

June 2011
Number 97

The Eider



A stunning adult Sabines Gull which put in an appearance at MSBO on the 24th May ©Eddie Maguire

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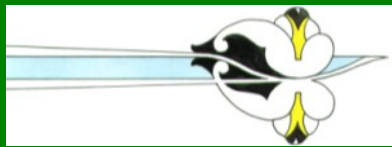
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What is the mystery bird with Barnacle Geese? See back page for the answer.

Acknowledgements

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John Aitchison, John Anderson, Gemma Cave, Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, Mike Harrison, David Palmar, Katie Pendreigh, Eddie Maguire, Nigel Scriven

Editorial

I am very tempted to welcome you to the **autumn** edition of the Eider. The weather has certainly not lived up to its usual spring billing of dry and warm with almost drought conditions and after the recent storm, the trees have a distinctly autumnal look about them. However, the spring migration has taken place with some birds arriving earlier than ever and there seems to have been a larger than usual influx of Willow Warblers (certainly this was the case at Port Ban, Kilberry).

During May, I walked the West Highland Way. When you walk through woodlands such as those at Inversnaid, by Loch Lomond and hear birds such as Wood Warbler, Tree Pipit, Redstart and Blackcap in full song, or cross over the Devils' staircase above Glencoe with the call of the Cuckoo drifting over the moorland you realise how wonderfully enriched we are by our diverse natural environment. The Argyll islands and mountains have much the same effect, with their sense of space, diverse wildlife and constantly shifting colours.

It is reassuring to know that despite the sometimes human propensity for destructiveness and even nature's own ability to harm itself that life in all its beauty wins through in the end.

Filming for TV programme.

Club member John Aitchison is currently filming for a series for BBC Scotland about wildlife on the west coast, for completion early in 2013. He is looking for interesting items to film locally and in particular they are most interested in finding in the short term (and also next spring) a Pine Marten female with kits somewhere on the west coast, either in a natural setting or denning in a building. Will anyone who thinks they may be able to suggest a site please contact John at jml.otterfilms@tesco.net.



Hebridean Whale
& Dolphin Trust

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Exciting new marine wildlife project launched by the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust

The Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) are pleased to announce their new 'Marine Biodiversity Awareness for All'

project. A programme of events, including beach cleans and wildlife watches, will offer opportunities for local people within Argyll and Bute and Lochaber to learn more about the marine biodiversity of the west coast of Scotland in 2011. This project is generously supported by The Big Lottery Fund Community Wildlife programme with funds contributed by Scottish Natural Heritage.

HWDT have designed this project to encourage everyone to get out and about to enjoy the natural environment. Experienced and knowledgeable staff will run the events and help members of the public, of all ages and from all backgrounds, to learn about marine biodiversity in a fun and interactive way. HWDT's Education Officer Gemma Cave is looking forward to getting started on the project: 'This is a great opportunity for HWDT to engage with local people in Argyll and Bute and Lochaber and to teach them about what we are so passionate about. We hope that people will gain knowledge and learn new skills that will encourage them to enjoy the outdoors responsibly and contribute to the future conservation of our natural marine heritage.'

The grant from Big Lottery will be used to purchase essential equipment including beach cleaning supplies, binoculars for whale watches, interpretive displays and ID guides. HWDT also hope to use some of the grant to fund a trip for young people on board our research yacht *Silurian*, where they will assist with whale and dolphin research on board a working sailing yacht.

Details of events organised by HWDT for this project will be publicised on their website www.hwdt.org

Gemma Cave. Education Officer

Field Trips

26th June: The possible outing to **Sanda Island** is looking increasingly unlikely as agreement on access to the island is still to be negotiated with the island owners. Machrihanish and Southend. have been mooted as an alternative outing . Further details will follow by email.

27th August: **Islay ferry**. Meet Mike Harrison from 12pm at Kennacraig in time to board the 13:00 ferry

ABC indoor meetings 2011

Indoor Meeting Autumn 2011: this is to be held at Cairnbaan Hotel, Saturday 5th November 2011. The programme for this meeting will appear in the September edition of the Eider

ABC Indoor meeting Spring 2012

Plans are underway for the March meeting to be held in Oban jointly with the Scottish Ornithologists Club and the British Trust for Ornithology Scotland. It came about from contact with BTO Scotland who asked us for advice about venues and dates in that area. We had already been planning a meeting in the Oban area, when this approach was made. It seemed better to collaborate on one meeting rather than have two meetings in the area on successive weekends. There will be a few issues to sort out, but overall, it has the potential to be an extremely good day. Further details will be announced as they emerge from the planning group.

Spring Meeting Report 12th March 2011

The weather forecast looked a bit iffy on the Friday evening, and it was with some tension that I arrived to set up at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dunoon. Would the speakers make it through the snow? Would there be an audience? It would have been difficult to notify everyone if it had been cancelled, so we just had to make the best of it. The snow was coming down harder and visibility was deteriorating. It was with some relief when the speakers started to arrive from as far afield as Carlisle and Glasgow, where the weather was supposed to be worse.

It was difficult to watch the weather with the curtains drawn, but when we could look out at coffee and lunch breaks, the snow that was falling was very wet and not lying on the ground, which was reassuring for getting home.

Paul Daw kicked things off with his round up of **recent reports**, which is now made much more interesting as a consequence of the number of photographs that are being sent in. This also allows discussion of the identification issues that some sightings can pose, making the session much more interactive and useful. More time will be allocated for this in the future, as it does seem to take longer than the 15 minutes traditionally allocated.

Andy Robinson's contribution on **renewable energy** was a well-received review of the conservation quandary that RSPB find themselves having to resolve. With concern about climate change, and the impact on habitats, the organisation is naturally supportive of measures that will mitigate these effects. However, where these measures impact on birds is often where there are plenty of renewable resources- so there is potential for conflict. Behind the scenes, RSPB staff have been working hard to identify areas of Scotland that are most sensitive to wind farm development, and those that would be less sensitive, to help guide developers and policy makers to focus on areas that would have least impact on birds. Assessing the impact of developments is not easy even after they have been built, and doing so in advance is far from an exact science. However the pressure for development is increasing apace with knowledge, and renewable development casework is now a huge part of RSPB conservation officers' workload. It's an evolving story, so watch this space.

Next up was **Ron Forester**, who revealed that he was one half of the Two Ronnies with Ron Jeffries, hitting the hippy trail to Marrakesh in the seventies, with a sprightly young George White and a very slim Iain Gibson on a birding expedition by car. Quite an achievement, and it paved the way for many subsequent visits to the African continent, taking in 8 countries and thousands of birds. It certainly distracted us from the snow falling outside. In nearly 300 slides we were transported through the avifauna of Morocco, Senegal, Gambia, Ghana, South Africa, Zambia, Kenya and Ethiopia. He showed us but a fraction of the 1400 birds he's seen from the African species list of 2300. There were mammals too, though not as colourful as the birds.

Chris Waltho posed the question, **where have all the eider gone?** Answer: we don't know. He then spent 45 minutes telling us how we know that we don't know. Chris traced the 19th century colonisation of the Clyde, and he modelled the population growth up to the first breeding bird atlas, when they seemed to have colonised most of the Firth. Since Chris started coordinating annual counts of eider numbers in the Clyde in 1996 numbers seem to have fallen back from around 19,000 to around 7,000, which is a significant decrease. The puzzle was that something must have driven the population expansion initially, and now something else is driving this decline. Chris examined an extensive list of causes of mortality, from mink and seal predation to disturbance and food supply. However, no single cause could explain the decline. Interestingly the eiders in south Cumbria also peaked and declined, although the decline started earlier, and also unexplained. So, it's a mystery, with work in progress.

Gemma Jennings, of Glasgow University, has been studying breeding **common terns in Leith Docks**. It must be one of the smallest SPAs in the country, designated because its population of over 800 pairs is

such a significant proportion of the UK and European total. Colonised in the 1970s the birds moved from the Isle of May and Inchmickery in response to the growing gull populations there.

The site is on an artificial island that was formerly part of a lock gate into the inner harbour. The gates are no longer in place, and it is an isolated haven inside a busy working harbour. There are weeds growing in the surface cracks proving meagre shelter for the birds. It is incredible to realise that there are so many nests in such a confined area. Gemma is able to safely observe the colony from the safe distance of the adjacent dockside with binoculars and telescope. Because of the disturbance that it would cause, opportunities to go into the colony are restricted to a couple of visits to get accurate counts of eggs and chicks, and some ringing with the help of Lothian Ringing Group.

There is a satellite colony of about 20 pairs on a ruined rickety wooden pier, but the nests are so precarious, that there is a very low success rate there. On the main colony, the success rate is between 0.5 and 0.6 chicks per pair, and there appears to be a good food supply within foraging distance. A JNCC team that studied foraging by following birds in a speed boat found that they foraged up to 15 km from the docks.

Nearby nesting herring and lesser black-backed gulls do take some eggs and chicks, but the neighbouring crows get a very hard time if they get ideas about taking a meal from the colony.

Given the survival rate of the birds and their lifespan, it would seem that the population might outgrow the tiny confines of their current island, unless competition for space reduces their success rate. A mink did turn up one day, but fortunately didn't make its way up onto the island. Further observations will keep monitoring this important colony.

With the over-running of the times allocated, it was decided to hold back Paul Daw's identification workshop for another meeting, and allow everyone to travel home through the snowy weather in the remaining daylight. We finished the day with the raffle during the final tea break.

