

The Eider

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The Eider is the Quarterly Newsletter of the Argyll Bird Club (<http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>)
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Female Bullfinch feeding on Herb Bennet
(Photo: Jim Duncan)

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To receive the electronic version of *The Eider* in colour, ABC members should send their e-mail address to the Editor (contact details, top of page 2). Past issues (since June 2002) can be downloaded from the club's website.

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ABC Autumn Meeting 2006

**On Saturday 4th November at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near
Lochgilphead**

The programme is on page 17

**ABC Spring Meeting 2007**

**On Saturday 10th March at the Royal Marine Hotel, Hunter Quay,
Dunoon**

Editorial

I'm sure you will have made the most of this great spring and summer. My wife and I spent three weeks in July in the mountains of northern Spain, only to find on our return that it had been as hot, if not hotter, in Argyll!! Anyway, I hope that some of you will be able to write about your summer birding experiences for the next issue of the *Eider*.

The club is flourishing! Membership is higher than ever before, the exciting new book of the *Birds of Argyll* in due to be published next year and the monumental task of handling the club's bird records has been resolved. Much of this recent success can be directly attributed to the contribution that David Wood has made during his time as Chairman. So, I'm sure you will be disappointed to learn that David has decided to relinquish the steering wheel and take a back seat at the AGM (see his article below). So, thank you David for all your hard work. With your support at the AGM, I believe he is willing to stand for election to the committee.

For contributions to this issue, many thanks to Tristan ap Rheinallt, John Bowler, Zul Bhatia, Tom Callan, Clive Craik, Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, Jim Duncan, Bob Furness, Iain Logan, Eddie Maguire, David Merrie, Katie Pendreigh, Linda Petty (proof reading), Nigel Scriven, Peter & Margaret Staley, Graham Todd and David Wood.

The AGM is your chance to influence the future direction of the club. So, this is a plea to all members to turn up at the Cairnbaan Hotel on 10th November and join in. Your contribution is essential. While the club can be proud of its successes, there is still much to do. For example, we still haven't hit the right formulae for field trips, as very few folks turn up for some outings (this year's trip to Sanda—pages 12-13). What sort of trips do you want—should we be more adventurous and head abroad?

I hope you've noted, we now include an issue number on the front cover. This follows my request in the last issue (page 19), which Peter Staley took up with gusto, and in the process produced an intriguing history of the *Eider* (page 12).

The *Eider* is due for another facelift, as I have now acquired more sophisticated software. This is the same as that being used to produce the *Birds of Argyll*, which should result in an improved December issue. I just need your articles to fill it!!

From the Chairman

The last 12 months have again been exciting and busy ones for the club. With a range of excellent field trips and two well attended indoor meetings, it's been great to see so many members getting involved. We must be doing something right, because the Club's membership rose again over the year! We have made significant progress towards publishing the 'Birds of Argyll' and, with the help of some really dedicated volunteers; our bird data issues are well on the way to

being sorted out. The *Eider* continues to go from strength to strength. Your Committee members are highly committed, and they bring a wide range of skills and experience, which ensures the club is well placed to grow and develop even more in the future.

After nearly four years in the role, I've decided not to stand for re-election as chair at the forthcoming AGM. I remain as keen for the club's future as ever, but it's time for someone new to take it forward, and possibly add some new dimensions. Should the club provide activities to encourage more young people to join? Are there some different field trips that the club should offer? Once the book is published, what are the priorities for new projects?

Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm over the last four years. It's been a privilege and a real pleasure.

David Wood

Lochwinnoch second-hand book and optics sale

RSPB Lochwinnoch reserve second-hand book and optics sale will be from Saturday 16th to Sunday 24th September 2006. There are several ways to get involved.

- Donate books, with all proceeds going to RSPB.
- Let us have some books for us to sell on your behalf. We have sold books worth over £3500 so far for others. We will keep a mere 10% for commission. If you have a scarce/rare book and you want to get the best price for it, we can put it into the auction. Book prices for non-auction books can be fixed by yourself or by a local expert (our preferred option).
- Ask for an auction list.
- Come to the reserve and buy books.
- There will be no selling prior to the event, but afterwards a list of books remaining will be produced and items sold off from this. We can send you this list on request.

Anything natural history (books/magazines/journals/pamphlets/videos/ DVDs/CD Roms/even maps, etc) qualify for the sale. We will even take the odd travel book!

