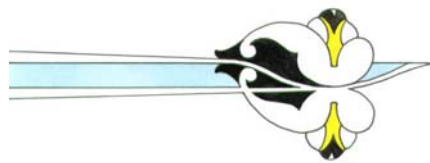


The Eider



The Eider is the Quarterly Newsletter of the Argyll Bird Club (<http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>)
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March 2005



Male goldeneye photographed in
Oban Harbour by Jim Duncan

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Editorial

I thought the long, wet winter would have encouraged many of you to put 'pen to paper' resulting in a bumper spring issue. So what happened!!! This is the smallest *Eider* for a while, and although it makes life easy for me, it's far less interesting for the reader. So, please

make me work a little harder with the June issue!! Articles have to be with me by 31 May.

Committee members are looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the spring meeting on the 12 March at Inveraray (programme on page 2). Once again, Bob Furness has put together an interesting series of talks ranging from coal tits to capercaillie and from birding in Australia to a famous American ornithologist. It will come as no surprise to many of you that the meeting includes a raffle! So, if you have a suitable prize, please bring it along.

Disturbance by people can unfortunately lead to nest desertions or even the death of birds. It's even worse when such disturbance is caused by birdwatchers. Therefore, I would encourage you all to read the draft code for birdwatchers on page 9. Most of it is common sense, but this is sometimes forgotten. For instance, when a rare migrant that refuses to budge out of thick cover is repeatedly flushed, just to get a better look! Such birds have often exhausted all their body reserves, and

Spring Meeting

**On Saturday 12th March 2005 at
the Argyll Hotel, Inveraray.**

The programme is on page 2

Autumn Meeting

**On Saturday 5th November 2005
at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near
Lochgilhead.**

**See the June issue of the *Eider*
for the programme**

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

finding food, undisturbed by birdwatchers, is often crucial for their survival. Another aspect of disturbance is highlighted by Katie Pendreigh on page 6. We are often very keen to help with beach clean-ups, but at what cost? The destruction of nests of shore-nesting birds, such as **Ringed Plover** and **Oystercatcher**, can be avoided simply by planning that beach cleaning is undertaken before the end of March or after the end of July.

For contributions to this issue, I would like to thank Richard, Allan, Roger Broad, Tom Callan, Paul Daw, Bob Dawson, Jim Dickson, Jim Duncan, Bob and Sue Furness, Clive McKay, Javier Milla, Katie Pendreigh, Linda Petty (proof reading), Mike Raven, Nigel Scriven, Margaret Staley, Michael Thomas & David Wood.

From the Chairman

I start my update this month with the sad news that Clive Craik has decided to stand down as editor of the *Argyll Bird Report*. I will admit that, on receiving this news, I was gripped with something approaching panic! Clive's dedication and editorial skills have been absolutely fundamental to the production of a high quality bird report for the last 10 years. Clive - many thanks indeed for all your input over the years. The good news is that Simon Wellock has agreed to take over as editor. Simon is the warden of the

RSPB's reserve on Coll.

We continue to make steady progress with the *Birds of Argyll* book. One of the project's linchpins, Tristan ap Rheinallt, recently upped sticks to the Isle of Lewis, but thanks to modern technology, we stay in touch via video conferencing and e-mail. Taken as a whole, the draft now runs to over 260 pages of closely typed text, and more is being written all the time. We have a good selection of illustrations already collated, and our funding package for the project is complete. There is, of course, a lot still to do. To make the book as definitive and accurate as it can be, we need to invest significant time in the review process, and we are just now considering how best to integrate that with all the other commitments that people have! The review phase for the species accounts is likely to extend over the summer months, while other tasks are being progressed. This additional work includes finalising the graphical aspects of the work; photos, maps, figures etc. and the right balance of text to graphics on the pages. We all want to end up with a book that is not only an authoritative factual work, but a visually attractive one too. We will be looking at best practise from other natural history books recently published in Britain, as well as the implications of the falling cost of printing in full colour. We hope to print sample pages from the book in forthcoming issues of the *Eider* to whet your appe-

tite for the full tome to come!

With best wishes

David Wood





Argaty field trip report

Having given up waiting to see **Red Kites** at Otter Ferry, Shirley and I were keen to take up the invitation to join the trip organised by Bob Furness to Argaty.

The first big surprise was that only five other members made the trip (everyone seen kites?). The second was that even from the car park we could already see kites in the air close by. After a brief introduction and paying our modest dues we settled down in a excellent recently built hide for the show to begin!

A small amount of game tit-bits were put out about 30 metres in front of us, which appeared to have little direct effect on the kites which slowly built up until there were about 20 in view. We then enjoyed their virtuoso aerial display, although little direct interest was taken in the bait provided. This would appear to indicate that the feeding station has little effect on the bird's behaviour and that they are finding plenty of food in the wild. In fact it was not until a **Buzzard** landed at the bait that the **Red Kites** took any interest at all.

**Programme for the Spring Meeting on Saturday 12th March 2005
The Argyll Hotel, Inveraray**

09.30	Doors open, coffee and tea 
10.00-10.20	Welcome, club news & round up of recent bird sightings— <i>David Wood & Paul Daw</i>
10.20-10.50	Conserving capercaillie— <i>Helen Doherty</i>
10.50-11.20	John James Audubon and the Scottish connection— <i>Michael Thomas</i>
11.20--11.45	Coffee 
11.45-12.45	Birding in Australia— <i>Brian Little</i>
12.45-14.15	Lunch (available in the hotel lounge) 
14.15-14.45	Northern goshawk: friend or foe?— <i>Steve Petty</i>
14.45-15.15	Breeding bird surveys— <i>Mike Raven</i>
15.15-15.45	Where do the coal tits in your garden come from?— <i>Bob Furness (University of Glasgow)</i>
15.45-16.15	Raffle, tea and coffee 



Red Kite (RSPB Images)

Eventually in spite of the **Buzzard's** attempts to hide the food with its wings, a couple of the kites swooped down and made off with some morsels. Sadly as they were not willing to sit still, I at least was not able to get a photograph.

An interesting side show was a flock of about 300 finches, mainly **Linnets**, which were feeding on an exotic bird seed crop in the next field. They in no way appeared disturbed by the constant overflying by the kites although a **Sparrowhawk** got them a bit agitated! If finches are not bothered by kites why on earth are

they so heavily persecuted by those who presumably see them as a threat to some peoples' interests? Indeed two kites were shot near Argaty last year.