To sum up, it was a very good day, and a shame that more hadn't managed to share it with us.

Nigel Scriven

Field Trip Reports

Dunoon Field Trip 13 March 2011

A group of five assembled at the Rock Cafe by the Dunoon Ferry Terminal in a perishingly cold north-easterly wind: Nigel Scriven, David & Janet Palmar, Tom Callan and Katie Pendreigh. We checked over the sea wall for purple sandpipers and turnstone on the rocks, but the tide was too low. They are usually only there when the tide is well up. We did have **Cormorant, Eider, Black Guillemot, Pied Wagtail** and **Black-headed Gull**. It was no place to linger, so we headed south to see if there might be a kinder climate down at Toward Sailing Club, spying **Redshank** on the shore at Innellan on the way.

On arrival we had **Wigeon, Oystercatcher, Lapwing, Curlew, Grey Heron** and **Rock Pipit**. It was a bit less windy, but still cold, as the rain had come on. The shore was not too productive as a succession of dog walkers had been along the shore track ahead of us. They and the two horse-riders with neon yellow tabards, had scared off anything near the track. They



Greylag Geese, Ardyne ©David Palmar
www.photoscot.co.uk

hadn't scared off the **Kittiwake** that Tom found dead at the top of the beach. It didn't have a ring. We heard and then saw **25 Whooper Swans** flying westwards up the Kyle in the distance. Some **Greenfinch** perched briefly in some gorse bushes by the fence before flying on. In the Rhododendrons by the ditch there were 5 Herons



Grey Heron roost at Ardyne ©David Palmar
www.photoscot.co.uk

roosting, with a group of **Pheasant** foraging nearby on the grass. A **Buzzard** flew in from the sea.

At the delta where the Ardyne Burn meets the sea, there were roosting gulls: **Herring, Common** and **Great Black-backed Gulls**. There were a couple of **Shelduck**, several **Teal** and a **Goldeneye**. We checked the bridge before the locked gates for Dipper, without success, then followed the river up the east side through the trees, picking up **Siskin, Robin, Blue Tit, Great Tit Coal Tit, Blackbird, Woodpigeon** and **Chaffinch**.

Reaching the lane by the next bridge we could see the **Greylag Geese** that we had been hearing in the distance. Once in a position to see as many as possible, a count was made, reaching 300. Also in the fields were **Starlings, Carrion Crows, Rooks** and **Jackdaws**. We walked up to the main road, adding **Song Thrush** to the list, before heading back to the vehicles. The Palmars kindly made room for us all to dine out of the elements in their campervan, brewing up hot drinks as well.

We finished the day by returning to Dunoon and the Holy Loch. A brief stop at Loch Loskin on the way gave us another **Cormorant** and **Goldeneye**, some **Mallard**, and 2 **Little Grebes**. Arriving at the new Broxwood hide at about 3pm, the tide was on its way in with about 2 hours to go to high water, which is ideal. Fortunately, we were initially free of dog-walkers, who also range across the shore here. We didn't add much to our list though. The **Oystercatchers** were a bit far off and too closely packed to get a count. The **Curlew** were in good numbers but kept moving about. There were more **Teal, Wigeon** and **Mallard**, and the same **Gulls** that we had seen already. No **Lessers** could be seen leaving us with a species total of 38.

Nigel Scriven



Great Northern Diver, Gigha Sound © John Anderson

Report of the Sound of Gigha Field Trip – Saturday 16th
April 2011

Although overcast for much of the time we had a quite warm and almost totally dry day for the Argyll Bird Club field trip to the Sound of Gigha. At least 15 members and friends turned up at the car park at Ronachan. We might have had more but for 'technical' problems with the Portavadie-Tarbert ferry.

As is often the case at Ronachan Point an obliging **Great Northern Diver** (in winter plumage) was present fairly close to the shore. **Scoters** were spotted offshore and initially identified as **Common**. However, one helpfully raised its wings to reveal striking white flashes making it obviously a **Velvet Scoter**. Eventually we concluded that most if not all of the group of half-a-dozen or so were **Velvets**. Other ducks seen here included **Mallard, Common Eider** and 2 pairs of **Red-breasted Mergansers**. At least one **Slavonian Grebe** was spotted well off-shore and **Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant** and **Shag** were all present as well as **Common, Herring** and **Great Black-backed Gull**.

A **Common Sandpiper** spotted on the beach was the first of the year for all present and other waders included **Oystercatcher** and **Ringed Plover**. The usual **Rock Pipits** were about and a well marked male **White Wagtail** was on the shore with a **Northern Wheatear** and **Goldfinch** nearby. **Buzzard, Meadow Pipit, Hooded Crow** and **Chaffinch** were also added to our day list here.

As we arrived at 'West Coast Salmon' Malcolm Chattwood and Mike Harrison picked up **Great Spotted Woodpecker** calling. **Great Tit,**



Could this be a major twitch on Gigha? Enjoying a walk down towards Achamore Gardens ©John Anderson

Common Raven and **Goldfinch** were recorded here too and the area was 'hoaching' with **Willow Warblers**. At this point a **Golden Eagle** appeared well against the sky and Malcolm Chattwood ran down towards the shore to draw its attention to the rest of the gang. The first impression was certainly of a Golden Eagle rather than a Buzzard but it then flew away beyond the road and was subsequently seen by the rest of us at a considerable distance against a background of trees and with a Common Buzzard in the area to confuse the issue. At this stage some photos were taken but most of those examined later turned out to be of the Buzzard! However, on balance, I'm pretty sure the bird first seen *was* a Golden Eagle.

At the shore several ducks that were definitely **Common Scoters** made an appearance and at least 3 **Great Northern Divers** in various plumages came quite close to the shore. We had thought the date might be rather late for seeing **Slavonian Grebes**, but as often seems to be the case here, they were obligingly close to the shore and in beautiful full breeding plumage. A **Common Guillemot** flew past and several **Sand Martins** appeared near the shore – our first for the day.

A **Mute Swan** was seen on the sea as we drove down to Tayinloan to catch the ferry. **Curlew**, **Collared Dove** and **Common Starling** were added to our list while we waited at the ferry terminal.

It was a relatively smooth crossing. Although it seemed at first as though there were few birds about we picked up a nice selection of bird on the journeys to Gigha and back. Several **Great Northern Divers** were spotted, again in the usual variety of plumages seen at this time of year. Apart from a distant bird that *could* have been Black-throated these were the only divers seen. We also had 2 **Common Shelducks** near Gigha, **Red-breasted Mergansers**, **Northern Gannet**, **Razorbill**, **Black Guillemots** and several **Sandwich Terns**. On the return journey a mystery duck with some white plumage flew rapidly past. Fortunately David Palmar managed to snatch a camera shot and revealed its identity as **Long-tailed Duck**. Another species we thought we might be too late in the year for. Arriving on Gigha we soon added several new species to our list as we walked up to the hotel; including **Song Thrush**, **Wood Pigeon**, **Dunnock**, **Blue Tit**, **Goldfinch**, and a **Blackcap** both seen and heard. A **Lesser Redpoll** flew over calling and a **Common Kestrel** was seen hovering in the distance.

As always, an enjoyable lunch at the Gigha Hotel provided an ideal opportunity for a long chat.

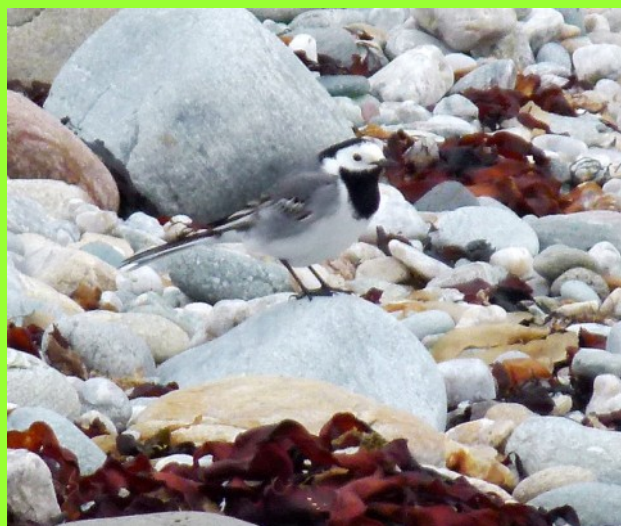
We decided to catch the 14:30 ferry back to the

mainland so just had time for a short stroll up towards Achamore House and back. Nevertheless we still picked up **Common Pheasant**, **Common Buzzard**, **Wren** (glad to hear several singing), **Robin**, **Great Tit**, **Common Starling**, **House Sparrow** and **Greenfinch**. A **Linnet** seen near the ferry slipway was the first of the year for many of us.

We were glad we'd decided to return early as the walk southward along the shore from the Tayinloan jetty and back proved quite rewarding. Another couple of **Great Northern Divers** were close inshore with two pairs of Red-breasted Mergansers. With a little impromptu bridge building we managed to get everyone across the Tayinloan burn to reach the point at Eilean Buidhe. The effort was worthwhile as we found a nice mixed group of hirundines flying low over the seaweed catching insects. Most were **Sand Martins** (including a group that provided an odd sight perched together on the sand for some time) but included **Swallows** and what were the first **House Martins** of the year for some of us. There was also a group of wagtails on the shore. They provided an excellent opportunity to study the plumage at close range and we agreed that most seemed to be **White Wagtails** (David Palmar's photos later confirmed this) with the odd **Pied Wagtail**. Iain Livingstone would have been proud of us! A **SkyLark** was in full song,

Northern Lapwings were displaying over the marsh and a **Common Raven** was cruising menacingly nearby. Waders on the shore included a nice group of **Ringed Plovers**, **Common Redshank** and **Turnstones**. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was also added to the list and just as Malcolm Chattwood commented that we were still missing **Grey Heron** one obligingly flew over the fields.