Books need to be with us ASAP and no later than end of first week of September. For further details, please contact Zul Bhatia or Paula Baker at:

zul.bhatia@rspb.org.uk

paula.baker@rspb.org.uk

Argyll Bird Report

It is far too long since the last Argyll Bird Report (for 2001) appeared. Work on subsequent issues has been delayed chiefly because of the effort being put into the *Birds of Argyll* book. However, thanks to the contributions of volunteer bird record processors (Jane Mitchell, Mary Gregory, Morag Rea and Tom Callan) and species accounts from Bob Furness and Tom Callan the combined volume for

2002-2003 is finally well on the way to completion. Every effort is being made to have it ready for distribution in time for the ABC Autumn Meeting. I am now concentrating all my efforts to this end and hope you will bear with me if I do not respond immediately to other requests for help/information until this work is finished.

Paul Daw, Argyll Bird Recorder

Galloway field trip: 11-12th November 2006

I am willing to lead a weekend birding trip to Caerlaverock WWT reserve and Mersehead RSPB reserve on the weekend of 11-12th November. My normal plan is to drive down on Saturday morning to Caerlaverock, stay overnight in New Abbey and visit Mersehead on Sunday before travelling back.

At this time of year the geese are usually in large flocks and make a great spectacle when they take to the wing. Over the years the hide facilities at both venues have continued to improve so, despite the weather, comfort is assured.

My current thinking is to travel down by car, sharing spaces as available. If there is sufficient demand I could hire a minibus, splitting the cost and collecting from Gourrock, and Glasgow. There would probably need to be at least 10 folks to make this worthwhile. If anyone prefers to travel separately and meet down there, we could just arrange to rendezvous.

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Argyll Bird Reports CD

All *Argyll Bird Reports* (vols 1-17) are now available on one CD in PDF file format. CDs can be purchased from the Treasurer (contact details on back page) and cost £10 inclusive of postage (£5 for ABC members).

Raffle prizes for the Autumn Meeting

If anyone would like to donate a raffle prize, can you please bring it along to the Autumn Meeting, and see Rodger Broad or Nigel Scriven on the day. Thank you!



Margaret Staley

Recent bird reports from Paul Daw: May—July 2006

The outstanding record of the period was probably the flock of 18 **Tree Sparrows** watched for 10 minutes at **Balnahard, Colonsay** in the early morning of 3rd June (see below).

It appears to have been another very successful breeding season for small passerines if reports from member's gardens are anything to go by. There are still (24th August) young birds appearing at bird tables, many still begging for food from their parents.

There have been reports from both our own area and Clyde of the early departure of **Common Swift** this year. Stuart Gibson comments: "The good July weather obviously has made all the difference, making up for the cold spring these birds arrived back to during May. In good years young Swifts (Swiftlets?) can be on the wing in five weeks, rather than the up to eight weeks when bad weather brings about food shortages and enforced torpidity. We don't normally expect such prolonged warm spells during the Glasgow Fair holiday (last fortnight in July) and, coincidentally, neither do the Swifts, hence the 7-10 days earlier than usual departure south".

Observers full names appear below in

Recent Report Updates

The latest news on bird sightings in Argyll is available on the Argyll Bird Club website:

<http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>

On the home page 'click here for latest bird reports' takes you to straight to the most recent update. This page is updated every 7-10 days

brackets, except for: SW = Simon Wellock, JB = John Bowler, TC = Tom Callan, PD = Paul Daw, JD = Jim Dickson, JH = John Halliday, BA = Bill Allan.

Divers to Herons

An impressive total of 71 **Great Northern Divers** in Crossapol Bay, Coll on 9th May (SW) was another example of the so far unexplained phenomenon of such concentrations in Argyll waters in early May. Some remained later in the month, with three in full breeding plumage in the Sound of Gigha on 10th May (JH) and five displaying off Tayinloan on 21st May (Katie Pendreigh). A minimum of 34 were still to be found around the coasts of Coll during 3rd-6th June. Most were first summer birds, but they included at least six adults (SW). A nice **Black-throated**

Diver in breeding plumage was seen no more than 100m in front of the pub at Otter Ferry on the evening of 6th May. How convenient was that?! (TC). Three **Red-throated Divers** still in non breeding plumage on 5th May were an unusual sight in mid Loch Feochan (nr Oban) (BA).

A pair of **Little Grebes** with a brood of young was present on a pool by Ardoran Road, Lerags, Oban on 30th June (BA). Although it was at an unusual time of the year and in untypical plumage, a grebe seen in the Sound of Jura near Keills, Loch Sween on 24th July with **Black-throated** and **Red-throated Divers** showed many of the characteristics of **Black-necked Grebe** (now under consideration by ABRC) (PD/TC).

Five **Manx Shearwaters** were seen at Garbh Eileach, The Garvellachs on 26th May during the Argyll Bird Club trip to the islands. Breeding has often been suspected there (Richard Wesley).

