

September 2011
Number 98

The Eider



Annual General Meeting: Minutes

Argyll Bird Club Annual Accounts

Autumn Indoor Meeting Programme

Field Trip Reports

Notes

Recent Reports

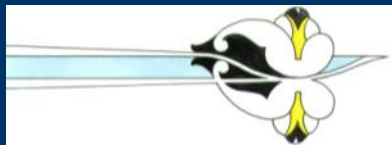
Sparrowhawk eying up the menu © M Williamson

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Acknowledgements

John Bowler, David Bridge, Tom Callan, Malcolm Chatwood, Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, Mark Fanshawe, Bob and Sue Furness, Keith Gillon, Mike Harrison, Alison Lindsay, Bob McGowan, Eddie Maguire, David Palmar, Katie Pendreigh, Nigel Scriven



What is the mystery bird?
See back page for the answer

Editorial

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Eider. I hope you will enjoy the latest offering— articles are always welcome, whatever the size. It certainly has been a strange year weatherwise and yet the birds have continued to impress with their ability to get on with breeding come what may. In the previous edition I commented on the arrival of large numbers of Willow warblers in the spring and this was confirmed by other observers across Scotland. Equally, there seems to have been a mass exodus during the middle of August of many of the summer visitors. Migrants such as Swallows and Sand Martins certainly left the Kilberry area very quickly and only stragglers are now being noted. On the other hand however, resident birds such as Blue Tits and Great Tits have done well in my garden- numbers of young have not been affected and in some cases have probably increased, much to the delight of a young Sparrowhawk. Life can be so cruel at times.

Bonapartes Gull, Tiree



Argyll Rare Bird Sightings Grapevine

Would you like to know more about the occurrence of rare and unusual birds in Argyll? and would you be interested in participating in an Argyll Bird Club email news sharing group? Then,

the following proposal may interest you.

Paul Daw and Jim Dickson are occasionally notified about unusual bird occurrences in Argyll. However, it is not always clear who else in the club would like to share this information. Not all members of the bird club are interested in rare birds, and relative to other regions of Scotland, Argyll has very few 'twitchers'. However, some members do take an active interest in finding rare and unusual birds and an email 'grapevine' may be useful.

As well as rarities there are lots of other ornithological events that members can share, for example, the arrivals of Waxwings and autumn thrushes, passage of seabirds and waders, occurrences of white-winged gulls etc.

It is hoped a good number of members will be interested enough to participate in such an email group and by sharing their sightings with the rest of the group. Paul and Jim can also pass on any relevant sightings they hear about.

Argyll Bird Club members who have emails known to the club will be contacted soon and given the chance to join in. Hopefully you can be part of the action!


Jim Dickson

Field Trips

Saturday 29th October	Trip to Machrihanish and the surrounding area
Saturday 26th November	WeBs Training Day
Saturday 31st December	Tayinloan

Fuller details of these trips and the training day will be circulated by email once they are known.

ABC Autumn indoor meeting 2011

 <p>ARGYLL BIRD CLUB</p>	<p>AUTUMN MEETING PROGRAMME</p> <p>Saturday 5th November 2011</p> <p>Argyll Arms Hotel, Inveraray</p>	 <p>www.argyllbirdclub.org</p>
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0930 Doors open and coffee/tea

0950 - 1000 Welcome & introduction - *Nigel Scriven, Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club*

1000 - 1030 **Recent birds sightings and photographs** - *Paul Daw, Argyll Bird Recorder*

1030 - 1115 **Progress on the Argyll Beaver Project** – *Simon Jones, Scottish Wildlife Trust*

1115 - 1130 Coffee/tea

1130 - 1215 **Birdtrack** - *James Bray, BTO Scotland*

1215 - 1345 Lunch (available in the hotel)

1345 - 1415 **AGM**

1420 - 1500 **Images of St Kilda** - *David Palmar, www.photoscot.co.uk*

1500 - 1520 **The many challenges of trapping mink on Seil** – *Richard Wesley, Seil Natural History Group*

1520 - 1540 Tea/coffee

1540 - 1600 **Identification Workshop** - *Paul Daw*

1600 - 1615 Raffle and summing up

Field Trip Accounts

Argyll Bird Club Field Trip, Saturday 30th July 2011 Circular route from Clachan Village Hall Car Park

On the same weekend last year the same four members had assembled in pouring rain and debated the wisdom of setting out in pouring rain. This year the weather was warm & sunny with a welcome light breeze and there was neither debate nor any doubt that the trip would go ahead as planned. The contrast in conditions served to highlight the differences that the weather can make in the number of individual species and where they may be seen. On the previous trip the track down Clachan Burn towards the shore was blessed with large numbers of swallows & sand martins feeding under the trees & three separate families of spotted flycatchers but this year there were none. Even large patches of thistles were notable for their lack of feeding goldfinches which would have been expected. Two of our number appeared to be spending more time spotting butterflies rather than birds although in fairness this was through interest rather than in desperation. Upon reaching the shore at the mouth of the burn a family party of mute swans was interesting in that the two adults were accompanied by two juveniles but their plumage suggested they had been born in separate years. Unlike last year divers were present at the entrance to West Loch Tarbert & we were treated to excellent views of two of the red throated variety whose throats were visible as bright red in the good light. It was interesting to compare the plumage & body shape of these two birds with a nearby black throated diver which although was mainly "tail on" showed its white flanks very well. As an added bonus the black throated bird took off and provided an excellent impression of the species in flight providing an image that could be mentally compared with the distinctive neck-down flight profile of the more common red throated species. A single dunlin resting in the middle of the burn only 15 metres from a couple who were enjoying the sun outside their tent would perhaps win the prize for the most unexpected bird/situation combination of the day. Common scoter, shag, cormorant & eider were all seen in this area. We left the shore to regain the main track by crossing a field where good views were obtained of willow warblers feeding on insects in the manner of spotted flycatchers using the barbed wire fence as a perch. Butterflies regained brief dominance in our attentions as good numbers of Scotch Argus were identified. Having noted the good numbers of lesser redpolls along the shore track we took lunch sitting on a low wall overlooking the shore. We disturbed a single curlew, our first oystercatchers of the day were seen & heard & a party of three common sandpipers flitted low over the water to land on a rock.

Calmac's new ferry Finlaggan hove into view on its lunchtime sailing to Islay which prompted a discussion on the suitability of its external accommodation for the many birders who would be making the passage to the Island in search of geese, choughs & other specialities. The writer had travelled on the vessel two days earlier and whilst the needs of birders probably weren't a major component of Calmac's design specification he was able to report that open deck space is accessible both under the bridge and on two decks at the stern. Low levels of vibration were experienced which meant that images obtained through binoculars were consequently pretty good which is not always a feature of other vessels in the fleet. The ship knocks twenty minutes off existing journey times which is good for most passengers but not necessarily for birders!

Back to the birding & Katie alone had been lucky enough to see a redstart flit into low trees adjacent to the track. The rest of the group's disappointment at missing this bird was short lived as a simultaneous cry of "redstart" from all four of us reminded us how distinctive features like a bright red tail can be helpful when identifying a bird from a glimpse of it in flight. Better views were had of a family of redstarts perching on fence posts at Portachoillan whilst further along the long awaited spotted flycatchers were seen with excellent views of a young bird being fed by its parents. Leaving the shore passing Corran farm we soon reached the quarry where around 70 sand martin nest holes were counted last year. This year, however, the quarry was obviously active on a regular basis and it was unclear whether the nest holes in the overlying soil were active but certainly there were none visible in the dust pile. The walk back along the road to the village only added woodpigeon to the list but the kestrels that we had seen close to the start of the walk were still hovering over the fields in the hunt for food. Although it may seem a bit unambitious to repeat field trips, the contrast in conditions compared to last year resulted in a different species list, the creation of plenty of interest and the hope that others may join us for another excellent trip next year.

