

December 2010  
Number 95

# The Eider



Bird of the autumn? A stunning photo of the Northern Parula which turned up on Tiree.  
courtesy of ©Lee Gregory

Autumn on Tiree  
Recent Reports  
Spring Meeting  
UK Twite Study Project  
Waxwing Influx 2010

Editor

Mark Williamson: Port Ban, Kilberry,  
Argyll PA29 6YD

Phone: 01880 770 162

E-mail: me41.williamson@btinternet.com



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

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Please keep producing the articles!!

Editorial

This autumn has certainly witnessed a great deal of excitement and activity within the club.

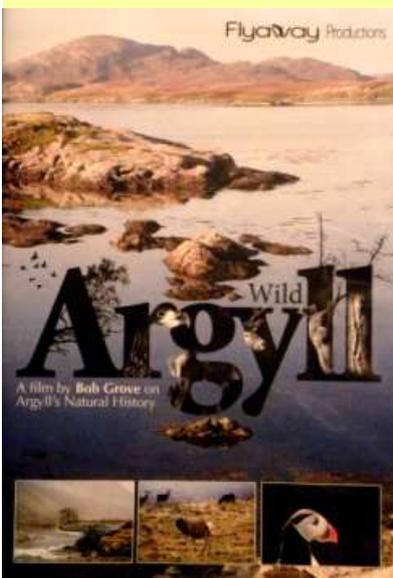
On the birding front, the “Fair Isle” of Argyll produced some stunning birds, including a first for Scotland ( see recent sightings ) . The “Fair Isle” of Argyll is of course a reference to Tiree. And talking of firsts– Argyll Bird Club celebrated its 25th anniversary this year– the year of biodiversity– and was honoured to welcome Colin Galbraith to the Autumn meeting in November. Colin is one of the founder members of the Club and even he must be pleased at the way in which the club has grown since its inception. I for one am amazed at the amount and variety of activities members undertake for conservation; both individually and as part of the club. ( see Nigel’s LBAP report for a list of some of the clubs activities).

It is with regret that Danielle has decided to step down from the role as webmaster and from the Club committee so, if you possess web design skills and would like to offer them to the club, or if you believe you could offer something on the committee, then please contact Nigel Scriven or Mike Harrison.



Colin Galbraith cuts the Silver Jubilee cake at the Autumn meeting in November

Correction: In the September Eider reference was made to Honey Buzzards sporting yellow wing- tags. The information should have referred to birds with yellow leg rings. Apologies to David Jardine, who provided the original information.



Wild Argyll is a pleasant review of Argyll’s amazing flora and fauna. From birds to bees, animals to wild flowers, butterflies and dragonflies, this dvd admirably captures the essence of Argyll’s amazing biodiversity.

Copies of the dvd can be ordered by contacting Bob Grove at ‘Flyaway Productions’ [robertgrove23@live.co.uk](mailto:robertgrove23@live.co.uk) and by sending a cheque for £11.00 ( £10 for the dvd and £1.00 postage ) to Robert Grove at Briarbank, Glencruitten Road. Oban. PA34 4DN.

Robert has kindly offered to donate £2 for each copy sold, to Argyll Bird Club.

## Field Trips

Ormsary/Loch Caolisport– 29th January. Meet at Ormsary community centre 10– 10.30am. Please bring a packed lunch. Mark Williamson will lead this trip

Appin area– 26th February. Meet Appin 10.30am. More details will follow by email

Broxwood Hide/Holy Loch– Sunday 13th March. Meet 10am at the Broxwood car park. Nigel Scriven will lead this trip. Packed lunch optional.

### ABC indoor meeting 2011



Argyll Bird Club Spring Meeting. Royal Marine Hotel.  
Dunoon  
Saturday 12th March 2011



0930	Doors open and coffee/tea
0950 - 1000	Welcome & introduction - <i>Nigel Scriven, Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club</i>
1000 - 1015	Recent birds sightings - <i>Paul Daw, Argyll Bird Recorder</i>
1015 – 1100	Andy Robinson. Wind Farm Issues.
1100 - 1120	Coffee/tea
1120 – 1220	<b>Ron Forrester “Birding in Africa”</b>
1220 - 1400	Lunch (available in the hotel)
1400 - 1445	Chris Waltho – Where have all the Eider gone?
1445 – 1515	Gemma Jennings – Industrial Common Terns
1515 - 1540	Tea/coffee
1540 - 1600	<b>Paul Daw’s ID Workshop</b>
1600 - 1615	Raffle and end of meeting

Royal Marine Hotel, Dunoon: This is a 3 star hotel with prices for accommodation ranging from £65 for a single room, £89 for a double/twin room to £109 for a family or premier double room. For more information [www.royalmarinehotel.co.uk](http://www.royalmarinehotel.co.uk). Contact details: email [info@royalmarinehotel.co.uk](mailto:info@royalmarinehotel.co.uk) Telephone 01369 705810

## Field Trip Reports

## Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, 25 September 2010

A beautiful sunny morning with a moderate northerly breeze greeted the dozen or so members and friends who gathered at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on the morning of 25 September. Pleasant though this was, it was clearly not the weather to bring in the migrating seabirds for which the observatory is famous. Warden, Eddie Maguire welcomed us to the observatory and pointed out the list of species which had passed through after the last gale, about ten days earlier. Eddie had managed to digiscope many of the species and wowed us with the images on the PC in the hide.



MSBO on a fair-weather day photo ©Tom Callan

**All was not lost however, just because the sun was shining. Another of Eddie's specialities is ringing** Twite and a small flock of Twite, Chaffinch, Greenfinch and Goldfinch was feeding in front of the hide where the birds could be conveniently netted for ringing. Cormorant, Shag and Eider were feeding in the waters north and west of Uisead Point where the hide is located and Gannets could be seen further offshore. Curlew, Oystercatcher and Rock Pipit could be seen on the rocks, together with a few Grey Seals, and Pied Wagtail. Swallow and Starling were around the other buildings on the point. A small group of Skylarks passed by. Buzzards were seen over the higher ground to the south, towards Cnoc Moy, and a local Raven cruised over the observatory. Some Manx Shearwater and Guillemots were eventually seen but, apart from the usual Common, Herring, and Great and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, there were very few seabirds about and we spent more time watching and photographing the flock of **feeding finches and marvelling at Eddie's digiscoped images than we did seawatching.**

Some of the party were local to south Kintyre and some were staying locally after the visit. Those from the north decided around lunchtime to head back up the road and look at some other favoured sites on the way. After they had bade their farewells those who remained were treated to a lovely flock of 20 Golden Plover which alighted on the rocks not far from the hide. A single Ringed Plover also turned up before the remaining members eventually went their separate ways.

### Species List (Machrihanish SBO)

Manx Shearwater	European Golden Plover	Barn Swallow
Northern Gannet	Curlew	Rock Pipit
Great Cormorant	Mew Gull	Pied Wagtail
European Shag	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Common Raven
Grey Heron	Herring Gull	Common Starling
Common Eider	Great Black-backed Gull	Chaffinch
Common Buzzard	Common Guillemot	European Greenfinch
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Sky Lark	European Goldfinch
Ringed Plover		Twite

**Mike Harrison**

Those who decided to head back north agreed to meet at the ferry terminal at Tayinloan. Then, having eaten our lunches and had coffee at the café, we proposed a walk south along the shore only to be preceded by a lady with three dogs. We abandoned that idea and thought to walk north from the ferry slip; only to see more dogs in the distance coming towards us. We did however manage some Dunlin, Black-headed gulls and Mute Swans before deciding to head for West Coast Salmon.

As we got out of our cars – guess what? Another car drew up and out got a lady with 3 large dogs, all of which headed for the beach. We persevered however and had a search, in an increasingly strong breeze, of the shore and out to sea. In these conditions we did well to find: Black Guillemots, Common Gulls, Eiders, Jackdaws, and best of all a pair of winter plumage Slavonian Grebes. I think it is the first time never to have seen divers here.

Moving on up the coast we stopped at Ronachan Point and managed to find: Ringed Plovers, Curlews, Mallards, Hooded Crows, Mute Swans, and had a great view of a Kestrel, which flew, more or less over our heads.

A final stop at the fishing pier at the head of the West Loch only added Herring Gull to our list but we also watched a small flock of six Red-breasted Mergansers.

All in all, not a great days birding but everyone agreed that it was a great day out; a large part of which was the chat with other like-minded folk.

Finally, I would like to thank Eddie Maguire for entertaining us all with his enthusiastic tales of what can be seen and done at Machrihanish SBO.

#### Species List (Tayinloan north)

Mute Swan	Black-headed Gull
Common Eider	Common Gull
Slavonian Grebe	Herring Gull
Common Kestrel	Black Guillemot
Ringed Plover	Western Jackdaw
Dunlin	Hooded Crow.
Eurasian Curlew	
Tom Callan	



The tough guys an' gals ready for some serious birding

Tayinloan Outing: Saturday,  
27<sup>th</sup> November, 2010

The extremely cold and frosty morning made me wonder if anyone would turn up to watch birds at glorious Tayinloan. However Terry Robilliard, Malcolm Chattwood and Tom and Shirley Callan braved the snow en route, with forecast of more to come, and joined me in the sunshine at the pier. The emotive sounds of

Greenland White-fronted geese and Curlews surrounded us and the glorious site of 6 long tailed ducks in one telescope view spurred us on to walk south along the coast - feet crunching **on the frozen pud-**

dles of sea water! We returned home to 'The Whins' to enjoy our sandwiches and a chat and to shelter from the chilly north east breeze. We were soon ready to set out again- this time in a northerly direction- with about 300 geese, all Greenland White-fronts ( none with neck collars ), keeping an eye on our movements! Altogether, a chilly but enjoyable days birding!

Birds seen – Great Northern Diver, Black Throated Diver, Red Throated Diver, Cormorant, Shag, Grey Heron, Greenland White-fronted geese, Shelduck, Mallard, Wigeon, Teal, Eider, Common Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Hen Harrier (male hunting over fields), Common Buzzard, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Lapwing, Turnstone, Dunlin, Redshank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, (large flock 70+), Snipe, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Collared Dove, Skylark, Rock Pipit, Meadow Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Stonechat, Song Thrush, Fieldfare, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Jackdaw, Rook, Carion/Hooded Crow, Raven, Starling, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Greenfinch.

Katie Pendreigh

## Loch Sween Field Trip– Sunday 7th November 2010

After an overnight frost and the clearance of early mist the morning dawned bright and sunny. At least 12 members and friends arrived up at the car park at Bellanoch.

With a very threatening weather forecast we decided to head straight down to Loch na Cille at the mouth of Loch Sween. On the way we met up again at Tayvallich and shared cars to save on transport.

Tom Callan noticed a couple of Little Grebes as we passed Caol Scotnish and when we stopped to look it turned out that there were nine of them in all. Four Eurasian Wigeon flew over while we were there and a couple of Cormorants were drying their wings on a rock there. Herring Gulls and a Grey Heron were in the harbour at Tayvallich and just before we left Graham Clark spotted a Sparrowhawk flying into a garden.

The next stop was at Linne Mhuirich where we saw Rock Pipits feeding on the shore and Mike Harrison noted one actually wading in shallow water. At least 4 more Little Grebes were found here as well as Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Robin, Common Chaffinch, Common Raven and a Eurasian Treecreeper was heard calling.