Our main enjoyment was the opportunity to view at leisure these spectacular fliers and I can thoroughly recommend a visit. For further details about Argaty, please visit their website at:

www.argatyredkites.co.uk

Tom Callan

Field Trips—Spring 2005

Sound of Gigha

I will lead a field trip to the Sound of Gigha on Saturday 2nd April 2005. Meet at the car park at Ronachan Point just off the A83 (grid reference NR741548) at 10.30am. This trip depends very much on suitable weather. Will those who intend to come please contact me, by phone or e-mail, at the latest on the evening before (Fri 1st April), so that I can confirm that the trip will go ahead and to give me some idea of how many people to expect. If the weather forecast is really atrocious it may be possible to postpone until the following Saturday. Additional information about this trip can be found on page 17 of the December 2004 *Eider*. An account of a similar trip last spring can be found in the June 2004 *Eider*.

Paul Daw

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Bird Ringing

Bob and Sue Furness invite bird club members to their garden (Cnoc, Tarbet, Loch Lomond) on a day when we will be catching and ringing birds. Ringing dates depend first of all on the weather. We cannot catch when the weather is wet, or windy, or extremely cold, as these conditions are unsafe for birds in nets. But we aim to catch on a couple of Saturdays or

Sundays in March-April. If conditions are good we may get about 50 to 100 birds, mostly during the morning and especially between 8 and 10 o'clock probably including **Siskins, Blue and Great Tits, Chaffinches, Greenfinches, Robins and Dun-nocks**. We sometimes even get the occasional **Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sparrowhawk, Long-tailed Tit or Jay**. You would be welcome to call in for an hour or two to see the catching and some birds in the hand, and even to learn some of the art of ageing and sexing and studying moult of small birds. If you would like to arrange to join us, please phone or e-mail and leave your phone number so we can let you know which days we will be catching. Given the difficulty of predicting the weather, we will not be able to confirm that ringing will be possible more than a day or two ahead, but we can call anyone interested to see if the date is suitable. Coffee, biscuits and a relatively warm conservatory available within yards of the net!

Bob and Sue Furness

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E-mail: r.furness@bio.gla.ac.uk

Sanda Island

The owners of Sanda Island, Mr and Mrs Gannon, have a new boat operated by a professional skipper. They are very keen to welcome *Argyll Bird Club* members to their island. Arrangements have been

made for a bird club visit over the weekend of 18-19 June, to be co-ordinated and guided by Nigel Scriven. More information about Sanda can be found in two articles in previous *Eiders*; March 2003, pages 3-4 and December 2004, pages 12-13. Also see the island's website:

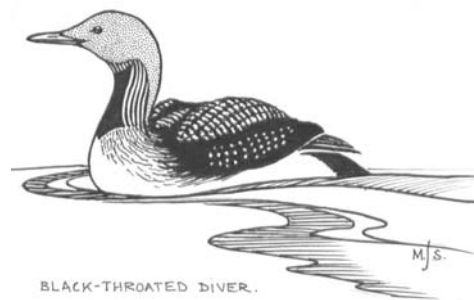
<http://www.sanda-island.co.uk>

There are various options available over the weekend. A day trip on the Saturday and Sunday will be £20 for the boat. We hope to depart at about 9 am from Campbeltown and return at about 5 pm. For those wishing to stay overnight there are two rooms available in the Farmhouse for B&B at £30 per person per night. Alternatively, there are 10 spaces in the Bunkhouse at £10 per person per night. The boat can take 12 people, so places are limited and subject to confirmation and the weather. For more information or to book a place contact:

Nigel Scriven

Phone: 01369 840606 or 01505 843679

E-mail: nigel.scriven@renfrewshire.gov.uk



BLACK-THROATED DIVER.

Recent bird reports from Paul Daw: November 2004—January 2005

Waxwings galore! A flock of 1,880 **Waxwings** seen in bushes in Aberdeen on 21st November is likely to be the largest gathering ever recorded in Britain! In Argyll the influx was dramatic, but brief. The first report was of 2 birds at Port Askaig, Islay on 21st October followed by 7 at The Lodge, Coll on 23rd, 25 at Port Charlotte on 25th, 50+ at Slockavullin (Mid-Argyll) also on 25th and 30+ on Seil island on 30th October increasing to 85 by 1st Nov. Mull had 9 at Lochdon on 2nd Nov, when 60 were also ranging around Oban. Further large flocks were reported in the following days, including 20 in Inveraray on 5th Nov, 75 near the Co-op in Lochgilhead on 6th and 61 in North Connel on 7th. The peak count was over 100+ at Kilmory, Lochgilhead on 9th and 43 were also present in Campbelltown at about this time, but after 82 were seen at Connel on 14th Nov the birds apparently disappeared as suddenly as they had arrived.

Otherwise the main event has been the unexpected appearance of what were almost certainly two different **Snowy Owls** in Argyll after a gap of over 100 years! A **Barn Swallow** seen on 14th/15th Dec was pretty remarkable too.

Divers to Wildfowl

Two winter plumage **Black-throated Divers** in the harbour at Tayvallich on 16th Jan were unexpected and 5 **Great Northern Divers** there on 17th Jan were even more surprising. On 8th Nov there were 12 **Black-throated Divers** and 15 **Great Northern Divers** off Claonaig, Kintyre. Twenty **Little Grebes** were recorded during the WeBS count at Loch Sween on 12th Dec and 11 **Slavonian Grebes** were counted in Loch na Keal, Mull on 28th Nov.

Neck collars on geese and swans.

If you see a goose or swan marked with a neck collar it is well worth reporting the number to Jenny Earle at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge. A **Whooper Swan** with a yellow neck collar seen at Killiechronan, Mull turned out to have had an interesting history. Originally marked in Iceland in August 1994 it was seen in 7 subsequent winters on the north east coast of England before appearing on Mull on 26th Nov 2004. It will be interesting to see where it turns up in future. A family of **Greenland White-fronted Geese** (pr of adults and four goslings) were canon netted and marked with neck collars at Wexford Slobs, Ireland on 3rd December 2003. They were seen again, still all together as a family, in west Ice-

Stop Press

An unprecedented number of 'white-winged' gulls have been reported this winter. As well as several individuals of both **Iceland** and **Glaucous Gulls** on Coll, Tiree and Islay during January, Jim Dickson found 3 **Glaucous** and one **Iceland Gull** at Loch Caolisport on 19th Feb, no less than 5 **Glaucous Gulls** (all first winter) in Kintyre on 20th Feb and 3 **Glaucous** and one **Iceland** in Oban on 22nd as well as further **Glaucous Gulls** at Dunstaffnage and Benderloch (again all 1st winter birds). This is apparently the best winter for these northern gulls in Scotland since 1993 and may well be the best on record.

Please let me know of any other sightings so that we can get a full picture. If it's any consolation to the rest of you, I haven't seen *either* yet!