Malcolm Chattwood

Birds seen:

Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, Common Shelduck, Mallard, Common Eider, Common Scoter, Red-throated Diver, Black-throated Diver, Northern Gannet, Great Cormorant, Shag, Grey Heron, Common Buzzard, Common Kestrel, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Eurasian Curlew, Common Sandpiper, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Black Guillemot, Wood Pigeon, Sand Martin, Barn Swallow, House Martin, Meadow Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Robin, Common Redstart, Northern Wheatear, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Common Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Rook, Hooded Crow, Carrion Crow, Common Raven, Common Starling, House Sparrow, Common Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll, Reed Bunting

ARGYLL BIRD CLUB – Field Trip Report
Sea-watching from the Islay Ferry, 27 August
2011



Wild Jura landscape from Islay ©David Palmar
www.photoscot.co.uk

There was no sign of the forecast fresh north-westerly breeze when seven members arrived at Kennacraig ferry terminal on Saturday 27 August. Conditions instead were overcast and almost calm. The new ferry, MV Finlaggan, was already berthed as we had a look round the terminal area and the surrounding mudflats. A group of Swallows was feeding over the trees while Oystercatchers chased noisily across the shore. A single Greenshank was feeding in the pools. Three Redshank, two Grey Herons and a Curlew were also visible. A group of five Mute Swans approached

the ferry and its queue of passengers as if expecting a free lunch.

Once underway a few Eiders were seen; their dull brown eclipse plumage partially replaced by patches of new white feathers. Divers were scarce; one Red-throated Diver was seen fairly close by and two possible Great Northern Divers seen at a distance in West Loch Tarbert were all we could manage. Grey Herons were seen at intervals along the shore of the loch and several Shags and a Cormorant were on the skerries at the mouth of the loch. Having left West



Guillemots from the Islay ferry ©David Palmar
www.photoscot.co.uk

Loch Tarbert there was an absence of birdlife for a while but we eventually started to see a scattering of young Auks, followed by some larger groups of Guillemots and Razorbills with young. Several large groups of Kittiwakes were seen feeding with small numbers of Manx Shearwaters and the occasional

Gannet joining in with them. The wind had started to freshen by this time and the cloudy sky was slowly clearing as we approached the Sound of Islay and, although there were fewer seabirds, there were several Mute Swans close to the Jura shore near Am Fraoch Eilean. The local Shags were standing shoulder to shoulder as the tide slowly covered the small skerries. As we approached Port Askaig two White-tailed Eagles were pointed out perching in one of the Scots Pine trees just above the beacon on the Islay shore. The ensuing frenzy of photography only finished when the ship was so far into Port Askaig that the birds were lost to view.

The ferry did not spend long in Port Askaig, much to the chagrin of those members who elected to continue bird watching from the beer garden of the Harbour Tap, before heading back down the sound past the eagles. The return passage was similar to the outward, though sailing downwind was welcome as the wind continued to strengthen. Kittiwakes were by far the most numerous species seen in the open water between the Sound of Islay and West Loch Tarbert. Once into the loch, by now in brilliant sunshine, a flock of about 90 Red-breasted Mergansers was seen close to the southern shore. Finally, a Sandwich Tern was spotted amongst a loose flock of Common Gulls as a Buzzard soared over the nearby forest. As we left the ferry at Kennacraig we reflected on an enjoyable trip on which we had seen many more seabirds than on the same trip last year, but we will need to come back again for the rarities.



White– Tailed Eagles by Port Askaig, Islay
©David Palmar www.photoscot.co.uk

Species List :

Red-throated Diver	Red-breasted Merganser	Great Black-backed Gull
Great Northern Diver	White-tailed Eagle	Black-legged Kittiwake
Manx Shearwater	Common Buzzard	Sandwich Tern
Northern Gannet	Eurasian Oystercatcher	Common Guillemot
Great Cormorant	Eurasian Curlew	Razorbill
European Shag	Common Redshank	Black Guillemot
Grey Heron	Common Greenshank	Barn Swallow
Mute Swan	Black-headed Gull	Pied Wagtail
Mallard	Common Gull	Hooded Crow
Common Eider	Herring Gull	

Mike Harrison

Notes

Unexpected, and all the better for it.....

This is the first of an occasional series drawing attention to an aspect of our interest that is often overlooked at the expense of collecting the ticks or chasing signature species. Loch Garten has its place but I'm sure many of us would prefer just to "happen" upon an Osprey at one of our local lochs. It's also an invitation to perhaps look

at birds in a different way and will hopefully encourage members to share their similar experiences.

The tick doesn't matter:

On a recent holiday in the south of France my family climbed to the Chapel de Notre Dame de Mai above Cap Sicié near Toulon. The reason was two -fold. Firstly, to obtain excellent views from 360m above the waves along the Mediterranean coast and over Toulon towards the limestone massif of Mount Caume and Mount Faron. Secondly, there may be some birds of prey around with the distinct possibility of seeing a Bonelli's eagle. The view didn't disappoint and we certainly saw eagles but as is often the case they weren't in view for very long and were silhouetted against the light – we've all been there & experienced the frustration. The frustration was compounded when the single eagle turned into four and then nine but by this time the birds were mere dots circling a crest some distance away.

The following week we repeated the exercise with similar hopes of seeing eagles & cautiously optimistic that the view may be good enough to raise the status from probable to definite. Sure enough an eagle appeared but sighted at an angle that would make identification difficult for someone who is competent in bird of prey identification, but impossible for someone who is rather less competent (less familiar is perhaps a kinder way of expressing it). The drama of sighting an eagle and the frustration of again struggling to identify it was forgotten with the appearance of two peregrines who did not seem too impressed by the presence of the larger raptor. They proceeded to harry the eagle with a series of stoops and dives from ever greater height and with increasing boldness. After a few attempts to drive the eagle off, the trio disappeared below the edge of the cliff and that was the end of that. So, were we disappointed by the absence of a tick for Bonelli's eagle, Booted eagle or whatever it was? Absolutely not. We'd witnessed one of nature's greatest predators in action, using its skill and speed, not against its usual humble prey, but against another big-league avian hunter. There's always another time for the tick in the box when hopefully there'll be better lighting, a better angle and, most importantly, a bit more time to take it all in.

Malcolm Chattwood

On the other hand.....



Lifetime opportunity to see the Matterhorn....

In February this year I had the opportunity to visit Switzerland for a weeks holiday. The first thoughts I had were of the birds I might find; the scenery I hoped to see and the opportunities I would have to visit places of historical interest. As a parent, I was mindful of the fact that all of this would have to be creatively balanced around the children's needs!

I needn't have worried as the children were just as interested in seeing as much as possible of this beautiful country. So, what actually stood out on this holiday? Well, as you can imagine, there were many moments: The view of the alps as we flew into Geneva,

Lake Geneva itself with its mass of water birds, the old town of Geneva, the stunning views of the Matterhorn and Zermatt and the woodland birds along the path to the foot of the Matterhorn. A Golden Eagle impressed the whole family on a walk up to the top of the Tour d'Ai– soaring high into the air and then stooping for hundreds of feet below us– before levelling out and beginning the whole process again– a magical sight. Early one morning, after a light fall of snow, I decided to walk up from Leysin, where we were staying, to the forests above. I decided not to take my camera and of course, the birds decided to put in an appearance– Alpine Accentor on a bird table, Nutcracker above my head in a small stand of pine trees. The star moment however, had to be when I drove the children into a small quarry I nicknamed Wallcreeper quarry– the photo below says the rest....



A lifelong ambition was finally fulfilled when this stunning Wallcreeper landed on a rock face in front of the car– even the children were excited....

M Williamson

Annual General Meeting

Committee Nominations:

Richard Allan will stand down from the Club committee at the AGM in November. Many, many thanks are extended to Richard for his invaluable contribution on behalf of the BTO and in general committee matters. Obviously, the committee will be one short– in fact, since Danielle stepped down last year, we will actually be two short. Please consider joining the committee– **your committee definitely needs you!!** If you would like to find out more about what is involved please feel free to contact any of the committee members listed on the last page of the Eider.

Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club held at Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday, 6th November, 2010

1. **Apologies:** Sue and Malcolm Chattwood, Peter and Margaret Staley
2. **Minutes of the 2009 AGM:** proposed by Ian Hopkins and seconded by Douglas Barker
3. **Matters arising, not covered in the following items:** none
4. **Chairman's report:** Another year has passed, and so has another milestone. This time it is 25 years of the Club. When Colin Galbraith put in motion the wheels that set the Club up all those years ago, little did we imagine then that we would be where we are today. There have been many changes in the way we do things, from record cards to databases, from typewriters to laptops, stamps to email, transparencies to digital imaging, and the website. Fortunately the Club has prospered, and our financial position has become secure enough to consider a range of projects to promote the aims of the Club. This is a result of several circumstances: the growth in the membership, the recent move to biennial bird reports, and the financial surplus from the "Birds of Argyll." The fruits of this success have included upgrading of computer equipment, the purchase of the digital projector and the PA system.
Gone are the days when I could write this on one page of A4. To condense it down would not do justice to the breadth of the Club's activities over the last year.
Among the highlights of the autumn meeting last year were the talks on 100 years of bird ringing by Mark Grantham from the BTO, and Bob Furness's amazing ability to convince us that we could all easily discriminate Common and Arctic Terns in flight. The spring meeting took place at Easdale Hall on Seil, thanks to Richard Allan who arranged this venue, which worked very well. St Kilda and Alaska's birds were the morning focus. In the afternoon the inventive technology of tracking seabirds at sea with Bob Furness opened up a whole new vision of seabird ecology. Continuing the series on identification, Paul Daw took us through the challenge of warblers in Argyll.
I am particularly pleased to say that the monthly field trip programme has bedded in securely, with regular attendances, and even suggestions of some mid-week excursions. Venues covered include Skipness, Tayinloan, Gigha, Clachan, Add estuary, L. Caolisport and Holy Loch. While some sites are regularly good and deservedly popular, it is always good to try somewhere new, so if anyone has a local patch they could share with others, please let us know. You will get the opportunity to try out the fabulous newly donated Club telescope, which is the Rolls-Royce of scopes.
The Club has bought 200 durable woodcrete nest boxes to encourage hole-nesting birds. Many of these remain to be deployed, once suitable sites have been identified, but can contribute to one of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Projects. We been assisting the Seil Natural History Group with resources in their Mink Control Project, and also supporting the SAMS tern raft project run by Clive Craik. We hope to continue using a portion of our financial reserves for these and similar conservation projects.
That the Club's Eider Newsletter has continued to arrive in the inbox or through letterbox has been due to the diligent efforts of Mark Williamson, who has taken up the editorial reins so competently. He can't do it without contributions though, so thanks also to the contributors of text and images that make it such an event to

anticipate. Please keep sending your copy in.

The Bird Report for 2006 & 2007 came out early in 2010, gaining more ground in the race to keep up, so thanks to Tom Callan, Paul Daw and the team of compilers. Quite when the on-line reporting system does eventually go live is hard to say. However the Excel spreadsheet system of data entry does make uploading to the database very much simpler.

Next, the Club's website, to which Danielle Clarke has given a new look, refining the site and adding new features. The downside of this is that it becomes more onerous to keep up to date, so we are trying to spread this burden. With other pressures, Danielle is standing down from the committee this year, and is sharing the website administration across a small team. We shall miss her valuable contributions, and thank her for her largely unseen hard work burning the midnight oil, but without which we would be much the poorer. If you have any comments to make about this, can I suggest that you go to the website forum, which Danielle set up as it needs more input to make it work better.

I am continually grateful to our committee, not only for attending meetings, come rain, flood, snow and sometimes shine, but also for the significant contributions made between meetings. This now includes responding on the Club's behalf to various consultations that are a feature of 21st Century Scotland. Notable this year was the SPA Designations for Golden Eagle, and the revision of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, which we are pleased to be part of. The new members have proved their worth, and a new venture this year was the photographic competition, which David Warden put in much effort to set up, and deserves thanks. My thanks also go to Bob and Sue Furness for managing our financial and membership business. My special thanks to Katie Pendreigh, not only for her prompt production of minutes, but also the numerous other things that make such a difference to the smooth running of the Club, and don't seem to be getting any less in number, especially in this anniversary year. Lastly, this time, I can also thank Colin Galbraith for starting the whole thing off.

Nigel Scriven

5. Secretary's Report: Interesting, varied and lively discussion took place at each of the four committee meetings held this year, in October 2009, and February, May and October 2010 at the Argyll Hotel, Inveraray. They all started at as near to 7 p.m. as possible and finished by 10 p.m. at the latest to allow members, who live a long distance from Inveraray, to reach home at a reasonable time.

On the agenda for each meeting was the request for updates to be given to the committee by Paul regarding the handling of Bird Records and the Argyll Bird Report, by Danielle regarding management of the website and by Richard on the progress of the BTO Atlas. These reports were followed by the discussion of any issues arising. time was allocated to allow the discussion of the best ways to use the club's funds with a view to assisting the conservation of Argyll bird life and biodiversity, educating future generations in these matters and promoting the Argyll Bird Club - several decisions were reached and acted on.

After some debating, the Club's reply to a communication on the Scottish Government's proposal to allocate Specially Protected Areas for Golden eagles was drawn up, also, our response to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan was discussed and relevant comments were forwarded as appropriate.

On a lighter note, the idea of a photographic competition was promoted and organised. Also, suggestions were put forward, and arrangements made for making this Silver Jubilee Anniversary meeting into a special and celebratory occasion and initial plans were made for the Spring Meeting to be held in Dunoon on Saturday 12th March, 2011. The Club's Public Liability Insurance policy was again renewed for another year with Golden Valley Insurance Services and the same company undertook the insurance of the telescope which was so generously donated to the club. This state of the art Swarovski telescope, together with tripod and dig scoping adaptor, is taken to our monthly outings for the use of those present, and is also available for short term loan to members by request. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator accepted the accounts of the Argyll Bird Club allowing us to maintain our charitable status for another year.

Sadly, Danielle has decided to step down from the committee; however, she has offered to continue to work with Paul on the bird recording programme and will attend club meetings and outings as in the past. Richard has intimated his intention to stand down from his position as BTO representative after the current 4 year Atlas period ends on 31st July 2011. I do hope someone will come forward to continue with his excellent work. As well as bringing to the attention of Argyll bird watchers (whether Club members or not) the many surveys run by the BTO, and encouraging participation in them, Richard has been carrying out much of the organisation towards ensuring that Argyll Timed Tetrad Visit surveys in respect of the BTO Atlas have been carried out and recorded.

I would like to thank Nigel and the committee for all their help and support throughout the year at meetings,

and also with coping with my computer, and correcting typos and other mistakes in the minutes.

Katie Pendreigh

6. Treasurer's report for financial year 2009-2010: *Members were referred to the Statement of Accounts for the year from 16th April, 2009 - 15th April, 2010 which had been published in the Eider and were also showing on the screen throughout the A.G.M.* Our assets at the end of the year stood at £22,356.96. However, the income from the book has begun to diminish, and our stock of copies is also much reduced so this source of income will be at a much lower level in future. Income from subscriptions was at the highest level on record. Income from bank interest fell dramatically with the reduction in interest rates to minimal levels. The new savings account we opened (a charities investment account) with Abbey, offered 30 times the interest rate given by the Bank of Scotland treasurer's account. Most of our savings were transferred to Abbey but the BoS account remained open to receive subscription income and for routine expenditures. However, the Abbey reduced their interest rate also to a negligible level so we closed the Abbey account and returned the money to the Bank of Scotland treasurer's account. Income labelled as "Field Trips" represents payments made by club members for meals at the spring 2009 meeting on Islay and the spring 2010 meeting at Seil.

Expenditure was deliberately increased this year to make best use of the income we obtained from the book, so our expenditure includes both normal activities plus extra ones. We published the 2006-07 Argyll Bird Report towards the end of this financial year. Newsletter photocopying costs cover issues from 2008 to 2010. Postage rates have increased, and we now routinely have issues of the Eider that have to be sent as large letters rather than the lowest postal category as our newsletters tend to be more pages now than had been typical in previous years. Public meeting costs look particularly high in 2009-10 but part of this is due to the fact that there were three meetings that fell into this financial year as the as the spring 2009 meeting on Islay was in April. In addition, extra meals costs were added to the budget because it was easier to pay centrally with a Bird Club cheque for the meeting dinner on Islay and the lunches at Seil. This Balanced by the income of £960 paid by members to the club for these meals. Insurance's costs were increased to add insurance of the club's telescope now available for monthly field trips. A donation of £500 was given towards the construction of the new hide at Sandbank. We bought presents to give to David Wood and Steve Petty when they retired from the Bird Club committee. Major extra costs included £1,995 spent on nest boxes to be put up in Argyll's oak woods to encourage Pied flycatchers, £22,356.96. About £2000 of this has been earmarked for renovation costs for the tern nesting raft on Loch Etive, and £500 for mink eradication efforts on Seil. A further £10, 000 is being set aside in case it can be used for land acquisition should an opportunity arise to develop a suitable site in Argyll for a habitat such as a wetland scrape.

