

Argyll Bird Report

Volume 18 (2002)
with Systematic List for the year

2001





Cover Picture

SNOWY EGRET

Balvicar, Seil Island, Argyll, November 2001
(see pp 28 and 109-114)

Photograph kindly provided by Bill Jackson

The Eighteenth ARGYLL BIRD REPORT

**With Systematic List for the year
2001**

Edited by
J.C.A. Craik

Assisted by
Paul Daw

Systematic List by
Paul Daw

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Argyll Bird Club**
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Argyll Bird Club

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Founded in 1985, the Argyll Bird Club aims to promote interest in and conservation of Argyll's wild birds and their natural environment. The rich diversity of habitats in the county supports an exceptional variety of bird life. Many sites in Argyll are of international importance. The Club brings together people with varied experience, from complete beginners to experts, and from all walks of life. New members are particularly welcome.

Activities

Every spring and autumn there is a one-day meeting with illustrated talks and other features. These meetings are held in conveniently central locations on the mainland. Throughout the year there are field trips to local and more distant sites of interest.

Publications

The annual journal of the Club is the *Argyll Bird Report* containing the Systematic List of all species recorded in the county during the previous year, together with other reports and articles. The less formal quarterly newsletter, *The Eider*, gives details of forthcoming events and activities, reports of recent meetings and field trips, and articles and shorter items by members and others.

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Editorial

Once again the *Argyll Bird Report* consists mostly of the Systematic List, and once again we are all very grateful to Paul Daw, the County Recorder, who has written it with little or no help from anyone else. In doing so he has had to overcome many obstacles and difficulties. Paul deserves many thanks and congratulations from all of us for again producing an excellent and remarkably detailed Systematic List.

I have just received a copy of the latest *Hampshire Bird Report*. Their Systematic List (for 2002) was written by no fewer than twenty-five contributors who each wrote up a group of birds – more or less one person for each of the bird groups on p 4 (opposite)! Yet Paul has been doing them all single-handedly for many years.

Publication of the *Argyll Bird Report* has already slipped more than two years behind its original schedule. This long delay greatly reduces the topicality and impact of all the interesting records in the Systematic List, some of them of great significance. It's generally agreed that this delay is now the greatest problem facing the club.

Very recently, Paul has started to receive help from a small number of people in tasks such as dealing with rarities and processing records. This is most encouraging. However, more help is needed if the backlog is to be broken. If you would like to restore the much-lamented *status quo ante* and help to make this journal as punctual and timely as it once was, please get in touch with Paul Daw (contact details on page 3).

On behalf of the club, I'd like also to thank the other contributors – Bill Jackson for his enthusiastic article on the Snowy Egret and, especially, for the superb pictures (cover and inside) of that remarkable visitor, the first record for the British Isles, Tristan ap Rheinallt for his description of the first Argyll record of an Arctic Redpoll, Aubrey and Edith Colling for an update on their continuing important work on the Red-throated Divers of Islay, and Margaret Staley for her drawings on p 114. I am most grateful to The Printshop, especially to Dee Rüdiger and Andy Bruce for their speedy and efficient service in the production of this report.

If you have done any work on birds in or around Argyll, why not think about writing your results up and sending them for publication in this journal? If you don't put them on record, others will never know what you discovered. Just think - publication, even in this local context, will bestow a kind of immortality on your work. Otherwise it will sink into oblivion and all your time and effort will have been for nothing.

Even if you have published (say) your PhD results (and there have been plenty of *those* in Argyll!) in a national journal, why not send a suitable version of your findings to the *Argyll Bird Report*? It would reach an interested audience who know the area and can well appreciate what you did.

J. C. A. Craik
Editor
(January 2004)

Systematic list for 2001

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INTRODUCTION

The systematic list below includes entries for 216 species recorded in Argyll during 2001 (*cf* revised totals of 215 in 2000, 222 in 1999, 215 in 1998, 209 in 1997, 213 in 1996, 204 in 1995 and 213 in 1994), making this a slightly better-than-average year for numbers of species. Four of the 216 species, Snowy Egret, Red-breasted Goose, American Black Duck and Arctic Redpoll, are additions to the Argyll list, which now totals 325 species.

The following species were not recorded in Argyll during 2001 and so have been omitted from the list below: Capercaillie *Tetrao tetrix*, Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* and Hoopoe *Upupa epops*.

ORNITHOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF 2001

January was mainly dry and cold at first with SE winds but it became milder later in the month.

The influx of Bohemian Waxwings continued from the end of 2000: no flocks exceeded 30 birds and most records were in the first two weeks of Jan. Most were on the mainland with relatively few birds reaching the islands. The first recorded Lapland Longspur for Colonsay appeared on Oronsay on 1st Jan and stayed until 14th Jan. In Oban Harbour the Mute Swan flock peaked at 63 on 2nd Jan; and the count of Long-tailed Duck in the Sound of Gigha reached 18 on 5th Jan. Eurasian Siskins were more numerous than usual in Jan and records included a flock of 100 or more nr Rhugarbh Croft (Appin) on 5th Jan. Sanderling numbers on Tiree were at their greatest on 9th Jan when a total of 255 were found in Balephetrish, Gott and Salum Bays. There were several reports of wintering Blackcaps including a pr at a bird table at Peninver from 6th-10th Jan. The first-winter Red-necked Grebe at Port Lunna (L Sween), first seen in 2000, was still there on 14th Jan. A single Black-billed Magpie at Lingerton Tip (Lochgilhead) on 25th Jan was well outside the normal range. An over-wintering Black-tailed Godwit was at RSPB L. Guinart in Jan and Feb.

A mild period at the start of February was followed by a colder spell with snow that did not lie for long. It was mainly dry later in the month with some sunny periods but overnight frosts.

A lone Bohemian Waxwing was with Redwings and Fieldfares at Minard on 6th Feb, and a single European Goldfinch on Oronsay on 7th-9th Feb was an unusual visitor for the island. Our regular male American Wigeon was present at L Crinan until at least 11th Feb and from mid-Jan was paired with a female Eurasian Wigeon. The possibility of confusing hybrids looms. A single bird in L Indaal on 18th Feb was the only Little Auk seen in the

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early part of the year; and **Snow Buntings**, five of which were near the summit of Beinn Bheula on 18th Feb, were also scarce. The 28 **Yellowhammers** seen at L Skerrols on 26th Feb were the largest single flock of the year. A survey along the west coast of *Tiree* on 24th Feb revealed a minimum of 35 **Purple Sandpipers**, quite a good total for a species that is relatively scarce nowadays in Argyll.

After snow early in March it became milder mid-month, with some showers. It then became drier but colder with SE winds, strong at times. It was very mild at the end of the month.

A **Great Crested Grebe** on Campbeltown Loch on 21st Mar was the first of five birds seen during the year. A male **Blackcap** in Oban on 16th Mar was almost certainly an overwintering bird. As is often the case, the first spring migrant was a **Northern Wheatear**, seen at Upper Killeyan on 19th Mar. The only other spring migrants reported during the month were two **Sandwich Terns** at Brunerican Bay (Southend) on 30th Mar. A sprinkling of **Snow Buntings** during the month included one on Oronsay on 12th, 3 at Machir Bay on 21st Mar and one at Carnain (L Indaal) on 22nd Mar. The last **Bohemian Waxwings** of the spring were 3 in Albert Lane (Oban) on 24th Mar.

The first half of April was mild with frequent showers. Colder towards the latter part of the month, still with showers and fairly light but cold winds from NE/SE.

The first spring migrants of the month were a single **Sand Martin** at Connel on 1st Apr and single **Barn Swallows** at Bridgend and Smaull on 2nd. A **Black-billed Magpie** was at Peninver on 6th Apr, and the last two **Snow Buntings** were on the south side of Glas-bheinn Mhor on 8th. In common with several other summer migrants, the first **Common Chiffchaff** was somewhat later than usual, the first singing bird being at Cnoc Fada (L Gorm) on 8th Apr. This was followed by a male **Ring Ouzel** at Aros Park gates on 13th and a **Common Cuckoo** calling at Strone (Minard) on 16th Apr. There was a short pause until the first **Common Grasshopper Warblers** (3 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 20th Apr) were reported. These were followed by **Tree Pipits** at Fernoch (Kilmichael) and at Skipness on 24th, a **Sedge Warbler** singing on Sanda Island on 27th Apr and a **Wood Warbler** singing at Craignish Estate (Ardfern) on 29th Apr. In contrast with some of the late arrivals, the **Spotted Flycatcher** at Craignish Estate on 28th Apr was the earliest-ever record of the species in Argyll. The last **Fieldfare** was on Sanda Island on 26th; and passage migrants included two **Eurasian Dotterels** feeding on sheep-grazed pasture on Oronsay on 27th Apr and a male **Lapland Longspur** in breeding plumage at Machrihanish SBO on 29th. A **Green Woodpecker** on the Craignish Estate on 27th Apr had been calling 2 or 3 days previously and was well away from the recent known range of the species.

May was mainly dry with just a few showers. It was often quite warm although with a cool easterly breeze at times. A period of cooler weather with prolonged rain occurred at the end of the month.

In common with several other species, **Whinchats** were apparently later than usual, the first being one on *Colonsay* on 1st May. The first **Common Whitethroat**, at RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd May, was also on the late side. However the first **Common Swifts**, two at Tobermory on 5th May, were slightly earlier than usual. A systematic count along the west coast of *Kintyre* on 6th May produced a total of 22 **Red-throated Divers** and 39 **Black-throated Divers**, mostly in the Sound of Gigha, as well as an impressive total of 417 **Great Northern Divers**. A **Black-billed Magpie** was seen several times during May in Lochgair,

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another was seen twice at Macharioch, and one was at West Drumlembie on 6th May. The only Eurasian Marsh Harriers recorded during the year were both seen on 6th May: an immature/female at Machrihanish Airfield had first been seen the day before, and an adult female at L Gruinart on 6th May remained in the area until at least 6th Sep. Also on 6th May, an adult male and an immature male Surf Scoter were seen off Ronachan Point, only the 12th record for Argyll of a species that has nevertheless been reported more frequently in recent years. The first Garden Warbler was at Taynish NNR on 8th May followed by birds at Moine Mhor on 10th. A pr at L an Eilein on 9th and 10th May were the only Garganey recorded during the year. A male Spotted Crake called at RSPB L. Gruinart for a few days in mid-May but there was no evidence of breeding. Churring European Nightjars were heard at L na Cuilce on 11th May and at Cnoc Reamhar (nr Tarbert, Kintyre) on 17th May. As nothing was heard at either site subsequently, these were presumably migrants. Two Wood Sandpipers at RSPB L. Gruinart on 16th May were the only Argyll records for the year. A very late Redwing was seen on Sanda Island on 27th May and trapped the following day; and a Blue-headed Wagtail was seen just outside the hide at Machrihanish SBO on 30th May.

Early June was rather cool with light rain and drizzle at times. It became warmer but still with a good number of showers and it was rather humid by the end of the month.

A Turtle Dove reported from a garden in Salen during 7th-15th Jun was one of three seen during the year. The 8th Jun was an unusual date for two pale-morph adult Pomarine Skuas with full 'spoons' seen NE of The Garvellachs. Also on 8th Jun, a bunting seen and photographed at Machrins was described as a presumed female, either Red or Black-headed Bunting. The British Birds Rarities Committee decided that it was a female Black-headed Bunting, the first accepted record of a female in Argyll. On 15th Jun our first new Argyll species of the year, an adult male American Black Duck, was found at L a' Phuill, one of only six Scottish records. On the afternoon of 14th Jun a rare visitor to Argyll, a Eurasian Wryneck, was identified at Croig. A flock of 138 Canada Geese seen in L Linnhe just north of Lurignich (and just within the Argyll recording area) on 17th Jun was probably the largest gathering of the species so far recorded in Argyll waters. A second extra-limital Black-billed Magpie was found at Cairmbaan on 18th Jun. The first of two Ring-billed Gulls, an adult with a damaged right wing, appeared at Crossapol Farm on 23rd Jun. Song Thrushes are common birds throughout most of Argyll but one singing regularly at dawn on 23rd-30th Jun on Lunga was the first record on the Treshnish Isles in 30 years of visits by the Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group; and another was seen on Cairn na Burgh Beg on 28th Jun. Prior to a thunderstorm at Machrihanish SBO on 26th Jun, a remarkable total of 157 Common Swifts were counted flying E and NE in off the sea over a period of 4 hrs. The only records of Common Quail for the year came from *Coll*, where 3 birds were calling at the RSPB reserve during Jun and one was calling west of Breachacha Castle on 9th Jul.

The breeding season

Despite reasonable weather during most of the crucial period, our breeding birds experienced mixed fortunes in 2001. Divers did rather poorly. There was low productivity at monitored Red-throated Diver sites and, with no young at all being fledged, it was the worst breeding season for Black-throated Divers since 1988. There was limited information on breeding success of Manx Shearwaters and Storm Petrels; and at least

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one colony of **Cormorants**, on Carraig an Daimh (Sound of Jura), reared no young at all because of egg predation and nest destruction by an unidentified predator. The relatively few heronries monitored were reasonably productive: Eilean Eoghainn (West L Tarbert), for example, had 21 medium to large young **Grey Herons** in 16 nests on 10th Jun.

Wildfowl. Mute Swans appear to have had a very poor year: of 20 prs checked in late summer, 4 prs had 10 young and 16 prs had no young (0.50 young/pr observed in late summer); another nine are known to have nested but the outcome was unknown. Relatively little quantitative information was available for our breeding duck species. A female **Mandarin Duck** incubating eggs in a nestbox on L Eck on 30th May was the only breeding record received for the species; and a female **Eurasian Teal** with 7 ducklings at Drimvore on 1st Jun was the first confirmed breeding record for Moine Mhor NNR. The SAMS study found 721 breeding **Eiders** in Argyll at 27 sites: ca 521 of these (72%) were on the Burnt Islands (Kyles of Bute) and 94 % of the total were at the six largest colonies. At least 8 prs of **Black Scoter** were present at the regular breeding site on *Islay* in early Jun.

Raptors. Information regarding **Hen Harriers** on *Islay* included data from a full survey of the Rinns of *Islay* Special Protection Area carried out for SNH, in which all sites with past breeding records were visited. Eggs were laid in 18 of 24 occupied territories on *Islay* and at least 50 young were fledged. At 34 **Common Buzzard** territories in Argyll where eggs were known to have been laid, a minimum of 52 young were fledged. **Golden Eagles** had an average year with 21 young fledged from 27 monitored territories where eggs were known to have been laid, and there was an apparent first recorded breeding attempt in a new area of Argyll. Our **Osprey** population increased to five breeding prs, all of which were successful, raising a total of ten young. Very little information was received for **Merlin**. Numbers of **Corn Crake** breeding on *Coll* continued their recent steady increase, but overall numbers in Argyll were slightly down on 2000 (at 237), possibly due to the poor summer. Among our familiar but declining species of waders, 165 prs of **Northern Lapwing** were found at RSPB L. Gruinart, 117 at Ardnave, 15 at Smaull, 52 prs on *Coll* and only 17 prs on *Colonsay*. **Common Snipe** fared slightly better: on *Islay* 68 prs were found at RSPB L. Gruinart, 34 prs on the Ardnave peninsula and 6 prs at Smaull RSPB Reserve, and 42 drumming birds were located on *Colonsay* on 12th Jun. On *Islay*, the total of 105 prs of **Common Redshank** at RSPB L. Gruinart was an increase on recent years and there were also 2 prs at Smaull RSPB Reserve and 30 prs at Ardnave; *Coll* RSPB Reserve had 15 prs nesting, and a total of 19 prs were found on *Colonsay* (including Oronsay). A pair of **Common Greenshank** probably bred in *N Argyll* and an adult was seen feeding young at a site on *Mull*.

The attempts of **Great Skuas** to breed on the Treshnish Isles were not successful but there were reports of prs breeding on Staffa and on *Coll*. Away from Sanda and the Treshnish Isles, the only really successful gull colonies monitored were at sites where mink were trapped systematically. Thus 176 prs of **Black-headed Gull** fledged 164 young, ca 810 prs of **Mew Gulls** at 16 sites fledged ca 715 young, ca 810 prs of **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at 10 sites fledged ca 299 young, 6,816 prs of **Herring Gulls** at 31 monitored colonies fledged 4,565 young (higher productivity at mink controlled sites) and 536 prs of **Great Black-backed Gulls** fledged ca 501 young. **Sandwich Terns**, only sporadic breeders in Argyll, may well have bred in 2001; prs were present at Fladda (Sound of Luing) and at Machrihanish. Many sites that held thriving colonies of gulls and terns in the 1980s and earlier are now deserted, largely as a result of mink predation. At SAMS monitored sites

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1,040 prs of Common Terns were counted breeding at 11 sites; birds may have deserted the largest regular colony in early Jun and bred elsewhere. In all they fledged *ca* 480 young and the largest successful colony, at L Melfort, held a record 442 prs. Among 250 prs of Arctic Terns that fledged 85 young, a fifty-pair colony on Fladda (Luing) failed completely after mink predation during egg laying. At L a' Phuill there were 34 active nests on 25^o Jun, 260 were counted nesting on a small islet at Milton with *ca* 60 fledglings on 24^o Jul; and *ca* 300 birds noted around Gunna Island on 26^o Jul included 60+ fledglings. At least 45 prs/nests of Little Tern were found on *Coll, Islay* and *Tiree*. There were no major changes in numbers of breeding Common Guillemots and Razorbills at monitored colonies on the Treshnish Isles, Sanda Islands and on the sample cliffs at Uragaig. On the Treshnish Isles in late Jun, adult Atlantic Puffins were apparently occupying burrows on Lunga, Sgeir a Chaisteil, Fladda and Cairn na Burgh Beg, and 290 adult birds were counted around the Sanda Islands. At 30 monitored Barn Owl territories on *Mull* and the mainland where eggs were laid, a minimum of 57 young were fledged. Two Long-eared Owl nests containing young were found on *Colonsay* and one at a site on *Mull*. Short-eared Owls bred successfully at Smaull RSPB Reserve, a pr bred at Moine Mhor NNR for the first time since 1997, and 4 successful prs were located in *Cowal*.

More Sand Martin colonies were reported on than usual, including 336 burrows at the large, regularly monitored colony at North Connel sandpit, and breeding was suspected, for the first time, on *Tiree*. Numbers of several of our common resident species were well down on 2000, possibly due to the colder winter of 2000-2001. At Tainish NNR, Winter Wren territories were down from 76 in 2000 to 56 in 2001, Robin down from 31 territories to 15, and Coal Tit were down to 4 territories, the lowest count since the census there began (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 9). Only 13 prs of Common Stonechats were located on *Colonsay* compared with 36 prs in 2000. Not all species were affected, as Common Blackbirds at Tainish NNR were up to 7 territories (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 5). There was a mixed picture among summer visitors. Tree Pipits were down to 11 territories at Tainish NNR (*cf* 17 in 2000) and Sedge Warbler numbers on *Colonsay* were down to only 31 singing birds, compared with 60 in 2000. At Bonawe nestboxes, only one of four prs of Pied Flycatchers was successful, and all three boxes occupied by Redstarts failed due to predation. With only one other record of Pied Flycatcher in 2001, there must be doubts about the future of the species in Argyll. On the plus side, the nine Common Whitethroat territories at Tainish NNR was also a record and singing male Whitethroats on *Colonsay* increased once more, to 25. Willow Warblers at Tainish NNR had another good season with 88 territories identified compared with *ca* 50 in the early 1990s. Blue Tits and Great Tits at Tainish NNR, with 22 and 10 territories respectively, had an average season, but the real surprise was the 3 prs of Long-tailed Tits nesting in Colonsay House gardens in June, the first breeding record for the island.

There was no count of breeding Red-billed Choughs on *Islay* in 2001, but *Colonsay* had 12 successful prs and a pr also nested successfully on *Oronsay*. There now seems to be only a single bird remaining on *Mull* and there was no information from *Jura*. Rooks on *Islay* had their best year since the regular survey of rookeries began, with 442 nests at 9 active colonies. The 36 monitored Common Raven territories on *Colonsay, Mull* and *Cowal* produced a minimum of 81 young. Lesser Redpolls apparently had a good year with a record total of 8 territories in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR and the first confirmed breeding records for the Sanda Islands, where 3 prs produced at least 15 fledged young.

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Finally, although it seems that **Corn Buntings** are now extinct as a breeding species in Argyll, the intriguing record of a singing bird on Gigha in Jul raises the possibility of future re-colonisation.

July began humid and wet with unseasonable gales at times. The second half of the month was drier with good sunny periods, although with some overcast and humid weather at the end.

In early Jul, 67 **Rock Pipits** were counted along 760m of shore at Carskief. A juv **Eurasian Dotterel** seen flying down from Beinn Dorian on 1st Jul raises the possibility that the species bred nearby. The 377 **European Storm Petrels** counted flying S past Machrihanish SBO on 7th Jul was a record day-total, and a **Great Crested Grebe** was seen from the observatory on 9th-10th Jul. The first large flock of **Common Linnets**, good numbers of which appeared during autumn, was 300+ at Southend on 18th Jul. Two colour-ringed **Black-tailed Godwit** were seen on *Tiree* during Jul: the first, at Heylipol on 22nd, had been ringed at Farlington Marshes, Portsmouth, Hants on 16th Nov 1998, and the second, at Cornaig on 24th, had been ringed as an adult male at Holbeach, Norfolk on 7th Sep 1998.

A **Turtle Dove** was seen in flight at Pennygael on 26th Jul. From early Jul onwards, **Common Crossbills** were widespread in Argyll and records included 12 or more feeding on Japanese Larch cones at for at least two weeks from 3rd Jul at Largimore, 10 feeding on Thrift on 15th Jul at West Hynish (part of a small influx), ca 10 at Campbeltown on 26th Jul, and up to 28 during Jul-Aug at Saddell.

After a few bright sunny days early on, August became overcast and wet for at least the second and third weeks. It was redeemed by some drier but still rather cool weather in the last week of the month.

At least 40 **Mistle Thrushes** flew over Crannich on 15th Aug. A **Green Sandpiper** at RSPB L. Gruinart on 17th Aug was the only record of the year; and three **Roseate Terns** at Big Scone islet (Machrihanish Bay) from 17th-19th Aug were the first record of this species in Argyll for six years. Frenchman's Rocks had four **Balearic Shearwaters** on 18th Aug, two on 25th Aug and one on 2nd Sep. On 19th Aug the first of three adult **Pomarine Skuas** seen during the autumn flew south past Machrihanish SBO; and **Common Tern** passage there peaked with a count of 157 birds incl. 11 juvs. The first **Little Stint** of the autumn, a juv, was in the Add Estuary on 21st Aug. Unusually large flocks of **European Greenfinches** reported in late summer and early autumn included 140 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 23rd Aug and 100+ at Tayinloan on 24th Aug. A single **Corn Bunting** was seen at Fidden on 22nd Aug, one of only two records during the year. On 31st Aug a heavy passage of shearwaters off Machrihanish SBO included 3 **Great Shearwaters** and 2 **Balearic Shearwaters** as well as 2,800 **Manx Shearwaters** flying S in 7 hrs.

Apart from a brief period of gale force NW winds early in the month, September was mainly fine and relatively warm for much of the month. It became much cooler with strong NE winds during the last week.

It was an excellent autumn for seabird passage, both for rarities and for record day-counts at the two regular sea-watching sites. On 1st Sep 57 **Sooty Shearwaters** flew past Frenchman's Rocks and a record day-count of 320 flying S in WNW winds was made in 7 hrs on 2nd Sep. The first **Leach's Storm-Petrels** were also at Frenchman's Rocks where 11 flew S on 2nd

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Sep, and on 13th Sep, during gale force winds, Machrihanish SBO had a day-count of no less than 82. Machrihanish SBO had a record count of approx. 10,000 Manx Shearwaters flying S in 12 hours on 7th Sep during a WNW gale; and the same gale produced an adult and a juv Sabine's Gull at Frenchman's Rocks and 3 juv Sabine's Gulls at Machrihanish SBO. It was an above-average autumn for the last species, with 4 records involving 8 birds. On 13th Sep, a juvenile/1st winter Long-tailed Skua was at Machrihanish SBO (the first of three Argyll records during the autumn) and 2 Great Shearwaters were seen from Balevullin during gale force NNW winds.

White Wagtail passage on Sanda Island reached a peak of at least 50 on 11th Sep. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper seen near Frenchman's Rocks on 12th Sep was probably a juv, and only the 8th record of this transatlantic visitor to Argyll. It was a good year for Grey Phalaropes with records involving at least 13 birds: at Machrihanish SBO one was seen in the early evening of 12th Sep but at least 6 passed through on the afternoon of 15th Sep. On 14th Sep the first of two radio-tagged European Honey-buzzards reported in Sep was tracked flying over the sea due W of Islay. A Common Redpoll seen close to the shore at Balemartine on 15th Sep was considered to be either of the race *rostrata* (from Greenland) or *islandica* (from Iceland) with *rostrata* the more likely. An even rarer Redpoll appeared at Craighens, Gruinart on 22nd Sep: after careful examination it was identified as an Arctic Redpoll, the first accepted record for Argyll (see pp 115-120). Late migrants included a Sedge Warbler in irises at Kilkenneth on 26th Sep, a Turtle Dove at Balephuill on 29th Sep and two Spotted Flycatchers at different locations on Tiree on 30th Sep. A Yellow-browed Warbler in a garden at Kilkenneth on 27th Sep remained there until 1st Oct; there have now been three records of this rare migrant in the last four years.

A bird flying SW at Hynish on 29th Sep was the first of two accepted records of juv/1st winter Black Terns; the other was at Machrihanish SBO on 6th Oct. This scarce migrant has also been seen more frequently in recent years. Another adult Pomarine Skua flew SW off Hynish on 29th Sep. On 30th Sep a flock of ca 15 Curlew Sandpipers were seen flying SW at L a' Phuill and two more were at Barrapol Dunes. Unusually, the Common Kingfisher seen at Bishop's Glen Lake (Dunoon) on at least two occasions in late Sep was the only record received during the year. Numbers found during the autumn Eider Count were generally down on previous years, although an increase in the L Fyne count partially helped to compensate for this; apart from the outer Ayrshire coast, there were low levels in the Firth of Clyde as a whole.

The first week of October had strong SW winds but was relatively mild with squally showers. It remained mild with sunny periods and showers until the end of the month, when it became cooler and wetter.

No fewer than three first-year Little Gulls were recorded in Oct, one at Ulva Ferry on 1st-4th Oct, one in Gunna Sound on 27th Oct and one flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 31st Oct. An immature male Ring-necked Duck at L a' Phuill on 3rd Oct was only our 8th record since the first in 1982. The last Pomarine Skua records of the year concerned a juv flying W across the mouth of Balephetrish Bay on 2nd Oct and, curiously, another juv on the same day at Machrihanish SBO. On 4th Oct, an immature American Golden Plover was found in a large flock of European Golden Plover at Greenhill. It was only our second record of this rare vagrant. On the same day, a very vocal adult Lapland Longspur was feeding in rough grass at Loch a' Phuill. Single Great Crested Grebes were at Machrihanish SBO on 11th & 18th Oct and at Blairmore on 13th Oct; and a juv. Long-tailed Skua was seen from the Barra

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ferry, just off the NW tip of *Mull*, on 12th Oct. The returning American Wigeon was first seen in L Crinan on 5th Oct and then intermittently there until the end of the year. An eclipse male of this species was identified at L a' Phuill on 3rd Oct and remained there until 9th Oct. The good run of **Grey Phalarope** records continued into Oct with one seen from the ferry just S of *Coll* on 3rd Oct, three first-winter birds feeding close inshore at Sorobaidh Bay on 7th and one in winter plumage at Bowmore (L Indaal) on 17th Oct.

Goldcrests are scarce visitors to *Tiree*, but single birds were present in gardens at Balemartine on 8th Oct and at Scarinish on 8th Nov. A late **Eurasian Dotterel** was spotted in a flock of **European Golden Plovers** at Middleton on 9th Oct. The first **Iceland Gull**, a first-winter bird, was reported at Machrihanish SBO on 12th Oct; and a first-winter **Yellow Wagtail** seen on Uisaed Point on 13th Oct was the only autumn record of this scarce migrant. A single very late **Common Swift** was seen flying S over the Mull of Oa on 23rd Oct. A male **Surf Scoter** was seen at Bruichladdich on 24th Oct, extending the continuous run of annual records to six years; and by 24th Oct an estimated 2,000 **Fieldfares** and 2,000 **Redwings** were at Laggan and 1,200 **Fieldfares** and 800 **Redwings** at Kilkivan. On 27th Oct our third new species of the year, an adult **Red-breasted Goose**, was found with **Barnacle Geese** at RSPB L. Gruinart. It remained until the end of the year, briefly at L Gorm but mostly at L Gruinart. The first of three **Little Auks** flew past Machrihanish SBO on 27th Oct and on the same day **Whooper Swans** at The Laggan reached a peak of 114 birds. Away from their usual haunts, a **Hedge Accentor** was recorded at Craighouse on 28th Oct and *Tiree* also had single birds in a mature garden at Balemartine in Oct/Nov.

November was mainly wet and windy apart from a brief cooler and drier period mid-month.

The last **Little Gull** of the year flew over Tayvallich on 1st Nov, an adult **Glaucous Gull** was seen at Traigh Bhi on 15th Nov, and a first-winter **Iceland Gull** was in the Gribun Sands area of L na Keal from 16th-24th Nov. During the month, single **Bramblings** were at Sunderland on 3rd and at Bridgend Woods on 4th, two were nr Ardilistry Bay on 4th Nov and two males were on stubble at Mannal on 10th Nov. A very late **Sand Martin** was feeding over Ardilistry Bay on 4th Nov, two late **Curlew Sandpipers** were with **Golden Plovers** at Heylipol on 13th Nov, and a very late **Ruff** was seen at L Gruinart on 24th and 26th Nov.

*The ornithological event of the year was the discovery of a **Snowy Egret**, a species never before recorded in Britain, at Balvicar on 5th Nov. A major 'twitch' was soon underway (see cover picture and article on pp 109-114).*

Among several leucistic **Common Starlings** noted on *Tiree* were two at Heylipol on 18th Nov, one with white rump and tail and the other sandy brown all over. An adult male **Green-winged Teal** at Bruichladdich on 18th Nov was seen intermittently until the end of the year, and another male first seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 25th Nov was also present until the year's end. The only **Stock Pigeons** recorded during the year were two nr Carnasserie Castle on 16th Nov, but numbers of **Rock Pigeons** at Smaull RSPB Reserve reached a peak of 336 on 19th Nov. A second **Lapland Longspur** feeding in an uncut meadow behind Balinoe Post Office on 22nd Nov later flew off to the south; and a small influx of **European Greenfinches** on *Tiree* in late Nov included 2 at Kenovay on 22nd and 3 at Hynish on 24th Nov. At least 100 **Common Ravens** were counted flying to roost nr Silvercraigs (Lochgilphead) on 24th Nov. A juv **Barn Swallow** seen feeding around Aros Castle on 25th Nov may well be the latest ever recorded in Argyll; and an immature **Grey Wagtail** at Crossapol Farm on 28th Nov was a rare visitor to the island.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2001

December was unusually dry with good amounts of sunshine from time to time. A good deal of frost and heavy snow showers at the end of the month left snow lying at the end of the year.

Single male Bramblings were seen regularly in gardens at Furnace and at Gorten during Dec, a male was with Chaffinches in Dunoon on 17th Dec, and six Bramblings were at L Gorm on 31st Dec. Large numbers of Sanderlings continued to be recorded at Balephetrish Bay until the end of the year and peaked at 320 on 1st Dec. Very cold-toned Common Chiffchaffs seen at Heylipol on 4th-5th Dec and at Kenovay on 18th Dec were very late migrants and probably examples of the Scandinavian race *abietinus*. A survey on Tiree on 10th Dec produced a total of 3,674 Greylag Geese, the highest recorded count there, but Greenland White-fronted Geese totalled only 16,078 in mid-Dec, still well below average for recent years. Slavonian Grebe numbers in L Indaal peaked at 30 on 9th Dec. A Little Auk was seen close inshore at Kilfinichen on 19th Dec. A first-winter Ring-billed Gull on the outskirts of Bowmore on 29th Dec was the second example of this scarce transatlantic vagrant species seen during 2001. A first-winter Iceland Gull near the Woollen Mill (Bridgend) on 29th Dec was more expected. The peak count of Mute Swans in Oban harbour was 65 (inc. 6 juvs.) on 30th Dec.

BIRD RECORDING IN ARGYLL

Advice to contributors

When submitting records, sightings should be listed in Vooos order (as in this report) and should include the following details.

Species name. The commonly used English name is usually sufficient (*British Birds* = List of English Names... versions acceptable if preferred) but scientific (Latin) name is helpful if reporting sub-species.

EURING Code No. - if possible (helps to speed up computer input).

Date. Please give exact date whenever possible (rather than 'June' or 'Spring') as this makes the record much more valuable and enables us to relate it to other records received.

Grid reference if known (six figure ref. preferred but a four figure ref. is often sufficient).

Location. Used in conjunction with grid ref. to avoid ambiguity (e.g. there are umpteen Loch Dubhs in Argyll) but mistakes can also occur with grid refs!

Number of individuals. Precise number whenever possible or, failing this, an estimate. Even a rough estimate is more useful than 'many', 'large flock', 'several' or 'few', which are too subjective to have much value.

Sex and age - if known

Other interesting comments are always welcome e.g. indications of breeding, behaviour, food, interactions with other birds/animals etc. Individual anecdotes add value to what can otherwise be rather a 'dry' report

Rare birds

Details of rarities should be sent in as soon as possible after the sighting, if possible on a standard form (available from Recorder). They will be judged locally by the Argyll Bird Records Committee (whose members are listed on p. 3) sent on to the *Scottish Birds* Records Committee (SBRC), or sent on to the *British Birds* Rarities Committee (BBRC), as appropriate.

The list below details rare species whose occurrence in Argyll needs to be fully documented. It is made up of the ABRC list of Argyll rarities (in lower case) and the SBRC list of Scottish rarities (in capitals - NB this includes the species shown in both upper and lower case in the SBRC official list), but excludes the large number of UK rarities assessed by BBRC. Asterisked species have occurred in Argyll.

No record of any of the species and plumage phases listed below will be published unless adequate supporting details (including a description) are available. In addition, brief details may be requested for occurrences of scarce species not on the list where the circumstances appear to warrant this.

BIRD RECORDING IN ARGYLL

List of SBRC and ABRC species and subspecies, 2001

(revised to cover Common Redpoll)

Black-necked Grebe*

CORY'S SHEARWATER*

GREAT SHEARWATER *

BALEARIC SHEARWATER*#

Great Bittern (Bittern)*

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON (NIGHT HERON)*

LITTLE EGRET*

PURPLE HERON

WHITE STORK*

Eurasian Spoonbill (Spoonbill)*

Bean Goose*

European White-fronted Goose (race *albifrons*)*

AMERICAN WIGEON*

GREEN-WINGED TEAL*

Red-crested Pochard*

RING-NECKED DUCK*

SURF SCOTER (except adult males) *

Smew*

Ruddy Duck*

EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD (HONEY BUZZARD)*

MONTAGU'S HARRIER

Goshawk*

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD*

EURASIAN HOBBY (HOBBY)*

COMMON CRANE (CRANE)*

Avocet*

STONE-CURLEW*

LITTLE PLOVER (LITTLE RINGED PLOVER)*

KENTISH PLOVER

Temminck's Stint*

PECTORAL SANDPIPER*

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER*

Red-necked Phalarope* (away from traditional breeding areas)

Long-tailed Skua (except adult)*

Mediterranean Gull*

SABINE'S GULL*

RING-BILLED GULL*

HERRING GULL (yellow legged races *michahellis* and *cachinnans*)*

Roseate Tern*

Black Tern*

Little Owl

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER (BEE-EATER)*

Eurasian Wryneck (Wryneck)*

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK (SHORT-TOED LARK)

WOOD LARK (Woodlark)

BIRD RECORDING IN ARGYLL

Horned Lark (Shore Lark)*
RICHARD'S PIPIT*
TAWNY PIPIT
WATER PIPIT
COMMON NIGHTINGALE (NIGHTINGALE)*
Bluethroat*
CETTI'S WARBLER
AQUATIC WARBLER
MARSH WARBLER
Eurasian Reed Warbler (Reed Warbler)*
ICTERINE WARBLER*
MELODIOUS WARBLER
DARTFORD WARBLER
BARRED WARBLER*
Lesser Whitethroat*
PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER (PALLAS'S WARBLER)
Yellow-browed Warbler*
FIRECREST*
RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER*
Bearded Tit
Marsh Tit
Willow Tit*
Crested Tit*
Wood Nuthatch (Nuthatch)*
Red-backed Shrike*
WOODCHAT SHRIKE*
ROSY STARLING (ROSE-COLOURED STARLING)*
EUROPEAN SERIN (SERIN)
Mealy Redpoll (formerly race of Redpoll)*
Scottish Crossbill
COMMON ROSEFINCH (SCARLET ROSEFINCH)*
Hawfinch*
CIRL BUNTING*
ORTOLAN BUNTING
LITTLE BUNTING*

Because of the frequency of records in Argyll, the SBRC has delegated decision making on this species to the Recorder. Normally a description will not now be required although the ABRC reserve the right to request one if the circumstances seem to require it.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

In the species accounts below, English and scientific names are as in the latest *Scottish Bird Report*; the sequence of species follows the Voous order as in the same report. As agreed by the Argyll Bird Club Committee and following the practice of the *Scottish Bird Report* the official English names as adopted by the British Ornithologists' Union have been used. This involves changes in the names of 108 or so species on the Argyll List although over half of these involve just the addition of the prefixes 'Common', 'Eurasian', 'European' or 'Northern'. To avoid confusion, where there are changes, the 'old' name is shown in brackets after the 'new' name.

Each species heading in the report contains the following information:

Common name - new (old)	Scientific name	Gaelic name	EURING code
e.g. COMMON RAVEN (RAVEN)	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Fitheach	1572

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Each heading is followed by a summary of the bird's known status and distribution within Argyll (see species status categories – below), together with any other relevant information. The information regarding sites of national or international importance for wintering/passage birds is taken from Musgrove, A. J. *et al.* (2001) *The Wetland Bird Survey 1999-2000: Wildfowl and Wader Counts*. The qualifying threshold for identification as such a site is generally that they hold, at some time during the qualifying period, at least 1% of the national (Great Britain) or international population of the species. The minimum qualifying count is normally 50 birds, although a lower figure has sometimes been chosen where the British population is very small. Significant 2001 records are then listed in approximate chronological order. For scarcer species, records for 2001 may be followed by late records or recent acceptances from earlier years.

For the purposes of this report, Argyll is divided into 10 areas, which are named on the accompanying sketch map (p 18). Because very few records have been received from Lismore in recent years, it is no longer considered a separate area but has been merged with *N Argyll*. For similar reasons Gigha is longer considered as a separate area but is included with *Kintyre*. Note that, for the moment at least, boundaries of the Argyll recording area remain unchanged despite local government reorganisation in 1996.

Records of rarities in the systematic list are accompanied by the names of the observer(s), starting with the finder(s)/ identifier(s) (or, in the absence of this information, the person who first reported the bird to me), followed by the observer(s) who submitted details of the record, if different. An asterisk after the square bracket indicates acceptance by the relevant rarities committee. Summarised data from many surveys of breeding birds are also accompanied by the initials of the observers or organisations responsible, in order to help readers who are interested in obtaining more detailed information.

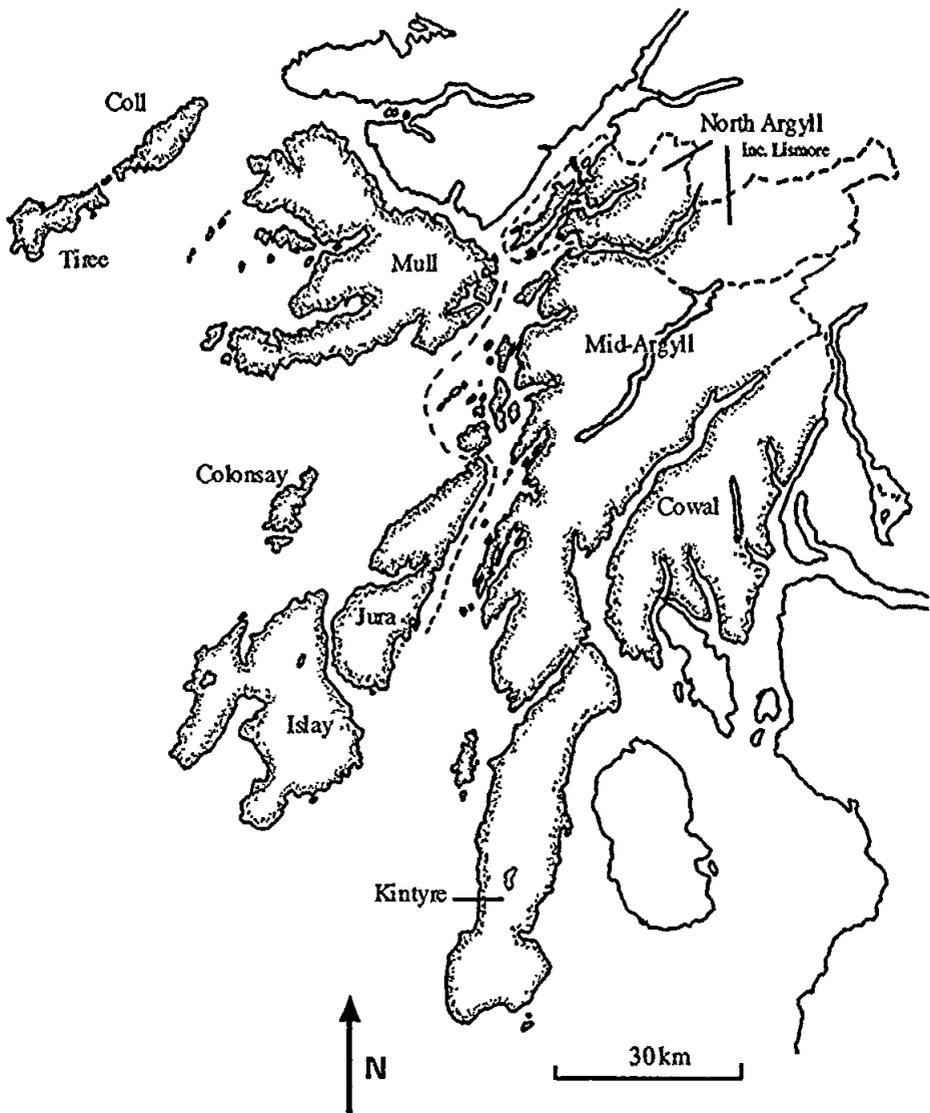
Place names

An attempt has been made to ensure that all place names in the systematic list feature on the 1:50,000 (Landranger Series) Ordnance Survey maps. An exception is The Laggan (*Kintyre*) which refers to the roughly triangular area west of Campbeltown, bordered by the B843, the A83, and Machrihanish Bay. Campbeltown Airport (previously RAF Machrihanish) is in this area. The Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (SBO) is situated at Uisaid Point on the western outskirts of Machrihanish (NR628209). In *Mid-Argyll*, Kilmichael Glen extends north-eastwards from Kilmichael Glassary at NR8593. On *Mull*, the Mishnish Lochs are the series of lochs extending from NM4652 to NM4853.

