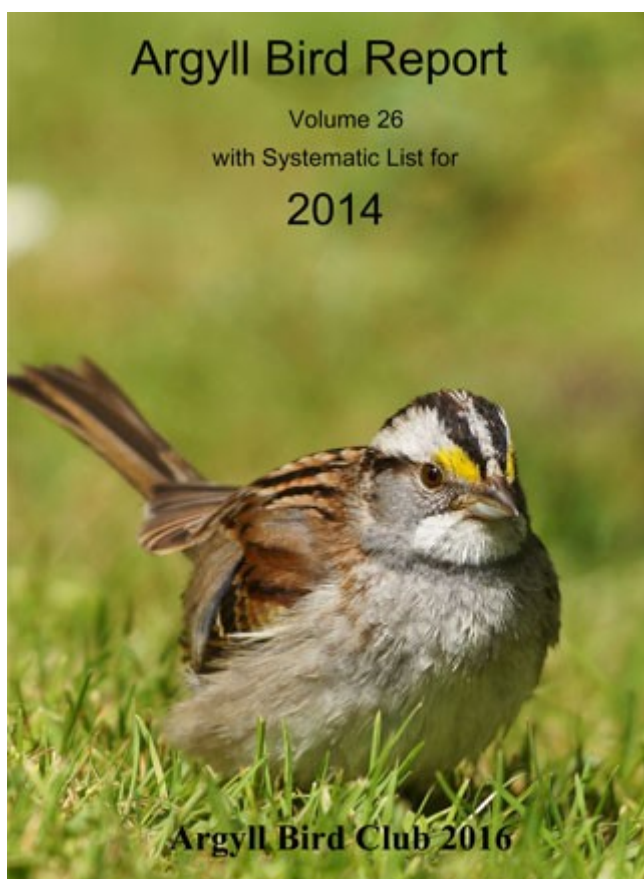
changed a little since the last *Eider*. **Directions**—take the A816 south from Oban or north from Lochgilphead. At Kilninver take the B844 to Easdale. Follow this road, which passes a converted tin church on the left at the summit of the road, and then descend to the shore. Continue on past the primary school and An Cala Garden. The hall is clearly visible on the left hand side of the road. **Catering**—coffee and tea will be available on arrival and at breaks during the morning and afternoon sessions. A lunch of soup and sandwiches will be provided in the hall at a cost of £8.00 per person.

Autumn Meeting and AGM. Saturday 12 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel (<http://www.cairnbaan.com/>), near Lochgilphead (Phone: 01546 603668). The programme and further information will appear in the June *Eider*.

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

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 26 (2014)

The latest bird report (front cover below) will be available at the spring meeting (another good reason to attend!). If you can take copies for other members who will not be at the meeting, please do so, as this saves the club postage. Please inform anyone on the committee if you are aware of any shop that would be willing to stock the report.



THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE

(www.argyllbirdclub.org)

Do visit our website to find out about up-to-date arrangements for meetings, recent sightings of birds, including photographs, and lots more.

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Coll Bird Festival 13-15 May. Coll has a rich and fascinating birdlife that attracts visitors all year round and the festival will look at some of the key species of breeding and passage birds with guided walks and family activities from Friday to Sunday. Boat trips to neighbouring Lunga offer an opportunity to spot a wide variety of wildlife and plant life (photo below). SOC (David Palmar) and RSPB (John Bowler) and a local birder are leading the trips to Lunga, while RSPB (John Bowler, Ben Jones and Kat Jones) are leading the walks on Coll.

More information can be found at <http://collbunkhouse.com/bird-festival-2016/>



A trip to Lunga offers fantastic photo opportunities. Puffins can be one of the highlights!

BTO Surveys in 2016

House Martin 2016 Nest Study



This survey will involve volunteers making regular observations at individual nests to collect information about nesting activity.

The 2016 nest study has different aims from 2015 count survey and so is NOT restricted to 'random' pre-selected survey squares. Instead, you can select your own study site where House Martins are nesting. Therefore, the study will be ideal for observers who have nests on their home or place of work, including those who contributed to the 2009-13 survey.

How can I help?

We need volunteers who are able to observe one or more nests regularly through the whole breeding season, i.e. from April to September, or exceptionally into early October. You do not need to be able to climb ladders to look inside the nests. Your observations made from ground level (or from a window) will enable us to compare factors such as egg laying dates and breeding success at different sites across the UK.

How often will I need to monitor?

Ideally, you need to be able to observe the nests for just a few minutes at least once a week to record any activity seen. If you are able to watch the nest more frequently, this will provide us with even more powerful information as we will be able to make more accurate estimates of egg laying dates and the length of time before the young birds fledge.

To register your interest in participating go online to:

<http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey/house-martin-nest-study-2016>

You will then be contacted directly by the BTO with more detailed instructions when they become available.

Breeding Bird Survey in Argyll 2015-2016



Running since 1994, this is one of the BTO's priority voluntary surveys. The more 1km squares covered provide better data for estimating population trends. Over the years uptake has improved, although it has always been a challenge to achieve good coverage in rural Scotland. For scientific reasons the squares are chosen randomly and may not coincide with where birders are. This was especially so initially when there were not many squares. Since then the BTO have generated more random squares, this has helped and coverage has increased. However, it could be better, and there are opportunities for more volunteers to contribute.