Just to crown it all, Jim also had a 2nd winter **Mediterranean Gull**, very well spotted among a large flock of **Black-headed Gulls**, at Loch Caolisport on 19th Feb. Earlier he had had tantalisingly brief (but conclusive) views of a **White-billed Diver** near Inverneil, Loch Fyne on 5th Feb. To complete a bumper period for sightings of scarce gulls, a **Little Gull** was found below Kellan Wood at Loch na Keal, Mull on 13th Feb.

land in autumn 2004 on their way south. Then on 5th Nov 2004 the same family (minus one of the 'children') was seen at Fidden, Mull, still together and presumably on their way south to Wexford. Thanks to Dave Sexton (RSPB Mull) for these intriguing stories.

The **Mute Swan** flock in Oban harbour peaked at 41 on 29th Dec. 49 **Whooper Swans** were found during the Loch Sween



Whooper Swans at Lochgilhead
(photo Jim Duncan)

WeBS count on 13th Nov and a total of 261 **Whoopers** were recorded on Tiree on 19th/20th Nov. All island goose counts on 24th/25th Jan found 761 **Greenland White-fronted Geese**, 3,494 **Greylag Geese** and a record 3,273 **Barnacle Geese** on Tiree with 640 **Greenland White-fronted Geese**, 598 **Greylag Geese** and 1,297 **Barnacle Geese** on Coll. A single **Snow Goose** has been seen with a flock of 60 or so **Greylag Geese** in the Kilmartin Glen/Moine Mhor area since late Jan. It is described as shy and unapproachable and might well be a genuine vagrant from North America.

A total of 9 **Mandarin Ducks** were counted along the River Cur at the north end of Loch Eck on 3rd Feb. On 16th Jan a male **Gadwall** was with **Mallards** and **Wigeon** in Dunstaffnage Bay and another male was seen in the Loch Ederline area in late Dec early Jan. A drake **Green-winged Teal** was seen at RSPB Loch Gruinart on 1st Nov and two were present there later in the month. Two male and a female **North-ern Pintails** were at The Reef, Tiree on 30th Jan and, more unusually, a male was in Dunstaffnage Bay, Mid-Argyll on 23rd Jan. A male **Velvet Scoter** was in Fishnish bay on 9th November and a juvenile female in Gott Bay, Tiree (an unusual location) on 1st Dec was accompanied by a female **Greater Scaup**. **Tufted Ducks** on Loch a' Phuill Tiree had reached 110 by 26th Nov and 15 **Long-tailed Ducks** were in Hough Bay on 22nd Jan. Coll had 39 **Long-tailed Ducks** in Feall Bay on 7th Jan. There is now a regular concentration of **Goldeneyes** off Furnace on Loch Fyne and numbers there reached 186 on 26th Dec. The other regular large gathering, at Loch Caolisport, numbered 162 on 28th Jan. A total of 45 **Goldeneyes** between West Bay, Dunoon and Hunter's Quay in late Jan was also unusual, while elsewhere numbers at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree totalled 66 on 1st Dec, Loch na Keal, Mull had 56 on 28th Jan and 20 at Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll on 8th Jan was a good count for this site. There seem to be increasing numbers of **Goldeneyes** wintering in Argyll.

Raptors to Gamebirds

A white morph **Gyr Falcon** was reported at Loch Gruinart on 9th and 20th Dec. An immature **White-tailed Eagle** was at Loch Coille Bharr, Knapdale on 29th Nov and a 3rd/4th year bird was seen over Scarba on 2nd Dec. On Coll a huge 2nd year **White-tailed Eagle** was seen sitting among the Eriskay ponies near The Lodge, Arinagour on 15th Jan.

At least four **Hen Harriers** were found on Coll in Jan as well as **Merlins**, **Peregrines** and **Short-eared Owls**. Twelve **Black**



Turnstone (photo Tom Callan)

Grouse were on the hills above the Black Lochs, Mid-Argyll on 11th Nov. The traditional **Common Coot** flock at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree numbered only 5 during Jan. Three **Water Rails** were noted by a shooting party on Tiree on 3rd Dec and another was in a garden at Cornaigmore on 10th Dec. Another **Water Rail** was flushed at Moine Mhor on 1st Dec—always a good bird to see in Argyll.

Waders

Numbers of **Golden Plovers** on Tiree reached an impressive 3,160 on 19th-20th Nov and large flocks of **Lapwings** there included 610 at Gott Bay on 8th Nov and 460 at Heylipol on 24th Nov. The highest **Ringed Plover** count on Tiree during the period was 380 at Gott Bay on 8th Nov, while 360 **Sanderling** were found in Balephetrish Bay on 13th Jan and 290 **Dunlin** were counted in Sorobaidh Bay on 25th Jan. At Otter Ferry at least 50 **Ringed Plovers** were counted on 2nd Dec and 70 or more **Dunlin** were there on 7th Nov. During the Loch Sween WeBS count on 13th Nov Loch na Cille had at least 48 **Ringed Plovers** as well as 3 **Grey Plovers**. Tiree had 15 **Purple Sandpipers** at Traigh Bhagh on 30th Nov, 12 at Vaul Bay on 1st Dec and 19 were by the CalMac pier on Coll on 13th Jan. There have also been small numbers at Kirn, Dunoon during the winter. All records of this apparently declining species (at least as a winter visitor to Argyll) are welcome. Two **Jack Snipe** were flushed and seen at close quarters at Loch na Cille (Loch Sween) on 17th Oct and one was flushed at Balephetrish, Tiree on 20th Dec. Six **Woodcock** were seen along the roadside between Lealt and Craighouse, Jura at dusk on 9th Nov. At least 85 **Redshank** were present at the head of Loch Gilp on 10th Nov and a single **Common Greenshank** was in the Seil Sound/Balvicar Bay area on 16th/18th Jan. At least 123 **Ruddy Turnstones** were around Otter Ferry on 2nd Dec and Tiree also had good numbers of **Turnstones** in Jan including 70 at Balephetrish Bay on 13th with many birds also feeding inland. A late **Grey Phalarope** flew past Aird, Tiree on 19th Nov during high winds.

Skuas to Woodpeckers

An unprecedented number of **Glaucous Gulls** appeared in January. On Coll there

was an adult at the pier on 13th, a 2nd winter at Cliad on 22nd and a 1st winter near Feall on 28th. In the same period there were up to 5 on Tiree including an adult, a 2nd winter bird and probably three 1st winter birds. **Iceland Gulls** also showed well in Jan with three 1st winter birds on Coll and one or more on Tiree. On the mainland three **Iceland Gulls** were found in the Knapdale area on 28th Jan and Mull had at least 3 **Glaucous Gulls** and an **Iceland Gull** during Jan. Over 1,000 **Herring Gulls** were at the roost at the top on Loch Feochan, Mid-Argyll on 29th Jan. At least 11 **Little Auks** flew west off Aird, Tiree on 10th Dec during high NNW winds.