A massive passage of **Manx Shearwaters** was noted heading west off Aird, Tiree on 22nd June; approx. 24,000 in one hour! (JB). At least 28 off Ardrishaig, Loch Gilp in strong southerly winds and generally poor weather on 29th July were unusual



A selection of waterfowl photographed by taken John Bowler on Tiree in May; Light-bellied Brent Goose at Sandaig (top right), Garganey at Kilmoluaig (top right) and European White-fronted Goose (bottom left).

for this location. (Malcolm Chattwood).

At least 300 **Northern Gannets** were counted fishing in Loch Fyne off the pier at Ardrishaig on 25th May. (Richard Marks).

An elusive **Little Egret** found at An Fhaodhail east of The Reef by visitors Keith Gillon and Mark Darling on 28th May was only the second for Tiree. It was seen later by BA, Anne-Lise Dickie and JB, and was still present on 31st May.

Wildfowl

A family of two adult **Mute Swans** and five one-third grown cygnets were at Loch Craiglin (Loch Sween) during the WeBS count on 24th July (PD/TC). Four **Whooper Swans** were present at An Fhaodhail, Tiree on 5th June (JB) and the almost annual pair of **Whooper Swans** were present on Loch Scammadale (nr. Oban) on 25th and 26th July (BA).

A tired looking **European** (*albifrons*) **White-fronted Goose** (a scarce visitor to Argyll) was seen and photographed at Heylipol, Tiree on 3rd May. It was still there on 11th May. Three **Whooper Swans**, two **Gadwall** and two **Pintails** were at Barrapol on the same day (JB). A late **Greenland White-fronted Goose** was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 30th May and a male **Garganey** was still on a roadside pool at Moss (BA). Two **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were on Soa, Tiree on 11th May (JB) and a single **Pink-footed Goose** was seen out at sea off Ardyne Point, Cowal on 18th June (James Towill *et al.*). A **Bar-headed Goose** was seen with **Greylag Geese** at Connel on Loch Etive on 24th July (Alec Anderson) and two adult **Bar-headed Geese** were at the head of Loch Feochan (nr Oban) on 31st July (BA).

Three male **Mandarin Ducks** were in a

flooded field at Strathadd, Kilmichael Glen on 5th May (Blair Urquhart) and three female **Wigeon** accompanied by nine small ducklings were at the east end of Loch Tulla, North Argyll on 1st July (BA). An impressive total (for Argyll) of seven **Garganey** was reported at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 10th May (five males and two females) (James How) and two drake **Garganey** were on a pool at Kilmoluaig, Tiree on 17th May (JB). One drake **Garganey** was still at Moss, Tiree on 7th June.

Two **Long-tailed Ducks** in breeding plumage were at Hough Bay, Tiree on 7th May (JB) and a very late summer plumaged drake **Long-tailed Duck** was reported on Loch Ba, Mull on 1st June (per Alan Spellman). Five drake **Velvet Scoters** were with 50 **Common Eiders** off Rhunahaorine Point, Kintyre on 25th June (BA). Post breeding gatherings of **Red-breasted Mergansers** included 31 at Loch an Eilein on the evening of 7th June (JB), 72 (incl. a flock of 60) off Rhunahaorine Point on 25th June (BA) and min. 83 at the head of Loch Riddon, Cowal on 22nd July (TC).

Raptors to Gamebirds

An amazing series of raptors were recorded on Tiree during easterly winds and clear skies on 10th June. An adult **Red Kite** (no wing tags) glided over the Reef in the afternoon harassed by Lapwings. Half an hour later, an adult **Hobby** flew south over Balephuill, also being mobbed by Lapwings. To round it all off, what had been reported on 8th June as a "white Buzzard" re-appeared in the evening at Kilmoluaig. It turned out to be a white-phase **Gyr Falcon**! It caused pandemonium as it circled over the nearby gull and tern colonies. Sadly it bore the remains of brown jesses on both legs. But, as John

Bowler said it looked great anyway! (JB) A **Red Kite** was reported at Loch na Keal, Mull, on the same day – possibly the same bird? (per Alan Spellman). The **Gyr Falcon** stayed around on Tiree until 13th June.

A **White-tailed Eagle** was reported flying high over Barrapol on 25th June causing widespread disturbance to the birds around west Tiree! (JB) and an adult was seen along the coast of North Appin on 19th July. A local farmer reports seeing the bird in this area previously (Mike Gear).

