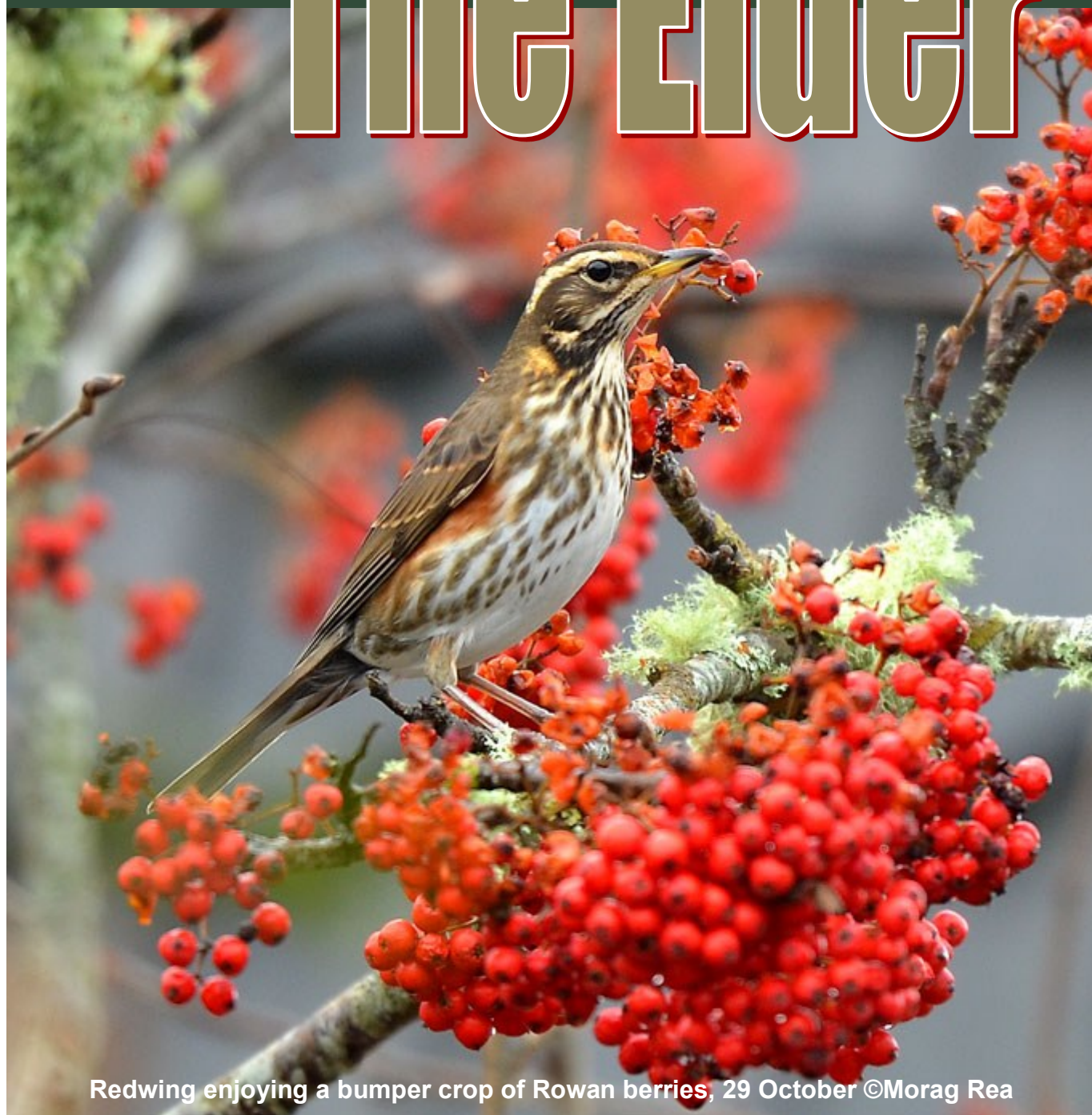


**December 2016**

**Number 118**

# The Eider



Redwing enjoying a bumper crop of Rowan berries, 29 October ©Morag Rea

**Recent bird sightings, pages 18-21**

**Yellow-browed Warbler in Argyll, pages 15-17**

**ABC Rookeries Survey 2017, pages 11-12**

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

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### Editorial

For a while, the committee have been discussing how we can get members involved in surveys of individual bird species in Argyll. Ideally the species we select should be easily identifiable by even relatively inexperienced birdwatchers, thus allowing most of our members to participate, unlike some of the BTO surveys that require a certain amount of skill. So, the first species we have decided to target is the Rook, and specifically Rookeries. These are relatively easy to locate during the winter and early spring before trees come into leaf. But, do bear in mind that some Rookeries are in conifers. Even so, the raucous calling and squabbling around Rookeries in late winter/early spring will help you to locate them. David Jardine describes the forthcoming survey on pages 11-12, with further details to follow in the March *Eider*. Please do make an attempt to participate.

The size of the *Eider* has been gradually decreasing due to a lack of contributions. In 2015 each issue of the *Eider* averaged 28 sides; this year it was down to 23 sides! Currently, most of the articles come from officials of the club. I find it hard to believe that most of the membership have nothing to contribute! So please, make a new year's resolution to support your newsletter in 2017 by writing about your experiences. They don't necessarily have to be about birds, as long as they contain something of a natural history interest, with a few photographs. Otherwise, we'll be down to even smaller issues next year!

Finally, on behalf of the officials of the club, we wish you all a very happy Christmas, and hope all your birding dreams come true in 2017. Thank you for your continuing support.

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Rooks ©Margaret Staley

### Acknowledgements

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## Club News

### FIELD TRIPS 2016-17

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

**Saturday 26 November.** Loch Gilp and the Add Estuary. Led by Jim Dickson (Phone 01546 603967. E-mail [meg@jdickson5.plus.com](mailto:meg@jdickson5.plus.com)). Meet at 10.00hrs in Lochgilphead at the Corran car park, opposite the caravan park, on the A83, close to the roundabout (A83/A816) at the western end of the town. Please bring your own lunch.

**Sunday 29 January.** Ormsary. Led by Stuart Crutchfield (Phone 01880 770267. E-mail [stu.crutchfield@gmail.com](mailto:stu.crutchfield@gmail.com)). Meet at the Ormsary Estate Office car park (gid ref. NR741724) at 10.00hrs. Please bring your own lunch.

**Saturday 25 February.** Walk to Port Ramsay, Lismore. Led by David Jardine (Phone 01546 510200. E-mail [dcjardine@btinternet.com](mailto:dcjardine@btinternet.com)). Meet at the Appin Hall car park (grid ref. NM938459) on the A828 at 0930hrs. Please bring a packed lunch, and let David know if you hope to attend.

### INDOOR MEETINGS 2017

**Spring Meeting.** Saturday 4 March at the Royal Marine Hotel (<http://www.royalmarinehotel.co.uk>), Dunoon (phone: 01369 705810). See the programme below. A one-course lunch will be available in the hotel for around £9 per person. Tea/coffee will be available free-of-charge for members on arrival, mid-morning and in the afternoon.