By this time, it was getting fairly late in the afternoon so some people left for home while the rest of us repaired to Katie's house for the traditional 'cuppa'. One of us noticed an odd, pale looking pipit with a marked whitish supercillium, near Katie's garden fence. None of us could be quite sure what it was and various exotic species optimistically flitted through our minds. David Palmar took some photos which were later passed to the experts (Jim Dickson and John Bowler) for



White Wagtail ©John Anderson

consideration. They in turn passed them on to others and opinion eventually seemed to be divided between **Meadow Pipit** and **Tree Pipit** although all agreed that it didn't quite fit a typical individual of either species. Without hearing calls or song it was just not possible to be sure. Quite reassuring in a way to know that even the experts can't always be certain of a bird's ID, even with photographs. And a useful warning against jumping to conclusions! Late leavers from Katie's picked up the final species for the day – a **Reed Bunting** on the car park fence.

As usual the company was good and we all enjoyed chattering away! A quite creditable 66 species were seen in all (67 if you include White Wagtail, which I'd have a small bet will be declared a full species fairly soon) – see list below. And, as always, many thanks to Katie for kindly providing the refreshments.

Paul Daw (with many thanks for comments and additions from Mike Harrison and Malcolm Chattwood).

Species List:

Mute Swan, **Common Shelduck**, **Mallard**, **Common Eider**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Common Scoter**, **Velvet Scoter**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Common Pheasant**, **Great Northern Diver**, **Slavonian Grebe**, **Northern Gannet**, **Great Cormorant**, **Shag**, **Grey Heron**, **Common Buzzard**, **Golden Eagle**, **Common Kestrel**, **Oystercatcher**, **Ringed Plover**, **Northern Lapwing**, **Eurasian Curlew**, **Common Redshank**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Turnstone**, **Common Gull**, **Lesser Black-backed**

Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Sandwich Tern, Common Guillemot, Razorbill, Black Guillemot, Feral Pigeon/Rock Dove, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sky Lark, Sand Martin, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Pied Wagtail, White Wagtail, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Northern Wheatear, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Blackcap, Willow Warbler, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Rook, Hybrid Crow, Hooded Crow, Common Raven, Common Starling, House Sparrow, Common Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll, Reed Bunting.

ABC Skipness Outing on 21-05-2011

The weather forecast was not encouraging for this outing; however at about 0900 there was a glimpse of sun over Tayinloan and the wind - well, you could stand up! After `phoning Tom to discover that he was already driving off the ferry at Tarbert and raring to go, I made haste to Skipness Castle Car Park (seeing no Hen harriers, Black grouse or otters on the way)! There, we were joined by Valerie, and having agreed that the originally proposed route along the old Skipness Road would be too exposed to allow many bird sightings, we set off along a riverside path to the Dunn which, though scenic and somewhat sheltered from the elements, proved to be rather over grown and hazardous in parts. Cheered on by several Wrens singing from the damp undergrowth, we saw neither Dipper nor Grey wagtail as we pushed on towards the top of the banking, and surprise, surprise the hoped for Tree creepers, Great spotted woodpecker, Spotted or Pied flycatcher failed to appear. Once we reached the top of the banking, and continued with plan B - a proposed route along the top of the gorge, across moorland where Hen harrier and possible

distant Golden eagle and Green Hairstreak butterflies had been sighted in the past, it became obvious from the swaying of the distant Sitka spruce trees that this route also should be abandoned. Having decided to avoid the precipitous route back past the Dunn we followed the fence line - well there should be a gate and a more propitious path back to the car park somewhere near!

Lunch and a welcome break from the worst of the elements was now on our minds. At the car park, however, sharp eared Valerie diverted our attention away from food and pointed out the calling of Jays. With our enthusiasm restored, we decided to venture along a small part of the route originally planned for this outing i.e. along the old Skipness Road and returning by the newer road at the edge of the sea. The weather seemed to have calmed down a bit and Red throated divers, shore birds and a possible otter, would give us a more respectable list for the day .

Gannet, Cormorant, Mallard, Red- breasted merganser, Buzzard, Oystercatcher, Ringed plover, Turnstones, Common sandpiper, Common gull, Herring gull, Greater black backed gull, Wood pigeon, Collared dove, Skylark, Sand martin, Barn swallow, Rock pipit, Meadow pipit, Pied wagtail, Wren, Robin, Song thrush, Mistle thrush, Blackbird, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Willow warbler, Gold crest, Great tit, Blue tit, Jay, Rook, Carrion crow, Raven, Starling, House sparrow, Chaffinch, Gold finch, Greenfinch, Siskin, Crossbill.

Katie Pendreigh

Places of Interest

The beaver project: a birders eye view.

Currently featuring on BBC Springwatch, this controversial reintroduction programme is well worth a visit to see it for yourself. I say so, because I did so, at the end of April. It will not mean you will be sure of seeing any beavers. To do that you need to visit late in the evening or before dawn and with a slice of good luck, a midge net and a deep well of patience you may glimpse one of these creatures. What you will find at the Barnluasgan car park is a log cabin with information on beavers, and an update

board with the latest news. If you take the trail round Loch Coillie-Bharr, you will follow south along the road, and then fork off to the right along a track. The track disappears into the beaver's lake and a new path skirts round the edge, leading to the main loch. There are plenty of stumps of saplings that the beavers have gnawed through. The original path has been re-routed to avoid the inundation, and at one point diverts onto a length of pontoon, taking walkers along the shore of the main loch. The reason for this becomes apparent at the other end, where



Beaver Dam, Loch Coille– Bharr © Nigel Scriven



Trees gnawed by beavers © Nigel Scriven

the beaver dam becomes visible. It is a significant structure and must have doubled the area of the original Dubh Loch.

This is all very exciting, but what I hadn't expected was the richness of insect life that has attracted birds to the area. Besides the willow warblers, tree pipits and blackcaps, the sheltered flyways between the trees were full of hirundines. That is the birding benefit, which I hadn't expected. Go and see it for yourself. I went again, during the recent storm to find a place for a sheltered walk.

Nigel Scriven.

A break in the journey – Hogganfield Loch



Hogganfield Loch– SW corner looking towards the car park

I often journey down to Manchester or Edinburgh to see family members. Until last year, the usual stop-off points would be Abington services, Tebay, Leighton Moss RSPB (a fabulous place in itself) and possibly a return stop-over at Dumbarton for groceries. However, a couple of winters ago, I was lured off the beaten track by the prospect of seeing only my second ever Lesser Scaup, which happened to be at Hogganfield Loch (whether the bird was truly wild or not is another matter). Hogganfield Loch is situated on the A80 about 1 mile north of the M8, so it is very easy to get

to. Parking is so good that you sometimes don't even have to get out of the car to view the birds— great for lazy birders like me. There is usually even a mobile burger bar and ice cream van— what more could you ask for?

The first time I visited Hogganfield, I was immediately struck by the sheer number and close proximity of water-birds present. I spent a great deal of time photographing different species such as Whooper Swan, Tufted Duck, Coot, Goldeneye and Goosander. I then decided to walk round the loch in the hope of seeing the Lesser Scaup. The walk took about an hour altogether, with lots of stops to check through the Tufted Duck and Coot and to observe other species such as Great Crested and Little Grebe and Grey Heron. Did I see the Lesser



Lesser Scaup, Hogganfield Loch ©M Williamson



Whooper swan, Hogganfield ©M Williamson

Scaup? Well, not initially. You would not believe how difficult it is to find one bird in amongst 200 other birds. I was even aware of its shape and behaviour, which made searching for it even more frustrating. Eventually, a second walk around the loch produced great views of the Lesser Scaup, which was just off-shore. Where had it been the first time?!! Hogganfield also proved good for roosting gulls and woodland birds.

I have subsequently visited Hogganfield Loch and seen Mediterranean Gull and Arctic Tern (end May 2011) along with all the usual waterfowl. The diversity of species and close proximity to the major road networks make Hogganfield well worth a visit at any time of year.

M Williamson

Notes

Snoring Birds and Atlas Fieldwork – Mike Harrison Solves a Mystery

"Wednesday 11 August 1999. Gometra Harbour. 56° 28'.85N 6° 16'.05W. Strange bird call heard again at dusk. Sounds like a snore, rising note, repeated at about normal breathing intervals. Bird appeared to fly along south coast of Gometra and Ulva as if in a territorial flight."

So reads an entry in the log of the sloop *Caol Mor*. We were cruising the west coast of Mull and had anchored in Gometra Harbour, a pool between Ulva and Gometra at map reference NM373402. We had heard the call during the previous evening. On that occasion it appeared to be stationary and it took us some time to decide that it definitely was not the sound of a snoring sailor in a nearby boat. But, although sure that it was not a sailor, we could not work out what it might be. When we returned home at the end of the cruise I listened to all the seabird calls on the records and tapes which I had but could find nothing like it. No-one whom I asked could suggest anything either, other than singing seals, but the distance over which the source of the sound had moved convinced me that it must be a bird. When I sent off my bird records for 1999 to Paul Daw I included a note of the observation just in case it was subsequently identified as a rarity.