An unprecedented sequence of records of **Marsh Harriers** occurred in early May; even if two or more sightings involve the same individual. On 6th May a female was seen at Dunamuck Farm (Moine Mhor) heading towards Cairnbaan (JH). On the following morning an immature female was reported flying over Salen Pier, Mull (Ross Facer per Alan Spellman). Amazingly, yet another sub-adult female flew south over Totronald at around 21.00hrs on the evening of 8th May (SW). On the evening of 9th May a female was found at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree (Ralph and Brenda Todd per John Bowler) and a sub-adult female was also reported at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 9th May! (James How). All these sightings of what is normally a very scarce migrant in Argyll—usually no more than two or three are seen in a year.

On 11th May, **Hen Harriers** were reported at Minard, Mid-Argyll (a smart male) (PD) and at a site in Appin, North Argyll, where a pair were seen in suitable breeding habitat (Mike Gear). Two **Golden Eagles**, both sub-adults, were seen soaring over Largie Farm, Kintyre on 13th May (Katie Pendreigh) and a sub-adult female **Golden Eagle** was seen over the roadside lochs on Coll on 9th May (SW).

Stop Press

An adult **Ross's Gull** at Aird, Tiree on the evening of 9th August was only the second ever record for Argyll (John Bowler).

Jim Dickson was lucky enough to spot two sub-adult **Mediterranean Gulls** in Loch Gilp on 21st August (photo of one opposite, with an adult **Black-headed Gull** behind it and a ringed adult **Common Gull** behind that!)



Photo: Jim Dickson

The Eider

A single **Osprey** was seen near the top of Loch Eck on 18th June (Peter Woods). The Rest and Be Thankful was an unusual location for the **Osprey** seen late in the afternoon of 19th July (Gerald Cannon per BirdTrack).

A **Common Quail** heard calling at Heylipol, Tiree early on the morning of 26th June, was the only record for Argyll so far this year (JB).

More than 50 **Corncrakes** were already present in west Coll on 4th May, many showing extremely well! (SW). A **Corncrake** was reported calling continuously in late May at a site beside Loch Sween that contains suitable breeding habitat. The calls were heard for at least four days running, but not subsequently. Calling birds are very scarce on the mainland—it would be nice to think they might be attempting to re-colonise (Gordon MacMillan/Mary-Lou Aitchison).

Breeding season records of raptors & rails

On Colonsay, a **Hen Harrier** nest with three young was found by Mike Peacock, the first proven successful breeding for the island and 4-5 pairs of **Common Kestrels** were breeding on the island (per David Jardine). A pair of **Hen Harriers** bred successfully at a site in the Appin area, North Argyll. Both adults seen making food passes to two fledged young (Mike Gear). A pair was also seen in the Taynuilt area during the breeding season (Lawrence Langan).

Using a tape lure, an amazing 19 **Water Rail** territories were found on Colonsay this June (Alastair Young/David Jardine). A breeding **Water Rail** was found at Jura Manse, Jura with at least two chicks. It is unusual to find breeding **Water Rail** at all. This is the first confirmed on Jura for many years (Norman Tait). A **Spotted Crane** called at night throughout June from a site on Tiree. The final total (after three surveys) of **Corncrakes** on Tiree was 316 calling males—just exceeding the 2005 total of 310. Several broods of chicks were reported (JB). A good number of reports of **Moorhens** with broods of young were reported, including birds at Gallanach Beg Farm and a pool by Ardoran road, Lerags, both nr Oban (BA), nr Dalvore, Moine Mhor (JD) and at Balephuill, Tiree (JB).

Waders

The female **Dotterel** was still at The Reef, Tiree on 1st May together with nine **Whimbrel** (JB). On the same day, two male and one female **Dotterel** were at Totronald, Coll with 280 **Golden Plovers** (SW). A pair of **Dotterel** were seen on the slopes of Beinn Achaladair (nr Bridge of Orchy), just within the Argyll recording area, on 14th May (Katie Haine per Zul Bhatia, RSPB).



Colour-ringed Black-tailed Godwit at Loch a'Phuill, Tiree on 1st May (photo: John Bowler)

Black-tailed Godwits on Tiree on 1st May included 115 at Loch a' Phuill and 95 at Loch an Eilein (including a colour-ringed bird—see photo above) (JB). **Whimbrel** numbers at Tayinloan, Kintyre peaked at 80 on 1st May (Katie Pendreigh). On 7th May, 32 **Whimbrel** were at Hough Bay, Tiree, together with 460 **Ringed Plovers** and 230 **Dunlin** (JB). Three **Whimbrel** were in Loch Gilp on 12th May (JD).

Huge numbers of waders around the coast of Tiree on 17th May included 2,330 **Dunlin**, 1,320 **Sanderling** at Gott Bay and 560 **Sanderling**, 370 **Dunlin**, 2 **Little Stint** and 6 **Red Knot** at Traigh Bhagh (JB).