At first there did not seem to be a lot about at Ulva Lagoons (or 'The Puddle' as it is known locally). However, as often happens, the more we looked the more there was to see. A single Whooper Swan was on the water

with at least 10 Mute Swans and then Graham Clark picked up a flock of 10 Whoopers in the distance flying down Loch Sween just above the sky line. Their identity was confirmed when the evocative calls were heard echoing across the water. A flock of about 35 Eurasian Teal were also on The Puddle and a few Eurasian Wigeon were picked up on the far bank. Also on the far bank a male and female Hen Harrier were seen hunting briefly. A Grey Wagtail was seen in a field nearby and Valerie Wells found a male Common Stonechat perched on a rock further up the road. Stonechats are usually quite numerous here but the fact that this was the only one we saw perhaps shows that numbers have still not recovered from the cold weather last winter. Other species noted here included Common Kestrel, Blackbird, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Chaffinch and Hooded Crow and a Raven flew up and down the ridge calling frequently and performing the occasional aerobatics.

After the glorious start to the day the weather showed signs of deteriorating so we moved on to Loch na Cille and then to the Danna Island causeway. Along the tide-line at Loch na Cille were small numbers of waders including Oystercatchers and Eurasian Curlews. A few Mallards and Red-breasted Mergansers were on the water with a single Shag on the shore in the distance. As we watched them a flock of about 140 Greenland White-fronted Geese suddenly cascaded up from behind the hill and flew right over us calling loudly. After wheeling around for a bit they finally landed on the grassy area towards the mouth of the loch, and were shortly followed by a flock of about 20 Greylag Geese. By this time it had started to rain lightly and a very cold wind had set in.

Some members were showing early indications of hypothermia and it seemed a good time to retreat to the cars and eat our packed lunches. Luckily by the time we had finished the rain had stopped, although there was still a chilly wind. Checking through the flock of geese on the grass we noticed that one of them had an orange neck collar. We managed to read the code as T2S. I reported this to Tony Fox of Greenland White-fronted Goose Study the following day and received an **almost immediate reply saying** *"T2S is very exciting, it was a bird marked in February 2010 at Ballylawn on Lough Swilly in County Donegal, an adult which was not sexed for some reason, but I would guess from the measurements a female. Needless to say, it had not been seen since, but it is very interesting that it should turn up with you in Argyll! We have had very few marked individuals seen on Danna. D5C and A9Y in winter 1995/6 were geese caught in west Greenland in 1992, and A9Y was reported again in 2000/1, but that is all."*

An otter spotted playing about on the far shore had us all scanning through our telescopes. When we finally tracked it down there turned out to be two together. We noticed approx. 10 Northern Lapwings dotted about in the field with the geese and on checking the shingle near the causeway found a Common Redshank and at least 34 Ringed Plovers (a good count for here). Morag and Norman Rea alerted us to the fact that a Grey Plover had been seen there earlier and after much searching we found it lurking in the middle of a **bunch of seaweed**. It's a curious fact that one, or occasionally two, Grey Plovers have been seen in more or less exactly the same spot here every winter since at least 1999 (WeBS count records). A Great Northern Diver was fishing just offshore, at least one Common Shelduck was present in Ceann an-t Sailein (the loch to the S of the causeway) and one or two Goldfinches were also around.

We decided to call it a day here and call in at the hide at Bellanoch on Loch Crinan on the way home. On the way back, David Palmar got some excellent photos of a Common Buzzard eating prey. The tide was well in here which restricted the number of species in the Add Estuary but we did find two beautiful drake Goosanders resting out of the water as well as the usual Wigeon, Teal, Grey Herons (8 roosting on the small islands), Curlews and Redshanks. Walking back along the canal to the cars we recorded Coal Tits and Siskins as well as a small party of Long-tailed Tits. To round the day off Danielle and Graham Clark had a party of 25-30 Waxwings near the western roundabout in Lochgilphead. Not a huge number of species (49) but nevertheless quite an interesting days birding.

Code	Species
MS	Mute Swan
WS	Whooper Swan
NW	Greenland White-fronted Goose
GJ	Greylag Goose
SU	Common Shelduck
WN	Eurasian Wigeon
T.	Eurasian Teal
MA	Mallard
GN	Common Goldeneye
RM	Red-breasted Merganser
GD	Goosander
ND	Great Northern Diver
LG	Little Grebe
CA	Great Cormorant
SA	Shag
H.	Grey Heron
HH	Hen Harrier
SH	Eurasian Sparrowhawk
BZ	Common Buzzard
K.	Common Kestrel
OC	Oystercatcher
RP	Ringed Plover
GV	Grey Plover
L.	Northern Lapwing
CU	Eurasian Curlew
RK	Common Redshank
CM	Common Gull
HG	Herring Gull
GB	Great Black-backed Gull
MP	Meadow Pipit
RC	Rock Pipit
GL	Grey Wagtail
PW	Pied Wagtail
WX	Waxwing
WR	Wren
D	Dunnock
R	Robin
SC	Common Stonechat
B	Blackbird
LT	Long-tailed Tit
BT	Blue Tit
GT	Great Tit
CT	Coal Tit
HB	Hybrid Crow
HC	Hooded Crow
RN	Common Raven
SG	Common Starling
CH	Common Chaffinch
GO	Goldfinch
SK	Siskin

Paul Daw (with thanks for comments and additions from Mike Harrison & David Palmar).

## Notes

### Siskin Ring Recovery

In the September Eider, Karl Pipes contributed the following piece: On the 2nd of May this year I picked up the dead, bedraggled body of a Siskin which lay on the ground under one of the peanut feeders. It was a male with a ring on its leg. Ring number X055306 was duly notified to the BTO. I wondered who it was that had been ringing locally as, after that dreadful nationwide freeze it surely must be recent. Well, on June 25th I received the answer. The bird was ringed on 19th February 2008 at Stover Country Park, nr Newton Abbott, Devon. The 'Ringing details' state Age: 2nd year (5) I'm not sure if that means its age when the ring was affixed or when I found it? I assume it means that it was in its fifth year, ringed in its second? If it had lived for five years and survived through last Winter I find that remarkable! Distance covered 641km.

Code 5 - this is a ringer's code which means that the bird was definitely hatched in the calendar year before the bird was ringed. The main codes used are:

0 - age unknown

1 - ringed as nestling

2 - fully grown, year of hatching quite unknown

3J - definitely hatched this calendar year and still partly, or completely in juvenile body plumage

3 - definitely hatched during current calendar year

4 - hatched before current calendar year - exact year unknown

5 - definitely hatched in the previous calendar year

6 - hatched before last calendar year - exact year unknown

7 - definitely hatched in the year before last

8 - hatched 3 or more years ago - exact year unknown

9 - definitely hatched 3 years ago

etc

This means birds with odd numbered codes have a known year of birth, while those with an even numbered code have an unknown year of birth.

David Jardine

### Bitterns in 2010— summary report by the RSPB

Please find attached a summary report on the 2010 Bittern monitoring results.

Some key points from this very interesting year are:

A further increase in the number of booming male Bitterns to 87, up from 82 in 2009.

An increase in the number of sites occupied by booming male Bitterns to 47, up from 43 in 2009.

An increase in the number of active nests, with 41 confirmed, up from 39 in 2009.

A decrease in the number of sites with nests, with 17 occupied sites in 2009, one down on 2009.

An increase to 14 booming males and 14 nests in the Avalon Marshes, Somerset, up from three and seven respectively in 2009.

There were just 11 confirmed nests on the Suffolk coast this year, the lowest since 1998.

There was confirmed nesting for the first time at Dungeness.

The full report is available from Paul Daw: [monedula@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:monedula@globalnet.co.uk)

Paul Daw

## UK Twite Study Project MSBO autumn 2010



**Twite originating from Cumbria controlled at MSBO**

### Introduction...

Recently, Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (MSBO) joined the UK Twite Study Project.

At Machrihanish there is a light passage of Twite in spring then, throughout summer, the MSBO feeding station is used routinely by small numbers of local breeders ( Twite will apparently travel several miles to exploit a regular source of nyjer seed ).

During this period, adults, often accompanied by begging fledglings, are a regular sight at the station.

However, autumn ( mid-August to October ) is prime time for the appearance of passage birds from the north; apparently from many islands and probably also mainland Argyll. Over many years, assemblies of up to 200 Twite have been logged in the area and in recent years migrant flocks have been attracted to the immediate vicinity of MSBO (a few metres from observers) to gorge on nyjer seed. On-going passage has always been assumed ( see comment on retraps below ). This conclusion has been often reinforced by highly variable

maximum daily counts at the station coupled by brief sightings of many colour-ringed birds ( majority photographed ) that originated mainly from ringing sites in NW England ( Cumbria & Lancashire ) in previous winters. A Twite colour-ringed in County Donegal in winter 2007 was photographed at MSBO during autumn 2008.

### Catching Twite at MSBO...

The trapping method involves a rather simple, near circular pull net (2m x 1.5m). The back edge of the net is attached to a lead which is linked to a 1m high post. A pull line is connected to the opposite end. The net is furled neatly in a semi-circle and when the pull line is activated (from MSBO), it rises quickly and closes almost 1m high over the birds (forming a tent shape) and is then lowered carefully. No pegs are used; the net is 2m deep but rises only 1m allowing the net that remains furled on the ground to form a very sound barricade. In addition, a drystone dyke-type wall was built as a shelter to aid trapping operations.

The successful pull system was designed by the warden & constructed ( very professionally at low cost ) by Derek Goode ( MSBO occasional assistant and ex Campbeltown fisherman ). The largest batch caught was around 30 birds.

### Ringling totals at MSBO...

Trapping Twite began in earnest on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010 and by the end of the month a total of almost 200 birds sported our unique colour rings. Throughout September the total rose ( rather slowly ) to 300 colour-ringed birds.

During October, a very obvious passage/influx of unringed birds occurred almost daily; a further

194 were captured during this rousing period, bringing the total colour-ringed birds this autumn ( August – October ) to 494 ( our anticipated ringing total was 500+ ).

MSBO colour ring sequence...

All Twite captured were fitted with a green over white split ring on each leg along with a statutory BTO metal ring which is positioned on the left leg above colour ring ( project identifier ).

Winter destinations?

So far, the project has established that MSBO is unquestionably an outstanding passage site for this species. It follows that many winter destinations could be discovered.

In recent years the Grampian Ringing Group has established that birds breeding on many islands off NW Scotland move E in late autumn to winter by coastal habitats in NE Scotland.

Will a similar movement be discovered in the population that breed further south on the mainland and Argyll islands? If so, MSBO colour-ringed birds can be expected to turn up on the Scottish east coast/borders. Many Twite winter in this well-watched coastal area, but to date, no colour-ringed bird has been sighted there.

#### **Controls at MSBO...**

Five Twite were controlled at MSBO, including two that were colour-ringed in NW England (Cumbria & Lancashire). The other three ( BTO rings only ) will hopefully provide some additional information on wintering/passage sites, or perhaps even breeding areas.

#### **Retraps at MSBO...**

Many birds acquired retrap histories- some

stretching back to mid-August. This indicated that the regular supply of nyjer seed was probably encouraging some to adopt the area as a lengthy staging post ( many adults were in wing moult August/early September ). However, by the end of October, the majority had moved on **and only a 'handful' of birds (<10) were exploiting** the feeding station.

#### **Movements to date...**

Sightings of MSBO colour-ringed birds include:

One photographed at Ramsey, Isle of Man on 16<sup>th</sup>October .

At least one was seen very well at Walney Island Bird Observatory (Cumbria) on 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup>October and 5<sup>th</sup> November, with a further sighting of two birds on the 17<sup>th</sup> November.

One was photographed at the Wig, Loch Ryan on 19<sup>th</sup> November ( at least three birds were present in a large Twite flock ).

Two of the birds appear to be wintering by MSBO.

One was controlled; V879672, ringed on 28<sup>th</sup>August & retrapped at MSBO on 21<sup>st</sup>September. The same bird was caught at Heysham Harbour north wall (Lancashire) on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>October.