Bob Furness, 1 May, 2010

7. Membership Secretary's report: Our number of paid up memberships is currently the highest on record. At the end of the financial year 2009-10 (April 2010) we had a total of 247 memberships, including a good number of family memberships, though a few members have not yet responded to a request for subscription renewal so may lapse. Therefore we have approximately 370 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships.

Sue Furness, 1 May 2010

8. Future field trips: Meeting at 10.00 a.m. unless otherwise stated

07-11-2010 Meet Paul Daw at Bellanoch Bridge for outing to Loch Sween .

27-11-2010 Meeting Katie at Tayinloan Car park to explore local shore both North and South.

29-01-2011 Meet Mark Williamson at Ormsary Estate Community Centre Car Park for a walk along the shore of Loch Caolisport beyond the river mouth and taking in the fish farm and to Ardpark Estate in the afternoon.

26-02-2011 Details of outing to Appin to be finalised nearer the time.

Nigel, having reported that the new owner of Sanda lives in Sweden and has organised for a boat to be based at Southend, volunteered to arrange a trip there early next year. He urged those present to share their favourite bird watching walks with other Club members.

9. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members: Nigel and the committee member's en block, stood down in order to allow proposals to be put forward for the coming year. Previously, Nigel had indicated his willingness to continue as chairman if there were no other volunteers and his name was duly proposed by Mike Wall and seconded by Hedde Merry. The position of vice-chairman had been vacant for several years and Mike Harrison, having agreed earlier to have his name put forward, was proposed by Richard Allan and seconded by Danielle Clark. With the exception of Dannielle who did not want her name put up for re-election, the remainder of the Committee and office bearers, as well as Sue Furness, were proposed en-bloc by Nigel and seconded by David Merrie.

10. **A.O.C.B.** Josey Hall asked the committee to consider the possibility of ABC using some of its funds to provide a bursary to a school or college towards starting a bird related project. Bob put forward the idea of organising field trips involving children e.g. ringing owls although Mike pointed out the possible obstacles caused by the vetting/disclosure system which would have to be addressed when dealing with children and vulnerable people. Rab Brown promoted support for mink eradication programmes and especially one on Sanda, and Paul suggested the idea, popular among those present at the meeting, for funding a second tern raft in view of the success of the first.

26th Year Accounts: 16 April 2010 – 15 April 2011

<i>Income</i>	2010/2011	2009/2010
Subscription	2582.23	2666.23
Sales	1092.00	2412.00
Bank Interest	21.04	29.77
Other (raffles, donations, etc)	208.00	210.00
25 year dinner	825.00	0.00
Field Trips	0.00	960.00
Total	4728.27	6,278.00
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Bird Report	0.00	2145.00
Newsletter photocopying	0.00	871.20
Postage	226.73	879.67
Bird Recorder expenses	43.41	120.26
Public meetings	840.77	2028.50
Insurance	239.70	243.35
Sandbank hide	0.00	500.00
Gifts	0.00	94.26
Licences/web site	81.22	846.67
Nestboxes	0.00	1995.00
Equipment	125.99	2073.05
Photo competition	100.00	0.00
Grants	2663.35	0.00
25 year dinner	825.00	0.00
Refund of overpayment	50.00	0.00
Total	5196.17	11,796.96
Surplus/Deficit for year	-467.90	-5518.96
Brought forward	22,356.96	27,875.92
Assets at end of year	21,889.06	22,356.96

As Trustees of Argyll Bird Club we certify that these figures accurately reflect the financial position of the club.

Nigel Scriven Chairman

Bob Furness Treasurer

Argyll Bird Club Treasurer's Report for financial year 2010-2011

Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £21,889.06, a reduction of £467.90 from the previous year. However, the income from the book has decreased considerably, and our stock of copies is also much reduced, with just a few boxes remaining. Income from subscriptions was slightly lower than the record level of 2009/10, with few new members and several leaving the club. Income from bank interest fell further, with the reduction in interest rates to minimal levels. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contribute items to be raffled. Income labelled as "25 year dinner" represents payments made by club members for the special dinner at the Cairnbaan Hotel to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the club.

Expenditure was deliberately increased this year to make best use of the income we obtained from the book, so our expenditure includes both normal activities plus extra ones. No bird report was published in 2010/11 and photocopying costs for the Eider in this year were carried forward to the next financial year so have yet to be included in accounts. Postage rates have increased, and we now routinely have issues of the Eider that have to be sent as large letters rather than the lowest postal category as our newsletters tend to have more pages now than had been typical in previous years. But with fewer books to post to purchasers, the overall expenditure on postage was reduced this year, and also took advantage of a surplus of 1st and 2nd class stamps built up in previous years at prices before those were increased. Public meeting costs were particularly high in 2009-10 due to the fact that there were three meetings that fell into that financial year as the spring 2009 meeting on Islay was in April. Meeting costs in 2010/11 were much lower. Insurance costs included insurance of the club's telescope and binoculars now available for monthly field trips, as well as third party cover. Web site registration costs also fell partly outside the financial year for these accounts so this year's sum is unusually low. We spent £125.99 on purchase of a PA system for use at indoor meetings, and £100 in prizes for the club's photographic competition. A substantial grant was given for repair and enlargement of tern nesting rafts on Loch Etive, and a much smaller grant for equipment for mink control at Seil. Expenditure on the 25th anniversary dinner was simply to facilitate paying the hotel with a single payment for the meal, club members having paid the cost to the club in advance. The refund of £50 was to a member who paid for the dinner but was forced to cancel.

We continue to look for sensible ways to use the cash that has been accumulated by the club over the last decade.

Bob Furness, 1 May 2011.

Membership Secretary's Report

Our number of memberships has declined slightly from last year's highest on record. At the end of financial year 2010-11 (April 2011) we had a total of 225 memberships, including a good number of family memberships, though a few members have not yet responded to a request for subscription renewal, so may lapse. However, the majority of members now pay by standing order which greatly simplifies administration. We have approximately 340 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships. The decline in numbers of new members joining this year is slightly unexpected and it is unclear why this has occurred although it may simply indicate that quite significant numbers of people had joined the club on a short-term basis in order to buy "Birds of Argyll" at the reduced rate for club members. It should be noted that the photographic competition, although held in association with a local newspaper, apparently did not lead to any noticeable increase in new members.

Sue Furness, 1 May 2011.

Recent Reports

June-August
2011

Paul Daw

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e-mail:

monedula@globalnet.co.uk

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



Common Nightingale photo
©by Mark Fanshawe

STOP PRESS.

A **Hoopoe** was seen and photographed in a garden just south of Duror (between Appin and Ballachulish - NM9854) by Alison and Tom McCallum on 7 September. It was still there at 19:00hrs and will presumably be heading south shortly. The sighting was just outwith the Argyll recording area so we're hoping it will appear in a garden near you next!

Nuthatches – the spread continues.

One was photographed by Tom Callan at Otter Ferry on 6 September. It was first noted in the area by a neighbour, on 6 August. After a gap of some weeks a Nuthatch was seen by Glyn Toplis on the nut feeder at Ardkinglas on 1 September. So far we have no information as to whether the pair nesting there successfully raised young.

A **Common Nightingale** found at Vaul, Tiree on 3 September was still there on 8 September (Keith Gillon/Mark Fanshawe). A very rare migrant in Argyll.

WILDFOWL (and GAMEBIRDS):

Mute Swan. One was at the north end of Loch Frisa, Mull on 5 June (Anand Prasad) and a single was at various locations on Islay in June (per Ian Brooke). A group of 27 at Inverawe, Loch Etive on 9 Aug was an unusually large gathering and a single Whooper Swan was with them (Mike Harrison). A pair with 4 large young were at Loch Craiglin (Loch Sween) on 3 Aug and a pair with 4 young, two white, two brown (current and previous year's brood?) were at New Ulva (Loch Sween) on 10 Aug (Tom Callan).

Whooper Swan. One with Mute Swans on Loch Etive (see above).

Greylag Goose. A total of 380 were at Nave Island, Islay on 23 July (Bob Davidson). An all island count on Tiree 31 August 1 September found a total of 2,236 birds. Of 1943 aged, 645 (33.2%) were juveniles with a mean brood size of 2.69 (N= 239 broods) (John Bowler). A total of 1,120 were found at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 16 Aug (James How).