Mediterranean Gull among Black-headed Gulls (photo Jim Dickson)

A **Barn Owl** in a barn(!) at Heylipol in early November was an unusual sight for Tiree. The most remarkable event of this period was the appearance of a beautiful white male **Snowy Owl** near Arleod, Coll, close to the RSPB reserve, on 27th Jan. The last **Snowy Owl** in Argyll was seen during the winter of 1891-92, also on Coll. Amazingly, only two days later, a large heavily marked **Snowy Owl**, thought to be an immature female, spent much of the 29th Jan sitting on a grass strip at Tiree airport. The first on Tiree since Nov 1873. Sadly neither bird was seen subsequently although the rest of us are hoping against hope that one or other might turn up elsewhere in Argyll. A **Common Kingfisher** was seen at Bonawe, Loch Etive on 16th Jan and another was at Loch Eck on 19th Jan.



Snowy Owl on Tiree (photo John Bowler)

Passerines

When I asked in the last newsletter if anyone could better 18th October as a last date for **Barn Swallow** I never expected that

one would be reported from Kilmore, nr Oban as late as 14th Dec! It was seen there again on the following day. A male **Grey Wagtail** was an unusual winter visitor to Coll, at Arinagour on 7th Jan. The influx of **Waxwings** even (unusually) reached Tiree with one at Milton on 30th Oct and another at Crossapol on 10th Nov (see above for other Waxwing records). More mid-winter flocks of **Fieldfares** and **Redwings** have been reported than usual including at least 60 of each at Moine Mhor on 22nd Dec, a mixed flock of 100 (mostly **Fieldfares**) at Kilfinan, Cowal on 30th Dec and 90 **Fieldfares** near Millhouse, Cowal on 21st Jan. Around 100 **Redwings** were present on Tiree on 24th-25th Jan.

No less than 5 **Blackcaps** were at Arinagour, Coll on 1st Nov with 2 more there on 8th Nov and Tiree had at least 8 at various locations during the first ten days of Nov and a male at Cornaigmore on 2nd Dec. '**Siberian**' **Chiffchaffs** (race *tristis*) have been recorded from Arinagour, Coll and Kilchoman, Islay on 1st November and from Keills (Loch Sween) on 5th Dec. At least 40 **Long-tailed Tits** were in the woods at Achnacloich, Mid-Argyll on 8th Nov. An unprecedented gathering of 22 **Magpies** were seen in a single tree in Dunoon on 29th Jan. One was seen at Strachur, Cowal on 18th Dec and it may be that this species is slowly increasing/spreading in Argyll; all records are welcome. At least 200 very excitable **Jackdaws** were flying around Otter Ferry on 3rd Jan and a flock of 750 **Common Starlings** were present near Loch an Eilein, Tiree on 24th Jan.

An influx of **Greenfinches** was noted on Coll and Tiree in Nov with 30+ at Totonald, Coll on 20th (together with a similar number of **Chaffinches**) and 45 feeding at Crossapol Farm, Tiree on 25th. It has been a good winter for **Siskins**. Flocks of 30+ were at Loch Craiglin (Loch Sween) on 12th Dec and in Dunoon on 13th Dec and over 100 were at Glenbranter at the end of Jan. Small numbers of **Common Crossbills** have been reported from various places on the mainland. At least 3 were in Minard Woods, Mid-Argyll on 10th Jan, a female was singing at the top of a Sitka Spruce near Otter Ferry and 3 (a male and 2 females) were in a garden at Glenbranter, Cowal 16th—18th Jan.

Waxwings were not the only visitors from the north this winter. There have also been reports of the '**Northern**' **Bullfinches** (race *pyrrhula*) that occurred in Scotland in some numbers this winter. These are larger and more brightly coloured than native birds and reputedly have a distinctive harsh call. A pair was reported at Creag Mhor, RSPB Loch Gruinart on 8th Nov and 3 were found on Coll on 16th Nov. A flock of 14 **Bullfinches** were on

the hill above Otter Ferry on 2nd Jan. Flocks of 250 or more **Twite** were seen regularly at Cliad, Coll during Jan and 90 were at Crossapol Farm, Tiree on 25th Jan. **Bramblings** reported during the period included 6 at Arinagour, Coll on 1st Nov increasing to 12 by 18th Nov when 18 **Snow Buntings** were also present. Six **Yellowhammers** were at Balvicar, Seil, Mid-Argyll on 27th Nov.

Paul Daw

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Beach Cleaning—help!

As I coorrie down in my wee hollow in the shingle to keep my newly hatched, fluffy chicks warm and protected against the wind and rain I survey the scene. The tide is quite far out and my mate is foraging for food at its edge. **Great Black-backed Gulls** fly overhead and survey the scene, in fact one lands only a few feet from me, but as long as I sit tight all will be well. A wheezing, heavy breathing sound approaches and the ground vibrates with the pounding of heavy feet—it must be that large plump woman jogging, and “oh help!” her large chubby dog is plodding along beside her and pausing to snuffle at this and that. Danger past, they have kept to the firm sand between high and low water and I can see other family friends also sitting tight on their precious eggs or chicks. I can relax again until it’s my turn to feed. Come to think about it, it must be my turn soon as the sea has come much nearer now.

What’s that noise? I must have dozed off in the sun for a moment and now people are walking along the sand – still quite far away but coming this way. They are talking and laughing and throwing things for those four-legged creatures that race up and down and bark; fine as long as they keep away from my nest. Oh Help! They are getting nearer and are also bending down, picking up things from the ground and putting them in big black bags – shiny coloured things that clonk together making a strange noise, also bits of that brightly coloured stuff that blows about in the wind, and odd shaped containers with a very strong, strange smell. Well, if that keeps them happy I don’t mind, but – HORRORS - one is getting nearer and nearer. I MUST sit tight – there are three evil-eyed gulls watching and hoping to dine on my carefully nurtured babies.

A high pitched shriek emits from the woman who earlier jogged along the shore and this seems to draw all the other two-



Ringed plovers are at risk from beach clean-ups (photo Jim Dickson)

legged creatures towards her. I hear her warning the ‘**Beach Cleaners**’ that there are birds nesting along the shore above high water and if frightened off their nests all their amazing effort and endurance will come to nothing as the gulls enjoy the meal of eggs and chicks they have been eagerly anticipating.

Without exception people are very grateful for beach-cleaning work carried out and would not want to discourage it. Few would disagree that unsightly (and dangerous) rubbish needs to be collected and removed, but **please** spare a thought as to the timing of these operations. Ground nesting shore birds often start laying eggs from the end of March and second broods are frequently still being reared in early July.

Katie Pendreigh

Jack Snipe on Islay

The following notes were originally put together for use in the forthcoming *Birds of Argyll* book, but as there won’t be space for all of them it was suggested that they be printed in full in the newsletter.

Status and distribution

Jack Snipe occur widely throughout Islay in the winter months, though they are possibly more common (or obvious) on autumn passage. Sometimes there is a discernible return passage in the spring, usually in April, but with two late records in May.