On *Islay*, the term 'Loch Gruinart' may refer to the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve at Loch Gruinart, or to parts of the loch lying outside the reserve. When a distinction has been made by the observer and when presenting counts of breeding pairs within the reserve, the abbreviation 'RSPB L. Gruinart' is used throughout. The same applies to the use of the terms 'Moine Mhor' and 'Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve (NNR)' (*Mid-Argyll*); I have used the former term to cover an area extending west to the landward edge of Loch Crinan and north to Barsloisnoch.

The following places are mentioned frequently in the text and are cited as shown in the first column. The relevant recording area is shown in the second column and a four figure Grid Ref. is given in the third. Where the location is a large feature (such as many of the sea lochs) the Grid Ref. is conventional and refers to approximately the centre of the feature.

Ardnave Loch	<i>Islay</i>	NR2873
Balephetrish Bay	<i>Tiree</i>	NM0047
Campbeltown Loch	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR7220
Dunoon	<i>Cowal</i>	NS1776
Frenchman's Rocks	<i>Islay</i>	NR1554
Gott Bay	<i>Tiree</i>	NM0546
Loch a' Phuill	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9541
Loch Awe	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NN0016
Loch Bhasapol	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9747
Loch Caolisport	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR7475
Loch Crinan (incl. Add Estuary)	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR7994
Loch Don	<i>Mull</i>	NM7332
Loch an Eilein	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9843
Loch Etive, Outer (i.e. Connel Br. to Taynult)	<i>North Argyll</i>	NM9434
Loch Gilp	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR8685



Map showing the areas of Argyll used in this Report

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Loch Gruinart	<i>Islay</i>	NR2868
Loch Indaal	<i>Islay</i>	NR2961
Loch na Keal	<i>Mull</i>	NM5038
Loch Scridain	<i>Mull</i>	NM4525
Loch Sween	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR7484
Machrihanish SBO (Seabird Observatory)	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR6220
Moine Mhor (National Nature Reserve)	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR8192
Oban	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NM8529
Oronsay (island)	<i>Colonsay</i>	NR3489
Sanda Islands	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR7204
Sorobaith Bay	<i>Tiree</i>	NL9942
Sound of Gigha	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR6749
Tayinloan (jetty)	<i>Kintyre</i>	NR6946
Taynish NNR (National Nature Reserve)	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	NR7384
Treshnish Isles	<i>Mull</i>	NM2842

All other locations are given as a place name followed by the recording area in italics e.g. Minard *Mid-Argyll*. Occasionally, where the locality is not well known, a qualifier may be added in brackets, e.g. Kintallan (Tayvallich), *Mid-Argyll*.

Tables

Tables 2 to 7 are derived in part from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) goose counts (there were no counts in Mar due to Foot-and-Mouth [FMD] access restrictions). Tables 1, 8-19 and 24-35 are based principally on data from the Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS), The Islay Bird and Natural History Report 2001 and John Halliday's (SNH) Moine Mhor NNR and Loch Crinan Bird Reports 2001, although higher counts have been included where available. Tables 20-22, 36 & 37 are based on the Argyll Raptor Study Group monitoring summary 2001 produced by R. A. Broad.

Figures in these tables for 'Loch Gruinart' represent the total for the RSPB Reserve at Loch Gruinart (in particular the area of flooded fields) and Loch Gruinart proper (below high water mark). There were no WeBS counts at these sites from Jun to Sep. Loch Crinan includes the outer Add estuary. In most cases the figures come from the respective WeBS counts for these areas although where higher counts are available these have been used. Also 'Outer Loch Etive' refers to WeBS counts covering the area from Connel Bridge to Taynuilt. 'Tiree' refers to WeBS counts covering the four main freshwater lochs on the island viz. Loch an Eilein, Loch Bhasapol, Loch Riaghain and Loch a'Phuill. For some species, numbers on *Tiree* may have been higher, at any given time, elsewhere on the island: where available appropriate counts are cited in the main text. No WeBS counts were received for Holy Loch, in fact very little information at all was forthcoming for this important site For this reason no information for Holy Loch appears in any of the tables.

Special studies carried out in 2001

Regular monitoring of species and groups of species in Argyll was badly affected in 2001 by access restrictions due to FMD, examples are the goose counts carried out by SNH, the monthly wildfowl and wader counts (WeBS) at several sites, and the monitoring of breeding birds of prey by members of the Argyll Raptor Study Group. Other single-species studies, either new in 2001 or continued from previous years, are referred to in the species accounts. Most of these activities were limited to a greater or lesser extent by FMD access restrictions.

Four further multi-species studies are summarised here to avoid repetition of details in the species accounts.

(1) Breeding Birds Survey (BBS)

The BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), which started in 1994, gives all birdwatchers a chance to take part in important survey work. Its objective is to extend and improve the monitoring of population changes of common breeding birds. It now counts birds annually in more than 2,300 randomly chosen one-km squares in the UK, using a line-transect method. New recruits are always needed for the BBS. If you think you might be interested but are not sure how much time it would take or how expert you need to be, or would like to know the location of the squares needing coverage, please contact your local BTO Representative (see p. 3 for details) or Mike Raven at the BTO, National Centre for Ornithology,

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk, IP24 2PU, (01842) 750050 or e-mail: Mike.Raven@bto.org

Due to FMD only 6 squares were surveyed in Argyll during 2001. They were located in *Colonsay* (NR3588, NR3895) and *Mid-Argyll* (NM9409, NN0615, NR7770 & NR8888). For this reason, BBS data for 2001 have been quoted for only a very few species.

(2) *Common Bird Census*. This national scheme is run by the BTO and involves mapping breeding territories of common and widespread birds in around 200 selected plots throughout the United Kingdom. The aim has been to quantify trends in bird populations and it has been instrumental, for example, in drawing attention to the declines among farmland birds. The scheme has been running since 1962, and from 1990 onwards two plots in the Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, one woodland and one coastal, have been monitored by John Halliday. Because it is very labour intensive (involving around 10 detailed survey visits each breeding season) the CBC has been gradually replaced by the simpler BBS scheme, which requires only three visits. From 2001 the CBC will no longer be supported nationally. However a core of about 50 high priority sites will continue to be supported and fortunately the two Tainish plots are among them. Because of the detailed nature of this survey and the continuity of the work (over 10 years now) at Tainish, the data provided are particularly significant for Argyll.

(3) *Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) study of seabird breeding success* [J. C. A. Craik]. As part of an on-going wider study of seabird breeding success, selected species were monitored in a study area along the west coasts of *Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, and N Argyll* (including Lismore), and at additional sites in *Loch Fyne (Cowall Mid-Argyll)* and *Mull*. For further details see: Craik, J. C. A. (2001). Results of the mink-seabird project in 2001. Privately Published (copies available from Dr J. C. A. Craik, Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory, Oban, Argyll PA37 1QA.).

(4) *Systematic sea-watching at Machrihanish Sea Bird Observatory (Kintyre)* [E. J. Maguire]. Movements of seabirds, wildfowl and waders past this site are monitored regularly during certain months of the year. With a few exceptions, all individual birds flying past when the hide is manned are identified and logged. During 2001 a total of 1,076 hours of observations were undertaken on 135 days from Jun to Nov. In the systematic list below, all records relating to Machrihanish SBO have been provided by E. J. Maguire. More comprehensive data for Machrihanish SBO can be found in Maguire (2002).

Categories of the British list (as revised by the BOURC - Jan 1998):

- Category A. Species that have been recorded in an apparently natural state at least once since 1st Jan 1950.
- Category B. Species that would otherwise be in Category A but have not been recorded since 31st Dec 1949.
- Category C. Species that, although introduced now derive from the resulting self-sustaining populations
- C1. *Naturalised Introductions* Species that have occurred only as a result of introduction e.g. Mandarin Duck, Little Owl.
- C2. *Naturalised Establishments* Species with established populations as a result of introduction by man, but which also occur in an apparently natural state e.g. Canada Goose.
- C3. *Naturalised Re-establishments* Species with populations successfully re-established by man in areas of former occurrence e.g. Red Kite, Capercaillie.
- C4. *Naturalised Feral Species* Domesticated species with populations established in the wild e.g. Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon).
- C5. *Vagrant Naturalised Species* Species from established naturalised populations abroad (none accepted yet although most Ruddy Shelducks occurring here must fall into this category).
- Category D. Species that would otherwise appear in Category A except that there is reasonable doubt that they have ever occurred in a natural state.
- Category E. Species that have been recorded as introductions, transportees, or escapes from captivity, and whose breeding populations (if any) are thought not to be self-sustaining. (E* indicates breeding has been recorded in the wild).

Species status, symbols and abbreviations

Species status categories: definitions.

Resident	Resident and normally sedentary
Breeding	Breeding and wintering ranges may differ
Summer visitor	Breeds unless otherwise stated
Passage migrant	Birds passing through on the way to breeding grounds or winter quarters

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Winter visitor	Includes species that are also resident but whose numbers are augmented by immigrants during the winter months
Introduced	Introduced species recorded in Argyll that may or may not breed here.
Vagrant	Five or fewer records since 1980.
Site of national importance	Sites of national importance in Great Britain (as defined by The Wetland Bird Survey)
<u>Symbols and abbreviations</u>	
*	Record accepted by relevant rarities committee
ABR	<i>Argyll Bird Report</i>
ABRC	Argyll Bird Records Committee
ARSG	Argyll Raptor Study Group
AOB	apparently occupied burrows
AON	apparently occupied nest-sites
AOS	apparently occupied sites
b/-	brood of .young
BBRC	<i>British Birds Rarities Committee</i>
BBS	Breeding Birds Survey
BOURC	British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
ca	<i>circa</i> = approximately
cl/-	clutch of eggs
cf	confer = compare
CBC	Common Birds Census
CES	Constant Effort (ringing) Site
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
incl.	including
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
juv./juvs.	juvenile/juveniles
L	Loch
max.	maximum (the highest of 2 or more counts at a given locality during the period being analysed)
min.	minimum
NCC	Nature Conservancy Council
NEWS	European Non-estuarine Coastal Waterfowl Survey
NNR	National Nature Reserve
n/r	not recorded (in tables of counts, where no count was made)
pr/prs	pair/pairs
RSPB Loch Gr.	Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve
SAMS	Scottish Association for Marine Science
SBO	Seabird Observatory
SBR	<i>Scottish Bird Report</i>
SBRC	<i>Scottish Birds Records Committee</i>
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
TIARG	Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey

ARGYLL BIRD RECORDS 2001

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata* Learga ruadh 0002

Widely distributed but scarce breeder. Also winter visitor and passage migrant.

Jan-May. Reported widely, in small numbers, around islands, in sea lochs and along the coast. The only counts in double figures came from L Indaal (max. 19 on 15th Apr) and Hynish Bay Tìree with 10 on 9th Jan. A systematic count along the W coast of Kintyre on 6th May produced a total of 22 birds, mostly in the Sound of Gigha. As some sections of the coast are inaccessible and access was limited by FMD, this is a min [AH].

Breeding. Of 16 monitored prs at sites in Kintyre, Mid-Argyll and N Argyll only 7 prs successfully raised young.

Sep-Dec. Frenchman's Rocks had 18 flying S in 7 hrs on 7th Sep, while Machrihanish SBO had a total of 241 flying S between 6th Jul and 10th Nov. During the winter months, the only counts of 10 or more were at L Indaal, where 54 birds were found in the Bruichladdich, Blackrock and Bowmore areas on 17th Dec.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica* Learga dhubh 0003

Very scarce breeder in Mid and N Argyll. Scarce in winter but more numerous on passage. L Caolisport is a site of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. Reported widely, in small numbers, around islands, in sea lochs and along the coast. The only single site with 10 or more birds was L Caolisport with a max. of 19 on 14th Jan. However a systematic count along the W coast of Kintyre on 6th May produced a total of 39 birds, mostly in the Sound of Gigha. As for Red-throated Diver, this was a min [AH].

Breeding. Occupancy data were less reliable than usual due to FMD, and interpretation was hindered by irregular occupancy at some hitherto regularly used lochs. Eight regular breeding sites were monitored and pairs were judged to have "summered" at 6 of these; a single was present at one, and one was apparently unoccupied. Clutches were laid at 5 (3 rafts, 2 natural) but no chicks were seen at any sites. This is the poorest success since 1988 and before the current raft programme was instigated. Pairs were reported from 2 further sites where, although data are incomplete, no young were reared; and a single bird was present on one date on Mull where breeding was last recorded in the 1970s [RAB/RSPB].

Sep-Dec. One to 6 birds were reported from sites in Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll and Mull. The only count of 10 or more was at L Caolisport (max. 22 on 20th Dec).

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer* Muir bhuchaille 0004

Numerous visitor, both in winter and on passage. Birds in breeding plumage regularly recorded Apr to mid-Jun. Pre-migratory gatherings occur off some coasts in late Apr and early May. A few individuals summer. L Indaal (Islay), L Caolisport (Mid-Argyll) and Lochs Beg & Scridain (Mull) are sites of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. Birds were reported from all areas of Argyll. Counts of 10 or more came from: Hynish Bay Tìree (max. 28 on 3rd Feb), Islay ferry between Kennacraig and Port Ellen (max. 70 or more on 24th Feb), L Indaal (max. 29 on 15th Apr), Port Ellen to Ardbeg Islay (17 on 7th May), Sound of Gigha (max. 32 on 12th May) and Machrihanish SBO (24, all in breeding plumage, on 19th May). A systematic count along the W coast of Kintyre on 6th May produced an impressive total of 417 birds, mostly in the Sound of Gigha. As for the last two species, this is very much a min. figure [AH].

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Jun-Aug. Reported, mostly in ones or twos, from *Kintyre, Mull* and *Tiree* from Jun to the first week in Aug, but with an unprecedented 46 in a raft offshore at Machrihanish on 6th Aug.

Sep-Dec. Records were received from *Colonsay, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree* but mostly in single figures. Sites with 10 or more were: L Indaal (max. 18 on 2nd Nov), Sound of Gigha (14 on 14th Nov), L Buie *Mull* (12 on 17th Nov), L Scridain (max. 13 on 26th Nov) and L na Keal (max. 12 during Dec).

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Spagriton 0007

Breeds locally in small numbers. Widespread in sheltered coastal waters in winter. Winter counts in Outer Loch Etive (N Argyll) currently exceed the qualifying level for a site of national importance.

Jan-Apr. Numbers in Outer L Etive peaked at 35 on 7th Jan, with 24 still present on 11th Feb. Up to 6 were reported elsewhere, with records from every area apart from *Coll* and *Cowal*.

Breeding. Adults with young were reported from Bishop's Glen (Dunoon) *Cowal*, L Tallant *Islay* and Lochan Tainish *Mid-Argyll*. Elsewhere prs were present during the breeding season at East & Mid L Fada *Colonsay* (3 prs) and L Gruinar.

Aug-Dec. Numbers on Outer Loch Etive built from 20 on 6th Oct to 38 on 16th Dec. Elsewhere 12 were counted on L Sween on 4th Nov and up to 6 were recorded at various other places in *Colonsay, Islay, Mid-Argyll, N Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree*.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus* Gobhlachan Iaparan 0009

Uncommon winter and passage visitor, with 2-6 records annually since 1984. Recorded in all months except Jun.

Another good year, with records of singles from Campbeltown Loch on 21st Mar and 12th Apr, Machrihanish SBO on 9th/10th Jul and 11th & 18th Oct, Blairmore *Cowal* on 13th Oct and L Indaal on 11th Nov.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena* Gobhlachan ruadh 0010

Scarce winter and passage visitor. Of 23 records during 1980-2000, 20 were during the period Sep-Mar, with one each in Apr, May and Jun.

The 1st winter bird at Port Lunna (L Sween), first seen in Nov 2000, was still there on 14th Jan and 13th Feb.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus* Gobhlachan mara 0011

Regular winter and passage visitor to sea lochs and sounds. Occasionally on inland waters. Loch Indaal (Islay), the Sound of Gigha (Kintyre) and Loch na Keal (Mull) are sites of national importance for wintering birds

Jan-Apr. Numbers on L Indaal peaked at 23 on 14th Jan, 22 were in the Sound of Gigha on 5th Jan and the peak on L na Keal was 26 on 28th Feb. The only other site was L Linnhe *N Argyll* where two were seen at Lurignich on 3rd Feb.

May-Jul. No summer records received.

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Aug-Dec. The first returning birds were 2 in the Sound of Gigha on 2nd Sep. The WeBS count on L Indaal totalled 29 birds on 14th Oct and numbers there stayed high, peaking at 30 on 9th Dec. L na Keal produced a count of 20 or more in flat calm conditions on 18th Dec. The only record elsewhere was a single at L Buie Mull on 17th Nov.

NORTHERN FULMAR (FULMAR) *Fulmarus glacialis* Eun crom 0020
Common but localised breeding species in all areas except Cowal and N Argyll. Large numbers on passage off western headlands.

Jan-Apr. A min. of 94 were seen on inland cliffs on *Tiree* on 16th Jan during SE winds.

Breeding. Treshnish Isles had an estimated total of 575 AOS on Lunga & Sgeir a Chaisteil with breeding also confirmed on Cairn na Burgh Mor, Cairn na Burgh Beg and Fladda (TIARG). On Sanda Islands there were 472 AON but productivity was lower than usual due, apparently, to avian predators. Counts at the sample census cliffs on *Colonsay* in Jun gave 426 AOS at Uragaig (cf 492 in 2000), 45 AOS at Kiloran Bay (cf 50 in 2000) and 21 at Port Lobh (cf 29 in 2000). A full census on *Tiree* (excl. Ceann a' Mhara, counted in 1999 – 1,382 AON) gave a total of 241 AOS.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The breeding information for *Islay* should read:

“A coastal survey of *Islay* and *Jura* by boat in early Jun for Seabird 2000 found totals of 56 AOS for *Jura* and 1,957 OAS for *Islay*. (Counts for Laggan Point, Kilchiaran and Tomisdale-Lossit are included in these totals).”

Jul-Dec. On 31st Aug 1,033 were counted flying S past Machrihanish SBO in 12 hrs, including one dark-phase bird. A min. of 600 were on nest ledges at Ceann a' Mhara *Tiree* on 18th Nov.

GREAT SHEARWATER *Puffinus gravis* 0040
Rare passage migrant, mostly in autumn.

Three were seen singly at Machrihanish SBO on 31st Aug, flying S offshore with Manx Shearwaters [EJM]*. On the morning of 13th Sep, 2 were seen from Balevullin *Tiree* flying W offshore during gale-force NNW winds [JBo]*.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus* Fachadh dubh 0043
Passage migrant almost exclusively recorded Jul-Oct. Sometimes in large numbers off headlands during Aug-Sep.

Aug-Oct. Recorded in larger numbers than usual, the first being 32 flying S at Frenchman's Rocks in 2.5 hrs on 18th Aug. At Machrihanish SBO a total of 209 were counted on 16 dates from 26th Aug to 20th Sep. Peak numbers occurred during the first week in Sep. On 1st Sep 57 flew past Frenchman's Rocks and the 320 birds flying S in WNW winds there, in 7 hrs on 2nd Sep, was a record day-count for Argyll. Also on 2nd Sep, 90 or more were feeding offshore at Aird *Tiree*. In the following four days smaller numbers were reported from *Islay* and *Tiree*. Then, on 7th Sep, 93 were counted passing Frenchman's Rocks in 7 hrs and the same number (93) were recorded in 7 hrs at Machrihanish SBO. Numbers fell again after this, with up to 5 at Balevullin *Tiree* between 8th and 16th Sep, 31 at Frenchman's Rocks on 12th and 3 there on 15th Sep. Elsewhere, one flew W at Ardnave Point

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Islay on 8th and one flew S past Rubh' Aird Alanais *Colonsay* on 21st Sep. The last reported were 25 flying S at Frenchman's Rocks on 23rd Sep.

MANX SHEARWATER

Puffinus puffinus Fachadh ban 0046/1

Breeding colonies confirmed only on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Large numbers on passage, especially during Aug-Sep.

Mar-May. Forty birds passing offshore at Hynish *Tiree* on 28th Mar were the first of the year and *ca* 20 were off the Garvellachs on 27th Apr. In the evening of 8th May 300 or more were seen off Arinagour *Coll*.

Breeding. Presumed breeding birds were seen at night on Lunga, Treshnish Isles, but no estimate of numbers was made (TIARG). On Sanda Islands there were an estimated 250 AOB in Jun and 37 adults and 71 pulli were ringed.

Jun-Sep. On 13th Jun 1,000 or more were seen in a raft offshore at Machrihanish SBO. As usual, large numbers of passage birds were noted during the 2nd half of Aug and first week of Sep. The highest counts included an estimated 7,500 in 2.5 hrs at Frenchman's Rocks on 18th Aug and *ca* 20,000 there on 2nd Sep. Machrihanish SBO had a record count of approx. 10,000 flying S in 12 hours on 7th Sep during a WNW gale, and 1,000 flew W past Balevullin *Tiree* on the following day. Smaller counts elsewhere included 300 moving SW in small groups down L Fyne off Lochgilphead on 18th Aug and 106 flying S in an hour off Rubh' Aird Alanais *Colonsay* on 22nd Sep. The last was a single bird flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 20th Oct.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER

Puffinus mauretanicus 0046/2

A regular passage migrant since 1992 (Aug-Dec) but in very small numbers. Usually seen with Manx Shearwaters.

As usual, most sightings were at Machrihanish SBO and Frenchman's Rocks. The first was a single at Machrihanish SBO 10th Aug, where there were 14 more on 6 dates with a max. of 3 on 26th Aug. Frenchman's Rocks had 4 on 18th Aug, 2 on 25th Aug and one on 2nd Sep. The only records elsewhere were on 2nd Sep, when 3 were with hundreds of Manx Shearwaters feeding close offshore at Aird and 2 flew NW past W Hynish, both on *Tiree*. The last was at Machrihanish SBO on 8th Oct.

EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL (STORM PETREL) *Hydrobates pelagicus* Paraig 0052

Summer visitor. The only known large breeding colonies are on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Breeding birds first come ashore in late May or Jun. Most sightings away from breeding sites are during Jul-Sep.

Apr-May. There were no reports.

Breeding. An estimated 450 prs were breeding at the Boulder Beach colony on Lunga (Treshnish Isles). This compares with 1,700 prs in 2000, suggesting significant inter-year variation in colony size. However, some TIARG members question the method's reliability (responses to taped calls) (Ward, Carter & Cooper 2001). Many were also heard churring from burrows on Fladda, Cairn na Burgh Beg and Cairn na Burgh Mor. The colony on

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Sanda Islands appeared stable at *ca* 200 AOB (judged by no. of retraps) and 426 adults were ringed.

Jul-Sep. The 377 counted flying S past Machrihanish SBO on 7^a Jul was a record day-total for this site and, in all, 665 were counted there on 32 dates between 9^a Jun and 12^a Sep. The only other site regularly reporting this species was Frenchman's Rocks with a max. of 15 on 7^a Sep and the last birds on 12^a Sep.

A bird found moribund at Whitehouse *Tiree* on 20^a Aug had been ringed as an adult on Sanda Island on 7^a Aug 1988 and was thus at least 14 years old. One ringed on the Isle of Man in 1998 was controlled on the Treshnish Isles in 1999; and one ringed on Treshnish Isles in 2000 was controlled later that year on the Isle of Man. Almost 12% of the 342 Treshnish Isles Storm-Petrels controlled since ringing there began have been on or from the Isle of Man.

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL (LEACH'S PETREL) *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* Gobhlan mara 0055
Scarce, but regular in autumn off western headlands following strong westerlies.

Sep-Oct. Larger numbers than usual were reported during a period of just a month. The first were at Frenchman's Rocks where 11 flew S on 2nd Sep. Next day (3rd), 46 flew S past Frenchman's Rocks and 40 were counted at Machrihanish SBO. The next birds were on 12^a Sep when 61 were counted at Frenchman's Rocks and 22 at Machrihanish SBO. Next day, during gale force winds, Machrihanish SBO had a day-count of no less than 82, and 5 were at Frenchman's Rocks. Of 6 recorded at Frenchman's Rocks on 15^a Sep, one was seen to be taken by a Peregrine Falcon. There were no more records until the last single at Machrihanish SBO on 3rd Oct.

NORTHERN GANNET (GANNET) *Morus bassanus* Sulaire 0071

The nearest breeding colonies to Argyll are Ailsa Craig (40 km east of Mull of Kintyre) and the Shiant Isles (140 km north of Mull). Common inshore from Apr to Oct, and often seen high up sea-lochs. Infrequently reported Nov/Dec.

Jan-Jun. Few birds were recorded in Jan but on 18^a Feb 204 were counted passing Dunaverty Bay *Kintyre* in 2 hrs and by early Mar the species was widespread. On 21st Jun, 57 adults flew S along the coast at the Mull of *Kintyre* Lighthouse between 1450 and 1550 hrs while 88 adults and 2 juvs were counted flying W to NW during the same period.

Jul-Oct. On 27^a Jul 793 passed W at Portan Aluinn (nr. Carskiefy) *Kintyre* in one hr, mainly in groups of 1-13. The first juvs. of the autumn at Frenchman's Rocks were 2 on 26^a Aug. A min. of 80 were feeding offshore of *Aird Tiree* on 2nd Sep; and 50 or more were close inshore at Grasspoint *Mull* on 7^a Sep. The last was one off West Hynish *Tiree* on 16^a Dec.

GREAT CORMORANT (CORMORANT) *Phalacrocorax carbo* Sgarbh 0072

Breeds in Cowal, Gigha, Jura, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull and N Argyll. Less numerous than Shag. All known Argyll colonies each hold fewer than 100 prs. Small numbers occur on some inland waters. 71 chicks were colour ringed at 3 sites (3 letter code, green on white) during 1999. Please report date and place of any sightings to C. Craik (address p.3).

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Jan-Apr. The only count of ten or more was at Tayinloan with 15 on 13th Apr.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 127 prs were found nesting at 4 sites. Of these, 27 prs on Carraig an Daimh (Sound of Jura) *Mid-Argyll* reared no young because of egg predation and nest destruction by an unidentified predator (probably man, mink or Great Black-backed Gull). This is the first record in the whole of the SAMS study (1985-2001) of a Cormorant colony failing to rear any young. Of 100 prs at the other 3 sites (74, 19, 7 prs) 54 nests held 120 large or medium young at the time of the visit in Jun or Jul, the other nests mostly holding small young or eggs. Thus the best estimate of productivity at these 3 unmolested sites was $120/54 = 2.2$ young/pr. On Sanda Islands, 28 obviously used nests were found in late June (as in 2000) and, judged by the number of broods of well-grown young, productivity was good. Of 24 birds on offshore rocks at Kintra *Mull* on 13th Jun, at least 4 were juvs.

Jul-Dec. Ten or more birds were reported from: Glas Eilean (L Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* (40 or more on 4th Sep), Outer L Etive (19 on 16th Sep), L Indaal (12 in WeBS counts in Oct, Nov and Dec), Blairmore *Cowal* (11 on 26th Oct) and nr Kilberry *Mid-Argyll* (20 on 15th Nov).

Apart from the occasional bird on the freshwater lochs of *Tiree*, there were no records from inland waters during the year.

EUROPEAN SHAG (SHAG) *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* Sgarbh an sgumain 0080
Very common resident breeding on the coast and on islands in sea lochs. Widespread in winter but rare inland at all times.

Jan-Apr. Counts of 50 or more were reported from Balephetrish Bay (60 offshore on 4th Jan) and Hynish *Tiree* (60 or more on 3rd Feb).

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, Shags were found breeding at 9 sites and counts were made at 7: these held 290 prs (25-105 prs in size). At one of these sites, Carraig an Daimh (Sound of Jura) *Mid-Argyll*, 30 prs reared no young because of an unidentified predator (probably man, mink or Great Black-backed Gull). Of the 260 prs at the other 6 sites, 118 nests held 249 large or medium young, and the rest held eggs or small young at the time of visits, mostly in Jun. Thus best estimate of productivity at unmolested colonies is $249/118 = 2.1$ young/pr. On the Treshnish Isles, 183 nests were found on Lunga and 14 on Sgeir a Chaisteil, and 3 adults and 34 chicks were ringed. Breeding was also confirmed on Cairn na Burgh Beg, Cairn na Burgh Mor and Fladda. On Sanda Islands, 565 AON were located and monitored nests indicated good productivity. Counts at sample census sites on *Colonsay* yielded 8 nests at Uragaig (*cf* 10 in 2000) and 37 nests at Pigs Paradise, mean clutch 2.55 ($n = 29$), (*cf* 37 in 1999, mean 2.59). 59 prs nested on the RSPB Reserve on *Coll*; and birds also bred on the *Islay* RSPB reserves at Smaull and Upper Killeyan, although no counts were made.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The breeding information for *Islay* should read:

“A coastal survey of *Islay* and *Jura* by boat in early Jun for Seabird 2000 found totals of 108 AON for *Jura* and 286 OAN for *Islay*. (The count for Smaull is included in this total).”

Jul-Dec. On 26th Jul 950 birds were counted in Gunna Sound *Coll/Tiree*. Other counts of 50 or more included: *ca* 120 on Glas Eilean (L Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* on 4th Sep, 150 on the Garvellachs on 19th Sep, 150 at Balnahard Bay *Colonsay* on 23rd Sep, and 250 at Ceann a' Mhara *Tiree* on 14th Oct.

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GREAT BITTERN (BITTERN) *Botaurus stellaris* Chorra-ghrain 0095

Vagrant to Argyll. Only three records since 1980: one at Dervaig (Mull) Jan-Mar 1982, one near Rhunahaorine Point (Kintyre) on 4th Dec 1982, and one found dead at Appin N Argyll on 19th Sep 1999.

[One was reported in the L Gruinart area by several people during mid/late Oct but no satisfactory description was ever received.]

SNOWY EGRET

Egretta thula

Vagrant. No previous British records.

After reports from local people of a 'small white heron' on Seil Island *Mid-Argyll* in early Nov, a bird initially assumed to be a Little Egret was found at Balvicar on 5th Nov. Although the poor weather conditions made viewing difficult, it was soon apparent that various features did not fit this species. Subsequent investigation revealed that, amazingly, it was a Snowy Egret, a species never before recorded in Britain [W. Jackson/J. M. Dickson]*. By the following day, news had spread via the internet and a major 'twitch' was underway. Birders from all over Britain converged on Balvicar and the bird obligingly 'performed' perfectly, feeding in a small creek next to the local golf course and giving excellent views. It seemed completely unfazed by the battery of telescopes, camcorders *etc* directed at it. The bird was last seen during 2001 at this location on 25th Nov. However it re-appeared the following year and an account of its further adventures will be detailed in the ABR for 2002. Also see article by Bill Jackson on pp 109-114 of this report.

This species, which breeds in North, Central and South America (including the Caribbean), is not known in captivity in Britain or Europe and has been recorded three times in the past in or near Iceland and four times in the Azores. The Balvicar bird was accepted by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee and British Birds Rarities Committee as the first record for Britain and the species has now been added to category A of the British List.

GREY HERON

Ardea cinerea Corra ghritheach 0122

Widespread resident, breeding in all areas.

Jan-Apr. Counts of 10 or more were reported from: Outer L Etive (max. 22 on 7th Jan), L Don (max. 16 on 14th Jan), L Scridain (Inner) (max. 11 on 11th Feb) and L Sween (max. 11 on 13th Feb).

Breeding. At Garvard *Colonsay*, 9 nests with at 32 eggs produced at least 12 young; and three nests at Mid-West L Fada produced at least 2 young. No nests were found at the former heronry sites at L Cholla, Scalasaig and Lochan Gleann Raonabuilg. One nest at Eilean nan Ron, Oronsay *Colonsay* produced 2 young. At Eilean Eoghainn (West L Tarbert) *Kintyre* 16 nests were counted on 10th Jun, of which 3 were empty, one held c/2 and 12 held 21 medium to large young. Other active heronries were located at Auchadalvorie and Kilmun *Cowal*, Ardfenaig, Bunessan, Fishnish and Killfinichen *Mull*, and Eriska *N Argyll*.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The breeding information should include:

"3 occupied nests were found at Kildalton *Islay* in early Jun."

Aug-Dec. Counts of 10 or more were made at: L Gruinart (11 on 24th Sep), Outer L Etive (max. 25 on 16th Dec), L Sween (max. 12 on 16th Dec) and L Feochan *Mid-Argyll* (12 on 18th Dec).

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MUTE SWAN

Cygnus olor

Eala

0152

Widespread but uncommon breeding species, both inland and at sheltered coastal locations. Absent as a breeding bird from Colonsay. Emigration from some breeding localities in winter, when flocks gather at favoured localities.

Jan-May. At Oban Harbour, the highest count was 63 on 2nd Jan, incl. 4 juvs, while the peak WeBS count on *Tiree* was only 27, on 14th Jan. One seen on Oronsay on 6th Feb was the first *Colonsay* (incl. Oronsay) record for many years.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, of 10 prs known to have nested, 4 prs reared 10 young and 6 reared none. Another 10 prs observed in late summer had no young. Thus of 20 prs checked in late summer, 4 prs had 10 young and 16 prs had no young. (i.e. 0.50 young/pr observed in late summer). Another 9 prs are known to have nested but the outcome was unknown.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The breeding information for *Islay* should read:

"Prs bred at L Ballygrant (3 young), L a 'Chnuic (3 young in late May) and RSPB L. Gruinart (3 young reared) and prs were present at Claggain Bay in Apr and at Proaig in early Jun." The comment on "5 broods totalling 22 juvs. on L Gorm " should be deleted."

Jul-Dec. The peak count on the freshwater lochs of *Tiree* was 37 on 17th Dec, most of which were on L a 'Phuill. Highest counts at other favoured sites were: 21 at the head of L Gilp on 18th Sep, 20 on L Don on 20th Oct, 30 on L Sween on 4th Nov, 10 on Outer L Etive on 16th Dec, and 65 (incl. 6 juvs.) in Oban harbour on 30th Dec

WHOOPEE SWAN

Cygnus cygnus

Eala bhan

0154

Common on passage; smaller numbers winter. Loch a 'Phuill (Tiree) is a site of national importance for wintering birds. A few birds summer in most years and breeding has been recorded.

Jan-Apr. Numbers on the four main freshwater lochs of *Tiree* peaked at 52 on 14th Jan, while the same number of migrant birds were counted flying over on 18th Mar [Table 1].

Smaller numbers were reported throughout the winter from sites in *Colonsay, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*. Counts in double figures, most of which were in mid-Mar/early Apr when birds were obviously on the move, came from: Imeraval *Islay* (23 on 16th Mar), Ardnave Loch (25 on 23rd Mar) and Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* (22 flying W on 11th Apr).

Summering birds. A pr were present at a site in *Mid-Argyll* during Jun & Jul but no young were produced. A pr were present at L Scammadale *Mid-Argyll* at least from 25th Jul-18th Aug. Two birds summered on L a' Phuill, as did two at L Bhasapol and one at L Gruinart; and one was present on *Colonsay* in Jun.

Sep-Dec. The first returning birds were seen on 18th Sep when 8 flew over Oronsay. Small numbers appeared in the first week of Oct followed by 38 at L Gorm *Islay* on 6th, 74 in stubble nearby at Rockside on 8th and 43 at L a' Phuill on 9th Oct. The peak of passage birds at L a' Phuill was 61 on 18th Oct. By 19th Oct there were 112 birds in the L Gorm area, on 22nd 20 were at L Don, 48 flew S at Machrihanish SBO on 23rd, and on 27th Oct 165 were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart.

By the end of Oct and into Nov flocks of up to 114 were widely reported and, away from the main sites, 10 or more were reported from: L Don (27 on 27th Oct), Ardnave Loch *Islay*

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(51 on 27^a Oct), The Laggan *Kintyre* (max 114 on 27^a Oct), L Gilp (33 on 27^a Oct), L Indaal (36 on 28^a Oct), Oronsay (14 on 29^a Oct), Machrihanish SBO (max. 66 on 29^a Oct), Ulva Lagoons (L Sween) (max. 42 on 3rd Nov), Fiddon *Mull* (14 on 6^a Nov), L na Nigheadaireachd *Islay* (71 on 7^a Nov), Laggan *Islay* (46 on 8^a Nov) and Black Loch *Kintyre* (27 inc. 7 juvs on 12^a Nov).

Numbers fell off generally by Dec, although there were still 14 at L Sween on 16^a, 20 at Bridgend (L Indaal) on 17^a and 108 on *Tiree* on 17^a Dec.

Table 1. Maximum monthly counts of Whooper Swans at RSPB L. Gruinart and on Tiree in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/a	3	22	16	0	1	1	1	1	165	7	1
Tiree	52	30	52	n/a	1	4	2	6	6	106	75	108

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE

Anser brachyrhynchus Geadh gorm 0158

Variable numbers on passage, with occasional large flocks. Relatively few winter.

Jan-Apr. From Jan to Apr up to 3 birds were recorded among flocks of other species at various locations on *Islay* and *Tiree*.

Aug-Dec. Two adults of unknown provenance were at Ruaig *Tiree* on 29^a Aug, and singles were at Balephetrish Bay on 10^a Sep and Outer L Etive on 16^a Sep. The first obvious autumn migrants reported were 40 at L a' Phuill on 26^a Sep; and next day *ca* 150 were seen coming in off the sea at various locations on *Tiree*. On 28^a Sep 15 flew in to RSPB L. Gruinart at dusk and next day 82 were counted on the reserve. Four were in a field nr Inveraray Golf Course *Mid-Argyll* on 10^a Oct. Apart from a flock of 21 at Sunderland Farm *Islay* on 10^a Nov and 5 at Lussa Loch *Kintyre* on 15^a Nov, birds were recorded in only ones and twos for the rest of the year. Most were on *Islay* with singles at Outer L Etive and on *Tiree*.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

Anser albifrons Geadh bhlar 0159

Winter visitor. Birds are of the Greenland race A. a. flavirostris, apart from occasional vagrants of the European race A. a. albifrons. Argyll holds about 50% of the world population of the Greenland race in winter, mainly on Islay. Most of the sites covered by the SNH goose counts are sites of international importance for wintering birds. A small introduced population breeds on the Rinns of Islay.

Jan-May. The late Mar co-ordinated goose count for Argyll did not take place due to FMD. Where counts were made, the following maxima were recorded: 11,252 in a full census on *Islay* on 15^a-17^a Jan, 1,221 in all-island count on *Tiree* on 17^a Mar, and 1,160 at Tayinloan on 19^a Mar. The main departure from *Islay* was delayed by persistent northerly winds and took place on 21^a-23^a Apr with stragglers remaining until early May. The last at Tayinloan were 14 on 23rd Apr.

Breeding. There were no breeding season records.

Sep-Dec. Five on Oronsay on 24^a Sep were the first returning birds, but the main arrival on *Islay* was delayed by adverse winds and did not take place until the very end of Oct. However, by the time of the Nov count, a total of 15,395 birds were present in Argyll

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[Table 2] (*cf* 18,786 mid-Nov 2000). The low total is partly due to missing data from certain areas but the total on *Islay* was the lowest since 1993 and was considered to be due in part to poor breeding success (see below) [MAO]. A more comprehensive count in mid-Dec gave a total of 16,078 birds in Argyll [Table 3], still well below average for recent years.

Of 5,523 aged on *Islay* in late autumn, 7.7% were juvs (well below the long-term average for the third year running) with a mean brood size of 3.5 [MAO].

Table 2. Numbers of White-fronted Geese in Argyll areas, 8th to 14th Nov 2001.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
3,142	430	n/r	n/r	702	n/r	34	11,003	84

Table 3. Numbers of White-fronted Geese in Argyll areas, 9th to 17th Dec 2001.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
2,423	427	46	469	813	n/r	46	11,854	n/r

GREYLAG GOOSE

Anser anser Geadh glas 0161

Increasing breeding population on Colonsay, Mull, Tiree and Coll. Some of these may be native birds that have colonised from the Outer Hebrides, while birds of introduced origin breed in Mid-Argyll. Tiree and Coll are sites of international importance for wintering birds. Migratory flocks also reported from most areas.

Jan-Apr. An all-island count of 3,535 on *Tiree* on 11th/12th Jan was the highest total there for the winter (*cf* 2,756 in Jan 2000) and the count of 391 birds in the vicinity of the North Moss, Moine Mhor on 11th Feb was a record high for this site. The late Mar co-ordinated goose count for Argyll did not take place due to FMD. Migrants on the move in mid-Apr included 85 resting at RSPB L. Gruinart on 17th, 27 flying over Oronsay on 18th and 31 flying N over Machrins *Colonsay* on 20th Apr.

Breeding. Confirmed breeding records came from all areas apart from *Jura* and *Kintyre*. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 16-20 prs are known to have bred at 6 or 7 islands (hatched nests, eggs or young seen) and there were one or more prs at each of another 8 sites where nests were not seen. A survey on *Tiree* on 14th Jul found a min. of 122 broods comprising a total of 464 goslings; and on Gunna Island *Coll* there were min. 19 broods totalling 55 goslings on 26th Jul. *Colonsay* had at least 3 broods totalling 13 in Jun while Oronsay had 5 broods totalling 21. Breeding records on *Islay* included at least 5 prs on L Gorm, where 4 broods totalling 14 were seen in Jun.

Jun-Dec. The late-summer moult flock on Treshnish Isles numbered at least 268 birds at the end of Jun. Autumn counts on *Mull* included 85 at the head of L na Keal on 15th Aug, 165 in fields near Killiechronan on 17th Aug and 118 at L Poit na h-I (Pottie) on 24th Sep. In mid-Nov, goose counts produced a total of 3,964 birds in Argyll [Table 4] (*cf* 4,704 in 2000). The low numbers are mainly due to missing data from certain areas; and all the *Mid-Argyll* birds were at Moine Mhor [SNH Goose project]. Counts on *Mull* on 26th Nov found *ca* 100 at L Don, *ca* 150 at Fidden and 25 at L Poit na h-I (Pottie). A more comprehensive count in mid-Dec gave a total of 4,299 in Argyll [Table 5], which included 3,674 on *Tiree*, the highest count ever recorded there. Later in the winter, 240 were at Tayinloan on 26th Nov

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and, in Dec, 36 were in Outer L Etive on 15^a, 377 were found during an all-island count on Coll on 17^a Dec, and 94 were feeding on spilt grain on Oronsay on 23^a.

Table 4. Numbers of Greylag Geese in Argyll areas, 8^a to 14^a Nov 2001.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
0	147	n/r	n/r	3,665	n/r	58	94	0

Table 5. Numbers of Greylag Geese in Argyll areas, 9^a to 17^a Dec 2001.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
0	178	n/r	334	3,674	n/r	0	113	n/r

SNOW GOOSE

Anser caerulescens Geadh ban 0163

A small introduced population breeds on Coll and on Mull, wintering mainly on Coll. Stragglers among wintering Greenland Whitefronts on Islay and Tiree may have a wild origin.