**An intriguing 'probable' sighting ( green over white on left leg ) during late November involved a bird in Lincolnshire.**

#### **2011...**

Next spring, many of our colour-ringed birds will return to the Argyll mainland and of course will disperse to breed on many islands. We appeal to Argyll Bird Club members and visiting birders to examine any Twite they encounter carefully for

colour rings (see contact details below & image of MSBO colour-ringed Twite).



**Twite showing MSBO colour ring sequence**

### **Acknowledgements...**

Special thanks to David Sowter, UK Twite Study Project co-ordinator, for considerable support & assistance when dealing with our enlistment to the project and for promptly supplying lots of unique colour rings.

Eddie Maguire ( Warden MSBO ).  
[machrihanishbirds@btinternet.com](mailto:machrihanishbirds@btinternet.com)

Tel. 07919 660 292 (mob)

Rod Angus ( BTO licensed ringer ).  
[scottishowlcentre@hotmail.com](mailto:scottishowlcentre@hotmail.com)

Eddie Maguire



**Waxwing photos courtesy ©Jim Duncan**

### **Waxwing Influx– Autumn 2010**

This autumn we had one of the largest influxes of Waxwings to Argyll on record. I was inundated with phone calls and e-mails and even people stopped me in the street to tell me about them!

The first were 7 reported from Dunoon by George Newall on 21 October. Then larger groups appeared at various locations in Mid-Argyll (incl. 30 at Easdale Lagoon – Terry Robilliard) and on Tiree on 23 October. By the following day (24 October) they were almost everywhere, with records from Connel, Kilberry, Tayvallich (Mid-Argyll), Arinagour ( Coll), Bridge of Orchy (North Argyll), and on Mull, including flocks of 50 or 60 in places. Records continued during the following week with up to 100 in Lochgilphead and a maximum count of 105 at Dunoon Castle Museum on 27 October. As usual with Waxwings they were gone as quickly as they had appeared and the last 2 (so far) were reported at Tullochgorm, Minard on 20 November. I've listed below all the records I've had so far but if you saw Waxwings at this time but haven't reported them yet please let me know. It's good to have as comprehensive a picture as possible of such impressive events.

## Waxwings: Argyll (and nearby) records – October/ November 2010

Date	Location	No.	
21/10/2010	Dunoon	7	First report
23/10/2010	Craignish, Mid-Argyll	12	between Craignish Castle and Craignish Point
23/10/2010	Balemartine, Tiree	16	- late on
23/10/2010	Meningie, Tiree	10-15	p.m.
23/10/2010	Easdale Lagoon, Mid-Argyll	30	
24/10/2010	Loch a' Phuill, Tiree	23	Others elsewhere on Tiree
24/10/2010	Kilberry, Knapdale	20	Or more at 15.00 for 5 mins at Port Ban Caravan Park until Whitebeam was stripped of berries.
24/10/2010	Arinagour, Coll	29	this afternoon, favouring the garden at Craigdarroch
24/10/2010	Balephuill, Tiree	2	this evening before heading off east
24/10/2010	Tayvallich, Mid-Argyll	50	50-60 arrived around 16.30
24/10/2010	Griburn, Mull	50	Others elsewhere on Mull
24/10/2010	Bridge of Orchy, North Argyll	14	Seen
24/10/2010	Connel, Mid-Argyll	14	Arrived today
24/10/2010	Balvicar, Seil, Mid-Argyll	10	Feeding on berries p.m.
24/10/2010	Tarbet, Loch Lomond	4	4 in a pretty sorry-looking rowan tree opposite the Tarbet Hotel
24/10/2010	Oban, Argyll	40	40 – 50 Glenmore Road in Oban in the afternoon
25/10/2010	Colintraive, Cowal	1	seen
25/10/2010	Dun-an-Achadh, Coll	8	And 7 at Tom-nan-Euan- a.m.
25/10/2010	Crossapol, Tiree	1	Seen
25/10/2010	Hunter's Quay, Dunoon	30	Or more
25/10/2010	Connel, Mid-Argyll	10	Seen today
25/10/2010	Eredine, Loch Awe, Mid-Argyll	15	Approx. flying around in the mist as a tight flock , early morning
25/10/2010	Ellenabeich, Isle of Seil, Mid-Argyll	80	Approx.
26/10/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	30	Or more briefly in car park behind bank
26/10/2010	Connel, Mid-Argyll	44	Numbers increased
26/10/2010	Balephuill, Tiree	1	Seen
26/10/2010	Arinagour, Coll	30	
26/10/2010	Oban, Mid-Argyll	2	This morning
26/10/2010	Kilberry, Knapdale	5	stayed for 2 days eating cotoneaster
27/10/2010	Hunter's Quay, Dunoon	40	'hundreds' reported around the Castle Museum
27/10/2010	Castle Museum, Dunoon	105	Counted from photo (see above)
27/10/2010	Ballachulish, Highland	37	Counted, , although when the flock is in flight I would estimate that there could be 50 or more birds.
27/10/2010	Arinagour, Coll	21	in Arinagour this afternoon
27/10/2010	Dunoon	8	Seen
28/10/2010	Dunoon	10	10-15 or more in Morrison's car park, early this afternoon

28/10/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	58	Min 58 <b>Waxwings</b> together at Manse Brae
28/10/2010	Strachur, Cowal	38	Increase from 15 on 26th. Per Jeff Wilson.
28/10/2010	Oban, Mid-Argyll	15	At Tesco's car park
29/10/2010	Inveraray, Mid-Argyll	25	Approx at Primary School
30/10/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	1	at Manse Brae
31/10/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	96	Around 100 (min 96) now behind Whitegates Centre
31/10/2010	Benderloch, North Argyll	30	Approx. late p.m.
01/11/2010	Oban, Mid-Argyll	8	At Tesco's car park
01/11/2010	Kilberry, Knapdale	2	stayed 10 mins at Port Ban Caravan Park
02/11/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	70	Approx. on the road up to Lochgilphead hospital this am
02/11/2010	Arinagour, Coll	7	in Arinagour and 3 at 'Garden House'
04/11/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	70	Or more at Manse Brae 08.55
05/11/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	6	feeding on berries behind office in Manse Brae
07/11/2010	Oban, Argyll	1	on Pulpit Hill in the morning
07/11/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	70	Or more still at Manse Brae 10:30
07/11/2010	Kilninver, Mid-Argyll	4	Seen
07/11/2010	Ardrishaig, Mid-Argyll	50	Or more at Glenburn Rd on holly bush
08/11/2010	Ardrishaig, Mid-Argyll	50	Approx. near bowling green
08/11/2010	Ardrishaig, Mid-Argyll	15	c15-20 in Ardrishaig early morning
08/11/2010	Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll	40	40+ at SNH office Kilmory
08/11/2010	Furnace, Mid-Argyll	10	in Furnace
09/11/2010	Easdale, Mid-Argyll	11	flew off N at 10:30
14/11/2010	Tullochgorm, Minard, Mid-Argyll	10	Or more on beech tree in garden early a.m.
20/11/2010	Tullochgorm, Minard, Mid-Argyll	2	flew off to N

59 records at 23.11.2010

Paul Daw: 23/11/2010.

## Autumn 2010 on Tiree

The Isle of Tiree enjoyed another exciting bird-filled autumn in 2010, with good coverage achieved by visiting birders and sharp-eyed residents alike. A mix of settled warm spells combined with winds from the west and east linked to active depressions meant that birds arrived from all quadrants during the period. Regular scarcities such as Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Yellow-browed Warbler and Barred Warbler were all once again in evidence, and two new species were recorded for the island. A Dipper was a surprise second Tiree occurrence, but compared to recent autumns, there were no American Golden Plovers, whilst



**Lapland Bunting ©John Bowler**

Lesser Whitethroats were conspicuous by their almost total absence, which just goes to show that no two autumns here are alike.

August:

August was rather slow for migrants, with the modest highlights including an early Spotted Flycatcher at Balephuill (19<sup>th</sup>) and five House Martins at Kilkenneth (19<sup>th</sup>). Even a late-month visit by Keith Gillon failed to turn up any real scarcities, other than the first migrant Chiffchaffs, a fly-over redpoll at The Manse (31<sup>st</sup>) and 2 late Grasshopper Warblers (31<sup>st</sup>). Wader passage was also thin during the month, with just 16 Black-tailed Godwits, 4 Ruff and 5 Greenshanks noted, although a Grey Plover (31<sup>st</sup>) was a hint of things to come.

September:

The start of September saw an immediate increase in grounded migrants, tying in with a similar fall on the east coast of the mainland. A long –staying Pied Flycatcher at Balephuill (2<sup>nd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>) was the highlight amongst an influx of five Spotted Flycatchers (2<sup>nd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>), a Whinchat at Balephuill (2<sup>nd</sup>), a Whitethroat at Carnan Mor (11<sup>th</sup>), a late Swift at Sandaig (8<sup>th</sup>) and a very early Redwing at Vaul (3<sup>rd</sup>). The first week of the month also saw an early burst of Lapland Bunting records including 2 at Salum (1<sup>st</sup>), 6 at Hough Bay (2<sup>nd</sup>) and 13 at scattered sites (3<sup>rd</sup>)- a precursor to what proved to be an unprecedented autumn for this species on the island and indeed across much of Scotland. The September tally totalled some 200+ birds in flocks of up to 48, and a further 400 were logged in October, including a record count of 160 at The Reef (13<sup>th</sup> October). September also saw the start of a good autumn for waders with no less than 15 Curlew Sandpipers (from 3<sup>rd</sup>) and 6 Little Stints (from 7<sup>th</sup>) recorded during the month. Scarcer terns included 6 Sandwich Terns (from 2<sup>nd</sup>), **a juvenile Black Tern at Loch a' Phuill found by David Kent (9<sup>th</sup>)** and then up to 4 juvenile Black Terns together at Loch Bhasapol (12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>). The first Pectoral Sandpiper of the autumn was found at Greenhill (13<sup>th</sup>) amongst a fall of hundreds of Snipe, **with another or the same at Loch a' Phuill (20<sup>th</sup>)**. Westerly winds mid-month brought the first Buff-breasted Sandpipers, a group of 3 birds, to the Reef (13<sup>th</sup>). Groups of up to 2 birds were then seen throughout the month at Sandaig, Ruaig and Vaul, although as always the precise number of individuals involved is hard to determine, it could have been as low as 3 or as high as 7. Oddly perhaps, despite turning up on Islay and Uist at this time, American Golden Plovers failed to appear this autumn on Tiree, despite much checking of the Golden Plover flocks, which were also smaller than in previous autumns. However, Ruff were present in good numbers with up to 25 re-



**Northern Parula ©Lee Gregory**

corded during the month. A run of NW gales on the back of a depression resulted in a good spell of sea-watching from the north coast (14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>) with 2 adult **Sabine's Gulls** and 2 juvenile **Long-tailed Skuas** the **highlights, along with 49 Leach's Petrels, 56 Sooty Shearwaters, 2 Pomarine Skuas** and a bumper 100 Great Skuas including a record count of 77 in 3.5hrs (15<sup>th</sup>). Things quietened down during a run of strong NE winds in the third week of September but these resulted in the most unexpected bird of the autumn. An afternoon check (25<sup>th</sup>) of the bushes at Carnan Mor as the winds eased revealed not the hoped-for early Yellow-browed Warbler, but instead a gleaming 1<sup>st</sup>-winter female Northern Parula! The first for Scotland, this brightly coloured North American wood warbler, spent five days actively feeding in the Carnan Mor bushes and in the adjacent gardens at Balephuill attracting some 75 birders to the island to twitch it. The bird turned up at the same time as the first of some 10 NW Common Redpolls, including one very large dark Greenland bird.