### Programme for the ABC's Spring Meeting

#### Saturday 4 March at the Royal Marine Hotel, Hunter Quay, Dunoon

Time	Session
<b>0930</b>	<b>Doors open, coffee and tea</b>
0950-1000	Welcome and introduction— <i>Mike Harrison</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1000-1030	Recent bird sightings and photographs— <i>Jim Dickson</i> , Argyll Bird Recorder
1030-1100	Wildlife crime— <i>Police Scotland</i>
<b>1100-1130</b>	<b>Coffee/tea</b>
1130-1215	Wildlife of the Serengeti— <i>Zul Bhatia</i>
1215-1230	BTO survey updates— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
<b>1230-1400</b>	<b>Lunch (available in the hotel if required)</b>
1400-1430	Talk by BTO Scotland
1430-1500	Argyll Bird Club Rookery Survey— <i>David Jardine</i>
1500-1530	<b>Tea/coffee</b>
1530-1600	Conservation issues— <i>David Palmar</i>
1600-1610	Sawing off the branch - 10 slides in 10 minutes— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1610-1630	<b>Raffle and closing remarks</b>



**Autumn Meeting and AGM.** Saturday 4 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel (<http://www.cairnbaan.com/>), near Lochgilphead (phone: 01546 603668). The programme will appear in the June *Eider*.

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

### **ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 26 (2014)**

If any members have not received their copy please contact Bob Furness (contact details on back page). Additional copies of the report can be purchased from Bob for £10.00 including postage. Cheques should be made payable to the 'Argyll Bird Club'. We would like to sell as many copies as possible before the next report is published, so if you know of any outlets that would be willing to stock it, please let Bob know. Preparation of the *Argyll Bird Report 27* (2015) is progressing well, and we

hope copies will be available for members at the Spring Meeting.

### **THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE**

Do visit our website ([www.argyllbirdclub.org](http://www.argyllbirdclub.org))

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

### **BTO TRAINING COURSE IN ARGYLL**

On 8 April 2017 the BTO will be running a one-day training course on bird survey techniques at the Living Stones, Kilmartin. The turning to the centre, on the A816, is on the opposite side of the road to the museum. If you would like further information or wish to register please contact Anne Cotton at BTO Scotland (E-mail [anne.cotton@bto.org](mailto:anne.cotton@bto.org). Phone 01786 466560). One aim of the meeting would be to recruit folks for the uncovered Breeding Bird Survey squares in this area.

## **ABC field trip on the Islay Ferry on 27 August 2016**

Seven members met at the Kennacraig Ferry Terminal in very unusual circumstances for the August field trip; the weather was warm and dry, the wind was light and the sky, though a little cloudy, was bright. All we needed now was for the birds to co-operate and, by and large, they did. A quick tour of the Kennacraig Peninsula turned up Robin, Goldfinch and Willow Warbler in the trees and bushes surrounding the car park, Swallows were zooming over and around the terminal building, Black-headed and Herring Gulls were patrolling the mudflats, as were two Hooded Crows, and a Grey Heron and some Mallard could be seen at the other side of the bay to the south of the access road. Alas, there was no sign of the Kingfisher, which had been reported to be present as recently as earlier that morning.

By the time the ferry left the pier, the sun was shining and we could see Common Terns and Gannets feeding in West Loch Tarbert. Two Red-throated Divers were noted and a number of Cormorants and Shags were present on or near the navigation beacons further along the loch. A few Oystercatchers could also be seen on the rocks at the foot of the beacons and two Mute Swans were added to the list before we passed the skerries at the mouth of the loch and turned towards the

Sound of Islay.

A few Eider were soon seen, followed by some Tysties and then a few Common Guillemots but no great numbers of birds on the first half of the crossing. A raft of a couple of hundred auks, mainly Guillemots, along with a few Gannets and Great Black-backed Gulls indicated that we were reaching the more productive waters where the tide ebbing through the Sound of Islay stirs up the water to the south of Jura. A group of eight Manx Shearwaters was disturbed by the approach of the ferry and the birds flew a short



distance before alighting on the sea once more. Several groups of Harbour Porpoise were noted, two or three at a time, and a group of four Razorbills was our first definite sighting of the species. Although we passed several groups of about 30 Guillemots on the water we could see many more birds to the north of our position, perhaps 20 rafts of auks, each maybe a hundred strong. It was clear there were lots of birds about. Kittiwakes started to be seen, a group of two, then four, then about 20 as we approached the Sound of Islay. From this point we could see enormous rafts of birds in the distance towards Jura, sadly much too far away to identify, but there were clearly several thousand birds in this area.

Our attention then turned to the islands and skerries off the southern coast of Jura. The tide had reduced one long reef to two short lengths of rock on which 30-40 Shags were standing shoulder-to-shoulder and jostling for position as new arrivals forced their way into the line. Mute Swans, 12 in all, could be seen feeding along the Jura shore as a group of six Gannets flew south. On the Islay side of the boat a distant raptor soaring over the hills was identified as a Golden Eagle, much to the delight of the visitor who had first spotted it above the skyline. As we approached Port Askaig all binoculars were trained on the pine trees between the beacon and the harbour where White-tailed Eagles have oblig-

ingly perched for previous field trips. Whilst the usual tree was empty this year we did find a juvenile bird perched in another tree closer to the harbour. Alas, there was no sign of the adult birds this year.

The return journey to the mainland was very similar to the outward journey except that the rafts of birds had drifted further south since we had first passed them and were now south of our track. The loose rafts were mostly made up of Guillemots, both adults and juveniles, with some Razorbills and Kittiwakes and a few small groups of Manx Shearwaters. A huge splash alongside the ferry, only 15-20m away, was presumed to have been caused by a breaching cetacean; within a few minutes a Minke Whale was spotted in the distance astern. The number of birds declined as we neared the north end of Gigha but the terns were still fishing when we arrived back in West Loch Tarbert. A group of six divers was just too far away for positive identification, but two seen much closer to the boat were definitely red-throated.

The afternoon might have been short on species, compared to previous trips, but was certainly long on enjoyment and spectacle.

**Species list:** Mute Swan, Mallard, Common Eider, Red-throated Diver, Manx Shearwater, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, European Shag, Grey Heron, White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Eurasian Oystercatcher, Black Guillemot, Razorbill, Common Guillemot, Common Tern, Black-legged Kittiwake, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Hooded Crow, Barn Swallow, Willow Warbler, European Robin and European Goldfinch.

**Mike Harrison**

### **ABC field trip to Holy Loch and the Dunoon area on 1 October 2016**

The meeting point was the Broxwood Car Park in Sandbank, near Dunoon. The initial team were Mike and Anne Harrison, Nigel Scriven, Brian Cheevers, Cherry Cook, Neil Hammatt and Drew Dick. Gordon Holm and Gordon Stewart also put in appearances for part of the time. There is ample parking here and we were then able to fill up two cars to drive round to the Kilmun Hide at the mouth of the River Eachaig, where parking is very limited. It was a fine dry morning, with a cool north-easterly breeze, although it was well sheltered in the hide. After the

first hour or so the incoming tide pushed the birds up the shore past the hide, so it was time to return to the Broxwood side. Here the wind was blowing right in the hide, making it rather cooler than usual.

While some watchers drifted away, the hard core headed in to Dunoon to check out the Crazy Golf for birds on the rocks just over the railings. While the Purple Sandpipers were not there, there were 38 Turnstone. From here we continued south to Ardyne, hoping to add a few species to the day list, which we did, but it was not so productive as hoped. The winter geese were absent from the fields, and the river mouth was less busy than anticipated. The 30 species at Holy Loch



became 33 at Crazy Golf, and totalled 39 with the addition of the Ardyne sightings. However the weather was fine, and the company excellent.

**Species list , Holy Loch:** Canada Goose, Wigeon, Teal, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Pheasant, Little Grebe, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Buzzard, Oystercatcher, Curlew, Black-headed Gull, LBB Gull, GBB Gull, Woodpigeon, Pied Wagtail, Dipper, Wren, Robin, Long-tailed Tit, Great Tit, Jay, Magpie, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Hooded Crow, Starling, Chaffinch.