Jan-Apr. An adult white-phase bird was seen with other geese at various sites on Islay in Jan and Feb and presumably the same bird was at Octomore Islay on 4^a Apr. Another was with Greenland Whitefronts in the Barrapoll area of Tiree from Jan until 9^a Apr.

Breeding. No breeding information was available from Coll or Mull regarding the introduced population but 22 adults were at Port na Luing Coll on 9^a Jul. Two blue-phase adults behaving as a pr were with a flock of Canada Geese at Lurignich (L Linnhe) N Argyll, on the boundaries of our recording area, on 17^a Jun and 20^a Jul (see ABR 17 - 2 similar birds on L Feochan in Aug 2000).

Aug-Dec. An adult blue-phase bird was with Greylags on Tiree on 28^a Aug. A similar bird was at Rockside Islay on 27^a Oct and was at RSPB L. Gruinart from 2nd Nov to the year end. Another blue-phase bird was with Greylags at Blarcreen N Argyll on 4^a Nov and an all-island count on Coll on 17^a Dec gave a total of 34 birds.

CANADA GOOSE

Branta canadensis Geadh dubh 0166

Resident population on Colonsay, introduced in 1934. Regular breeding since 1992 in Mid-Argyll, now in increasing numbers. Occasional breeding attempts elsewhere. A transatlantic origin seems probable for at least some of the medium-sized and small individuals seen in winter goose flocks on Islay.

Jan- Jun. From early Jan to early Apr 'small' or 'medium-sized' birds, possibly of the vagrant races *parvipes* and *hutchinsii*, were reported from various locations on Islay, and a single large-race bird was on Tiree on 12^a Jan. The only flock of any size reported comprised 19 at the head of L Craignish Mid-Argyll on 15^a Mar. A pr at Taynish Pt on 3rd May were the first ever at Taynish NNR. On 17^a Jun a flock of 138 together with 2 Snow Geese were in L Linnhe just north of Lurignich N Argyll (and just within the Argyll recording area). Probably the largest flock of Canada Geese so far recorded in Argyll waters, this congregation may have been the adults and fully-grown young of the 20 or so prs that breed each year on Eilean Balnagowan (Highland).

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Breeding. In *Mid-Argyll* nesting prs were present on Eilean an Ruisg (L Feochan) (1-3 prs), the Abbot Isles (L Etive) (1 pr) and Eilean Creagach (L Melfort) (1 pr) and in *N Argyll* on Eilean Dubh (Lynn of Lorn) (1-2 prs). Prs showing breeding behaviour were also present on Eilean Mor (Dunstaffnage) (*ca* 2 prs), Eilean Gamhna (L Melfort) and Ruadh Sgeir (Sound of Jura) in *Mid-Argyll* and Eilean Glas (L. Linnhe) *N Argyll* (1 pr each), although no nests were found.

On *Colonsay* and *Oronsay* 6 prs with broods were found in Jun. Three adults incl. a pr with 5 young were at Caol Scotnish *Mid-Argyll* on 20th Jun but a pr nesting at L Leathan *Mid-Argyll* were unsuccessful.

Aug-Dec. On 6th Sep 30 flew S past Machrihanish SBO and on 13th Sep 67 were present on *Oronsay*. Apart from up to 38 birds on *Oronsay* until mid Nov, no further flocks in double figures were reported. Once again 'small' or 'medium-sized' birds ascribed to the vagrant races *parvipes* and *hutchinsii*, as well as one considered to be of the race *minima*, were reported from various locations on *Islay*; and one thought to be *hutchinsii* was with 5 'normal' birds on *Oronsay* on 23rd Dec. A single large-race bird was present on *Tiree* from 22nd Nov to the year's end.

BARNACLE GOOSE

Branta leucopsis

Cathan

0167

Very large numbers of birds from the Greenland population winter on Islay, and smaller numbers elsewhere. Most of the localities covered by the SNH goose counts are sites of international importance for wintering birds. A few birds occasionally summer. A few introduced birds also breed on the Rhinns of Islay

Jan-May. On 15th-17th Jan, an all-island count for *Islay* produced a total of 35,472, a comparatively high count for mid-winter (*cf* 31,792 in Jan 2000). A similar count on *Tiree* on 11th/12th Jan found a total of 1,162, and the peak count on *Oronsay* was 372 on 5th Mar. The only birds reported elsewhere were 2 in L Crinan on 18th Jan and a max. of 6 at Tayinloan on 4th Mar. The late Mar co-ordinated goose count for *Argyll* did not take place due to FMD.

Summering birds. One was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 29th Jul.

Sep-Dec. The 8 birds that arrived at RSPB L. Gruinart on 14th Sep were probably genuine returning migrants while the first at Machrihanish SBO appeared on 29th Sep. The first arrivals on *Tiree* were 28 at Gott Bay on 19th Oct. As with the Whitefronts, the main arrival was delayed by adverse winds until the end of Oct when 13,300 were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 31st. Goose counts in mid-Nov produced a total of 34,735 birds in *Argyll* [Table 6] of which 33,248 were on *Islay*. By the time of the more comprehensive count in mid-Dec, *Islay* had 34,829 birds and accounted for 92% of the *Argyll* total of 37,403 [SNH Goose Project see Table 7]. The peak winter count for *Oronsay* was on 28th Dec when 295 birds were recorded.

Ageing of a sample of 9,955 birds on *Islay* revealed that 7.1% (well below average) were juvs, with a mean brood size of 2.1 [MAO].

Table 6. Numbers of Barnacle Geese in *Argyll* areas, 8th to 14th Nov 2001.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
0	297	n/r	n/r	1,103	n/r	87	33,248	0

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Table 7. Numbers of Barnacle Geese in Argyll areas, 9th to 17th Dec 2001.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
0	72	n/r	600	1,782	n/r	120	34,829	n/r

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla* Geadh got 0168

Passage migrant, uncommon in spring but sometimes in considerable numbers in autumn. Very few winter. Most birds seen in Argyll are of the light-bellied race B. b. hrota, which breeds in Greenland and arctic Canada, wintering mainly in Ireland. Birds of the dark-bellied race B. b. bernicla occur occasionally, and there has been one record of the Black Brant B. b. nigricans.

The following records all refer to the light-bellied race *B. b. hrota*.

Jan-Apr. A small group of up to 17 birds were on L Indaal from early Jan to mid-Apr. Larger numbers were reported in early May incl. 36 at L Indaal on 2nd. Also on 2nd May, 124 were in Gott Bay, 26 in Vaul Bay and 112 in Salum Dunes on *Tiree* and 82 in Sorobaídh Bay next day. A single bird was with Common Eiders at Liath Eilean (L. Fyne) on 13th Apr.

Aug-Dec. The first of autumn were at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* where 10 were seen on 19th Aug. The next were in early Sep, when one was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 5th and 17 flew past Frenchman's Rocks in 7 hrs on 7th Sep. Numbers built up later in the month and, on 13th Sep, 154 were recorded flying S in 1 hr at Frenchman's Rocks and 72 flew S at Machrihanish SBO. Then, on 28th, 143 were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart and 31 flew in to Rubha Chraiginis *Tiree*. Numbers remained high at RSPB L. Gruinart with 590 recorded on 2nd Oct. The same day at least 575 birds were seen flying S over *Tiree* at various locations. Machrihanish SBO had its highest count of autumn on 10th Oct with 160 birds in 4 groups. Thereafter numbers fell, with 25 at L. Gruinart on 21st Oct and up to 15 in L. Indaal until the year end.

RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis* 0169

Vagrant. No previous Argyll records.

On 27th Oct an adult was with Barnacle Geese at RSPB L. Gruinart. It was seen at L Gorm on 4th Nov but by 11th Nov had returned to L. Gruinart where it remained until the end of the year. Although birds of this species are often suspected to be of captive origin, this one was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee as a genuine vagrant [D. Butler, P. Roberts, A. W. Reid *et al*]*.

COMMON SHELDUCK (SHELDUCK) *Tadorna tadorna* Cra-gheadh 0173

Widespread breeding species, especially on sandy coasts. The majority are absent from mid-Aug to late Oct, when they migrate to moulting grounds.

Jan-May. Besides those at L. Indaal and L. Gruinart *Islay* [Table 8], counts of 20 or more were made at Tayinloan (max. 22 on 7th Jan), Miodar *Tiree* (27 on 9th Jan), The Strand *Colonsay* (max. 49 on 14th Feb), L. Sween (max. 34 on 13th Feb) and L. Don (max. 46 on 5th Mar).

Breeding. On *Islay* 8 prs bred at RSPB L. Gruinart and 3 prs at Bridgend Merse (L. Indaal). Six breeding prs were on Sanda Islands and one brood of 7 was seen being

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reduced to 4 by Herring Gull predation. On *Colonsay* (incl. Oronsay) 25 prs were found in Jun incl. 5 with broods. On 25th May an adult was seen with 17 ducklings on Oronsay. Three broods were noted on *Tiree* on 31st Jul. Elsewhere, adults with broods were seen at Sgat Beag (L Fyne), Machrihanish Bay, Campbeltown Loch, Port na Luing *Coll*, L Don, and Ulva Islands (L Sween).

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The breeding information should include:

“There were 3 broods at L Gruinart and 4 at L Indaal.”

Aug-Dec. Four birds were at L a' Phuill on 20th Aug, after which none were reported until 10 were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 14th Sep. After this short gap in records, birds were reported regularly. Apart from L Gruinart and L Indaal [Table 8], the only site with 20 or more was L Don, where 20 were present on 31st Oct and 21st Nov.

Table 8. Maximum monthly counts of Shelduck at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	30	n/r	n/r	6	27	0	7	9	0	38	68
L. Indaal	42	47	38	59	61	36	0	10	0	3	12	42

MANDARIN DUCK (MANDARIN)

Aix galericulata

0178

Introduced species which has bred regularly at Loch Eck (Cowal) in recent years. The present size of the Argyll population (whose origin is unknown) suggests that it may well now be self-sustaining.

Breeding. A female incubating eggs in a nestbox on L Eck on 30th May was the only breeding record received.

Sep-Dec. Two males & a female were seen at Dornoch Point (L Eck) on 1st Nov, and a male was at An Lodan (L Awe) on 4th Nov.

EURASIAN WIGEON (WIGEON)

Anas penelope

Glas lach

0179

Scarce and local breeding species. Common passage migrant and winter visitor to all areas.

Jan-Apr. Numbers on *Tiree* maintained the levels reached in 2000, well up on previous years. Other than those in Table 9, the only site with counts of 100 or more was Outer L Etive (max. 119 on 7th Jan). Flocks of 50-100 were reported from L Don and L Sween.

Breeding. Breeding occurred at L Tulla *N Argyll* where 2 broods totalling 9 young were seen in Jun. Up to 8 prs were present at RSPB L. Gruinart in Jun but with no evidence of breeding.

Sep-Dec. The total of 714 found at L Crinan on 7th Oct was the 2nd highest there since counts began in 1993. The combined counts at L Gruinart and L Indaal built to a peak of 828 in Dec (*cf* 734 in Oct 2000) [Table 9]. The only other sites reporting counts of 100 or more were: Holy Loch (150 on 6th Oct), L Don (max. 200 in Dec), Outer L Etive (max. 117 on 16th Dec), L Sween (max. 107 on 16th Dec) and Balvicar Bay *Mid-Argyll* (244 on 18th Dec).

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Table 9. Maximum monthly counts of Wigeon at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll), and Tiree in 2001 (i.e. all sites which regularly held 100+ birds in the winter months).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	323	n/r	n/r	n/r	8	16	0	0	12	24	252	448
L. Indaal	101	120	103	21	2	0	29	0	241	450	379	380
L. Crinan	65	113	53	5	0	0	0	0	104	714	136	126
Tiree	292	312	142	n/r	n/r	2	4	25	115	404	179	243

AMERICAN WIGEON

Anas americana

0180

Vagrant. Six or more previous Argyll records, all since 1989 and all of single males. Recent records in the Loch Craignish/Loch Crinan area have been attributed to a single returning individual.

Our regular male was at L. Crinan from early Jan to at least 11th Feb. From mid-Jan it was paired with a female Eurasian Wigeon. The pattern was repeated in the autumn, when it was seen in L. Crinan first on 5th Oct and then intermittently until the end of the year [JDj/JHa/SCV]*. An eclipse male was identified at L a' Phuill on 3rd Oct and remained there until 9th Oct [SCV/SBe/JBo].

GADWALL

Anas strepera

Lach glas

0182

Scarce but regular on passage and in winter, with most recent records from Kintyre, Islay, Mid-Argyll and Tiree. Breeding confirmed on Tiree and probable on Islay 1986 - 1994.

Jan-May. Up to 4 were seen regularly on the floods at RSPB L. Gruinart in Feb with 5 on 28th Mar. A male was in the bay at Sanda Island on 26th Apr.

Breeding. Two males and a female were at RSPB L. Gruinart throughout May and in early Jun but with no evidence of breeding.

Sep-Dec. Two were present at L a' Phuill from 8th-30th Sep and 2 were seen at L Poit na h-I (Pottie) Mull on 21st Sep. The first at RSPB L. Gruinart was on 17th Oct, with up to 6 there during early Nov and 7 on 26th Nov. The only other record was of 3 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 21st Dec.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The 23 Gadwall at RSPB L. Gruinart on 14th Oct are confirmed as a record count for *Islay*.

EURASIAN TEAL (TEAL)

Anas crecca

Crann Iach

0184

Widespread but uncommon breeding species. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Jan-Apr. Apart from those in Table 10, the only sites with counts of 50 or more were L. Don (max. 95 on 14th Jan) and Tayinloan (max. 60 on 12th Mar).

Breeding. On *Islay*, 22 prs were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart and 10 prs at Ardnave Loch. At least one pr bred on *Tiree*, and a female with 7 ducklings at Drimvore on 1st Jun was the first confirmed breeding for Moine Mhor NNR.

Aug-Dec. The peak total of 1,569 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 26th Nov was well down on 1999 and 2000 (*cf* max. 2,343 on 22nd Sep 2000) [Table 10]. However, the total of 180 at L. Crinan on 4th Nov was the highest there since records began in 1993.

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Other than those in Table 10, the only sites with counts of 50 or more were L Gorm *Islay* (80+ on 4th Oct), Lussa Loch *Kintyre* (60 on 15th Nov), L Don *Mull* (max. 200 during Dec), An Fhaodhail *Tiree* (120 on 5th Dec), L Sween (max. 66 on 16th Dec), Tayinloan (max. 200 on 16th Dec) and Ardnave Loch *Islay* (max. 54 on 12th Dec).

Table 10. Maximum monthly counts of Teal at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) and Tiree in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	843	n/r	n/r	44	0	0	0	90	20	1,569	1,320
L. Indaal	141	69	101	31	1	0	0	12	43	141	152	161
L. Crinan	0	11	62	30	4	4	0	0	10	154	180	165
Tiree	295	292	82	n/r	n/r	4	0	36	200	123	200	254

GREEN-WINGED TEAL

Anas carolinensis

Rare visitor from North America with nine or more accepted records since 1980, mostly on Islay. Some records may well involve returning individuals.

An adult male was at Bruichladdich on 18th Nov and was seen intermittently there until the end of the year [GJ/TapR]*. Another male first seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 25th Nov was also present there until the year's end. [TapR/CRM *et al*]*.

MALLARD

Anas platyrhynchos

Lach

0186

Common breeding, passage and wintering species.

Jan-Apr. Other than those in Table 11, the only count exceeding 50 came from L Caolisport (315 on 14th Jan).

Breeding. Five prs bred on Sanda Islands, where recently fledged young were seen in Jul. On *Islay* an estimated 47 prs were at RSPB L. Gruinart, 5 prs were at Ardnave Loch and 3 prs at Smaull RSPB Reserve. Elsewhere, records of confirmed breeding came from *Colonsay* (4 sites), *Cowal* (3 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (8 sites), *Mull* (one site), *N Argyll* (2 sites) and *Tiree* (2 sites).

Aug-Dec. Peak numbers at L Indaal and RSPB L. Gruinart (277 in Dec) were again well down on recent years (*cf* 390 in Oct 2000 and 1999's record total of 704 in Sep) [Table 11]. Other than those in Table 11, the only sites with 50 or more were Tayinloan (max. 50 on 8th Sep), L Gilp (55 on 9th Sep), Muircroft (Oban) *Mid-Argyll* (200+ on 25th Sep), Oban (harbour area) (108 on 4th Oct), Sanda Island (max. 66 on 7th Oct), An Lodan (L Awe) (79 on 4th Nov), Kilberry shore *Kintyre* (118 on 13th Nov) and L Caolisport (380 on 20th Dec).

Table 11. Maximum monthly counts of Mallard at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll), Outer Loch Etive (N Argyll), Holy Loch (Cowal) and Tiree in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	66	n/r	n/r	136	41	n/r	n/r	15	9	147	139
L. Indaal	185	140	39	14	19	38	30	31	44	61	101	138
L. Crinan	36	3	20	4	13	2	2	21	30	16	14	n/r
L. Etive	92	161	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	72	134	78	81
Tiree	61	41	38	n/r	n/r	39	41	150	177	80	50	80

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AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

Anas rubripes

0187

Vagrant. No previous Argyll records.

An adult male of this species found at L a' Phuill Tìree on 15th Jun was gone by the next day. This was the first for Argyll and there are only 5 previous records for Scotland (JBo/AJL)*.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (PINTAIL)

Anas acuta

Lach stiùireach

0189

Very scarce breeding species. Scarce passage migrant. Winter visitor, regular only on Islay and Tìree.

Jan-Apr. The highest count on Tìree was at L Riaghain, where 9 were present on 14th Jan and 6 on 11th Feb. Four were at L an Eilein on 22nd Mar. Away from Islay [Table 12] and Tìree, the only report was an unusual record of 4 males and 4 females at Holy Loch on 13th Jan.

Breeding. Three prs were on the floods at RSPB L. Gruinart until 20th Apr, but there was no evidence of breeding and no more sightings until autumn.

Jul-Dec. One flying S past Machrihanish SBO on 13th Sep was the first autumn record, and 22 birds were seen there altogether on 5 dates up to 29th Oct.

A count of 68 in the Bridgend area of L Indaal on 17th Dec was by far the highest of the winter but, for most of the winter, numbers in L Indaal were lower than usual. The highest count on Tìree was only 4, at L an Eilein on 17th Dec. Elsewhere there were 5 birds (3 males, 2 females) on Holy Loch on 6th Oct.

Table 12. Maximum monthly counts of Pintail at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	4	6	n/r	4	0	0	0	0	0	5	7	4
L. Indaal	22	11	16	4	0	0	0	0	0	68	11	22

GARGANEY

Anas querquedula

Lach crann

0191

Rare summer visitor and passage migrant. Bred in Kintyre in 1994 and on Islay in 1997.

The only record concerned a pr at L an Eilein on 9th and 10th May.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (SHOVELER)

Anas clypeata

Lach a'ghuib leathainn

0194

Scarce breeding species. More numerous as passage migrant and winter visitor although largely restricted to Islay and Tìree.

Jan-Apr. Numbers on Tìree peaked on 6th Jan when 41 were counted, all at L a' Phuill, while L Gruinart had 35 on 12th Feb [Table 13]. Elsewhere birds were reported from the Add estuary Mid-Argyll (single males on 4th Jan and 16th Apr) and L Caolisport (a male on 14th Jan).

Breeding. Three prs were present on The Reef Tìree on 8th Jun, and 12 prs were present at L Gruinart. In neither case was there any information on breeding success.

Sep-Dec. Yet another a new high count for Islay was achieved (cf 70 in Mar 2000) when 81 were counted at L Gruinart on 21st Dec; and numbers on Tìree peaked at 35 on 17th Dec [Table 13]. Nearly all the Islay birds were at RSPB L. Gruinart but 2 were on L Gorm on 24th Oct. The only record elsewhere concerned a single male at L Caolisport on 20th Dec.

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Table 13. Maximum monthly counts of Shovelers at Loch Gruinart (Islay) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	12	35	n/r	n/r	24	1	0	0	0	30	73	81
Tiree*	41	26	15	n/r	4	6	0	1	6	12	6	35

* Mostly on Loch a 'Phuill.

COMMON POCHARD (POCHARD) *Aythya ferina* Lach mhasach 0198

Winter visitor in small numbers. No confirmed breeding in recent years.

Jan-Apr. Very small numbers were recorded, with a high count of only 9 on 11th Feb during the WeBS count on *Tiree* (all but one on L a' Phuill). Elsewhere, up to 6 were reported from L Awe, L Leathan, L nan Druimnean and L a' Phearsain (Kilmelford) *Mid-Argyll* and Ardnave Loch *Islay*. All records were during Jan and Feb.

Breeding season. Two at RSPB L. Gruinart on 6th Jun were an unusual summer record.

Sep-Dec. A single female-type bird was at Muircroft (Oban) on 25th Sep, and in Oct up to 3 were present on L a' Phuill, while numbers at L Gorm *Islay* peaked at ca 30 on 24th. After this, L Skerrols *Islay* had 8 on 6th Nov and 6 on 28th Dec and numbers at L nan Druimnean peaked at 12 on 30th Dec. All other records involved single birds, on *Islay* and *Tiree* and at Crosshill/Campbeltown Lochs *Kintyre* and a few lochs in *Mid-Argyll*.

RING-NECKED DUCK *Aythya collaris* 0200

Vagrant. First accepted record in Argyll 1982 with 6 further records to 1997.

An immature male was found at L a' Phuill *Tiree* on 3rd Oct and stayed until 18th Oct [SCV/SBe/JBo]*. The previous 7 records have included birds in *Mid-Argyll* and on *Mull* as well as on *Islay* and *Tiree*.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula* Lach thopach 0203

Scarce breeding species. Common winter visitor.

Jan-Apr. The WeBS counts on *Tiree* were down on 2000 with a max. of 84 on 11th Feb (*cf* 138 on 21st Feb 2000) while Ardnave Loch reached 19 on 25th Feb [Table 14]. Other sites with counts of 10 or more birds were: Lochan Tainish *Mid-Argyll* (max. 14 on 11th Jan), Dubh Loch (Glen Shira) *Mid-Argyll* (max. 19 on 15th Jan), L Seil *Mid-Argyll* (max. 16 on 22nd Jan), L Leathan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 13 on 27th Jan), L Skerrols *Islay* (28 on 26th Feb), L Ballygrant *Islay* (18 on 26th Feb) and L Gorm *Islay* (18 on 2nd Mar).

Breeding. The only confirmed breeding records were on *Tiree* in Jun, where there were 2 broods on L Bhasapol and one brood on L an Eilein. Birds were present at suitable sites during the breeding season on *Islay* and *Mull* and in *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *N Argyll*.

Sep-Dec. Numbers on *Islay* peaked in Oct when there were 19 at Ardnave Loch on 22nd [see Table 14] and 96 at L Gorm on 4th. WeBS counts on *Tiree* produced totals of 74 in both Nov and Dec. Other counts of 10 or more birds came from L Seil *Mid-Argyll* (max. 19 on 15th Oct), L Poit na h-I (Pottie) *Mull* (max. 12 on 26th Nov) and L Leathan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 13 on 15th Dec).

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Table 14. Maximum monthly counts of Tufted Ducks at Ardnave Loch (Islay) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ardnave L.	n/r	19	n/r	15	5	2	n/r	n/r	1	19	14	14
Tiree	83	84	58	n/r	n/r	9	9	3	6	32	74	74

GREATER SCAUP (SCAUP) *Aythya marila* Lach mhara 0204
Winter visitor and passage migrant. Large numbers at Loch Indaal (Islay), which is a site of national importance for wintering birds, but scarce elsewhere. Occasionally summers.

Jan-May. Numbers at L Indaal peaked at 1,200 on 14th Jan (*cf* 780 in Jan 2000) [Table 15]. The last birds there were 5 on 20th May. The only records elsewhere were at L Bhasapoll (3 on 14th Jan and one on 14th Feb) and Dubh Loch (Glen Shira) *Mid-Argyll* (a single female with Tufted Ducks on 1st Mar).

Jul-Dec. The first birds of autumn were at Machrihanish SBO on 26th Jul and a total of 235 flew past there on 19 dates, with a max. of 26 on 24th Oct. By 19th Aug the WeBS count in L Indaal had already reached 101 and numbers there rose steadily until 1,070 were counted on 17th Dec. The only other records came from *Tiree* where there were up to 4 birds on L a' Phuill in Sep and Oct and a total of 15 were counted flying past Rubha Chraiginis in small groups on 2nd Oct.

Table 15. Maximum monthly counts of Scaup at Loch Indaal (Islay) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	1,200	705	43	270	5	0	0	101	167	350	800	1,070

COMMON EIDER (EIDER) *Somateria mollissima* Lach lochlannach 0206
Resident breeding bird common on all suitable coasts. Large flocks of moulting drakes and first-year birds gather at some sites during Jun to Aug. Many Argyll breeding birds apparently winter in the Firth of Clyde.

Jan-May. Other than those listed in Table 16, flocks of 100 or more were reported from: Ardmucknish Bay *N Argyll* (105 on 20th Feb), Oronsay (108 on 23rd Feb), Otter Ferry Cowal (max. 1,091 on sand spit on 25th Feb), Hynish Bay *Tiree* (min. 150 on 1st Mar), Carradale *Kintyre* (103 in harbour on 8th Mar) and Dunoon (100 or more near pier on 10th Apr). On 19th May, 116 adult males and 4 imm. males were counted on the shore of Liath Eilean (L Fyne) *Mid-Argyll*; and 149 birds incl. 109 adult males, 18 imm. males and 22 females were counted in Machrihanish Bay *Kintyre* on 26th May.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 721 nesting females were counted at 27 sites: *ca* 521 of these (72%) were on the Burnt Islands (Kyles of Bute) and 94 % of the total were at the six largest colonies [Craik, 2001]. A min. of 9 broods were found on Treshnish Isles in Jun with evidence of breeding from Fladda, Lunga, Sgeir a Chaisteil and Sgeir an Eirionnaich. An accurate count on Sanda Islands gave a total of 34 breeding prs; 9 monitored nests all hatched eggs but the young faced heavy predation and further outcome was unknown as adults with well-grown young leave the islands. On *Colonsay* a census in

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Jun found 51 males and 24 females with no young as well as 18 females with 19 broods totalling 48 young (mean size of 6 broods on Ardkenish peninsula was 2.67 [cf 2.69 in 2000]). A nest with 5 eggs was found at The Strand *Colonsay* on 6th May and the first chicks reported were 5 at Otter Ferry on 19th May. Reports of females with young came from many other sites in *Cowal, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree*.

Autumn Eider Survey The co-ordinated count of Eiders in the Firth of Clyde, which took place as usual in Sep, gave a total of 4,677 for the Argyll part of the area. (N.B. this includes all those counted in L Long, some of which will belong with the Clyde area) (cf 4,087 in 2000, 5,519 in 1999, 4,771 in 1998 and 5,715 in 1997). Numbers were generally down on previous years but an increase in the L Fyne count helped to compensate for this. Apart from the outer Ayrshire coast, there were low levels in the Firth of Clyde as a whole (C. Waltho). Again, much higher counts were achieved for at least one key site in Argyll earlier in the autumn (see below).

Aug-Dec. The highest single count was 1,312 from Otter Ferry to 3 miles N on 1st Sep, while numbers at L Indaal *Islay* peaked at 204 on 16th Sep [Table 16]. On 21st Sep 1,472 were counted between Otter Ferry and Castle Lachlan *Cowal*; and on 9th Dec 2,424 birds were counted in the same area. Elsewhere, counts of 100 or more were made at: SE *Colonsay* (198 on 22nd Sep), Gunna Sound *Tiree* (max. 370 on 25th Sep) and off Hynish *Tiree* (max. 450 on 22nd Oct).

Table 16. Maximum monthly counts of Eiders at Loch Indaal (*Islay*) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	121	97	167	190	127	201	191	201	204	142	137	200

LONG-TAILED DUCK

Clangula hyemalis Eun buchainn 0212

Uncommon winter visitor, most frequent in Sound of Gigha (Kintyre), Islay, Coll and Tiree. Usually marine but occasionally seen on inland lochs. Occasional summer records.

Jan-Apr. The highest count in the Sound of Gigha was 18 on 5th Jan, and there were still 13 off Tayinloan on 22nd Apr. Smaller numbers were seen regularly on L Indaal, with a max. of 5 on 1st Mar. Only single birds were recorded on *Tiree*, at Hynish on 4th Jan and in Balephetrish Bay on 3rd Feb. The last birds of spring were a pr at Ballochroy *Kintyre* on 6th May.

Oct-Dec. The first bird of autumn was an immature female in Dunstaffnage Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 15th Sep, followed by a female flying past Rubha Chraiginis *Tiree* on 27th Sep. There were 2 in L Indaal on 14th Oct and numbers there peaked at only 5, on 9th Dec. In Oct, Machrihanish SBO had an adult male flying N on 20th, 5 flying S on 22nd and a single flying S on 31st. Elsewhere *Tiree* had up to 2 birds at various sites from Oct to Dec, incl. an inland bird at L a' Phuill on 17th Dec. The only record from the Sound of Gigha concerned a male & female off Tayinloan on 14th Nov.

BLACK SCOTER (COMMON SCOTER)

Melanitta nigra Lach bheag dubh 0213

Very rare breeding species in Islay, Mid-Argyll and N Argyll. Present throughout the year in the Sound of Gigha (Kintyre) and at Loch Indaal (Islay). Scarce winter visitor elsewhere.

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Jan-Jun. Numbers at L Indaal were lower than usual with a peak of only 59 on 10^a Mar (cf peaks of 97 on 9^a Apr 2000 and 142 on 18^a Apr in 1999) [Table 17]. The Sound of Gigha did rather better, with numbers rising from 20 on 18^a Feb to 190 off Ronachan Point on 6^a May. The only other reports were of groups in single figures seen from the Kennacraig-Islay ferry during Feb.

Breeding. At least 8 prs were present at the regular breeding site on *Islay* in early Jun. None were recorded elsewhere.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The breeding information for *Islay* should read:

“The main regular breeding site on *Islay* held at least 7 prs in early Jun. A nearby small loch, sometimes also used, dried up completely in spring and no birds were present there in the breeding season.”

Jul-Dec. The L Indaal flock peaked at 71 on 22nd July (cf 63 on 10^a Sep in 2000) [Table 17]. At least 100 were in the Sound of Gigha on 26^a Jul and 47 were counted there on 14^a Nov. At Machrihanish SBO a total of 184 were recorded flying S between 9^a Jul and 10^a Nov with a peak count of 36 on 8^a Oct. Up to 3 birds were recorded flying past Frenchman's Rocks on 4 dates during Sep. Elsewhere, 60 or more birds were reported in West L Tarbert *Kintyre* on 9^a Nov, *Tiree* had one or two birds on various dates from Oct to Dec, and a single female was in L na Keal on 20^a Oct.

Table 17. Maximum monthly counts of Common Scoter at Loch Indaal (*Islay*) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	38	52	59	41	38	40	71	65	59	50	40	40

SURF SCOTER

Melanitta perspicillata

0214

Rare. At least 11 Argyll records, mostly in spring.

An adult male and an immature male were seen off Ronachan Point *Kintyre* on 6^a May, and a male was seen at Bruichladdich *Islay* on 24^a Oct. This extends the continuous run of annual records to six years.

VELVET SCOTER

Melanitta fusca

Lach dubh

0215

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Most often on the west coast of Kintyre and at Loch Indaal (Islay), rare elsewhere. Occasional summer records.

Jan-Jun. The only records were from the Sound of Gigha where the following counts were recorded: 8 on 5^a Jan, 2 on 28^a Jan, 2 on 18^a Feb and 5 on 6^a May.

Jul-Dec. One at Bunnahabhain *Islay* on 4^a Jul and, in the Sound of Gigha, 3 on 2nd Sep and 6 on 28^a Dec were the only records received.

COMMON GOLDENEYE (GOLDENEYE) *Bucephala clangula* Lach bhreac

0218

Common winter visitor. Birds regularly present in all areas from early Oct to late Apr. Occasional summer records.

Jan-Apr. The highest count was 197 at L Caolisport on 14^a Jan. Other than those in Table 18, the only sites with counts of 10 or more were: L Awe *Mid-Argyll* (16 nr Kilchum

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Castle on 2nd Jan), Sound of Gigha (78 on 5th Jan) and L Leathan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 11 on 16th Apr). The last record was of one at Ardnave Loch on 12th May.

There were no records of summering birds.

Sep-Dec. The only Sep record concerned a single bird at Machrihanish SBO on 13th.

Three birds were reported from L Don on 11th Oct, 11 were recorded during the WeBS count on L Indaal on 14th and one was on L a' Phuill on 18th Oct. Birds were not widely reported until 20th-22nd Oct when there were records from *Mull, Islay, Kintyre* and *Tiree*. Machrihanish SBO had 28 flying S between 22nd and 30th Oct. A flock of at least 65 was reported in L Spelve *Mull* on 17th Nov, numbers in L Caolisport peaked at 158 on 20th Dec and 85 were counted in the Sound of Gigha on 28th Dec. Elsewhere the only site [apart from those shown in Table 18] with 10 or more birds was Ganavan (Oban) with 17 on 12th Dec.

Table 18. Maximum monthly counts of Goldeneyes in Loch Indaal (Islay), Outer Loch Etive (N Argyll), Loch Sween (Mid-Argyll) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2001. No birds were reported from these sites from May to Aug.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	10	16	5	6		0	11	12	15
L. Etive	16	25	n/r	n/r		0	0	8	13
Loch Sween	8	26	n/r	n/r		0	0	22	25
Tiree	44	41	32	n/r		0	7	16	53

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator* Siolta dhearg 0221
Common resident breeder. Large moulting flocks gather at some sites during Jul-Aug. Loch Indaal (Islay) is a site of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. The peak count at L Indaal was 48 on 14th Jan [Table 19]. The only other counts of 20 or more were at L Caolisport (35 on 14th Jan), Tayinloan (max. 20 on 28th Jan), Otter Ferry *Cowal* (34 on 24th Feb), and Gott Bay (max. 48 on 1st May). A group of 5 near Seal Cottage, Oronsay on 1st May was one of only 3 *Colonsay* sightings during the year and records there have declined during the last decade [DCJ].

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, eggs or dependent young were seen at 7 sites. At one of these sites, the Islandadd Bridge by the Crinan Canal, a single female with 23 medium-sized young were counted on 21st Jul [(cf counts of single females with 22 and 19 young in 1999 and 18-19 in 1998) (ABR 15 & 16)] [Craik, 2001]. There were also several reports of adults with recently hatched young from *Kintyre* and similar records from sites on *Coll, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *Tiree*.

Aug-Dec. The only moult congregation count received was of 87 in L Riddon *Cowal* on 11th Aug. The peak WeBS count on L Indaal of 161 on 19th Aug was only slightly below last year's record (of 163 on 14th Aug) [Table 17]. The only other site with a count of 20 or more birds was the head of L na Keal (max. 28 on 15th Aug).

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Table 19. Maximum monthly counts of Red-breasted Mergansers at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) and Loch Sween (Mid-Argyll) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	3	1	n/r	2	6	n/r	0	26	0	6	2
L. Indaal	48	42	41	46	38	37	80	161	112	87	75	59
L. Crinan	11	15	7	5	n/r	n/r	n/r	11	25	8	8	8
L. Sween	12	18	n/r	28	14	24						

GOOSANDER

Mergus merganser

Siolta

0223

Scarce breeding species, mainly in Cowal, Mid-Argyll, Mull and N Argyll. More widespread in winter but only in small numbers.

Jan-May. Up to 4 birds were seen at Ardnahoe Islay, McDougall's Bay Jura, Holy Loch and L Restil Cowal, Waterfoot/Torrisdale Bay Kintyre, L Beg, Pennygael and Mishnish Lochs Mull, Tayvallich, Glen Shira, Add Estuary, L Gilp, L Feochan and Kilmartin Burn Mid-Argyll and L Etive and River Orchy N Argyll. A pr in the rapids on 22nd May were the first records for Taynish NNR since 1989.

Breeding. A pr with 7 young were seen at L an Torr Mull on 22nd May, a female with 7 young was on the River Eachaig Cowal on 4th Jun, a female with 6 small young was seen on the River Euchar near Lagganbeg Mid-Argyll on 7th Jun and all 6 were still present on 3rd Jul, and a female with 8 young was at Blarghour (L Awe) Mid-Argyll on 29th Jul.

Aug-Dec. The max. number in L Crinan was 8 birds on 23rd Aug, while L Etive had a max. of 4 on 16th Sep. Elsewhere, one to 3 birds were seen at Machrihanish and Lussa Loch Kintyre, L Gilp, L Feochan and L Leathan Mid-Argyll and on L Tuath, River Aros, L Don and L na Keal Mull.

EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD (HONEY BUZZARD) *Pernis apivorus*

0231

Very rare passage migrant. Seven accepted records since 1980; the last at Ledaig Point (N Argyll) in 1999.

Two individuals were recorded in rather unusual circumstances. Some young birds from the small Scottish breeding population have been fitted with radio tags so that their progress can be followed. On 14th Sep juv. No. 21252 was tracked flying over the sea due W of Islay (55.766 N. 6.613 S) and on 24th Sep juv. No. 21253 was tracked over the Sound of Mull W of Fishnish (56.553 N. 5.87 W). The latter bird was detected nr Bunessan Mull (56.325 N. 6.197 W) on the following day (25th Sep) (information obtained from www.roydennis.org website). A sighting of a bird that was probably of this species on Colonsay on 20th Sept could have been one of these birds (DCJ).

RED KITE

Milvus milvus

Clamhan gobhlach

0239

In an attempt to re-introduce this species to Scotland, Red Kites have been released in Highland Region since 1989 and in Central Scotland since 1996. Genuine vagrants have occurred in the past, but most recent Argyll records involve these birds. All records are requested, ideally with details of presence or absence of wing-tags.

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There were five records. The first concerned a bird reported as having yellow wing-tags that was seen in Glen Fyne *Mid-Argyll* on 12th-13th Jun. Insufficient details of the tags were given to establish its origin. On 23rd Sep one was seen flying over the road nr Clachandhu (L na Keal) *Mull* mobbed by 2 Hooded Crows; and one was seen from Benderloch flying towards Beinn Lora on 6th Oct. The skeletal remains of a bird were found on the beach 2 miles N of Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 9th November. This was thought to have been a bird released in Dumfries & Galloway on 9th Aug 2001 (RAB). Lastly one was reported nr Tayinloan on 27th Dec: no wing-tag was noted.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE

Haliaeetus albicilla Iolair mhara 0243

Formerly resident breeder in Argyll. A re-introduction programme involving the release of 82 birds on Rum between 1974 and 1985, and 59 in northern Scotland between 1993 and 1998, has been successful in establishing breeding pairs in the wild. All records are requested, ideally with details of age, activity and presence/absence of wing-tags.

Breeding. In Scotland, 23 areas were occupied by territorial prs/birds; eggs were laid by 17 prs and breeding suspected at another 2 sites. Seven successful prs fledged a total of 11 chicks (4 broods of 2 and 3 broods of 1) [RAB].

Wandering or dispersing birds were reported on the islands, from *Islay* (one individual), *Mull* (many sightings including birds with coloured wing-tags marked in previous years) and The Garvellachs *Mid-Argyll* (two individuals). Mainland records came from Clachan Seil, L Feochan and Gallachoille (L Sween) *Mid-Argyll* and Ledaig and Port Appin *N Argyll*.

EURASIAN MARSH HARRIER

(MARSH HARRIER)

Circus aeruginosus Clamhan loin 0260

Scarce but now more or less annual passage migrant, with records in every year but one since 1986. Most records Apr-Jun.

On *Islay*, an adult female first seen at L Gruinart on 6th May was present in the area until at least 6th Sep. A different individual (a juvenile presumably not bred on *Islay*) was also seen at L Gruinart on 6th Sep and again at Island House on 25th Oct. The only record elsewhere concerned an immature/female at Machrihanish Airfield *Kintyre* on 5th and 6th May.

HEN HARRIER

Circus cyaneus Breid air toin 0261

Sparse but widespread breeding species. A survey in 1998 produced an estimate of 66-189 breeding pairs (at 95% confidence levels) in Argyll and Bute.

Jan-Apr. Very few were at the two roosts at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* with max. totals of just 2 birds in Jan and 3 in Feb. The roost at RSPB L. Gruinart was similarly low with no more than 4 birds present during the period. Elsewhere, hunting birds were reported from Oronsay and from *Cowal* (3 sites), *Islay* (6 sites), *Jura* (one site), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (4 sites), *Mull* (4 sites), *N Argyll* (one site) and *Tiree* (3 sites).

Breeding. Breeding success of monitored territories is summarised in Table 20. On mainland Argyll, five sites occupied in previous years in the Lochgilphead area were unoccupied in 2001 [RAB].

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Table 20. Outcomes of monitored Hen Harrier territories in Argyll in 2001.

Area	Sites checked	Territories occupied*	Ts where eggs laid	Ts known to have fledged young	Min no. of young fledged	No. of young per successful territory
SW Mull		5	5	5	12	2.40
Islay ¹		24 ^{1,3}	18	15	50	3.33
Mainland	8	3	3	2	5	2.50
Cowal		9 ²	9	5	21	4.20
Total		41	37	27	88	3.26

* Females involved in bigamous pairings are treated as separate "territories". Polygamy was suspected at 6 sites, with circumstantial evidence that 3 males may have nested with 6 females.

¹ Involving at least 19 male harriers

² Involving 8 male harriers

³ Figure includes 2 territories each held by an apparently unpaired, one-year old, male.

The figures for *Islay* include data from a full survey of the Rinns of Islay Special Protection Area carried out for SNH in which all sites with past breeding records were visited and other suitable areas were searched.

Aug-Dec. The roost at RSPB L. Gruinart again did not exceed 4 birds. The Moine Mhor roosts did rather better, with a max. total of 8 birds at both roosts in Nov as well as 5 in Oct and 4 in Dec. A ring-tail was seen on Sanda Island *Kintyre* on 19th Sep and birds were widely reported on *Islay*. There were also reports from 2 locations on *Coll*, one on *Jura*, 5 in *Kintyre*, 4 in *Mid-Argyll*, 11 on *Mull*, one in *N Argyll* and 4 on *Tiree*.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK (SPARROWHAWK) *Accipiter nisus* Speireag 0269
Widespread, resident breeding species.

During the year birds were widely reported with records from all areas of Argyll except *Coll*, *Jura* and *N Argyll*. One at Ard Ear *Tiree* on 14th Mar was the first on the island for some considerable time, and at least 2 birds were present on *Tiree* Oct-Dec. Prey species recorded in Argyll during the year included Feral Pigeon, Robin, Blackbird, Redwing, tits, Chaffinch, Siskin and Twite. At one site 7 Blue Tits were taken in a single day.

Breeding. Three prs were found breeding on *Colonsay* in Jun, and a nest with young was reported in *Cowal*.

COMMON BUZZARD (BUZZARD) *Buteo buteo* Clamhan 0287
Resident breeding bird, common in all areas.

Numerous records were received from all Argyll areas except *Jura* (where the species was almost certainly present). At least 8 birds were recorded on *Tiree* during the goose count on 11th Jan, and 9 birds were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart on 17th Jan. During hard weather in Jan a bird at RSPB Smaull *Islay* was seen eating worms where cows had broken the frosted surface; and one was seen with a Eurasian Curlew kill on *Tiree* on 26th Sep.