Three years passed and I was no nearer to knowing what the source of the sound had been. We sold *Caol Mor* in 2001 and by August 2002 were cruising in *Way of the Wind*. And then...

"Sunday 11 August 2002. Loch Aline. 56° 32'.32N 5° 45'.90W. 2225hrs While practising star sights heard the same 'snoring' noise which we heard at Gometra Harbour in 1999 (see Caol Mor log). Definitely the flight call of a bird which flew south down east shore of L. Aline and across the neck of land towards Sound of Mull. Call is a rising wheeze lasting 1.5-2 sec. No other sound heard and nothing seen in the gloom (approx. 1.5 hours after sunset and sky almost completely clear (90%)."

Here we go again, I thought. I went through the tapes and records again but with no more success than in 1999. I again included the incident with my annual records when I sent them to Paul (I know Loch Aline is in Morvern and not in Argyll, but it used to be in Argyll so bear with me!). Loch Aline is one of our favourite anchorages (despite it not being in Argyll) and, being an easy sail from our home mooring in Dunstaffnage Bay, we stop there quite often.

"Thursday 17 July 2003. Loch Aline. 56° 32'.31N 5° 45'.89W. 2400hrs: Roused by the 'snoring bird' call. Quite loud, possibly two birds, flew over from direction of village NE across our position towards east shore of loch. Much louder/clearer/closer than previous occasions. Present for several minutes with occasional calls continuing for perhaps a further 10 minutes."

I was glad to have heard it again, if only to confirm that it was real, but I was just as baffled as before. Fast forward to the winter of 2010/11, the final winter of fieldwork for the BTO Atlas 2007/11. I had been saying for three winters that I would need to go out looking for owls but had not got beyond driving slowly along a road where I had previously seen a Barn Owl in the hope of seeing one again (I did). Eventually, with only seven nights left out of a four-winter project, I stirred myself into a night visit to Glen Lonan (square NM92) and heard Short-eared and Tawny Owls. That success made me try a similar trip in my local square (NM93) where I have often thought Short-eared Owls should be present but have never found any. Imagine my surprise when the first listening post produced what I was fairly sure was the snoring bird, followed by three more at different locations across the square, only two of which were close to the shore. I had now heard Tawny, Short-eared and Long-eared Owls in real life and Barn Owl in recordings. But this was none of those, so what could it be? Back to the records and tapes. Having run through all possible nocturnal species it was difficult to see beyond owls in general and Barn Owl in particular, but it did not sound like the one in my recording. I emailed Paul to see whether he had any more Barn Owl recordings than I had. Back came a compilation of all that he had and, lo and behold, the snoring bird call was included.

You may have noticed that all three log entries regarding the snoring bird related the movement of the bird to the shoreline or, in the second instance, "towards the Sound of Mull". Because I was on a boat I had automatically assumed that this was a seabird and had been listening to seabird (and wader) recordings and asking other people about seabird calls. It had never crossed my mind that the source may have been an owl, especially a Barn Owl, as I was under the impression in those days that Barn Owls were pretty scarce in these parts. Clearly it is a long time since I first heard the calls in Gometra Harbour and Loch Aline but I am fairly sure that the mystery has been solved and that what I heard were Barn Owls.

Which just goes to show that more can be gained from Atlas fieldwork than sore feet and a new Atlas.

Mike Harrison

Argyll Spring Migrants 2011

The table shows a selection of records received by the Recorder up to 20 May 2011. As you will see these are not just the first arrival dates for Argyll as a whole. I've tried to include records from as many recording areas* of Argyll as possible with the data available and to show the pattern of the main arrival of the commoner species.

It has been a remarkable spring for migrants with many early arrivals , including the earliest ever Common Swift. John Halliday, who has kept detailed records at Taynish NNR for the past 20 years, had earliest ever arrival dates there for no less than six species!

Many thanks to all who have taken the trouble to send in records. If any of you have records that fill gaps in the table please let me know (monedula@globalnet.co.uk): for example we still have no records for Pied Flycatcher.

*The recording areas are as used in the Argyll Bird Reports viz.

Coll
Colonsay (including Oronsay)
Cowal
Islay
Jura
Kintyre (including Gigha)
Mid-Argyll (including Kerrera, Luing, Scarba etc.)
Mull (Including Iona and Treshnish Isles)
North Argyll (including Lismore)
Tiree

Paul Daw – Argyll Bird Recorder

Species	First Date	GridRef	Location	No	Obs Name
Garganey (rbbp)	21/04/2011	NL9542	Loch a' Phuill (NW), Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Garganey (rbbp)	01/05/2011	NR2868	Loch Gruinart, Islay	2	Robinson, Andy
Garganey (rbbp)	06/05/2011	NM2059	Cliad, Coll	2	Wellock, Simon
Manx Shearwater	10/03/2011	NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	3	Maguire, Eddie J.
Manx Shearwater	07/04/2011	NL9340	Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree	6	Bowler, John
Little Egret (rbbp)	02/05/2011	NL9542	Loch a' Phuill (NW), Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Great White Egret	21/05/2011	NN0908	Inveraray, Mid-Argyll	1	Daw, Paul
Marsh Harrier (rbbp)	03/05/2011	NR2365	Loch Gorm, Islay	1	Robinson, Andy
Marsh Harrier (rbbp)	11/05/2011	NM0147	Balephetrish Hill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Osprey (rbbp)	23/03/2011	NN0726	Cruachan Power Station, Mid-Argyll	1	Marks, Delys
Osprey (rbbp)	25/03/2011	NM8602	Loch Ederline, Mid-Argyll	1	Dickson, Jim
Osprey (rbbp)	08/04/2011	NR9374	Loch Melldalloch, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Osprey (rbbp)	17/04/2011	NR8467	West Tarbert, Kintyre	1	Barbara McMillan
Osprey (rbbp)	30/04/2011	NR8366	Baravalla, Knapdale, Mid-Argyll	2	Chattwood, Malcolm
Spotted Crake (smb) (rbbp)	25/04/2011	NM2059	Cliad, Coll	1	Wellock, Simon
Corn Crake (rbbp)	07/04/2011	NM1654	Uig, Coll	1	Wellock, Simon
Corn Crake (rbbp)	14/04/2011	NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Corn Crake (rbbp)	14/04/2011	NR2267	Ballinaby, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.

Corn Crane (rbbp)	19/04/2011 NM1656	Totronald, Coll	5	Wellock, Simon
Corn Crane (rbbp)	20/04/2011 NR3489	Oronsay, Colonsay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Dotterel (rbbp/lss)	19/04/2011 NM0045	The Reef, Tiree	14	Bowler, John
Curlew Sandpiper	01/05/2011 NR2267	Ballinaby, Islay	1	Robinson, Andy
Ruff (rbbp)	04/04/2011 NL9744	Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Black-tailed Godwit (rbbp)	08/04/2011 NL9843	Loch an Eilein, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Black-tailed Godwit (rbbp)	14/04/2011 NR2767	Loch Gruinart RSPB hide, Islay	14	Tom Callan
Black-tailed Godwit (rbbp)	15/04/2011 NM9246	Loch Laich, North Argyll	1	Jardine, David C.
Black-tailed Godwit (rbbp)	15/04/2011 NR2767	Loch Gruinart RSPB hide, Islay	16	Brooke, I. & M.
Whimbrel (rbbp/lss)	07/04/2011 NR2661	Bruichladdich, Islay	20	Brooke, I. & M.
Whimbrel (rbbp/lss)	15/04/2011 NM8942	Eriska (SW), North Argyll	1	Jardine, David C.
Whimbrel (rbbp/lss)	16/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Whimbrel (rbbp/lss)	07/05/2011 NM0045	The Reef, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Common Sandpiper	17/04/2011 NR8093	Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll	2	Dickson, Jim
Greenshank (rbbp)	02/04/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Greenshank (rbbp)	13/05/2011 NL9642	Loch a' Phuill (NE), Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Green Sandpiper (rbbp)	29/04/2011 NM3548	Treshnish, Mull	1	Anand Prasad
Wood Sandpiper (rbbp)	28/04/2011 NM1552	Port na Luing, Coll	2	Wellock, Simon
Wood Sandpiper (rbbp)	01/05/2011 NL9343	Sandaig, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Common Sandpiper	16/04/2011 NR7455	Ronachan Point, Kintyre	1	Daw, Paul
Common Sandpiper	16/04/2011 NR9983	Bealachandrain Farm, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Common Sandpiper	18/04/2011 NM5038	Loch na Keal, Mull	1	Anand Prasad
Common Sandpiper	23/04/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Common Sandpiper	03/05/2011 NM0047	Balephetrish Bay, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Arctic Skua	11/04/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	2	Maguire, Eddie J.
Arctic Skua	12/05/2011 NM0546	Gott Bay, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Great Skua	07/04/2011 NL9340	Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Little Tern (rbbp/lss)	09/04/2011 NR2863	Cnoc Iolairean, Islay	2	Tom Callan
Little Tern (rbbp/lss)	11/04/2011 NL9839	Hynish, Tiree	4	Bowler, John
Little Tern (rbbp/lss)	11/04/2011 NR2863	Uisg an t-Suidhe, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Little Tern (rbbp/lss)	20/04/2011 NR6949	Rhunahaorine Point (E), Kintyre	2	Pendreigh, Katie
Little Tern (rbbp/lss)	28/04/2011 NM1352	Crossapol Bay, Coll	6	Wellock, Simon
Sandwich Tern	30/03/2011 NR2961	Loch Indaal, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Sandwich Tern	31/03/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Sandwich Tern	08/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Sandwich Tern	23/04/2011 NR2661	Bruichladdich, Islay	2	Brooke, I. & M.
Common Tern	28/04/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Common Tern	05/05/2011 NR9184	Otter Ferry Spit, Cowal	35	Tom Callan
Common Tern	09/05/2011 NM8423	Eilean an Ruisg, Mid-Argyll	10	Allan, Bill
Arctic Tern	14/04/2011 NR2974	Ardnave Point, Islay	1	Tom Callan
Arctic Tern	17/04/2011 NR2974	Ardnave Point, Islay	4	Brooke, I. & M.
Arctic Tern	23/04/2011 NM0746	Soa Island (E), Tiree	2	Bowler, John
Arctic Tern	28/04/2011 NM1352	Crossapol Bay, Coll	8	Wellock, Simon
Arctic Tern	01/05/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	2	Maguire, Eddie J.
Common Cuckoo	10/04/2011 NN3043	Loch Tulla, North Argyll	1	Allan, Bill
Common Cuckoo	10/04/2011 NR 2667	Kilchoman Schoolhouse, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Common Cuckoo	14/04/2011 NR8756	Claonaig, Kintyre	1	Kate Sampson
Common Cuckoo	15/04/2011 NR7487	Tayvallich, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Common Cuckoo	16/04/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Common Cuckoo	16/04/2011 NR9695	Tullochgorm, Mid-Argyll	1	Smith, Adam & Christine
Common Cuckoo	17/04/2011 NR8367	Kintarbert Lodge, Knapdale, Mid-Argyll	1	Linda Garwood
Common Cuckoo	17/04/2011 NR9574	Powder Dam (upper), Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Common Cuckoo	17/04/2011 NS0178	Salthouse, Loch Riddon, Cowal	1	Warden, David
Common Cuckoo	17/04/2011 NS1385	Benmore Botanic Garden, Cowal	1	Scriven, Nigel
Common Cuckoo	18/04/2011 NR9695	Tullochgorm, Mid-Argyll	1	Daw, Paul
Common Cuckoo	20/04/2011 NM8833	Dunstaffnage Bay, Mid-Argyll	1	Harrison, Mike