**Bluethroat ©Jim Dickson**



Visiting birders went on to find a Common Rosefinch at Scarinish (28<sup>th</sup>) and a Turtle Dove at Balevullin (from 28<sup>th</sup>), whilst a Barn Owl put in a rare appearance at Balephuill (30<sup>th</sup>). Commoner passerine migrants were also much in evidence late in the month, once again tying in with a fall on the east coast of the mainland, with the first Garden Warbler at Carnan Mor (26<sup>th</sup>), 4 Blackcaps, 20 Chiffchaffs, 22 Willow Warblers, 7 Goldcrests, 3 Dunnocks and 6 Snow Buntings (from 26<sup>th</sup>), along with dozens of Wheatears and alba wagtails. Finch migration also started later in the month with a Siskin at Balephuill (19<sup>th</sup>), 9 Lesser Redpolls, the first Chaffinch (27<sup>th</sup>), the first Goldfinch (30<sup>th</sup>) and 7 Greenfinches.

October:

October continued where September left off and visiting birders had the choice of enjoying watching waders from North America, finding vagrant passerines from Europe or watching a huge passage of geese from the Arctic. First up was a confiding Short-



**Short-toed Lark ©Jim Dickson**

toed Lark found by Jim Dickson at Sandaig (2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>) - just the second record for Argyll, following on from the long-staying bird at The Reef in August 2008. The bird spent most of its time feeding on the bottom of a gravel extraction pit, where it was often accompanied by a group of Lapland Buntings. Not to be outdone, Ross Ahmed then found a skulking 1<sup>st</sup>-winter Bluethroat at Balemartine (5<sup>th</sup>), the first ever autumn record of this species from Argyll, and judging from its secretive behaviour, it is not hard to see why! Scouring the island each day, Ross and Jim recorded high day totals of some commoner migrants such as 43 Goldfinches (10<sup>th</sup>) and 14 Reed Buntings (6<sup>th</sup>), but **also 14 "north-west" Common Redpolls (4<sup>th</sup>)**. Inevitably, they also found more rarities in the form of a juvenile Barred Warbler at Vault (7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>), with a fe-

male-type Yellow Wagtail on the beach there (9<sup>th</sup>). American waders remained in evidence early in the month with some 14 Grey Phalaropes logged (1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>), plus records of 1-2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers from The Reef, Ruaig and Heylipol (3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) and 1-2 Pectoral Sandpipers at Heylipol and at Ruaig (5<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>). How many different individuals of the latter two species were involved this autumn is hard to tell, but it was clearly another good autumn for them.

There was a big arrival of Redwings (10<sup>th</sup>) involving at least 600 birds, in amongst which were at least 6 Bramblings and a mix of other commoner finches. On the same day, the long-staying group of Goldcrests and Chiffchaffs in the gardens at Balephuill were joined by a stunning Firecrest, the first record for Tiree. Having just found this bird and called my wife Janet over to see it too, our attention was drawn to the hillside above by the alarm calls of a Heron, which revealed the presence of a wing-tagged Red Kite being mobbed by a sub-adult male Hen Harrier, an unforgettable sight! The Firecrest



**Firecrest ©Jim Dickson**

showed very well in the willows all day but disappeared overnight. Other unusual raptors included a juvenile Osprey, first found roosting at The Reef (6<sup>th</sup>) and which then spent three more days in West Tiree, roosting for two nights on telegraph poles at Balephuill. This was followed by occasional reports of up to 2 immature Golden Eagles around West Tiree, which I finally caught up with in early November. It is surprising how elusive such large raptors can be, even on a flat island like Tiree!

With the winds remaining in the east, passerines kept arriving including a very late Sedge Warbler at Cornaigbeg (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>), the first Fieldfares (from 11<sup>th</sup>), a Pied Flycatcher at Cornaigmore (11<sup>th</sup>), a Garden Warbler at Vault (12<sup>th</sup>) and a Yellow-browed Warbler at Balephuill (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>). Jim found a second Yellow-browed Warbler in a garden at Kenovay (12<sup>th</sup>), whilst another bird at Bale-

phuill (23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>), brought the autumn tally to three. Formerly regarded as very rare in Argyll, there have now been up to 12 different individuals on Tiree in the last four autumns. In stark contrast, the intensive coverage on Tiree in early October failed to locate a single Lesser Whitethroat, a species, which had been appearing with increasing regularity here in October. A lone bird at Vaul (20<sup>th</sup>), found during a goose count, was the only record of the autumn.

Goose passage was very intense this year, with most movements focussed over just a few days. Totals logged were 980 Pale-bellied Brent including 800 through (6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>), 1,180 Pinkfeet (10<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>) and 5,500 Barnacle Geese (13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>), although Greenland White-fronts were slower to arrive, with just 204 present by 21<sup>st</sup>. Things slowed down in mid October as the winds swung around to the northwest but a Dipper found **feeding along the outlet stream of Loch a' Phuill at Traigh Bhi** (16<sup>th</sup>) was most unexpected and just the second record for the island. The latter half of the month saw a further influx of northern finches with some 20 Siskins (from 17<sup>th</sup>), 3 Mealy Redpolls (23<sup>rd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>) and a handful of Bramblings, as well as a late Pied Flycatcher at Carnan Mor (24<sup>th</sup>). Warbler totals also remained high in the second half of the month with a further 7 Chiffchaffs including 2 grey-green *abietinus*-type birds, 12 Blackcaps and a late Garden Warbler at Balinoe (16<sup>th</sup>), whilst a Mistle Thrush at Balephuill (24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>) was the second of the autumn for this less than annual visitor. The third week of October saw an unprecedented and rapid passage of Waxwings. The first Waxwings arrived on 23<sup>rd</sup>, when 15 were seen briefly feeding on rose-hips at Meningie and these or another

group of 16 were seen leaving Balemartine later that day, bounding east across the sea towards Mull. A **flock of 23 flew north across Loch a' Phuill, the following day with singles and pairs noted at several sites until the last on 26<sup>th</sup>**. A few late waders included a Ruff and a Black-tailed Godwit at Loch a' Phuill (to 19<sup>th</sup>), a Curlew Sandpiper at Sandaig (to 21<sup>st</sup>) and a Little Stint at Sorobaidh Bay (23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>).

November:

As always, migration slowed down rapidly at the start of November, although there were further pulses of Whooper Swans and Redwings through, whilst the odd Chiffchaff and Blackcap hung on at Balephuill in the first week of the month, and there was a late Swallow at Sorobaidh Bay (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>). A drake Green-winged Teal **at Loch a' Phuill (7<sup>th</sup>)** was the first autumn record here since 1999. A juvenile Glaucous Gull on the same chilly day at Sorobaidh Bay marked the start of the winter and time to start writing up all those rarity descriptions.....

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all the island residents and visiting birders who reported bird records this autumn. I would particularly like to thank the following for their more intensive birding efforts this autumn on the island: Ross Ahmed, Bill Allan, Anne-Lise Dickie, Jim Dickson, Keith Gillon, Bob Grove and Graham Todd, plus all the birders from the radar bird monitoring team at Sandaig.

John Bowler

## Bird Club Committee Member in Court Appearance

**A committee member of Argyll Bird Club appeared in the Ornithologist's Court recently charged with poor bird recognition skills following an incident where it took over a week to identify a party of 4 birds as Linnets. The offence took place whilst the accused was on holiday on the Cote d'Azur and followed a number of sightings over the period of a week before the identity of the species was confirmed. The seriousness of the offence was compounded by the fact that the defendant had taken his Collins Field Guide and a decent pair of binoculars on holiday with him.**

When cross-examined the defendant said that he and his wife had occasionally seen a party of 4 birds in flight and perched in bushes which surrounded a small grass area adjacent to the terrace of their holiday apartment in Frejus. He said that House Sparrows and Sardinian warblers were also regular visitors to the patch of grass and this allowed the size of the mystery birds to be placed between the two regular species. The bill was noted as **being similar in shape to a sparrow's suggesting finch or bunting rather than warbler. The plumage remained the most puzzling feature, with small white wing bars and a hint of white along the edge of the tail and a slightly barred breast being the main distinguishing feature of an otherwise uniform brown plumage. Repeated trawling through the pages of the Bird Guide had not revealed the birds' identity and at one stage had threatened to put the defendant off his regular glass of local wine.**

The accused was asked by his counsel whether there were any mitigating circumstances surrounding his inability to identify such a common bird. He replied that he had readily identified Linnets on countless occasions previously but had always scanned the flock until the male- with its distinctive pink breast and cap- was spotted. He could not remember an occasion when a flock of Linnets was confirmed by identifying female birds and suggested that would probably be the case for most birdwatchers. The environment was also not typically suited to Linnets, which could have contributed to the poor application of identification skills, whilst Mediterranean birds could sport slightly different plumage characteristics, much like humans.

The judge accepted the guilty plea and sentenced the defendant to remain on the Argyll Bird Club Committee for another year and to attend as many monthly field trips as possible, where he could benefit from the extensive **knowledge of accomplished birdwatchers**. Had the judge himself not been faced with a situation, where he'd found difficulty differentiating female whinchats from stonechats, he said he would have considered imposing a custodial sentence which would have been served at the Fair Isle Bird Observatory.

Court Reporter  
Malcolm Chatwood

Launch of Argyll & Bute Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November

<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/news/general/3318819>

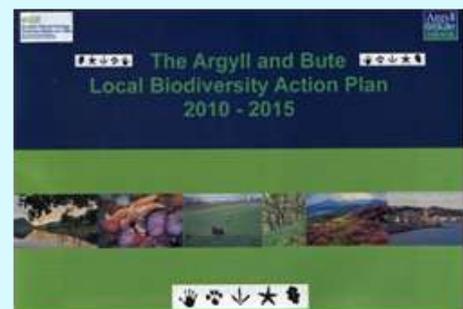
The LBAP was launched by Andrew Campbell, SNH manager for Argyll & Stirling Area. The event took place at the Hunters Quay Holiday Park, Dunoon, and was attended by many representatives of the members of the Biodiversity Partnership. Over 70 work programmes are now divided into 6 ecosystem groups.

Comparison with the previous action plan reveals a slimmer document, which is less a wish list and more focused on deliverable outcomes. The shift to more habitat based projects should benefit many species in the wider countryside than occur in protected areas. The selection of habitats and species was taken from the UK and Scottish Biodiversity Lists, plus some of local importance. Another difference is the removal of the area now covered by Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, which now has its own LBAP.

The full new Action plan will appear soon on the Argyll and Bute Council website as a downloadable pdf, either at: [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/planning/environment/localbiodiversity](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/planning/environment/localbiodiversity) or on the biodiversity website [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/biodiversity/](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/biodiversity/)

Argyll Bird Club has several projects in the final plan to which it is contributing:

- Black-throated Diver Raft Monitoring Project
- Pied Flycatcher and Redstart Nestbox Project
- Seabird Ringing and Census at Treshnish Isles and on Sanda
- Breeding Arctic Skua Monitoring
- Mink Control to protect seabirds
- Tern Raft Breeding Programme
- Identify new LNRs



Nigel Scriven

## Recent Reports

Aug—Nov  
2010

Paul Daw  
(Tel. 01546 886260)

e-mail:  
[monedula@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:monedula@globalnet.co.uk)

The latest news on bird sightings in Argyll is available on the Argyll Bird Club website at [www.argyllbirdclub.org](http://www.argyllbirdclub.org)  
**See 'Click here for latest bird reports' on the home page.**

### STOP PRESS.

Green-winged Teal. A drake has been present at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree throughout November. Although a regular winter visitor to Islay there are only five or six previous records for Tiree.

A first winter Little Gull was found at Tayinloan on 02 November (Katie Pendreigh).