Breeding. Breeding success of monitored territories is summarised in Table 21. On *Colonsay* the evidence of occupation at a further 3 sites was inconclusive, and of the definitely occupied territories, the outcome was unknown for 4 prs, 8 prs failed or did not

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breed, one pr had young but they were inaccessible, and 7 prs were fully monitored and presumed to have fledged 13 young [RAB]. A pr bred on Sanda Islands and fledged 2 young; and on *Islay* 3 prs bred at RSPB L. Gruinart, one at Upper Killeyan, and one at RSPB Smuall nested low down on a rocky outcrop. Other breeding records included a pr with 3 recently fledged young at Strone Glen *Kintyre*, a pr behaving territorially on Fladda (Treshnish Isles) in Jun, a successful pr at Tainish NNR and an adult with 2 juvs. at Glen Byre *Mull* on 2nd Jul.

Recorded in 2 of 6 BBS squares (33%), (cf 4 of 10 in 2000).

Table 21. Outcomes of monitored Common Buzzard territories in Argyll in 2001.

Area	Sites checked	Territories occupied	Ts where eggs laid	Ts known to have fledged young	Min no. of young fledged	No. of young per successful territory
SW Mull		18	18	18	29	1.61
Colonsay	50	20	15+	7	[13]	1.86
Islay		1	1	1	3	3.00
Cowal		26 ¹	?	5	7	1.40
Total		65	34+	31	52	1.68

[] presumed to have fledged

¹ most sites thought to have been successful but outcomes only known accurately at 5 of them.

GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos* Iolaire 0296

Scarce resident breeding species. Immatures tend to wander and may be recorded in areas where breeding does not occur.

Recorded away from the breeding areas, in winter, in *Colonsay, Cowal, Islay, Jura, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull* and *N Argyll*.

Breeding. Breeding success of monitored territories is summarised in Table 22. Although, as usual, most nests were on crags, two were in trees - one in a Scots pine and one in an ash. One very unusual (and unsuccessful) nest site was "on the ground on the top of a coastal slope" [RAB].

Table 22. Outcomes of monitored Golden Eagle territories in Argyll in 2001.

Year	Sites checked	Territories occupied	Ts where eggs laid	Ts known to have fledged young	% of occupied Ts that fledged young	Min no. of young fledged	No. of young per successful territory
2001	54	54	27	18	33.3%	21	1.16
2002	62	59	28+	19	32.2%	22	1.15

The data for 2001 include the establishment and apparent first recorded breeding attempt in a new area of Argyll.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus* Iolaire iasgach 0301

Summer visitor. Very scarce breeding species. Occurs more widely on passage.

Apr-May. No early arrivals were recorded, the first report being of one seen fishing in L Leathan *Mid-Argyll* on 26th Apr. The only other passage bird reported was one at Esknish *Islay* on 1st May.

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Breeding. The population increased to 5 breeding prs. All were successful and reared a total of 10 young (b/1 x 1, b/2 x 3, b/3 x 1). There were increasing reports, usually of single birds, in several other areas of Argyll [RAB].

Jul-Sep. Away from the known breeding sites, single birds were at L Uisg Mull on 12^a Jun and L Don on 30^a Jun, and 2 were seen several times in early Jul near the head of L Caolisport.

Passage birds were seen at L Frisa Mull on 16^a Aug, several sites on *Islay*, incl. L Gruinart, 27^a-29^a Aug, Port Appin *N Argyll* on 6^a Sep and Holy Loch Cowal on 18^a Sep. The last was a juv. reported over L Crinan on 5^a Oct.

COMMON KESTREL (KESTREL) *Falco tinnunculus* Clamhan ruadh 0304

Widespread but uncommon breeding bird. Population in some areas appears to fluctuate from year to year. Emigration from some areas in autumn (e.g. Mull) and immigration to others.

There were records from all areas except *N Argyll* during the year. Away from known breeding areas, one or two were seen on *Tiree* in Jan and Mar and from Aug to Dec.

Breeding. On the Ross of Mull at least 6 out of 16 occupied territories were successful, 9 occupied sites on Cowal were all successful (at least 21 young fledged), one pr on *Islay* was probably successful and a territorial pr on *Colonsay* were presumed to have failed [RAB].

MERLIN *Falco columbarius* Meimeal 0309

Scarce breeding species, possibly under-recorded. More widely distributed on passage and in winter.

Jan-May. Birds were reported regularly on Oronsay, Mull, *Islay* and *Tiree* (where min. 3 individuals in Jan). There were also records from 2 localities on *Colonsay*, one in *Mid-Argyll* and two in *N Argyll*.

Breeding. Very little information received. Of 4 monitored sites, 2 were apparently unoccupied, a pr present early in the season did not stay, and a pr that occupied a new site probably failed. A male alarming in suitable habitat on *Islay* in Jun may have indicated successful breeding [RAB]. A pr were holding territory at one site on Mull in Jun, and an adult was seen carrying food at another site on Mull on 20^a Jul.

Aug-Dec. Reported from various localities on *Islay* throughout the period. *Tiree* also had birds regularly, with 3 or more birds present in Oct. The first autumn migrant at Machrihanish SBO appeared on 4^a Aug. The only records elsewhere involved single birds at 3 localities on Mull in Sep, at Tarbert *Kintyre* on 1^a Oct, at L Crinan on 2^a Dec and on Oronsay on 8^a Dec.

PEREGRINE FALCON (PEREGRINE) *Falco peregrinus* Seabhag 0320

Sparsely distributed but widespread breeding species. Found throughout the year in all areas. Breeding recorded in fifty-two 10 km squares in Argyll in 1991 survey [RSPB et al.].

Outside the breeding season there were frequent records for *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *Tiree* but none for *Coll*, *Jura* or *N Argyll*.

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A female found dead and partially eaten on 22nd May at Ballochgair Point, nr Kildonald *Kintyre* had been ringed as a nestling at Moffat, Dumfries & Galloway, on 5th June 1991. It was thus nearly ten years old and was found 131 km from its hatching place.

Breeding. Of 8 occupied territories monitored in *Cowal*, 5 sites were known to be successful and fledged at least 9 young. Elsewhere in Argyll, 4 sites were monitored of which 3 were successful and fledged at least 5 young [RAB]. Successful breeding was recorded in *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull* but no birds were present on Treshnish Isles for the first time in recent years.

WILLOW PTARMIGAN (RED GROUSE) *Lagopus lagopus* Coileach fraoich 0329
Sparsely distributed resident breeding bird.

Breeding. A female with one chick was seen at Tìrèragan *Mull* in Jun and several prs were reported from another area in the north of *Mull*. Birds were also present at L Gruinart and Smaull *Islay* during the breeding season.

Outside the breeding season, birds were reported also from *N Argyll*.

ROCK PTARMIGAN (PTARMIGAN) *Lagopus mutus* Tarmachan 0330
Very localised resident breeding bird, generally above 800 m. All records required.

The only records came from *N Argyll*, where feathers and droppings were found at Beinn Fhionnlaidh in Aug and birds were seen at Beinn a' Bhuiridh, Coire Chat (Ben Cruachan) and Meall nan Each (Ben Cruachan) in Sep.

BLACK GROUSE *Tetrao tetrix* Caoileach dubh 0332
Scarce and local resident breeding bird. Populations in some areas may derive from released birds. Numbers apparently in steep decline: all records required.

The only records received were as follows: 'Several' flushed from the high ground above L Scotnish *Mid-Argyll* in Mar/Apr, one greyhen in Dunbeg forestry *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Apr, one greyhen nr Clashgour on 14th May, greyhen and fledged brood near Tarbert *Kintyre* on 14th Jul, 4 males on high ground above Tayinloan *Kintyre* on 2nd Oct, male at Aucharua (nr Southend) *Kintyre* on 7th Oct, and a greyhen in Cairnbaan forest *Mid-Argyll* on 20th Oct.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa* Cearc thomain dhearg chasach 0358
Birds (some hybrids with Chukar A. chukar) introduced to several areas. Although this species is in Category C of the British list, populations in Argyll do not appear to be self-sustaining.

There were widespread reports from *Islay*, including 8 at L Skerrols on 16th Feb, 2 at *Islay* House on 15th May, 2 at Octofad on 23rd Sep, 20 or more at Octovullin on 6th Oct, 14 at Rockside on 20th Oct, 29 at Drochaid Bheag (nr Laggan Point) on 24th Oct, 19 at Rockside on 26th Oct, 14 near the mouth of the River Laggan on 14th Nov, as well as singles at other sites. Such records seem to indicate that recent releases have been reasonably successful. Single birds were seen on *Colonsay* from Apr to Jun; and a group of 4 birds near Drum Farm *Cowal* on 12th Nov was the only mainland record.

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COMMON QUAIL (QUAIL) *Coturnix coturnix* Gearradh gort 0370

Rare and irregular summer visitor.

The only records came from *Coll*, where 3 birds were calling at the RSPB reserve in Jun and one was calling west of Breachacha Castle on 9th Jul.

COMMON PHEASANT (PHEASANT) *Phasianus colchicus* Easag 0394

Long-established, widespread and common resident breeding bird. Birds also annually reared and released on some estates.

During the year birds were reported from all areas except *Coll*, *Jura* and *N Argyll*. They were particularly numerous and widespread on *Islay* with a high of 33 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 1st Nov. Large numbers were released on *Colonsay* and in *Kintyre*, including 450 birds at both High Lossit and Peninver.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 6 BBS squares surveyed (cf 2 of 12 in 2000), and birds also bred on the Smaul and Loch Gruinart RSPB reserves on *Islay*, although no counts were made.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus* Snagan allt 0407

Scarce breeding bird, numbers augmented by passage migrants and winter visitors. Under-recorded.

Jan-Apr. Single birds were reported at RSPB L. Gruinart in Apr, and one was seen running across the road at Balephuill *Tiree* in Jan.

Breeding. During the breeding season birds were heard calling from 4 locations at RSPB L. Gruinart and calling birds were also heard at the RSPB Reserve on *Coll*, at L Fada *Colonsay*, on *Iona Mull* and at Loch Bhasapol *Tiree*.

Aug-Dec. On *Islay* birds were recorded in Oct at Loch Gruinart and in a roadside ditch at Ardilistry and one was at L an t-Sailein in Nov. At least two were calling at East L Fada *Colonsay* in Sep and one was calling on Oronsay in Nov and Dec. *Tiree* had records at Kilkenneth in Sep and at Loch Bhasapol in Dec.

For the second year running there were no mainland records.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana* Traon breac 0408

Rare and irregular summer visitor. First confirmed breeding record for Argyll in 1993.

A male called at RSPB L. Gruinart for a few days in mid-May but there was no evidence of breeding.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): entry should read:

"A male was calling at RSPB L. Gruinart from mid-May until the end of Jun." (not Jul as given).

CORN CRAKE (CORNCRAKE) *Crex crex* Traon 0421

Localised summer visitor. Breeding mainly on Islay, Colonsay, Iona (Mull), Tiree and Coll.

The first confirmed record of spring was one seen at Blackpark (L Indaal) *Islay* on 1st

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May. This was followed by 2 birds calling at Balemartine *Tiree* on 3rd May and one calling on Iona *Mull* on 6th May.

Breeding. Numbers on *Coll* continued their recent steady increase although overall numbers were slightly down on 2000, possibly due to the poor summer.

Table 23. Minimum numbers of calling Corncrakes in Argyll areas in 2001 with totals for 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997 and 1996 for comparison [RAB].

Area	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Coll	40	42	40	48	53	62
Tiree	117	136	136	144	153	143
Mull	0	0	2	2	1	0
Iona	5	8	12	13	9	7
Colonsay & Oronsay	8	8	14	21	21	18
Islay	7	17	4	7	8	7
Total	177	211	208	235	245	237

In addition, at least one or possibly two calling birds were reported from the Treshnish Isles [TIARG].

One was heard calling on 8th Aug on rough ground next to the golf course at Machrihanish. In Sep one was on The Reef *Tiree* on 6th, and a full grown juv was seen on Oronsay on 10th. A very late bird was seen crossing the road at Balephuill *Tiree* on 19th Oct.

COMMON MOORHEN (MOORHEN) *Gallinula chloropus* Cearc uisge 0424
Localised resident breeding species.

Breeding. Four prs were present at RSPB L. Gruinart and at least one brood was seen. A pr raised 2 broods at Silvercraigs (nr Lochgilphead) *Mid-Argyll*; and a pr at Lochan Tainish with young in Jul was the first recent breeding record for Tainish NNR.

In *Mid-Argyll* birds were present on the small lochs in the Ford area and at the southern end of L Awe as well as at Muircroft (Oban) and Moine Mhor. *Tiree* had birds at L Bhasapol (regularly) and at Kilkenneth, Balephuill and L a' Phuill. Elsewhere there were records for Keil Crofts *N Argyll* and L Assapol *Mull*.

COMMON COOT (COOT) *Fulica atra* Lach a bhlaire 0429
Very scarce breeder and uncommon winter visitor.

Jan-May. The regular small flock on L Bhasapol peaked at 9 on 14th Jan. A single bird was seen at L Nell *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd Jan, one was at L Ballygrant *Islay* in Feb, and one or more birds were reported from *Colonsay* in May.

Summering birds. There were no records during the breeding season.

Aug-Dec. A juvenile was seen at East L Fada *Colonsay* on 20th-23rd Sep, and 3 birds were at An Lodan (south L Awe) *Mid-Argyll* on 4th Nov. Otherwise the only records concerned L Bhasapol where birds were first noted on 14th Aug and numbers had built to 8 by 17th Nov.

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EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER

(OYSTERCATCHER)

Haematopus ostralegus Gille brighde 0450

Widespread and common breeding species. Flocks congregate at favoured locations outside the breeding season.

Jan-Apr. Numbers at L Indaal peaked at 493 in Feb [Table 24]. Other than those in Table 24, the only sites with counts of 100 or more were: L Gilp (max. 116 on 29th Jan), Otter Ferry Cowal (max. 364 on 18th Feb), *Tiree* (100+ recorded around coast in Mar) and Campbeltown Loch (at least 250 or more at 'Stinky Hole' on 8th Mar).

Breeding. Ten breeding prs were found on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) in late Jun with further prs on Fladda ('several'), Sgeir a Chaisteil (3 prs), Cairn na Burgh Beg and Cairn na Burgh Mor. An accurate count on Sanda Islands gave a total of 25 prs. At Tainish NNR 3 prs bred successfully and eggs were predated at a fourth nest.

At Otter Ferry on 20th Jul, a family of 3 chicks were seen to swim out *ca* 10 m from the shore to avoid human disturbance. One of the same family was later picked up by a small dog and rescued unharmed. Despite the disturbance they stayed within a few metres of the nest site and were still being fed by long suffering parents on Christmas Day. This was the only successful nest of 8 found in the Otter Ferry area along the shores of L Fyne [T. Callan].

Aug-Dec. Apart from those in Table 24, the only sites with counts exceeding 100 were: Campbeltown Loch (490 at 'Stinky Hole' on 21st Aug), L Gilp (max. 310+ on 9th Sep), Otter Ferry (500+ on sand spit on 16th Sep), Ballimore Cowal (600+ on shore 22nd Sep) and Holy Loch Cowal (760 counted on 6th Oct). A total of 302 flew past Machrihanish SBO in 8 hrs on 18th Aug.

Table 24. Maximum monthly counts of Oystercatchers at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) and The Strand (Colonsay) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	44	n/r	n/r	1	2	40	100	12	n/r	n/r	12
L. Indaal	486	493	407	515	414	398	372	402	383	323	442	492
L. Crinan	30	66	82	54	42	n/r	81	87	47	42	53	36
The Strand, Colonsay	n/r	39	n/r	n/r	48		70	105	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r

RINGED PLOVER

Charadrius hiaticula Trilleachan traghad 0470

Widespread and common breeding species. Flocks of birds congregate at favoured locations outside the breeding season, especially on passage. Tiree is a site of international importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. Numbers at L Indaal peaked at 127 in May [Table 25]. On *Tiree* a total of 188 were counted in Balephetrish, Gott and Salum Bays on 9th Jan. The only other sites with 50 or more birds were Dunaverty Bay Kintyre (112 on 29th Jan), The Strand Colonsay (max. 64 on 1st May), and Ardnave Islay (155 on 20th May).

Breeding. On Colonsay (incl. Oronsay) 30 prs were located (*cf* 42 prs in 2000). A pr bred on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late Jun with 2 further prs on Sgeir a Chaisteil and one pr on Fladda. Up to 8 prs bred on Sanda Islands, where the high failure rate of nests was

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mainly due to damage by sheep. At least 3 prs were nesting in the Toward Point area *Cowal*, 3 prs were sitting on eggs in the Pennygael area *Mull* on 16th May, and at least 4 prs were present at Ardnave.

Aug-Dec. The highest single gathering of autumn was on *Colonsay*, where a total of 217 birds were counted at Traigh nam Barc on 21st Sep. As usual *Tiree* held good numbers until the end of the year, with the following max. counts at favoured locations: 82 at L a' Phuill on 14th Aug, 178 in Gott Bay on 25th Sep, 58 at Heylipol on 25th Oct, 130 on golf course at Vaul on 25th Nov, and 143 at Sorobaidh Bay on 30th Nov.

Other sites with counts of 50 or more birds (in addition to those in Table 25) were Otter Ferry *Cowal* (max. 53 on 3rd Aug), L Beg *Mull* (70 on 22nd Aug), Ardnave Point *Islay* (max 130 on 8th Sep), and Oronsay (52 on 4th Dec).

Table 25. Maximum monthly counts of Ringed Plover at two sea-lochs on Islay 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	44	n/r	n/r	1	2	40	100	12	n/r	n/r	12
L. Indaal	49	49	27	117	127	42	39	111	100	81	40	92

EURASIAN DOTTEREL (DOTTEREL) *Charadrius morinellus* Amadan-mointich 0482
Scarce migrant, mostly in late Apr and May. Occasional breeding records in N Argyll.

Two were seen feeding on sheep-grazed pasture on Oronsay on 27th Apr, a juv. was seen flying down from Beinn Dorian to Allt Kinglass *N Argyll*, nr the West Highland Way, on 1st Jul, and a late adult bird was spotted in a flock of European Golden Plovers at Greenhill *Tiree* on 9th Oct.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis dominica* 0484
Vagrant. One previous Argyll record, on Colonsay in Oct 1992.

On 4th Oct, an immature bird of this species was found in a large flock of European Golden Plover at Greenhill *Tiree*. It was still present at the same site on 9th Oct but was not seen thereafter. The only previous record of this species in Argyll, on *Colonsay* in 1992, was at exactly the same time of year (3rd-5th Oct) [S. Votier/S. Bearhop/J. Bowler]*.

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER
 (GOLDEN PLOVER) *Pluvialis apricaria* Feadag 0485

Sparse but widespread breeding species. Upland afforestation has greatly reduced available breeding habitat in some areas. More numerous in winter, especially on Islay and Tiree, and on passage.

Jan-May. Numbers on *Tiree* at the start of the year were lower than usual but had built to a respectable min. 1,500 on The Reef by 25th Mar [Table 26]. On Oronsay numbers peaked in mid-Apr with totals of 106 on 12th and 99 on 18. Other than those listed in Table 26, the only sites with counts of 50 or more were all on *Islay*: L Indaal (WeBS max. 210 on 14th Jan), Ardnave (max. 330 on 25th Feb) and L Gruinart (50 on 2nd Mar). Nine birds at Traigh nam Barc *Colonsay* on 29th Apr were of the 'northern' form, which has extensive black on face and belly.

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Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (*cf* 2 of 10 in 2000). A pr was present in suitable habitat at Lochan Cairn Dearg *N Argyll* on 28^a May, and one was giving alarm calls at the north end of *Colonsay* on 11^a Jun. Calling birds were also present at Beinn a' Chaisteil and Ben Iverveigh *N Argyll* on 1^a Jul.

Jul-Dec. A group of 17 birds in a cut silage field at Cornaig *Tiree* on 24^a Jul were the first returning migrants, and 45 were feeding at L Beg *Mull* on 26^a Jul. There were 2,000-3,000 birds on *Tiree* during Nov, the highest single count being 1,600 in the Barrapoll/Kilkenneth area on 14^a [Table 26]. The Laggan *Kintyre* had its highest numbers in recent years when 909 were counted on 31^a Oct. WeBS counts on *Islay* yielded totals of 275 on 11^a Nov and 310 on 9^a Dec at L Indaal and 660 at L Gruinart on 26^a Nov. Elsewhere on *Islay*, 200 or more were at Leorin on 3^a Oct, over 500 at Bridgend on 28^a Oct and 70 at Ardnave on 16^a Nov. Other sites with 50 or more birds included L Beg *Mull* (max. 180 on 17^a Aug) and Machrihanish SBO (peak count 230 on 1^a Nov).

Table 26. Maximum monthly day-counts of Golden Plover on *Tiree* in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Tiree</i>	350	440	1,500	n/r	962	1	17	320	n/r	2,000	2000+	1,000+

GREY PLOVER

Pluvialis squatarola Trilleachan 0486

Uncommon passage migrant, mostly to islands. A few winter, mainly on Islay.

Jan-May. A flock of 12 at Ardnave *Islay* on 27^a May was the only count in double figures. The only other sites reporting birds were: Salum Bay *Tiree* (6 on 9^a Jan), L na Cille *Mid-Argyll* (max. 7 on 13^a Feb), L Gruinart (max. 8 on 18^a Feb), Fidden *Mull* (one on 27^a Feb) and Tayinloan (one on 4^a Mar).

Aug-Dec. The first returning bird was a single in L Gruinart on 31^a Jul and 2 were there next day. Two flew S past Machrihanish SBO on 10^a Sep and one on 5^a Oct. Numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart built to 11 on 30^a Sep but none were recorded there after this date. Elsewhere on *Islay* 3 were at Bridgend Merse on 22nd Oct, and at Ardnave there were 2 on 26^a Oct, 3 on 3^a Nov, 2 on 26^a Dec and one on 31^a Dec. The only other records came from *Tiree* where one was at Sandaig on 4^a Oct, 5 were W of Salum on 25^a Nov and one was at Scarinish on 20^a Dec.

NORTHERN LAPWING (LAPWING)

Vanellus vanellus Carracag 0493

Localised breeder and widespread wintering species.

Jan-Apr. Numbers generally peaked in Feb when, in addition to the counts shown in Table 27, 113 were found on Oronsay on 18^a while, on *Islay*, 129 were at Smaull RSPB reserve on 23rd, *ca* 100 at Druim Iriseig (Port Ellen) on 24^a, 200 at Ardnave *Islay* on 25^a and *ca* 100 in the Newton/Ballygrant area also on 25^a. The only other sites with 50 or more birds were Tayinloan (80 on 6^a Jan and 20^a Apr) and Kilfinan Bay *Cowal* (100 or more on 18^a Mar). Birds were also reported, in smaller numbers, from elsewhere in *Kintyre* and from *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*.

Breeding. The species was recorded in one of the 6 BBS squares surveyed, (*cf* 2 of 12 in 2000). Only 17 prs were found on *Colonsay* while, at RSPB reserves, 52 prs were on *Coll*,

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165 prs at L Gruinart, 117 prs at Ardnave and 15 prs at Smaull. On *Mull* up to 4 prs were at each of Con na Faoilinn (L Spelve), Fiddin, Lagganulva, Aird of Kinloch and Oskamull. Breeding prs were also located at Toward *Cowal*, Connel *Mid-Argyll* and Kirkapol and L Bhasapol *Tiree*.

Aug-Dec. In addition to counts in Table 27, flocks of 50 or more were at: Machrins *Colonsay* (110 on 23rd Sep), The Laggan *Kintyre* (max. 165 on 3rd Oct), Tayinloan (max. 64 on 14th Nov), Toward Quay *Cowal* (100+ on 7th Nov) and High Dunashry (N of Tayinloan) *Kintyre* (160 on 28th Dec).

Table 27. Maximum monthly counts of Lapwing at two sea-lochs on Islay and on Tiree in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	431	1,678	42	300	300	37	n/r	n/r	185	240	543	112
L. Indaal	0	12	131	16	11	7	0	27	47	112	190	36
Tiree	425	850	400	n/r	n/r	162	87	647	450	950	230	267

RED KNOT (KNOT) *Calidris canutus* Luatharan gainmhich 0496

Uncommon passage migrant with main passage Aug-Sep. A few winter.

Jan-May. The highest count was 50+ at L Gruinart on 18th Feb but most records came from L Indaal where there were 20 on 20th Mar, 4 on 15th Apr and 10 on 20th May. Elsewhere only singles were noted, at L a' Phuill on 6th Jan and at Tayinloan on 20th Apr.

Summer records. Unusually there was a group of 3 birds in partial summer plumage at Crossapol Bay *Tiree* on 26th Jun.

Jul-Dec. An early returning migrant was at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 12th Jul. Small groups were seen regularly from mid-Aug, incl. 2 in Gott Bay *Tiree* on 14th (and 4 there on 25th), 5 at L Gruinart on 19th, 11 at L Indaal on 19th, 8 at L Gruinart on 20th and 3 in the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 23rd Aug. Similar numbers were reported through Sep with 3 on Sanda Island on 13th, 12 at L Indaal on 16th, 5 at L Gruinart on 24th and 10 flying past Machrihanish SBO on 30th Sep. Numbers increased only slightly later in the year with a max. 25 at L Indaal on 21st Oct and 10 at Ardnave *Islay* on 10th Dec: in general fewer birds were seen than usual.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba* Luatharan glas 0497

Main passage in late-Apr/May and in Aug. Some winter, mainly on Islay and Tiree. Occasionally recorded in summer. Tiree is a site of national importance for passage/wintering birds.

Jan-Jun. As usual *Tiree* held by far the greatest numbers with a total of 255 in Balephetrish, Gott and Salum Bays on 9th Jan, min. 200 in Balephetrish Bay alone on 28th Feb, 70 in Gott Bay on 1st May and 35 in Balephetrish Bay on 3rd May. *Islay* had 18 at L Gruinart on 18th Feb and 30 at L Indaal on 19th Feb. The only records away from *Islay* and *Tiree* were a single at Ardskenish *Colonsay* on 29th Apr, 2 on Oronsay on 1st May and 10 at Tayinloan on 30th May.

There were several records in Jun including 6 on Oronsay on 12th, 10 on the west coast of Iona *Mull* on 14th, 2 at Traigh Baile Aonghais (nr. Killinallan) *Islay* on 24th and 3 at L a' Phuill on 25th.

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Jul-Dec. Autumn passage began with 2 at L Indaal on 22nd and 4 at L Gruinart on 26th Jul. There must have been a considerable movement of birds on 26th Jul as there were also counts of 225 in Gott Bay, 75 in Balephetrish Bay, 60 on Gunna Island *Coll* and 13 at Fidden *Mull* on this date. The autumn peak came a little later at Machrihanish SBO with 116 passing through on 10th Aug. Numbers at L Gruinart in Aug peaked at 27 on 31st while significant counts on *Tiree* included 62 at Gott Bay on 20th, 75 at Sorobaith Bay on 26th, 60 at Caolas on 26th and 138 at Balephetrish Bay on 27th. A single in the Add Estuary on 19th and 23rd Aug was unusual for this location.

Large numbers continued to be recorded at Balephetrish Bay until the end of the year with monthly peak counts of 100 on 21st Oct, 155 on 29th Nov and 320 on 1st Dec. Elsewhere on *Tiree* at this time, counts in excess of 100 birds were also made at Gott Bay (max. 220 on 9th Oct), Hynish (120 on 23rd Sep), Vaul Bay (220 on 7th Oct) and Sorobaith Bay (max. 200 on 15th Oct). Apart from 8 on the west coast of Iona *Mull* on 20th Sep, 12 at L Don on 21st Sep and 2 at Ardalanish Bay *Mull* on 26th Nov, all other records were from *Islay*. Max. counts at each location were: 50 at L Gruinart on 5th Sep, 19 at L Indaal on 14th Oct and 50 at Ardnave on 30th Dec.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* Luatharan beag 0501
Scarce but annual passage migrant, with the majority of records in autumn.

Spring. No birds were reported.

Autumn. The first birds were both single juvs: in the Add Estuary on 21st Aug and in Gott Bay from 3rd to 8th Sep. At Machrihanish SBO 3 were seen on 16th Sep and a flock of 12 flew S on 28th Sep. The remaining records were all on *Tiree* and comprise a juv at Gott Bay on 3rd- 8th Sep, one in Balaphetrish Bay on 1st Oct, 3 juvs just N of Gott Bay on 4th Oct, and a single juv moulting into winter plumage at Heylipol on 25th Oct.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea* Luatharan crom 0509
Scarce but more or less annual passage migrant, with most records in autumn.

Spring. The only record was of 2 in summer plumage at Blackrock (L Indaal) on 18th May.

Autumn. A single flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 16th Sep was followed by 2 at L Gruinart on 29th Sep. Other records were all on *Tiree*. On 30th Sep a flock of ca 15 flew SW at L a' Phuill and 2 more were at Barrapol Dunes. A group of 5 were at Balephetrish Bay on 1st Oct followed by a juv at L a' Phuill on 3rd and 4th Oct, and two very late birds were with Golden Plovers at Heylipol on 13th Nov.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima* Luatharan rioghail 0510
Widely but sparsely distributed along rocky coasts from Oct to May. Tiree is a site of national importance for wintering birds.

Jan-May. Eight were in Balephetrish Bay on 4th Jan and 25 were there on 28th Feb. A survey along the W coast of *Tiree* on 24th Feb revealed a min. total of 35. The highest count elsewhere was 27 in L Caolisport on 14th Jan. L Indaal had up to 10 from Jan to Apr with a max. of 19 on 14th Feb. The only other records were of a single on Oronsay on 9th Feb and 8 or more on Eilean Aoghainn (L Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Mar.

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Sep-Dec. The first returning birds were 2 near the landing point on Staffa *Mull* on 21st Sep followed by 3 passing Rubha Chraiginis *Tiree* on 2nd Oct. The first reported on *Islay* was not until 24th Oct when one was at Claddach. Machrihanish SBO had its peak daily count of autumn on 29th Oct when 38 were recorded. A single was at Bruichladdich *Islay* on 28th Oct and a small number were in the area regularly during the winter with max. 11 on 11th Nov. The highest count on *Islay* was at Ardnave where there were 22 on 10th Dec. On *Tiree* the species was unusually scarce, with 5 at Balephetrish Bay on 1st Dec being the highest count. Elsewhere, 4 were in the bay at Skipness *Kintyre* on 12th Nov, 2 were on Oronsay on 23rd Dec and a group of 10 were seen regularly at Machrihanish during Dec.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* Graillig 0512
Very localised breeding species. Numbers are generally highest on passage but large numbers winter on Islay and Tiree.

Jan-Jun. In the absence of co-ordinated counts at L Gruinart, the highest numbers were on *Tiree* with a peak of 499 at Balephetrish Bay, Gott and Salum Bays on 9th Jan. The highest number at L Indaal was also in Jan when the WeBS count on 14th totalled 161 [Table 28]. Other sites with counts of 50 or more were: Tayinloan (max. 50+ on 20th Jan), The Strand *Colonsay* (max. 64 on 9th Feb), Oronsay (99 on 1st May), Vaul Bay (max. 100+ on 2nd May), Fiddien *Mull* (50 on 17th May) and Ardnave *Islay* (max. 209 on 20th May).

Breeding. No confirmed breeding records were received.

Jul-Dec. Passage birds were recorded from late Jul onwards with 92 at L Indaal on 22nd, 47 at L a' Phuill and 550 in Gott Bay on 24th, and 19 with Ringed Plovers at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 25th. The main passage at Machrihanish SBO was from 22nd Jul to 9th Aug when a total of 1,192 were recorded on 13 dates, with a peak of 294 on 30th Jul. Numbers on *Islay* also peaked at about this time with a total of 1,100 at L Gruinart on 1st Aug [Table 28]. Other sites with 50 or more at this time were: Gott Bay (max. 64 on 20th Aug), Sorobaidh Bay (max. 220 on 30th Nov), Balephetrish Bay (max. 80 on 13th Dec), L Caolisport (max. 81 on 20th Dec) and L Don (100+ on 26th Dec).

Table 28. Maximum monthly counts of Dunlin at two sea-lochs on Islay in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	5	n/r	n/r	15	22	80	1,100	n/r	200	454	879
L. Indaal	161	142	13	49	104	15	92	98	49	81	191	180

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis* 0516
Rare transatlantic visitor with only 7 accepted Argyll records, involving 10 birds, since 1980. One was in May, one in Jun and the remainder in Sep.

The bird near Frenchman's Rocks on 12th Sep was considered probably to be a juv. and was seen on a typical date for this transatlantic vagrant [TapR]*.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax* Gibeagan 0517
Scarce but annual passage migrant, more numerous in autumn.

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Apr-Jun. The only spring records were at L Gruinart, where a male was present from 30th Apr to 6th May followed by 2 birds on 3rd Jun.

Jul-Oct. The first returning birds were 2 flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 29th Jul. Then 2 'small' birds (i.e. presumably reeves) were seen at L an Eilein on 10th Aug followed by 2 more small birds at L a' Phuill and one large individual at L an Eilein on 14th Aug. A group of 7 were at Barrapol Tìree on 19th Aug, and 5 were at L Gruinart on 20th. A single flew S at Machrihanish SBO on 24th Aug and 2 more on 13th Sep. On Tìree 3 were at L an Eilein on 26th Aug, one on The Reef on 31st Aug and 2 at L a' Phuill on 2nd Sep followed by a flock of 10 there 25th Sep. Two were in the Kilkenneth area of Tìree from 27th Sep to 2nd Oct, one at Barrapol on 6th Oct and one at L a' Phuill on 9th. Up to 4 were seen regularly at L Gruinart from 11th to 23rd Oct and at Machrihanish SBO 3 flew in off the sea on 17th and one flew S on 22nd Oct.

A very late bird was seen at L Gruinart on 24th and 26th Nov.

JACK SNIPE

Lymnocyptes minimus Gobhrag bheag 0518

Scarce, but probably under-recorded, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Jan-May. Singles were reported from 'The Meadows' Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 13th Jan, Sunderland *Islay* on 19th Jan, and a presumed migrant on Sanda Island on 17th Apr.

Sep-Dec. One was seen at a small lochan nr Heylipol Tìree on 26th Sep and one at Grulinmore *Islay* on 24th and 26th Oct. In Nov single birds were at L Gruinart on 2nd (flushed by Hen Harrier) and 26th, and at The Reef Tìree also on 26th. One was on Oronsay on 4th Dec and one was flushed at Balínoe Dunes Tìree on 15th while, on *Islay*, one was at Island Farm and 2 at L na Nigheadaireachd, both on 20th Dec.

COMMON SNIPE (SNIPE)

Gallinago gallinago Naosg 0519

Widespread and locally common breeding species. More numerous on passage and as a winter visitor.

Jan-May. Birds were reported in single figures from various localities in *Colonsay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *N Argyll* during the winter. At least 6 were flushed from a house drive in Appin *N Argyll* on 7th Feb and 8 were seen nr L Gorm *Islay* on 2nd Mar, but in the absence of systematic counts at RSPB L. Gruinart the only record in double figures was 11 there on 14th May.

Breeding. On *Islay*, 68 prs were found at RSPB L. Gruinart, 34 prs on the Ardnave peninsula and 6 prs at Smaull RSPB Reserve. A circuit of the road network at dusk on *Colonsay* on 12th Jun located 42 drumming birds (*cf* 32 in 2000) and prs bred on the Coll RSPB reserve, although no count was made. On Treshnish Isles *Mull* 4 drumming birds were found on Lunga & Fladda in late Jun and a pr with very young chicks was found on Lunga. Birds were also reported in suitable habitat during the breeding season from sites in *Kintyre*, *Mull* and *Tìree*.

Aug-Dec. Large numbers were present on Tìree in late Sep and Oct and 47 flew in off the sea in two flocks at Meall an Fhithich on 2nd Oct. One observer estimated an overall total of around 500 birds on the island in late Sep. Flocks of 35 were counted at Balínoe on 21st Oct and The Reef on 26th Nov. On *Islay* 20 were counted at Gruinart Flats on 22nd Sep and a flock of 35 birds was seen there on 24th Nov. Otherwise, small numbers were reported from *Kintyre* and *Mull*, but no other sites had counts in double figures.

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EURASIAN WOODCOCK (WOODCOCK) *Scolopax rusticola* Coileach coille 0529
Widespread but under-recorded breeder. Numbers augmented in winter by visiting birds.

Jan-Apr. Single birds were reported from Oronsay and, on *Islay*, from L Gruinart, Imeraval, Ballygrant Woods, Bunnahabhain and Bridgend Woods, and from Kinuachdrachd *Jura*. In Jan two were flushed from the dam at L Glashan *Mid-Argyll* on 7th, two were at L Don on 14th and 4 were at Kinloch *Mull* on 27th. Three were nr L Allan *Islay* on 26th Feb.

Breeding. On *Colonsay* 4 roding birds were at Kiloran meadow on 10th Jun. One territory was found in the woodland CBC plot at Tainish NNR. Elsewhere, birds were reported in suitable habitat during the breeding season from one site on *Islay* and 3 sites on *Mull*.

Oct-Dec. Single birds were at 7 sites on *Islay* and 2 were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 23rd Nov. Elsewhere, singles were flushed at Heylipol *Tiree* on 24th Oct and in Minard Woods *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Dec, and small numbers were found regularly at Tainish NNR throughout Dec.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa* Cearra ghob 0532

Increasingly regular passage migrant, especially on Islay and Tiree with odd over-wintering birds in recent years. Scarce elsewhere.

Jan-Jun. A single over-wintering bird was seen at RSPB L. Gruinart in Jan and Feb. The first migrants were 3 in breeding plumage in the Add Estuary on 22nd Apr. Two were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 26th Apr and numbers there built to a max. of 40 on 29th Apr. Twelve were at L an Eilein on 2nd May, one flew S at Machrihanish SBO on 15th May and one was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 27th May but otherwise very few birds were reported anywhere until Jun. Then *Tiree* had 7 at L an Eilein on 3rd Jun rising to 11 on 25th and a peak of 14 on 27th.

Jul-Oct. All the Jul records also came from *Tiree* starting with 7 at L an Eilein on 15th. Later in Jul, 2 colour-ringed birds were seen on the island. One at Heylipol on 22nd had been ringed at Farlington Marshes, Portsmouth, Hants, on 16th Nov 1998, and the other at Cornaig on 24th had been ringed as an adult male at Holbeach, Norfolk on 7th Sep 1998. On 27th a very high count of 79 birds was recorded at L an Eilein. At Machrihanish SBO the first were on 29th Jul with a peak of 42 on 21st Sep, a record day count for this site. The first at RSPB L. Gruinart was a single on 14th Aug and 25 were counted there the following day. Small numbers were on *Tiree* during Aug but on 2nd Sep 31 were counted at L a' Phuill and 32 were there on 17th Sep. In Oct up to 3 were on *Tiree* until 9th and there were similar numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart until 18th. Five were at RSPB L. Gruinart from 21st to 26th Oct and 3 were there on 30th. Single late birds were at L Gruinart on 10th and 12th Nov and 2 were at the RSPB reserve on 17th. The last was a single with Bar-tailed Godwits at Sorobaidh Bay on 30th Nov.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* Cearra ghob mhor 0534

Recorded throughout the year especially at passage times. Most frequent and numerous on the islands with smaller numbers on the mainland. Wintering birds most numerous on Islay.

Jan-May. Numbers at L Indaal and L Gruinart peaked at 197 in Jan (*cf* 285 in Feb 2000) [Table 29]. The only other sites with 10 or more were, on *Tiree*, 48+ in Balephetrish,

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Sorobaidh & Gott Bays on 6th Jan, max. 29 in Balephetrish Bay alone on 16th Mar and 21 in Gott Bay on 2nd May, and at Tayinloan (max. 11 on 20th Mar). Smaller numbers were recorded from Sanda Island, L Crinan, L Don and Iona.

Jun. As with the previous species, quite large numbers were reported in Jun. 25 were recorded at RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd, no less than 64 on 24th and 37 on 26th Jun. Elsewhere, 10 were at Traigh Bhag Tìree on 4th Jun and 7 at Tayinloan on 13th.

Jul-Dec. In Jul, a max. of 45 were at L Gruinart and the max. there in Aug was 75 on 1st. 17 in Gott Bay on 14th was the peak Aug count for *Tiree* and 12 were at Fidden *Mull* on 17th Aug. *Islay* had the bulk of the birds recorded in Sep with a peak count at RSPB L. Gruinart of 97 on 24th. Other Sep records included 11 at Hynish *Tiree* on 10th, 10 at Eilean Nostaig *Islay* on 16th, 25 or more at L Don on 21st and single figure counts from Gott Bay, Sorobaidh Bay, L a' Phuill and Tayinloan. In Oct, 27 were in Sorobaidh Bay on 7th and single figure counts in L Crinan, L Gilp and Ardnave. Numbers on *Islay* peaked in Dec when a total of 203 were counted at L Gruinart and L Indaal [Table 29]. Elsewhere the only counts of 10 or more outwith *Islay* were at Sorobaidh Bay (max. 18 on 30th Nov) and Gott Bay (11 on 17th Dec), with single figure counts at L Crinan and Ardpatrik *Mid-Argyll*.

Table 29. Maximum monthly counts of Bar-tailed Godwits at two sea-lochs on *Islay* in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	116	30	n/r	n/r	1	64	45	75	97	0	105	158
L. Indaal	81	65	40	19	9	11	10	10	15	19	42	45

WHIMBREL

Numenius phaeopus Eun bealltain 0538

Regular passage migrant in small numbers, mainly from late Apr to May and late Jul to early Sep. Summer records not infrequent.

Apr-May. The first was at Ardnave *Islay* on 18th Apr; one on Oronsay on 24th was followed by 13 there next day. Singles were at L na Keal on 27th Apr and at different sites on *Colonsay* on 28th and 29th. Two were feeding at L Don on 29th Apr, and on 30th 4 were on Sanda Island and 2 on Oronsay.

In early May birds were widely reported in small numbers, with counts in double figures at: L Gruinart (max. 14 on 2nd May), L na Keal (12 on 3rd May), Manna *Tiree* (22 on 3rd May) and Machrihanish Airfield (25 on 5th May). On 17th May passing flocks were reported at Croig *Mull* (15 birds), Fidden *Mull* (14) and Tayinloan (20). The peak at Machrihanish SBO was 17 on 22nd May. Apart from 12 birds at Ardnave on 20th, records for the rest of May were in single figures.

Jun. Birds passed through almost continuously with more reports than usual during Jun (*cf* Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits). These included single birds on two dates on Oronsay and on 3 dates at Machrihanish as well as up to 3 on 5 dates at various sites on *Tiree*. There were also 3 at Ardnave on 12th Jun.