Common Cuckoo	20/04/2011 NR7150	West Coast Salmon, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Common Cuckoo	20/04/2011 NS1676	Dunoon (SE), Cowal	1	Newall, George
Common Cuckoo	27/04/2011 NR8592	Bridgend, Mid-Argyll	1	Chattwood, Malcolm
Common Cuckoo	30/04/2011 NL9745	An Airidh, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Common Swift	04/04/2011 NR7120	Campbeltown, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Common Swift	07/05/2011 NR7120	Campbeltown, Kintyre	10	Maguire, Eddie J.
Common Swift	08/05/2011 NM9134	Connel, Mid-Argyll	1	Harrison, Mike
Common Swift	09/05/2011 NM8529	Oban & Harbour, Mid-Argyll	6	Harrison, Mike
Sand Martin	23/03/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Sand Martin	25/03/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Sand Martin	26/03/2011 NR8798	Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll	30	Halliday, John
Sand Martin	27/03/2011 NR8694	Torbhlaire, Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll	3	Chattwood, Malcolm
Sand Martin	29/03/2011 NR2766	RSPB Gruinart, Islay	30	Brooke, I. & M.
Sand Martin	31/03/2011 NR9473	Powder Dam (lower), Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Sand Martin	03/04/2011 NR2060	Kilchiaran, Islay	2	Brooke, I. & M.
Sand Martin	04/04/2011 NL9542	Loch a' Phuill (NW), Tiree	2	Bowler, John
Sand Martin	07/04/2011 NM9036	North Ledaig, North Argyll	5	Harrison, Mike
Sand Martin	08/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	5	Pendreigh, Katie
Sand Martin	09/04/2011 NR6955	Kennacraig-Islay Ferry Crossing	7	Tom Callan
Sand Martin	16/04/2011 NR9269	Portavadie, Cowal	22	Tom Callan
Sand Martin	27/04/2011 NL9744	Tiree	##	Bowler, John
Barn Swallow	23/03/2011 NR2558	Port Charlotte, Islay	1	Dickson, Jim
Barn Swallow	24/03/2011 NR3040	The Oa, Islay	3	Brooke, I. & M.
Barn Swallow	25/03/2011 NR8590	Achnabreck, Mid-Argyll	1	Gibson, Lynsey
Barn Swallow	31/03/2011 NM9913	Blarghour, Loch Awe, Mid-Argyll	1	Marks, Delys
Barn Swallow	02/04/2011 NL9742	Balinoe, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Barn Swallow	04/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Barn Swallow	07/04/2011 NM3548	Treshnish, Mull	1	Anand Prasad
Barn Swallow	07/04/2011 NR8592	Bridgend, Mid-Argyll	1	Chattwood, Malcolm
Barn Swallow	08/04/2011 NR7120	Campbeltown, Kintyre	1	Lord, David
Barn Swallow	08/04/2011 NR7992	Bellanoach, Mid-Argyll	1	Purslow, Chris
Barn Swallow	08/04/2011 NR8688	Lochgilphead town, Mid-Argyll	1	Dickson, Jim
Barn Swallow	09/04/2011 NR6740	Muasdale (W), Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Barn Swallow	10/04/2011 NR8197	Tayness, Kilmartin, Mid-Argyll	1	John, Brian
Barn Swallow	11/04/2011 NR8798	Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Barn Swallow	12/04/2011 NS0374	Colintraive, Cowal	1	Clark, Graham & Danielle
Barn Swallow	16/04/2011 NR9566	Osde Bay, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Barn Swallow	17/04/2011 NM9242	Rhugarbh Croft, Appin, North Argyll	1	Gregory, Mary
Barn Swallow	17/04/2011 NR8467	West Tarbert, Kintyre	5	Barbara McMillan
Barn Swallow	20/04/2011 NM9133	Connel (S), Mid-Argyll	1	Harrison, Mike
Barn Swallow	20/04/2011 NR9695	Tullochgorm, Mid-Argyll	30	Daw, Paul
House Martin	06/04/2011 NR2766	RSPB Gruinart, Islay	12	Brooke, I. & M.
House Martin	10/04/2011 NM0047	Balephetrish Bay, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
House Martin	16/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	2	Pendreigh, Katie
House Martin	17/04/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
House Martin	24/04/2011 NR8592	Bridgend, Mid-Argyll	1	Chattwood, Malcolm
Tree Pipit	07/04/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Tree Pipit	12/04/2011 NM8038	Lismore, North Argyll	1	Newall, George
Tree Pipit	14/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Tree Pipit	15/04/2011 NR9695	Tullochgorm, Mid-Argyll	2	Daw, Paul
Tree Pipit	21/04/2011 NR9485	Pier House, Otter Ferry, Cowal	1	Warden, David
Tree Pipit	26/04/2011 NR9569	Auchadalvorie, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Blue-headed (Yellow)				
Wagtail flava	01/05/2011 NR3489	Oronsay, Colonsay	1	Jardine, David C.
Blue-headed (Yellow)				
Wagtail flava	05/05/2011 NL9542	Loch a' Phuill (NW), Tiree	1	Bowler, John