They are probably more common on the island than realised, but are rarely seen due to their extremely secretive habits. They are almost always seen singly, usually when flushed by the observer. When out walking his pointer dog, which seemed to be particularly good at “pointing” snipe, Mike Madders flushed several **Jack Snipe** from small patches of habitat on the moorland edge where he would never have normally looked for or expected to see them.

Habitat

A range of wetland habitats is used, differing subtly from those used by **Common**

Snipe. Jack Snipe are more confined to wet habitats than **Common Snipe** - rarely being flushed from drier open moorland or grassland habitats in which **Common Snipe** are often seen. However, despite the **Jack Snipe**’s affinity for wetlands, they are rarely found on the margins of larger, open water bodies such as loch edges or flooded grasslands. Their scarcity in front of the RSPB’s observation hide at the well-watched Gruinart floods is testimony to this (only one or two birds seen from the hide in seven years compared to the regular occurrence of **Common Snipe**, sometimes in flocks of up to 50 birds). Like fish and herrings, **Common Snipe** can be seen in all habitats used by **Jack Snipe**, but **Jack Snipe** don’t occur in all the habitats used by Commons!

The favoured locations of **Jack Snipe** are the edges of small pools, creeks, flushes, wet runnels and ditches, with some standing water, though this is often hidden by tall emerging vegetation. These locations are usually associated with a range of semi-natural habitats such as marshes (fresh and saltwater), mires, short fens, wet moorland, wet *Juncus*-dominated grasslands or coastal wetlands. Sites are characterised by tall vegetation of 30-50 cm height providing plenty of natural cover. The tall vegetation usually comprises rushes (especially *Juncus acutiflorus*) and sedges (esp. *Carex rostrata* and *Eriophorum angustifolium*), or sometimes low willow scrub.

The wide availability of these habitats within Islay and the Argyll islands in general, probably exacerbates the under-recording of this species, as there is no need for birds to concentrate in a few locations, as is often the case in other parts of the UK. This may also explain why there are so few sightings of more than one bird. However, in freezing conditions, **Jack Snipe** may become more obvious as they



COMMON SNIFE.

are concentrated around ice-free ditches, springs and small burns with suitable cover.

Although most sites are essentially lowland, birds are also seen in remoter moorland mires and bogs of upland character: I flushed several birds from very wet "hummock and hollow" bog pools when searching remote areas of Islay for **White-fronted Goose** roosts in 1991-93. It appeared that the **Jack Snipe** were associating with the puddled and trampled peaty "ooze" around the pool edges that was also enriched by the goose droppings.

Identification

When a snipe flies up from your feet there is always a moment or two's uncertainty as to its identity. The short flight (c.30-100 m) before pitching down again and lack of call from the **Jack Snipe** are good ID features, compared to the usual "schaaap" call of the **Common Snipe** as it takes off, followed by its longer, often towering flight. But as with the habitat distinctions, some **Common Snipe** behave like Jacks, though **Jack Snipes** almost never behave like Commons.

Additional features that I find useful are that when you do flush a Jack Snipe it usually rises literally at your feet (< 1 m), and often audibly clips the tall vegetation that they are usually found in with its wings as it flies up. This is probably all the more audible because the bird doesn't call. Overall the upperparts are darker than a Common, and so the bold back stripes stand out more clearly, and these

features are slightly (!) easier to see because the flight is not so fast. The low flight is weaker than Common's, and when the bird does drop into the vegetation, if it was a **Jack Snipe**, you can be sure you'll never flush it again, even though you saw exactly where it landed!

By contrast, **Common Snipe** are usually flushed at 2-5 m, with an explosive call and a fast flight and disappear into the distance. The speed of events is so fast that plumage details are hard to discern - altogether a more dramatic experience than flushing a Jack Snipe.

However...some Commons occasionally misbehave, possibly more introverted individuals, but also recently fledged juveniles in the summer, which haven't mastered the knack of giving you a heart attack when they take off. On only two occasions have I heard a **Jack Snipe** call (a feeble version of the Snipe's), and on both occasions this was followed by a towering flight (but not as towering as a Common's). Both these sightings were in late spring (23/4/2003 and 1/5/2003) and may have involved the same bird. I presume it was full of migratory restlessness, or perhaps it was thinking of breeding on Islay? (It didn't).

Clive R. McKay, Tigh an Arish, Gruinart, Islay PA44 7PP.

E-mail: clive.mckay@btinternet.com

[note from the Editor: if anyone has similar observations of **Jack Snipe** elsewhere in Argyll, I'm sure Clive would be interested to hear from you]

The Bullfinch's tale

The Bullfinch, named for its large head and neck, is one of the jewels among Bute's resident birds. Its German name is 'Dompfaff' meaning cathedral priest, from its scarlet breast and black cap. It is not a rare bird, but it is always illusive, more often heard than seen. Its call note is quite distinctive, a soft whistle 'peu or phew'. If you don't know its call and want to find the bird, get a CD and learn the song. When you track it down, you will see the velvety quality of the plumage, plump breast warm reddish- pink in the male, brown in the female, grey back, black wings with a distinctive white wing bar, black tail and prominent white rump. It is a most beautiful bird.

Beautiful maybe, but it has a bad reputation, particularly among fruit growers in Southern England. The Bullfinch has a wedge shaped bill, ideal for ripping off the buds of any fruit tree or bush in early spring, seeking the highly nutritious material at the heart of the bud. There was a price on the head of the Bullfinch as early as in the England of Elizabeth I:

*a penny reward for everie Bullfynche or other Byrd
that devoureth the blowthe of fruite*



For much of the year the bird consumes natural foods, including dandelion, nettle and dock, bramble, ash seeds, blackthorn and hawthorn. Birds seeking weed seed often come close to my house, when I can admire them at the closest quarters. They never stay long and the last I see of them is the white rump as they depart. They are rarely alone, with male and female staying close to each other, calling constantly. After the breeding season they can often be seen in small flocks.

Michael Thomas

Buzzard with damaged wings



This photo of a **Common Buzzard** with wing damage was taken by Jim Duncan in Glen Fruin in mid-November 2004. The birds could fly okay, but would 'hang' both wings out when perched - very strange! Jim couldn't explain how the damage had occurred, but said, not surprisingly, that the bird was easily identified when soaring.

Editor

Requests for help

Wing tagged White-tailed eagles

A proportion of White-tailed Eagle chicks are fitted with patagial wing tags each year, including chicks raised in Argyll. While we are keen to receive **all** sightings of White-tailed Eagles, those with details of wing tags are particularly useful. Each chick is fitted with two similarly coloured tags, one in each wing. The colour of the tags is visible at long range and indicates the year that the bird was fledged (eg yellow in 2000, white in 2001, blue in 2002, pink in 2003 and green in 2004). With close views it may also be possible to read the labels on the tags (usually a letter or number, occasionally another symbol) and determine the identity of the individual. Please forward all sightings to:

Roger Broad, RSPB Scotland, 10 Park Quadrant, Glasgow, G3 6BS.