Jul-Sep. Single birds were reported during Jul on Sanda Island, Oronsay, Gunna Island *Coll* and Crossapol *Tiree* as well as 6 at Eilean an Ruisg (L Feochan) *Mid-Argyll* on 1st, 3 at Balemartine *Tiree* on 8th, 9 at Crossapol Point *Tiree* on 9th and 3 on Sanda Island on 28th. Numbers increased from mid-Aug with 12 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 15th, 55 (present for two days) at L Don from 21st, a peak at Machrihanish SBO of 31 on 23rd and 18 at Crossapol

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on 28th. On 29th Aug one was standing in the middle of the road at Scarinish *Tiree*. The exceptionally high numbers at L Don continued into Sep, with 78 on 2nd rising to a peak of 106 on 5th and falling to 36 on 19th. Elsewhere, apart from 2 on Sanda Island on 1st, only singles were reported during Sep. Single late birds were at Machrihanish SBO on 8th Oct, at L a' Phuill on 13th and 14th Oct and at 2 sites on *Mull* on 20th Oct.

EURASIAN CURLEW (CURLEW) *Numenius arquata* Guilbneach 0541

Widespread and locally common breeding species. More numerous on passage and in winter.

Jan-Apr. Numbers on *Islay* reached a peak in Feb, with a total of 483 at L Indaal and L Gruinart (cf 540 in Feb in 2000) although there were no counts at RSPB L. Gruinart in Jan, Mar or Apr [Table 30]. The only other localities with counts of 50 or more were Tayinloan (max. 110 on 5th Jan), L a' Phuill & Crossapol *Tiree* (145 on 6th Jan), L a' Phuill (78 on 11th Feb), Machir Bay *Islay* (110 on 2nd Mar) and Glenramskill (Campbeltown Loch) (53 on 8th Mar).

Breeding. 24 prs were at RSPB L. Gruinart and adults with recently hatched young were in Glen More and at L Ba head *Mull*. Otherwise, birds were reported during the breeding season from several localities in *Colonsay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Tiree*.

Jul-Dec. Numbers at L Indaal and L Gruinart peaked during Aug, with a total of 887 (cf 698 in Nov 2000) [Table 30]. Flocks of up to 49 were reported from all areas except *Coll & Jura* between Jul and Dec, and sites with 50 or more included: Miodar *Tiree* (58 on 14th Aug), Sandaig *Tiree* (55 on 19th Aug), Glenramskill (Campbeltown Loch) *Kintyre* (58 on 21st Aug), Crossapol *Tiree* (83 on 5th Sep), L a' Phuill (max. 59 on 8th Oct), Sanda Island (max. 113 on 13th Sep), Crossapol Point *Tiree* (80 on 13th Nov), Tayinloan (max. 98 on 16th Dec) and Machrihanish Bay (at least 100 on 29th Dec).

Table 30. Maximum monthly counts of Curlew at two sea-lochs on *Islay* in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	238	n/r	n/r	48	92	n/r	495	332	20	72	143
L. Indaal	2403	245	192	81	21	20	197	392	471	427	339	405

COMMON REDSHANK (REDSHANK) *Tringa totanus* Cam ghlàs 0546

Localised breeder and widespread passage migrant and wintering species.

Jan-Apr. Birds were recorded in single figures from many coastal sites but, apart from those in Table 31, the only site with 20 or more was L Caolisport (35 on 14th Jan).

Breeding. On *Islay* 2 prs bred at Smaull RSPB Reserve, 30 prs bred at Ardnave and a total of 105 prs were at RSPB L. Gruinart (cf 85 in 2000, 60 in 1999, 85 in 1998 and 95 in 1997). At *Coll* RSPB Reserve 15 prs were nesting and on *Colonsay* (excluding Oronsay) 8 prs were found (cf 13 in 2000) while 11 prs were on Oronsay itself (cf 14 in 2000). 'Several' prs bred on the saltmarsh at Moine Mhor, and breeding prs were reported from 2 sites on *Mull*.

Jul-Dec. The peak autumn passage day count at Machrihanish SBO was 90 on 9th Aug, 32 flew S past Frenchman's Rocks in 4 hrs on 25th Aug, and 88 were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 31st Aug. Other than those in Table 31, the only sites with 20 or more were: Fidden *Mull* (30

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on 17th Aug), Hough *Tiree* (21 on 25th Aug), Balemartine *Tiree* (29 on 16th Sep), L Beg *Mull* (30 or more on 24th Sep) and L Gilp (30+ on 26th Nov).

Table 31. Maximum monthly counts of Redshank at two sea-lochs on Islay, Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) and at the four main freshwater lochs on Tiree in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	18	n/r	n/r	210	n/r	7	88	55	n/r	3	15
L. Indaal	19	21	21	18	12	10	15	21	12	19	12	8
L. Crinan	43	25	28	31	3	0	0	7	0	3	32	33
Tiree	28	16	20	n/r	n/r	16	0	0	0	4	1	7

COMMON GREENSHANK (GREENSHANK) *Tringa nebularia* Deoch bhuidhe 0548

Very scarce breeding species (only in Mull and N Argyll in recent years). Small numbers on passage with a few birds wintering in some localities.

Jan-May. During the winter months (Jan-Mar) singles were recorded on *Mull* at L Beg, L Scridàin and L a' Chumhainn. The Strand *Colonsay* had 4 on 22nd Jan and 5 on 19th Mar. During Apr and May, singles were at L Gilp (10th Apr), Tayinloan (23rd Apr), L Don (25th Apr), East L Fada *Colonsay* (28th Apr), Tarbert harbour *Kintyre* (1st May) and Pennygael *Mull* (6th May). Two were at The Strand on 15th Apr and two were at Grasspoint *Mull* on 6th May.

Breeding. A pair were calling in suitable habitat at a site in *N Argyll* on 18th Jun and an adult was seen feeding young at a site on *Mull* on 21st Jul. Two summering birds were on Oronsay on 22nd Jun.

Jun-Dec. Singles were at Ardnave *Islay* on 12th Jun and at RSPB L. Gruinart on 22nd and 25th Jun, and one flew over Heylipol *Tiree* on 24th Jun. One or two were at various sites on *Tiree* during Jul, one was at Machrihanish from 12th-19th Jul and two were at L na Keal from 17th-27th Jul. During Aug 15 birds flew S past Machrihanish SBO on 8 dates, singles were at L an Eilein throughout Aug with 2 on 15th, and up to 3 were in the Add Estuary. No less than 8 were at L Beg *Mull* on 3rd Aug, 3 were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 15th Aug, 6 at Fidden *Mull* on 17th, the WeBS count on *Tiree* on 20th Aug found 8 birds, and 6 were at L Don on 31st Aug. Good numbers were seen on *Mull* throughout Sep with 6 at L Don on 22nd and up to 6 at L Beg and 2 at Fidden on 24th. Birds were regular at L Don for the rest of the year with 5 on 24th Nov and 4 on 26th Dec. Singles were at RSPB L. Gruinart on several dates in Nov and Dec. Elsewhere, 2 were at the Strand on 10th Oct, the last on *Tiree* was at Balephetrish Bay on 21st Oct, and singles were at Crinan Ferry *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd Nov and L Caolispport on 20th Dec.

GREEN SANDPIPER

Tringa ochropus Luatharan uaine 0553

Scarce passage migrant. Recorded in 16 of the 21 years 1980-2000. Majority of records in autumn; very rare in spring.

The only record concerned a single bird at RSPB L. Gruinart on 17th Aug.

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WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola* Luatharan coille 0554

Scarce passage migrant. Recorded in 13 of the 21 years 1980-2000, with 10 of the 16 records in spring.

Two birds were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 16th May with one remaining until 18th May.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos* Luatharan 0556

Widespread and common breeding summer visitor. Recorded once in mid-winter - at L Sween in Jan 2000.

Apr-May. There were three early arrivals: one at L Don on 31st Mar, 2 at Salen Mull on 4th Apr and one at Rubha Riabhach (Appin) N Argyll on 9th Apr. The main arrival took place, as usual, from the 18th Apr when one was at L Tarsan Cowal. Birds were at Tainish NNR and New Loch Colonsay on 19th, and by 28th Apr they were well distributed throughout Argyll.

Breeding. Three territories were recorded in the coastal CBC plot at Tainish NNR Mid-Argyll (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1). Elsewhere in Mid-Argyll, prs bred near the Add Estuary hide, on the foreshore at Minard (2+ prs) and at L Leathan. A total of 27 prs was found on Colonsay in Jun (cf 31 in 2000) and least 5 birds were displaying or alarming on three of the Treshnish Isles Mull including 3 on Fladda. Six prs with young were on L Fyne between Otter Ferry and Largiemore Cowal on 17th Jun and there were records in suitable habitat during the breeding season from all areas except Coll.

Jul-Sep. Passage birds were reported from late Jul including 14 flying S At Machrihanish SBO on 26th, 5 on Sanda Island on 30th and 15 (including a group of 7 together) flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 22nd Aug. The last passage bird reported was at Machrihanish SBO on 30th Sep.

Winter. A bird was on the shore at Kilmun Cowal on 31st Dec, only our second winter record.

RUDDY TURNSTONE (TURNSTONE) *Arenaria interpres* Trilleachan beag 0561

Widespread and common passage migrant and winter visitor, mainly from Aug to May. Tiree is a site of national importance for wintering birds. Summer records not unusual.

Jan-mid-May. There were 66 birds in the Balephetrish, Gott and Salum Bays Tiree on 9th Jan and on 11th Feb 131 were counted on Tiree as a whole, mainly on the west coast. The highest count on Islay was at L Indaal with a max. of 66 on 14th Feb [Table 32]. Other sites with peaks of 20 or more were Oban Esplanade (max. 30 on 24th Mar), Otter Ferry Cowal (max. 46 on 24th Mar) and Tayinloan (max. 60 on 8th Apr).

Summering birds. There were more or less continuous records at Otter Ferry of birds in breeding plumage, including 5 on 23rd May, 11 on 17th Jun, 12 on 25th Jun and 12 again on 3rd and 18th Jul. On 26th Jun there were 20 at Crossapol Bay and small parties on the other rocky shores of Tiree.

Jul-Dec. Apart from Otter Ferry the only sites with records during Jul were L Indaal (10 on 22nd), Scarinish Tiree (12 on 26th) and L Gruinart (2 on 31st). Numbers built from early Aug with a peak autumn count at Machrihanish SBO of 18 on 5th, at least 50 on the sand spit at Otter Ferry on 13th and 29 at Balephetrish Bay on 27th. From Sep birds were wide-

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spread but apart from those in Table 30 the only sites with 20 or more were: Ledaig Point (21 on 26th Sep), Traigh Thodhrasdail Tìree (ca 60 on 27th Sep), Balephetrish Bay (max. 80 on 1st Oct), L na Keal (20+ on 20th Oct), Oban Esplanade (max. 29 on 24th Oct), Skipness Kintyre (24 on 12th Nov), Greenhill Tìree (34 on flooded fields on 13th Nov), Campbeltown Loch (40 during Dec) and Ardrishaig Mid-Argyll (max. at roost S of harbour, 35 on 31st Dec).

Table 32. Maximum monthly counts of Turnstone at two sea-lochs on Islay and at Otter Ferry (Cowal) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	5	n/r	n/r	n/r	0	2	0	28	n/r	14	n/r
L. Indaal	43	66	27	35	5	0	10	40	11	31	42	52
Otter Ferry	n/r	n/r	46	23	27	12	12	50+	30	43	35	n/r

GREY PHALAROPE

Phalaropus fulicarius Liathag allt 0565

Irregular passage migrant particularly associated with autumn gales. Rare in winter. All but 9 of 44 records during 1980-2000 were in the period mid-Sep to mid-Oct.

A good year for this species with records of at least 13 birds. At Machrihanish SBO one was seen in the early evening of 12th Sep and at least 6 passed through on the afternoon of 15th Sep. One was seen from the ferry just S of Coll on 3rd Oct; and on 7th Oct 3 first-winter birds fed close inshore at Sorobaidh Bay, one of which landed on the beach. A bird in winter plumage was at Bowmore (L Indaal) on 17th Oct.

One at Ulva Ferry Mull on 19th Dec was well beyond the usual range of dates for this species.

POMARINE SKUA

Stercorarius pomarinus Fasgadair donn 0566

Scarce but annual passage migrant. Majority seen in autumn.

Two adult pale-morph birds with full 'spoons' were seen NE of The Garvellachs on 9th Jun. At Machrihanish SBO single adults flew S on 19th & 26th Aug and on 2nd Sep. An adult flew SW off Hynish Tìree on 29th Sep. The last records of the year concerned a juv. flying W across the mouth of Balephetrish Bay on 2nd Oct and, curiously, another juv. on the same day at Machrihanish SBO.

ARCTIC SKUA

Stercorarius parasiticus Fasgadair 0567

The commonest skua in Argyll, regularly seen in small numbers near large seabird colonies. Small breeding colonies on Jura and Coll. Passage birds regular and widespread in spring and especially autumn.

Apr-Jun. An early dark-morph individual was seen from the ferry just off Oban on 17th Apr and another dark-morph bird was seen from the ferry between Coll and Tìree on 8th May. One flew W offshore at Scoor Mull on 9th May, two were off Port Wemyss Islay on 17th May, one was seen from Oronsay on 25th May, 4 dark-morph birds were at Machrihanish SBO on 30th May and 2 were there on 2nd Jun. Single dark-morph birds were seen off Colonsay on 14th and 28th Jun and one was in Gott Bay Tìree on 27th Jun.

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Up to 5 birds were seen daily around Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late Jun (TIARG).

Breeding. No information was received regarding the breeding colonies on *Coll* and *Jura*.

Jul-Nov. In Jul single birds were off Hynish *Tiree* on 8th, off Tobermory *Mull* on 26th and at L Gruinart on 29th and 31st. Two were chasing Arctic Terns at L a' Phuill on 17th Jul. On 4th Aug 3 pale-morph birds were at Lunga (Treshnish Isles) and on 8th one was chasing terns at Eilean na h-Eairne (Sound of Jura) *Mid-Argyll* and one was in Gunna Sound *Tiree*. Birds were recorded passing Frenchman's Rocks throughout Aug and Sep with day totals of 5 on 25th Aug, 9 on 26th, 7 on 2nd Sep and 3 on 7th and 23rd Sep. Machrihanish SBO had a total of 72 birds on 22 dates from 30th Jul to 12th Oct with a peak of 10 or more on 4th Sep. Elsewhere singles were recorded on *Tiree* on various dates in Sep. The last were 2 at Frenchman's Rocks on 29th Sep and singles S of *Coll* on 3rd Oct and at Machrihanish SBO on 12th Oct.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus* Fasgadair stiuirich 0568

Scarce and irregular passage migrant, with accepted records in only 9 of the 21 years 1980-2000. Recorded in both spring and autumn off western coasts and islands.

Single juvenile/1st winter birds were recorded at Machrihanish SBO on 13th Sep and 8th Oct [EJM]*, and a juv. was seen from the Barra ferry, just off the NW tip of *Mull*, on 12th Oct [SCV]*.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua* Fasgadair mor 0569

Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor. Bred successfully on Treshnish Isles (Mull) in 1998 and 2000 and has also attempted to breed on Coll in recent years.

Feb-Jun. An early bird was at L Gruinart on 12th Feb and one flew past Sanda Island on 25th Apr. In May singles were off Lunga (Treshnish Isles) on 8th, in Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 8th, off Ulva *Mull* on 9th and in the Sound of Iona *Mull* on 16th. One was chasing gulls in the bay at Hynish *Tiree* on 22nd Jun.

Breeding. On the Treshnish Isles *Mull* in late Jun, two birds were seen displaying on Lunga (and 3 on 29th Jun) but there was no sign of a nest; attempted breeding was confirmed on Fladda when a single empty nest was located (TIARG). Prs were also reported breeding on Staffa *Mull* and on *Coll*.

Jul-Oct. Birds were passing Frenchman's Rocks from 12th Aug to 12th Sep with a max. day count of 13 on 2nd Sep. Machrihanish SBO had a total of 39 flying S on 19 dates from 13th Aug to 27th Oct with a max. of 6 (incl. 5 juvs) on 7th Sep. On *Tiree* singles were recorded from 10th Jul to 3rd Oct with 4 off Balevullin on 16th Sep. Elsewhere one was off Duart Point *Mull* on 27th Jul, 2 flew W off Sanaigmore *Islay* on 3rd Sep and one flew W at Ardnave Point on 8th Sep. In Oct, 3 were seen off *Tiree* from the Oban-*Tiree* ferry on 2nd, 2 were just S of *Coll* on 3rd and one flew S down L Fyne at Tarbert *Kintyre* on 7th.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus* Crann fhaioileag 0578

Irregular visitor, with records in all but 3 years since 1980. Typically seen Aug to Oct, but there are records for every month of the year.

All records were late in the year with 1st year birds at Ulva ferry *Mull* 1st-4th Oct, in Gunna

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Sound *Tiree* on 27th Oct and flying S at Machrihanish SBO on 31st Oct. The last flew over Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Nov.

SABINE'S GULL

Larus sabini

0579

Scarce and irregular passage migrant, mainly in autumn, with records in 12 of the 21 years 1980-2000. More frequent recently, with records in all but one of the last ten years.

An excellent autumn for this species with 4 records involving 8 birds. All were recorded at times of strong or gale force winds from the W or NW. On 7th Sep an adult and a juv were seen flying S at Frenchman's Rocks [TapR]* and, the same day, 3 juvs (2 flying S in the afternoon and one remaining in the area during the evening) were seen at Machrihanish SBO [EJM]*. Machrihanish had 2 more juvs. on 13th Sep [EJM]* and another juv. was flying W with Black-legged Kittiwakes off Meall an Fhithich *Tiree* on 2nd Oct [CR]*.

BLACK-HEADED GULL

Larus ridibundus Faoleag a'chinn duibh 0582

Patchily distributed resident breeder. Reduced or absent at some sites due to mink predation. Scarce in many areas in winter.

Jan-May. By far the largest count was at L Caolisport where 740 were found during the WeBS count on 14th Jan. Otherwise, other than those in Table 33, the only site with 50 or more was Crarae Point *Mid-Argyll* (59 on 1st Jan).

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 176 prs were counted breeding at 7 sites. Together they fledged 164 young (0.93 young/pr). 85% of the prs and 91% of the fledged young were at a single site in Loch Craignish where mink have been controlled annually since 1995. All other substantial colonies of this species along the Argyll mainland coast have been annihilated by mink predation since 1987 [Craik, 2001]. On *Tiree* 65 fledglings were among 165 birds counted at L Bhasapol on 3rd Jul.

Aug-Dec. Once again L Caolisport supported the largest gatherings, with a max. of 450 on 20th Dec. Elsewhere, other than those in Table 33, the only counts of 50 or more were in the first half of Nov at: L Melfort *Mid-Argyll* (300+ on 8th Nov), head of L Gilp (200+ on 11th Nov) and Otter Ferry *Cowal* (220 on 14th Nov).

2000. On 12th Jan 2000 the rings on two birds at Inveraray *Mid-Argyll* were read with a telescope (with a helper who tempted the birds nearer with bread). As reported in ABR 17, one had been ringed as a nestling at Storora, Trondheim, Norway on 3rd Jul 1997. Amazingly, the other bird had also been ringed as a nestling in 1997 (on 19th Jun), in this case at Breidabolstadir, Alftanes Kjosar, Iceland. So, two birds ringed within two weeks of each other in different countries were in Inveraray on the same winter day.

Table 33. Maximum monthly counts of Black-headed Gulls at two sea-lochs on Islay and at Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	n/r	2	n/r	1	2	n/r	n/r	120	145	n/r	n/r	n/r
L. Indaal	19	52	71	61	27	32	61	14	61	60	15	14
L. Crinan	0	0	9	29	13	n/r	139	56	3	16	0	0

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RING-BILLED GULL

Larus delawarensis

0589

Scarce visitor from North America. There are records for every month of the year, from 13 of the 18 years since the first confirmed sighting in 1983.

For the second year running, there were two records: an adult with a damaged right wing was at Crossapol Farm *Tiree* from 23rd Jun until 24th Jul (when it was found freshly dead as a road casualty) [JBo/RAB]*; and a first-winter bird on the outskirts of Bowmore *Islay* on 29th Dec [TapR]*.

MEW GULL (COMMON GULL)

Larus canus

Faoileag

0590

Widespread and common resident breeding species but reduced or absent at some sites due to predation by mink.

Jan-Apr. Other than those in Table 34, the only sites with counts of 100 or more were: Tayinloan (max. 110 on 7th Jan), L Caolisport (max. 210 on 14th Jan) and *Tiree* (island total 100 during WeBS count on 11th Feb).

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 1,131 prs were counted breeding at 47 sites (1 to 365 prs in size). Breeding of 46 prs at 9 sites was not monitored. Where mink were removed, 839 prs at 16 sites fledged 715 young (0.852 young/pr). Where mink were not removed, 246 prs at 22 sites fledged 131 young (0.533 young/pr). Thus mink lowered productivity by 37% [Craik, 2001]. Breeding was again confirmed on south-east Fladda (Treshnish Isles), where the colony had expanded to 9 prs (TIARG). There were 55 active nests at the main colony on the Sanda Islands (58 young ringed) and on RSPB reserves, 12 prs bred on *Coll*, 11 prs at L Gruinart and 3 prs at Ardnave *Islay*.

Jul-Dec. In addition to Table 34 sites, counts of 100 or more came from: Machrihanish SBO (max. 445 on 6th Aug), Crossapol *Tiree* (160 on 8th Aug), Traigh Bail-a-mhuilinn *Tiree* (ca 200 on 1st Oct), Balephetrish Bay (120 on 2nd Oct), Killail *Cowal* (150+ on 14th Nov), Drum Farm *Cowal* (180 on 14th Nov), Kilfinichen Bay *Mull* (116 on 17th Nov), Sorobaidh Bay (105 on 30th Nov), Tayinloan (max. 500 on 16th Nov), Skipness *Kintyre* (100+ on 26th Nov) and Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* (112 at roost on 29th Dec).

Table 34. Maximum monthly counts of Common Gulls at two sea-lochs on Islay and at Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	230	145	n/r	16	32	28	n/r	n/r	212	n/r	n/r	n/r
L. Indaal	181	301	165	222	119	98	92	288	252	43	101	111
L. Crinan	42	39	6	30	n/r	n/r	54	12	70	35	40	7

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

Larus fuscus

Faoileag bheag

0591

Widespread breeding species, generally present from Mar to Sep. Some colonies much affected by mink predation. A few remain in winter.

Jan-May. The only Jan record concerned 2 at Tayinloan, but birds were more generally distributed from mid-Feb onwards with 2 at L Indaal on 14th Feb, 2 on Oronsay on 1st Mar and 3 at Smuall RSPB Reserve on 6th Mar. No large gatherings were reported.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, ca 810 prs were counted at 10 sites

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(incl. single prs at two sites). The largest colony (Reisa mhic Phaidean in the Sound of Jura) held *ca* 300 prs but only *ca* 25 young fledged. In total *ca* 299 young fledged (0.37 young/pr) [Craik, 2001]. Breeding was also confirmed on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) (4 prs on territory) (TIARG). There were 65 active nests on the Sanda Islands (43 young ringed) and birds colour-ringed on Sanda in 1997 were noted among those breeding in 2001. There were no counts from the breeding colonies on *Islay*.

Aug-Dec. The peak autumn count at Machrihanish SBO was on 19th Aug when 135 birds counted included 63% of juvs. After the end of Sep, the only birds reported were 1st winter individuals at Lyrabus *Islay* on 7th Oct and at Oban Harbour on 26th/27th Oct, 2 in L Gilp on 4th Nov and an adult passing Machrihanish SBO on 6th Nov.

HERRING GULL

Larus argentatus Faoiléag an sgadain 0592

Widespread and abundant resident breeding species. Productivity at many colonies much affected by mink predation. Some evidence for immigration into Argyll in winter; colour-ringing studies have shown that some of these birds are from the Clyde and NE England.

Jan-Apr. In addition to those in Table 35, counts of 200 or more birds came from L Caolisport (520 on 14th Jan) and Minard Islands (L Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* (500+ on 1st Mar).

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 6,845 prs were counted at 48 colonies (1- *ca* 800 prs in size). Breeding success of 29 prs at 17 sites was not monitored. At 6 sites where mink were removed, 1,373 prs fledged 1,141 young (0.831 young/pr). At 25 sites where mink were not removed, 5,443 prs fledged 3,424 young (0.629 young/pr). Thus mink predation reduced productivity by 24%. 17 sites which formerly held significant breeding colonies were found empty or nearly so [Craik, 2001]. On the Treshnish Isles breeding was confirmed on Fladda, Lunga (66 prs) and Sgeir a Chaisteil (22 prs), with birds considered to be breeding on Sgeir an Eirionnaich (3 prs) and Sgeir an Fheoir (2 prs) (TIARG).

A total of 700 prs were found breeding on the Sanda Islands (*cf* 617 in 2000), and fledging success was apparently good. Four prs bred on the RSPB reserve on *Coll*; there were no counts at the RSPB reserves on *Islay* or at colonies on *Tiree* although birds are known to have bred.

Aug-Dec. Counts of 200 or more were made at: L Indaal [Table 35], Machrihanish SBO (300 on 6th Aug), Gruinart Flats *Islay* (1,300 on 5th Sep), Furnace (L Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* (500+ on 19th Sep), off SE *Colonsay* (200+ on 22nd Sep), L Nell *Mid-Argyll* (200+, mostly juvs., on 25th Sep), Oban Bay (max. 345 on 5th Oct), The Laggan *Kintyre* (*ca* 2,900 on 10th Oct), Ganavan (Oban) *Mid-Argyll* (200+ around trawler on 28th Oct) and the head of L Feochan *Mid-Argyll* (1,400+ on 18th Dec).

Table 35. Maximum monthly counts of Herring Gulls at Loch Indaal (Islay) and at Loch Crinan (Mid-Argyll) in 2001.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	219	261	245	162	167	31	40	191	297	221	229	206
L. Crinan	42	120	12	24	88	n/r	15	96	34	196	10	112

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ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides* Faoileag liath 0598

Scarce but regular winter visitor, most frequent Jan-Mar.

Jan-May. After a bumper year in 2000, there were relatively few records during 2001. An adult was seen on Oronsay on 8th Mar. Oban produced only two records: a 4th winter bird present during Mar and last seen on 26th, and an adult on 13th Apr. *Islay* provided the only other record, a 1st winter bird at Bridgend Merse on 2nd Apr.

Oct-Dec. There were slightly more records than usual. First-winter birds were reported at Machrihanish SBO on 12th Oct, in the Gribun Sands area of L na Keal 16th-24th Nov and near the Woollen Mill (Bridgend) *Islay* on 29th Dec. A bird of unspecified age was reported from Ardnave *Islay* on 29th Nov, and a first or second year bird was at Port Ellen on 28th Dec.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus* Faoileag mhor 0599

Scarce but regular winter visitor, most frequent Jan-Mar.

Jan-May. A 2nd winter bird was feeding on a seal carcass at Sorobaidh Bay 4th-14th Jan, and an adult was at Bunnahabhain *Islay* on 25th Feb. A 1st winter bird was seen regularly around Machrihanish SBO until 5th May, an adult in poor condition was in Campbeltown Loch on 27th Apr and a 2nd summer bird was reported at Bunesan *Mull* on 11th May. Birds of unspecified age were reported from Fidden *Mull* on 29th Jan and Oronsay on 24th Apr.

Sep-Dec. At Machrihanish SBO a 4th winter/adult was seen regularly 28th Sep-29th Dec, 1st winter birds were present 1st-5th Oct, and on 30th Oct and a 2nd winter flew S on 1st Dec. Elsewhere, 1st winter birds were seen following a shellfish boat in Oban harbour on 26th Oct, in Tarbert Harbour *Kintyre* on 27th Oct and at L an Eilein on 15th Nov. An adult was at Traigh Bhi *Tiree* on 17th Nov.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus* Farspag 0600

Common and widespread resident breeding bird. Also occurs as passage migrant and winter visitor.

Jan-May. The only sites with 50 or more were: L Caolisport (65 on 14th Jan), L Crinan (max. 50 on 11th Feb) and L Feochan *Mid-Argyll* (134, mostly adults, on 2nd May).

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 536 prs were noted breeding at 46 sites. Colony size varied from 1 to 59 prs and 22 of these sites (48%) held only single prs. Productivity was monitored at 42 sites holding 532 prs. These fledged *ca* 501 young (0.94 young/pr), (*cf* 1.14 young/pr in 2000) [Craik, 2001]. On the Treshnish Isles breeding was confirmed on Fladda, Sgeir an Eirionnaich (est. 48 prs), Lunga (67 prs), Sgeir a Chaisteil (7 prs), Sgeir na Giusaich (2 prs N, one pr S) and Sgeir an Fheoir (9 prs) (TIARG). A total of 33 prs attempted to breed on the Sanda Islands (*cf* 38 prs in 2000), of which 3 on Sanda itself are known to have failed. There were no counts on *Islay* or *Tiree*.

On Lunga in Jun, one bird was seen to drown a Puffin by repeatedly forcing it to dive.

Aug-Dec. Counts of 50 or more came from Holy Loch *Cowal* (171 on 6th Oct), L a' Phuill (max. 75 on 9th Oct), L Gilp (63 on 4th Nov), head of L Feochan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 68 on 4th Nov) and Traigh Bhi *Tiree* (310 roosting on 14th Nov).

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BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE (KITTIWAKE) *Rissa tridactyla* Ruideag 0602
Normally strictly marine. Main breeding area on Colonsay, with other important colonies on Islay, Treshnish Isles (Mull) and Tiree. Rare in winter and very scarce inland.

Jan-Apr. The only count reported was of 40 flying SE past the Oban-Colonsay ferry on 20th Apr.

Breeding. Figures now available for the Seabird 2000 counts carried out during the 2000 breeding season include: 6,485 AON for the W coast of *Colonsay*, 28 AON for the W coast of *Jura* and 803 AON for the whole coast of *Islay*. The regularly monitored sites on *Colonsay* produced counts of 92 nests at the Uragai sample colony (cf 124 in 2000), and 17 nests at the sample ledge at Pigs Paradise (cf 14 in 2000) with a mean clutch size of 1.71 (cf 1.79 in 2000). On the Treshnish Isles, breeding was confirmed only on *Lunga* (1,010 prs), the main colony being around Harp Rock (TIARG). The slow recolonisation of the Sanda Islands continued, with 9 apparently successful nests on Glunimore.

Jul-Dec. Visitors to the Treshnish Isles in Aug counted ca 500 adults and 200 juvs. on *Lunga* on 4th. The peak autumn count at Machrihanish SBO was 2,800 in 5 hrs on 4th Sep and, in a sample of 1,820 birds, 606 (33%) were juvs. Elsewhere, 180 flew W in 1 hr at Balevullin *Tiree* on 16th Sep, 150 were seen from the Oban-Craignure *Mull* ferry on 22nd Sep, 150 were feeding in Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 25th Sep and again on 27th Oct, 500 flew SW past Hynish *Tiree* in 90 mins on 29th Sep, and 140 were counted at L. Gruinart on 27th Oct. There were no records during Nov or Dec.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* Stearnag mhor 0611
Uncommon passage migrant. Very rare and irregular breeding species.

Jan-May. The first were 2 at Brunerican Bay (Southend) *Kintyre* on 30th Mar. They were followed by 2 at Tayinloan on 1st Apr, one at Machrihanish SBO on 3rd and 2 more at Tayinloan on 4th Apr. Two were reported at Bruichladdich (L. Indaal) on 12th Apr, a further 2 were at Tayinloan on 15th and 2 were seen at Claonaig *Kintyre* on 23rd Apr. The peak count at Machrihanish SBO was 22 birds on 7th May, and one or two were seen feeding in Sanda Bay *Kintyre* on several dates in late May/early Jun.

Breeding/Summering birds. Pr present with 50 prs of Arctic Terns at Fladda (Sound of Luing) *Mid-Argyll* may have laid but mink predation led to complete desertion before nests could be examined. At least 5 birds summered at Machrihanish and coition noted on several occasions; may have bred locally there as recently fledged young photographed on 17th Jul. Three birds were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th and 16th Jun.

Jul-Nov. Four birds at Tayinloan on 8th Aug included 2 juvs. On 18th Aug 7 flew S past Frenchman's Rocks in 2½ hrs and the peak count at Machrihanish SBO was on 19th Sep, when the 34 birds passing included 8 juvs. In all, Machrihanish SBO had 152 (incl. 28 juvs) on 32 dates 21st Jul-16th Sep. On 23rd Aug one was at RSPB L. Gruinart and no less than 23 were counted at Tayinloan. These were followed by 2 at Frenchman's Rocks on 25th Aug and, on *Tiree*, 2 in the bay at Hough on 25th, 5 at Balemartine (incl. 2 begging juvs.) on 26th and 2 in Gunna Sound on 27th Aug. In early Sep, 3 were at Tayinloan on 1st, singles were at Hynish and Port Fada *Tiree* on 2nd and 8 were on the shore at Blairmore *Cowal* on 5th. The last migrants were 2 at Sorobaidh Bay on 29th Sep and 2 at Machrihanish SBO on 5th Oct.

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ROSEATE TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* Stearnag stiuireach 0614

Rare non breeding visitor. Last accepted record 1995.

Three passage birds were at Big Scone islet (Machrihanish Bay) *Kintyre* from at least 17th-19th Aug [EJM] *. This is the first accepted record of this species in Argyll for six years.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo* Stearnag 0615

Locally common summer visitor, considerably more numerous than Arctic Tern close to the mainland but less so on outer islands. Many colonies severely affected by mink predation and often unproductive where no trapping is undertaken.

Apr-May. None were reported until May when one was seen on Iona *Mull* on 6th followed by 11 at Port Ellen *Islay* on 7th and by Common and Arctic Terns at Scallastle beach *Mull* on 12th. On L Indaal 11 were recorded during the WeBS count on 20th May and 26 were resting on the sea near Fishnish Jetty *Mull* on 25th May. Two birds at Otter Ferry *Cowal* in early Jun were the only individuals recorded there all summer.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 1,040 prs were counted breeding at 11 sites. The *Mull* colony, which had held 400-800 prs every year during 1987-2000, held *ca* 250 prs on 28th May but these all deserted in early Jun. Two successful 'new' colonies (200, 82 prs) appeared in the Sound of Jura in late Jun. These may have come from the 250 pr *Mull* colony, so the true total in the area was 790-1,040 prs. Together they fledged a *ca* 480 young (0.46-0.61 young/pr). The largest successful colony in Argyll in 2001 was at L Melfort, where 442 prs (a record number for this site) fledged *ca* 300 young [Craik, 2001]. Four prs bred at *Coll* RSPB reserve, 4 prs bred at Big Scone islet (Machrihanish Bay) *Kintyre* and 7 prs nested at Oitir Riabhach, RSPB L. Gruinart. Birds were also present in Campbeltown Loch and on *Tiree* during the breeding season. No evidence of breeding was found on Treshnish Isles (TIARG).

Jul-Sep. Two were seen on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* on 4th Aug. The only other site reporting autumn migrants was Machrihanish SBO where the peak of 157 on 19th Aug included 11 juvs. and the total of 707 migrants recorded on 21 dates 14th Jul-21st Aug occurred later in the season than usual.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea* Stearnal 0616

Summer visitor and localised breeding species. Many colonies severely affected by mink predation and often unproductive where no trapping is undertaken.

Apr-May. As for Common Tern, there were no records prior to May, with the first 2 reported at Vaul Bay *Tiree* on 2nd. On *Islay* 8 were at L Gruinart and 9 at Port Ellen on 7th May, and on 20th May 29 were recorded in L Indaal during the WeBS count.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 250 pairs were counted at 8 colonies (1-72 prs in size). They fledged 85 young, of which 78 were at the two largest colonies (68 and 72 prs, close together in the Sound of Jura). A fifty-pair colony on Fladda (Luìng) failed completely after mink predation during egg laying [Craik, 2001]. On *Islay* 27 prs bred at Traigh an Luìng (L Indaal), 15 prs at Ardnave and 4 prs on Oitir Riabhach, RSPB L. Gruinart. 11 prs bred on the RSPB reserve on *Coll*, where some young fledged, and 10 prs on Big Scone islet (Machrihanish Bay) *Kintyre* also produced some young later in the season. At L a' Phuill there were 34 active nests on 25th Jun; 260 birds were counted

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nesting on a small islet at Milton *Tiree* with *ca* 60 fledglings on 24th Jul; and *ca* 300 birds noted around Gunna Island *Coll* on 26th Jul included 60+ fledglings. Around 50 birds were present on a small island off Oronsay for a few days in Jun but did not stay to breed. No evidence of breeding was found on Treshnish Isles (TIARG). A ring read on a live nesting bird at L a' Phuill showed that it had been ringed as a nestling at Big Copeland Island, Northern Ireland, on 6th Jul 1997.

Jul-Nov. Most of the birds breeding at the colonies on *Tiree* had left by mid-Aug but there were still 6 in Gunna Sound on 27th Aug. At Machrihanish SBO peak counts were 235 on 30th Jul and 256 on 31st Jul and the overall total of 1,533 flying S on 25 dates 14th Jul-1st Sep included 194 juvs and 18 first-summer birds. Like Common Tern, the main passage occurred unusually late in the season. In Sep 2 flew past Frenchman's Rocks on 1st, one was at Hynish *Tiree* on 5th, 17 (all adults) flew S at Frenchman's Rocks on 7th, and on 16th 2 were feeding offshore at Balemartine *Tiree* and one flew W at Balevullin. A late juv. was at Machrihanish SBO on 1st Oct.

LITTLE TERN

Sterna albifrons Stearnag bheag 0624

Very scarce breeding species, confined to Islay, Tiree and Coll. Scarce passage migrant elsewhere.

Apr-May. The first birds were on *Islay* where 2 were at L Gruinart on 16th Apr. Two at Gott Bay on 1st May were the first of the year on *Tiree* and 14 were resting on the beach there on 9th May.

Breeding. On *Coll* 19 prs fledged at least some young; and a total of 11 prs were breeding at 2 monitored sites on *Islay*. At least 15 active nests were found on *Tiree* in the second half of Jun and the first young fledged on 27th Jun. One or two birds were seen at islets in the Sound of Jura *Mid-Argyll* on 13th Jun but with no evidence of breeding.

Jul-Sep. Three birds remained in Gott Bay on 14th Aug and the last bird was seen at Hynish *Tiree* on 5th Sep. There were no reports of passage birds away from the breeding areas.

BLACK TERN

Chlidonias niger Stearnal dhubh 0627

Scarce and irregular passage migrant. Only 11 records 1980 - 2000.

The two accepted records were both of juv/1st winter birds, one flying SW at Hynish *Tiree* on 29th Sep [CR]* and the other at Machrihanish SBO on 6th Oct [EJM]*. There have now been records in 4 of the last 6 years.

COMMON GUILLEMOT (GUILLEMOT)

Uria aalge Eun dubh an sgadain 0634

Highly colonial, locally abundant breeding species. Adults with small young appear on the sea far from colonies in late summer. Large numbers of passage migrants may be seen from headlands and smaller numbers are regular in sea-lochs in winter.

Jan-Apr. Three were found dead on the tideline at L Beg *Mull* on 19th Apr.

Breeding. On the Treshnish Isles, breeding was confirmed on Fladda, Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil, with the main concentration at Harp Rock, Lunga (est. 7,740 adult birds present) (TIARG). A total of 116 birds was recorded on the sample cliff at Uragaig *Colonsay* (cf 129 in 2000). There were 3,300 adult birds on the Sanda Islands in Jun (cf 3,290 in 2000) and 1,005 young were ringed.

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Figures now available for the Seabird 2000 counts carried out during the 2000 breeding season (all refer to individuals) include: 75 for N *Colonsay*, 26,394 for W *Colonsay* (*Colonsay* total 26,469) and 1,176 for the whole coast of *Islay*.

Sep-Dec. At least 500 birds were feeding off the coast of SE *Colonsay* on 22nd Sep and 350 flew SW past Hynish *Tiree* in 90 mins. on 29th Sep. Birds were recorded in L Gail Cowal and L Scridain and L Spelve *Mull* during Oct and Nov.

An adult ringed on Lunga, Treshnish Isles on 24th Jun 1999 was found dead off the coast of France (Pointe D'Arcay, L'Aiguillon-Sur-Mer, Vendeⁿ) on 21st Jan 2000, the 11th French recovery of a bird from the Treshnish Isles.

RAZORBILL

Alca torda

Falc

0636

Locally common breeding species, although less numerous and with smaller colonies than Guillemot. Large numbers of passage migrants may be seen from headlands with smaller numbers regular in sea-lochs in winter.

Jan-Apr. No significant records.

Breeding. On the Treshnish Isles, breeding was confirmed on Fladda and Sgeir a Chaisteil and birds were at suitable sites on Cairn na Burgh Beg, Cairn na Burgh Mor, and Fladda (TIARG). There were 3,000 adults on the Sanda Islands in Jun (*cf* 2,910 in 2000) and 405 young were ringed. On the sample cliff at Uragaig *Colonsay* an average total of 32 birds were counted (*cf* 37 in 2000).

Figures now available for the Seabird 2000 counts carried out during the 2000 breeding season (all refer to individuals) include: 108 for N *Colonsay*, 2,631 for W *Colonsay* (*Colonsay* total 2,739), 15 for the W coast of *Jura* and 1,768 for the whole coast of *Islay*.

Oct-Dec. At least 250 birds were seen from the Kennacraig-Islay Ferry on 4th Sep and 100 or more were feeding off the coast of SE *Colonsay* on 22nd Sep.

A bird ringed as an adult on the Treshnish Isles on 26th Jun 1986 and found dying on a beach at Sylt, Schleswig-Holstein, F. R. Germany in Feb 2000 was a victim of oiling.

AUK sp. (GUILLEMOT/RAZORBILL)

At Machrihanish SBO 1,600 specifically unidentified auks flew past S in 5 hrs on 9th May and 3,830 flew past in 7 hrs on 28th Jul. On 9th Oct 260 flew W past Balevullin *Tiree* in 15 mins.

BLACK GUILLEMOT

Cephus grylle

Gearra-breac

0638

Common resident breeding species, on coasts and islands in sea lochs.

Jan-Apr. The 25 birds counted at Port Askaig *Islay* on 25th Feb were all in breeding plumage and 22 were counted in Oban Bay on 26th Mar.

Breeding. In the Argyll part of the SAMS study area, 90 adults were noted during the breeding season at 22 sites. Eggs or young were confirmed at 6 of these [Craik, 2001].

Counts of adult birds around the Treshnish Isles in late Jun included: Fladda (20), Sgeir an Eirionnaich - Sgeir an Fheoir area (17), Cairn na Burgh Beg (4), Cairn na Burgh Mor (4) and south end of Lunga (9) [TIARG]. Two prs bred on the RSPB reserve on *Coll*, 10 were seen off Traigh Ban *Colonsay* on 28th Jun, and 196 adults were counted on the sea around the Sanda Islands in Jun.

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Figures now available for the Seabird 2000 counts carried out during the 2000 breeding season (all refer to individuals) include: 49 for N *Colonsay*, 21 for W *Colonsay*, 33 for SW *Colonsay*, 7 for E *Colonsay*, 24 for Oronsay (*Colonsay* total 134), 28 for the W coast of *Jura* and 463 for the whole coast of *Islay*.