White Wagtail (rbbp)	01/03/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
White Wagtail (rbbp)	05/04/2011 NM0546	Gott Bay, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
White Wagtail (rbbp)	08/04/2011 NR2863	Uiskentuie, Islay	2	Brooke, I. & M.
White Wagtail (rbbp)	10/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
White Wagtail (rbbp)	14/04/2011 NR8195	Barsloisnoch, Mid-Argyll	70	Dickson, Jim
White Wagtail (rbbp)	19/04/2011 NR2873	Ardnave, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Black Redstart (rbbp)	23/04/2011 NR8360	Spion Kop, Kintyre	1	David & Val. Bridges
Black Redstart (rbbp)	01/05/2011 NM4533	Gribun, Mull	1	Spellman, Alan
Common Redstart	12/04/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Common Redstart	15/04/2011 NM9535	Ardachy, L. Etive, North Argyll	1	Jardine, David C.
Common Redstart	16/04/2011 NL9740	Carnan Mor (E), Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Common Redstart	25/04/2011 NR7995	Duntrune Castle, Mid-Argyll	1	Dickson, Jim
Common Redstart	28/04/2011 NR3362	Bridgend, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Common Redstart	02/05/2011 NL9444	Kilkenneth, Tiree	2	Bowler, John
Whinchat	20/04/2011 NR8093	Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll	1	Warden, David
Whinchat	23/04/2011 NR8093	Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll	2	Allan, Bill
Whinchat	24/04/2011 NM3648	Ensay, Mull	1	Brown, Arthur and Pam
Whinchat	29/04/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Whinchat	01/05/2011 NR4199	Balnahard, Colonsay	2	Jardine, David C.
Whinchat	01/05/2011 NR9481	Strone Farm, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Northern Wheatear	13/03/2011 NS1068	Mid Ardyne, Cowal	1	Scriven, Nigel
Northern Wheatear	16/03/2011 NR3756	Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Northern Wheatear	16/03/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Northern Wheatear	16/03/2011 NR6980	Loch na Cille, Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll	2	Daw, Paul
Northern Wheatear	17/03/2011 NR2365	Loch Gorm, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Northern Wheatear	20/03/2011 NM0947	Port Ban, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Northern Wheatear	20/03/2011 NR1653	Claddach, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Northern Wheatear	23/03/2011 NR2063	Machir Bay, Islay	2	Brooke, I. & M.
Northern Wheatear	23/03/2011 NR2166	Saligo, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Northern Wheatear	27/03/2011 NR3044	Glenastle, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Northern Wheatear	28/03/2011 NR3846	Kilbride, Islay	2	Brooke, I. & M.
Northern Wheatear	28/03/2011 NR9384	Killail, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Northern Wheatear	30/03/2011 NR9671	Auchenlochan Farm, Kames, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Northern Wheatear	02/04/2011 NR6946	Tayinloan Jetty & Bay, Kintyre	2	Pendreigh, Katie
Northern Wheatear	05/04/2011 NR9382	Barr Iola, Otter Ferry, Cowal	1	Warden, David
Greenland' Wheatear	25/04/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Ring Ouzel	21/04/2011 NM0045	The Reef, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Grasshopper Warbler	11/04/2011 NR8798	Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll	2	Halliday, John
Grasshopper Warbler	15/04/2011 NM8942	Eriska (SW), North Argyll	3	Jardine, David C.
Grasshopper Warbler	18/04/2011 NR2766	RSPB Gruinart, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Grasshopper Warbler	19/04/2011 NR7991	Loch Barnluasgan, Mid-Argyll	1	Chattwood, Malcolm
Grasshopper Warbler	19/04/2011 NR9483	Strone Road End, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Grasshopper Warbler	20/04/2011 NR9695	Tullochgorm, Mid-Argyll	1	Daw, Paul
Grasshopper Warbler	20/04/2011 NS0583	Craigendive, Loch Striven, Cowal	4	Newall, George
Grasshopper Warbler	20/04/2011 NS1676	Dunoon (SE), Cowal	1	Newall, George
Grasshopper Warbler	21/04/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Grasshopper Warbler	22/04/2011 NM9242	Rhugarbh Croft, Appin, North Argyll	1	Gregory, Mary
Grasshopper Warbler	25/04/2011 NM2059	Cliad, Coll	1	Wellock, Simon
Grasshopper Warbler	26/04/2011 NR8095	Loch Crinan (NE), Mid-Argyll	1	Allan, Bill
Sedge Warbler	14/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Sedge Warbler	16/04/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Sedge Warbler	20/04/2011 NR2267	Ballinaby, Islay	2	Brooke, I. & M.
Sedge Warbler	21/04/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Sedge Warbler	22/04/2011 NR9482	Barr Lagan, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Sedge Warbler	24/04/2011 NM3548	Treshnish, Mull	3	Anand Prasad
Sedge Warbler	02/05/2011 NM9038	Benderloch, North Argyll	1	Harvey, Robin

Blackcap	23/03/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Blackcap	06/04/2011 NR2163	Kilchoman, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Blackcap	08/04/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Blackcap	11/04/2011 NM3548	Treshnish, Mull	2	Anand Prasad
Blackcap	11/04/2011 NR7045	Culfuair, Kintyre	1	Pendreigh, Katie
Blackcap	13/04/2011 NR3563	Woollen Mill, Islay	1	Tom Callan
Blackcap	17/04/2011 NR9772	Tighnabruaich, Cowal	3	Warden, David
Blackcap	17/04/2011 NS1385	Benmore Botanic Garden, Cowal	1	Scriven, Nigel
Blackcap	19/04/2011 NR7991	Loch Barnluasgan, Mid-Argyll	1	Chattwood, Malcolm
Garden Warbler	20/04/2011 NR7995	Duntrune Castle, Mid-Argyll	1	Dickson, Jim
Garden Warbler	21/04/2011 NR9985	Camquhart, Cowal	1	Warden, David
Garden Warbler	21/04/2011 NR9985	Camquhart, Cowal	1	Warden, David
Garden Warbler	22/04/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	2	Halliday, John
Garden Warbler	26/04/2011 NM8004	Ardfern, Mid-Argyll	1	Allan, Bill
Garden Warbler	02/05/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	2	Bowler, John
Common Whitethroat	27/04/2011 NR9385	Otter Ferry (N), Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Common Whitethroat	10/04/2011 NR8197	Tayness, Kilmartin, Mid-Argyll	1	John, Brian
Common Whitethroat	22/04/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	2	Halliday, John
Common Whitethroat	23/04/2011 NR2766	RSPB Gruinart, Islay	3	Brooke, I. & M.
Common Whitethroat	26/04/2011 NM8004	Ardfern, Mid-Argyll	1	Allan, Bill
Common Whitethroat	28/04/2011 NL9544	Moss, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Common Whitethroat	28/04/2011 NM3548	Treshnish, Mull	1	Anand Prasad
Common Whitethroat	28/04/2011 NS1168	Ardyne Farm, Cowal	1	Newall, George
Wood Warbler	21/04/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Wood Warbler	30/04/2011 NM9137	Beinn Lora, North Argyll	1	Harvey, Robin
Wood Warbler	03/05/2011 NL9740	Carnan Mor (E), Tiree	2	Bowler, John
Wood Warbler	06/05/2011 NR9589	Goirtein Croft, Loch Fyne, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Common Chiffchaff	26/03/2011 NR8190	Dail Loch (N), Mid-Argyll	2	Halliday, John
Common Chiffchaff	27/03/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Common Chiffchaff	27/03/2011 NR6980	Loch na Cille, Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll	1	Aitchison, John
Common Chiffchaff	28/03/2011 NR8390	Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll	1	Dickson, Jim
Common Chiffchaff	29/03/2011 NM9134	Connel, Mid-Argyll	1	Harrison, Mike
Common Chiffchaff	29/03/2011 NS1581	Brox Wood, Sandbank, Cowal	1	Scriven, Nigel
Common Chiffchaff	30/03/2011 NR6220	Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre	1	Maguire, Eddie J.
Common Chiffchaff	31/03/2011 NN1710	Ardkinglas House, Cowal	1	Toplis, Glyn
Common Chiffchaff	01/04/2011 NR8786	Kilmory Castle, Mid-Argyll	1	Chattwood, Malcolm
Common Chiffchaff	02/04/2011 NR9384	Killail, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Common Chiffchaff	03/04/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Common Chiffchaff	05/04/2011 NR9282	Ballimore (S), Cowal	1	Warden, David
Common Chiffchaff	08/04/2011 NR3462	Bridgend Woods, Islay	1	Brooke, I. & M.
Common Chiffchaff	10/04/2011 NM9038	Benderloch, North Argyll	1	Harvey, Robin
Willow Warbler	03/04/2011 NR8798	Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Willow Warbler	05/04/2011 NM9133	Connel (S), Mid-Argyll	1	Harrison, Mike
Willow Warbler	05/04/2011 NR9382	Barr Iola, Otter Ferry, Cowal	1	Warden, David
Willow Warbler	08/04/2011 NR8492	Dunamuck, Mid-Argyll	1	Chattwood, Malcolm
Willow Warbler	09/04/2011 NL9540	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Bowler, John
Willow Warbler	09/04/2011 NM3548	Treshnish, Mull	1	Anand Prasad
Willow Warbler	10/04/2011 NM9038	Benderloch, North Argyll	2	Harvey, Robin
Willow Warbler	10/04/2011 NR6945	Tayinloan Village, Kintyre	5	Pendreigh, Katie
Willow Warbler	13/04/2011 NR3462	Bridgend Woods, Islay	1	Tom Callan
Willow Warbler	13/04/2011 NR9695	Tullochgorm, Mid-Argyll	1	Daw, Paul
Willow Warbler	15/04/2011 NR2163	Kilchoman, Islay	3	Brooke, I. & M.
Willow Warbler	16/04/2011 NR8674	Meall Mhor, Loch Fyne, Mid-Argyll	1	Barbara McMillan
Willow Warbler	17/04/2011 NS1490	Allt na Blathaich (S), Loch Eck, Cowal	1	Scriven, Nigel
Spotted Flycatcher	04/05/2011 NR7384	Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll	1	Halliday, John
Spotted Flycatcher	09/05/2011 NR9982	Waulkmill, Cowal	1	Tom Callan
Spotted Flycatcher	12/05/2011 NL9740	Carnan Mor (E), Tiree	1	Bowler, John

Recent Reports

February—May 2011

Paul Daw

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

This report would normally cover the period February – April 2011 but in an effort to keep more up-to-date I have included a good number of records for May. Later records for May will be covered by the next report. As ever, many thanks to all those who took the trouble to send in records.

STOP PRESS.

SABINE'S GULLS. An unprecedented spring influx of Sabine's Gulls is ongoing. Since 17th May (on Mull) there have been records from Machrihanish Bird Observatory (25 May), Coll, Tiree and at least 4 birds on Mull (Loch na Keal 24 May). This is normally a scarce autumn migrant in Argyll and these records may well refer to storm driven birds. Full details will appear later but in the meantime please send all records to Jim Dickson j.dickson@tiscali.co.uk.

Various species of skua have also been involved in this movement. Birds seen during a 7hr seawatch at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 May, included 32 **Pomarine Skuas** (a record no. for the observatory), 6 **Arctic Skuas**, 4 **Long-tailed Skuas**, 6 **Great Skuas** and a **European Storm-petrel** ! (Eddie Maguire).

May has been an excellent month for unusual birds on Mull including a **Red-necked Phalarope** at Killiechronan on 23 May, **Sabine's Gulls** (at least 4), **Common Rosefinch** at Dervaig on 23 May and culminating with a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** photographed at Fidden on 27 May (see www.mullbirds.com – Latest Reports)

Rarities (see below for details).