If you wish to make your birding more purposeful, and feel the satisfaction of contributing to a national scheme, then do consider taking part. The data feed in to the 'Birds of Conservation Concern' assessments, national biodiversity indicators and conservation targeted farm payments. After the initial setting up of your two transect routes, and a habitat survey, it requires one morning's visit before mid-May and another four weeks later before mid-June. These usually take between an hour and a half and two hours, not including time to get to the start and back from the finish. To find out more about the methodology go to: <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/core-surveys> and register as a volunteer. This will get you in to the pages with more detailed instructions. The data can be submitted on-line. Also, the data are useful for the Argyll Bird Club's database, and can be submitted through the ABC's excel spreadsheet to the ABC Recorder.

Argyll is covered by three BTO regions (table), each with its own rep (details on back page). Each will be happy assist you. As you can see from the table below, only about 50% of the squares in Argyll are allocated, and not all of these are being actively covered, and may become available for re-allocation.

1km squares	Argyll South	Argyll North	Islay, Jura & Colonsay	Total
Total	44	19	17	80
Allocated	21	11	8	40
Completed 2015	16	6	6	28



Common Bird Census resumes at Taynish NNR

Taynish National Nature Reserve (NNR) is located on a peninsula on the western side of Loch Sween in Knapdale, Mid Argyll. Native broadleaved woodland has survived here for over 6,000yrs. Sensitive management throughout its history has allowed Taynish to remain a very special place. The reserve is a mixture of woodland, scrub, bog, foreshore, grassland and heath, which together support a rich diversity of wildlife.

I established two Common Birds Census (CBC) plots at Taynish NNR in 1990; a woodland plot and a coastal plot. A wide range of habitats are represented within each CBC plot.

The CBC methodology allows the actual number of breeding bird territories to be determined within each plot. It was the long-standing breeding bird census method used by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) until 1994 when it was superseded by the less time consuming Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). BTO staff analysed the Taynish CBC data until 1994., after which I continued the data analysis to maintain continuity and survey accuracy. Following two missed years (2013 and 2014) due to other work commitments, I resumed the CBC at Taynish in 2015, largely thanks to the encouragement and support from the Argyll Bird Club.

Bird species richness has remained high over

Interesting trends and highlights of the 2015 season

Species in *italics* and **bold** are listed amber and red respectively in Birds of Conservation Concern.

- *Redstart* reached a record level of 12 territories in 2015 (long-term average of 7 territories per year).
- **Song Thrush** reached its highest level since 2007 with 12 territories (long-term average of 8 per year).
- **Grasshopper Warbler** was at a record low level with no territories identified (long-term average of 3 territories per year).
- *Sedge Warbler* was at a record low level with 3 territories (long-term average of 8 territories per year).
- *Garden Warbler* reached an outstanding record level with 11 territories (long-term average of only 3 territories per year).
- *Blackcap* was a scarce breeding species at Taynish through the 1990s but has shown a steady increase since 2001 and reached a record level of 22 territories in 2015 (long-term average of only 6 territories per year).
- *Willow Warbler* remains by far the commonest breeding bird species at Taynish with 89 territories in the CBC plots in 2015 (long-term average of 89 territories per year). However, the Willow Warbler popula-

the 24-year period with an average of 36 breeding species per year, reflecting the rich habitat diversity.

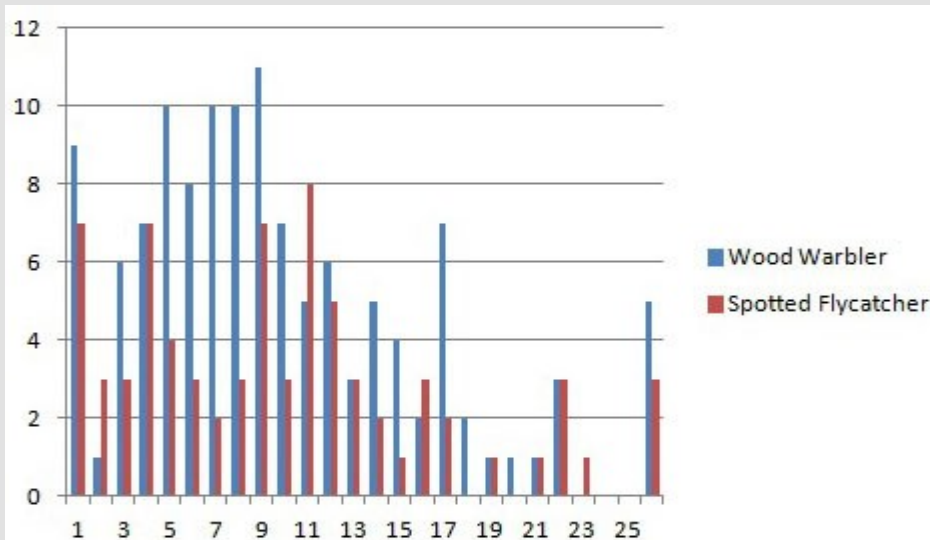
The full data set of the breeding bird populations within the Taynish CBC plots can be viewed under the 'Publications' tab at <http://argyllbirdclub.org>.

John Halliday

tion within the plots has significantly declined from the record high of 137 territories in 2011.