A flock of at least 50 were with Canada Geese in fields near Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) on 8 Aug (Paul Daw).

Greater Canada Goose. A flock of at least 550 were in fields near Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) on 8 Aug (Paul Daw). This is the largest flock reported so far in Argyll and is probably an indication of the relentless increase in the local population.

Snow Goose. One was with Greylag Geese at the usual site at the Craobh Haven turn off the A816 on 8 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Common Shelduck. The first ducklings seen at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory were a brood of on 5 June (Eddie Maguire), a pair with 7 small young were at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 4 July (Tom Callan). A female with 8 ducklings was at Tayinloan on 13 June (Katie Pendreigh).

Gadwall. Six were at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree from 18 – 31 August (John Bowler).

Eurasian Teal. The first four of autumn were in the Add Estuary on 26 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Pintail. A female with fledged brood of 5 was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree 03 -28 July (John Bowler).

Shoveler. One in eclipse was at Tayinloan on 29 July (Katie Pendreigh). A drake in eclipse plumage arrived at Machrihanish



Nuthatch, Otter Ferry
6 Sep 2011

Nuthatch © Tom Callan

Seabird Observatory on 2 August and stayed until 7th (Eddie Maguire).

Ring-necked Duck. One was reported at Loch Ballygrant, Islay on 23 June although no description has been received so far (Chris and Tony Johnson).

Tufted Duck. Two females with broods of young seen at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 4 July (John Bowler).

Common Eider. A female with a brood of 9 were still present at Otter Ferry on 5 July (Tom Callan).

Common Scoter. The first returning bird at West Coast Salmon, Kintyre was on 22 July and by 27 July 30 were counted there (Katie Pendreigh). One or two were seen flying S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on three dates in August (Eddie Maguire). At least 73 were in the Sound of Gigha off Ballochroy, Kintyre on 3 Aug (Tom Callan).

Velvet Scoter. A single bird was at West Coast Salmon, Kintyre was on 22 July (Katie Pendreigh) and at least 9 were in the Sound of Gigha off Ballochroy, Kintyre on 3 Aug (Tom Callan).

Red-breasted Merganser. Females with a broods of 4 and 7 were still present at Otter Ferry on 11 July (Tom Callan). A female with a brood of 6 young was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 4 August and a female with 7 young was at Loch an Eilean on 3 August (John Bowler). Rafts totalling at least 100 moulting birds were seen from West Coast Salmon, Kintyre on 27 Aug (Malcolm Chattwood).

Red-legged Partridge. One was seen regularly at Campbeltown Airport during June (Stuart McGougan per Eddie Maguire).

Common Quail. One was calling at Haunn, Mull on 18 June (Anand Prasad) and another was heard at The Reef, Tiree on 27 June (John Bowler).

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

Red-throated Diver. A female with a very late chick, hatched on 27 July, was still present at Loch Melldalloch, Cowal on 31 July (Tom Callan). Four were seen near the mouth of West Loch Tarbert during the ABC Field Trip on 30 July (Malcolm Chattwood). A total of 18 were seen flying S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 6 dates in August (Eddie Maguire). One at Loch Leathan (near Lochgilphead) on 1 Aug was making “peep, peep” calls with neck outstretched parallel but just above the water and was thought to have young nearby. Five were in a tight group off Otter Ferry on 23 Aug (Tom Callan).

Black-throated Diver. Five were at West Coast Salmon, Kintyre on 22 July (Katie Pendreigh).

Sooty Shearwater. An early bird was reported between Tiree and Mull on 20 July (John Bowler) and a total of 12 flew S in 3 hrs at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 17 July (Eddie Maguire).

Tiree records included one following a scallop dredger off Port Ban on 5 August, 2 in 2hrs off Balevullin on 8 August, 2 in 1hr off Hynish on 11 August, 5 in 1hr off Hynish on 12 August and 2 in 1 hr off Hynish on 19 August (John Bowler/Ewan Urquhart) and at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory at least five were foraging offshore with Manx Shearwaters on 20 August and one was offshore on 21 August (Eddie Maguire). Two were seen off Coll pier on 13 Aug (Simon Wellock).

Manx Shearwater. A total of 470 flying S in 3 hrs at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 17th was the best southerly movement of July there (Eddie Maguire). At least 1000 were counted in 2 hrs off Balevullin, Tiree on 8 August (8th Ewan Urquhart) and on 21 August, some 2,500 were feeding in a raft off Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (Eddie Maguire). A minimum of 30 (probably many more) were seen from the Tarbert-Portavadie ferry, Cowal on 6 Aug (Tom Callan).

Balearic Shearwater. Singles flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 20, 21 and 26 August (Eddie Maguire / Rod Angus). One was reported with Manx Shearwaters at the mouth of the Sound of Mull, near Ardnamurchan Point, on 27 Aug (Andrew Stephenson).

European Storm-petrel. Twelve flew south past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 19 June (Eddie Maguire) and one was in Gunna Sound on 5 July (John Bowler). On 19 July a total of 62 flew S over a 5hr period at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (following NW winds for several days) (Eddie Maguire). Twelve were counted in 1 hr off Hynish, Tiree on 19 August (John Bowler).

Little Egret. One was found at the head of Holy Loch, Cowal on 2 Aug (Graham and Danielle Clark): it was still present on 4 Aug but not seen subsequently (George Newall).

RAPTORS, RAILS etc.:

White-tailed Eagle. An adult bird was reported from Gott, Tiree on 28 August (John Bowler). An adult and juvenile were observed from the ferry approaching Port Askaig, Islay on 27 Aug (Mike Harrison). Both were tagged, adult yellow letter L and juvenile white. A single adult was seen flying down Loch Etive westwards, at Airds Bay on 9 Aug, with five Herring Gulls mobbing it as it went (David Jenks).

Hen Harrier. A nest with recently fledged young was found E of Loch Frisa, Mull on 18 July (Anand Prasad). A pair of Hen Harriers were hunting over the field opposite Spion Kop, Kintyre on 31 July. The lucky observers, Valerie Wells and David Bridge, watched the male hunting just outside of their garden and saw him catch a vole and devour it.



Hen Harrier
© David Bridge

Golden Eagle. The sub-adult bird on Tiree was again noted on and off during June & July including Balinoe on 18 June, two sub-adults together at Ceann a' Mhara on 14 June, and again near Ceann a' Mhara on 23 July (John Bowler).

Osprey. One was seen around Loch Gruinart, Islay from mid-June to early July (per Ian Brooke). Elsewhere on Islay, one was at Carnduncan on 26 Aug (Malcolm Ogilvie) and one was carrying a fish at Bridgend on 29 Aug (per Ian Brooke). A pair at Loch Ederline, Mid-Argyll still had a chick in the nest on 1 Aug and singles were seen hunting off Otter Ferry on 20 and 28 Aug (Tom Callan).

Common Kestrel. A nest was located near Reudle, Mull on 11 June (Anand Prasad).

Merlin. Adults were seen at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 4 July and at Loch Melldalloch on 27 July (Tom Callan)

Hobby. One was reported at Parkfoot near Campbeltown on 7 Aug making passes at a flock of 30+ Swifts (Neil Brown).

Peregrine Falcon. Single juvs. were seen at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on several dates during August (Eddie Maguire).

Water Rail. Five were heard calling at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve early on 24 June (James How) and on Tiree a large recently fledged juvenile was in a garden at Balephuill on 3 Aug (John Bowler).

Spotted Crake. One was heard calling between Ardnave and Uiskentuie, Islay on 3 June (Michal Sur) and one was calling at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve early on 24 June (James How).

Corn Crake. A finalised (July) total of 385 calling males on Tiree (cf 391 in 2010) birds remained calling all month. One was calling on the afternoon of 23 June at Drumore farm on the edge of Campbeltown (Neil Brown) and one was calling at Feochaig, Kintyre (S of Campbeltown) on 15 June (per John Taylor).



Ruff by MSBO 14th August 2011 ©Eddie Maguire

WADERS:

Oystercatcher. A total of 467 were counted on the spit at Otter Ferry on 20 Aug (Tom Callan) and 386 were roosting at Stinky Hole' Campbeltown Loch on 27 Aug (Paul Daw).