Four **Woodcock** and a **Common Snipe** were among the less expected species seen at Garbh Eileach, The Garvellachs on 26th May during the Argyll Bird Club trip to the islands (Richard Wesley).

A **Greenshank** and no less than eight **Common Sandpipers** were in the Add Estuary on the evening of 6th May (JD). A mixed flock of waders that flew briefly into Loch Gilp on 30th May contained 64 **Dunlin** apparently all in breeding plumage, three **Sanderling** (two in breeding plumage and one pale bird) and four **Ringed Plovers** (JD). **Sanderling** is a very unusual species for Loch Gilp and the fact that the flock were there for less than 10 minutes shows, once again, how easy it is to miss good birds!

A newly arrived adult **Little Stint** was with **Dunlin** at a freshwater pool at Moss early on the morning of 6th June (JB). Two **Little Stints** were at Tayinloan on the evening of the same day (Katie Pendreigh). Another **Little Stint** was at Gott Bay, Tiree on 12th June (Lawrence Lan-

gan).

Continuing the run of unusual sightings of summer plumaged waders, a fine **Curlew Sandpiper** was on the Add Estuary on the morning of 10th June (JD). An interesting mixed flock of waders opposite the bird hide at the Add estuary on 12th June included not only the summer plumaged **Curlew Sandpiper** (above), but also a **Little Stint** (JH's first at this site), a **Red Knot**, nine **Dunlin** and 14 **Ringed Plovers** (JH). On 17th June a single **Greenshank** was in Loch Crinan (JD) and a single **Wood Sandpiper** (always a scarce bird in Argyll) was seen, in the drizzle, at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree with six **Dunlin** (JB).

Two **Whimbrel** were on the shore at the east end of Loch Tulla, North Argyll on 1st July (BA). A beautiful flock of exactly 40 **Black-tailed Godwits** were in the Add Estuary on 2nd July at 17.00hrs plus a single **Greenshank**, all in breeding plumage (JH).

On 5th May, most of the 27 **Turnstones** at the fish farm near Otter Ferry were more or less in full breeding plumage, no less than six pairs of **Common Sandpipers** were counted between the Fish Farm and Otter Ferry, and a single **Whimbrel** flew from the road onto the beach at Killail (TC). On 8th July an adult **Curlew Sandpiper** in mostly summer plumage was at Rubha Chraiginis (south of Hough Bay), Tiree at 13.00hrs with five **Dunlin**, one **Whimbrel** and 30 **Curlew**. An obvious influx of **Curlew** on Tiree over previous few days included quite a few rather recently fledged young (JB).

A total of 87 **Common Redshanks** were at the head of Loch Gilp just before high tide on 22nd July with seven **Dunlin**.



Sanderling in breeding plumage at Ledaig Point, North Argyll on 27th July (photo: Jim Dickson)

Most of the latter were still in breeding plumage (PD). On 23rd July, five **Dunlin**, four **Common Snipe**, a **Black-tailed Godwit** in breeding plumage, a single **Whimbrel** and five **Greenshank** were at Loch na Cuilce, Dervaig, Mull (David Williams per Alan Spellman).

At the end of July, 133 **Oystercatchers** were at Ledaig Point, North Argyll on 27th (surprisingly including only one juv.) with 37 **Ringed Plovers** (min. seven juvs.), nine **Sanderling** (incl. a red-necked variant), four **Dunlin** in breeding plumage, 17 **Curlews**, seven **Turnstones** and a family party of four **Common Redshanks** (JD/Stuart Gibson). Then, on 29th July, an excellent mixed flock of waders in Machrihanish Bay included seven **Red Knot** (all in breeding plumage), 95 **Sanderling** (two-thirds in breeding plumage) and 35 **Dunlin** (two-thirds in breeding plumage) (BA). A survey on Tiree on 31st July found good numbers of waders on the move, including 447 **Dunlin**, 361 **Sanderling** and 65 **Ringed Plovers** at Gott Bay and among smaller groups at other bays were 190 **Golden Plovers** at Cornaigmore, 15 **Black-tailed Godwits** at Whitehouse (all un-ringed adults) and one **Greenshank** at Loch a' Phuill. Also, there were 105 **Sanderling** at Sorobaidh Bay on 30 July. (JB).

Breeding season records of waders

Totals of 128 pairs of **Oystercatchers**, 53 pairs of **Ringed Plovers**, 315 pairs of **Northern Lapwings**, 50 pairs **Common Redshank**, and 57 singing male **Dunlins** and 140 male **Common Snipe** were found at The Reef, Tiree, but there were no **Common Sandpipers** anywhere on Tiree (JB).