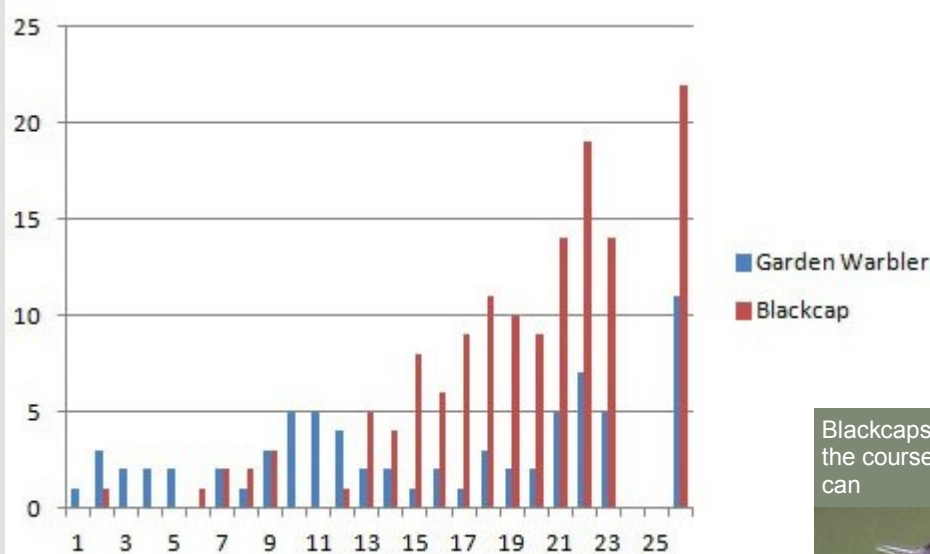
- **Wood Warbler** after record low levels in recent years is now showing signs of recovery from no territories in 2012 to 5 territories in 2015 (long term average of 5 territories per year).

The contrasting trends of some species at Taynish



The graphs show the number of territories from 1990 (1 on the bottom (x) axis) to 2015 (26 on the x axis). No counts were made in 2013 and 2014 (24 and 25 on the x axis).

Wood Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher (upper figure) have declined during this period. In contrast, Garden Warbler and Blackcap have shown substantial increases (lower figure).



Blackcaps have increased remarkably during the course of the study at Taynish ©Jim Duncan



Twite movements to and from Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during 2010-2015



A male Twite colour-ringed at MSBO in autumn 2014 and resighted there in spring 2015 ©Eddie Maguire

Introduction

In July 2010 Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (MSBO) joined the UK Twite Study Project. During autumns 2010-2015, a total of 1,500 Twite were colour ringed at MSBO, an average of 250 birds per year. The greatest movement was of a bird to Essex, but most movements were to and from western Scotland, northern England and Northern Ireland. In total, 75 birds ringed at MSBO have been sighted, photographed or controlled (recaptured) elsewhere in the UK and Republic of Ireland, and 20 birds ringed in other parts of the UK and Republic of Ireland have been sighted, photographed or controlled at MSBO.

Recoveries and Controls Autumn 2010- 2015

The figures show the distribution of UK/Republic of Ireland movements of Twite to and from MSBO. However, the maps do not give the numbers of birds involved.

The table (next page) gives totals and includes 1) all MSBO col-

our-ringed birds that were seen/controlled elsewhere in the UK/Republic of Ireland and 2) all birds that had been ringed elsewhere and seen/photographed or controlled at MSBO.

The control totals from Co. Donegal, Lancashire and Isle of Man include colour-ringed individuals (c.12) that were photographed at MSBO.

The latest totals include our first birds (2) controlled in North Wales (Flintshire), our first two (photographed) in Norfolk (Happisburgh and Blakeney), our second to Northumberland (Newbigging-by-the-Sea) and another first in Co. Louth (Republic of Ireland).

References

Maguire, E. (2014). Twite ringing in Kintyre. *The Eider* (Argyll Bird Club newsletter) March 2014, number 107, pages 21-23.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Argyll Bird Club and Sanda Island Bird Observatory Trust for generous grants to cover the 2015 project costs of colour rings and nyjer seed

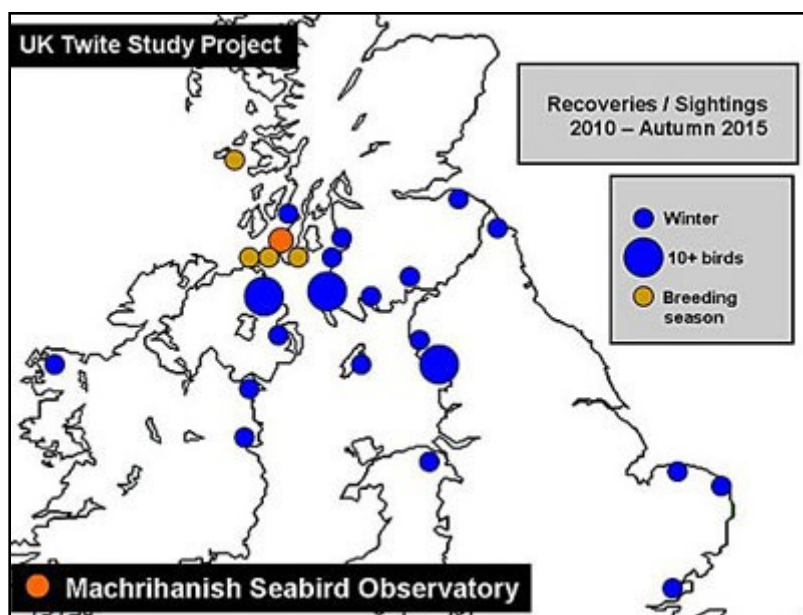


Figure 1. Recoveries (sightings/recaptures) elsewhere of Twite colour-ringed at Machrihanish SBO

Thanks' also to Rod Angus, Derek Goode, Rab Morton for their help with this project over the years and the many folks who have reported MSBO-ringed birds elsewhere in the UK and Ireland.