Oct-Dec. Forty birds seen in Machrihanish Bay on 30th Aug were all in winter plumage. Other counts of 10 or more birds included 10+ off Grasspoint *Mull* on 22nd Sep, 10 off SE *Colonsay* also on 22nd Sep, 10 off NW *Tiree* on 26th Sep, 12 at Port Ellen *Islay* on 13th Nov, 12 or more in West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre* on 13th Nov and 11 in Oban Bay on 26th Nov.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle* Colcach bheag 0647
Scarce and irregular winter visitor, usually seen during sea-watches or after severe gales.

One was seen in L. Indaal on 18th Feb; single birds flew past Machrihanish SBO on 27th Oct, 2nd Nov and 6th Nov; and one was seen close inshore at Kilfinichen *Mull* on 19th Dec.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN (PUFFIN) *Fratercula arctica* Buthaid 0654
Very localised breeding species with main colonies on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Occasionally recorded in winter.

Apr-May. One was at Pigs Paradise *Colonsay* on 30th Apr and birds seen from ferries included 6 off the E coast of *Coll* on 4th May, 6 between *Mull* and *Coll* on 8th May and one between Oban and *Mull* on 17th May.

Breeding. On the Treshnish Isles in late Jun, adults were apparently occupying burrows on Lunga, Sgeir a Chaisteil, Fladda and Cairn na Burgh Beg (ca 50 active burrows) (TIARG). 290 adult birds were counted around the Sanda Islands in Jun.

Jul-Dec. More than usual were seen at Machrihanish SBO during autumn with a total of 38 birds on 22 dates, the last on 30th Sep. One was seen with Common Guillemots just S of Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 19th Aug, 100 or more were seen from the Kennacraig-*Islay* Ferry on 4th Sep, one flew S at Rubh' Aird Alanais *Colonsay* on 22nd Sep, and single birds were seen flying off *Tiree* on 30th Sep, 6th Oct and 18th Nov.

A partial albino with white nape and collar was seen on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) in Jun.

ROCK PIGEON (ROCK DOVE) *Columba livia* Calman creige 0665
Resident breeder except in Cowal. Large flocks often gather on arable fields outwith breeding season. Genetic integrity of most populations now in doubt because of interbreeding with feral pigeons but those on the islands probably nearest 'pure' Rock Dove. Feral Pigeons recorded from most areas, but no information on population size.

Jan-May. The max. count on *Tiree* was 74 at Heylipol on 11th Jan, and there were 40-50 on a ploughed field at Balephetrish on 9th May. A total of 100 were on the floods at RSPB L. Gruinart on 1st May, all of the wild type, and Smaull RSPB Reserve had a max. count of 50 on 11th Jan. Elsewhere a max. of 37 were counted feeding on arable stubble on Oronsay on 1st Apr, and small numbers (<10) were reported from various locations on *Mull*.

Breeding. Of 4 breeding prs located on Sanda Islands, 3 prs were on Glunimore; and 2 or

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3 birds were seen at suitable sites on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*. A nest containing 2 squabs was found in a ruin at The Airport *Tiree* on 6th Sep.

Jul-Dec. Smaull RSPB Reserve once again regularly held over 100 birds and numbers reached a peak of 336 on 19th Nov. The only other counts of 50 or more birds on *Islay* were at Kilchiaran (67 on 6th Oct), Ballinaby (72 on 10th Oct), Rockside (50+ on 10th Nov), Killinallan (150+ on 12th Nov) and L Skerrols (100 on 28th Dec). On *Tiree*, an impressive flock of 198 was at Kenovay on 17th Sep, and the max. count at L an Eilein was 282 on 17th Dec. The flock roosting on Oronsay peaked at 114 on 10th Oct, and the largest count on *Mull* was 28 feeding in a field at Fidden on 22nd Aug.

Apart from the odd racing pigeon, no obviously feral types were seen on *Tiree* during the year [JBo].

Records of Feral Pigeons came from: Dunoon, Carskief & Strone Glen *Kintyre*, Inveraray *Mid-Argyll* and Oban.

STOCK PIGEON (STOCK DOVE) *Columba oenas* Calman gorm 0668
Very scarce and local resident. Only regularly reported in Mid-Argyll in recent years (with just one confirmed breeding record) but with other records from Colonsay, Cowal, Kintyre, and Mull in the past 10 years.

The only record concerned two birds seen nr Carnasserie Castle *Mid-Argyll* on 16th Nov.

COMMON WOOD PIGEON
(WOODPIGEON) *Columba palumbus* Calman fiadhaich 0670
Common resident breeding species except in some areas, such as Mull, where more numerous in winter. Normally absent from Coll and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. A flock in the Minard area *Mid-Argyll* during Jan peaked at 170 on 31st. Reported in smaller numbers from *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Islay* and *Mull*. A flock of 25-30 in Hafton Woods (Dunoon) in Mar was thought to be attracted by seed put out at the nearby Bird Garden.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 4 of 12 in 2000).

Jul-Dec. Flocks were reported feeding on acorns at Tainish NNR in Sep and 'hundreds' were reported flying down L Awe in early Nov. A flock of 35 was in Raera Forest *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Nov.

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE
(COLLARED DOVE) *Streptopelia decaocto* Calman a chrios 0684
Sparse but widespread distribution throughout Argyll. Some island populations emigrate in winter.

Jan-May. There were records of groups of up to 6 birds from all Argyll areas except *Coll* and *Jura*. By far the largest gathering was in a garden at Bruichladdich *Islay* where 41 were counted on 31st May.

Breeding. There were breeding season reports from all areas except *Coll* and *Jura*.

Aug-Dec. Groups of up to 9 birds widely reported but no flocks of 10 or more birds.

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EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE

(TURTLE DOVE)

Streptopelia turtur Calman tuchan 0687

Scarce but almost annual passage migrant (none in 2000). Majority recorded during May-Jun.

One was reported from a garden in Salen Mull 7^a-15^a Jun, and one was seen in flight at Pennygael Mull on 26^a Jul. In autumn, one was at Balephuill Tiree on 29^a Sep.

COMMON CUCKOO (CUCKOO)

Cuculus canorus

Cuthag

0724

Common summer visitor. Main host species is Meadow Pipit.

Apr-May. The first record of the year was one calling at Strone (Minard) Mid-Argyll on 16^a Apr. Calling birds were heard at Kiel Crofts N Argyll and Glenramskill Kintyre on 22nd April and by 28^a Apr there had been records from all areas except Coll, Jura and Tiree.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 7 of 12 in 2000). One was calling at Cornaigmore Tiree at 03:00 hrs on 23^a Jun but the species is reportedly becoming scarcer on the island.

Jul-Aug. An adult was seen on Sanda Island on 13^a Jul and there were records from RSPB L. Gruinart of a single on 7^a Aug and 2 birds on 15^a Aug.

BARN OWL

Tyto alba

Comhachag

0735

Scarce breeding species, but probably under-recorded. Absent from Coll, Colonsay and Tiree. All records required.

During the year records were received from all areas except Coll, Colonsay, Jura and Tiree.

Breeding. Breeding success of monitored territories is summarised in Table 36.

Table 36. Outcomes of monitored Barn Owl territories in Argyll in 2001.

Area	Territories occupied	Ts where eggs laid	Ts known to have fledged young	Min no. of young fledged	No. of young per successful pair
Cowal	5	5	4	11	2.75
Kintyre/Knapdale (FE)		8	7	15	2.14
Kintyre	22	14	9	22	2.44
Mull		2	2	3	1.50
N Argyll		2	2	9*	4.50
Total		31	24	60	2.50

* NB Includes one unusually large brood of 6 fledged, and a brood of 3 fledged from a box in our editor's garden.

TAWNY OWL

Strix aluco

Comhachag dhonn

0761

Widespread and common resident breeding bird, but absent from Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. In the Glen Branter study area Cowal, a min. of 19 young were fledged from 13 known successful territories. The 8 prs monitored elsewhere in Cowal produced at least 10 young. An adult was seen with recently fledged young at Carskieve Kintyre in Jul.

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Other records during the year came from: *Cowal* (2 sites), *Islay* (6 sites), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (7 sites) and *Mull* (7 sites).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* Comhachag adharcaiche 0767

Very scarce resident breeding bird and winter visitor: almost certainly under-recorded. All records required.

Jan-May. An individual found injured at Culcharron (nr. Benderloch) *N Argyll* on 6th Jan sadly died subsequently. One was seen at Lochgair *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd May.

Breeding. Two nests containing young (b/3, b/2+) were located on *Colonsay* in Jun; and a nest containing young was found in May at a site on *Mull*.

Aug-Dec. One was found roosting on a mist net pole at Aros Moss *Kintyre* in early Sep.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus* Comhachag chluassach 0768

*Widely but thinly distributed breeder and winter visitor. Numbers fluctuate and distribution varies with abundance of small rodents, especially field voles *Microtus agrestis*. Some emigration in autumn.*

Jan-May. One was seen by Claonaig Water *Kintyre* on 28th Mar, and birds were reported during May from Traigh Gheal (nr. Buessan) and Glen More *Mull* and from nr Foreland House and at Kilchoman *Islay*.

Breeding. A pr at Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* successfully reared 4 young, and a pr bred at Moine Mhor NNR (adult seen carrying food for young) for the first time since 1997. Five prs were located in *Cowal*: four were successful including one pr that fledged 6 young. Birds were also present in suitable habitat at a site in *Kintyre* and at 3 sites on *Mull*.

Aug-Dec. Two were seen at Lochdon *Mull* on 2nd Aug and one at Ceann Chnocain (Glen More) *Mull* on 21st Sep. A single bird was seen on Oronsay on 18th Oct and 28th Dec. On *Islay* during Oct, singles were reported at RSPB L. Gruinart and at Coull Farm, Grulinmore and Sunderland in the L Gorm area. There were no records from the mainland.

EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR (NIGHTJAR) *Caprimulgus europaeus* 0778

Very scarce and irregular summer visitor. Has bred in the past in Kintyre and Cowal.

Churring birds were heard at L na Cuilce *Mull* on 11th May and at Cnoc Reamhar (nr. Tarbert) *Kintyre* on 17th May. Despite later checks, nothing was heard at either site subsequently, so these were presumably migrants.

COMMON SWIFT (SWIFT) *Apus apus* Gobhlan mor 0795

Summer visitor, breeding only very locally on the mainland. Wandering birds in summer and passage migrants may occur in all areas.

May-mid-Jul. The first arrivals were 2 at Tobermory *Mull* on 5th May, followed by singles at Scoor *Mull* on 10th and on Oronsay on 11th May. Two were around Connel Bridge *Mid-Argyll* on 14th May and singles were at Dunoon on 14th and at Blairmore *Cowal* on 17th May. On 21st May 24 were counted circling over Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* and 17 flew S over Skerry Fad Fell (Machrihanish) on 22nd May.

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Away from known breeding areas, birds were also seen at Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* (up to 5 from 23rd-26th Jun), Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* (one on 3rd and 4th Jun), Tayinloan (4 on 14th Jun), Carnain (L Indaal) (one on 16th Jun), Port Ellen *Islay* (one or more on 23rd Jun), RSPB L. Gruinart (one on 24th Jun), Sanda Island (4 on 26th Jun), Beinn Bheigeir *Islay* (4 on 27th Jun), Carskiefy *Kintyre* (one on 2nd Jul), Kilmelford *Mid-Argyll* (6 on 2nd Jul) and Hough *Tiree* (one on 3rd Jul).

A group of 16 over Ardrishaig *Mid-Argyll* on 13th Jun included one with a white chest and flanks. Prior to a thunderstorm at Machrihanish SBO on 26th Jun, a remarkable total of 157 were counted flying E and NE in off the sea over 4 hrs. More typically, singles were recorded here on 2nd and 14th Jul.

Breeding. Birds were reported during the breeding season at Lochgilphead (max. 24 on 21st May), Dunoon (max. 15 in Jun), Oban (3 on 2nd Jul) and Connel (no count).

Mid-Jul-Sep. On 18th Jul, 18 birds were over the pier in Dunoon and a loose flock of 40 flew W over Southend *Kintyre* at 21:00 hrs. Two were seen at Gruline *Mull* on 22nd Jul. On 19th Aug 26 flew S very high over Oban and 3 were still present in Oban on 23rd Aug. The last birds of the year at Connel were 2 seen on 26th Aug and none were reported anywhere after this except for a single very late bird flying S over the Mull of Oa *Islay* on 23rd Oct.

COMMON KINGFISHER (KINGFISHER) *Alcedo atthis* Biorra cruidein 0831
Scarce but regular visitor. Most records are in autumn and winter, and may represent dispersing juveniles.

The only record received concerned one seen at Bishop's Glen lake (Dunoon) on at least two occasions in late Sep.

EURASIAN WRYNECK (WRYNECK) *Jynx torquilla* Geocair 0848
Very rare & irregular passage migrant. Only 5 records since 1980: one at Bousd (Coll) on 13th Oct 1984, one on Sanda (Kintyre) on 6th Oct 1987, one at Torlochan (Mull) on 9th/10th Jun 1991, one at Cairnbaan (Mid-Argyll) on 11th Sep 1997 and one near Slockavullin (Mid-Argyll) from 4th to 6th Jun 1998.

On the afternoon of 14th Jun one was seen in flight at Croig *Mull*. Its identity was confirmed when it landed on a large boulder in the vicinity. It was not seen again. [M. Hutcheson]*.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis* Snagardach 0856
Rare but recorded regularly in Cowal in recent years, as well as in Mid-Argyll, Mull and N Argyll. Only confirmed breeding record Kintyre 1998. All records required.

One was seen at Sutherland's Grove (Barcaldine) *N Argyll* on 2nd Mar and possibly the same bird was in Barcaldine village on 17th Mar. One seen on the Craignish Estate (Ardferm) *Mid-Argyll* on 27th Apr had been heard calling 2 or 3 days previously and was well away from the recent known range of this species.

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GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major* Snagan daraich 0876
Resident breeder, widespread on the mainland and Mull. On Islay, recorded only in 1982, 1987, 1996, 1998 and 2000.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* 2 of 12 in 2000). There were 2 territories in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR, a pr bred at Fernoch (Kilmichael) *Mid-Argyll*, and prs seen regularly during the breeding season at Barcaldine *N Argyll*, in the NW wood at Moine Mhor and at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* probably bred.

One was seen at L Ballygrant *Islay* on 1st and 6th Oct, the second year running that the species has been recorded at this site in Oct. Other records during the year came from *Kintyre* (4 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (5 sites), *Mull* (4 sites) and *N Argyll* (2 sites).

Predation by this species accounted for 5 Blue Tit and 2 Great Tit broods in nestboxes near Bonawe. The boxes were attacked from below and all the young extracted through the drainage holes, which had been enlarged by the woodpecker. On 12th Jun an adult bird was seen flying from box to box tapping noisily on each (seemingly to test if boxes were occupied) (JCAC).

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): The statement "On 24th Oct one was seen well at L Ballygrant *Islay*, the first record on the island since 1996" should be amended to read "....since 1998".

SKY LARK (SKYLARK) *Alauda arvensis* Uiseag 0976
Widespread breeding species, common in some areas. Many emigrate in winter, with remaining birds mainly in coastal and low-lying localities.

Jan-Apr. Monthly maxima were: at RSPB L. Gruinart, 101 on 11th Jan, 197 on 16th Feb, 390 on 2nd Mar and 107 on 8th Apr; and at Smaull RSPB Reserve, 54 on 4th Jan, *ca* 300 on 27th Feb, 30 on 23rd Mar and 81 on 7th Apr. The only flocks of 50 or more birds reported elsewhere were on Oronsay (50 on 13th Feb) and at Kilchoman *Islay* (50+ on 18th Feb).

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 6 BBS squares (67%), (*cf* 4 of 10 in 2000). Elsewhere, birds were present and breeding on *Coll* RSPB Reserve, 4 singing birds were holding territory on Lunga and one on Fladda (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in Jun, and at least 8 prs bred on Sanda Islands. After a blank year in 2002 a single territory was found in the coastal CBC plot at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 3) and at least 6 singing birds were noted at Moine Mhor.

Sep-Dec. Monthly maxima at RSPB L. Gruinart were: 350+ on 29th Sep, 109 on 4th Oct, 181 on 20th Nov and 241 on 30th Dec. The only other counts of 50 or more were from Sunderland *Islay* (200 on 30th Sep), Balephetrish *Tiree* (50 on 2nd Oct), Smaull RSPB Reserve (51 on 18th Oct) and Oronsay (65 on oats stubble on several dates in Dec).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia* Gobhlan gainmhiche 0981
Summer visitor and passage migrant Uncommon and localised breeding species. All breeding records required.

Apr-May. The first of the year was at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Apr and by 8th Apr there had been records from *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*. On 28th Apr 80 or more were feeding low over L na Keal, and 75 were counted at RSPB L. Gruinart on 1st May.

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Breeding. There were 336 burrows at the large, regularly monitored colony at North Connel sandpit *N Argyll* (not used for sand extraction in 2001), and 107 burrows were counted in the sandy banks at Barcaldine gravel quarry, a site not previously reported on. On 19th Aug many unfledged young were still being fed at the hole entrances at the latter site. At L an Eilein at least 4 were present throughout Jun and breeding was suspected in the dunes nearby; if so, this would be a first breeding record for *Tiree* since 1955.

The following breeding colonies were also reported:

Cowal. Blairmore (no count), Colochla (nr Millhouse) (9+ birds) and Little Eachaig River (nr Dunoon) (ca 20 birds)

Islay. Coull Farm (10+ holes) and Saligo (14 holes)

Kintyre. On the coast at Ballure (total 100 holes in 2 sub-colonies), at Glenadale Water (23+ active holes), Breackerie River (4 freshly dug holes), Carskey (2 active holes) and Strone Glen (3 active holes).

Mid-Argyll. Kilmichael Glen woodyard (ca 70 occupied holes), nr L Leachd (Eredine Forest) (20 holes in newly excavated bank) and Kerrera Drove, Oban (ca 10 nesting birds)

Mull. Gorten (39 active holes), L Ba head (100 birds nr holes in river bank), Scoor beach (9 occupied holes in dune and others being excavated on 11th May), Crannich (5 occupied holes) and Glen Aros chapel (2+ holes).

Sep-Nov. Two birds were over L Nell *Mid-Argyll* on 6th Sep, one was at Ardnave *Islay* on 16th Sep, 22 flew S at Machrihanish SBO on 28th Sep, and one was at Loch Ba *Mull* on 3rd Oct. A very late bird was feeding over Ardilistry Bay *Islay* on 4th Nov.

BARN SWALLOW (SWALLOW)

Hirundo rustica Gobhlan gaoithe 0992

Widespread and common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Apr-May. The first were singles at Bridgend and Smaull *Islay* on 2nd Apr. They were followed by 3 at Lochdon on 6th Apr, 1 in Dunoon on 11th, 5 at Ardchattan Kirk *N Argyll* on 12th and one at Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* on 15th Apr. The main arrival occurred 16th-26th Apr, after which birds were generally distributed.

Breeding. At RSPB L. Gruinart 12 prs bred, not all of which were successful. Six prs were found breeding in farm buildings in Strone Glen *Kintyre*, one or two prs bred on Oronsay and a pr bred on Sanda Island, successfully fledging 2 broods.

Jul-Nov. A roost at Machrihanish Water held at least 1,000 birds in mid-Jul and 440 were counted there at dawn on 22nd Aug. At least 100 passed through Sanda Island on 1st Sep but an adult and newly fledged juv were still present at Ardnave *Islay* on 16th Sep. Smaller numbers were still passing through during the first week in Oct including 20 at Largie Farm (Tayinloan) *Kintyre* on 6th and 20 at Ballygrant *Islay* on 7th Oct. Late migrants included one at West Hynish *Tiree* on 19th Oct, 2 at Claddach *Islay* on 24th, one at Laphroaig *Islay* on 25th and 2 at Bridgend *Islay* on 2nd Nov. The last record, of a very late juv. feeding around Aros Castle *Mull* on 25th Nov, may well be the latest ever recorded in Argyll.

2000. A late record of a late Swallow. One was seen in Lochgilphead on 13th November 2000.

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HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica* Gobhlan taighe 1001

Summer visitor breeding commonly on the mainland. Less numerous on the islands and no recent breeding records from Colonsay, Tiree and Coll.

Apr-May. The first arrivals were earlier than usual and included 8 flying over Innis Chonain (L Awe) on 1st Apr, 8 nr Duart Castle Mull on 8th Apr, one at Tayinloan also on 8th Apr and one at Lephinmore Cowal on 10th Apr. The main arrival appeared to take place considerably later with 3 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 27th Apr, one at Muircroft (Oban) on 27th, 15 at Portinnisherrich (L Awe) Mid-Argyll on 28th and one at Minard Mid-Argyll on 29th Apr.

Breeding. Several observers considered that numbers of breeding birds were down on previous years with, at one locality in Cowal, no nests at all for the first time in 21 yrs. A pr were still feeding young at Barcaldine N Argyll on 13th Sep.

Jul-Sep. One flying over Taynish NNR on 13th Jul was only the third-ever record for the reserve. At least 20 were still circling over Tullochgorm (Minard) Mid-Argyll on 16th Sep and up to 20 were at Lochdon on 20th Sep. The last birds were a juv. at Balevullin Tiree on 30th Sep, 2 at L Ba Mull on 3rd Oct and 8 at Bunessan Mull on 7th Oct.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis* Riabhag 1009

Summer visitor breeding commonly on the mainland. Also widespread on Jura and Mull, but very scarce on Islay.

Apr-May. The first were at Fernoch (Kilmichael) Mid-Argyll and at Skipness Kintyre on 24th Apr followed by 2 at Doire Darach N Argyll on 27th and one at Connel Mid-Argyll on 29th Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 6 BBS squares (33%), (cf 6 of 12 in 2000). Eleven territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (cf 17 in 2000). One was singing at Ballimony Islay on 17th May outwith the usual range of this species on the island.

Sep-Oct. The last records were of single birds at Tullochgorm (Minard) Mid-Argyll on 15th Sep and at Dunoon on 2nd Oct.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis* Snathag 1011

Abundant breeding species. Most leave the higher ground in winter, and significant flocks occur on passage. Those remaining in Argyll occur mainly in coastal and low-lying localities.

Jan-Apr. Only small flocks of no more than 30 birds were reported during the winter months, from Islay, Kintyre and Mid-Argyll. A flock of 70 birds at Tullochgorm (Minard) Mid-Argyll on 13th Apr were the only migrants recorded.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 6 BBS squares (67%), (cf 9 of 12 in 2000). At Taynish NNR, there were 7 territories in the coastal CBC plot (cf 1990-2000 av. of 5). A census on Sanda Islands revealed a total of 34 prs.

Aug-Dec. Migrant flocks included 30 at Kerrera Ferry jetty (Oban) on 18th Aug and 35 at Stob a' Choire Odhair (nr L Tulla) N Argyll on 25th Aug. Large numbers passed through Sanda Island in the first two weeks of Sep, including more than 200 birds on 15th. The peak winter count at L Gruinart was 35 on 1st Nov.

Addition to 2000 breeding data (ABR 17): Sample count at RSPB L. Gruinart: 105 territories in 279 ha (0.38 prs/ha) in 2 moorland compartments during breeding season.

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ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus* Gabhagan 1014
Common resident breeding species on coasts, sea lochs and islands with some emigration and passage in autumn. Scarce passage and winter visitor elsewhere.

Jan-Apr. A total of 18 birds were counted at Tayinloan on 1st Jan.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 1 of 12 in 2000). At Tainish NNR, there was a single territory in the coastal CBC plot, and a census of the shoreline of the Sanda Islands revealed a total of 39 prs. A min. 14 prs were recorded around Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* and birds were also noted on Fladda, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Jul-Dec. In early Jul, 67 birds were counted along 760m of shore at Carskief *Kintyre*. At Oban Bay 14 were counted on 28th Oct, and at Machrihanish SBO numbers built to a max. of 70 during Nov-Dec.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* Breacan buidhe 1017
Scarce and less-than-annual passage migrant; recorded in 13 of the 19 years 1980-98. Birds of the blue-headed race M. f. flava occur from time to time, and there has been at least one record of the grey-headed race M. f. thunbergi (in 1985).

Two calling birds were heard at Machrihanish SBO on 23rd May and one was heard on 9th Jul. A first-winter bird seen on Uisaed Point *Kintyre* on 13th Oct subsequently flew off to the SW.

BLUE-HEADED (YELLOW) WAGTAIL *M. f. flava*

One was seen just outside the hide at Machrihanish SBO on 30th May.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea* Breacan bain tighearna 1019
Widespread resident breeding species; some emigration in winter.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 2 of 12 in 2000). On *Mull*, a pr at Lochdon with chicks in the nest on 2nd May had a 2nd brood in Jun. Also on *Mull*, a pr with 3 juvs was at Penmore House (Croig) on 14th May and an adult at Dervaig was with 2 juvs on 20th May. Prs were reported on *Islay* during the breeding season at Laggan Bridge (2 prs), the Woollen Mill and on the River Sorn nr Bridgend.

One or two passage birds were recorded on Sanda Island 12th-15th Sep. Eight birds were in Machrihanish village on 29th Oct, one was at Scarinish *Tiree* on 29th Sep, and an immature was at Balemartine on 21st Nov and at Crossapol Farm *Tiree* on 28th Nov.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii* Breach an t-sil 1020
Widespread and common breeder. Emigration from most areas in winter. Returning birds generally arrive late Feb to early Mar; departure Aug-Oct.

Jan-Apr. Twelve were counted at Tayinloan on 1st Jan. Five returning birds were at Kinloch *Mull* on 5th Mar, and 10 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 12th Mar were part of an influx noted there at this time.

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 6 BBS squares (50%), (cf 3 of 12 in 2000). Five prs bred on

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Sanda Islands, incl. a pr on Sheep Island, and 2 broods were ringed. A pr nested in a hole in the rocks at Lochan Quarry (Dunoon) *Cowal* in Apr and, at Gallachaille (nr Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Jun, all the nearly fledged young in a nest in a shed were taken by a Hooded Crow.

Jul-Dec. Autumn movements were noted at the following locations: Sandaig *Tiree* (21 on 19th Aug), Sanda Island (15 on 11th Sep), L Gruinart (25 on 28th Sep), Balemartine *Tiree* (62 in pre-roost gathering), Crossapol *Tiree* (19 on 29th Oct), Kilkenneth *Tiree* (24 going to roost in iris bed on 30th Oct) and Machrihanish Bay (84 on 6th Nov). In addition, at least 300 were present Jul-Oct at a reed bed roost at West Machrihanish *Kintyre*, and there were still 23 birds at Tayinloan on 30th Dec.

WHITE WAGTAIL

M. a. alba

Passage migrant, usually recorded in spring. Extent of autumn passage obscured by identification difficulties.

Apr-May. The first spring migrants noted were 3 at Tayinloan and one on Oronsay on 12th Apr, followed by one on Sanda Island on 17th and 5 at L Gruinart on 18th Apr. Birds were then reported continuously until mid-May, the highest counts being 20 at L Gruinart on 24th Apr, 17 on Oronsay on 1st May, 12 at The Green *Tiree* on 2nd May and 11 at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 5th May. The last were 7 at Machrihanish SBO on 15th May.

Aug-Sep. One or two birds were seen regularly on the shore at Machrihanish during Aug, and one was at L Gruinart on 10th Aug. Over 100 passage birds were recorded on Sanda Island during Sep with a peak count of at least 50 on 11th. Elsewhere, 1-3 birds were seen on *Colonsay* 20th-23rd Sep, small numbers were present on *Tiree* in late Sep, 12 were on Sanda Island on 7th Oct, and a late bird was at Trudermish *Islay* on 4th Nov.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING (WAXWING) *Bombycilla garrulus* Canarach dearg 1048

Irruptive winter visitor in varying numbers; not seen every year.

Jan-Feb. The influx that began in late Dec 2000 continued, with the majority of records relating to the first two weeks of Jan. Most were on the mainland and relatively few birds reached the islands. After mid-Jan there were only isolated records and most had presumably moved on.

The following is a complete list of records submitted.

- 1st Jan Campbeltown *Kintyre* - 30 or more feeding on rosehips at Limecraigs.
2nd Jan Crarae Gardens *Mid-Argyll* - flock of 17 at cemetery, being mobbed by Mistle Thrush.
Tobermory *Mull* - 2 in garden.
Oban *Mid-Argyll* - one in garden
3rd Jan Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* - 2 in garden
4th Jan Walkers Garage, Dunoon *Cowal* - 7 (stayed until 21st Jan)
Craighouse *Jura* - one seen
Barcaldine Sawmill *N Argyll* - 2 in garden
Inveraray *Mid-Argyll* - 8 seen along The Avenue
Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* - 10 on cotoneaster bushes

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- 5^o Jan Barcaldine Sawmill *N Argyll* – 20 at same location as on 4th
 Barcaldine Village *N Argyll* – 21 feeding on rose hips
 Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* – 8 on cotoneaster bushes
- 6^o Jan Oban *Mid-Argyll* – 12 near Oban Hospital
 L. Tulla *N Argyll* – 6 at Blackmount Forest Lodge
- 7^o Jan Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* – 2 on hawthorn bush in garden
 Dunoon – 15 feeding on hawthorn tree in Royal Crescent
- 8^o Jan Ardrishaig *Mid-Argyll* – 7+ in garden
- 9^o Jan Connel *Mid-Argyll* – 18 (max. seen here – present ‘mid-Dec – mid-Jan’)
- 10^o Jan Strath of Appin *N Argyll* – one nr road junction
- 11^o Jan Lochdon *Mull* – 2 seen
 Clachan Beag (L. Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* – 2 outside the Oyster Bar
- 13^o Jan Connel – ca 15 on crab apple tree at S end of Connel Bridge
 Connel – 13 seen S of village at NM916334 (poss. same as above?)
- 14^o Jan Benderloch *N Argyll* – 5 in village
- 16^o Jan Connel – 6 nr Connel Surgery
- 17^o Jan Oban - 2 near Oban Hospital
- 23rd Jan Connel – 9 at North Connel
- 6^o Feb Minard *Mid-Argyll* – one with Redwings and Fieldfares
- 24^o Mar Oban – 3 in Albert Lane.
- Nov-Dec A single bird was listed on “Birdline” as being seen at Seil Island *Mid-Argyll* on 7^o Nov.

WHITE-THROATED DIPPER (DIPPER) *Cinclus cinclus* Gobha uisge 1050
Widespread resident breeder, though scarce on Islay and Colonsay and absent from Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Breeding prs were recorded on *Mull* at: Beach River (Ross of Mull), Aros Bridge, Knock and Dervaig (recently fledged young on 9^o May) and at Younger Botanic Gardens *Cowal* (pr nesting below footbridge had recently fledged young on 10^o May) and Connel *Mid-Argyll* (pr feeding young on 5^o May).

During the year birds were also reported from *Cowal* (2 locations), *Islay* (5 locations), *Mid-Argyll* (4 other locations), *Mull* (5 other locations) and *N Argyll* (2 locations).

WINTER WREN (WREN) *Troglodytes troglodytes* Dreathann donn 1066
Very common resident breeder, although numbers fall following hard winters.

Breeding. Recorded in 4 of 6 BBS squares (50%), (cf 9 of 12 in 2000). The total of 56 territories in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR was well down on the 76 in 2000, possibly due to a cold winter (cf 1990-2000 av. of 51). On the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, 12 singing males were found on Lunga in Jun, mostly at the N end, and they were also recorded on Fladda and Cairn na Burgh Mor. In Oban, 2 territories were noted at the Hydropathic Ruins and 8 territories along Glencruitten Road, 25 prs were counted breeding on Sanda Islands.

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HEDGE ACCENTOR (DUNNOCK) *Prunella modularis* Gealbhonn nam preas 1084
Widespread and common resident breeder, but very local on Coll and Jura and only a winter visitor to Tiree.

Breeding. A total of 3 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 4). In Oban the following territories were recorded in Apr: 2 at Hydropathic Ruins, 2 at Polvinister and one at McCaig's Tower. An adult was feeding young at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Jun.

One was recorded at Craighouse *Jura* on 28th Oct and *Tiree* had single birds in a mature garden at Balemartine in Oct/Nov and at The Airport Camp in Dec. Otherwise there were records from all areas except *Coll* and *N Argyll* (although it is known to be common in parts of the latter, records are sparse and would be welcome).

EUROPEAN ROBIN (ROBIN) *Erithacus rubecula* Bru dhearg 1099
Widespread and common resident breeder, but only rarely and sporadically on Coll or Tiree. Immigration in winter and noticeable autumn passage in some years.

Jan-Mar. In Jan single birds were reported inside the Co-op, Kwik-Save and Tesco supermarkets in Oban. At least 100 were estimated to be present on *Tiree* in Jan but the species was totally absent during the summer months.

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 6 BBS squares (50%), (*cf* 9 of 12 in 2000). The total of 15 territories found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR was only 50% of the record total of 31 in 2000, possibly due to a colder winter in 2000/2001 (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 21). In Oban the following territories were recorded in Apr: 11 at Hydropathic Ruins, 7 at Polvinister and 2 at McCaig's Tower.

Aug-Dec. In late Aug, an obvious influx was noted on *Tiree* with birds found at 5 locations on 25th, and by Nov there were small numbers in gardens all over the island. On 19th Sep 18 passage birds were noted on Sanda Island, and 18 were counted in the area of McCaig's Tower, Oban on 16th Nov.

COMMON REDSTART (REDSTART) *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Ceann dearg 1122
Summer visitor, locally common in relatively open woodland. Recorded on Colonsay, Islay, Tiree and Coll only as a scarce passage migrant.

Away from the monitored breeding areas at Blarreen and Taynish NNR, only 8 records were received during 2001, all from *Mull* and the mainland.

Apr-May. Singing males were reported from Barr Glen *Kintyre* on 6th May, Inverchaolain (L Striven) *Cowal* on 8th May and in Minard Woods *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd May. A female on Sanda Island on 11th May was their only record for the year.

Breeding. A total of 6 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 6). Three prs bred in 158 available boxes near Bonawe (clutches 8, 8, and unrecorded). All three were predated by Pine Marten at the egg stage and none fledged. Two young birds were seen at Ardchonnell Farm (L Awe) *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd Jul and a family party were at Ardnadrochit *Mull* on 7th Jul.

Jun-Aug. A female was seen by the River Add at Drimvore *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Jun and an immature bird was on Kerrera Island *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Aug.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2001

WHINCHAT

Saxicola rubetra

Gocan

1137

Widespread and common summer visitor.

Apr-May. Spring arrival was apparently later than usual and the first bird was not seen until 1st May when one was found on *Colonsay*. This was followed by one at *Glen More Mull* on 2nd May, 2 at *Ardachoil Mull* on 5th and one *L Gorm Islay* also on 5th May. The main arrival apparently took place 11th-13th May when birds were reported from *Tayinloan*, *Braleckan* (nr *Furnace*) *Mid-Argyll*, *RSPB L. Gruinart* and *Gartnagrenoch* (nr *Clachan Kintyre*).

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 3 of 12 in 2000). On *Colonsay* 2 prs were located and on *Oronsay* one pr (cf total of 7 prs in 2000). On *Islay* a min. of 3 prs bred at *RSPB L. Gruinart* and 6 prs were located in the *Coull Farm - Saligo* area. Recently fledged young were seen at *Braleckan Mid-Argyll*, *Kilvecuen Mull* and at *Balephuil* and *West Hynish on Tiree*.

Aug-Sep. Five were at *RSPB L. Gruinart* on 15th Aug, 2 males were seen on *Kerrera Island* on 4th Sep, one was on *Sanda Island* on 13th Sep, one was at *Balephuil Tiree* on 17th Sep and the last was at *Saligo Bay* on 29th Sep.

Correction to 2000 data (ABR 17): *Islay*. In the passage "...where 22 were seen at *Easter Ellister* on 28th Apr", "22" should be changed to "2".

STONECHAT

Saxicola torquata

Clacharan

1139

Widespread resident breeding species, but population can decline dramatically after severe winters. Some emigration may take place in winter.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 5 of 12 in 2000). On *Colonsay* only 13 prs were located (cf 36 prs in 2000), a significant decline following the cold winter. Three prs breeding on *Sanda Islands* were all double-brooded. Prs with recently fledged young were found at 4 sites on *Tiree* in Jun, and at least 7 prs bred at *RSPB L. Gruinart*. Prs with recently fledged young were also seen at *Coll RSPB Reserve*, *Iona Mull*, *Salthouse (L. Ridon) Cowal* and at *Auchindrain*, *Braleckan* and *L. Leacann (Eredine Forest) Mid-Argyll*.

Oct-Dec. At least 20 were counted in *Glen Aros Mull* on 22nd Sep and, on *Islay*, 14+ were along the *Coull* road to *Saligo* on 29th Sep, 10 or more were at *Ardnave* on 10th Nov and 20+ were around *L. Gorm* on 12th Nov.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (WHEATEAR) *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Bru gheal

1146

Common summer visitor and passage migrant.

Mar-Apr. The first birds were singles at *Upper Killeyan Islay* on 19th Mar and at *Tayinloan* on 20th. There were also 4 at *Kinnabus Islay* on 20th Mar. By the end of Mar birds were widespread, with records from *Colonsay*, many locations on *Islay*, *Jura*, *Kintyre* and *Mull*.

Breeding. On *Lunga* (excluding *S* end) (*Treshnish Isles*) *Mull* 10 territories were identified in late Jun. A census of the *Sanda Islands* revealed 20 breeding prs, of which 2 prs were on *Sheep Island*. Also bred on *Oronsay* and on the *RSPB reserves* on *Islay* although no counts were made. Adults with recently fledged young were seen at *Kintra Mull* and *Kilchoman Islay*.

Jul-Oct. A count along 760m of shore at *Carskiey Kintyre* in early Jul totalled 27 birds.

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Passage birds were widely reported throughout Sep. Late records included singles at Sanda Island on 4th Oct, Fidden *Mull* on 6th Oct, Tayinloan on 10th Oct, Oronsay on 10th Oct and Frenchman's Rocks on 24th Oct. There were also 2 at Claddach *Islay* and 2 between Portnahaven & Kilchiaran *Islay* on 24th Oct. The last were on *Tiree* where singles were seen at Crossapol Bay and Gott Bay on 27th Oct.

Among 27 birds trapped for ringing on Treshnish Isles, 3 had been previously ringed. One of these, retrapped on Lunga on 28th Jun 2001, had been ringed as a juv. on Fladda on 3rd Jul 1997. A female killed by cat on Lismore *N Argyll* on 7th Apr 2000 had been ringed on Guernsey, Channel Islands, on 31st Mar 2000, just 7 days earlier.

GREENLAND WHEATEAR

O. o. leucorhoa

Apparently rare passage migrant, but probably under-recorded.

Spring. The first was a single at Sanda Island on 30th Apr followed by 2 there on 3rd May, 5 on 5th May and one on 21st May. One was also reported from Penmore House (Croig) *Mull* on 13th May.

Autumn. One thought to have been of this race was at The Reef *Tiree* on 12th Sep, 3 were at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th, 5 on Sanda Island on 19th and one at L Buie *Mull* on 20th Sep. Juveniles were recorded daily at Machrihanish SBO from 25th Sep to 7th Oct with a peak count of 15 on 28th Sep. Two were on Sanda Island on 4th Oct and, on *Tiree*, 5 juvs apparently of this race were at Balemartine on 3rd Oct, 4 at Vaul on 7th Oct and 3 at Balemartine on 27th Oct.

RING OUZEL

Turdus torquatus Dubh chreige 1186

Summer visitor breeding very locally in upland areas. More widespread, though still very scarce, on migration. All records required.

Jan-Apr. A male at Aros Park gates *Mull* on 13th Apr was the first record of the year, and one was seen at L Gearach *Islay* on 7th May.

Breeding. One was seen nr the top of Glen Bellart *Mull* on 27th Jun but with no evidence of breeding.

Sep-Oct. One was reported at West Parkfergus *Kintyre* on 2nd Oct and there were reports of one or more birds in Glen Airigh (Kilmichael Forest) *Mid-Argyll* during 15th-21st Oct.

COMMON BLACKBIRD (BLACKBIRD)

Turdus merula Lon dubh 1187

Widespread and common resident breeding species. Immigration in winter and noticeable autumn passage in some years.

Jan-Apr. There were 16 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 5th Jan. A male with a perfect snow white hood was seen at Chiscan Farm (The Laggan) *Kintyre* on 2nd Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 6 of 12 in 2000). A total of 7 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 5). In Oban, the following prs were located in Apr: 9 at Hydropathic Ruins, 7 along Glencruitten Road and 3 at McCaig's Tower. A pr bred and fledged young on Sanda Island

Sep-Dec. Of 16 birds at Lochdon on 19th Oct, 14 were imm. males, and the majority of 15 in Campbell Crescent, Oban were 1st winter males. RSPB L. Gruinart had 14 on 30th Dec.

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2001

FIELDFARE

Turdus pilaris

Liath thruisg

1198

Passage migrant and winter visitor. Abundant in autumn but relatively few winter and spring.

Jan-Apr. Only relatively small flocks were recorded including 30 at Tayinloan on 2nd Jan, 23 at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 12th Jan, 30+ at Craigens (L. Gruinart) on 25th Feb, and 62 at Tayinloan on 3rd Mar. One on Sanda Island on 26th Apr was the last bird of spring.

Sep-Dec. The first autumn arrivals were 6 at Bunnahabhain *Islay* on 29th Sep, and one was at Crossapol *Tiree* on 8th Oct. The main arrival took place from 18th Oct and larger counts included *ca* 200 at Heylipol, 430 at Balephuill and 450 at West Hynish on *Tiree* on 19th, 123 at Upper Killeyan *Islay* on 19th, 300 at L. an Eilein on 20th, 600 between Southend and Campbeltown on 21st, 700 flying S at L. Gruinart on 22nd, 150 at Moine Mhor on 22nd, 440 at Kilkivan (The Laggan) *Kintyre* on 23rd Oct and 320 (incl. some Redwings) at Blarghour (L. Awe) *Mid-Argyll* also on 23rd. By 24th Oct an estimated 2,000 were at Laggan *Islay* and 1,200 at Kilkivan *Kintyre*. Numbers fell away slightly after this but there were still 110 in the Kilkenneth/Hough area *Tiree* on 14th Nov, 200+ at Kintra *Islay* on 28th Nov, 300 on *Tiree* on 11th Dec, 120+ at Skipness *Kintyre* on 26th Dec and 'several hundred' at The Laggan *Kintyre* through Dec.

SONG THRUSH

Turdus philomelos

Smeorach

1200

Widespread and common resident breeding species. Some immigration in winter.

Jan-Jun. During the goose count on *Tiree* on 11th Jan, an island total of 55 were recorded. One singing regularly at dawn 23rd-30th Jun on Lunga and one seen on Cairn na Burgh Beg on 28th Jun are the first records of this species on Treshnish Isles *Mull* in 30 years of visits by TIARG. An individual at Benderloch *N Argyll* on 3rd Mar had a white band across the 'shoulders'. An individual mist-netted on Sanda Island on 23rd Apr showed the characteristics of the continental race *philomelos* and 6 birds seen there together on 18th May were thought to be migrants.