Skuas to Woodpeckers

An adult **Pomarine Skua**, seven **Arctic Skuas** and three **Great Skuas** were seen from the ferry between Mull and Coll on 17th May harrying approx. 1,500 **Manx Shearwaters** and 140 **Arctic Terns** (JB). Four **Arctic Skuas** and two **Great Skuas** were involved in a major feeding frenzy off Mingary Point, Mull on 21st May (Colin Wilkinson).

Two adult **Long-tailed Skuas** headed low over Ruaig on the morning of 22nd May were part of a wider movement that included large numbers off the Uists and Lewis (JB). The movement was not just confined to the islands either. A remarkable sighting of four or five adult **Long-tailed Skuas** soaring over Kilmichael Forest (just north of Loch Glashan, Mid-Argyll) on the same day was reported to JD. An adult **Long-tailed Skua** flew in off Hough Bay, Coll on the evening of 6th June (SW) and another adult was picked up flying slowly along the shore at Traigh

Bhagh at 05.20hrs on 8th June. It flew to within 10m of the fortunate John Bowler before drifting off SW down the coast toward Hynish. Altogether this was an excellent year for this normally scarce species. Eight **Great Skuas** were seen from the ferry between Mull and Coll on 30th July (JB).

A first winter **Little Gull** was in Sorobaidh Bay on 1st May. Another (or the same?) was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 10th May and a first summer bird was in Hynish Bay, Tiree on 28th May (JB). A good description was provided of an adult **Little Gull** seen from the Coll-Oban ferry near Lismore Lighthouse today (Diane Elliot). By co-incidence, another adult was seen off Inverkip (Clyde recording area) in the Firth of Clyde at 17.00hrs on the same day (per James Towill).

An adult **Laughing Gull** in breeding plumage was seen from the Islay Kennacraig ferry on 15th June, close to Gigha (Peter Roberts). This followed a series of records during the winter.

There were many more sightings of **Sandwich Terns** this summer, including a first summer bird at Machrihanish on 5th July—unusual to see birds in this plumage in Argyll (TC). A mixed flock of terns in Machrihanish Bay on 29th July included one **Little Tern**, two **Sandwich Terns** and at least three **Arctic Terns** as well as **Common Terns**. It is very unusual to see all four species together in Argyll (BA).

Two **Turtle Doves** were on passage at Totronald, Coll on 4th May (SW). A single **Turtle Dove** was seen near Corphin Bridge (S of Campbeltown), Kintyre on 2nd June (Neil Brown). Another was at Crossapol, Tiree on 11th June (Laurence Langan) and one was photographed at Heylipol, Tiree on 5th July (JB).

A **Cuckoo** (a scarce bird on Tiree) was seen at Balephuill, Tiree on 31st May (BA). One lucky birder had excellent



Arctic Skua at Machrihanish Bird Observatory in early June (photo: Eddie Maguire)

views of a **Long-eared Owl** on the golf course at Balvicar, Seil on the evening of 1st May—always a good bird to see in Argyll (Richard Wesley).

Unexpectedly, there were two well documented accounts of churring **Nightjars** on Mull during May. One was at a site on the Ross of Mull and was first heard by a member of a group of visiting French scientists at 23.00hrs on 22nd May. The following night it was heard churring for 40 minutes after midnight by two members of the group, both of whom were familiar with Nightjars (Jérôme Fournier). The other was first heard churring on 25th May at a site in the east of Mull and was both heard and seen at 23.30hrs on the following night (Geoff Campbell).

Swifts seem to have been more numerous this year in Argyll (or possibly better reported). Two early arrivals were seen over Tesco's car park in Oban on 3rd May (Mary Gregory). On the following day, Swifts were well in evidence in the Oban area; one near Loch Nell (JD), one at Kilmore (Stuart Gibson), eight around the Corran Halls, Oban (BA) and two, in the morning, at Connel (Mike Harrison). The first were seen in Lochgilphead on 5th May (JH). Breeding was confirmed at Kilmichael Glassary (nr Lochgilphead) in July when two, probably just fledged, Swifts were seen clinging to the wall of Glassary Primary School. (Blair Urquhart). Seven were seen over Ardrishaig and three over Lochgilphead on 29th July (Malcolm Chattwood). Forty were counted flying together over Campbelltown in July (Eddie Maguire per BA) and no fewer than 49 were counted over Oban at 11:30 hrs on 28th July. Most had left by the end of the month (see above) (Stuart Gibson).

Breeding Season Records

A pair of **Short-eared Owls** was found nesting with three young on Colonsay. This is the first known breeding of the species on the island. Three or more **Long-eared Owl** territories including two broods of young were also located. A **Kittiwake** leg in a Colonsay **Peregrine** nest had a ring. It was from a chick ringed 13 years previously, some 350m from the Peregrine nest. David Jardine commented, "I guess recoveries like this are why we do ringing".