Eddie Maguire

MSBO Warden

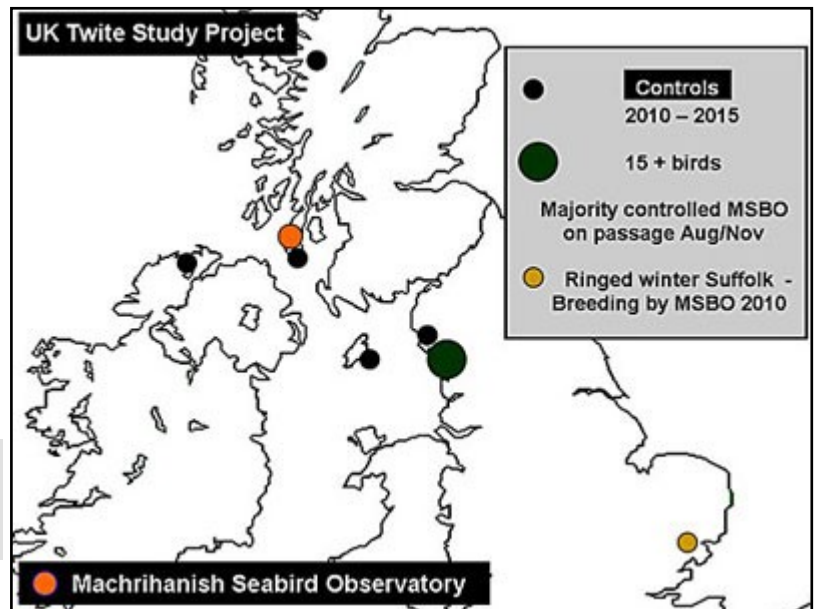


Figure 2. Sightings or recaptures at Machrihanish SBO of Twite that had been colour ringed elsewhere.

Table. Locations of Twite recoveries and controls from MSBO during 2010-2015		
Location	Ringed at MSBO and seen/ caught elsewhere	Ringed elsewhere, photo- graphed/caught at MSBO
SCOTLAND		
Argyll	6	1
Ayrshire	2	0
Dumfries and Galloway	16	0
East Lothian	1	0
Highland	0	1
ENGLAND		
Northumberland	2	0
Cumbria	5	2
Lancashire	14	12
Isle of Man	6	2
Suffolk	0	1
Norfolk	2	0
Essex	1	0
WALES		
Flintshire	2	0
NORTHERN IRELAND		
Co. Antrim	11	0
Co. Down	4	0
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND		
Co. Donegal	0	1
Co. Mayo	1	0
Co. Louth	1	
Co. Wexford	1	0
TOTALS	75	20

Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the new assessment of bird conservation status

On a global scale, species threatened with extinction have been "Red Listed" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). A similar approach for British birds was first published by Batten *et al.* (1990). This introduced the traffic light system of Red, Amber and Green lists. It was repeated with refinements in 2002 (Gregory *et al.* 2002) and again in 2009 (Eaton *et al.* 2009). The new analysis (Eaton *et al.* 2015) continues the 6yr cycle in accordance with a pattern of reporting required by the EU Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), which is obligatory for all member states, and which is used for the European Red List of Birds.

So what has changed since BoCC3 (Eaton *et al.* 2009)? More species have been added to the Red List than any previous assessment, with 20 moving to Red, and only three moving from Red to Amber. It seems that whatever is being done for bird conservation has not been enough to halt this rise in red-listed species. So, no change there. Also, three species have been added to the list of former breeders—

Temminck's Stint, Wryneck and Serin, so joining the company of the Great Auk and Snowy Owl.

That no new farmland birds have joined the Red List is probably because the birds most affected by modern agriculture are already there. Three woodland birds join the Red List—Woodcock, Nightingale and Pied Flycatcher, the latter two being long-distance migrants. The largest increase in proportion of birds red-listed is those in upland and coastal habitats. In fact, there are now as many upland birds on the Red List as there are farmland birds (12).

There have been conservation successes too, with some species moving from Red to Amber, such as Bittern and Dunlin. Twenty-two species have moved from Amber to Green, nine of which were due to changes in the assessment process, but 13 were due to genuine improvements.