**Northern Parula ©Lee Gregory**

### A first for Scotland.

A Northern Parula (*Parula Americana*) was found and photographed by John Bowler at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 25 September. This American warbler is not only a first for Argyll but a new species for Scotland: there are only 14 previous records for Britain as a whole. John says a chartered aircraft arrived on Sunday (26 Aug) full of twitchers (makes me wonder about my fellow birders sometimes!), not to mention those arriving on the ferry.... Luckily for them it was still there, having re-appeared in gardens at Balephuill. They are beautiful little birds though: as my son put it "like a

child with a paintbrush has been set loose on a Goldcrest". It was still there, back at Carnan Mor, on 27 Aug.

### Waxwings

The main recent ornithological event has been a major Waxwing influx during October/November see report on p11

### Wildfowl (and Gamebirds):

Whooper Swan. Twelve adults flying south over Carnan Mor on 23 September were the first definite migrants of the autumn on Tiree (John Bowler). The island total on Tiree on 21-22 October was 156, including 24 cygnets (John Bowler), 33 flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 20 October (Eddie Maguire), 7 flew high over Connel Mid-Argyll on 20 October (Mike Harrison), 12 flew past Treshnish Point, Mull on 20 October (per Anand Prasad), 10 (including 4 juveniles) arrived at Ulva Lagoons, Loch Sween on 23 October and 22 flew over the Crinan Canal on 30 October (Mark Williamson).

Pink-footed Goose. On 20 September, 30 flew SE over Balephuill, Tiree and 80 flew south over Balinoe (John Bowler). A large flock of at least 66 flew south down Loch Gilp at lunch time on 11 October (Lynsey Gibson), 40 flew S over Tayinloan on the same day (Andrew Stevenson) and 40 were at Bleachfield, The Laggan on 22 October. On Tiree, 175 flew over south on 10 October, some 850 flew over on 13 October and 30 flew south on



**Waxwing ©Jim Duncan**

15 October (John Bowler). A single bird has been present at the head of Loch Gilp (possibly an injured bird?) for the past few weeks (Mark Williamson *et al*).

Greenland White-fronted Goose. On Tiree, 4 flew north over Ben Hynish on 15 October, 99 on 23 October and the all-island count on 20-21 October found 204 (John Bowler). The October maximum for Machrihanish was 485 on 28<sup>th</sup> (Eddie Maguire).

Greylag Goose. An all-island count on Tiree on 20-21 October found 2,412 birds (John Bowler).

Snow Goose. The white-morph, un-ringed annually returning Snow Goose was back early (with 15 Greylag Geese) in its favoured field at the Craobh Haven turn-off of the A816 Oban - Lochgilphead road on 12 August (Bill Allan).

Greater Canada Goose. At least 227 were counted at the River Add Estuary on 21 August (Tom Callan).

Barnacle Goose. The wintering geese arrived on Islay en masse on 17 October, including 28,072 Barnacle Geese at the Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve. First big movement on Tiree was on 13 October when some 1,850 geese flew south over the island of which around 1,000 were Barnacle Geese. Approx. 3,400 birds passed through in total on 15 October (John Bowler).

Pale-bellied Brent Goose. Three flocks totalling 60 (largest 35) flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 15 September (WNW gale event) (Eddie Maguire) and a flock of 28 flew west past Aird, Tiree on 24 September (John Bowler). Approx. 800 flew over Tiree on 6-7 October and 11 at Gott Bay on 8 October included a bird colour-ringed in West Iceland in May 2008 which appeared at Larne Lough N. Ireland the following day (John Bowler).

Gadwall. **Three were at Loch a' Phuill on 11 October with 6** there on 17 October (John Bowler).

Mandarin Duck. Five (2 males/ 3 females or immatures) were at Dubh Loch, Glen Shira, Inveraray on 26 September (Roger Broad).

Eurasian Wigeon. A group of 14 recently arrived at the Add Estuary, were still in eclipse plumage on 24 August, as were the 8 Eurasian Teal with them (Jim Dickson).

Pintail. Six were found at **at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 18 August**, with 3 Shovelers (John Bowler). A flighty flock of 19 birds at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 31 October was a grand sight and an unusually high number of bird for this site (Eddie Maguire).

Shoveler. A first winter drake was an unusual visitor at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 29 September (Eddie Maguire).

Greater Scaup. A total of 31 (2 flocks/largest 19) flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 15 September (gale event) as well as a single Long-tailed Duck (Eddie Maguire). Two drakes were on Loch Gilp 30 Sep-5 Oct: an unusual species for this location (Andrew Stevenson).

Common Scoter. A group of 23 were at Aird Kilfinichen, Mull on 8 September (Tom Callan) and 8 were at Tayinloan, Kintyre on 17 September (Katie Pendreigh). Two were off the pier in Calgary Bay, Mull on 24-31 October (Anand Prasad).

Velvet Scoter. Five were reported on Loch na Keal, Mull on 4 August (per Alan Spellman) and one was off Rhunahaorine Point, Kintyre with 4 Common Scoters on 19 August (Katie Pendreigh)..

Common Goldeneye. A drake was on Loch nan Druimnean, nr. Kilmelford, Mid-Argyll on 11 October (Bill Allan) and one at Connel on 31 October was the first of winter there (Mike Harrison).

Red-breasted Merganser. A female was with a crèche of 10 or 11 young (down from 14 earlier) at Otter Ferry on 1 August (Tom Callan). A moult flock of ca 150 was off Rhunahaorine Point on 19 August (Katie Pendreigh). A flock of well over 100 was photographed in Loch Caolisport, Mid-Argyll on 16 September (Robert Daw – no relation!).

Red (Willow) Grouse. A covey of about 6 were near the summit of the Ensay-Burg road, Mull on 31 August (Anand Prasad).

Ptarmigan. A single bird was found on Beinn Bheula, Cowal on 15 October (Nigel Scriven).

Reeve's Pheasant. Five were at the roadside at Castle Lachlan, Cowal on 10 October (Tom Callan).

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

Red-throated Diver. A group of 14 adults were at Achadh, Loch Caolisport on 14 August (Jim Dickson), 8 flew S in 2 hrs at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory also on 14 August and three were in Loch Stornoway, Knapdale on 22 August (Mark Williamson). Two were in Calgary Bay, Mull, out from the 'pink pier', on 24 August (Anand Prasad).

Great Northern Diver. One hit overhead wires at Gott, Tiree on 13 August but was successfully returned to the sea (John Bowler). Eight were at Traigh Bhaigh, Tiree on 13 October (John Bowler). After an overnight arrival at Machrihanish on 24-25 October at least 25 were found in the bay and off the point (Eddie Maguire).

Little Grebe. A total of 25 during the WeBS count at Loch Sween on 17 September included a tight group of 12 at Linne Mhuirich (Paul Daw).

Manx Shearwater. At least 1,000 flew S in 3hrs at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 6 August, a feeding flock of at least 150 were seen from the Tarbert-Portavadie Ferry on 21 August and 300 were counted in 15 minutes offshore at Port Ban Caravan Park, Knapdale on 22 August (Mark Williamson). A bird found dead at Traigh Bhaigh, Tiree on 1 June 2010 had been ringed as an adult on 8 Sept 1994 at Copeland Bird Observatory, Down, N. Ireland. At least 50 were seen from the Mull-Oban ferry SW of Lismore feeding with other species on 11 September (Tom Callan).

Sooty Shearwater etc. A total of 41 Sooty Shearwaters flew west past Aird, Tiree in 80 mins on 14 September together with 3 European Storm-petrels and 7 Leach's Storm-petrels (John Bowler). On the same day 86 Leach's Storm-petrels were logged flying S in 9 hrs during WNW gales at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory with an even larger total of 105 in 5 hours on the following day (15 September). Many were slow moving and quite close in allowing opportunities for digiscoping (Eddie Maguire). On Tiree, two Sooty Shearwaters passed SW off Hynish, in 75 mins on 1 October (Jim Dickson), one flew west off Traigh Bhaigh on 5 October and one headed west off Aird in 2 hours on 18 October (John Bowler).

Balearic Shearwater. Singles were seen flying S at Machri-

hanish Seabird Observatory on 7, 17 and 18 August (Eddie Maguire)

**Leach's Petrel.** Two appeared just offshore at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, flying S at 1225hrs & 1237hrs on 18 October - wind W force 5-6 accompanied by squalls (Eddie Maguire).

Northern Gannet. A total of 1,080 flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory in 3 hrs on 10 August (Eddie Maguire).

Shag. At least 400 were counted at Calgary bay mouth, Mull on 27 August (Carolyn Charrington per Anand Prasad). On Tiree, 180 were in Gunna Sound on 30 August (John Bowler) and 59 were at Rhunahaorine Point, Kintyre on 19 August (Katie Pendreigh).

Great White Egret. A bird found At Ulva Lagoons, Loch Sween on 12 Oct (Jon Close per Jim Dickson) was seen regularly in the area until at least 30 Oct (John Aitchison/Bill Allan/Morag Rea/Mark Williamson).

Raptors, rails etc.:

A large bird of prey sailed across a garden at St Catherine's on 21 August, trailing jesses. Graham Thomas, whose garden it was, managed to get a record photo which Jim Dickson identified as a **Harris' Hawk**. Jim thinks it was an adult bird and must have been an escaped falconer's bird.

Red Kite. A wing-tagged bird headed SW at Carnan Mor at 1020hrs on 10 October (John Bowler) and a single Red Kite was seen 1-45 pm on 19 Oct., flying North over Ardkinglas, Loch Fyne being mobbed by Jackdaws (Glyn Toplis).

White-tailed Eagle. A fourth year adult seen at the Add Estuary on 17 August had a yellow wing tag marked "O". Dave Sexton, RSPB Mull, reports " This does look like Yellow O (one of our T18 Loch Frisa, Mull male chicks



**Water Rail ©John Bowler**

from 2006 who goes by the name of Oatie!) His sibling Yellow H (Haggis) has also been seen lately. They were named by children from Lochdon Primary School so they'll be thrilled to **know Oatie is alive and well.** An adult was seen well (mobbed by Hooded Crows) soaring over the raised beach by the A83 about 1 mile N of Bellochantuy, Kintyre (Grant Edmonson per Eddie Maguire). One was at Keills, Loch Sween on 20 October, flying NE up Loch na Cille (John Aitchison).

Hen Harrier. Two possibly 3 ring-tailed birds were at the Add Estuary on the evening of 3 August (Bill Allan). A ring-tailed was flying low over rough grass S of Lochorodale, Kintyre on 7 August (Steve & Sue Walker). A male and female were seen around their house near Kennacraig, Kintyre on 29 August. The following day (30 August) the female appeared with a juvenile and then the male appeared as well. A beautiful sight for the observer (Valerie Wells). At least four different birds were on Tiree during October (John Bowler).

Northern Goshawk. A sighting of this always controversial (in Argyll) species was reported at Grogport, Kintyre on 7 October. A description is currently awaited (per Eddie Maguire).

Osprey. One was fishing at the head of West Loch Tarbert on 7 August (Linda Garwood per Paul Daw) and one was high over the garden at Glen Euchar (nr Oban) at 21:30 on 8 August and two were sitting in trees watching the fish at Oude Dam Loch on the evening of 12 August (Bill Allan). One flew S at Tayinloan on 18 August (Katie Pendreigh). One was stayed around fishing at Loch Don, Mull from 2 at least 10 September. The local White-tailed Eagle got wise to this activity and seemed to wait to ambush the Osprey as soon as it had caught a fish. On most days the Osprey easily managed to evade the eagle except on one occasion when it was forced to drop the fish, which the eagle then stole. The Osprey simply went and caught another fish (thanks to Alan Spellman for the anecdote). One flew S offshore at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 25 September (Eddie Maguire). An un-ringed juvenile Osprey that roosted at the Reef, Tiree on 6 October was seen around the island and roosted on a telegraph pole at Balephuill on 7 and 8 October It was last seen at Gott Bay **and then near Loch a' Phuill on 9 October (John Bowler).**

Merlin. Two males and a female were at Tayinloan, Kintyre on 20 September (Bill Allan). Three immature birds were seen together at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 29 September and at least 4 were around the island on 30 September (John Bowler/Jim Dickson). One was near Lephinchapel Farm, Cowal on 27 September (Tom Callan). Merlins were seen frequently around Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during October (Eddie Maguire).