For the first time since the 1970s, a colony of **Little Terns** has bred at a traditional site on the coast of Kintyre. When checked on 14th July there were 28 adults, 2 fledged young, one feathered but not fledged and 6 fluffy chicks (10-12 days old). This is an amazing success rate for a site that experiences considerable disturbance (Blair Urquhart).

Passerines

For arrival dates of spring migrants in early May, see the June *Eider*.

A good count of 75 **Sand Martins** at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 17th May (JB) and a small group found nesting on the Corran River, Jura on 2nd July comprised the first confirmed breeding on the island since the first Breeding Bird Atlas of 1968-72! (Norman Tait).

Three **House Martins** inspecting the eaves of houses at Balinoe on 4th June would have been the first known to breed on Tiree if they had stayed, but they were not seen subsequently. Similarly two **Robins** in a garden at Balephuill on 3rd June looked as though they might be breeding. They would have been the first to do so on Tiree for more than 10 years if they had stayed, but they did not (JB). A female **Ring Ouzel** was reported at Tiroran, Mull on 10th June (per Alan Spellman).

Blackcaps were everywhere at Taynish NNR this spring. There was a record number in the Common Bird Census plots and **Wood Warblers** have recovered, fortunately, from last year's record low (JH). On 18th June, a **Lesser Whitethroat** was heard repeating a few song phrases at the old oil rig construction yard at Ardyne Point, Cowal at 20.40hrs (James Towill *et al.*). A **Spotted Flycatcher** on the woodland edge near Flat Rock, Glengorm, Mull on 25th May, was one of relatively few reported so far this year (Colin Wilkinson), although there was a late influx of three **Spotted Flycatchers** at Balephuill/Carnan Mor on 3rd June. A **Lesser Redpoll** with one recently fledged young and family party of at least six **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen at River Feochan nr Oban on 14th July (BA/Anne-Lise Dickie). I have still had no reports at all of **Pied Flycatchers** in Argyll this year.

A juv Rose-coloured Starling reported at Sandaig, Tiree on 5th June turned out to be a leucistic/albino juv. **Starling**—always a potential trap for the unwary. This was a very striking bird—all buffy-white with pink feet, reddish eyes and a pink bill (JB).

In the early morning of 3rd June, a flock of 18 **Tree Sparrows** was watched for 10 minutes at Balnahard, Colonsay. This must be the largest number of **Tree Sparrows** seen together anywhere in Argyll for many years and is the first record for Colonsay since 1899! As David Jardine put it "this will probably go down as the sighting of the year for me" (David Jardine/Mike Peacock/Lorna Dow).

A flock of 60 or more **Twite** were seen near Keills, Loch Sween on 18th July (TC). On 29th July young **Twite** were just fledging at Keills Point nearby (Loch Sween). Four were seen leaving the nest with at least four adults in attendance (John Aitchison).

Three male and one female **Lesser Redpolls** were over the usual colony site at Kames Golf Course for the first time on

3rd May—the males singing and song flighting (Steve Petty).

On 5th May, there was an unusual sighting of a **Siskin** feeding (with **Herring Gulls**!) among the seaweed on the foreshore in Oban harbour. Also on the same day a pair of **Linnets**, including a male in breeding plumage, was at Balvicar golf course, and five **Twite**, including two nice pink-rumped males, were in a garden behind Oban Hospital—obviously moving through (BA).

Reports of **Common Crossbills** included at least a pair at Arduaine Gardens on 7th May (JH), a pair (with a family party of **Lesser Redpolls**) at the east end of Loch Tulla, North Argyll on 27th June (BA) and calling birds at Glencruitten Golf Course, Oban on 15th June and 19th July (Stuart Gibson).

Other sightings

Basking Sharks have made a good showing this year including six at different locations around the coast of Tiree 31st May–2nd June (BA), four off the pier at Arinagour, Coll on 3rd June (JB), twelve off NE Tiree on 5th June (JB) and no less than 37 on the evening of 5th June between High Bay and Feall Bay Coll (SW).

Minke Whales were reported in Hagh Bay, Coll on 11th May (SW), from the Tiree-Oban ferry on 3rd June (BA), and close in off Sorisdale, Coll at mid-day on 6th June (SW).

Hummingbird Hawk Moths were reported at Arinagour, Coll on 14th June (SW), and one or possibly two, near the Corran Esplanade, Oban on 26th July (Graham Brennan per Stuart Gibson). One was caught and photographed at Sandaig, Tiree on the afternoon of 19th July (JB).