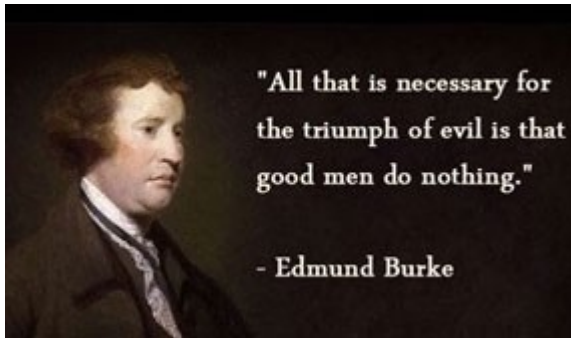
What is responsible for these changes and what can be done? Climate change is an obvious factor to be considered. Some birds have benefitted, with Little Egret and Firecrest responding to a warmer climate in the south and joining the Green List. At the other end of the UK this warming may be partly why Dotterel are decreasing, although nitrogen deposition and grazing may also be involved. Climate change may also be shifting wintering ranges and affecting marine food chains, and the distribution and abundance of many species. Our migrants are suffering especially, with flyways being damaged by habitat change, especially at critical stopover areas. This is an international problem.

So what can be done? Climate change is the big one to tackle, and is a global political issue that is beyond the ability of most birders to influence, except in a small way. Politics has also produced a government that is spending a smaller and smaller proportion of its wealth on nature conservation, and is incrementally eroding protection where it can get away with it.

So, dare we leave it up to the politicians? I don't think so. We can all make our contributions, in small ways, that can add up to a lot. We need to keep up the pressure for conservation action for the species



Folks in Argyll might be surprised to learn that Shag has been moved to the Red List



that need it most. The internet has been a valuable tool in extending democracy with e-petitions, e-mails and social media campaigns. Be informed and engage in the debate. Land use is currently a big issue that has significant impacts on birds, and the uplands are a case in point. Should uplands be managed the way they are, or could it be done in ways with more benefits for nature and people? The problems of establishing Marine Protected Areas drag on, with exploitation interests delaying the process without resolution, while damage to the seas continues. Don't despair. Even birders can help the situation. Get out there, report your sightings, take part in surveys, and have fun while it lasts. The more data we have for BoCC5 in 2021, the more we will understand what is happening to our birds, and the better we can respond.

Reference

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Gregory, R. D., Wilkinson, N. I., Noble, D. G., Robinson, J. A., Brown, A. F., Hughes, J., Procter, D., Gibbons, D. W., & Galbraith, C. A. (2002). The population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man: an analysis of conservation concern 2002-2007. *British Birds* 95: 410-448.

Nigel Scriven

Editor's note

A pdf of Eaton et al. (2015) and a very useful summary leaflet of BoCC4 can be downloaded from the following website:

<http://www.bto.org/science/monitoring/psob>

ABC field trip to the Add Estuary—15 November 2015



Hooded Crow - one species to brave the weather ©Jimmy Maxwell

This trip was planned for the day after the AGM and 30th Anniversary Dinner at Cairnbaan Hotel, with the intention that members already in the area for the meeting would be joined on Sunday by those from afar. As the weekend approached it began to look as though the weather would deter those from afar from attending and the decision was taken to formally cancel the trip.

An unofficial 37mm of rain fell in the area over Saturday night and by morning the roads both north and south of Cairnbaan

were flooded. After Jim Dickson had managed to get through to Lochgilphead to check that no-one was waiting at the original muster point. Eight members who were on the right side of the floods met at Islandadd Bridge overlooking the River Add and the Moine Mhor. It was a dreich, misty morning with intermittent light rain and the Add was a turbid brown flood. Hooded Crows were rafting down the river on clumps of floating debris, pecking at some unseen food before flying off as their raft approached the bridge. A group of Canada Geese watched us warily as we scanned the moss and the river. Some Whooper Swans could be seen in a bend of the river further upstream as a group of Greylag Geese flew over and disappeared from view behind some trees. We walked up the road towards the canal and the bird hide. A Dunnock was skulking in the bushes by the road, contrasting with the Buzzard that was perched on top of an electricity pole. Some Goldfinches flew out of the bushes as we passed and a Meadow Pipit called as it flew over the road. Turning along the canal towpath we heard Robin and Chaffinch calling from the woodland across the canal.

We were joined in the hide by another two local members. The tide was well into the ebb

by now and some areas of mud were showing despite the high level of the river. Several Curlew and Redshank could be seen along with a single Lapwing in the distance. Two Little Grebes were diving in a small bay sheltered from the main current. Wigeon were feeding along the edge of an island in the stream while a Goosander could be seen further down the estuary. A Wren popped up on to the stone wall in front of the hide. As lunch-time approached and the limited visibility was further reduced by steady rain we decided to call it a day and made our way back to the cars, adding Blue Tit and Blackbird to the list as we went, and looking forward to trying again in better weather next time.

Species List: Whooper Swan, Greylag Goose, Greater Canada Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Goosander, Great Cormorant, Little Grebe, Common Buzzard, Oystercatcher, Northern Lapwing, Eurasian Curlew, Common Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Hooded Crow, Blue Tit, Wren, Starling, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Common Chaffinch, Goldfinch

Mike Harrison



Recent bird sightings

November 2015 to
January 2016



Rock Pipit, Add Estuary, 14 November ©Jim Dickson

Presented here are records of rare and unusual species, as well as counts and movements of more common species, recorded in Argyll during this period. I wish to thank to everyone who sent in records and I apologise for any errors or omissions. More details of sightings can be found on the ABC website under 'Recent Reports'.