Common Kestrel. One hunting east of the pier at Otter Ferry on 13 August was mobbed by ca 40 Barn Swallows until it gave up and moved away (Tom Callan).

Merlin. Two juveniles were at Heylipol, Tiree on 21 August (John Bowler), one flew from Cruachan Treshnish, Mull on 31 August and landed on a hillock to the south (Anand Prasad) and Merlins were seen regularly in the Machrihanish Seabird Observatory area from 11 August (Eddie Maguire).

Peregrine Falcon. At least two adults and two immatures were seen around West Tiree on 5 October. One was seen attacking migrating Pink-footed Geese over Balephuill on 10

October! (John Bowler).

Corn Crane. Odd late birds were seen on Tiree, at Vaul on 3 October, at West Hynish on 8 October and at Meningie on 9 October (John Bowler).

#### Waders:

Oystercatcher. A total of 375 were counted in Holy Loch on 10 October – together with one Northern Lapwing, 2 Common Snipe, 150 Eurasian Curlews and 70 Common Redshanks (Nigel Scriven).

Ringed Plover. Eight were at the Add Estuary on 24 August with 24 Red Knot, most of which were juveniles (Jim Dickson). The peak count of Ringed Plovers at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was 70 on 21 August (Eddie Maguire) and 36 were at Rhunahaorine, Kintyre on 19 August (Katie Pendreigh). Twenty five were in Ardalanish Bay, Mull on 6 September (Tom Callan). The highest count on Tiree was 130 at Vaul Bay on 5 October (John Bowler).

American Golden Plover. One was found at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 4 September (Jim Dickson). Still present on 18 September according to John Armitage's weblog (per Jim Dickson).

European Golden Plover. Numbers on Tiree had reached 405 at Kilmoluaig on 31 August (John Bowler).

Grey Plover. A single first summer bird was an unusual visitor (with 11 Ringed Plovers) at Otter Ferry on 14 August (Tom Callan) and an adult was at Gott Bay, Tiree on 31 August (Keith Gillon per John Bowler). One was at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 9 and 10 September (Jim Dickson). Two at Calgary beach, Mull on 28 September were unusual for this location (Anand Prasad).

Red Knot. The peak count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was 48 flying S on 22 August (Eddie Maguire) and four were at Otter Ferry with 25 Dunlin on 21 August (Tom Callan). Very few were seen on Tiree, with just 2 juveniles at Gott Bay on 18 August (John Bowler).

Sanderling. The peak count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was 45 flying S on 22 August (Eddie Maguire) and the highest number on Tiree was 220 at Gott Bay on 31 August. Of eight different leg-flagged birds on Tiree, 6 had been ringed in SW Iceland, one in Portugal and one in Ghana (John Bowler). The highest count on Tiree was 103 at Vaul on 5 October (John Bowler) and 17 were at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 18 October (Eddie Maguire).

Little Stint. Up to 4 were at Loch Gruinart, Islay during the first week in September (Jim Dickson). On Tiree, an adult was at Traigh Ghrianaidh on 7 September, 2 juvs. were at Traigh Bhi on 10 Sep, 2 more juvs. at Vaul on 13 Sep and another 1 juv. at Balephetrish on 15 September (John Bowler/Graham Todd). A late juvenile was at Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree 23-25 October (John Bowler).

Pectoral Sandpiper. A juvenile was feeding with Snipe at Greenhill on 13 September, followed by another (or the same?) **at Loch a' Phuill on 20 September (John Bowler)**. Two juveniles were among ca200 Golden Plovers at Heylipol, Tiree on 5 Oct (John Bowler) with another at Sandaig on 10 October (Jim Dickson).

Curlew Sandpiper. A juvenile was reported at Point Sands, Rhunahaorine, Kintyre on 21 August (Keith Hoey per Eddie



**Osprey © Dave Warden**

Maguire). Juveniles were reported throughout the month on Tiree with a maximum of 4 at Sandaig on 7 September (John Bowler). Up to 8 were at Loch Gruinart, Islay during the first week in September (Jim Dickson). A juvenile was at Arinagour, Coll on 8 September (Simon Wellock) and another juv. was in the Add Estuary on 8 September (Andrew Stevenson). Two juveniles were at the Add Estuary on 10 September (Bill Allan). An influx of juveniles on Tiree included two 2 at Sandaig on 2 October, 7 at Sorobaidh Bay on 5 October and singles elsewhere 5 – 7 October (John Bowler/Ross Ahmed/Jim Dickson).

Purple Sandpiper. The first autumn record at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was a single on 15 September (a typical date). A flock of 30 arrived on the point on 28 September but headed S almost immediately (Eddie Maguire).

Dunlin. The peak count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was 80 or more on 18 August (Eddie Maguire) and 76 were at the Add Estuary on 24 August (Jim Dickson).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper. An absolute minimum of 3 juvenile birds, but possibly up to 7 in total, were found on Tiree during September. Three juveniles were feeding with Lapwings and Starlings at The Reef on 17 September (John Bowler). One, probably an adult, was photographed on Oronsay on 14 September (Mike Peacock) and one was at Port Charlotte, Islay on 20 September (Bob Davison per Jim Dickson). A juvenile was found at Ruaig, Tiree on 3 October, two were at The Reef on 4 – 5 October and single juveniles were at Heylipol on 5<sup>th</sup>, and The Reef on 6 – 8 October (Ross Ahmed/Jim Dickson/John Bowler).

Ruff. Four were seen at different locations on Tiree during August (John Bowler). A good showing on Tiree throughout September including 4 at Loch a' Phuill and 3 at Sandaig on 20 September (John Bowler). Up to 3 were at Loch Gruinart, Islay during the first week in September (Jim Dickson).

Black-tailed Godwit. Regular appearances at the Add Estuary (all juveniles) included one on 6 August, three on 11 August, one on 24 August and 4 on 28 August (Jim Dickson). At Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, singles were seen on 6 and 18 August, 2 on 21 August and 3 on 22 August (Eddie Maguire). Unusually, relatively few were seen on Tiree with 12 at Loch a' Phuill on 6 August the maximum count (John Bowler). Eight were with a single Bar-tailed Godwit in the

Add Estuary on 8 September (Andrew Stevenson). On 10 September, 14 were in the estuary with 8 juvenile Red Knot (Bill Allan)

Bar-tailed Godwit. At Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, 9 flew S on 21 August, 14 on 22 August and singles on 23 and 30 August (Eddie Maguire). Regular appearances at the Add Estuary (all juveniles) included one on 24 August, 9 on 28 August and 5 on 31 August (Jim Dickson).

Whimbrel. At least 1 possibly 3 were at Quinish pier, Mull on 8 August (Anand Prasad), 8 were at Arinagour, Coll on 8 August (Simon Wellock), singles were at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 11, 13 and 16 August (Eddie Maguire), and a group of 5 were on the grass at Loch Stornoway, Knapdale on 24 August (Mark Williamson). A late bird was at Sandaig, Tiree on 19 October (John Bowler).

Eurasian Curlew. A total of 183 were found during the WeBS count at Holy Loch, Cowal on 20 September (George Newall) and a flock of 94 were at the head of Loch Riddon, Cowal on 30 September (Tom Callan).

Common Redshank. An impressive total of 56 were at the Add Estuary on 11 August (Jim Dickson).

Greenshank. Single juveniles were at the Add Estuary on various dates in August, three were there on 3 August and **12 August (Jim Dickson/Bill Allan), at least 7 were "off-passage" at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 19 August (Eddie Maguire).** Three were at Arinagour, Coll on 8 August (Simon Wellock) and five were on The Strand, Oronsay on 24 August (John Bowler). One flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 8 October (Eddie Maguire).

Common Sandpiper. Three at Hynish, Tiree on 8 August were presumably migrants (John Bowler) and the peak count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was 5 on 21 August (Eddie Maguire). A late bird was at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 6 October (Eddie Maguire).

Turnstone. The peak count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was 30 flying S on 22 August (Eddie Maguire). Numbers at Otter Ferry, Cowal had reached 61 by 3 October and a leg-flagged bird (no report on origins received yet) was seen there on 25 October (Tom Callan).

Red-necked Phalarope. One was seen at Ardnave, Islay on 30 October and photographed on 31<sup>st</sup>: very late for this species. The photographs were taken by a relatively inexperienced birder who originally identified it as a Grey Phalarope. When Malcolm Ogilvie and others saw the photos they saw it was clearly a Red-necked Phalarope (per Jim Dickson).

Grey Phalarope. Two flying S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 14 September were among a total of 6 logged during the month (Eddie Maguire). A juvenile was on a pool at Sandaig, Tiree on 1 -2 October, one was off Miodar on 3 October, 6 flew west off Hynish on 4 October, 4 flew west off Hynish on 5 October, one was at Gott Bay on 8 October and one was at Vaul Bay on 10<sup>th</sup>. (Ross Ahmed/Jim Dickson/John Bowler).

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

Auk wreck in Loch Fyne. Several people reported numbers of Common Guillemot and Razorbills in poor condition in Loch Gilp, and elsewhere in Loch Fyne, from about 9 Sep-

tember onwards. Up to 80 auks were in Loch Gilp on 12 September (Andrew Stevenson/Jim Dickson/Mrs. H. Cameron/Tom Callan). They provided easy prey for predators such as Peregrine Falcons and Great Black-backed Gulls. One club member was treated to the sight of a Peregrine Falcon plucking and eating what was apparently a Common Guillemot, from his kitchen window! (Dave Payne). Four were found on the freshwater Dubh Loch (Glen Shira) and one was dodging traffic on the main A83 nearby (Joan Thomson).

Pomarine Skua. An adult on 14 September and a juv. on 15 September off Aird, Tiree and an immature from the Tiree ferry on 30 September (John Bowler/Jim Dickson). A pale morph adult was digiscoped at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 14 September (Eddie Maguire). A juvenile flew west off Hynish, Tiree on 6 October and another juvenile was seen from the ferry flying N along the NE coast of Coll on 23 October (Bill Allan).

Arctic Skua. A total of 12 birds were logged at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during August including 5 adults (4 pale morph, 1 dark morph) on 29 August (Eddie Maguire). One was off Aird, Tiree on 12 August (John Bowler). A dark morph bird was in Craignure Bay, Mull on 6 September (Tom Callan).

Long-tailed Skua. Two juveniles flew W past Aird, Tiree on 15 September (John Bowler).

Great Skua. One flying S on 17 August was the only record for the month at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (Eddie Maguire), two flew N in 10 minutes at Port Ban Caravan Park, Knapdale on 24 August (Mark Williamson), 4 flew W off Aird, Tiree in 80 mins. on 11 August and 8 were seen from the ferry between Oban and Colonsay on 23 August (John Bowler). A record 77 flew W past Aird, Tiree in 210 minutes on 15 September (John Bowler). Three were seen from Keills, Loch Sween on 16 September, with one Arctic Skua (Jim Dickson). Singles flew W off Hynish on 6 October and off Miodar on 18 October (Bill Allan), + 2 flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 5 October (Eddie Maguire) and one (probably juve-



**Great White Egret, Ulva Lagoons ©Jim Dickson**

nile) was seen from the Islay – Kennacraig ferry on 10 October (George Newall).