Ringed Plover. The highest count on Tiree during the

month was 275 at Gott Bay on 11 Aug (John Bowler) and 237 were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 16 Aug (Michal Sur). Two small young with a pair with at Killail (Otter Ferry) on 4 Aug were presumably a late brood following earlier failure. At least 60 were at Otter Ferry on



Little Stint at Loch a Phuill, Tiree © Keith Gillon

25 Aug (Tom Callan) and 76 in the Add Estuary on 11 Aug was a record count here (Jim Dickson).

European Golden Plover. A flock of 30 flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 Aug (Eddie Maguire). A total of 405 was counted around Tiree 31 Aug – 1 September (John Bowler).

Northern Lapwing. A total of 2,235 was counted around Tiree 31 Aug – 1 September (John Bowler).

Red Knot. Three late birds were at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 1 June and 10 at Hough Bay on 15 June (John Bowler). First 'returning' birds at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory were 4 adults flying S on 7 July (Eddie Maguire). Autumn migrants flying S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory included a total of 60 on 13 Aug (including a flock of 40), a flock 18 on 14 Aug and a flock of 33 on 15 Aug (Eddie Maguire). Ten at Gott Bay, Tiree on 11 Aug included 2 red adults (John Bowler) and 63 were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 19 Aug (James How). A flock of 87 at Loch Crinan on 11 Aug included 15 juveniles (Jim Dickson) and an adult and juvenile on 15 Aug were the first migrants of the year at Otter Ferry (Tom Callan). Twelve juveniles were at the Add Estuary on 21 Aug

Sanderling. Returning migrants included 80 at Gott Bay, Tiree on 27 July and 135 there including two leg-flagged birds, on 29 July (John Bowler). Three were on the beach at Ardalanish, Mull on 20 July (Anand Prasad). Moderate passage on Tiree included : 175 at Balephetrish Bay on 2 Aug, 185 at Gott Bay on 11 and 31 Aug, and 170 at Hough Bay on 21 Aug. Of seven different leg-flagged birds observed during the month – 6 had been ringed in SW Iceland and 1 on the island of Jersey.

The maximum count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during Aug was 30 flying S on 22nd (Eddie Maguire) and 145 were at Loch Gruinart on 28 Aug (James How). Two were in the Add Estuary on 10 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Little Stint. An adult bird was with Dunlin at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 9 and 10 June (Keith Gillon per John Bowler). Three were at Ardnave, Islay on 1 Aug (Bob Davidson).



White-rumped Sandpiper
© John Bowler



White-rumped Sandpiper. An adult was photographed with Dunlin at Gott Bay on 4 Aug. If confirmed this will be the first record of this species for Tiree and only the third record for Argyll (John Bowler).

Curlew Sandpiper. A juvenile was at Gott Bay with Dunlin on 31 Aug (Keith Gillon) and singles were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 26 and 28 Aug (James How).

Dunlin. A flock of ca60 flew N past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 9 June. The maximum count there during Aug was 130 flying S in 7hrs on 6th (Eddie Maguire).

Ruff. One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 29 July (Toby Green per John Bowler). A remarkable total of 18 at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 14 Aug included a flock of 10 flying S in mid-morning, 7 flying S in early afternoon and one resting in the late afternoon (Eddie Maguire). Up to two on Tiree on various dates in Aug (John Bowler) and one was at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 19 Aug (James How) and four were found at Tayinloan on 13 Aug (Katie Pendreigh).

Black-tailed Godwit. An adult was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 13 and 29 July with 12 at Whitehouse on 16 July (John Bowler). A total of 81 were at Gartnatra, Islay on 7 July (Stephen Welch). Records at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during Aug included 5 resting on 10th, a flock of 30 was offshore on 11th and a flock of 47 was resting on 13th (Eddie Maguire). A fair passage on Tiree included: 12 at Heylipol on 10 Aug, 13 at Kenovay and 44 at Loch a' Phuill on 15 Aug and 19 at Middleton on 21 Aug. Numbers at Loch a' Phuill peaked at 47 on 22 Aug (John Bowler/Tony Jenkins). The maximum count on Islay was 45 at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 26 Aug (James How). Nine were in Loch Crinan on 11 Aug, with 7 there on 26 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Bar-tailed Godwit. One flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 1 June (Eddie Maguire) and a first summer bird was at Traigh Ghriana, Tiree on 18 June (John Bowler). A total of 187 were counted at Gartnatra, Islay on 7 July (per Ian Brooke). A flock of 8 flew NE into Machrihanish Bay on 11 Aug (Eddie Maguire). A stronger passage than normal on Tiree included: 27 at Balephetrish on 30 Aug, 12 at Vaul on 29 Aug and 10 at Salum on 31 Aug (John Bowler/Keith Gillon). The maximum count on Islay was 220 at Gartmain, Loch Indaal on 26 Aug (Bob Davidson). Three were in the Add Estuary on 26 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Whimbrel. Two were at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

early on the morning of 7 June and one with a damaged leg was found nearby on 16 June (Eddie Maguire), 16 were at Loch Gruinart on 13 June (per Ian Brooke) and one or two birds were at various sites on Tiree during June and July (John Bowler). Six flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 13 Aug (Eddie Maguire). A good showing on Tiree included: 12 at Loch a' Phuill on 9 Aug, 30 near Soa on 8 Aug, 15 at Salum on 11 Aug and 9 at Balephuill on 14 Aug (Ewan Urquhart/John Bowler/Tony Jenkins). Three were at Loch Gruinart on 16 Aug (Michal Sur). One on 11 Aug was the first migrants of the year at Otter Ferry (Tom Callan).

Eurasian Curlew. A flock of 65 flying S on 10th was by far the largest movement at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during Aug (Eddie Maguire). Good numbers on Tiree included: 45 at Traigh nan Gilean on 3 Aug and 40 at Cornaig on 13 Aug (John Bowler).

Spotted Redshank. A juvenile was a juvenile reported at Hynish, Tiree on 8 Aug (Tony Jenkins).

Greenshank. Singles seen at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 7, 13 and 26 June were unusual for the time of year (Eddie Maguire). Two migrants flew SW at Auchalick Bay, Loch Fyne, Cowal on 26 June (David Warden) and singles were at Tayinloan, Kintyre on 16, 17 and 29 July (Katie Pendreigh). Six were at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 8 Aug (John Bowler) and ten were counted at Bridgend Merse, Islay on 7 Aug (Bob Davidson). Two were at Loch na Cille (Danna) on 1 Aug and 3 were in the Add Estuary on 24 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Green Sandpiper. One was reported at the North Rinns, Islay on 2 Aug (per Ian Brooke).

Common Sandpiper. Numbers at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree peaked at 10 on 29 July with smaller numbers elsewhere on the island (John Bowler). A single was still at Otter Ferry on 29 Aug (Tom Callan).

urnstone. Twelve flying S on 20th was the largest number at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during Aug (Eddie Maguire). A total of 65 were counted on Loch Indaal, between Gartbreck and Bowmore, on 20 Aug (Bob Davidson).

SKUAS, GULLS, TERNS and AUKS (see also Seabirds above):

Pomarine Skua. Single pale morph adults flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 22 and 23 Aug (Eddie Maguire). Three (2 adults with almost full spoons associating with a juvenile) were heading SE off Coll pier on 12 Aug (Simon Wellock).

Arctic Skua. At least two dark morph birds were at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory from late May until 4 June and one flew N on 18 June. Two dark morph birds were harassing Kittiwakes in the Sound of Sanda on 15 June and one was at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 25 July (Eddie Maguire). Two dark morph birds were harrying terns off SW tip of Lismore on 26 June (John Bowler). A pale morph adult flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 8 Aug, seven adults on 8 Aug included 2 pale morph birds and single dark morph birds flew S on 13, 20 and 29 Aug (Eddie Maguire). On Tiree, just one was seen, in 2 hrs off Balevullin on 8 Aug (Ewan Urquhart). Six were heading SE off Coll pier on 12 Aug (Simon Wellock) one was seen in the Firth of Lorn south of Mull on 31 Aug (Mike Harrison) and one was at Loch Gruinart on 28 Aug (James How).