Ideally records should be submitted using the Argyll Bird Recording system or by using the BTO's BirdTrack system. For more details please email abcrecorder@outlook.com

Machrihanish SBO = Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre

Swans, ducks, geese & gamebirds

WHOOPEE SWAN. An island record count of 502 birds on Tiree on 5 Nov, included 431 at Loch a'

Phuill (also a record) (photo from Tiree on the next page).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE. The highest count on Islay was of 4,644 on 15-16 Dec.

LESSER CANADA GOOSE. One *hutchinsii* was seen regularly on Islay during this winter period.

BARNACLE GOOSE. The highest count on Islay was of 48,568 on 17-18 Nov.

AMERICAN WIGEON. A drake was on the floods at Kilmichael Farm, near Campbeltown, Kintyre on 17 and 22 Nov (Chris Bradshaw, Andy McKee *et al.*). A drake on Tiree (first seen on 21 Oct) was still there during 1-16 Nov (John Bowler). On Islay the drake (first seen at Ardnave Loch on 12 Sep) was reported again at the RSPB Gruinart Reserve on 24 Dec (Gary Turnbull).

EURASIAN TEAL. On Islay, there were high counts of 410 at Loch Indaal on 13 Dec and 226 at the RSPB Gruinart Reserve on 15 Dec. On Tiree,



A family party of Whooper Swans, Tiree, 13 November ©John Bowler

the highest count was of 340 at An Fhaodhail on 1 Jan.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL. A drake was at the RSPB Loch Gruinart Reserve, Islay from 14 Dec (Mary Redman *et al.*) and remained throughout the winter period.

PINTAIL. The highest count at the RSPB Gruinart Reserve, Islay was of 87 on 6 Nov. Six flew south past Machrihanish SBO on 2 Nov.

SHOVELER. The highest count (17) was at the RSPB Gruinart Reserve, Islay on 15 Dec.

POCHARD. Six were on Islay on 4 Nov (five on Loch Gorm and one on Ardnave Loch).

TUFTED DUCK. The highest count on Islay was of eleven at Loch Gorm on 4 Nov. Highest counts on Tiree were 84 on 16 Nov and 100 on 8 Dec. Seventeen were at Loch Seil, Mid-Argyll on 23 Jan.

GREATER SCAUP. Highest count on Islay was of 61 on Loch Indaal on 22 Nov and 13 Jan.

LESSER SCAUP. An adult female was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 16 Nov (John Bowler).

LONG-TAILED DUCK. Five flew past Machrihanish SBO on 20 Nov. The highest count on Islay was of 15 in Loch Indaal on 30 Nov. Fifteen were seen in the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre on 2 Jan. The highest counts on Tiree were of five at Hough Bay on 5 Nov and six on 4 Jan.

COMMON SCOTER. Ninety were in Loch Indaal, Islay on 30 Dec and 59 were in the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre on 2 Jan.

VELVET SCOTER. Two males were seen in the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre on 16 Jan.

GOLDENEYE. A count of 142 was made at Eilean Traighe, Ormsary, Mid-Argyll on 28 Jan.

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

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER. High counts included 53 at Loch Indaal, Islay, with a flock of 37 engaged in communal fishing on 4 Nov, and 58 there on 13 Dec. In the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre 61 were seen on 20 Jan, and on Tiree 55 were seen off Hynish on 31 Jan in calm sea conditions.

SOOTY SHEARWATER. On Tiree, four passed Hynish on 12 Nov and three passed Aird on 13, 16 and 17 Nov.

LEACH'S PETREL. One was seen off Port Charlotte, Islay on 12 Nov (Mike Peacock). On Tiree, two were off Hynish on 12 Nov and one was off Aird on 16 Nov (John Bowler). Three flew past Machrihanish SBO on 20 Nov.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE. One was on Loch Gorm, Islay on 4 Nov and one was at the Holy Loch, Cowal on 14 Dec.

RED-NECKED GREBE. A first-winter bird was at Loch na Cille (Loch Sween), Mid-Argyll on 17 Jan (Paul Daw, Morag Rea *et al.*).

SLAVONIAN GREBE. Twenty-seven were counted in the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre on 2 Jan.

LITTLE GREBE. Highest count was of 20 on Loch Etive, North Argyll (WeBS count) on 12 Dec.

Raptors to rails

MERLIN. On the mainland, singles were seen at Machrihanish SBO on 8 and 15 Nov, and one was at Gobagrennan (near Campbeltown), Kintyre on 21 Jan. On the islands, there were several reports of singles across Islay, Mull and Tiree during Nov-Jan.

MOORHEN. High counts included four at Westport Marsh, Kintyre on 4 Dec and 10 at Arden-cable, Seil Island, Mid-Argyll on 4 Jan.

Waders

GOLDEN PLOVER. The highest counts were of 3,020 on Tiree on 22 Jan and 1,600 on Islay at Loch Gruinart on 6 Nov.

LAPWING. A high count of 1,000 was made at Westport Marsh, Kintyre, on 18 Dec. High counts on Tiree included 3,390 on 24-25 Nov and 3,655 on 22 Jan. The highest count on Islay was of 705 at Loch Gruinart on 22 Nov.

RED KNOT. Twelve were at Otter Ferry Spit, Cowal on 13 Jan, with smaller numbers noted elsewhere.

CURLEW SANDPIPER. Four late birds flew past Machrihanish SBO on 6 Nov.