**Species list, Crazy Golf, Dunoon:** Turnstone, Pied Wagtail, Rock Pipit, Black Guillemot, Black-headed Gull.

**Species list, Ardyne:** Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Gannet, Grey Heron, Buzzard,



Watching birds from the Broxwood Hide ©Nigel Scriven

Lapwing, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, GBB Gull, Meadow Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Robin, Jay, Rook

**Nigel Scriven**



## ABC field trip to Kerrera on 29 October 2016

ABC members aboard the Kerrera Ferry ©David Palmer [www.photoscot.co.uk](http://www.photoscot.co.uk)

A small group, led by David Jardine met at Galanach on the last Saturday of October, with a view to exploring Kerrera; a new destination for a club outing. Despite the early morning mizzle, there were signs that it was easing. The forecast was that it should dry up, so it was with some hope that the group boarded the 'Gylen Lady' for the five minute crossing to set off round the longer southern 'loop' of the island. The crossing was quiet with only Shag and Herring Gull being noted, with no sign of the usual

Black Guillemots.

Opting to take on the climb early in the day the group headed up past Ballimore towards the west coast. On the way up the hill a good range of woodland and garden birds were found, giving an excuse for a quiet 'breather' and a Grey Wagtail was noted flying over, along with a small number of Redwing.

From the high track ten Wigeon were spied on the shore at Slatrach Bay, with their identity

confirmed by 'scope, along with the only Cormorant seen during the day and a large group of gulls loafing from the fish-farm to the north. Visibility was poor from the upper path due to low cloud and the group struggled to see, let alone identify, any of the islands to the west.

Things were quiet until the path went down to Barnabuck, where Redwings and Blackbirds were found amongst the Sycamores along with around ten Chaffinches and ten Blue Tits. Closer to the farm a couple of Greenfinches were found feeding on the seeds of the *Rosa rugosa*. A Ringed Plover which had been seen flying as we approached the shore remained camouflaged or out of sight, but two Oystercatchers were found on the rocky shore along with Rock and Meadow Pipits and a couple of Pied Wagtails were feeding amongst the cattle. Offshore there was a single Great Northern Diver and right on cue an Otter was found feeding on the northern side of the bay.

Heading south and round to Ardmore the mizzle returned and lunch was taken sheltering behind an impressive volcanic dyke, complete with its own troglodyte which came and sheltered from the weather a few metres above the group, before flying off into the nearby garden, which was sadly lacking any migrants, apart from the ubiquitous Robins that we found throughout the island. Two Mistle Thrushes were with a small group of Redwing sheltering in one of the trees

at the back of the garden and a large group of over 100 Redwing, including a few Fieldfares were seen disappearing into the gloom further up the hill. Two Canada Geese feeding on the shore added to the list.

Unfortunately the weather showed little sign of improvement, but looking on the bright side it was now on their backs as the group members headed for the ferry. Sadly the teashop at Gylen had closed for the winter. At Little Horse-shoe Bay there was a single Curlew on the shore, and it was noted that the closure of the parrot sanctuary has led to a reduction in the number of Mallard and gulls feeding in the bay, with none being noted. Indeed it wasn't until the group arrived back at the ferry when they saw the first Common Gull of the trip—and the first hint of sunshine and blue sky as we were heading home! Maybe next time the group should explore the shorter loop at the northern end of Kerrera.

**Species list (34):** Canada Goose, Wigeon, Great Northern Diver, Cormorant, Shag, Heron, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Curlew, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Hooded Crow, Raven, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Wren, Starling, Blackbird, Fieldfare, Song Thrush, Redwing, Mistle Thrush, Robin, Stonechat, Dunnock, House Sparrow, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch

**David Jardine**



Barnabuck Bay, Kerrera ©David Palmar [www.photoscot.co.uk](http://www.photoscot.co.uk)



## Summaries of talks from the Autumn Meeting of the ABC

### Introduction

Mike Harrison, the club chairman, welcomed 43 members to the Autumn Meeting at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday 12 November. County Bird Recorder Jim Dickson presented an excellent set of photographs of birds, both common and uncommon, seen in Argyll since the spring meeting and pointed out particular plumage details which can be used to identify correctly some of the 'confusing' species.

### Seabirds and offshore windfarms—Julie Miller, University of Glasgow (summary by Mike Harrison)

Julie Miller's presentation covered the work she has carried out so far on a Ph.D project which aims to study and quantify the effects of offshore windfarms on seabird populations. Some of the direct effects of windfarms on bird populations are well known, such as collisions between the birds and turbine blades while others, such as the shoaling of fish around the underwater sections of turbine towers, have only been discovered more recently, partly as a result of tracking the foraging behaviour of seals. Indirect effects include barrier effects, where birds fly round rather than through the array, thus increasing the distance flown when foraging,

and the sterilisation of foraging areas. Julie's project aims to create a mathematical model of the populations, incorporating birth, death, emigration and immigration of birds within the population whilst taking account of environmental factors such as variations in food supply and the effects of the proposed windfarm. Preliminary results, using historic data from the Firth of Forth for Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Gannets, indicate that Kittiwakes are the most sensitive of these three species to the combined effect of environmental pressures, population density and the presence of windfarms, while Gannets are the least sensitive.

### Birding in Nepal—Nigel Scriven (summary by Nigel Scriven)

A six-week trip condensed into half an hour was going to be challenging, especially covering such a rich destination as Nepal. The trekking part of the trip was to the rarely visited Arun Valley and into the Makalu Barun Conservation Area, following the vegetation zones from Tumlingtar at 400m up to the alpine meadows at nearly 4000m. Compared to the beaten tracks of Annapurna region, the unspoiled villages were linked by rough tracks too difficult for mules or yaks, and ascended through rice fields, deciduous woodland, oak-bamboo-rhododendron, then conifer-rhododendron to the snowy high meadows. This was followed by the subtropical heat of the Terai Plain, first at Kosi Bird Observatory, and then Koshi Tapu Wildlife Reserve, in this migration corridor. Here birds were much easier to see, and we had the assistance of local knowledge from our guides. Colour, diversity and rarity were all to be found here, making it a top destination for birders. Heading west to Pokhara, a short climb to the annual Raptor Migration Camp at Thulakharka was special for the close views of vultures, hawks, falcons and eagles, as well as other forest species. Finishing up at Chitwan, the obligatory elephant ride into the jungle gave close up views of rhino, but not tiger, and with the help of local guides, the bird species list was extensive.



Julie Miller ©David Palmar [www.photoscot.co.uk](http://www.photoscot.co.uk)



Tireragan: showing the lush growth of ericaceous vegetation and the recovery of native woodlands ©Alan Fielding



**Highland renewal; improving estates for wildlife—Alan Fielding** (summary by David Jardine)

This talk was a surprise—it was not about raptor politics and large estates putting a gloss on their work as might have been assumed from the title, rather it was about the work of a small pioneering charity which had taken on the management of a small estate on the Ross of Mull. In introducing the area Alan described the level of depopulation which has taken place on Mull since the 19th century. The original objective of the charity, which leased the estate in 1994, was to 'create an exemplary and viable Highland community'. However, difficulties in creating a suitable access road, and changes in personnel meant that the plan was adjusted.

With the help of woodland grant schemes the project at Tireragan, just east of Erraid, became one of habitat restoration. Deer and sheep were removed from the land, the area was surrounded by a deer fence and paths built. While the trees which were planted did not grow well and were browsed by the Mountain Hares which were present on the site, there was abundant regeneration of native woodland and regrowth of the Heather and Bog Myrtle found on the site—Scotland's first rewilding project was underway—before the concept had even been refined by Soule & Noss 1998 (*Wild Earth* 8, 19-28).