Pied-billed Grebe on Mull 22 March and subsequently.

Great White Egret at Inveraray on 21 May.

Bonaparte's Gull on Tiree on 4 April and subsequently.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper on Mull 27 May.

Lesser Grey Shrike at Iona on 4 May.

Wildfowl (and Gamebirds):

Whooper Swan. The WeBS count on Tiree found 168 on 7 February (including 120 at Loch a' Phuill) (John Bowler). A flock of 19 flew NW over Cairnbaan at 8pm on 6 March (Jim Dickson), 25 flew past Toward bay, Cowal on 13 March, 37 flew NW over Otter Ferry, Cowal also on 16 March (Tom Callan), flocks of 19 and 52 headed WNW over The Reef, Tiree on 23 March before the fog closed in (John Bowler) and 26 were on the mud at Loch Gilp on 18 April.

Bean Goose. Two of the *fabilis* race were seen flying low NW along the flank of Carnan Mor, Tiree and were heard and seen well from above on the morning of 26 March (John Bowler).

Greenland White-fronted Goose. A flock of 31 flew N over Ensay, Mull on 18 April (Anand Prasad).

Barnacle Goose. Unusually, at least 255 were at Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) on 22 February, with 17 **Greenland White-fronted Geese**. All-island goose count on Tiree (14-15 March) found a high total of 4,190 Barnacle Geese (John Bowler).

Pale-bellied Brent Goose. A strong but rapid passage on Tiree included 135 at Balephetrish Bay on 16 April (John Bowler). Four in Loch Gilp on 22 May were unusual (Simon Lawrence).

Muscovy Duck. A handsome(!) male was seen at the North Pier in Oban on 2 April (George Newall). Although this a Category E (recorded as introductions, human-assisted transportees, or escapes from captivity) species we are always keen to receive records.

Gadwall. A male at Loch na Cille (Loch Sween) 17 April was unusual for here (Tom Callan).

Garganey. A fine drake was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 21 and 24 April (John Bowler). See Spring Migrants for further records.

Long-tailed Duck. A large group of 21 were at Hough Bay on 22 March (John Bowler).

Velvet Scoter. At least 6 were at Ronachan Point, Kintyre on 16 April (Sound of Gigha Field Trip).

Black Grouse. Encouragingly there were more records than usual. A male was seen in a garden(!) at Tighnabruaich, Cowal on 1 April (Ann Archer per Tom Callan), at least one lekking male was at the Powder Dams, Cowal on 17 April, one was heard lekking in the distance at Craigendive (Loch Striven) Cowal early on the morning of 20 April (George Newall), two were seen at Clachan Flats (above Loch Fyne Oysters), Mid-Argyll on 1 May (Glyn Toplis), a female was seen near Tarbert, Kintyre also on 1 May (Paul Daw) and a male was calling at Lephinmore, Cowal on 11 May (Tom Callan).

Reeve's Pheasant. A fine (and very aggressive!) male was seen and photographed at Achnabreac (near Lochgilphead) on 21 April (per Jim Dickson). The only previous reports have been from Cowal.

Seabirds – divers, grebes, shearwaters, herons etc (and other seawatch species):

Great Northern Diver. At least 34 were in Crossapol Bay, Coll on 28 April (Simon Wellock).

White-billed Diver. One was reliably reported (and photographed) on Loch na Keal, Mull in late February, by an observer who wishes to remain anonymous! Two different single birds were reported from a bird survey vessel off West Tiree on 27 and 28 March.

Pied-billed Grebe. One was found and photographed at Salen Bay, Mull on 22 March by visiting birder Bed Oldfield. It obligingly stayed in the area until at least 6 April and was seen by many local birders and visitors. The only previous Argyll record was also on Mull; at Mishnish Lochs on 8th and 15 June 1998.

Red-necked Grebe. One was reported in Laggan Bay, Mull on 6 March by Bill Aspin, a visitor to the island. It was seen there again on 5 April (per Alan Spellman).

Slavonian Grebe. Nine were at 'West Coast Salmon', Kintyre on 16 March (Katie Pendreigh).

Northern Gannet. The first returning birds at Ensay, Mull were three on 22 February, unusually early for this location (Anand Prasad). The first at Otter Ferry was on 1 April (Tom Callan).

Little Egret. One was newly arrived at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on the evening of 2 May (John Bowler).

Great White Egret. An adult Great White Egret in breeding plumage was showing well on the shore opposite the war memorial at Inveraray at 09:30 on the morning of 21 May. The very long neck and yellow upper legs were striking (Paul Daw). Sadly it was a short stayer and had gone by the following day, although there were reports of a heron sized white egret at Ballimore, Cowal on 23 May (Tom Callan).

Raptors, rails etc.:

Red Kite. An exceptional number of records in Argyll this winter.

A single first year bird was at Kiloran Dunes, Colonsay on 11 and 14 February (David Jardine), two were over Arinagour (one red tagged bird) on 17 March (Simon Wellock), two were on Colonsay on 21 March (one un-tagged, the other red 63 left & blue 63 right) (Jim Dickson). There have been rumours of a pair nesting in the Loch Awe area but no hard



White Tailed Eagle over Port Ban, Kilberry, Feb 2011 ©editor

evidence. It may only be a matter of time though?

White-tailed Eagle. An immature bird seen late afternoon of 29 March over Ronachan Hill (NR6825), Kintyre hung around for about 15 minutes and was briefly mobbed by a Great Black-backed Gull before drifting off towards Lussa Loch (Neil Brown). One was seen at Barochreal (River Euchar), Mid-Argyll on 16 April (Mike Harrison), two adults flew over the Kilmaronag Islands (Loch Etive) on 7 May (David and Adrienne Watson) and two immature birds were circling over Loch Fyne at Inveraray on 14 May (Paul Daw).

Marsh Harrier. A female was over Grasspoint and Lochdon on the morning of 6 May (Alan Spellman) and a female flew south across the road at Balephetrish Hill, Tiree on 11 May.

Common Kestrel. One was seen taking food to a nest near Haunn, Mull on 19 April (Anand Prasad).

Golden Eagle. A first winter bird with very clear black and white tail and white wing patches was seen in Lussa Glen, Kintyre on 11 April, being mobbed by a Buzzard and a Hooded Crow (David Lord). A sub-adult bird was seen on Tiree on 8 and 9 May (Graham Todd per John Bowler).

Spotted Crake. One was calling at Cliad, Coll on the night of 25 April along with a Water Rail (Simon Wellock).

Waders:

Oystercatcher. The WeBS count at Holy Loch on 17 Feb found 467 Oystercatchers with smaller numbers of other waders incl. Purple Sandpiper and Turnstones (George Newall).

Dotterel. A 'trip' of 14 birds – most still moulting into breeding plumage - called in at The Reef, Tiree on 19 April. Probably the largest group ever recorded in Argyll (John Bowler). Three were reported near the summit of Ben More, Mull on 4 May (Julian & Lucy Bray) and 8 were on the runway of Tiree Airport on 17 May (John Bowler).

Grey Plover. One at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 27 April was unusual (Tom Callan).

Northern Lapwing. The WeBS count at the Add Estuary at the Add Estuary on 12 February found a good total of 52 Lapwings (including 30 in the fields at Barsloisnoch) as well as Ringed Plovers, Dunlins, Bar-tailed Godwits, Common Redshanks and 66 Eurasian Curlews (John Halliday) and approx. 120 were at Tayinloan on 23 February (Katie Pen-

dreigh).

Purple Sandpiper. Five were found near Calgary Bay, Mull on 14 February (Anand Prasad).

Black-tailed Godwit. A steady passage continued through April on Tiree with a maximum of 98 at Loch Bhasapol on 16th. (John Bowler). A flock of 58 at the head of Loch Gilp on 23 April was exceptional for this site (Bill Allan).

Whimbrel. A flock of 56 were at Tayinloan on the



Arctic Skua MSBO 31st May © Eddie Maguire

evening of 6 May (Katie Pendreigh), 17 were at the head of Loch Gilp on 7 May (Bill Allan) and some 37 Whimbrel flew north over The Reef, Tiree on 17 May (John Bowler).

Common Redshank. There were at least 110 Redshanks at Loch Gilp on 17 April an exceptionally large number for this site (Jim Dickson)

Green Sandpiper. One was flushed from a pond at Treshnish, Mull on 29 April (Anand Prasad).

Wood Sandpiper. Two were on a pool near Port-na-Luing, Coll on 28 April, together with 7 Black-tailed Godwits (Simon Wellock). One was at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 8 May and 2 on 12 May (I & M. Brooke). Wood Sandpipers are normally very scarce (less than annual) migrants in Argyll.

Turnstone. A total of 160 were at The Reef, Tiree on 5 March (John Bowler).

Red-necked Phalarope. A female was feeding on the tide-line at Gott Bay, Tiree on 11 May, along with 2,200 Sanderling (six with leg-flags) and 1,200 Dunlin(!) (John Bowler)

Skuas, gulls, terns and auks (see also Seabirds above):

Arctic Skua. Two pale morph birds flew past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 11 April (Eddie Maguire).

Sabine's Gull. (see above)

Bonaparte's Gull. A first winter bird found at Gott Bay, Tiree on 4 April was seen again on 6-8 and on 21 April. If confirmed it will be just the second for Argyll (John Bowler).