PURPLE SANDPIPER. The highest counts were of 25 at Dunoon Crazy Golf, Cowal on 8 Jan and 38 at Hynish, Tiree on 31 Jan, with smaller numbers noted elsewhere.

JACK SNIFE. On Tiree, there were singles at Sandaig on 25 Nov, at Balinoe on 1 Dec and at Heylipol on 22 Jan. One was on the Isle of Gigha, Kintyre on 19 Dec. One was on the tide line at Danna Island, Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll on 10 Jan. Onother was at Moine Mhor, Mid-Argyll on 12 Jan.

WHIMBREL. A late individual was at Ardnave Loch, Islay on 4 Nov.

COMMON SANDPIPER. A late individual was among 30-40 Turnstones and Ringed Plovers at the mouth of the Killail Burn, Otter Ferry, Cowal on 23 Nov.

GREENSHANK. Highest counts were of four at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 8 Nov, 20 Nov and 14 Dec. On Mull three were at Tioran on 3 Nov, four at Loch Cuin (Dervaig) on 7 Nov and five at Pen-nyghael on 11 Nov.

GREY PHALAROPE. One flew past Machrihanish SBO on 19 Nov (Eddie Maguire, photo this page). One was seen on Oronsay, Colonsay on 20 Nov (Morgan Vaughan).

Skuas, gulls, terns & auks

POMARINE SKUA. On Tiree, a juvenile was off Hynish on 12 Nov, an adult flew past Aird on 16



Grey Phalarope, Machrihanish SBO, 19 November
©Eddie Maguire

Nov and two juveniles were there on 17 Nov. Two juveniles flew past Machrihanish SBO on 20 Nov.

GREAT SKUA. One flew past Machrihanish SBO on 13 Nov with two more on 29 Nov. One was reported by fishermen off Fhionnphort, Mull on 15 Jan.

LITTLE GULL. A near adult (third-winter) and an adult were at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll from 6 Dec and seen infrequently until February. A first-winter bird was seen off Inverneill, Mid-Argyll on 16 Jan.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL. Two adults were at Loch Gilp on 13 Jan, and a second-winter bird was also there on 17 Jan, followed by a new colour-ringed adult there on 31 Jan.

COMMON GULL. A new record island count of 1,870 was made on Tiree on 22 Jan.

LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL. An early adult was at Sandaig, Tiree on 20 Jan.

ICELAND GULL. A juvenile was at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll from 1 Nov. A juvenile was at Calgary, Mull on 18 Nov. Three juveniles were in Oban Bay, Mid-Argyll on 18-19 Nov with one remaining into 2016. A juvenile was at the head of Loch Fyne, Mid-Argyll on 1 Dec. A juvenile was at Ardnave, Islay on 16 Dec. Two juveniles were on the Isle of Gigha, Kintyre on 19 Dec. An adult was at Taynuilt pier, Mid-Argyll on 2 Jan. On Tiree, juveniles were at Balephuil on 11 Jan, at Salum on 11-19 Jan, at Ruaig on 19 Jan, at Loch Stanail on 20 Jan and Sandaig on 22 Jan (making 3-4 juvs on the island in total). A juvenile was at Luig, Mid-Argyll on 24 Jan, and a juvenile was at Knock, Mull on 24 Jan.

KUMLIEN'S (ICELAND) GULL. One flew past Machrihanish SBO on 28 Nov and was thought to be a good candidate for Kumlien's. On Tiree, single juveniles were at Balinoe on 18 Jan and another was at Crossapol Farm on 19 Jan.

GLAUCOUS GULL. A juvenile was at Campbeltown Marina, Kintyre on 6 Nov. On Islay, a juvenile was at Uiskentuie on 15 Nov and a second-winter bird was at Machir Bay on 24 and 31 Dec. A juvenile was at Arrochar Pier, Clyde/Cowal on 26 Nov and remained there throughout the winter. A juvenile was off Achnacroish and another was at Kilcheran, both on Lismore, Mid-Argyll on 28 Nov. On Tiree, a juvenile was at Traigh Bhi on 6 Dec and perhaps it was the same individual again on 23 Jan with another juvenile at Rubha Chraiginis on 10 Dec, followed by another juvenile at Sandaig on 20 Jan. A juvenile was at the head of Loch Fyne, Mid-Argyll on 11 Dec and remained there until February at least.

LITTLE AUK. There were several reports of this species around Argyll from 4 Jan and some were thought to have flown west across Scotland from the North Sea after many birds were 'wrecked' along the east coast during easterly gales. Single birds were noted in Cowal at Loch Long, Loch Goil and off Dunoon on 4 Jan; in Kintyre with one on 10 Jan; in Mid-Argyll at Oban on 19 Dec, Ford (photo opposite) on 4 Jan and Taynuilt on 5 Jan; on Islay at The Oa on 7 Jan, The Laggan on 8 Jan and Loch Indaal on 23 Jan; on Jura on 6 Jan; on Mull at Iona with two on 16 Jan, a moribund bird was in NW Mull on 3 Feb; on Tiree with one there on 10 Jan and two on 12 Jan.

PUFFIN. One passed Aird, Tiree on 12 Jan.

Doves, cuckoos, owls, Swift, Kingfisher & woodpeckers

BARN OWL. One was seen on Tiree near the airport on 11 Nov and also at Cornaigmore on 21 Jan. Most other reports were from Islay, Mid-Argyll and Mull.