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 6 BBS squares (50%), (*cf* 9 of 12 in 2000). At Tainish NNR there was a total of 11 territories in the CBC plots (*cf* 15 in 2000 but 1990-2000 av. of 7); one pr nested successfully next to the car park, with the adult remaining sitting even when cars were parked beside it. A surprising 6 prs were noted breeding on Sanda Islands, and adults feeding young were reported from Kintra and Lochbuie *Mull* and Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll*.

Sep-Dec. A very heavily marked individual at Balnahard *Colonsay* on 20th Sep had a belly appearing almost black from markings, suggesting the race *hebridensis* from the Outer Hebrides and Skye; and among 40 new arrivals at RSPB L. Gruinart on 22nd Sep was one possibly of the continental race *philomelos*. Eight birds in the dunes at Balevullin *Tiree* on 9th Dec were among large numbers present on the island since an influx in Oct/Nov.

REDWING

Turdus iliacus

Sgiath dhearg

1201

Passage migrant and winter visitor. Abundant in autumn but relatively few winter. Occasional individuals recorded in late spring. Bred on Mull in 1991.

Jan-May. During the goose count on *Tiree* on 11th Jan, at least 96 were recorded.

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Elsewhere, flocks of no more than 20 or so were reported in Jan and Feb. On 2nd Mar 50 or more were seen at Ballinaby *Islay*, ca 50 were at Rhugarbh Croft (Appin) *N Argyll* on 2nd Apr, 45 were counted at L Gruinart on 15th Apr, and ca 200 were in the vicinity of Colonsay House *Colonsay* on 20th Apr. 10 were at Bruichladdich *Islay* on 27th Apr, and a very late bird was seen on Sanda Island on 27th May and trapped the following day.

Sep-Dec. The first autumn arrivals were 3 at Ardfeinag *Mull* on 21st Sep followed by singles at Kilkenneth *Tiree* and L Gorm *Islay* on 29th and at Fernoch (Kilmichael) *Mid-Argyll* on 30th Sep. Only small numbers were reported until 19th Oct when 300 were found at Heylipol *Tiree*. In the next few days large numbers appeared in most areas. Notable counts included 500 at Lochdon (mixed flock with Fieldfares) on 20th Oct, 100 at An Airidh *Tiree* and 100 at L an Eilein also on 20th, 200 at Kilkivan (The Laggan) *Kintyre* on 21st Oct, ca 1,000 between Southend and Campbeltown *Kintyre* on 21st and 150 at Heylipol *Tiree* on 22nd Oct. By 24th Oct an estimated 2,000 were at Laggan *Islay* and 800 at Kilkivan *Kintyre*. Flock sizes fell away to no more than 30 or 40 in most places after this but flocks of 100 or more were seen at various locations on *Tiree* through Nov and Dec and an estimated 500 were present on the island on 11th Dec. At least 70 were in a field nr Skipness *Kintyre* on 26th Dec.

MISTLE THRUSH

Turdus viscivorus Smeorach mhor 1202

Widespread but thinly distributed resident breeding species, except on Coll and *Tiree* where only an occasional visitor. Flocks sometimes seen on passage.

Breeding. There was one territory in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1.5). An adult with recently fledged young was in Younger Botanic Garden *Cowal* on 9th Jun and a pr held territory at Glencruitten Golf Course, Oban.

Jul-Dec. Flocks appeared from early Jul when 21 were seen at Carskiey *Kintyre*. At least 40 flew over Crannich *Mull* on 15th Aug, a flock of 24 were at Stone Cottage (Bridgend) *Islay* on 10th Sep, 22 were in a rowan copse by L Gorm *Islay* on 3rd Oct, and 20 or more were at Tayinloan on 16th Dec. A single bird at West Hynish on 16th Dec was an unusual record for *Tiree*.

COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER

(GRASSHOPPER WARBLER) *Locustella naevia* Ceileiriche Ieumnach 1236

Summer visitor breeding locally in all areas; good densities may occur in young conifer plantations. Numbers fluctuate from year to year.

Apr-May. Three at RSPB L. Gruinart on 20th Apr were the first returning migrants, followed by reeling birds at Fernoch (Kilmichael) *Mid-Argyll* on 24th and on *Colonsay* on 28th Apr. By mid-May birds had been recorded on *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull* with most records from *Islay* and *Mid-Argyll*.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf one of 12 in 2000). There were 2 territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2) and 3 singing males were found on *Colonsay* (cf 4 in 2000). The species bred on Coll RSPB Reserve and 13 singing males were present at RSPB L. Gruinart. There were also reports of males singing during the breeding season from *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (6 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (6 sites) and *Mull* (2 sites).

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Aug-Sep. Reeling birds were heard nr L Scammadale *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd Aug and at L Frisa *Mull* on 5th Aug, and 2 in a garden at Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* on 16th Aug were the last of the year.

SEDGE WARBLER

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus Glas eun 1243

Summer visitor and locally common breeding species.

Apr-May. One singing on Sanda Island on 27th Apr was the first spring record. It was followed by birds at Fernoch (Kilmichael) *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Apr, at Craignish Estate (Ardfern) *Mid-Argyll* on 29th, *Colonsay* on 30th Apr and RSPB L. Gruinart on 1st May. On 6th May 4 males were singing near the terminus at Machrihanish Airfield.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of 6 BBS squares (33%), (cf 3 of 12 in 2000). A total of 10 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 9). Numbers on *Colonsay* were well down on last year with only 31 singing birds located on *Colonsay* incl. Oronsay, compared with a total of 60 in 2000. Breeding numbers on Sanda Islands were also down, to 2 prs (cf 5 prs in 2000). Twelve singing birds were heard between Fernoch and L Leathan *Mid-Argyll* on 13th May, and 4 prs were located between Coull Farm and Saligo *Islay* on 23rd Jun. An adult was feeding young at Carskiey *Kintyre* on 2nd Aug. Elsewhere, singing males were reported from *Islay* (6 sites), *Jura* (one site), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (one site), *Mull* (10 sites) and *Tiree* (one site).

Aug-Sep. Late birds were at Upper Killeyan *Islay* on 24th Aug and Balemartine *Tiree* on 17th Sep, and the very last was in irises at Kilkenneth *Tiree* on 26th Sep.

COMMON WHITETHROAT (WHITETHROAT) *Sylvia communis* Gealan coille 1275

Summer visitor, breeding widely but patchily. Numbers appear to fluctuate from year to year.

Apr-May. Arrival seems to have been later than usual with no records until early May, the first being one at RSPB L. Gruinart on 3rd. In the following few days there were records from Port Crom (nr Bellochantuy) *Kintyre* on 6th May, Ulva Ferry *Mull*, Dunlossit *Islay*, Salen *Mull* and Sanda Island (6 migrants) on 7th, and Tainish NNR and Inverchaolain (L Striven) *Cowal* on 8th May. At least 6 were heard singing from the roadside between Craignure and Tobermory *Mull* on 12th May.

Breeding. A record total of 10 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 7) and of the 5 prs breeding on Sanda Islands (cf one pr in 2000), most were in the areas containing newly planted trees. Singing males on *Colonsay* increased once more, to 25 (cf 23 in 2000 and 17 in 1999) and 2 singing males were recorded in the Glencruitten Road-High School area of Oban. Elsewhere, singing males were reported during the breeding season from *Coll* (one site), *Cowal* (4 sites), *Islay* (one site), *Kintyre* (6 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (one site) and *Mull* (6 sites).

Aug-Sep. A juv. was seen at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Aug, migrants were recorded on Sanda Island on 17th and 18th Sep, and the last was at Nerabus *Islay* on 27th Sep.

GARDEN WARBLER

Sylvia borin Ceileiriche garaidh 1276

Summer visitor and scarce breeding species.

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May. The first arrival was at Taynish NNR on 8th May followed by birds at Moine Mhor on 10th May, Salthouse (L Riddon) *Cowal* on 11th May, Dunbeg *Mid-Argyll* on 12th May and L Leathan *Mid-Argyll* on 13th May. Migrants were recorded on Sanda Island on 13th May and at Portnahaven *Islay* on 17th May.

Breeding. A total of 4 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2). Elsewhere, the only other reports of singing birds came from Quinish House *Mull*, Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll*, Torrisdale *Kintyre* and Saddell Abbey *Kintyre*.

There were no autumn records.

BLACKCAP

Sylvia atricapilla Ceann dubh 1277

Scarce summer visitor and regular passage migrant, especially in autumn. Increasingly numerous in winter.

Jan-May. There were several records of wintering birds. A female was in a garden in Oban on 2nd Jan and a male was at a bird table in Oskamull *Mull* on 4th Jan. A male came daily to a bird table at Peninver *Kintyre* from 6th Jan to mid-Feb and was joined by a female from 6th-10th Jan. A female was seen at Ballochgair *Kintyre* on 9th Jan and a male fed at a bird table in Kirn (Dunoon) on 12th Jan. At Tobermory *Mull* a male was regularly at a bird table from 17th Jan to at least 3rd Mar and another was at a bird table at High Askomil (Campbeltown) in late Feb. A female was in a garden at Furnace *Mid-Argyll* on 15th Feb and a male was seen in Oban on 16th Mar. After this there was a gap until what was presumably the first of the spring migrants, at Coullabus Wood on 13th Apr. This was followed on 14th Apr by a male in a garden in Lochgilphead and by 20th Apr there were 3 or 4 singing males in Oban.

Breeding. There was a single territory in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* none in 2000). In *Kintyre* 9 singing males were recorded at Torrisdale and 3 at Saddell in May/June. A single male was singing in Colonsay House Gardens *Colonsay* in June (*cf* 3 in 2000). Elsewhere, from mid-May to July, singing males were heard at one site in *Cowal*, 7 on *Islay*, one on *Jura* and 3 in *Mid-Argyll*. As in 2000, there were no summer records from *Mull*.

Sep-Nov. Records of probable migrants included singles nr Minard *Mid-Argyll* on 23rd Sep and at Lockerbie (L Sween) and Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 7th Oct and up to 2 at Balemartine *Tiree* on 18th-20th Oct. A total of 8 were in Ballygrant Woods *Islay* on 24th Oct.

Single birds seen in gardens at Lochdon 16th-20th Nov, at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 9th Dec, at Strachur *Cowal* on 26th Dec and in Campbeltown throughout Dec were presumably over-wintering.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER

Phylloscopus inornatus 1300

Very rare & irregular passage migrant. Only four accepted previous records for Argyll: on Skerryvore in 1906, on Islay in Oct 1988, on Tiree in Oct 1998 and on Islay in Oct 1999.

One found in a garden at Kilkenneth *Tiree* on 27th Sep remained there until 1st Oct [CR]*. After a gap of 82 years between the first and second Argyll records, there have now been three records in the last four years.

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WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* Ceileiriche cille 1308

Summer visitor, common in suitable woodlands.

Apr-May. The first record of the year was of a singing male at Craignish Estate (Ardfern) *Mid-Argyll* on 29th Apr. By 5th May, 2 were singing in Minard Woods *Mid-Argyll*, 4 were singing nr Grasspoint *Mull* and 2 were singing in Glen Forsa *Mull*.

Breeding. There were 6 territories in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 8), and 8 singing males were recorded on the Torrisdale Castle estate *Kintyre* in May/Jun. An adult was feeding young at Salthouse (L Riddon) *Cowal* on 30th Jul. Further records of singing birds in breeding season came from *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (one site), *Kintyre* (one site), *Mid-Argyll* (3 sites) and *Mull* (2 sites).

Aug-Sep. At least one bird was present on Kerrera *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Aug.

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF (CHIFFCHAFF) *Phylloscopus collybita* Cailean 1311

Summer visitor and uncommon breeding species, scarce on the islands. More frequent on passage on some islands. Occasional records in winter.

Apr-May. Arrival was somewhat later than usual with the first singing bird at Cnoc Fada (L Gorm) *Islay* on 8th Apr, followed by one at Tioran *Mull* on 13th Apr and birds at Minard *Mid-Argyll*, Easter Ellister *Islay* and Tayinloan *Kintyre* on 15th Apr and on Sanda Island on 16th Apr.

Breeding. Singing birds were reported mid-May-Jul on *Colonsay* (2 singing males at one site), *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (one site), *Mid-Argyll* (2 sites) and *Mull* (one site).

Sep-Oct. One was singing in Dunoon on 24th Sep and single birds were also recorded on Sanda Island on 29th Sep, at Balevullin and Kilkenneth *Tiree* on 30th Sep, at RSPB L. Gruinart on 13th Oct and at Balemartine *Tiree* on 25th Oct.

Very cold-toned birds seen at Heylipol *Tiree* on 4th/5th Dec and at Kenovay *Tiree* on 18th Dec showed features of the Scandinavian race *abietinus*.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus* Crionag ghiuthais 1312

Widespread and abundant summer visitor.

Apr-May. During the first few days of Apr, singing birds were heard at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd, in Campbeltown on 6th and on Oronsay on 7th. The first on *Islay* was at RSPB L. Gruinart on 10th Apr and reports steadily increased until by 20th they had been recorded in most areas of Argyll. Passage was still taking place on 27th Apr when at least 21 were recorded on Sanda Island. One seen at RSPB L. Gruinart on 6th May showed characteristics of the Scandinavian race *acredula*. A bird trapped in spring on Sanda Islands was found to have been ringed 4 days earlier on Bardsey Island, Gwynedd.

Breeding. Recorded in 5 of 6 BBS squares (83%), (*cf* 8 of 12 in 2000). Another good season for the CBC plots at Taynish NNR with 88 territories identified (*cf* 93 in 2000 but only around 50 in the early 90s). A census on Sanda Islands revealed 12 breeding prs although the success rate appeared to be low. In Oban, 8 birds were singing along Glencruitten Road, 3 at Hydropathic Ruins, and one at McCaig's Tower, on 20th Apr. A pr bred on Oronsay but, although a pr at Balemartine *Tiree* were apparently holding territory on 8th Jul, they were not seen subsequently.

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Aug-Sep. Late records included singles at Lochdon on 31st Aug, at Machrihanish SBO on 10th Sep, on Sanda Island on 17th Sep and at Fernoch (Kilmichael) *Mid-Argyll* on 30th Sep.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus* Crionag bhuidhe 1314
Common breeding species and passage migrant. Scarce on Coll and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. Migrant birds seen on Sanda Island included 8 on 17th Apr, 2 on 19th and 4 on 26th Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 6 of 12 in 2000). A single territory was recorded in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1). In Oban, 2 males were singing along Glencruitten Road and 2 at Polvinister on 27th Apr. A family party were seen nr Brenchoille (Auchindrain) *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Jun.

Sep-Dec. On *Tiree* single birds were present in gardens, at Balemartine on 8th Oct and at Scarinish on 8th Nov. The most seen together was 9 at Ballochgair *Kintyre* 15th Oct.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata* Breacan glas sgiobalta 1335
Summer visitor breeding widely but sparsely.

Apr-May. A bird seen at Craignish Estate (Ardfern) *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Apr constituted the earliest ever record of this species in Argyll. The next record was not until 7th May when one was in Ballygrant Village *Islay*. This was followed by birds at Tainish NNR on 8th May, Fernoch (Kilmichael) *Mid-Argyll* on 13th May and Oskamull *Mull* on 14th May. One on Sanda Island on 23rd May was their sole spring record.

Breeding. At Tainish NNR there was a total of 5 territories in the CBC plots (cf 1990-2000 av. of 5). Records of breeding prs also came from Balliemore *Cowal*, Carskiey *Kintyre*, Chiscan Farm (The Laggan) *Kintyre* and Fernoch (Kilmichael), Scammadale and Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll*. Additional breeding season records came from *Cowal* (one site), *Islay* (2 sites), *Jura* (one site), *Kintyre* (3 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (2 sites) and *Mull* (3 sites).

Aug-Sep. At least 6 birds were seen at 3 separate locations on Kerrera *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Aug, and 2 were at Victoria Bridge (L Tulloch) *N Argyll* on 25th Aug. Single birds were at Tullochgorm and on Sanda Island on 29th Aug, and two late individuals were at different locations on *Tiree* on 30th Sep.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca* Breacan glas 1349
Summer visitor and passage migrant breeding very locally in oak woods. Increase in breeding population in recent years is attributable to the Argyll Bird Club nest-box scheme but numbers may now be declining.

One seen at Torran (L Awe) *Mid-Argyll* on 7th Apr was the only record away from the breeding area nr Bonawe.

Breeding. Four prs bred in boxes near Bonawe *N Argyll* (cf 12 prs in 2000). One brood of 7 small young starved to death, two boxes were predated by Pine Marten, and one pr fledged 8. By far the worst year since the scheme began in 1988. A female K440235, ringed at L Caolisport (Clyde RG) in 1996, nested in boxes at Bonawe every year from 1997-2000; sadly she failed to reappear in 2001 but had still achieved a good age for a Pied Flycatcher.

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LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus* Ciochan 1437

Widespread and common resident breeding bird on mainland; local on some islands and rare on Colonsay, Tiree and Coll.

Jan-Apr. Flocks of 10 or more were reported from Connel *Mid-Argyll* (10 on 16th Jan) and RSPB L. Gruinart (11 on 17th Jan).

Breeding. The exceptional record for the year came from *Colonsay*, where 3 prs nesting in Colonsay House gardens in Jun represented the first breeding records for the island. A single territory was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2). A pr were feeding young in a nest at Quinish House *Mull* on 20th May, and a family party were seen at Lochdon on 2nd Jul.

Jun-Dec. An estimated 50 birds were found on the estate at *Torrisdale Kintyre* on 17th Jun. At least 4 birds were still present on *Colonsay* (East Loch Fada woods) on 21st Sep. Flocks of 10 or more were reported from: Lochdon (30+ on 25th Aug), Bridgend Woods *Islay* (10 on 10th Sep & 10 on 4th Nov), RSPB L. Gruinart (12 on 22nd Sep), L Allan *Islay* (24 on 2nd Oct), Port Askaig *Islay* (16 on 2nd Oct), Ballygrant Woods *Islay* (15 on 7th Oct & 10 on 28th Oct), Carradale *Kintyre* (21 on 9th Nov), Campbeltown (12 on 17th Nov) and Stone Cottage (Bridgend) *Islay* (10 on 29th Dec).

COAL TIT *Parus ater* Smutag 1461

Widespread and very common resident breeding bird, except on Tiree and Coll. Some dispersal noted in autumn.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* 5 of 12 in 2000) The total of 4 territories found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR was the lowest there since the census began (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 9).

A flock of 15 in *Mínard Woods Mid-Argyll* on 31st Jan was the only flock of 10 or more birds recorded. There were no records from *Coll* or *Tiree*.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus* Cailleachag ceann ghorm 1462

Widespread and very common resident breeder, but rare on Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* 2 of 12 in 2000). There were 22 territories in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 20) and an estimated 12 territories at the Hydropathic Ruins, Oban. Thirty-one prs bred in boxes near Bonawe *N Argyll*. Twenty broods/clutches were destroyed by Pine Marten, 5 were destroyed by Great Spotted Woodpecker and 6 successful prs fledged 50 young.

No flocks of 10 or more were reported and there were no records from *Coll* or *Tiree*.

GREAT TIT *Parus major* Currac bhain tighearna 1464

Widespread and very common resident breeder, but absent from Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* 4 of 12 in 2000). The number of territories in CBC plots at Taynish NNR declined once again, to 10, after 12 in 2000 and a record 16 in 1999 (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 10). Fourteen prs bred in boxes near Bonawe *N Argyll*. Six broods/clutches were destroyed by Pine Marten, 2 by Great Spotted Woodpecker and 6 successful prs fledged 41 young. No flocks of 10 or more were reported.

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EURASIAN TREECREEPER (TREECREEPER) *Certhia familiaris* Snaigear 1486

Widespread and common resident breeder, except on Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* none of 12 in 2000). For the second year running, a record 6 territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 4).

There were records from all areas of Argyll except *Coll, Cowal, Jura, N Argyll* and *Tiree*.

EURASIAN JAY (JAY) *Garrulus glandarius* Sgraicheag 1539

Locally distributed breeder, on the mainland only. Some immigration in autumn. All records required.

Jan-Apr. There were records from several locations in both *Cowal* and *Mid-Argyll* and from *Torrisdale Kintyre*.

Breeding. Recorded in one of 6 BBS squares (17%), (*cf* one of 12 in 2000). Birds were also present during the breeding season at Ardcastle Wood and nr East Kames *Mid-Argyll* and in the Carradale area of *Kintyre*.

Sep-Dec. Five were seen together flying over the outskirts of Dunoon on 13th Sep. One seen at Aros Park *Mull* on 17th Sep was, perhaps surprisingly, only the third record for the island. The usual autumn influx into *Mid-Argyll* occurred from mid-Sep onwards and up to 3 birds were recorded at 10 sites there from 19th Sep until the year end. Elsewhere, there were records from Barnamuc (Glen Creran) *N Argyll* in Sep and from Peninver *Kintyre* in Oct and Tarbert *Kintyre* in Nov.

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE (MAGPIE) *Pica pica* Cadhag 1549

Local resident breeder in Cowal, rare elsewhere. All records required.

Jan-May. Birds were seen regularly in Dunoon and single birds were at Lingerton Tip (Lochgilthead) *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Jan and at Peninver *Kintyre* on 6th Apr. During May one was seen several times in Lochgair *Mid-Argyll*, another was seen twice at Macharioch *Kintyre* and one was at West Drumlemble *Kintyre* on 6th May.

Breeding. A pr bred in a monkey puzzle tree in Dunoon and had recently fledged young on 11th Apr.

Jun-Dec. An adult bird was released during the summer on *Colonsay*. Apart from one at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 18th Jun, all records at this time came from the Dunoon area with a max. of 5 in a garden at Kirn during Sep.

RED-BILLED CHOUGH

(CHOUGH) *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Cathag dhearg chasach 1559

The Argyll islands hold almost all of the Scottish population. Islay is the stronghold, with smaller numbers on Jura and Colonsay and a so far unsuccessful pair on Mull. All records away from Islay required.

Breeding. On *Colonsay* 12 prs produced fledged young and 4 additional prospecting or failed prs were present. A pr also nested successfully on Oronsay. Adults with recently fledged young were seen on *Islay* but no count was undertaken during 2001. The only record from *Mull* concerned a single bird on 10th Jun, and there was no information from *Jura*.

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Forty were feeding on Oronsay during Jan and Feb, and a roost on *Islay* held 91 birds on 17th Feb, one of the highest single counts in recent years. The highest post-breeding season counts on *Islay* were 52 at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 5th Oct and 48 at Ardnave on 7th Oct and 31st Dec. An estimated 80 birds were present on *Colonsay* (incl. Oronsay) in Sep and 39 were feeding in the same area on Oronsay on 23rd Oct.

EURASIAN JACKDAW (JACKDAW) *Corvus monedula* Cathag 1560
Resident breeding bird, common throughout much of Argyll, but scarce on Mull and does not breed on Tiree or Coll.

Jan-Apr. The only counts of 50 or more birds were at RSPB L. Gruinart (66 on 11th Jan), Lochgilphead (80+ in a loose flock calling excitedly over the town on 16th Feb) and Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) *Mid-Argyll* (50+ on 26th Mar).

Breeding. None were recorded during the BBS survey.

Aug-Dec. On 21st Sep, 80 were feeding on grain put down for Pheasants at Kiloran Meadows *Colonsay*. The highest count at RSPB L. Gruinart was 55 on 20th Nov, 63 were at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 7th Dec, and 70+ were coming into a roost at Lochgilphead on 14th Dec.

There were no records from *Coll* or *Tiree* during the year.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus* Rocas 1563
Resident breeding bird, common throughout much of Argyll, but scarce on Mull and does not breed on Colonsay, Tiree or Coll. Post-breeding influx of juveniles to some islands, e.g. Mull and Tiree.

Jan-Apr. Two feeding around cattle on Oronsay on 12th Apr, and 3 at Machrins *Colonsay* on 28th Apr, were unusual sights for the islands.

Breeding. The usual survey of rookeries on *Islay* produced a record total of 442 nests at 9 active rookeries (cf revised figures of 364 nests in 2000 and 326 in 1999) [MAO]. In Campbeltown, 96 nests were counted at the rookery near the Council Offices and 41 nests at the rookery at Askomil.

Aug-Dec. A flock of 9 birds were on stubble at Whitehouse *Tiree* on 14th Nov. Elsewhere, flocks of 100 birds or more were reported from: Coullabus *Islay* (192 on 5th Oct) and Upper Killeyan *Islay* (107 on 16th Oct).

HOODED CROW *Corvus corone cornix* Feannag 1567
Widespread and very common resident breeding species.

Jan-Apr. Flocks of 20 or more birds were reported from: Upper Killeyan RSPB Reserve *Islay* (max. 24 on 9th Jan), Beinn Gott *Tiree* (25+ at rubbish tip on 12th Jan), Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* (25, incl. 2 or 3 *corone* type on 25th Jan), Benmore Lodge (L. Ba) *Mull* (30 on 4th Jan) and Sunderland Farm *Islay* (30 on 24th Feb).

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 6 BBS squares (50%), (cf 7 of 12 in 2000). A single nest was found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2). Presence of 2 adults and 5 juvs on 25th Jun along E coast of Lunga showed that the species probably bred on Treshnish Isles *Mull*. Only 5 breeding prs were located on *Colonsay*, and the 3 prs found on Sanda

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Islands were largely unsuccessful (4 recently fledged young were found dead).

Aug-Dec. Counts of 20 or more birds were made at Upper Killeyan RSPB Reserve (max. 46 on 16th Oct) and Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* (max. 21 on 31st Oct).

CARRION CROW

C. c. corone

Most crows in Cowal are this form and it is also spreading into Kintyre and Mid-Argyll with a broad area of hybridisation. There are occasional records from outwith this area of birds showing all the characteristics of corone.

Regularly reported from the Dunoon area. A proportion (more than 10%) of the crows around L Fyne *Mid-Argyll* appear to be wholly *corone* and at least 20% are hybrids showing, to a varying degree, characteristics of both forms.

Away from the main breeding areas, birds showing wholly *corone* characteristics were seen at Kiloran Bay *Colonsay* (one on 19th-21st Sep), Sandaig *Tiree* (one flying S on 28th Sep), Aoradh Farm (L Gruinart) *Islay* (4 on 11th Nov) and Traigh nan Gilean *Tiree* (one with Hoodies on 18th Nov).

CARRION CROW / HOODED CROW

From September 2002 these forms will be treated as separate species: Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* and Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*.

Any records of all-black crows of the *corone* type are welcome as they help to establish the present distribution of this form. The hybridisation zone is known to have moved north-westward in the past. We have little information as to the extent or location of areas where hybrids are currently found. Records of hybrids, preferably indicating the extent to which the birds resemble pure Carrion or pure Hooded Crows, are also welcomed.

COMMON RAVEN (RAVEN)

Corvus corax

Fitheach

1572

Common resident breeding bird. Large flocks may occur, especially in winter.

Jan-May. Reports of 20 or more birds came from Oban (24 together over Glencruitten Road on 20th Apr) and Bonawe *N Argyll* (24 on 29th May), and from the rubbish tips at Beinn Gott *Tiree* (34+ on 12th Jan) and Tobermory *Mull* (90 or more on 12th May).

Breeding. Breeding success of monitored territories is summarised in Table 37 [RAB].

Table 37. Outcomes of monitored Common Raven territories in Argyll in 2001.

Area	Territories checked	Territories occupied	Ts known to have fledged young	Min no. of young fledged	No. of young per successful pair
SW Mull		16	16	48	3.00
Colonsay*	8	8	6	14	2.33
Cowal		12	12	19	3.33 ¹
Total		36	34	81	2.38²

* All known sites on *Colonsay* were monitored.

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- ¹ calculated from sample of 3 sites where brood size at fledging accurately known (10 fledged young).
² calculated from sample of 28 sites where brood size at fledging accurately known (83 fledged young).

Recorded in 2 of 6 BBS squares (33%), (*cf* 5 of 12 in 2000). Presence of moulting adult with 4 juvs on Lunga on 29th Jun indicated probable breeding on Treshnish Isles *Mull*. Breeding prs were also reported from 3 sites on *Islay*, one in *Mid-Argyll*, one in *N Argyll*, one on *Tiree* and 2 other sites on *Mull*.

Jul-Dec. Counts of 20 or more birds included: 46 around a dead hare at The Reef *Tiree* on 4th Aug, 25+ at Speinne Mor (L Frisa) *Mull* on 24th Aug, up to 60 SW of Machrihanish SBO 'during late summer/early autumn', and at least 70 flying to roost nr Silvercraigs (Lochgilphead) *Mid-Argyll* during Oct, increasing to 100 or more on 24th Nov.

COMMON STARLING (STARLING) *Sturnus vulgaris* Druid 1582
Locally common resident breeding bird. A localised post-breeding influx of juveniles occurs on Mull. Numbers boosted by winter visitors.

Jan-Apr. At least 4,000 birds were at the town roost in Campbeltown during Jan-Mar. Counts of 100 or more included: 500+ at Heylpol *Tiree* on 5th Jan, 120 at Tayinloan on 7th Jan and 155 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 2nd Feb.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of the 6 BBS squares, (*cf* 2 of 12 in 2000). Three territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2).

Jun-Dec. Several leucistic birds were noted on *Tiree*, including two at Heylpol on 18th Nov, one with white rump and tail and the other sandy brown all over. As usual, sizeable flocks were apparent on *Tiree* from early Jul including: 650 at Crossapol on 8th Aug, 1,300 at L a' Phuill on 6th-13th Oct, 900 feeding along the beach at Balemartine on 18th Oct, 800 at Heylpol on 16th Nov and 1,300 in a single flock at Heylpol on 8th Dec. Other notable gatherings included: 174 at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 27th Aug, 200 at Upper Kilchattan *Colonsay* on 19th Sep, 247 at Ardnave *Islay* on 22nd Sep, 700+ at a roost at West Machrihanish *Kintyre* in Nov/Dec, and 1,000 in a tight flock over Campbeltown on 28th Dec. A dark *zetlandicus* type juv. was seen at Garra Eallabus (Loch Gruinart) on 30th Jul. Such dark juvs are known to occur in the nominate race *vulgaris*, and all juvs on *Tiree* are of this dark type.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus* Gealbhonn 1591
Resident breeding bird commonly associated with human habitation, so distribution rather localised in sparsely inhabited areas.

Jan-Jun. The only flock of 20 or more birds reported was from RSPB L. Gruinart (45 on 3rd Jan).

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of the 6 BBS squares, (*cf* none of 12 in 2000). A resident flock of ca 50 birds bred in the cattle sheds at Oronsay Farm (Oronsay).

Jul-Dec. Counts of 20 or more birds included: Lochbuie *Mull* (25 on 6th Jul), Machrihanish SBO (max. 44 on 15th Jul), Benderloch *N Argyll* (25 sunbathing on 24th Jul),

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Crossapol Farm *Tiree* (95 on 10th Aug), Whitehouse *Tiree* (100 on 14th Aug), Balemartine *Tiree* (80 on 8th-15th Sep), RSPB L. Gruinart (32 on 21st Sep) and Oronsay (71 on 30th Nov).

CHAFFINCH

Fringilla coelebs Breacan beithe 1636

Abundant resident breeder, except on Tiree and Coll. Foraging flocks gather outwith the breeding season, their numbers augmented by winter visitors.

Jan-Apr. The only counts of 50 or more birds were at: Tayinloan (50 on 12th Jan), Druim Iriseig (nr Port Ellen) *Islay* (ca 200 on 24th Feb) and RSPB L. Gruinart (83 on 2nd Mar).

Breeding. Recorded in 3 of 6 BBS squares (50%), (*cf* 7 of 12 in 2000). A total of 32 territories was recorded for the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 27). In Oban, 11+ territories were identified at the Hydropathic Ruins and 8 males were singing along Glencruitten Road on 27th Apr.

Sep-Dec. Single birds were seen at various locations on *Tiree* from late Sep and a small influx about 13th Nov produced 2 at Heylipol and singles at two other sites. Specially created wild bird cover on Oronsay attracted a small flock of Chaffinches that reached 27 on 30th Dec. Counts of 50 or more birds were reported from: Crarae gardens *Mid-Argyll* (50+ on 9th Sep), Ballygrant Woods *Islay* (60+ in kale field on 1st Oct), Oban (50 at McCaig's Tower on 16th Nov), Tayinloan (max. 142 on 17th Nov), Cnoc Amanta (nr Laggan Bridge) *Islay* (200 on harvested kale on 19th Dec) and RSPB L. Gruinart (max. 76 on 30th Dec).

BRAMBLING

Fringilla montifringilla Bricein caorainn 1638

Uncommon winter visitor in varying numbers (only small numbers in recent years). Occasional summer records.

Jan-Apr. The only records at this time were of a single bird with Chaffinches at a garden nr Dalmally *Mid-Argyll* on 12th Feb and a male singing at Ardfenaig *Mull* on 26th Apr.

Oct-Dec. The first arrival was a single bird at Ballygrant Woods *Islay* on 14th Oct. This was followed by a 'small flock' with Chaffinches at Lochdon on 22nd Oct, 6 at Upper Killeyan RSPB Reserve *Islay* on 23rd Oct, one at Torosay Castle *Mull* on 27th Oct, 3 at Ballygrant Woods on 28th Oct and one at Kilnaughton *Islay* on 31st Oct. In Nov there were single birds at Sunderland *Islay* on 3rd and at Bridgend Woods on 4th. Two were nr Ardilistry Bay *Islay* on 4th Nov and 2 males were on stubble at Mannal *Tiree* on 10th Nov. Single males were seen regularly in gardens at Furnace *Mid-Argyll* and Gortan *Mull* during Dec, a male was with Chaffinches in Dunoon on 17th Dec, and 6 were at L Gorm *Islay* on 31st Dec.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH (GREENFINCH) *Carduelis chloris* Glaisean daraich 1649

Locally common resident breeding species. Scarce on some islands.

Jan-Apr. Counts of 10 or more birds were reported as follows: max. 38 at coastguard cottages Machir Bay *Islay* on 2nd Mar, max. 35 at Kilchoman *Islay* on 2nd Mar, and 11 at Balnahard *Colonsay* on 18th Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of the 6 BBS squares, (*cf* none of 12 in 2000).

Jul-Dec. Some unusually large flocks were reported in late summer/early autumn including 140 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 23rd Aug, 100+ at Tayinloan on 24th Aug, 60 at Kintra *Islay* on 30th Sep and 60+ nr Cluanach *Islay* on 2nd Oct. By Nov only relatively small groups

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were recorded, including 16 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 1st Nov and 15 at Tayinloan on 17th.

A small influx to *Tiree* in late Nov led to 2 being seen at Kenovay on 22nd and 3 at Hynish on 24th Nov. In mid-Dec a total of 9 were seen at 3 sites on *Tiree*. A single bird present in the wild bird cover on Oronsay during Nov and Dec was an unusual record for the island.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (GOLDFINCH) *Carduelis carduelis* Lasair choille 1653
Localised resident breeder. Absent as a breeding species from Colonsay, Tiree and Coll. Some emigration in autumn.

Jan-May. Outwith the breeding range, *Tiree* had 8 birds at Balemartine on 9th Jan and 2 there on 3rd Mar, and Oronsay had a single bird on 7th-9th Feb. Numbers at RSPB L. Gruinart peaked at 11 on 2nd Mar, and 10 were at Tayinloan on 11th May.

Breeding. Two territories were found in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1). Two birds were seen on *Colonsay* on 15th Jun but with no evidence of breeding. Other breeding season records came from *Islay* (2 sites), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (5 sites) and *Mull* (one site).

Jul-Dec. A flock of 300 or more was reported from Aros Moss *Kintyre* in early Sep. Other, smaller, flocks reported included: 26 at Crois Mhor (L. Gruinart) on 14th Sep, 20 nr L. Frisa *Mull* on 18th Sep, 30 at Grasspoint *Mull* on 24th Sep, 44 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 4th Oct, 10 at Blairmore *Cowal* on 9th Nov, 10 at Drum Farm *Cowal* on 12th Nov, and 12 at Gortan *Mull* on 1st Dec. Up to 10 were on *Tiree* in Nov-Dec.

EURASIAN SISKIN (SISKIN) *Carduelis spinus* Gealag bhuidhe 1654
Resident and locally common breeding species but absent from Tiree and Coll except as an occasional winter visitor. Numbers fluctuate from year to year.

Jan-May. More numerous than usual early in the year. A flock of 100 or more were seen nr Rhugarbh Croft (Appin) *N Argyll* on 5th Jan. Smaller groups reported included 25 at Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 11th Feb and 15 in Dunoon in Mar. By mid-May the species had been recorded in all areas except *Coll*, *Colonsay* and *Tiree*.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of the 6 BBS squares, (cf 4 of 12 in 2000). There were again no territories in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 1). Family parties were seen at Bridgend Woods *Islay*, Jura House *Jura* and 4 localities on *Mull*, and birds were also recorded during the breeding season in *Cowal*, *Kintyre* and *Mid-Argyll*.

Jul-Dec. Flocks of 10 or more were recorded at: Garmony *Mull* (15 on 8th Jul), Minard *Mid-Argyll* (10 on 14th Sep), Woollen Mill (Bridgend) *Islay* (15 on 1st Oct), Largie farm *Kintyre* (50 on 6th Oct), Ballygrant Woods *Islay* (60 on 28th Oct) and Oban (35 at Dalintart on 9th Nov). A female at Heanish on 20th Nov was the first *Tiree* record since 1996 and another individual was flying N at Balinoe on 15th Dec.

COMMON LINNET (LINNET) *Carduelis cannabina* Gealan lin 1660
Localised resident breeder. Flocking in autumn and winter.

Jan-May. No large flocks were reported, the highest count being 16 at Ardnave *Islay* on 2nd May. Smaller numbers were reported from *Colonsay*, *Kintyre* and *Mull*.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 6 BBS squares (33%), (cf 2 of 12 in 2000). There were 3

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territories of this 'Red Listed' species in the coastal CBC plot at Taynish NNR (*cf* 1990-2000 av. of 2). The species bred on *Coll* RSPB Reserve, and a census on Sanda Islands revealed 26 breeding prs. There were additional records of birds during the breeding season from *Colonsay*, *Islay* (2 sites), *Kintyre* (8 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (one site) and *Mull* (5 sites).

Jul-Dec. Good numbers appeared in autumn when the following locations had counts of 50 or more: Southend *Kintyre* (300+ on 18th Jul), Kenovay *Tiree* (80 on 14th Aug), Smaull RSPB Reserve (max. *ca* 60 on 24th Aug), Machrihanish SBO (max. 85 on 16th Sep), Corsapol *Islay* (350 on 22nd Sep) and Grasspoint *Mull* (*ca* 200 on 22nd Sep). In addition, Sanda Island had a flock of 70 or more throughout the autumn period. After the end of Sep only small numbers were present: 56 at RSPB L. Gruinart on 4th Oct and 22 at Smaull RSPB Reserve on 7th Dec were the highest counts reported.

TWITE

Carduelis flavirostris Gealan beinne 1662

Localised resident breeding species, found especially on the islands. Flocking in low-lying arable and coastal areas, Aug onwards. Some evidence to suggest emigration from Argyll in autumn, although there may also be an influx of wintering birds to some areas.

Jan-May. The largest flock reported at this time was 100 birds at Ardnave *Islay* on 22nd Feb. Other reports of flocks of 25 or more birds came from: Smaull RSPB Reserve *Islay* (max. 27 on 9th Jan), Upper Killeyan RSPB Reserve *Islay* (max. 35 on 13th Feb), Cornaigmore *Tiree* (36 on 18th Mar) and Tayinloan (25 on 19th Apr).

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 6 BBS squares (33%), (*cf* 2 of 12 in 2000). Up to 5 birds seen regularly in late Jun on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* but no juvs. noted (TIARG). On Sanda Islands 15 prs were located in spring and many recently fledged young were noted by summer. A survey on *Colonsay* (without Oronsay) located a total of 28 prs, while a (possibly incomplete) count on Oronsay found 10 prs (*cf* total of 40 prs in 2000). Twites bred widely on *Tiree* and at *Coll* RSPB Reserve although no breeding counts were made. A partial count at Ardnave located 20 prs and birds were also recorded during the breeding season on *Islay* (3 other sites), *Jura* (one site), *Kintyre* (one site), *Mull* (6 sites), and *N Argyll* (one site).

Aug-Dec. Flocks began to appear in late Jul, when 30+ were seen at The Reef *Tiree* on 25th and 25 at Scammadale *Mid-Argyll* on 31st. Larger flocks appeared from mid-Aug and counts of 50 or more were reported from: Kerrera *Mid-Argyll* (70 in 4 groups on 18th Aug), Breachacha *Coll* (*ca* 300 E of castle on 23rd Aug), Balemartine *Tiree* (100 on 15th Sep), Upper Kilchattan *Colonsay* (180 on 19th Sep), Grasspoint *Mull* (100+ with other finches on 21st Sep), Ardnave (max. 106 on 22nd Sep), Upper Killeyan RSPB Reserve (max. 73 on 26th Sep), Storakaig *Islay* (110 feeding on seed heads at roadside on 2nd Oct), Machrihanish SBO (max. 160 on 4th Oct), Balephuill *Tiree* (55 on 14th Oct), Killinallan *Islay* (300+ in kale field on 21st Oct), Frenchman's Rocks (*ca* 100 on 24th Oct), Mulindry (*ca* 70 along roadside on 24th Oct), Mannaig *Tiree* (80 on 11th Nov), Airport *Tiree* (95 at car park on 15th Nov), Heylipol *Tiree* (60 on 17th Nov), Smaull RSPB Reserve (max. 94 on 19th Nov) and Balevullin *Tiree* (60 on 8th Dec).

REDPOLL

NB. Redpoll is now treated as two separate species viz. Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret* and Common Redpoll *C. flammea* (latter includes 'Mealy' Redpoll, 'Iceland Redpoll' and

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'Greenland' or Greater Redpoll). All records submitted should distinguish between these two species.

LESSER REDPOLL (REDPOLL) *Carduelis cabaret* Dearcan seilich 1663
Localised resident breeder. Numbers fluctuate from year to year. Flocking occurs in autumn and winter.

Jan-May. A flock of 20 was in alders nr Kilchum Castle Mid-Argyll on 28th Jan and 12 were at Loch Tallant (Laggan) Islay on 26th May.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 6 BBS squares (33%), (cf 4 of 12 in 2000). A total of 8 territories in the CBC plots at Tainish NNR was a new record count (cf 1990-2000 av. of 4). Breeding was confirmed for the first time on Sanda Islands, where 3 prs were found nesting in a fenced-off tree plantation and at least 15 young are known to have fledged. A pr were seen nest-building at Grasspoint Mull on 22nd May and a pr bred at Mid Loch Fada Colonsay. Birds were also found during the breeding season on Islay (5 sites), Jura (one site), Kintyre (one site) and Mull (2 sites).

Jul-Dec. The only significant flocks reported were 25 at the Woollen Mill (Bridgend) Islay on 10th Sep and 60 at Auchinabreck (Carradale) Kintyre on 9th Nov.

COMMON REDPOLL (MEALY REDPOLL = C. f. flammea) *Carduelis flammea* 1663
Scarce passage migrant and irregular winter visitor.