Mediterranean Gull. The second summer bird was on the shore with a few other gulls at Inverneill, Loch Fyne on 1 August (Bill Allan). A 2 calendar year bird flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 11 August (Eddie Maguire) and the second summer bird was at Inverneill, Loch Fyne on 3 and 23 August (Jim Dickson). A juvenile/first winter was seen regularly at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory from 9 September to 6 October (Eddie Maguire) and another juvenile/first winter (sometimes two) were around Loch Gilp from 7 September (Andrew Stevenson/Jim Dickson). An adult was in Loch Gilp on 12 September (Jim Dickson) and an adult was at Inverneill, Loch Fyne on 20 September (Bill Allan) and at Ardrishaig on 26 September (Roger Broad).

Little Gull. A juvenile flew W off Aird, Tiree on 11 August (John Bowler). Single juveniles flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 9 and 14 September (Eddie Maguire) and a juvenile was off Scarinish, Tiree on 30 September (Jim Dickson). A first-winter bird was seen very briefly at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 28 October (Eddie Maguire).

Sabine's Gull. Two adults headed west past Aird in 210 mins during NW gales on 15 September (John Bowler). An adult in full breeding plumage was digiscoped in flight at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 14 September (Eddie Maguire) and a juvenile was in Feall Bay, Coll the same day (Simon Wellock).

Ring-billed Gull. An adult bird first found at Dunstaffnage Bay on 22 August has been seen regularly in Oban/Dunstaffnage are since. We presume this is our long standing annual returning bird that often appears on the foreshore in Oban and w as first seen as a second year in April 2005.

Little Tern. An adult flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 6 August (Eddie Maguire).

Black Tern. One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 9 Set (David Kent) and 4 juveniles at Loch Bhasapol on 12 September (3 remained on 15 September) (John Bowler). A juvenile flew s at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on (with 3 first-winter Arctic Terns) on 14 September (mid-month WNW gale event) (Eddie Maguire). Singles were seen at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (both juvenile/first-winter types) on 1 and 6 October. The latter established a pattern of frequently appearing throughout the day to dip-feed in a sheltered area below **the sea wall by Fisherman's Cottage (c 400m ESE of MSBO)** (Eddie Maguire).

Sandwich Tern. The peak count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was 10 on 15 August (Eddie Maguire), an adult was at the head of West Loch Tarbert on 23 August (Jim Dickson). Three (incl. one juv.) were with a juvenile Arctic Tern off Ardrishaig, Loch Fyne on 6 September and 11 were in Loch Gilp on 20 September (Andrew Stevenson). Nine were at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 8 September, 53 were counted in West Loch Tarbert on 11 September and one was **with 2 Arctic Terns** in Loch Gilp on 16 September (Jim Dickson). Seven were at Tayinloan on 23 September (Katie Pendreigh).

Common Tern. A total of 750 terns off Lismore on 23 August were mostly this species (John Bowler) and a juvenile flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 August (Eddie Maguire).



**Yellow Browed Warbler ©Jim Dickson**

Arctic Tern. A second-summer plumaged bird was foraging offshore at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory all afternoon on 5 August, 2 adults flew S on 16 August and a juvenile flew S on 28 August (Eddie Maguire). Twenty were seen between Kerrera and Colonsay on 23 August (John Bowler). The last at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was logged on 19 September (Eddie Maguire). A late juvenile flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 6 October (Eddie Maguire).

Doves, owls, woodpeckers etc.:

Rock Dove. An impressive 240 were counted at Clachan, Tiree on 31 August (John Bowler).

Turtle Dove. One seen in a garden at Balevullin on 28 September remained until 2 October (John Bowler).

Barn Owl. One was seen squeezing out of the owl box on the Dervaig - Calgary road, Mull on 26 August (Anand Prasad). One was calling at Balephuill, Tiree early on the morning of 30 September (John Bowler). There was at least one in the nest box on the Dervaig - Penmore road, Mull on 1 September and one was near Treshnish (Mull) on 8 September (Anand Prasad).

Short-eared Owl. One was at the Add Estuary on 3 August (Bill Allan) and one was seen on the summit of the Ensay-Burg road, Mull. This is the first record for the area in over a year (Anand Prasad).

Common Swift. Late birds were over Treshnish, Mull on 7 September, at Sandaig, Tiree on 8 September (John Bowler) and again over Treshnish on 23 September (Anand Prasad).

Common Kingfisher. One was seen along the Crinan Canal (near Islandadd Bridge), Mid-Argyll on 1 September (Katie Pendreigh/Tom Callan). Two were reported on the River Sorn, Islay on 21 September (Fiona McGillivray per Jim Dickson) and two were also reported between Gairletter Caravan Park and Ardentinn, Loch Long on 26 September (Andrew Winnington). One was seen at Benmore Gardens on 21 October and possibly the same individual at Sand-



**Yellow Wagtail © Jim Dickson**

bank, Cowal on 24 October (Nigel Scriven). One was reported independently during the last week of October at Knockstapplemore, Coney Glen Water (near Southend), Kintyre by local trout fishermen Brian Cook & Bobby McLean (per Eddie Maguire).

#### Passerines:

Ringling totals at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory Aug-Sep 2010. The following were ringed during August/September: 10 Common Chaffinches, 138 Greenfinches, 77 Goldfinches, 52 Linnets and 300 Twite. All Twite trapped there are now fitted with a green/white split ring on each leg + BTO metal on left leg above colour ring (project identifier). The colour rings were supplied by UK Twite Study co-ordinator David Sowter. Information from Eddie Maguire.

Short-toed Lark. One found on the afternoon 2 October at Sandaig, Tiree by Jim Dickson in with 17 Lapland Buntings: it stayed until at least 7 Oct. Only the second record for Argyll: the first was also on Tiree, in Aug 2008.

Barn Swallow. The peak count at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was *ca* 700 flying S on 26 August (Eddie Maguire). The last sighting at Kilmichael Glassary, Mid-Argyll was 14 on 7 October (Lynsey Gibson) and one or two were at Treshnish, Mull on 3 October (Anand Prasad). Later reports elsewhere included four at Lagavulin, Islay on 15 October (Mick Stewart), 2 at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 16 October and one at Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree on 04 and 05 November.

House Martin. Five at Kilkenneth, Tiree on 19 August were unexpected (John Bowler). The first young at Treshnish, Mull fledged on 15 September after many unsuccessful attempts (collapsed nests) earlier in the year. The first successful breeding here (Anand Prasad).

Meadow Pipit. A loose flock of *ca* 340 was near the Machrihanish Seabird Observatory early on the morning of 23 August (Eddie Maguire). Approx. 100 were on fields above the beach at Loch Stornoway, Knapdale on 22 August, with 50 or more Pied Wagtails (Mark Williamson).

Yellow Wagtail. An immature/female type at Vault, Tiree on 9 October was possibly of the Blue-headed race *flava* (Ross Ahmed/Jim Dickson).

Grey Wagtail. Two were at Ormidale, Loch Riddon on 30

August. They seem to have been scarce this summer (Tom Callan). Two were seen regularly near Treshnish Old Schoolhouse, Mull during August (Anand Prasad).

White Wagtail. Numbers at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory built up from one on 3 August to 30 or more on 26 August (Eddie Maguire), and 8 or more were at Loch Stornoway, Knapdale on 22 August (Mark Williamson).

Waxwing. See separate report. Since the report was compiled a records of 4 over Treshnish, Mull on 23 October, *ca*30 flying E over Treshnish, Mull towards Ensay on 24 October (Anand Prasad) and 60 at High St, Campbeltown on 1 November have been received (Eddie Maguire).

Dipper. **An elusive bird on the outlet stream from Loch a' Phuill at Traigh Bhi, Tiree on 16 October** appeared to have a blackish belly, i.e. probably a *hibernicus* bird from the Outer Hebrides – only the second Dipper record for Tiree.

Bluethroat. A first winter found by Ross Ahmed on 05 October at Balemartine, Tiree was still showing there later. Although relatively frequent in northern isles and E coast of Scotland there are only 4 or 5 previous Argyll records.

Whinchat. Four juveniles were at the Add Estuary on 17 August (Jim Dickson) and singles were seen at Ardalanish Bay, Ardtun and Scoor, Mull on 8 – 10 September (Tom Callan).

Common Stonechat. Two family groups were seen near Otter Ferry on 29 August – a sign that numbers in Argyll may start to recover after the severe winter (Tom Callan).

Northern Wheatear. Most birds seen on Tiree during October **were thought to be "Greenlandic" (i.e. large and dark with many orangey tones above and below)**. The last was at Cenn a' Mhara on 23 October (John Bowler). A late bird was near Treshnish, Mull on 5 October (Anand Prasad) and an even later one at Crossapol, Coll on 27 October (Simon Wellock).

Ring Ouzel. A migrant bird, probably male, was seen in a garden at Cumladden Cottage, Furnace, Mid-Argyll on Friday 3 September (Nigel Price). One was reported at Arinagour, Coll on 27 October (Simon Wellock).

Mistle Thrush. At least 30 were at the edge of Treshnish wood, Mull on 21 September (Anand Prasad) and 26 were feeding on Rowan at Otter Ferry on 22 September (Tom Callan).

Fieldfare. One at Balephuill on 11 October was the first on Tiree, followed by 8 at An Airidh Cornaigmore and two at Cornaigbeg on the same day (Jim Dickson), *ca*40 were at Eredine, Loch Awe on 20 October (Karl Pipes) approx. 100 were at Connel (Mike Harrison) and 12 around Treshnish House, Mull on 24 October (Anand Prasad).

Redwing. Singles at Baugh and Vault, Tiree on 8 October were the first reported (John Bowler) and at least one was at Port Ellen, Islay on 9 October (George Newall). The first mainland sighting of winter was a flock of 40 flying north towards Kilmichael Glen (near Lochgilphead) on 10 October (Lynsey Gibson). Approx. 50 Redwings were also reported on Islay on 10 October (Michal Sur per Tom Callan), *ca*100 were at Eredine, Loch Awe on 12 October (Karl Pipes), *ca*600 were at Connel on 16 October (Mike Harrison) and 20 were at Otter Ferry on 18 October (Tom Callan).

Grasshopper Warbler. Late reeling birds were heard at Tullochgorm, Minard on 6 August (in the dark at 23:05hrs) (Paul Daw) and at Keillmore, Loch Sween on 13 August (Tom Cal-

lan). An adult was seen carrying food at The Manse, Tiree on 30 August (Keith Gillon per John Bowler).

Sedge Warbler. A family group calling loudly at Keillmore, Loch Sween on 13 August (Tom Callan) and a late bird was at Cornaigbeg, Tiree on 9 – 11 October (Ross Ahmed/Jim Dickson).

Garden Warbler. One at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 26 September moved to Balephuill that evening (John Bowler).

Lesser Whitethroat. A migrant was found in a garden at Port Ban, Knapdale on 4 September (Mark Williamson).

Barred Warbler. A juvenile was found in brambles in a ditch beside the Manse in Arinagour, Coll on 11 September (Simon Wellock) and another juvenile was found by Jim Dickson and Ross Ahmed at Vault, Tiree on the afternoon of 7 October.

Lesser Whitethroat. One at Vault, Tiree on 20 October was a poor showing by recent standards (John Bowler) and one was near Hyne, Coll on 27 October (Simon Wellock).

Blackcap. Several were seen during October in gardens on the mainland and islands including: a male at Otter Ferry on 8 October (Tom Callan), a male seen briefly in a garden in Lochgilphead on the morning of 11 October (Lynsey Gibson), males at Port Ban Caravan Site, Knapdale from 12 – 30 October (Mark Williamson),. On Tiree, at least ten were present around the island on 10 and 11 October (John Bowler).