With no grazing or burning for 22 years the site is now a wonderful matrix of Heather moor, mire

and native woodland which supports a wide range of biodiversity including 67 species of birds (40 resident and 12 summer visitors) and 15 mammals. In 2016, the restored woodland and heath was the home for six pairs of Hen Harrier (one of which nested within 10m of a path), which is twice the English population. Alan commented this was perhaps more a reflection of practices in England than the quality of the habitat on Mull.

In closing Alan described the wider work taking place across Scotland by other conservation estates to advance re-wilding, including the work of Anders Holch Poulson, one of the largest private land owners (800km<sup>2</sup>, compared to 6km<sup>2</sup> at Tireragan). Things are changing! Tireragan estate is now managed for conservation, education and the arts, hosting many visitors. It has open access from Knockvologan at the end of the road south of Fhionnphort. It certainly sounds worth a visit.

**31st Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club** (summary by Mike Harrison)

The annual general meeting of the club took place after lunch and was attended by 36 members. After members had voted to adopt the annual report and accounts the chairman thanked Roger Broad who was retiring from the Argyll Bird Records Committee after very many years, and Jim Dickson for keeping the recent reports section of the club website up-to-date alongside his work as recorder and editor of the bird re-



port. The annual election of office bearers and committee members then took place. Mike Harrison was re-elected chairman and promptly submitted 12 months notice that he would not seek re-election at the next AGM. The remaining office bearers and committee members were re-elected with the exception of Neil Brown, who stepped down from the committee and was replaced by Katie Pendreigh.

### **BTO surveys and updates—Nigel Scriven**

Nigel summarised ongoing BTO surveys, which can be found on pages 12-13.

### **Birding in Trinidad and Tobago—Gordon Holm**

Gordon described a recent holiday to these island, both of which are very close to the South American mainland. In fact some birds regularly commute between Trinidad and Venezuela. The talk was illustrated by many of Gordon's superb photographs (see September *Eider*, pages 20-21 for more information about Gordon's trip).

### **Diver identification and ecology—Bob Furness (summary by Bob Furness)**

Bob showed photographs of Great Northern, White-billed, Black-throated, and Red-throated Divers in breeding and winter, adult and juvenile plumages, pointing out some of the features, such as bill shape, head shape, and the angle the bird holds its head, that can be used to identify species. He acknowledged that identification of divers by ornithologists experienced with these

species and their plumages is usually carried out from the overall impression created by the species rather than by looking for species-specific detail, and in winter is often based on distant views in gloomy conditions! Bob highlighted that the Scottish Government is currently designating sites as Special Protection Areas for Great Northern Divers and these include two sites in Argyll; waters around Coll and Tiree, and the Sound of Gigha. The latter site, which actually stretches from Ormsary to Machrihanish, so is much larger than its name suggests, is the second most important site in Europe for wintering Great Northern Divers, with an average annual peak count of over 500 individuals. These birds originate from breeding populations in Iceland, Greenland and eastern Canada. Birds from each population can be identified from their measurements, and a surprisingly high proportion have lead shot embedded in their body, indicating a high hunting pressure in part of their range. Recently, German researchers have been catching Red-throated Divers at sea in German waters and equipping birds with satellite transmitters that have tracked their migrations back to breeding sites (see [www.divertracking.com](http://www.divertracking.com)). Similar research on Great Northern Divers in Argyll wintering areas might prove very interesting.

### **Conclusion**

After drawing the raffle and thanking the donors for the prizes, the speakers for their excellent talks and Bob Furness for arranging the programme, Mike Harrison closed the meeting with an invitation to the Spring Meeting at Dunoon on 4 March 2017.

### **Mike Harrison**





## Argyll Bird Club Survey 2017

### How many Rooks are there in Argyll?

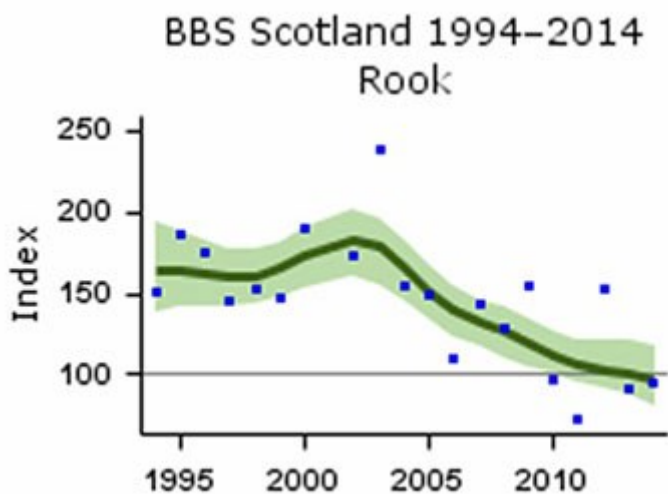


Figure 1. Population trend of Rooks in Scotland from the Breeding Bird Survey (source: BTO bird trends webpage)

#### Stage 1—Mid-Winter Search for Rookeries

The Rook has an interesting distribution in Argyll, being found in some areas and islands, but not in others. In view of the decline reported in the population of Rooks in Scotland, as measured by the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey (Figure 1, above), the Club has decided to organise a local survey to establish whether the

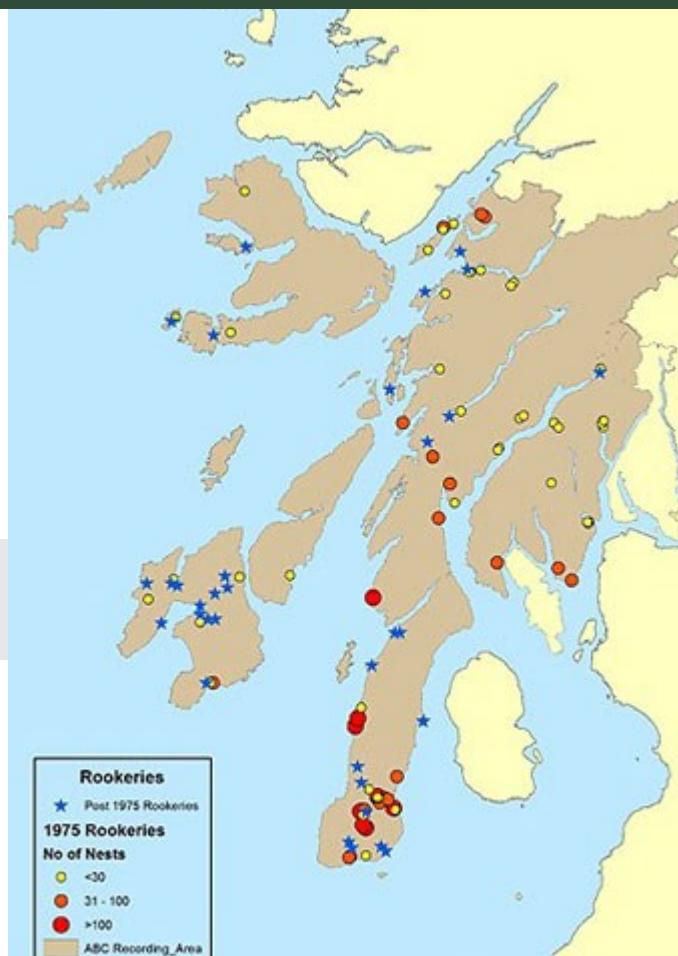


Figure 2. Known distribution of Rookeries in Argyll (source: location of Rookeries found in the 1975 Rookery Survey and those found since them).

Rookery at Inverneil, November 2016 ©David Jardine



population has also declined in Argyll.

The last survey to achieve almost full coverage of the Rookeries in Argyll was in 1975 and found 3132 nests in 71 different sites. Since then there has been no co-ordinated count across the county. Numbers increased significantly in Kintyre, where there was an 80% increase between 1989 and 1996, but there is little recent information on the population trend of this common species.