Phone: 0141 331 0993

Email: roger.broad@rspb.org.uk

Farmland bird surveys

The declines of farmland bird populations in Scotland continue. For example, in the UK, the **Lapwing** declined by 41% between 1970 and 2001, and in Scotland by 42% during 1994-2003. So, the **Lapwing** chick you saw while driving by last May might be of some significance. There is a national commitment to halt and ideally reverse these declines in farmland birds. Reforms to agriculture subsidy payments mean that from this year, more funding is likely to be made available for beneficial management by farmers.

The RSPB Volunteer & Farmer Alliance is a project that provides farmers with a free and confidential survey of the birds on their land. Three CBC-style survey visits are made between April and July, with volunteers walking field boundaries. The results are very well received by farmers. Not only do they learn more about which species are where on the farm, but this information can be used by specialist advisors to help design a farm business plan that incorporates the most appropriate actions to help farmland birds and other biodiversity.

In Scotland, the project has surveyed over 200 farms since 2002. The RSPB South & West Region covers the area south of a line from Argyll through to Stirlingshire, Clackmannanshire and the Lothians. We are keen to satisfy demand for farm surveys in the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, where lowland waders are of great interest. Other species of

particular interest are **Tree Sparrow** and **Grey Partridge**. Our volunteers would already have appropriate identification skills, but a project manual and full training in the survey method are provided, and fuel expenses are covered.

Some key areas in and near Argyll where there are farms awaiting surveys are the Kintyre peninsula, southwest Loch Lomondside and Glen Dochart (east of Crianlarich, albeit in the north of Stirlingshire). I would be very interested to hear of anyone who may like to carry out surveys in these areas. The main birds of interest for identification purposes will be the lowland waders, since typically arable species such as **Grey Partridge** and **Tree Sparrow** maybe not present in these areas.

If anyone would be interested in the survey and helping farmland birds, or who may know of a farmer in the Region that may be interested in the project, please contact me.

Bob Dawson

RSPB South & West Scotland Regional Office, 10 Park Quadrant, Glasgow, G3 6BS, Telephone: 0141 331 0993

E-mail: bob.dawson@rspb.org.uk

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

The BTO is looking for birdwatchers to take part in the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) in Argyll, and have the following 1-km grid squares still available.

NM8224, NM8326, NM9621, NN0104, NN0615, NN1035, NN1234, NN1925, NN2835, NR7684, NR9275, NR9333, NS0392, NS0884, NS1280.

Please note that BBS squares are being allocated to people on a daily basis, and therefore, some of the squares listed as available may have already been taken.

What is the BBS?

The BBS is the UK's main survey for keeping track of the bird populations of common and widespread species. More than 2,000 birdwatchers collect data from more than 2,400 sites across the country each year, enabling us to follow the changing fortunes of more than 100 bird species. BBS results are used by Government Agencies to set their priorities for bird conservation. For more information, visit our website: www.bto.org/bbs

What is involved?

Just 5-6 hours of fieldwork per season. The BBS observers visit their square twice

each breeding season (early April to early July) to count all the birds they see and hear along a 2km route within that square.

What skills are required?

BBS observers need to have a reasonable knowledge of the songs and calls of common UK birds. You **DO NOT** need to know every call of every species!! A free tape or CD containing the songs and calls of the more difficult to identify species is available to all new volunteers on request.

How do I find the location of a BBS square?

Visit the Ordnance Survey website on: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/getamap/> Click on the green 'Get-a-map' button, and then enter the grid reference (e.g. NN1925) and hit the 'GO' button. Your square appears as the one in the top right of the map displayed. Alternatively find your square on a pink OS Landranger map (scale 1:50,000), or an orange O.S. Explorer map (scale 1:25,000), by reading the reference from the 100,000 metre square identified on the map by the letters **NN** then **19** along the top of the map and down to **25** on the side.

Entering your data

You can submit your BBS counts on paper forms or electronically via the web, using the BBS-Online application. BBS-Online also allows you to view previous years data for your squares and the web pages also provide you with a host of BBS results and information about the survey (via the BTO web address above).

Mike Raven (BTO), BBS National Organiser

Phone: 01842 750050

E-mail: mike.raven@bto.org

[For survey forms or assistance contact the BTO regional representative for Argyll South, Bute & Gigha, Richard Allan, by telephone (01852 300359) or e-mail richardallan@compuserve.com

Other surveys which you may wish to participate in are a waterways breeding bird survey and a heronry census]

Green Woodpecker records

For the *Birds of Argyll* book, we are in the process of writing up the species account for **Green Woodpecker**. The only recent records for this species have been from Mull. In particular there have been no records from Cowal (a previous stronghold) since 2000 and none from anywhere else on the mainland since 2001. If anyone has any records at all for **Green Woodpecker** in Argyll (even if you've only

heard them ‘yaffling’) that have not been submitted or if you know of anyone else who may have records please let me know as soon as possible.

Paul Daw

Tel: 01546 886260

E-mail: monedula@globalnet.co.uk

The birdwatcher's code

Birds give great pleasure to many people. Following the *Birdwatchers' Code* is good practice, common sense and should enable us all to enjoy seeing birds. It puts the interests of birds first and respects other people, whether or not they are interested in birds. It applies not just when you are at a nature reserve, but whenever you are watching birds in the UK and abroad. It will be most effective if we lead by example and sensitively challenge birdwatchers who ignore it.

The interests of the bird come first

Birds' response to people varies a great deal, depending on the location and the time of year. Disturbance can keep birds from their nests, leaving the chicks hungry or enabling predators to take eggs or young. When migrants have just completed a long flight or in cold weather, flushing birds can cause them to use vital energy instead of feeding. It could be the difference between life and death. Reckless disturbance of some bird species is illegal in the UK. Therefore:

- Avoid going too close or disturb their habitat – if the bird flies away, makes an alarm call or dives into bushes, you're too close. And you won't get a good view!
- Stay on roads and paths where they exist; otherwise, keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.
- Repeatedly playing a tape or CD of birdsong to encourage a bird to respond can divert a territorial bird from other important duties, such as incubating its eggs. Never use playback to attract a species that is endangered or locally rare.

Be an ambassador for birdwatching

Respond positively to questions from interested passers-by. They may not be birdwatchers yet, but a good view of a bird or a helpful answer may light a spark of interest. Your enthusiasm could start a lifetime's commitment.

Follow the *Countryside Code*, respect the wishes of local residents and landowners, and don't enter private land without permission. Irresponsible behaviour may lead to a land manager denying access to other

birdwatchers or disturbing the bird.

If you use local services, such as pubs, restaurants or petrol stations, let them know that you're there because of the birds. Just wearing your binoculars around your neck will convey the message!