Yellow-browed Warbler. One newly arrived at Balephuill on 11 October was the first of three on Tiree during October, including birds at Kenovay on 12 and another at Balephuill / Carnan Mor on 22-24 October. Singles were also reported at various locations on Coll from 7 to 26 October (John Bowler/Jim Dickson/Simon Wellock).

Common Chiffchaff. One was at Ardrishaig, Loch Fyne on 26 September (Roger Broad). Up to 3 were on Tiree on various dates during October, including green-grey *abietinus*-type birds at Carnan Mor on 17<sup>th</sup> and at Balephuill on 28<sup>th</sup> (John Bowler). Three were on Coll on 10 October (Simon Wellock) and one was in the garden at Port Ban Caravan Site, Knapdale on 17 October (Mark Williamson).

Firecrest. A fine 1<sup>st</sup>-winter male bird with Goldcrests at Balephuill on 10 October was a first for Tiree. There are only 7 or 8 previous records for Argyll as a whole. (John Bowler/Jim Dickson).

Spotted Flycatcher. Birds were reported regularly from Treshnish House and Kilninian, Mull during August (Anand Prasad) and three were at Loch Stornoway, Knapdale on 22 August (Mark Williamson). Migrants were at Balephuill and Carnan Mor, Tiree on 19 and 22 August (John Bowler).

Red-breasted Flycatcher. Singles were reported from Gigha and Coll, both on 10 October (Simon Wellock, Andrew Stevenson). If confirmed they will be our first records since 1975!

Pied Flycatcher. A long-staying first winter bird was at Balephuill / Carnan Mor, Tiree from 2 – 11 September (John Bowler) and one was at Arinagour, Coll on 15 September (Simon Wellock). An immature bird was at An Airidh Cornaigmore, Tiree on 11 October, followed by another at Carnan Mor on 24<sup>th</sup> (John Bowler). One was by football pitch behind Village Hall at Achamore, Gigha on 10 October (Andrew Stevenson) and up to two were at Arinagour and

The Lodge, Coll from 10 to 12 October (Simon Wellock).

Long-tailed Tit. Four were on feeder in a Lochgilphead garden on 11 October – the first seen in this garden (Lynsey Gibson). At least 8 were near Treshnish, Mull on the same day (and for the following two days) – a scarce species at this location (Anand Prasad).

Eurasian Nuthatch. A new location for the species. One was seen on peanuts in the garden at Minard Castle, on the shores of Loch Fyne, on 31 August (Reinold Gayre). It was seen there again on several days in the following week or so. Definitely still around Ardkinglas (Loch Fyne) - one heard calling on 13 September in the Ardkinglas Woodland Garden. They are usually around the same area of the garden and have been around all spring and summer, although it has been possible to confirm breeding (Glyn Toplis). One was seen at the usual feeders at Ardkinglas on 26 September (Roger Broad).

Eurasian Jay. A total of 11 flew over the garden at Otter Ferry in ca 4 mins. on 14 August (Tom Callan).

Magpie. One was at the head of Loch Striven, Cowal on 7 September (Danielle & Graham Clark), one was at Hazel Bank, Lochgilphead on 17 September (John Hodgson), one was at West Glen, Tighnabruaich, Cowal on 28 September (Daphne Campbell) and one was seen at head of Loch Striven on B836 on 8 October (Grace Rogerson).

Western Jackdaw. At least 500 were by Kilkivan Quarry, East Machrihanish on 14 September. This quarry holds the largest breeding colony of Jackdaws in Kintyre (Eddie Maguire).

Hooded Crow. There were 47 in the meadow below Ensay farmhouse, Mull on 14 September (Anand Prasad).

House Sparrow. A flock of 70 at Port Ban Caravan Park, Knapdale on 29 August included many juveniles (Mark Williamson) and **“many local people have commented on the sudden abundance of this species” in the Campbeltown area** (Eddie Maguire).

Tree Sparrow. There were reports of one in a garden at Argyll Street, Campbeltown in late Aug/early September (Mr Strother per Zul Bhatia, Manager, Lochwinnoch RSPB). We would be interested in more details of this sighting.

Bramblings. It looks as though it might be another good year for Bramblings. Six were at various locations of Tiree on 10 October, 7 were at Balephuill on 11<sup>th</sup> and ones or two were at other locations on the island throughout the month (John Bowler). Elsewhere one was ringed at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 14 October (Eddie Maguire), one was near the shop in Connel on 29 October (Bill Allan) and at least 6 were with Common Chaffinches at Otter Ferry on 31 October (Tom Callan).

Goldfinch. Flocks of about 80 were between Treshnish and Haunn, Mull on 2 September and over 100 were near Haunn on 11 September (Anand Prasad). A flock of at least 50 were at Evanachan, Cowal on 22 October (Tom Callan).

Twite. **A flock of at least 70 were at “West Coast Salmon”, Kintyre on 28 August (Tom Callan).** A total of 334 finches were ringed at the feeding station at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during August. This included 178 Twite, which were also colour-ringed (Eddie Maguire). The highest count



**Common Redpoll ©John Bowler**

on Tiree during September was 190 at Meningie on 30<sup>th</sup> (John Bowler). Approx. 90 were at Dalachlary, Clachan, West Loch Tarbert on 20 September (Bill Allan) and *ca* 100 were at Ardalanish Bay, Mull on 6 September (Tom Callan). The maximum count of Tiree was 200 at Miodar on 20 October and *ca*30 were between Treshnish and Haunn, Mull on 2 October (Anand Prasad). Sightings of Machrihanish Seabird Observatory colour-ringed birds include one photographed at Ramsey, Isle of Man on 16th October and at least one was seen very well at Walney Island BO (Cumbria) on 29-30 October and 5 November. One was controlled; V879672, ringed on 28th August and re-trapped at MSBO on 21 September was caught at Heysham Harbour north wall (Lancashire) on 24-25 October (per Eddie Maguire).

Lesser Redpoll. A large group of 60 or so were beside Loch Stornoway, Knapdale on 22 August (Mark Williamson). A flock of *ca*200 redpolls at Achamore, Gigha on 10 October all appeared to be lesser (Andrew Stevenson).

Common Redpoll. Up to **14 "NW" birds were at Balephuill / Carnan Mor** including the large dark Greenland bird from September 1 – 4 September (John Bowler).

Common Crossbill. Three were at Dunardry, Cairnbaan on 19 August (Mark Williamson) and three were at Ardkinglas, Loch Fyne on 26 September (Roger Broad). Approx. 6 were in Sitka spruce in a garden in Dunoon on 13 October (George Newall).

Common Rosefinch. An immature bird was reported at Scarinish, Tiree by visiting birders on 28 September (John Bowler).

Bullfinch. At least 8 were with 12 Siskins at Treshnish Wood, Mull on 30 August (Anand Prasad).

Hawfinch. Two birds were reported in a garden at Glenbarr, Kintyre on 1 October (Frank McNaughton per Eddie Maguire). A description is currently awaited.

Lapland Bunting. An unprecedented showing on Tiree probably involved at least 200 birds; including 48 at Hough Bay on 5 September, 30 at Sandaig on 8 September and 29

at The Reef on 30 September (John Bowler *et al*). Similar numbers were reported on the Western Isles at about the same time.

Elsewhere in Argyll: 2 were at Port Ban, Knapdale on 5 September (Mark Williamson), 11 were at Arinagour, Coll and 26 at Torastan on 11 September, 12 at Gallanach, Coll on 14 September, 18 at Acha, Coll on 16 September (Simon Wellock), 4 were near Bellochantuy, Kintyre on 18 September (Andrew Stevenson). Extraordinary numbers of Lapland Buntings were reported again through the month of October – mainly on Coll and Tiree (max. 160 at The Reef on 13 Oct). Just a few on the mainland including 2 at West Tarbert on 11 Oct (Andrew Stevenson) and 2 at Port Ban, Knapdale on 5 Sep (Mark Williamson).

Snow Bunting. The first on Tiree were 6 at Sandaig on 26 September (John Bowler). Numbers at Sandaig, Tiree peaked at 20 on 16 and 21 October (John Bowler).

Yellowhammer. Several were seen along the coast from Carsaig bay, Mull on 17 August including a family group (adult with recently fledged young) (Anand Prasad). Two males were in the garden at Lagganmore, Glen Euchar on 23 October (Bill Allan) and four females were in a Lochgilphead garden on 27 October - usually only males seen here (Lynsey Gibson).

#### Other sightings

Basking Sharks. Three were in Calgary Bay, Mull on 22 August (Anand Prasad) and one was regular in Machrihanish Bay all month (Eddie Maguire)..

A Bottle-nosed Dolphin was seen off Port-na-Luing, Coll on 12 October (Simon Wellock) and 7 Harbour Porpoises were seen of Otter Ferry on 24 October (Tom Callan).

Butterflies and Moths. An influx of Red Admirals took place at Cairnbaan, Mid-Argyll during the week prior to 22 August, with at least **four in Jim's garden and several more in the surrounding gardens**. But they were outnumbered by the Peacocks by about four to one (Jim Dickson). Something similar occurred on Tiree on 22 August: a small influx of Red Admirals was accompanied by the first records of Satellite moth and Poplar Hawk-moth (latter as a caterpillar feeding on a Black Poplar) (John Bowler).

Paul Daw

In the next Eider:

Birds in India

Digiscoping at MSBO

Black Grouse survey information

Articles for the March issue of the *Eider* should with the Editor before the 24th February 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)

Vice Chairman: Mike Harrison

Secretary: Katie Pendreigh, The Whins, Ferry Road, Tayinloan, Argyll PA29 6XQ (*phone* 01583 441359)

Treasurer: Bob Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Arrochar, Dumbartonshire G83 7DG (*phone* 01301 702603)

Membership Secretary: Sue Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Arrochar, Dumbartonshire. (*phone* 01301 702603)

Committee: Richard Allan (Oban), Tom Callan (Otter Ferry), Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilphead), Paul Daw (Minard), Andy Robinson (Partick), David Warden (Kilfinan) and Mark Williamson (Kilberry).

Editor of the *Argyll Bird Report*: Tom Callan, Corra, Otter Ferry, Tighnabraich, Argyll PA21 2DH (*phone* 01700 821212)

Editor of the *Eider*: Mark Williamson, Port Ban, Kilberry, Argyll PA29 6YD (*phone* 01880 770 162)

ABC Website: <http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>

Webmaster: Danielle Clark  
*phone* 01700 841284

*e-mail* [dany@condorjourneys-adventures.com](mailto:dany@condorjourneys-adventures.com)

#### Argyll Bird Recorder

Paul Daw, Tigh-na-Tulloch, Tullochgorm, Minard, Argyll PA32 8YQ

*phone* 01546 886260

*e-mail* [monedula@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:monedula@globalnet.co.uk)

#### BTO Regional Representatives in Argyll

Argyll South, Bute & Gigha: Richard Allan  
*phone* 01852 300 359

*e-mail* [r.allan13@btinternet.com](mailto:r.allan13@btinternet.com)

Argyll North—Mull, Coll, Tiree & Morvern: Arthur Brown  
*phone* 01688400415

*e-mail* [pamartbrown@btinternet.com](mailto:pamartbrown@btinternet.com)

Rod Little

*phone* 01688400315

*e-mail* [rltt6@aol.com](mailto:rltt6@aol.com)

Islay, Jura & Colonsay: John Armitage  
*phone* 01496 860396

*e-mail* [jsa@ornquest.plus.com](mailto:jsa@ornquest.plus.com)

Mystery bird—Sedge Warbler



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).