Great Skua. A pair were holding territory at a site on Tiree

during June/July (John Bowler). One was at Eilean Beag, Islay on 23 July (Bob Davidson). One flew NE into Machrihanish Bay, Kintyre on 2 July and one flew S on 4 July and at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, three flew S on 20 Aug with singles on 28 and 29 Aug (Eddie Maguire). One or two were seen off Tiree on various dates in the first half of Aug (John Bowler). Eight were heading SE off Coll pier on 12 Aug (Simon Wellock).

Mediterranean Gull. The adult was still present on the mud at Loch Gilp on 7 Aug (Jim Dickson) and what was presumably the same bird was opposite the West Coast Motors garage at Ardrishaig on 19 Aug (Bill Allan).



Mediterranean Gull at Ardrishaig © Jim Dickson

Little Gull. One was seen at Bagh Gleann nam Muc, Jura on 27 June (Roger Broad).

Common Gull. Most of the pairs at the Treshnish Lochan, Mull had fledged their young by 10 July (Anand Prasad).

Kittiwake. Numbers were down again at Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree, with just 205 AON there on 21 June, although with many birds on eggs (John Bowler). Peak counts at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory included 600+ offshore on 20 Aug (Eddie Maguire).

Little Tern. At least 57 pairs on Tiree fledged more than 45 young (John Bowler). Two adults flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 4 Aug and a further 5 adults were resting there later in the day (Eddie Maguire). Birds hung on late on Tiree after the late broods there, including 7 juveniles at Gott Bay on 17 Aug (John Bowler).

Sandwich Tern. Present daily around Big Scone Island, Machrihanish with a maximum of 33 on 2 June (Eddie Maguire). Two were at Ardrinish Bay, Gigha, Kintyre on 3 June (Malcolm Chattwood).

A total of 24 flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 26 Aug (Eddie Maguire). Singles were seen on Tiree, near Port Ban on 5 Aug and at Traigh Bhagh on 15 Aug (John Bowler). Two were in the Add Estuary on 12 Aug (Jim Dickson) and one was near Dunmore House, West Loch Tarbert on 27 Aug (Mike Harrison).

Arctic Tern. Tiree had a total of ca286 AONs at 13 sites in June – with many small chicks at the end of June. It was a very mixed breeding year with some colonies failing and others producing dozens of fledged young from mid July (John Bowler). Twenty pairs were counted along The Big Strand, Islay on 23 June (Peter Roberts) and two were at Tayinloan on 7 and 10 July (Katie Pendreigh).

Sixteen pairs were breeding at Big Scone Island, Machrihanish in June but all apparently failed and the

colony was deserted by 12 July. A first summer bird was present there on 7 – 8 July (Eddie Maguire). Small numbers remained on Tiree after the successful breeding season, including 10 near Port Ban on 5 Aug and a juvenile in Gunna Sound on 22 Aug (John Bowler). At least 180 were heading SE off Coll pier on 13 Aug (Simon Wellock). One was at the mouth of Loch Buie, Mull on 31 Aug (Mike Harrison) and ten were at Bridgend Merse, Islay on 7 Aug (Bob Davidson).

Common Tern. Five pairs were breeding at Big Scone Island, Machrihanish in June (Eddie Maguire).

At least 20 were seen from the Tarbert - Portavadie Ferry, Cowal on 5 Aug (Tom Callan) and four late birds were at the mouth of Loch Etive on 14 Aug (Mike Harrison).

Puffin. Three were seen from the Tarbert - Portavadie Ferry, Cowal on 1 Aug (Tom Callan).



Storm Petrel off MSBO 19th July 2011 ©Eddie Maguire

DOVES, OWLS, WOODPECKERS etc.:

Common Cuckoo. Two juveniles were seen together, feeding on cinnabar caterpillars on ragwort at Tayinloan on 31 July. One was much more rufous brown than the other but both were definitely juveniles (Katie Pendreigh). A grey juvenile was seen at Connel, Mid-Argyll on 8 Aug (Mike Harrison). The first of the five Common Cuckoos satellite tagged by the BTO arrived back in Africa on 13 July – much earlier than expected. By 24 July four of the five had made it to Africa. The BTO also reports that Scotland may now be becoming the last refuge of the species in Britain. Numbers in England have declined by 60% between 1995 and 2008 according to the Breeding Bird Survey but have increased by 6% in Scotland.

Barn Owl. Looking after local wildlife can have its rewards. Valerie Wells and David Bridge feed nuts to the mice just outside of their kitchen door near Kennacraig. Just as it was getting dark on 19 Aug a large bird flew past their patio doors. As they looked out of the door a Barn Owl flew towards them and hovered just 2 feet in front of them, obviously looking for the mice. What a magnificent sight!

Short-eared Owl. Following the individual at Balephuill, Tiree in May one was there on 24 June. Breeding thought possible (John Bowler). Adults were seen bringing voles to calling chicks at a nest near Treshnish, Mull on 28 June had at least two fledged young on 28 July (Anand Prasad). Singles were seen hunting over Moine Mhor on two dates in June (Malcolm Chattwood).

Common Swift. Three were over Ardrinish Bay, Gigha, Kintyre on 3 June (Malcolm Chattwood) and one flew high over Dalmally, Mid-Argyll on 14 June (Paul Daw). Two flew N at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 22 June. Eddie Maguire reports that “poor weather (high winds, rain and low temperatures during mid-late May), and perhaps a

lack of flying insects, appears to have discouraged birds from staying/breeding in Campbeltown. The best count over Burnside Square was only 9 birds on 21 June. However numbers picked up in July with 50 over Campbeltown on 14th and 60 or more on 29th (Derrick Goode)". Eight were over Crinan Harbour, Mid-Argyll on 5 July (Mid-Argyll). One was seen over Carnan Mot, Tiree on 2 July (John Bowler) and 4 were over Gartbreck, Islay on 4 July (Bob Davidson). The August maximum in Campbeltown was 20+ over Burnside Square on 3 Aug. Later in the month 12 were counted on 17 Aug and the last were 4 on 18 Aug (Derrick Goode). Ten were at Bridgend (near Lochgilphead) on 13 Aug and 20 over Oban town centre on 14 Aug. The last three were at Bridgend on 20 Aug and a single late Swift was at Achamhinish, Gigha on 26 Aug (Malcolm Chattwood). Singles were seen on Tiree at Balemartine on 10 Aug and at Balephuill on 13 Aug (John Bowler/Keith Gillon). Seven at Connel on 24 Aug were the last of the year there (Mike Harrison).

Common Kingfisher. One was on the shore of Tayvallich Bay, Mid-Argyll on Wednesday 10 August (Morag Rea – who had never seen one in the village bay before).

European Bee-eater. Two observers who are very familiar with this species, independently heard a Bee-eater calling, flying fairly high over Duart Castle, Mull heading northwards on 14 June ca 08.30 (Su & Luke Gough).

Hoopoe. One was seen and photographed at Arnabost, Coll on the morning of 22 Aug and turned up in various gardens on Coll until 26 August (Simon Wellock).

Wryneck. One present briefly at Treshnish, Mull on 15 August was photographed thanks to the quick reactions of Anand Prasad. The third Wryneck record for Mull (following records at Torlochan (near Gruline) in June 1991 and at Croig, again in June, 2001) and there are only 12 previous records for Argyll. They seem to be turning up on Mull "regularly", at ten yearly intervals!

PASSERINES:

Sand Martin. Twenty pairs were counted along The Big Strand, Islay on 23 June (Peter Roberts).

A new colony of 7 used burrows was found at Brock Ruaig on Tiree on 17 Aug. Numbers have been increasing steadily on Tiree since regular breeding commenced in 2002 (John Bowler).

Barn Swallow. Breeding success of first broods appears to be have been very low in some areas of South Kintyre, apparently because of a lack of flying insects. At Knockkrioch Farm, The Laggan ca 6 pairs failed at chick stage and an observant farmer commented that, "*unusually, no hordes of flies were noted around his cattle*" (Donald Brown per Eddie Maguire).

House Martin. In mid-June a big reduction in numbers in the Otter Ferry area since mid-May was noted (Tom Callan). Birds nest building at Treshnish, Mull had almost completed their nests by 10 June. Two of the nests contained hatched chicks by 8 July. Sadly one was evicted by a House Sparrow on the following day (9 July) but at least one flew from one of the other nests on 30 July (Anand Prasad). A pair were feeding young at Bruichladdich, Islay on 15 July (per Ian Brooke).