For more information on the Countryside Code, see:
www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk in England
www.codcefngwlad.org.uk in Wales.
 The Scottish Outdoor Access Code is available from Scottish Natural Heritage (www.snh.gov.uk)

Make your sightings count

Add to tomorrow's knowledge of birds by sending your sightings to www.birdtrack.net. This online bird recording scheme from the BTO, RSPB and BirdWatch Ireland enables you to store all your birdwatching records, support species and site conservation at local, national and international scales and forward your records automatically to the relevant county recorder. For an up to date list of the county recorders, see: www.britishbirds.co.uk/countyrecorders.

Finding rare birds

We like to share our experiences, and mobile phones and the internet mean we can now do it instantly. Therefore:

- If you discover a rare bird, check with the landowner (on a nature reserve, the warden) before spreading the news.
- Think about whether the site can cope with a large number of visitors and whether there are sensitive species that might be at risk.
- With a little planning, access can usually be arranged, and rare bird hotlines are used to marshalling visitors.
- Rare breeding birds are at risk from egg-collectors. If you discover a rare breeder, contact the RSPB, who may organise protection or enable visitors to see them once the eggs have hatched. Also tell the landowner (so that the nest is not disturbed accidentally) and, at the end of the summer, the county bird recorder.

Seeing rare birds

For many, seeing a rare bird is an exciting opportunity, but don't let your enthusiasm over-ride common sense.

- If you twitch a rare bird, follow on-site instructions and consider making a donation if requested.
- Don't try to get too close for a photograph - you'll earn the wrath of everyone else if you flush the bird out of

sight.

- Be patient if the viewing is limited and give others a chance to see the bird after you've had a good view.
- Not everyone likes to see an 'organised flush', but with elusive birds it can be the best way to ensure that the bird is left to feed and rest. A flush should not be organised more frequently than every two hours and not within two hours of sunset, so that the bird has a chance to feed.

The Law

Laws protecting birds and their habitats have helped to secure the conservation of many species. They are the result of hard campaigning by generations of birdwatchers. We must ensure that we don't allow them to fall into disrepute.

It is a criminal offence to recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 or the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (see www.rspb.org.uk for a full list). The courts can impose fines of up to £5000 and/or a prison sentence of up to six months for each offence.

The Birdwatchers' Code has been produced by a partnership of: The British Ornithologists' Union, British Trust for Ornithology, The RSPB, Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, *Birding World*, *Birdwatch*, *Birdwatching*, *British Birds*, Rare Bird Alert, BirdNet

Recent publications

This section provides readers with information about publications (papers in journals, reports, books etc) that have appeared since the last list appeared in the September 2004 *Eider*. The criteria for selection is that a publication must have a link to birds in Scotland. The selection is biased towards what I read, so I would welcome information about other publications for inclusion in future lists.

Editor

Amar, A., Picozzi, N., Meek, E. R., Redpath, S. M. & Lambin, X. 2005. Decline of the Orkney hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* population: do changes to demographic parameters and mating system fit a declining food hypothesis? *Bird Study*, **52**, 18-24.

ap Rheinallt, T. 2004. Nuthatches and red-

winged blackbirds. *Scottish Bird News*, **73**, 16.

Bowler, J., Mitchell, C. & Leitch, A. J. 2005. Greylag geese on Tiree and Coll, Scotland: status, habitat use and movements. *Waterbirds*, **28**, 61-70.

Butterfield, D. 2004. The black-throated dive raft programme in Scotland. *Scottish Bird News*, **74**, 9-11.

Buxton, N. E., Summers, R. W. & Peach, W. J. 2004. Survival rate of female goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*. *Bird Study*, **51**, 280-281.

Camphuysen, C. J. 2005. Seabirds at sea in summer in the northwest North Sea. *British Birds*, **98**, 2-19.

Clark, J. A., Robinson, R. A., Balmer, D. E., Adams, S. Y., Collier, M. P., Grantham, M. J., Blackburn, J. R. & Griffin, B. M. 2004. Bird ringing in Britain and Ireland in 2003. *Ringling & Migration*, **22**, 85-127.

Dougall, T. W., Holland, P. K., Mee, A. & Yalden, D. W. 2005. Comparative population dynamics of common sandpipers *Actitis hypoleucos*: living at the edge. *Bird Study*, **52**, 80-87.

Fraser, P. A. & Rogers, M. J. 2005. Report on scarce migrant birds in Britain in 2002. Part 2: American wigeon to ring-billed gull. *British Birds*, **98**, 73-88.

Frederiksen, M., Wanless, S., Harris, M. P., Rothery, P. & Wilson, L. J. 2004. The role of industrial fisheries and oceanographic change in the decline of North Sea black-legged kittiwakes. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, **41**, 1129-1139.

Furness, B. 2004. Seabird breeding failure, climate change and wind farms. *Scottish Bird News*, **74**, 18-19.

Green, R. E. 2004. Age-dependent changes in the shape of the secondary remiges of individual adult corncrakes *Crex crex*. *Ringling & Migration*, **22**, 83-84.

Gricks, N. 2005. Short-eared owl preying on merlin. *British Birds*, **98**, 46.

Hatton, P. L. & Marquiss, M. 2004. The origins of moulting goosanders on the Eden Estuary. *Ringling & Migration*, **22**, 70-74.

Kalmbach, E., Griffiths, R., Crane, J. E. & Furness, R. W. 2004. Effects of experimentally increased egg production on female body condition and laying dates in the great skua *Stercorarius skua*. *Journal of Avian Biology*, **35**, 501-514.

Kirby, A. D. & Smith, A. A. 2005. Evidence of re-nesting after brood loss in red grouse *Lagopus lagopus scoticus*. *Ibis*, **147**, 221.

Mougeot, F., Irvine, J. R., Seivwright, L., Redpath, S. M. & Pierney, S. 2004. Testosterone, immunocompetence, and honest sexual signaling in male red grouse. *Behavioral Ecology*, **15**, 930-937.

Newson, S. E., Woodburn, R. J. W., Noble, D. G., Baillie, S. R. & Gregory, R. D. 2005. Evaluating the Breeding Bird Survey for producing national population size and density estimates. *Bird Study*, **52**, 42-54.

Newton, I. 2004. The recent declines of farmland bird populations in Britain: an appraisal of causal factors and conservation actions. *Ibis*, **146**, 579-600.

Siriwardena, G. M. 2004. Possible roles of habitat, competition and avian nest predation in the decline of the willow tit *Parus montanus* in Britain. *Bird Study*, **51**, 193-202(10).

Stevenson, A. 2005. Long-tailed shrike: new to Britain. *British Birds*, **98**, 26-31.

Stoate, C., Henderson, I. G. & Parish, D. M. B. 2004. Development of an agri-environment scheme option: seed-bearing crops for farmland birds. *Ibis*, **146**, 203-209.