The survey will take place in spring 2017, during March and April, before there are leaves on most of the trees. It is hoped that all of the known Rookeries in Argyll can be visited and the number of occupied nests counted. This is a relatively easy task which can be undertaken by those who have never taken part in a bird survey before. Further details of the survey methodology will be provided in the spring edition of the *Eider*.

Figure 2 (previous page) shows the known locations of all Rookeries in Argyll and members are invited to sign up to count any of these Rookeries by emailing [argyllrookeries@outlook.com](mailto:argyllrookeries@outlook.com) (or phone David Jardine).



Rook drinking ©Jim Dickson

While this map is believed to be up to date, it may be that there are other new Rookeries that have not yet been recorded. This winter members are encouraged to keep their eyes open for new breeding sites and to send locations to the email address opposite at an early date to ensure that they are included in the survey. The club will also be seeking the help of the public and hope that through this survey the club increase its appeal and also gain some new members.

David Jardine (Phone 01546 510200)

## **BTO update, November 2016**

**Nigel Scriven, BTO Regional Representative—Argyll  
Mainland, Bute and Gigha**



## **House Martin Nest Survey 2017**

This survey is to be extended for a further year, so there is another chance to take part. It involves volunteers making regular observations at individual nests to collect information about nesting activity.

It is NOT restricted to 'random' pre-selected survey squares so you can select your own study sites anywhere that House Martins are nesting. All you need to do is observe one or more nests regularly through the whole breeding season, i.e. from April to September, or exceptionally into early October.

You do not need to be able to climb ladders to look inside the nests. Just observe the nests for just a few minutes at least once a week to record any activity seen.

To register your interest and for more information go to:

[www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey/house-martin-nest-study-2016](http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey/house-martin-nest-study-2016)

The precise details of data recording (instructions and data entry etc.) will be released as soon as available, so register to get notification)

## **Argyll BTO Scotland Training Course: Identification Skills and Survey Techniques**

On 8 April 2017 the BTO will be running a one-day training course on bird survey techniques at the Living Stones, Kilmartin. The turning to the centre, on the A816, is on the opposite side of the road to the museum. If you would like fur-



ther information or wish to register please contact Anne Cotton at BTO Scotland (E-mail [anne.cotton@bto.org](mailto:anne.cotton@bto.org). Phone 01786 466560). One aim of the meeting would be to recruit volunteers for the uncovered Breeding Bird Survey squares in this area.

## National Nestbox Week 14-21 February 2017

Aims to encourage everyone to put up nestboxes to promote and enhance biodiversity of breeding

birds and other wildlife. Natural nest sites such as holes in trees or old buildings are scarce as gardens are tidied up and buildings repaired or replaced.

You can register online at [www.bto.org/about-birds/nbw/information-pack](http://www.bto.org/about-birds/nbw/information-pack) or phone 0800 072 0130. You will get an information pack with great advice on making and buying a nestbox, choosing a place to put the nestbox and reducing the risk from predators.

## Birding in Vancouver

Vancouver is generally regarded as one of the world's great cities and most desirable to live in, and it's not difficult to see why. Sydney and Auckland are similar in that there is a lot of water with its natural attractions, but Vancouver also benefits from a backdrop of mountains across the Burrard Inlet to the north. Snow-capped in winter, a cable car makes access to ski slopes for Vancouverites just a ferry and a bus ride away. For birders just passing through, or able to spend a bit more time, there are plenty of opportunities in the wide variety of habitats close to Downtown, many of which are readily accessible by foot or the excellent public transport system. To give a flavour, Bald Eagles are regularly seen flying over the Downtown area whilst Osprey, Peregrine, Red-tailed Hawk and Cooper's Hawk have all been observed in the vicinity of the city-centre skyscrapers.

Since our son moved to Vancouver in 2010 we've been fortunate to visit on a number of occasions in either May or September. Whilst certainly not birding holidays, let's just say that opportunities have presented themselves and were taken with binoculars firmly in hand. It's always worth a bit of effort prior to making visits to ensure that limited time is well spent. The internet was consulted and pointed me in the direction of the Vancouver Natural History Society (Nature Vancouver) at [www.naturevancouver.ca](http://www.naturevancouver.ca). As the name suggests the scope of its activities is wide but conveniently split into sections and it was soon apparent that there was a very active birding section. An area checklist and a list of local birding spots were available for downloading and were invaluable in helping to identify what might be found, where and when. In 2016 the Society

updated an earlier guide when it published *The Birder's Guide To Vancouver and the Lower Mainland*. It goes without saying that the purchase of the book was afforded a high priority during our recent visit in September/October. This is an excellent publication, including descriptions of 33 birding sites with clear maps and access details, along with lists of the species that might be encountered. Also included are two seasonal checklists in chart form which give a clear indication of the presence and abundance of species on a monthly basis. The two lists cover regularly seen and seasonal "casual and accidentals" and were to become of particular interest later in the holiday. For anyone spending a few days in Vancouver I would strongly recommend the purchase of this excellent book.

The Birding Section of Nature Vancouver holds monthly Birders' Nights from September through to May and for the first time our visit and a meeting coincided. The meeting was held in a church hall a short bus ride away, which was fortunate as the weather was distinctly "west coast" in its resemblance to stair rods. It was certainly worth the effort and I was welcomed to join the 100 or so others who turned out to hear two main speakers. The first provided an update on the recent publication of a freely accessible online atlas of the birds of British Columbia at <http://www.birdatlas.bc.ca/>. This had been a huge amount of work with some of those members present at the meeting contributing to the effort. One chap told me about a survey trip he'd made "up country" in a float plane, being dropped off on a river bank and spending a few days camping in the wilds and then being picked up a few days later. It certainly made the annual

efforts I spend surveying my BBS square feel a bit tame.

The second speaker's presentation was on bird migration and in particular looked at some of the factors influencing the routes and resting places en route. The impacts of predators such as the Peregrine were described and were shown to have an influence, which I hadn't appreciated before. That rounded off an enjoyable and informative evening amongst a large and welcoming group.

On one beautiful sunny day, armed with my binoculars and new guide to the birds of Vancouver, I headed off down to the district of Richmond to visit the Terra Nova Nature Area and to walk the West Dyke Trail to Steveston between the Middle and South Arms of the Fraser River delta. Terra Nova was memorable for my first sighting of a Pied-billed Grebe and whilst scanning a clump of bushes for what turned out to be Song Sparrows an unseen Bald Eagle flopped out of a tree above me and flapped lazily off. How can you miss a Bald Eagle? Very easily it would seem, especially when peering into bushes in the hope of something more exotic.

As I made steady progress down the Dyke Trail, I spotted a bird which landed in the top of a conifer adjacent to a golf course. My first thought was that it was a Kingbird, a member of the tyrant flycatcher family. It's quite a distinctive bird being the size of a Mistle Thrush, but with the colouring of a Grey Wagtail i.e. grey back and bright yellow underparts. I'd seen one before further up the Fraser Valley in Hope, so I was fairly confident with my initial identification. Fortunately I managed a quick photo as a record just in case—a smart move as it turned out as the bird flew off after a few seconds. A quick check of my Sibley field guide suggested a Western Kingbird, but reference to the seasonal status chart in *The Birder's Guide To Vancouver and the Lower Mainland* indicated that the species was rare between May and mid-August and casual/accidental until early October.