Red-rumped Swallow. One was reported at Ballygown, Mull on 5 July (Chris Smith). There have been unconfirmed reports of this species before in Argyll **but if this sighting,**

of a bird which was seen well, is accepted it will be a new species for the Argyll list.

Tree Pipit. A flighty calling bird was at Carnan Mor on 8 June - a very rare migrant on Tiree (John Bowler).

White Wagtail. The first juveniles at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory were three on 10 Aug and the first adult was present on 16 Aug. At least 20 were there on 20 Aug, with 4 -10 present daily until the month's end (Eddie Maguire). Several in amongst large numbers of Pied Wagtails on Tiree, included 2 at Vaul on 30 Aug (John Bowler). An adult male was in the Add Estuary on 24 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Dipper. Two adults were bringing food to chicks in their nest on Ensay Burn, Mull on 1 June. This is their second brood, which is unusual for Dippers (Anand Prasad).

Dunnock. Unusual numbers were seen on a walk in the forest near Millhouse, Kintyre on 30 Aug (e.g. 12 Dunnocks with 4 Robins at Tom an Uile) (Tom Callan). There have been other observations of larger than usual numbers of Dunnocks in Argyll at this time of year (e.g. concentrations in coastal Kintyre). Despite comments in *Birds of Scotland* that Dunnocks are very sedentary it's difficult not to suspect there's some kind of passage going on. Possibly involving the Continental race *modularis*, which is known to be a passage visitor to Scotland.

Common Redstart. A pair with at brood of at least 3 young was noted at Keillbeg, Loch na Cille, Mid-Argyll on 10 July (Tom Callan) and two adults and a juvenile were seen near Clachan, Kintyre on 30 July (Malcolm Chattwood).

Whinchat. A pair at Haunn, Mull had young on 14 July (Anand Prasad) and a recently fledged young was at Carnduncan, Islay on 17 July (Peter Jackson). Three juveniles were in the Add Estuary on 24 Aug (Jim Dickson).

Common Stonechat. Pairs with young were seen near Feolin, Jura on 9 June (Paul Daw) and at The Puddle, Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll on 25 July (Tom Callan).

Northern Wheatear. Good numbers at Keillbeg, Loch na Cille, Mid-Argyll on 19 July included at least 6 juveniles (Tom Callan).

Grasshopper Warbler. Up to 11 birds reeling on and off on Tiree during June was a record total for the island and one was still reeling at Balephuill, Tiree on 6 Aug, with a juvenile showing well there on 18 and 21 Aug (John Bowler).

Sedge Warbler. Good numbers at Keillbeg, Loch na Cille, Mid-Argyll on 25 July included several juveniles (Tom Callan) and a juvenile was in the garden at Tayinloan on 27 July (Katie Pendreigh). Three pairs with several broods of young were at Keillmore (Loch Sween) on 5 Aug (Tom Callan).

Common Whitethroat. A pair with a brood of 3 young were at Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll on 1 Aug (Tom Callan).

Wood Warbler. A very vocal late bird was at Balephuill, Tiree on 30 Aug. Records of Wood Warblers after the end of July are very unusual in Argyll and this appears to be latest date ever recorded! (John Bowler). Another late record was of one on the gorse at Bridgend Merse, Islay on 7 Aug (Bob Davidson).

Common Chiffchaff. A pair at Balephuill had fledged 3-4 young on 4 June – the second confirmed nesting for Tiree (John Bowler).

Spotted Flycatcher. A pair with a brood of at least 4 large young were at Keills (Loch Sween) on 5 Aug (Tom Callan). Several people have commented on the good numbers of Spotted Flycatchers breeding in Argyll this year including 8

(adults feeding juvs.) at Corran, Kintyre (Malcolm Chattwood).

Pied Flycatcher. A male was seen at St Catherine's, Cowal on 5 June (Graham Thomas).

Eurasian Jay. One was seen at Langamull (near Calgary), Mull on 19 June: always a scarce species on the island (Anand Prasad). A very noisy squabbling flock of 8 were at Moine Mhor near Dalvore on 1 Aug (the most Jim Dickson had seen together).

Magpie. One was present on the outskirts of Campbeltown (Meadows Avenue area) throughout June and July (Margaret McCallum *et al* per Eddie Maguire) and one was seen at various locations on Islay throughout June (per Ian Brooke). One was reported by Stronvaar Bowling Club, Campbeltown on many dates to at least 19 Aug (Bob Middleton *et al*).

Common Starling. On Sunday 30 August, a creamy-white albino Starling was seen in a group of about 8/10 near Ardnò (upper Loch Fyne) (Glyn Toplis). A flock of 81 perched on wires at Bridgend (near Lochgilphead) on 13 Aug probably represented the whole village population (Sue Chattwood).

Rose-coloured Starling. One first seen at Laphroaig on 3 July (John Bell) was presumably the same as that seen at Ardnave, Islay by various observers from 10 – 23 July (per Ian Brooke).

House Sparrow. A flock of approx. 200 were on barley stubble at Port Charlotte, Islay on 18 Aug (Bob Davidson).

Tree Sparrow. Two were reported at Feolin Farm, Jura on 8 July (Bob Davidson). The first record for Jura since two were seen at Lagg in July 1992.

Common Chaffinch. The Garden Bird Watch count at a garden at West Tarbert peaked at 75 during the week begin-



Rose-coloured Starling, Islay © Alison Lindsay

ning 7 Aug (Barbara McMillan).

Siskin. Reports of a good breeding season (despite the weather!) in Argyll this summer and 15 were in a garden at West Tarbert, Kintyre on 26 June (Barbara McMillan). At least 60 were feeding in riverside trees at Balure, Loch Etive on 18 Aug (Malcolm Chattwood).

Goldfinch. Eddie Maguire has recently heard that a Goldfinch found at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 15

April 2011 had been ringed as an adult at Thorpe Marsh, Doncaster, South Yorkshire on 11 December 2010. A flock of at least 50 were at Kilnaish, S. Knapdale on 21 Aug (Tom Callan).

Twite. Fifteen were seen at Ardnave, Islay on 23 July (Bob Davidson) and at least 23 were at Haunn, Mull on 30 July (Anand Prasad). The maximum at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during Aug was just 10, on 30th (Eddie Maguire). Many groups of up to 20 were on Tiree plus 25 at The Green on 13 Aug and 60 at Ard Ear on 31 Aug (John Bowler). Flocks of 40 and 85 were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 18 Aug (James How).

Common Redpoll. The nesting pair on Tiree remained at Carnan Mor throughout July, occasionally visiting Balephuill (e.g. 12 July) and raised 3 young, a second pair at the Glebe fledged 4-5 young (11 July). **The first successful nesting by this species in Argyll.** (John Bowler).

Lesser Redpoll. One has been a regular visitor to a garden at West Tarbert, Kintyre during July and two were present on 26 June (Barbara McMillan).

Common Crossbill. A female-type bird was seen briefly at Balephuill, Tiree on 12 June (John Bowler) a group of 8 were at Otter Ferry on 14 June (Tom Callan) and 9 were near Kilmory, Lochgilphead on 24 June (Paul Daw). A female-type bird flew south over Balephuill, Tiree on 11 Aug (John Bowler).

Common Rosefinch. A singing immature male was present in a garden at Balephuill, Tiree 8-9 July (John Bowler).

Yellowhammer. A male was seen at Kilmelford, Mid-Argyll on 26 Aug (Bill Allan).

Reed Bunting. A female with at least one young was at Strone Farm, Cowal on 21 July (Tom Callan).

NB: European Roller. Following a query from Alan Spellman regarding the location (Achaforse High Wood) of the 1927 Roller shot, supposedly on Mull, I contacted Bob McGowan, Senior Curator, Birds at the National Museums Scotland (They have the skin – see below).



Photo © Bob McGowan

Bob's researches reveal that Achaforse (sic) is in fact on the mainland of Morvern (NM684472) near Kinlochaline and not on Mull at all. The current theory is that Mull might have been the postal address in those days. As Morvern has not been in Argyll since 1975 and is not part of the Argyll Bird Recording area it means that this bird should be deleted from Argyll's records. The 16 June 2011 record on Mull is now the second Roller for the island, following the bird shot at Lochbuie in 1888.

Paul Daw: 11 September 2011.

**Articles for the December issue of the
Eider should with the Editor before the
24th November 2011**

**Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club
(2010/2011)**

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The mystery bird is a male House Sparrow



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
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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).