KINGFISHER. One was seen at Dunoon, Cowal on 17 Nov. One was at Loch Craignish, Mid-Argyll on 20 Jan. On Mull, one was at Dervaig on 17 Nov and perhaps the same bird at Loch Cuin (Loch a' Chumhainn) on 22 Jan.

Passerines (larks to buntings)

RED-BILLED CHOUGH. The highest count was on Islay of 46 at Ardhave on 22 Nov.



Little Auk (upper photo) at Ford, Mid-Argyll on 4 January ©Julia Randall

Juvenile Glaucous Gull (lower photo) at Campbeltown on 12 November ©Eddie Maguire

HOODED CROW. A high count of 89 at Barsloisnoch, Mid-Argyll on 22 Jan included four Carrion and five Hybrid Crows.

FIRECREST. One was seen at Knock, Mull on 1 Nov (Sue & David McDowell).

BARN SWALLOW. One was at Ardchylne Farm (near St Catherine's) on 6 Nov, and another late bird was at Gartmain, Islay on 23 Nov.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER. A late bird was at Balephuil, Tiree on 1 Nov (John Bowler).

CHIFFCHAFF (Siberian). One was at Balephuil, Tiree on 17 and 22 Nov (John Bowler).

BLACKCAP. At Balephuil, Tiree one was there on 1 Nov with two on 13 Nov and one from 17 to 22 Nov. One was at Tobermory, Mull on 7 and 13 Nov.



Photos of some late autumn migrants from Balephuill, Tiree. Upper photo of a Brambling on 17 November, middle photo of a Tree Sparrow on 15 November, and lower photo of a female Blackcap on 17 November (all images ©John Bowler)

WAXWING. One or two were noted on Islay on 13 Nov and seven were in Bowmore on 22 Dec. One was seen at Balephuill, Tiree on 21 Nov.

FIELDFARE. There was a high count of around 1,000 birds in the Drumlemble area, Kintyre on 11 Nov.

REDWING. In Mid-Argyll there was a flock of 650 in the Dalvore/Drimvore (Moine Mhor area) on 13 and 19 Nov. Around 1,000 birds were counted on Tiree on 24 Nov.

BLACK REDSTART. A female/immature was seen near Loch A' Phuill, Tiree during 7-16 Nov (John Bowler).

NORTHERN WHEATEAR. Two were at Uisken-tuie, Islay on 1 Nov.

TREE SPARROW. Two were seen at Balephuill, Tiree on 2 Nov and stayed there until 28 Nov, with one remaining until last seen on 11 Dec (John Bowler).

CHAFFINCH. A flock at Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll increased from 115 in early Jan to a maximum of 240 birds by the end of the month.

BRAMBLING. Most reported together were 12 on the Dunoon Golf Course, Cowal on 2 Nov. There were several reports of smaller numbers elsewhere.

GREENFINCH. At Cullipool, Luing, Mid-Argyll there were nine on 7 Nov. At Achnacroish, Lismore, North Argyll there were 11 on 28 Nov. A flock of 80 birds was discovered during a NEWS survey sector at A 'Chleit Point, Kintyre on 11 Jan. At Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll a group of 15 was seen there on 14 Jan.

YELLOWHAMMER. The highest count on Islay was of five at Scarrabus on 31 Dec. Thirty-six were at Kilmory Ross Farm near Barraholm (past Tayvallich), Mid-Argyll on 19 Jan. Up to eight were seen in Alan Spellman's Garden at Lochdon, Mull in Jan.

SNOW BUNTING. One was seen at Ardhav, Islay on 18 Nov, and one was at The Oa, Islay on 21 Nov. One was at Gott tip, Tiree on 9 Dec.

Jim Dickson, Argyll Bird Recorder

STOP PRESS (up to 21 February)

MANX SHEARWATER. One bird flew past Tiree on Feb 2, the earliest island record.

AMERICAN HERRING GULL. A first-winter bird was reported from Tiree on 15 Feb (John Bowler).

Articles for the June issue of the *Eider* should
with the editor before the
20th May 2016

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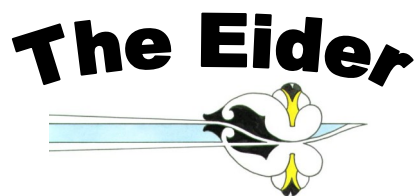
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The *Eider* is the quarterly newsletter of the **Argyll Bird Club**. The editor welcomes articles about birds, wildlife conserva-
tion and ecology in Argyll, including articles of a wider natural
history interest, notices of forthcoming events, book 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, Septem-
ber 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 nec-
essarily those of the **Argyll Bird Club**.

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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 rela-
tively small and widely dispersed. The club hosts two one-day meet-
ings each year, in spring and autumn. The venue of the spring meeting
is rotated between different towns, including Dunoon, Oban and
Lochgilphead. The autumn meeting/AGM is held in a convenient cen-
tral location, usually near Lochgilphead. The club organises field trips
for members. It publishes the *Argyll Bird Report*. Additional or past
copies can be purchased from the Treasurer. Your annual subscription
entitles you to one copy of the *Argyll Bird Report*, four issues of the
Eider and free admission to the two indoor meetings. New members
are always welcome, whether you live in Argyll or not. Membership
categories and rates are:

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

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