Summers, R. W. 2004. Use of pine snags by birds in different stand types of Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*. *Bird Study*, **51**, 212-221.

Swann, B. 2004. Greylags in Scotland. *Scottish Bird News*, **73**, 7.

Swann, B., Brockway, I. K., Frederiksen, M., Hearn, R. D., Mitchell, C. & Sigfusson, A. 2005. Within-winter movements and site fidelity of Icelandic greylag geese *Anser anser*. *Bird Study*, **52**, 25-36.

Votier, S. C., Bearhop, S., Ratcliffe, N., Phillips, R. A. & Furness, R. W. 2004. Predation by great skuas at a large Shetland seabird colony. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, **41**, 1117-1128.

Scottish Bird Records Committee List for 2004-2006

Snow Goose (Greater)	<i>Anser caerulescens atlanticus</i>
*Brent Goose (Black Brant)	<i>Branta bernicla nigricans</i>
*Black Scoter (American)	<i>Melanitta nigra americana</i>
Red-necked Grebe (American)	<i>Podiceps grisegena holboellii</i>
Great Cormorant (Continental)	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>
*Whimbrel (Hudsonian)	<i>Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus</i>
*Herring Gull (American)	<i>Larus argentatus smithsonianus</i>
Little Auk (Franz Josef Land)	<i>Alle alle polaris</i>
Yellow Wagtail (Sykes's)	<i>Motacilla flava beema</i>
*Yellow Wagtail (Black-headed)	<i>Motacilla flava feldegg</i>
Yellow Wagtail (Eastern Blue-headed)	<i>Motacilla flava simillima</i>
*Common Nightingale (Eastern)	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos hafizi</i>
*Common Redstart (Ehrenberg's)	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus samamisisicus</i>
*Arctic Redpoll (Hornemann's)	<i>Carduelis hornemanni hornemanni</i>

All potential new taxa for the *Scottish List* require to be accepted by either BBRC (and BOURC if new for Britain) or SBRC. The Secretary of SBRC can advise Local Recorders/observers of the correct procedure for each particular taxon involved. In particular BBRC are no longer examining records of the 'Caspian' race of Herring Gull *cachinnans*, which has still to be added to the *Scottish List* and therefore all future claims should be submitted to SBRC.

The table to the left shows a list of subspecies recorded in Scotland on 20 or fewer occasions. The table on page 11 lists the species for which written descriptions are required.

*Records of these subspecies are examined by BBRC. Records of all others should be submitted to SBRC.

AMERICAN WIGEON†	LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER
Green-winged Teal	GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK†
Ring-necked Duck	WOOD LARK
Surf Scoter (females only)	Richard's Pipit*
CORY'S SHEARWATER	TAWNY PIPIT
GREAT SHEARWATER	WATER PIPIT
Balearic Shearwater	COMMON NIGHTINGALE†
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON	CETTI'S WARBLER
PURPLE HERON	AQUATIC WARBLER
White Stork	MARSH WARBLER†
European Honey-buzzard*	Icterine Warbler*
MONTAGU'S HARRIER	MELODIOUS WARBLER
ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD	DARTFORD WARBLER
Eurasian Hobby*	Barred Warbler*
Common Crane*	Pallas's Leaf Warbler*
STONE-CURLEW	Firecrest
Little (Ringed) Plover	Red-breasted Flycatcher*
KENTISH PLOVER	WOODCHAT SHRIKE
Pectoral Sandpiper*	ROSY STARLING†
BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER	EUROPEAN SERIN
Sabine 's gull	Common Rosefinch*
RING-BILLED GULL	CIRL BUNTING
HERRING GULL (yellow-legged Race <i>MICHAHELLIS</i>)	ORTOLAN BUNTING*
European Bee-eater	LITTLE BUNTING†

KEY

UPPER CASE (BLOCK CAPITALS): SBRC would prefer to receive all records.

Lower case: These should normally be dealt with locally if a local records committee exists, but should be submitted to SBRC if there is no local committee.

The *Scottish Bird Report* will only include records of the above species if they have been accepted by either SBRC or a local records committee. Assessment of a record can only take place by a committee, if a full written description is provided by the observer. This should be submitted by the observer to the Local Recorder.

*A dispensation has been granted to the Local Recorders in Shetland & Orkney that records of species marked with this symbol can be accepted *at their discretion* without full written descriptions. A similar dispensation has been granted to the Argyll Local Recorder in respect of Balearic Shearwater.

†A dispensation has been granted to the Local Recorders in Shetland & Orkney that records of species marked with this symbol can be adjudicated locally.

All 'new' pre-1950 records of species appearing on the BBRC List, require to be accepted by SBRC.

In addition to the above, all records of subspecies recorded in Scotland on twenty or fewer occasions, should be examined by either BBRC or SBRC.

Montague's Harrier website

Mike Gregory told me about this website: <http://www.alcorai.net/esfera/aguiluchos/>
 It's a gallery of absolutely superb photos of Montague's Harrier, taken by a Spanish photographer, Javier Milla. Some of the shots of food passes are the best I've seen. Two photos are shown below, but the rest are well worth a look! *Editor*



Articles for the next issue of *The Eider* should with the Editor before the 31th May 2005



The frequency and ferocity of storms this winter are probably linked to the many records of white-winged gulls over the last few months. (photos Jim Duncan above and Jim Dickson below)



Iceland Gull

Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2004/2005)

Chairman: David Wood, Drover's House, Bellanoch, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8SN (phone 01546 830272)

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

Secretary: John Anderson, Ard Beag, Connel, Oban, Argyll PA37 1PT (phone 01631 710630)

Treasurer: Bob Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Loch Lomond G83 7DG (phone 01301 702603)

Membership Secretary: Sue Furness, The Cnoc, Tarbet, Loch Lomond G83 7DG (phone 01301 702603)

Committee: Richard Allan (Oban), Roger Broad (Killearn), Tom Callan (Otter Ferry), Paul Daw (Minard), Mike Gear (Appin), David Merrie (Blairgowrie), Katie Pendreigh (Tayinloan) and Steve Petty (Tighnabrauaich)

Editor of the Argyll Bird Report: Simon Wellock, Warden RSPB Coll Reserve, Totronald, Isle of Coll, Argyll PA78 6TB (phone 01879 230301)

Editor of the Eider: Steve Petty (contact details on front page)

Argyll Bird Recorder: Paul Daw, Tigh-na-Tulloch, Tullochgorm, Minard, Argyll PA32 8YQ (phone 01546 886260 e-mail monedula@globalnet.co.uk)

Argyll Bird Club Website: <http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>



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 and press releases. 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 around the 15th day of March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor before the 1st day of each publication month. However, it greatly helps if material can be submitted well before these deadline dates.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author/s and not 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.

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 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 annual 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 box on this page).