Back at our apartment I checked the Nature Vancouver website for available options to report the sighting. Not having the detailed notes to make a formal rare bird report I registered with a local Yahoo group VANBCbirds and sub-

mitted the details of my sighting along with the photo for what I was anticipating would be confirmation that I'd seen a Western Kingbird. What I hadn't done up to this point was to check the Casual and Accidentals status list in the Birders' Guide as I simply don't normally see rarities so the thought didn't occur to me. Opinion on VANBCbirds was directed towards identifying my sighting not as a Western but a Tropical Kingbird which breeds in Mexico and just into southern Arizona and is included in the Casual and Accidentals list. Contributors to the website revealed that there had been sightings of a single Tropical Kingbird in the same area around the same date in the preceding three years. The record was picked up by the British Columbia Rare Bird Alert website and was featured complete with the barely adequate photograph I'd taken. I confess to being a touch bemused how an anticipated planned stroll with binoculars round my neck had turned into an interesting and not unwelcome dip into the local birding fraternity.

Reflecting on the events of the sighting I was left wondering whether the bird I saw was the same one seen in preceding years or whether different birds have regularly headed north instead of south after leaving breeding grounds over 1000 miles away. It does appear to be a navigational mistake of major proportions but I suspect the event will just remain one of the fascinating mysteries that are not unusual in our hobby. Although I won't be on holiday in Vancouver next October I shall certainly be keeping an eye on the VANCBirds blog!

**Malcolm Chattwood**

Tropical Kingbird ©Malcolm Chattwood





## Yellow-browed Warblers in Argyll

### A significant increase in sightings



Yellow-browed Warbler on Coll on 17 October 2016 ©Toby Green

In this article I will look at the changing status of Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) in Argyll following a dramatic increase in the number of reports in the last few years.

#### Background

Since the early 1970s I have had a keen interest in seeing and finding rare and unusual birds and can clearly remember seeing no less than six Yellow-browed Warblers at St Abb's Head, Borders in October 1975. At the time the realisation that these birds had come all the way from Asia completely fascinated me. For many years since I have always perceived the occurrence of this species to be scarce in the east UK at best, to rare in the west, however in recent years this perception has changed greatly and has prompted me to reassess my understanding of the species status.

The Yellow-browed Warbler is a small leaf warbler not much larger than a Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*) and breeds across Russia, Siberia, extending east from the Urals as far as Kamchatka and south to Afghanistan, northern India and the Sea of Japan. In the northern Urals, their breeding range is just inside the boundary of the Western Palearctic, but every autumn they appear well inside the region in seemingly ever-increasing numbers. In autumn most of the breeding population probably migrates through north-eastern China, filtering down to the spe-

cies' winter quarters, which extend from central Nepal south to the Malay Peninsula. The breeding zone is vacated in August and September, and birds arrive in the winter range from mid-October, departing again in late March and early April (Harbard 2010).

#### British status

The middle fortnight of October is the peak time for Yellow-browed Warblers arrival in Britain, but the first birds often turn up as early as mid-September and the last as late as November. Records in Britain and Ireland have been increasing steadily in recent years. The reason for the increase is still unknown; with reverse migration, misorientation and range expansion all proposed as potential factors (Thorup 1998). Formerly a rare migrant to Britain, the increase in Yellow-browed Warblers is now a long term trend. The British rare birds report from 1958 showed just TWO accepted records (Pyman 1959). In the 1970s the average number occurring annually was 76, but in the 1980s and 1990s it rose to 320. 1988 was a record year with 739 recorded, while in 2003 there were more than 500. However, both totals were eclipsed in the autumn of 2005, and October of that year saw a huge arrival on the east coast, with the total recorded in Britain for October 2005 being at least 1,250 of which 75 reached Ireland (Harbard 2010). Since then numbers have con-

tinued to increase, particularly from 2013, with accurate totals difficult to calculate but it appears that upwards of 600 birds are now being recorded in Scotland alone (Rivers 2013-15). This autumn (2016) has been a record-breaking year for sightings of the species in the UK.

### Argyll status

The *Birds of Argyll* (2007) noted that there had been only six Argyll records to the end of 2006. The first report came from Skerryvore lighthouse where a bird was killed at the lantern on 21 September 1906. The next occurrence was not until 1988 at Kilchoman on Islay. Up to the end of 2015 there have been a total of 50 birds accepted by the Argyll Bird Records Committee, and a marked increase in 2013 with 13 birds (see Figure 1 and Table 1). The number of reports this autumn have reached at least 23 birds from only nine areas and no doubt many more birds are going undetected in the region. It remains to be seen if this upward trend will continue at the same pace. However what is now clear, is that the species is no longer the 'rarity' that it once was. Given a good easterly airflow from continental Eu-

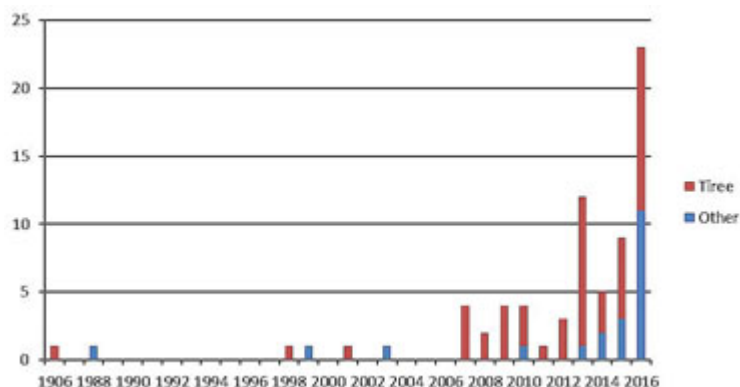


Figure 1. Yellow-browed Warbler numbers in Argyll by year (per David Jardine)

rope between mid-September and early November this species is now anticipated by birders on the Argyll islands looking for migrant passerines. Furthermore birds are now being encountered more widely throughout Argyll as they associate with migrating Goldcrests and occasionally Chiffchaffs (*Phylloscopus collybita*) as demonstrated by the first Argyll mainland records from central Kintyre in October 2014, and from Ormsary and Bellanoch, Mid-Argyll in October 2016.

### Reasons for the increase

It appears that the increased reports from Argyll closely reflect the increases elsewhere in Scotland and Britain. Some years, for example 2005, where the spe-

Table 1. Yellow-browed Warbler occurrence by year and Argyll Recording Region

Year	Tiree	Coll	Colonsay	Islay	Mull	Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Totals
Before 2004	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	7
2004	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2008	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2009	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2010	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
2011	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2012	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
2013	11	0	1	1	0	0	0	13
2014	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	5
2015	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
2016	12	1	2	2	3	0	3	23
Totals	53	1	3	8	3	2	3	73

cies appeared in very large numbers in Britain this produced no Argyll records. It should be noted that in Argyll there are only a very few observers actively looking for drift migrants around our coast, compared to the east and northern coasts of Britain. Since 2002 the Isle of Barra has been intensively watched by groups of birders searching for migrants and this gives a good barometer of fluctuations in drift migrant numbers from year to year on the west coast. On this one island Yellow-browed Warblers have been reaching up to 30 birds in a day in three of the last four years. On average it appears that Argyll records only about 20-30% of the numbers on Barra, which would perhaps reinforce just how under watched most of Argyll is. What is clear from Argyll, Barra and elsewhere is that the increase in Yellow-browed numbers is real and not to do with any increase in birder numbers.

There are a few theories to try and explain the recent increases in numbers reaching Britain and western Europe each autumn. These include reverse migration, genetic mutation and natural dispersal, which may have resulted in a subtle shift in wintering range, with regular dispersal having become successful and leading to overwintering and a subsequent return migration (Harbard 2010). Ongoing rapid loss of their traditional wintering habitat in south-east Asia, as hill forests are logged and cleared for agriculture, may be a factor (Bowler 2016) as well as range expansion to the west of the Urals.