Mediterranean Gull. Adults in winter plumage were reported at Ardrishaig on 9 March (Andrew Stephenson) and near the mouth of West Loch Tarbert on 10 March (Marc Eden). A first-winter bird was offshore at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 29th April (Eddie Maguire).

Yellow-legged Gull. One was reported at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 11 May (Toby Green). **Warning to all birders!** This is a very difficult species to get accepted by rarity committees (SBRC in our case) and a detailed description (preferably with photographs) is required. Following a review of records by SBCR we now have just a single accepted record for Argyll, on Islay in September 2002.

Glaucous Gull. Two different second calendar year birds were seen on Tiree on 15 March – one at Barrapol and one at Sandaig. Two at West Hynish on 27 March were possibly the same birds (John Bowler). One was first seen at the piers in Campbeltown on 22 March and another individual (first year) was on the Grammar School field in Campbeltown on 30 March. One was still present in town on 21 April (Neil Brown).

Sandwich Tern. Four were in Loch Gilp on 23 April (Bill Allan).

Doves, owls, woodpeckers etc.:

Barn Owl. Calling birds were recorded at 4 location in North Argyll on the night of 26 Feb (Mike Harrison) and a lone bird was present in a barn near Loch an Eilein, Tiree 5 – 8 April (John Bowler).

Tawny Owl. The first chicks were noted out of the nest box in the garden at Otter Ferry on 26 May (Tom Callan).

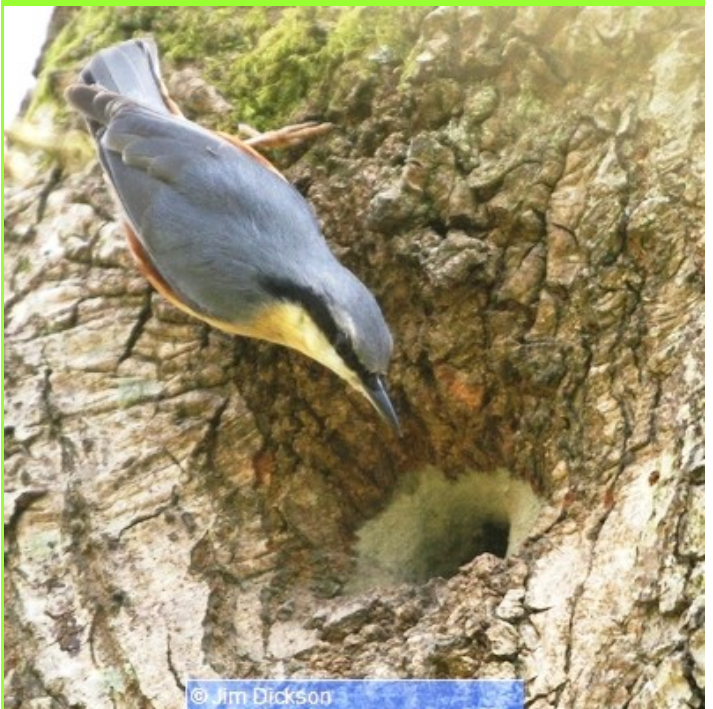
Long-eared Owl. One at Glengorm, Mull on 3 May was thought possibly to be feeding young (Julian Bray).

Short-eared Owl. A male was calling in Glen Lonan, Mid-Argyll on 21 February (Mike Harrison) and four were seen mobbing a Golden Eagle at Ensay, Mull on 26 April (Anand Prasad).

Common Swift (see Spring Migrants table). One was seen in Campbeltown on the evening of 4 April (Eddie Maguire). This is by far the earliest ever record for Argyll – the previous earliest was on Islay, on 10 April 1995. Amazingly this was one of three reported in Scotland 3 - 5 April 2011.

Passerines:

Sand Martin. At least 31 were counted at Ensay, Mull on 24 April (Anand Prasad).



Nuthatch at Ardkinglas © Jim Dickson

Blue-headed Wagtail. A male was seen at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree at lunchtime on 5 May.

White Wagtail. At least 40 White Wagtails were on Crossapol beach, Coll on 28 April (Simon Wellock).

Waxwing. Six were photographed sitting on top of a street light at Sandbank, Cowal on 4 March (Callum Satchel) and a very late bird was seen well at the top of a small tree in a garden at Benderloch, North Argyll on 13 April (Jane Eccles). Spring records are unusual in Argyll.

Dipper. A pair were engaged in courtship display at Ensay, Mull on 23 February and at least one possibly two fledged young were seen there on 25 April (Anand Prasad).

Black Redstart. A female was seen in High Glenadale (near Southend), Kintyre on 21 April (Neil Brown). On 23 April a beautiful male in breeding plumage was seen and photographed in a garden at Spion Kop (near Kennacraig), Kintyre (Val Wells and David Bridges). They must be the only people in Argyll to have this species on their garden bird list! A female was reported at Gribun (by Loch na Keal), Mull in the first week of May (per Alan Spellman).

Common Stonechat. Scarce everywhere, including on Tiree where only a few pairs were noted in April (John Bowler). So, two at the Add Estuary and two at Loch na Cille (Loch Sween) on 17 April was encouraging (Bill Allan) and two were in the Otter Ferry area in early May (Tom Callan).

Grasshopper Warbler. One was seen well singing on fence wire at start of road to Crinan Ferry on 26 April. It showed heavy streaking on the throat that made it look as though it had a large round spot on throat with streaking on sides. Apparently this is not uncommon but one doesn't normally get a good enough view of one to see it!

Wood Warbler. At least 18 were heard singing in woods along the east shore of Loch Fyne N of Otter Ferry on 6 May (Tom Callan). Very encouraging for a species that is nationally in steep decline.

Long-tailed Tit. A small wintering flock of 6 or more were at Ensay, Mull on 5 February (Anand Prasad).

Blue Tit. One at Balephuill, Tiree on 23 March was a new species for John Bowler's garden bird list!

Eurasian Nuthatch. A pair were found nest building at a site at Ardkinglas, Cowal this spring by Glyn Toplis and their progress has been followed with keen anticipation. On 22 May they were seen carrying faecal sacs from the nest site indicating that it contained young (Bill Allan). **This constitutes the first confirmed breeding record for Argyll.** Let's hope it's the first of many.

One has been reported coming to feeders in a garden in Port Ann (near Lochgilphead) during early April (per Jim Dickson) We are keen to receive all records of Nuthatches seen in Argyll so that we can map their (hoped for) spread in the county.

Lesser Grey Shrike. One was reported near the Abbey on Iona on 4 May by Anthony & Alana Sharp, visitors from Cornwall. A description for BBRC has been provided and if accepted it will be only the fourth Argyll record: the last being on Tiree in June 2008.

Magpie. One was seen in a garden near Slockavullin (near

Lochgilphead) on 14 April: the first there for nearly 5 years (Brian John) and one was seen in Taynuilt, Mid-Argyll on 28 April, again well outwith the normal range (Dunoon area) in Argyll (Barry Bramley). One on a roof in Connel, also on 28 April may possibly have been the same bird? (Mike Harrison) and one was seen in the Gruinart area of Islay during April and May (I & M. Brooke),

Tree Sparrow. One was seen on Oa, Islay in February and early March (per Catherine Fotheringham).

Brambling. A female was at a bird feeder at Tullochgorm (Minard) Mid-Argyll on 25 February (Paul Daw), single birds were still being seen in a garden in Dunoon until 19 March (George Newall), a male was at Ardlamont, Cowal on 24 March (Tom Callan), a female was in the garden at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 3 April (Tom Callan) and a female at Carnan Mor on 30 April was a rare spring visitor to Tiree (John Bowler).

Goldfinch. A flock of approx. 35 were seen at Moine Mhor, Mid-Argyll on 15 February (Bill Allan).

Twite. A impressive total of 216 was counted at "The Broad-billed Sandpiper" Islay on 25 March (per Catherine Fotheringham).

Common Crossbill. Crossbills were still being seen in unusual numbers including a pair at Blairintibberth, on the hill above Bellanoch Bridge, during the Big Garden Bird Watch on 20 February (Bill Alexander). Four in a garden in Dunoon on 2 April included a juvenile (George Newall)

Hawfinch. One was reported in the forestry north of Carra-dale, Kintyre on 14 March (description awaited) (David Lord).

Lapland Bunting. One was at Killinallan, Islay on 2 February (per I & M. Brooke), singles were on Tiree at Balephetrish on 11 April and Traigh nan Gilean on 12 April and two at Loch a' Phuill on 24 April included a male in breeding plumage (John Bowler).

Snow Bunting. One was at Kilnaughton Bay, Islay on 10 March (Ian Brooke).

Paul Daw 30 May 2011.



Magpie on a Connel rooftop © Mike Harrison

**Articles for the September issue of the
Eider should with the Editor before the
24th August 2011**

**Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club
(2009/2010)**

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

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Committee: Richard Allan (Oban), Tom Callan (Otter Ferry), Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilphead), Danielle Clark-De Bisschop (Colintraive), Paul Daw (Minard), Mike Harrison (Connel), Andy Robinson (Partick), David War-den (Kilfinan) and Mark Williamson (Kilberry).

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Mystery Bird: Lesser Canada Goose on Islay



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

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

The *Eider* is published during the first week of March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor before the 24th day of the month prior to publication. However, it greatly helps if material can be submitted well before these deadline dates. Contributions are accepted in the order they are received, which may result in some late submissions being held over until the next issue.

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

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

More about the Argyll Bird Club

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

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

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

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