One was seen close to the shore at Balemartine Tiree on 15th Sep. It was ascribed to the Greenland race *rostrata* and a description was provided, which was eventually passed to SBRC for adjudication. The committee agreed that the bird was a Common Redpoll and considered that it was either of the race *rostrata* (from Greenland) or *islandica* (from Iceland) with *rostrata* being the more likely [JBo]*.

ARCTIC REDPOLL *Carduelis hornemanni* 1664
Vagrant. No previous accepted Argyll records.

One was seen with a mixed finch flock consisting mostly of Linnets at Craigens, Gruinart Islay on 22nd-24th Sep. After careful examination it was considered to be a first-winter bird, probably of the race *exilipes* from northern Europe and Asia. The very detailed description needed for this notoriously difficult species was provided and subsequently accepted by BBRC [TapR]*. (See pp 115-120 for full account.)

This is the first accepted record for Argyll. The claim for an individual of the Greenland and North American race *hornemanni* supposedly shot on Mull in 1920 was later shown to be a deliberate fraud.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra* Cam ghob 1666
Numbers, distribution and breeding season vary depending on abundance of conifer cone crops. Highly irruptive species with large flocks sometimes moving to locate a new seed area, usually in summer.

A good year for this species in Argyll with a large number of records. However there were few indications of breeding (see below).

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Jan-May. The only records at this time involved 2 (incl. a red male) at Tunns (Kilmichael Forest) *Mid-Argyll* on 7th Jan, 5 at Laganbuidhe Farm (Dalmally) *N Argyll* on 19th Mar, 8 calling at Doire Darach *N Argyll* on 27th Apr, and 2 or more in woods N of L Avich *Mid-Argyll* on 18th May.

Jun-Dec. The first indications of a large-scale influx were flocks of 30 and 10 birds at Fairy Isles (Knapdale Forest) *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd Jun. These were followed by one bird at Colonsay House *Colonsay* on 10th Jun and 4 there on 18th, and 30 in the hills above Otter Ferry *Cowal* also on 18th Jun.

From early Jul onwards birds were widespread and records included those from: Baluachraig (nr Kilmartin) *Mid-Argyll* (1st year male was found dead on 1st Jul), Largiemore *Cowal* (12 or more feeding on Japanese Larch cones at for at least 2 weeks from 3rd Jul), West Hynish *Tiree* (10 feeding on Thrift on 15th Jul - part of a small influx), Braevallich (L Awe) *Mid-Argyll* (3 on 15th Jul), Kilmaha (L Awe) *Mid-Argyll* (5 on 22nd Jul), Campbeltown (ca 10 on 26th Jul), Saddell *Kintyre* (up to 28 during Jul/Aug), Kennacraig *Kintyre* (20+ on 10th Aug), Fishnish *Mull* (20 on 24th Sep), Carradale *Kintyre* (up to 60 birds on 6 dates Jul-Sep), Tullochgorm (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* (12 flying over on 6th Oct), Barcaldine Forest *N Argyll* (12 on 7th Oct), L Allan *Islay* (6 on 14th Oct), Pass of Melfort *Mid-Argyll* (20 on 17th Oct), Cairmbaan *Mid-Argyll* (15 on 20th Oct), Dalavich (L Awe) *Mid-Argyll* (12 feeding on spruce cones on 28th Oct), Fernoch (Kilmichael) *Mid-Argyll* (16 on 2nd Dec), Minard Woods *Mid-Argyll* (16, incl. 6 males, feeding on spruce cones on 12th Dec), L Craighin *Mid-Argyll* (14 flying over on 16th Dec), Glen Forsa *Mull* (10 flying over calling on 19th Dec) and Port Ellen *Islay* (5+ on 26th Dec).

By the end of the year there had been records from all areas except *Coll*, *Colonsay* and *Jura*.

Breeding. On 4th Nov the response of birds to tape lures played on 4th Nov at Barnluasgan, Inverliever Forest and Craigans (mixed party of 17 birds) *Mid-Argyll* indicated breeding readiness (DCJ). A male bird was singing at Auchinabreck (Carradale) *Kintyre* on 9th Nov and a female was nearby.

COMMON BULLFINCH (BULLFINCH) *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Corcan-coille 1710
Locally common resident breeder. Absent from Tiree, Coll and Colonsay and irregular on Gigha.

Jan-May. There were records of small numbers from *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *N Argyll*, the largest group being 6 nr Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 1st Apr.

Breeding. Recorded in 1 of 6 BBS squares (17%), (cf 2 of 12 in 2000) A total of 3 territories was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2). Birds were also reported during the breeding season from *Islay* (2 sites), *Kintyre* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (one site) and *Mull* (2 sites).

Jul-Dec. Once again small numbers were reported from *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*. The largest group was 8 in Bishop's Glen (Dunoon) in Dec; and 5 on the floods at RSPB L. Grunart on 26th Dec was an unusual record.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR (LAPLAND BUNTING) *Calcarius lapponicus* 1847
Less-than-annual passage migrant. Most frequent in autumn, less so in spring, and very rarely recorded in winter.

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One present on Oronsay from 1st-14th Jan was the first authenticated record for *Colonsay*. A male in breeding plumage was seen at Machrihanish SBO on 29th Apr and 2nd May.

Both autumn records came from *Tiree*. A very vocal adult was feeding in rough grass at L a' Phuill on 4th Oct and another, in an uncut meadow behind Balinoe Post Office on 22nd Nov, later flew off to the south.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* Gealag an t-sneachda 1850
Varying numbers on passage and in winter. Has bred N Argyll in the past.

Jan-Apr. On 18th Feb 5 birds including at least one male were just west of the summit of Beinn Bheula Cowal. The only other records were of one on Oronsay on 12th Mar, 3 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 21st Mar, one at Carnain (L Indaal) on 22nd Mar, and 2 on the S side of Glas-bheinn Mhor *N Argyll* on 8th Apr.

Breeding. No evidence of breeding in Argyll was reported.

Sep-Dec. In Oct, *Islay* had single birds at Mull of Oa on 23rd and Machir Bay on 26th and 3 at Ardnave on 27th and 30th. An adult male was at Machrihanish SBO on 1st Nov, one was near Ducheran Hill wind farm on 9th Nov and one was at the top of Glen More *Mull* on 19th Dec. The only flock reported was of 20 birds (incl. just 2 males) at West Hynish *Tiree* on 16th Dec. Oronsay had single birds on 27th-31st Oct, 8th Dec and 21st Dec.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella* Buidheag bhealaidh 1857
Localised resident breeding species. Birds forage in cut hay and silage fields outwith breeding season. Population seems to be in decline and all records are welcome.

Jan-Apr. The largest single flocks comprised 28 at L Skerrols *Islay* on 26th Feb and 23 at Lerags *Mid-Argyll* on 12th Apr. A flock of 8 was at Balure of Shian *N Argyll* on 13th Feb, 6 were at Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Feb and 8 were in Kilmichael Glen *Mid-Argyll* on 16th Mar. Elsewhere 2 were reported from Craighouse *Jura* and one or 2 from 12 sites on *Mull*.

Breeding. Singing males or territorial prs were reported during the breeding season from single sites on *Islay* and in *Kintyre* and *Mid-Argyll* and from 5 sites on *Mull*.

Aug-Dec. The largest flocks were of 22 at Seil Island *Mid-Argyll* on 13th Oct and 18 at Machrihanish SBO on 2nd Nov. Apart from 5 in Kilmichael Glen on 4th Nov and 8+ at Coullabus *Islay* on 10th Nov, the remaining records, which were all of one or two birds, came from *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *N Argyll*.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus* Gealag Ioin 1877
Locally common resident breeding species. Small flocks sometimes gather outwith the breeding season.

Jan-Apr. The regular flock at RSPB L. Gruinart peaked at 37 on 11th Jan and there were still 25 on 17th Mar. A flock of 10 at Sùnderland *Islay* on 27th Feb was the only other count of 10 or more birds.

Breeding. Recorded in 2 of the 6 BBS squares (33%), (cf 2 of 12 in 2000). Only one territory was located at Taynish NNR, in the coastal CBC plot (cf 1990-2000 av. of 2). On *Colonsay* (incl. Oronsay) 12 prs were located (cf 10 in 2000), and a census on Sanda Islands found 6 breeding prs. Elsewhere, birds were found during the breeding season at 3 sites on

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Islay, one on *Jura*, 2 in *Kintyre*, 2 in *Mid-Argyll* and single sites on *Mull* and in *N Argyll*.

Jul-Dec. The flock at L. Gruinart peaked at 17 birds on 20th Nov. Single birds and small groups were recorded elsewhere, at Tayinloan (regularly), on Oronsay, *Jura*, *Islay*, and *Tiree* and in *Kintyre* and *N Argyll*.

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza melanocephala* 1881

Vagrant. Six previous records, all of single males May – Jul.

A bird seen and photographed at Machrins *Colonsay* on 8th Jun was described as a presumed female, either Red or Black-headed Bunting. Full details were sent to BBRC and the committee decided that it was a female Black-headed Bunting. This is the first accepted record of a female of this species in Argyll [DCJ]*.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra* Gealag bhuathair 1882

Resident population on Tiree almost certainly extinct. Recent records probably of migrants.

A male singing on Gigha *Kintyre* on 16th Jul was not reported subsequently, and a single bird was seen at Fidden *Mull* on 22nd Aug. There were no records from *Tiree*.

ESCAPES AND INTRODUCTIONS

This section includes species which are not on the British list or whose occurrence in the UK is EXCLUSIVELY within Categories B, D or E (see definitions of categories on p 20). Other species, whose occurrence in Argyll arises partly or wholly from introduced birds which may not or do not form self-sustaining breeding populations, include White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Barnacle Goose, Mandarin, Red Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Red-legged Partridge, Grey Partridge and Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon). These are dealt with in the main systematic list.

CINNAMON TEAL *Anas cyanoptera*

Category E*

A drake seen in the Aros Estuary *Mull* on 20th Sep had presumably escaped from a wildfowl collection.

ROSS'S GOOSE *Anser rossii*

Category E*.

One seen at the head of L. Feochan and on L. Nell *Mid-Argyll* during Dec was doubtless the same individual as that seen at L. Feochan in Jul/Aug 2000. Geese of various species are apparently kept locally.

MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*

Category E*.

A pr were seen in Tarbert harbour *Kintyre* on several occasions from Aug onwards; and 3 were reported on L. Sween nr. Achnamara on 4th Nov.

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[EAGLE OWL

Bubo bubo]

0744

Deleted from Argyll list. Now Category E.

A 'Great Horned Owl' reported roosting in a tree in Bishop's Glen, Dunoon, on 30th Dec and seen by at least 3 people may have been an escaped individual of this species.

LIST OF REJECTED RECORDS, PENDING RECORDS AND RECORDS FOR WHICH DETAILS ARE STILL AWAITED

Please note that the records below are listed for information purposes only, and do not form part of the dataset for the years in question.

The following records of species on the ABRC, SBRC or BBRC lists have been rejected since the publication of *ABR 17*.

American Wigeon	<i>Colonsay</i>	14/04/01	BBRC
Black Kite	<i>Mull</i>	17/07/01	BBRC
Northern Goshawk	<i>Islay</i>	03-04/03/01	ABRC
Rough-legged Buzzard	<i>Mull</i>	09/05/01	ABRC
Hobby	<i>Kintyre</i>	15/05/01	ABRC
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Mull</i>	05/10/01	ABRC
Bluethroat	<i>Mull</i>	15/05/01	ABRC
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>N Argyll</i>	15/06/01	BBRC
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Mull</i>	16/05/01	ABRC
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Mull</i>	18/05/01	ABRC
Great Grey Shrike#	<i>Mull</i>	29 - 30/05/01	ABRC

Most records are rejected not because the committee in question is convinced that a mistake has been made, but because the evidence provided is insufficient to establish the identification.

There are no 2001 records currently in circulation around the various rarity committees.

Details of the following claimed 2001 records of species on the BBRC, SBRC and ABRC lists have not been received.

King Eider	<i>Gigha</i>	<i>Kintyre</i>	30/05/01
Harlequin Duck	<i>Machrihanish SBO</i>	<i>Kintyre</i>	26/10/01
Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull*	<i>Iona</i>	<i>Mull</i>	14/05/01
Barred Warbler	<i>Balevullin</i>	<i>Tiree</i>	30/09/01
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Garmony</i>	<i>Mull</i>	04/07/01
Great Grey Shrike#	<i>Heanish</i>	<i>Tiree</i>	27/06/01
Hawfinch	<i>Bishop's Glen, Dunoon</i>	<i>Cowal</i>	11/01

* description supplied had insufficient detail to circulate

although Great Grey Shrike is not officially a description species, the dates of the two claimed sightings are unlikely for this species but possible for Lesser Grey Shrike.

Anyone who saw any of these birds is encouraged to send in details. The records will not be referred to again in future reports unless details have by then been forwarded to ABRC, BBRC or SBRC.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The entire text of the systematic list was compiled by myself, and any errors in transcription are solely my responsibility.

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SYSTEMATIC LIST 2001

NB: The Islay Bird and Natural History Report for 2001 is available from: Islay Natural History Trust, Port Charlotte, Isle of Islay, PA48 7TX; price £2.00 including p&p.

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Snowy Egret at Balvicar - the first British record

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From the very start, I suspected that the rumours were not all as daft as they seemed. An albino Guillemot, a small white heron or just a strange white bird had been seen in the Balvicar area for the past few days. The weather on the morning of the 5th of November 2001 was absolutely terrible, with driving rain and poor light, and that's my only excuse for having first described the bird I found sheltering as a possible Little Egret. Looking at it head-on, hunched up in the grasses and in the gloom, it was not easy to see, and a Little Egret is a very rare bird for these parts. Who would have even thought of a Snowy Egret? Not long after the first photos were taken I phoned Jim Dickson, my nearest pal, an Argyll birder who lives some 50 minutes away down at Lochgilphead. After what seemed an age he arrived, and we set out in much better light to get some better views and more shots. The penny dropped when the small Egret began to hunt around the tidal lagoons. As it came closer, its legs were lemon yellow with a black stripe up the front, and it had yellow feet and bright yellow lores...it gave us both a jolt. By late afternoon John Holloway's telephoned words were ringing in my ears as we looked at our photos... "check the legs and the lores". Jim Duncan had e-mailed me a page from Ken Kaufman's book saying "Here's your bird Bill....Snowy Egret!!!"

Could it be... here in Argyll only three minutes from our house? Not wanting to start the biggest twitch in history for this area, we had to look very carefully at our reference books to make sure that no variation of Little Egret was possible. In a matter of no time we were convinced, but very reluctant to put it out straight away. I downloaded pictures to a few friends on the net. When Jim Duncan of Balloch and John Holloway of Stronsay both confirmed our decision we were relieved and a lot happier. In the evening the news was out, with some looking at pagers in disbelief. Late that evening hurried plans were being made for the trip up north. Some, having seen the photos, had already left a distant Norfolk by ten pm and were here just before first light, sitting in cars outside Balvicar Post Office in anticipation of seeing a "first" for Britain. For a few top listers, this was their only tick for the year and certainly one they did not want to miss. All evening Jim and I were still looking at various books but by then we were just waiting, as everyone else was, for the morning. What a day to find a first for Britain, the 5th of November 2001, a real cracker of a bird and no damp squib.

That first morning brought the hard core of twitchers to the golf course, some 50-60 in all and this was the start of the largest gathering of birders ever to be seen in Argyll. It was very good to see a few friends that I had met whilst living on Shetland, many of the country's top bird photographers. Over the next few days a pattern emerged. At first light the



One of the most confiding of birds...a real pleasure to observe and photograph

arrive from its nearby roost down at Balvicar farm pine trees, at about 8.30am, and settle into a feeding routine depending on the tide. Food was no problem. Flatties and other fish were caught by the combined action of its paddling feet and swift dagger-like bill. Continually feeding, the bird was obviously in tremendous condition. I did wonder just how long it had been unnoticed in this part of the world? Some now claim that it was around since the 31st of October. For such a long distance wanderer it looked remarkable, without a feather out of place, except for one that is, and despite all my searchings it was nowhere to be found.

The marvellous thing about the Snowy was the total lack of respect for the assembled hordes of folk, tripods, telescopes and clicking cameras...it just did what Egrets do and fed quite happily, at times to within a few feet, especially once the weekend rush had died down a wee bit. I well remember Paul Docherty and myself with the bird walking towards us up the creek, the two of us propped up against the walkway wall and filling our video tapes with memorable minutes of this amazing bird. A first for Britain could not have been more appreciated by anyone who observed it and all agreed, it well justified the effort, lack of sleep and for some over a thousand miles in a little over 24 hours.

Many hundreds at a time were coming and going over the next ten days or so. An accurate count would be almost impossible, but estimates are that over 2,500 birders came to Argyll. Some moved on to Islay, others enjoyed seeing a Golden Eagle mobbed by a Peregrine over the sound as they watched the Egret. Hen Harriers and otters were also appreciated during what for some was only a very brief stay in the area. Gyr Falcon and Honey Buzzard were seen that year, as well as a plethora of common migrants. We came to live here in July 2000 and I have learnt what this wonderful area has to offer. Jim Dickson and I will be searching the Sloe bushes and willows along the coastal walks for another Booted Warbler, Red-backed Shrike or something even grander...but another first for Britain... well that would be lucky. However don't put your maps away too soon, come and have a look yourself next spring or autumn. There's only a few of us trying to cover this huge area and as we have now found out birds do turn up all over the place. With such a rich and varied habitat, resident wildlife is plentiful and if a real rarity turns up...that's a bonus to be savoured. Jim and I certainly did our share of celebrating with this bird.

The next remarkable thing about this "First for Britain" on our doorstep was this. Who would have dreamt that after its departure it would return to within a yard or two from where it left 4 months earlier? The Snowy Egret departed, possibly due to high tides making it impossible to feed during the hours of daylight in the burn or pool at the golf course. During its trip south it visited other golf courses and fared well by all accounts. Ardrossan, Stevenson's Point, the Isle of Arran and eventually Loch Fyne were visited. However on the 4th of April 2002 there it was back at Balvicar in all its glory and totally at home feeding in familiar places and going to roost down at the farm in the pine trees. The Snowy Egret returned to within a yard or two of where it had left several months earlier and I can only surmise that the instinct to migrate north had kicked in and it returned to where it made its first landfall. The Seil area once again saw a fairly good number of bird watchers back or, in some cases, here to see the bird for the first time. As ever, tremendous views of this, the most photographed "first" of all time, from only a few feet in some cases. Professionals and amateurs alike all have experienced a bird of a lifetime and just could not

get enough of it on film or, these days, stored in their digital memory chips. The bird will always remain in my memory as a wonderful time all round and a bird we were lucky to have shared with most of Britain's birders. It was fascinating to watch the cycle of events with the Snowy Egret over the months and I wonder just where this beautiful little character will call in next. Wherever it decides to visit, you will be charmed and, like us, more than a little sad when it departs.

However the bird decided to have a tour around Scotland visiting such places as Ayrshire, Arran, Bute, Dumfries and Galloway... periodically vanishing for long periods. After its third and final visit back to Balvicar on the 4th of June it was last reported feeding on a small burn at Duntocher by Ken McMaster walking his dog on 12th December 2002. Extensive searching by John Bell, Jim Duncan and John Molloy proved fruitless but here's hoping the bird has survived another winter. It attracted the largest ever number of birders to Scotland, and a rough estimate of around 4,500+ folk have enjoyed this wonderful visitor to our shores.

The numbers of photographs of this beautiful and confiding creature may well run into many, many thousands if my efforts are anything to go by. Who could resist capturing more of this "first" for Britain? The Argyll Snowy Egret has now been accepted by the BOU and the BBRC onto the British list category A.

Received 28th February 2003



My very last photograph of the Snowy Egret at Balvicar. 4th June 2002

Itinerary

This individual Snowy Egret is known to have visited several parts of southwest Scotland. Its wanderings included three separate visits to Balvicar so it is perhaps not unreasonable to describe it as the "Argyll" Snowy Egret. Its itinerary, as far as we know it, was as follows (compiled from *British Birds* 95: 481-482 and 96: 551; and with information from Bill Jackson and Paul Daw).

5 Nov 2001	First recorded at Balvicar, Seil Island, ARGYLL
5-25 Nov 2001	Present at Balvicar
7 Nov 2001	One website reported "...due to severe traffic problems in the area, the police will shortly attempt to ease the congestion to allow local people to go about their business.." Donations of £1 to an "Honesty Box" were begun, and £150 had been collected by 10 November.
22 Dec 2001-9 Jan 2002	Ardrossan, Ardeer, Saltcoats and Steventon areas, AYRSHIRE
13 Jan-28 March 2002	Isle of ARRAN
30 Mar 2002	Head of L Shira (just N of Inveraray)
1 April 2002	Lachlan Bay, south shore of L Fyne (NS006952)
2-3 April 2002	L Gair, 6 miles NE of Lochgilphead
3 April 2002	Port Ann (L Fyne)
4 Apr-3 May 2002	Balvicar
15-18 May 2002	Etrick bay, BUTE
18-20 May 2002	L Ruel, head of L Riddon, 4 miles N of Bute
22 May 2002	Lachlan Bay again
24 May 2002	L Fyne
26-31 May 2002	L Fyne shore nr Castleton, 3 miles SSE of Lochgilphead (NR884846)
1-4 June 2002	Balvicar
7-8 June 2002	Mouth of L Feochan
13 June 2002	Lachlan Bay again
19 Aug 2002	Tongland Bridge, DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY
6 Sept 2002	Caerlaverock, D. & G.
7-17 Sept 2002	Lochar Water, D. & G.

For those who did not see it (who perhaps came to Argyll to get away from crowds...)

The Snowy Egret breeds widely in the Americas but has been recorded in Europe on only seven previous occasions and never before in the British Isles. The only species with which it might be confused is the Little Egret, a species that now breeds in southern England, is common from Hampshire to Devon and is rapidly spreading. The Cattle Egret (smaller) and the Great White Egret (much larger) breed in continental Europe and over much of the world and, like the Little Egret, are rapidly spreading north; although vagrants to the British Isles at present, either or both may well breed in Britain in the next few years.

All have pure white plumage. All are described/shown non-breeding.
Drawings by Margaret Staley.

Size

Great White Egret (Great Egret) Similar size to Grey Heron. Long neck.

Snowy & Little Egrets Two-thirds size of Grey Heron. Medium neck.

Cattle Egret Slightly smaller but stockier than Little or Snowy Egrets; just over half the size of Grey Heron. Short neck.

Bill

Great Egret Yellow with greenish-yellow lores.

Snowy Egret Blackish with bright yellow lores.

Little Egret Black with greyish lores (to distinguish from Snowy).

Cattle Egret Black with yellow lores.

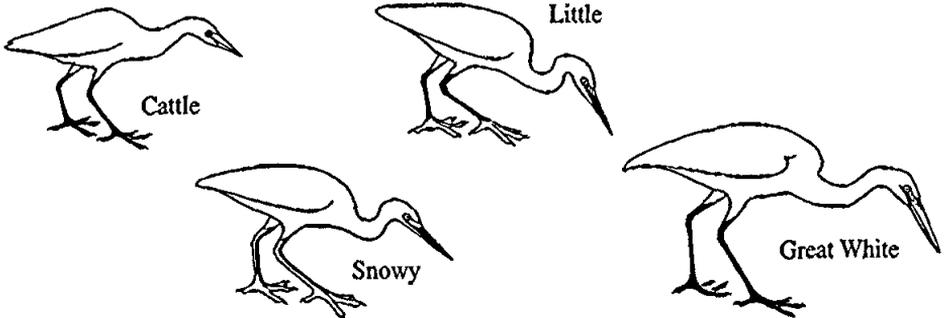
Legs & Feet

Great Egret Feet and tarsus blackish, tibia yellowish.

Snowy Egret Black legs with yellow of feet extending up rear of tarsus to "knee" and sometimes to tibia.

Little Egret Black legs, pale yellow feet.

Cattle Egret Legs and feet dark greenish.



Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni* on Islay, 22 September 2001 - the first Argyll record

Tristan ap Rheinallt
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INTRODUCTION

Three species of redpoll occur in the UK: Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*, Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea* and Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*. The Lesser Redpoll is a regular breeder in Argyll and the Common Redpoll apparently a scarce visitor in the autumn and winter months (ap Rheinallt and Daw, 2000). The Arctic Redpoll formerly featured on the Argyll bird list on the basis of a specimen allegedly collected on Mull in 1920 (Baxter and Rintoul, 1953). However, Knox (1993) demonstrated convincingly that this record was the result of deliberate fraud, the specimen in question having been obtained in Greenland in 1936. Accordingly, Arctic Redpoll was deleted from the Argyll list (ap Rheinallt and Daw, 2000). However, the recent acceptance by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) of a record from Islay in autumn 2001 means that it is now reinstated. This note gives details of the Islay record.

Arctic Redpolls are rare visitors to the UK. In Europe, they nest only in the north of Scandinavia. The Scandinavian race, *C. h. exilipes*, also breeds in high latitudes across Asia and North America as far east as Hudson Bay. The nominate race, *C. h. hornemanni*, breeds in Arctic Canada and Greenland. *C. h. exilipes* appears to occur more frequently in Scotland, where there are only 16 acceptable records of *C. h. hornemanni* (Andrews and Naylor, 2002). However, many birds are not positively identified beyond the species level.

Arctic Redpolls of both races appear big and bulky, largely because of their feather mass. Compared to Lesser and Common Redpolls, many appear to have steep foreheads, small eyes and small "pushed-in" bills. Some individuals have strikingly pale plumage with few dark streaks and are unlikely to be confused with either of the other two species. The most distinctive birds in this respect are males of the race *hornemanni*. In the case of less well-marked individuals, the most important distinguishing features are an unstreaked white rump and completely or almost completely unmarked white undertail coverts (Votier *et al.*, 2000). However, some Common Redpolls of the race *flammea* (Mealy Redpolls) can look very pale and may appear to lack streaking in these areas when viewed in the field (e.g. Gibbins and Baxter, 2000). Conversely, it appears that some heavily marked female and immature *C. h. exilipes* may in fact be indistinguishable from Mealy Redpolls (Votier *et al.*, 2000).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF OBSERVATION

The following notes have been adapted from the author's submission to BBRC:

The morning of 22nd September 2001 was sunny and calm following two or three days of fine weather. I started birding shortly after dawn at the southwestern end of Loch Gruinart, where I noted good numbers of passerines, including possible continental Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos philomelos and continental Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs coelebs*. These observations suggested that there had been a fall of migrants. I paid close attention to a group of six Lesser Redpolls feeding in a tree, hoping that I might find a Mealy Redpoll amongst them.

I then decided to drive up the eastern side of the loch, but whilst on the way there my attention was diverted by a flock of several hundred Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* (with a few Twite *C. flavirostris*, Greenfinches *C. chloris* and Goldfinches *C. carduelis*) at Craigens. I decided to stop and count these birds as they sat on a telegraph wire. At the right-hand end of the flock was a plump grey-and-white redpoll, at least as big as a Linnet. Judging by the size and plumage tones, it was not a Lesser Redpoll.

I hastily set up my telescope. From the front the bird looked strikingly white, with a neat buffy/ochre wash on the throat and face. I concentrated on trying to see the undertail coverts; this was difficult because of the wire. However, the only dark marking on the otherwise white feathers seemed to be a very narrow black streak along one central covert.

Over the next half-hour or so, while waiting for Clive McKay to arrive in response to my phone call, I watched the bird flying between the wires and the weedy field below. Although I felt that it looked good for Arctic Redpoll, with an extensively white rump in flight, the presence of heavy streaking on the flanks and breast-sides concerned me. I recalled in particular the article by Gibbins and Baxter (2000), describing and illustrating a Mealy Redpoll that looked very white-rumped until caught, when its identity became obvious. Clearly, closer and more prolonged views were required, especially of the rump.

Over the next couple of hours, Clive and I followed the finch flock as the birds fed in a nearby reed bed. The redpoll was in sight most of the time and gave close views. On one occasion it came out onto the road, no more than 10 metres away from us. Nevertheless, it was next to impossible to get a completely unobstructed square-on view of the undertail or rump. Thus although the latter appeared pure white centrally, I could not discount the possibility that a few faint streaks might be present.

Having taken extensive notes, we now consulted Clive's copy of Votier *et al.* (2000). On reading this we became convinced that despite the heavy flank streaks, the bird was indeed an Arctic Redpoll. This identification was based on a combination of size, structure, coloration and loose feathering at the base of the legs. I then spent some more time watching the bird and checking up on specific features before releasing the news. I returned the following morning with Ian Brooke and again had prolonged views. Finally, I spent 30 minutes watching the bird on the evening of 24th September. Only then did I obtain a perfect view of the rump as the bird perched on a wire at close range, its back to me and its wings held open. In total, I watched it for more than five hours.

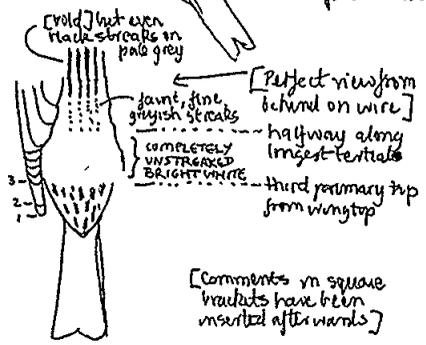
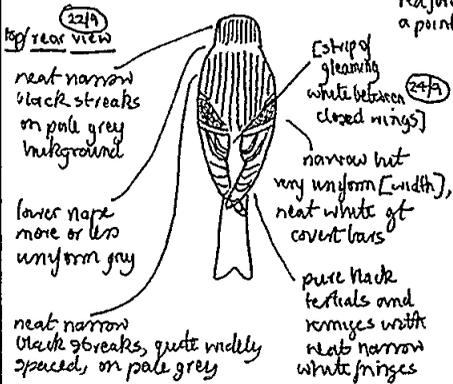
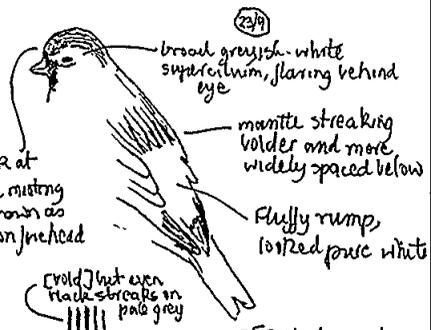
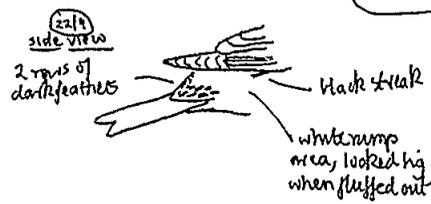
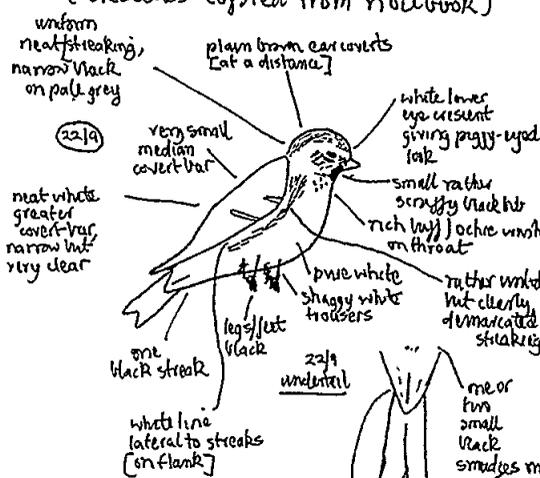
DESCRIPTION

General impression: A large, plump, strikingly grey-and-white redpoll. The only areas of colour were a red forecrown and a delicate buff/ochre wash on the face, the latter (together with the fresh plumage) suggesting that the bird was a first-winter. In flight, it showed a very conspicuous white rump, which was also apparent to a varying degree at rest. The bird's appearance varied dramatically according to whether the plumage was "sleeked down" or "fluffed up".

Arctic Redpoll, Loch Gruinart, 22-24/9/01

Trotter ap Rhenalitt

(Sketches copied from notebook)



[Comments in square brackets have been inserted afterwards]

Size and structure: The bird was roughly the size of a Linnet. However, it looked bulkier and differently proportioned, with a larger head and front end and a narrower rear end. A Lesser Redpoll briefly present in the flock was much smaller. The forehead was steep and the bill short and stubby.

On the 22nd when first seen, the plumage was smoothed down and - with the exception of the shaggy "trousers" - resembled that of other finches present. However, on the cold breezy morning of the 23rd, the fluffed-up plumage gave a very different impression. Loose feathering tended to hide the legs and feet when the bird was perched on a wire; long, wispy feathers on the flanks and breast-sides covered the wing-edge. This made the bird look much whiter overall. It also made it look considerably larger, though it retained its front-heavy look throughout.

Plumage: At all ranges and angles, the plumage was entirely black, grey and white, the only exceptions being the red fore-crown and a rich buff or ochre wash on the throat. This wash extended onto the face and ear-coverts and came to an abrupt end at the level of the upper breast.

The patterning of the upperparts was very neat and "frosty". The crown (except for the fore-crown) and nape bore neat, uniform, fine black streaks on a pale grey background. However, the nape sometimes looked plain depending on the distance and angle. The ear-coverts looked plain rich buff at a distance, but were in fact finely and lightly streaked grey on a buff background, which represented an extension of the wash on the throat. There were two slightly darker smudges at the rear edge of the ear-coverts. A white eye crescent gave the bird a "piggy-eyed" look; this crescent was more prominent below than above because of the greyish-white supercilium, which was broad and flared out behind the eye. The lores and the feathers around the base of the bill were dark grey and looked untidy. They were joined below to a small, rather scruffy black bib, and came to a point above where they met the red fore-crown in the centre of the white forehead.

Like the nape, the mantle and scapulars were neatly patterned with rows of narrow black streaks on a pale grey background, but the streaks were more widely spaced than on the nape. They became bolder and even more widely spaced on the lower mantle. There were neat, narrow but conspicuous white bars of uniform width across the tips of the greater coverts, and small white median-covert bars. The tertials were solid black with white outer edges; the remiges were also black with neat narrow white fringes. There was a pale secondary panel.

The uppertail coverts were dark and heavily streaked, with broad black shaft streaks and grey fringes. They were separated from the mantle streaking by a broad band of unstreaked white across the rump at around the level of the longest tertials, with (on the right side) just one black streak showing under the partly raised wing. The white rump appeared very striking when the feathers were fluffed up, forming a large white "hump" on the back. On the whole, though, the rump was difficult to see well. Most of the time the bird was very reluctant to open or drop its wings; instead, it held them tightly closed, with a strip of gleaming white showing between them. From comparison with photographs, I estimated the white area to occupy about one-twelfth of the total body length, or approximately 1 cm.

The sides of the breast and the flanks were quite heavily streaked. This streaking was more

extensive on the right side than on the left, with four or five rows of streaks on the breast, reducing to two or three on the lower flanks. Streaking was completely absent from the centre of the breast and the belly, which were pure white and very striking when the bird was seen front-on. Shaggy white "trousers" at the base of the legs were particularly obvious when the bird was feeding on the road. When the plumage was fluffed up, the breast and flank streaks appeared narrower, much less conspicuous, and grey rather than black.

When the undertail was seen square-on, one central covert showed a single long but uniformly narrow black streak, with a couple of very faint lateral "pencil lines" visible only at the closest range.

In flight, the bird looked strikingly grey-and-white. The white rump was very obvious, recalling House Martin in shape and extent though obviously contrasting less with the rest of the plumage.

Bare parts: The legs and feet were black and the bill yellow. The bill was short, stubby and sharply conical, with a straight, steep culmen. It was shorter than the bill of a Linnet.

Call: The call was clearly heard on one occasion. It was looser and more rattling than the calls of some Lesser Redpolls also in the area.

Behaviour: The bird remained with Linnets all the time but was often at the edge of the flock, whether at rest or in flight. Thus when the flock perched in a row on a telegraph wire, it was seldom more than three birds from the end. On the morning of the 22nd it fed busily with Linnets, initially in weedy persicaria at the edge of a field, then later in reeds and rushes by the roadside. Food items included the seeds of Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*.

DISCUSSION

Many British records of Arctic Redpoll are associated with winter influxes. However, the species also occurs as an autumn migrant, most frequently in the Northern Isles. Elsewhere in Scotland, it is a major rarity, although birds were considerably more widespread than usual during the invasion of winter 1995/96 (Riddington et al., 2000). The Scandinavian origin of most birds arriving in Britain is reflected in the fact that there are currently only three accepted records from Ireland, the first being in 1999 (P. Milne, pers. comm.). Two of these records come from Tory Island (Co. Donegal), where first-winter birds were seen in September 2000 and September 2001. Interestingly, the 2001 bird was found on 18th September, just four days earlier than the Islay one.

The plumage of the Islay bird was well within the range of variation shown by *C. h. exilipes* in the photographs published by Votier et al. (2000), suggesting that it was probably of that race and thus likely to have come from Scandinavia. However, there is still some debate about the extent to which the two races of Arctic Redpoll can be reliably distinguished in female and immature plumages. Identification to species level, on the other hand, is more straightforward than it was once thought to be. Indeed, the 1995/96 influx played an important role in clarifying many of the distinguishing features (Votier et al., 2000). Nevertheless, it remains true that prolonged good views may be required to eliminate the possibility of a pale Mealy Redpoll, as in this instance.

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Breeding of Red-throated Divers *Gavia stellata* on Islay in 2002

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INTRODUCTION

Earlier we reported the results of our observations on the breeding of Red-throated Divers on Islay (Colling & Colling, 2000) and summarised all the evidence that was available to us from others (Colling & Colling, 1999). We were associated with previous attempts at overall surveys in 1975 (together with the late Rodney Dawson) and in 1992 and 1993 (by ourselves). In 1975 we found 5 pairs on 46 lochs visited; in 1992, 6 pairs on 104 lochs; and, in 1993, 7 pairs on 70 lochs. It seemed appropriate, a decade later, to undertake a further survey during 2002.

METHODS

From 228 lochs and freshwater sites, we identified 18 lochs that had definitely held breeding pairs in at least one previous year ("breeding lochs"). We thought 46 other lochs showed features favourable to breeding divers ("possible breeding lochs"). We set aside two weeks at the beginning of June 2002 for visits to these 64 lochs. Poor weather restricted our visits to between 3rd and 12th of June but we were able to visit 17 of the 18 breeding lochs and 37 of the 46 possible breeding lochs. Visits were kept as short as possible. A photograph was taken of each nest found but nest and eggs were not examined in any other way.

RESULTS

Nests with eggs were found on eight lochs (six of the breeding and two of the possible breeding lochs). Two divers were present at each of three of these sites (2,2,1 eggs), a single diver was present at each of another three (2,2,2 eggs) and two nests were unguarded (2,2 eggs).

Pairs of divers were present at four other lochs where nests were not found. One of these had been used frequently as a nest site in previous years but no nest could be confirmed on this visit; the loch is distant from other nest sites so these birds were probably an additional breeding pair. We considered the second and third lochs to be unsuitable for breeding, so the divers were probably visitors nesting elsewhere. The fourth loch is one where we have frequently seen divers and once witnessed a lengthy formation display by four divers, but we have never found a nest there despite careful searching.

COMMENT

The number of definitely breeding pairs (eight) in 2002 was slightly higher than we have

found before; the previous maximum was seven in 1993. This confirms our opinion (Colling & Colling, 1999) that environmental factors such as climate change and possibly poorer fish supplies are not harming the breeding of Red-throated Divers in this marginal breeding zone. Although we confined our visits to those lochs that we thought most suitable, we believe our findings represent a reasonably complete picture of the breeding of this species on Islay. We would recommend this method to any subsequent investigators.

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Increasing numbers of Greylag and Canada Geese breeding in mainland sealochs

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Every year since the mid 1980s I have kept records of seabirds, waders and wildfowl found breeding on most of the 150 or so small islands in the sealochs and sounds of mainland Argyll and adjacent parts of Highland Region. Mute Swan, Eider, Mallard and Red-breasted Merganser are common and widespread, but it used to be a rare event to find wild geese nesting on these islands. Earlier I may well have overlooked occasional single pairs, but I did not really become aware of Greylags breeding in this habitat until 1995 (a brood off Eileanan Glasa in the Sound of Mull) and 1996 (a nest on E an Ruisg in L Feochan). Canada Geese have bred for many years on islets in L Linnhe (Eilean Balnagowan and islets off Fort William) but I did not record a Canada Goose nest elsewhere until 1997, when one bred on E Inshaig in L Craignish.

Since then, numbers of both species breeding in sealochs have increased considerably, as shown in the Table. These are totals of nests or broods seen, plus a small number of pairs that showed breeding behaviour but whose nests were not looked for. The area covered and the search effort were about the same each year, so these are real increases; however, the numbers are all minima as some pairs may have been missed, particularly on larger islands that are difficult to search thoroughly.

Numbers of pairs of geese found breeding on small islands in sealochs of mainland Argyll & Lochaber. (Number of occupied islands in brackets)

Year	Greylags		Canada Geese	
1995	1	(1)	1	(1)
1996	6	(3)	5	(1)
1997	7	(5)	3	(3)
1998	6	(5)	5	(3)
1999	9	(5)	11	(5)
2000	19	(12)	26	(11)
2001	22	(12)	22	(12)
2002	21	(11)	32	(15)
2003	37	(15)	35	(14)

Year by year, the breeding range of both species has spread as islets have been colonised, often in new sealochs or sounds. First occupation usually involves single pairs, and some islets that were first used for nesting in the mid-to-late 1990s have grown into small colonies; for example, there were two Greylag nests on Kilmaronag in L Etive in 1996 and *ca* 12 in 2003; and one Canada Goose nest on E Mor, Dunstaffnage, in 2000 and at least six in 2003.

Numbers of Canada Geese (and almost certainly Greylags) have also increased on fresh-water lochs on the mainland, particularly at L Ederline (see partial summary for Canada Goose, compiled from *Argyll Bird Reports*, in Craik 2000). An interesting account of the introduction of a few Canada Geese to "the south end of L Awe", possibly the origin of the present increase, was given by Anne Kahane (1999).

Much larger numbers of Greylags migrate here for the winter, so we would not expect the above increase to be reflected in counts of winter flocks. The SNH co-ordinated winter goose counts, reported annually in the *Argyll Bird Report*, usually give between 100 and 300 Greylags in Mid-Argyll (the main area covered by the above Table) (*e.g.* 315 in Mar 1993 and 120 in Mar 2000). Canada Geese are less migratory but co-ordinated counts seem not to be available. My impression is that their numbers in North and Mid-Argyll have increased. Large flocks form in mid- to late summer, particularly near the main breeding sites. These flocks appear to comprise adults that have just bred, their young, and non-breeding or failed adults. Such flocks are worth reporting as they may contain all or most of the birds in an area. The larger flocks of Canada Geese that I have noted in recent years have been as follows.

Nr E. Balnagowan, L Linnhe	17 Jun 2001	138 fully grown (ages not distinguished)
L Lomond	6 Jun 2002	93 (71 adults + 22 young)
Off E. Mor, Dunstaffnage	27 Jun 2003	39 (including 5 broods known to be local)
Ardferm, L Craignish	9 Jun 2000	35 (10 adults + 25 locally bred young).
E. an Ruisg, L Feochan	1 Mar 2003	15 adults displaying and competing at an islet where only 3 pairs bred.

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