Perhaps with Britain and Europe now on a new migration path there is a new winter range slowly evolving? Wintering birds are becoming more common, perhaps due to the mild winters that Britain now experiences. A few birds are now also seen here on spring migration as they head north-east back towards their Siberian breeding grounds. This would suggest that at least some of these westwards migrating birds are managing to find somewhere to successfully overwinter, perhaps in Spain or in West Africa (Bowler 2016). This October at least 34 birds were noted in Spain (Clarke, 2016).

Whatever the reasons and factors involved behind these significant increases in numbers

in Argyll and elsewhere, it is clear that this once rare little gem is now regarded as scarce and chances of finding 'your own' are now greatly increased.

### Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks to all observers who sent in their descriptions for assessment and the subsequent work of the Argyll Bird Records Committee. Thanks also to David Jardine for looking at the data and producing Figure 1 and to Toby Green for his photograph.

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**Jim Dickson**



Yellow-browed Warbler on Tiree on 27 September 2016  
©Jim Dickson



## Recent bird sightings

August to October  
2016

Juvenile Spotted Sandpiper on  
Tiree on 18 August ©Jim Dickson



Presented here are a wide range of rare and unusual species as well as counts and movements of more common species recorded in Argyll during this period. I wish to thank to everyone who sent in records and apologise for any errors or omissions. Ideally records should be submitted using the Argyll Bird Recording System or by using the BTO BirdTrack system. For information about either scheme please email: [abcrecorder@outlook.com](mailto:abcrecorder@outlook.com)

A more detailed and up-to-date account of recent sightings, including a list of spring migrant arrival dates, is available on the Argyll Bird Club website.

*Note: Machrihanish SBO = Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre.*

*BBRC = British Birds Records Committee.*

### Swans, ducks, geese & gamebirds

**ACKLING GOOSE.** Two birds were reported from Islay in late Oct, with up to 10 Canada Geese of various sizes/races.

**AMERICAN WIGEON.** One was reported from Gruinart RSPB Reserve, Islay on 29 Oct (Fiona McGillvary).

**POCHARD.** One was at Loch Ballygrant, Islay on 25 Oct. Two males were at Loch a' Phuill and one male at Loch an Eilein, Tiree on 25 Oct.

**SURF SCOTER.** A juvenile flew south past Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 27 Oct (Eddie Maguire).

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

**SOOTY SHEARWATER.** Small numbers were noted from 1 Sep, with peaks of 17 off Hynish, Tiree on 30 Aug, 12 there on 1 Sep and 6 there on 5 Sep. Sixteen were seen from the Barra Ferry off Coll on 31 Aug and eight went past Frenchman's Rocks, Islay on 3 Sep. Last three were off Aird, Tiree on 29 Sep.

**BALEARIC SHEARWATER.** A very good showing this autumn. On Tiree; one was off Gunna Sound on 23 Aug, one was off The Green on 26 Aug, one was off Hynish on 29 Aug and 30 Aug. One was off Jura on 15 Aug. One was off Frenchman's rocks, Islay on 3 Sep. One was off Calgary Bay, Mull on 27 Sep.

**LEACH'S PETREL.** One was seen from the Barra Ferry off Coll on 31 Aug and two were off Hynish, Tiree on 11 Sep.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE.** One was in Loch Indaal, Islay on 31 Aug and this or another was there on 8 Oct.



## Raptors to rails

**RED KITE.** One was at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll on 14 Oct (Errol Crutchfield).

**MARSH HARRIER.** An adult female was at Grasspoint, Mull on 2 Aug (Alan Spellman). One was at Kilchoman, Islay on 28 Aug (Ian and Margaret Brooke) and probably the same bird was again nearby at Loch Gorm on 3 Sep (Paul Graham).

**COOT.** One was at Loch Gorm, Islay on 14 Aug.

## Waders

**PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER.** An adult was at Middleton, Tiree on 29 Aug to 1 Sep (John Bowler/Keith Gillon). (photo below)

**AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER.** A moulting adult was at Crossapol and Kennovay, Tiree during 26 Sep-10 Oct (John Bowler/Jim Dickson) (photo below).

**DOTTEREL.** A juvenile was at Beinn a' Ghraig, Mull on 10 Sep (Ewan Miles), and another juvenile was at Bale-



Adult Pacific Golden Plover (above ©Keith Gillon) on Tiree on 29 August, and an adult American Golden Plover (below ©Jim Dickson) on Tiree on 30 September



Juvenile Curlew Sandpiper at Machrihanish SBO on 24 August ©Eddie Maguire

phuil, Tiree on 12 Sep (John Bowler).

**CURLEW SANDPIPER.** Record numbers were recorded at the end of Aug, particularly at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre where passing birds were noted from 20 Aug, with 18 later followed by 55 on 21 Aug and peaking at 80 on 22 Aug, with last two birds there on 10 Sep (Eddie Maguire) (photo above). On Tiree there was a record influx of 23 at The Green on 19 Aug with one-three birds elsewhere on the island until the last single at Vault Bay on 17 Oct. On Islay three were at Ardnave on 6 Sep, two at Gruinart on 10 Sep and one at Loch Indaal on 17 Sep.

**LITTLE STINT.** One was at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 20 Aug (David Jardine). Up to four were at Loch Gruinart, Islay from 10 Sep and up to three were at Loch Indaal, Islay on 17 Sep (Jim Dickson *et al.*).

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER.** A juvenile was at Middleton/Sandaig, Tiree on 2-5 Sep (John Bowler/Keith Gillon/Graham Todd) and a separate group of four juveniles was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 4 Sep (John Bowler).

**SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER.** Two juveniles were at Vault Bay, Tiree on 30 Sep (Jim Dickson).

**JACK SNIFE.** On Tiree one was at Middleton on 26 Sep, one was at Balephuill on 11 Oct, one was seen at Barrapol on 28 Oct and one was at the The Reef on 31 Oct. On Islay one was at Loch Gruinart on 13 Oct. On Luing, Mid-Argyll one was at Ardlarach on 15 Oct.

**GREEN SANDPIPER.** One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 14-15 Aug (John Bowler). One

was at Balvicar, Mid-Argyll on 17 Aug (John Sedgewick). One was at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre during 23-24 Aug (Eddie Maguire/Iomhar McMillan/Miriam Lord).

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER.** A juvenile was at Balephetrish Bay/Ard Mor, Tiree during 14-22 Aug (John Bowler/Jim Dickson/Dante Shepherd)

**GREY PHALAROPE.** On Tiree singles flew past Hynish on 11 and 12 Sep (John Bowler).

## **Skuas, Gulls, Terns & Auks**

**POMARINE SKUA.** One was off Aird, Tiree on 8 Aug, an adult was off Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 31 Aug, one was seen from the Islay Ferry on 9 Sep and three were off the north end of Jura on 1 Oct.

**SABINE'S GULL.** One was reported 'off Tiree' on 26 Aug (Rare bird alert services). On Tiree juveniles were off Hynish on 23 Sep and off Aird on 29 Sep (John Bowler).

**LITTLE GULL.** A juvenile was at the Holy Loch, Cowal on 10 Aug (Neil Hammatt) and another juvenile was offshore at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 12 Aug (Eddie Maguire).

**BONAPARTE'S GULL.** A 1CY (first calendar year) was reported from Grasspoint, Mull on 5 Sep (Rich Payne).

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL.** A juvenile was at The Green, Tiree on 19 Aug (Dante Shepherd) with presumably the same bird at Balemartine on 4 Sep (John Bowler). A juvenile was at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre during 19-26 Aug (Eddie Maguire).

**ICELAND GULL.** A long-staying 2CY bird on Tiree was seen again at Greenhill/Middleton on 3 Sep, Barrapol on 5 Sep and Kilkenneth on 30 Sep. A 2CY was at Tobermory, Mull during 4-8 Oct and an adult was at Loch na Keal, Mull on 28 Sep.

## **Doves, cuckoos, owls, swift, kingfisher, woodpeckers and falcons**

**TURTLE DOVE.** A moulting juvenile was at Balephuill, Tiree on 4-5 Sep (John Bowler) (photo opposite).

**STOCK DOVE.** One was at Blarbuie farm, Lochgilphead on 2 Sep (Jim Dickson).

**KINGFISHER.** One was at Garmony and Loch Cuin, Mull during Aug-Sep. One was at Kennacraig, Kintyre during 24-27 Aug. One-two birds were around Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll from 1 Oct. One was at Cairndow, Cowal on 1 Oct. One was at Inveraray, Mid-Argyll on 20 Oct. One was at Bridgend, Islay from 25 Oct.

**GREEN WOODPECKER.** One was at Glenmasson, Cowal on 5 Sep (Alistair McGregor) and one was just south of Tobermory, Mull on 31 Oct (Stuart Gibson).

**HOBBY.** A juvenile was at Barrapol, Tiree on 28 Aug and again at Hynish on 1 Sep (John Bowler/Keith Gilson).

## **Passerines (larks to buntings)**

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE.** One was reported from Coille, Islay on 11 October (Nicholas Watts), further details are required.

**GREAT GREY SHRIKE.** One was seen and photographed at Grasspoint, Mull during 16-17 October (Steve Hiscock *et al.*).

**SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF.** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 23 Oct (John Bowler).

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER.** A record showing of birds with approx. 23 individuals from the first on Tiree at Carnan Mor on 27 Sep to the last on Tiree into Nov. On Tiree up to four birds were seen in a day with a total of 12-13 birds recorded. On Islay one was at Port Charlotte Camp Site on 8-9 Oct and one was at Kinnabus on 22 Oct. On Mull three were at Ardura (near Lochdon) on 8 Oct (first record for Mull). On Colonsay, one was on Oronsay during 9-11 Oct with another on 20 Oct, and one was heard at Colonsay House Woodlands on 23 Oct. In Mid-Argyll one was at Ormsary on 9 Oct, one was on Kererra on 9 Oct and one was at Bellanoch during 14-17 Oct (first records for Mid-Argyll).



Turtle Dove on Tiree on 4 September ©John Bowler





Snow Bunting on Tiree on 29 September ©Jim Dickson



Common Rosefinch on Tiree on 12 September ©John Bowler

**LESSER WHITETHROAT.** On Tiree, one was at Balephuill on 3 Sep (John Bowler), one was at The Manse on 10 and 17 Oct (John Bowler), and one was near Heylipol Church on 10 Oct (John Bowler/Jim Dickson). The Oct birds showed some features of the 'Siberian' race *blythi*.

**RING OUZEL.** One was at Scammadale, Mid-Argyll on 1 Oct. One was at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 17 Oct and one was at Heylipol, Tiree on 19 Oct.

**EURASIAN REED WARBLER.** A 1CY bird was at Balephuill, Tiree during 3-4 Sep (John Bowler).

**BLYTH'S REED WARBLER.** A 1CY bird was at Balephuill, Tiree on 22 Oct (John Bowler).

**NUTHATCH.** One was at Bellanoch, Mid-Argyll on 23 Aug. One was at Glenmassan, Cowal on 5 Sep. One was at Strachur, Cowal on 11-13 Sep. One was at Taynuilt, Mid-Argyll on 19 Sep. One was at Loch Creran, North Argyll on 21 Sep. Two-three were seen at Inveraray Castle Gardens on 20 Sep. One was at Glendaruel, Cowal on 25 Sep. One was at Taynuilt, Mid-Argyll during 7-10 Oct and one was at Inverawe, North Argyll on 17 Oct.

**WAXWING.** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 20 Oct. One was at Hynish, Tiree on 22 Oct. One was at Kilmeny, Islay on 29 Oct.

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH.** A very elusive bird was seen well but briefly at Balephuill, Tiree on 22 Oct and again briefly the following day. (John Bowler *et al.*). It will become the first record for Argyll if accepted by the BBRC.

**PIED FLYCATCHER.** On Tiree a 1CY was at Carnan Mor on 24 Aug, a 1CY at Balephuill on 4 Sep with another there during 9-13 Sep and a different 1CY at Carnan Mor on 10-12 Sep.

**RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER.** A 1CY was at Balephuill, Tiree on 22 Oct (John Bowler).

**COMMON ROSEFINCH.** A juvenile was at Balephuill, Tiree on 12 Sep (John Bowler) (photo

above).

**SNOW BUNTING.** In Kintyre, 15 were at Carradale Beach on 6 Sep and one was seen near Campbeltown Airport on 8 Sep. On Islay, three were at Glenmore on 14 Sep, one was at The Oa on 30 Sep, one at Sanaigmore on 12 Oct with four there on 14 Oct, two were at Claddach on 21 Oct, one at Gruinart on 21 Oct and four at Ardnave on 30 Oct. On Tiree one was near Balemartine on 29 Sep (photo above).

**LAPLAND BUNTING.** On Tiree, one was at Carnan Mor on 4 Sep with two there on 18 Sep, six were at The Reef on 21 Sep, 13 were at Barrapol on 2 Oct, 11 at The Green on 3 Oct and the last bird was at Balevullin on 17 Oct. On Islay one was at Glenastle on 19 Sep, one was at Kinnabus on 17 Oct, two were at Machrie on 17 Oct and three were seen at Ardnave on 21 Oct. On Colonsay, one was at Turnigal on 17 Sep with two more over the Strand that day.

**Jim Dickson, Argyll Bird Recorder**

## Stop Press

**LITTLE EGRET.** One was at Machir Bay, Islay on 20 Nov (Toby Green)

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL.** A drake was at Clachan, Tiree on 15 Nov (John Bowler). Another drake was at Gruinart Floods, Islay on 20 Nov (Toby Green)

**WAXWING.** Single birds were noted on Tiree and up to 28 birds at Connel, Mid-Argyll in early November (John Bowler/Mike Harrison).

**'NORTHERN' LONG-TAILED TITS.** At least two were seen and photographed in a flock of 10 Long-tailed Tits at Loch Beg, Mull on 7 Nov (Bryan Rains/Steve Hiscock).

Articles for the March issue of the *Eider*  
should with the editor before the  
20th February 2017

### Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2016/2017)

**Chairman:** Mike Harrison, 8 Ferryfield Drive, Connel,  
Oban PA37 1SP (phone 01631 710656)

**Vice Chairman:** Nigel Scriven, 14 Taylor Avenue,  
Kilbarchan, Johnstone PA10 2LS (phone 01505 706652)

**Secretary:** Anne Archer, Springbank, Tighnabruaich,  
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Petty (Ardentinny), Andy Robinson (Stirling), Blair Ur-  
quhart (Kilmichael Glen)

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**Editor of the Eider:** Steve Petty, Cluaran Cottage, Ar-  
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### Argyll Bird Records Committee

Jim Dickson (Secretary, contact details below), John  
Bowler, David Jardine, Malcolm Ogilvie & Andy Robin-  
son

### Argyll Bird Recorder

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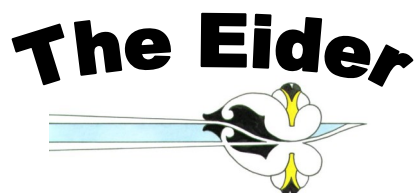
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**T**he *Eider* is the quarterly newsletter of the **Argyll Bird Club**. The editor welcomes articles about birds, wildlife conserva-  
tion and ecology in Argyll, including articles of a wider natural  
history interest, notices of forthcoming events,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

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

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

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

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

### More about the Argyll Bird Club

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

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

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

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