Painted Lady butterflies have been widely reported in Cowal, including sightings at Otter Ferry, Tighnabruaich and near Ardyne Point.

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Islay memories: Shorebirds on my doorstep

During my early years as a birdwatcher, I rarely if ever heard the term “shorebird”. Nowadays, owing to the same relentless wave of Americanisation that has brought us loons and longspurs, it’s almost as familiar as “wader”. Nor do shorebird species from the far side of the Atlantic Ocean seem as mysterious and exotic as they once did. Firmly relegated to the appendix of my first European field guide, they are well illustrated and given in-depth treatment in its modern counterparts. Hence, there is little excuse for failing to recognise them. In this article, I shall describe how occasional encounters with shorebirds from across the Pond added spice to my wader-watching days on Islay.

I can proudly claim that the birds I shall write about were all seen within a stone’s throw—three kilometres, to be exact—of my home on the margins of Loch Gruinart, although the first encounter occurred while I was living elsewhere. When I moved to Islay in 1993, I had seen every “non-rarity” (i.e. species not assessed by the British Birds Rarities Committee) on the British list except two: Aquatic Warbler and Buff-breasted Sandpiper. The chances of encountering an Aquatic Warbler on Islay were vanishingly small, but the same didn’t apply to Buff-breasted Sandpiper. There were already seven Argyll records, including one from Islay in September 1971.

Each year in early September, I resolved to make an intensive search for Buff-breasted Sandpipers on Islay, but not until 6th September 1996 did I get round to checking Islay Airport. Judging by the places where I’d failed to catch up with the species in southwest England, I reckoned this was potentially the best location on the island. But my search was in vain, and in any case I realised that the grass around the airstrip was far too long to be attractive to waders. By pure coincidence, Angus Murray called me that evening and told me there were two Buff-breasted Sandpipers on Tiree and another three had been seen earlier in the week on South Uist. I racked my brains and decided my best chance was to locate a Golden Plover flock. Ardnave was the most obvious possibility, and that’s where I headed soon after dawn on the 8th.

It was a lovely calm, sunny morning, and I took my time walking around the point. Unfortunately, after two-and-a-half hours I had failed to locate any significant numbers of Golden Plovers, though I could hear one or two calling in the distance. Then, as I was returning to the parking area at Ardnave Loch, I briefly saw a

A distant Buff-breasted Sandpiper (photo: Tristan ap Rheinallt)



small group disappear over the hillside to my right, accompanied by what appeared to be a Ruff. I soon located the group, which had alighted in a nearby field. Among the Golden Plover, was the Ruff, and then a second, much smaller Ruff. Or was it? It couldn’t be any larger than a Dunlin.

At this point I was scoping the flock at a distance. Only when I approached more closely was I able to confirm that the bird showed all the expected features of a Buff-breasted Sandpiper; plain face, straight bill, spotted breast-sides, scalloped upperparts and bright yellow legs. I took notes and then watched it at leisure for a short while until the flock took off again. I followed cautiously and discovered to my surprise that this time, there were two Buff-breasts feeding together. The next time they took off I had excellent flight views at close range and realised that there were in fact three, together with a single Ruff. Briefly I watched all three of these delightful birds feeding together, less than 50m away, and then the whole

group flew off down the hillside to the west. I did not see them again, but a local birdwatcher relocated them in exactly the same spot that afternoon.

1999: a big year

Three years later, I moved to live at Gruinart and immediately adopted Loch Gruinart and Ardnave as my “local patch”. I had already seen several interesting species in the area, but Buff-breasted Sandpiper was the only American shorebird among them. This situation was not to last long. On 5th September 1999, returning from a holiday in Mallorca, I found a crowd assembled at the bottom of the Ardnave road. Seeing several familiar faces I realised that a rare bird had to be involved, but when I stopped to talk I discovered that there were not one but two unusual shorebirds present; a Buff-breasted Sandpiper and a much rarer small *Calidris*, Baird’s Sandpiper. Leaving my wife with the unenviable task of unpacking the car and opening up the house, I grabbed my binoculars and hot-footed it down to the shore. Both birds were in with a large Dunlin flock and I was able to study them at leisure using the telescope Fiona Rout kindly lent me (mine still being packed away in the holiday luggage). It was the first and last time I’ve seen Buff-breasted Sandpiper in the intertidal zone, but even so I spent most of my time watching the Baird’s, which was to stay around for more than ten days.

In the meantime, further excitement occurred on the 9th when Andrew Whitehouse turned up at my door to report that he had just seen a very grey stint in the Dunlin flock and he believed it to be a Semipalmated Sandpiper. Without delay, I followed him down the field to the edge of the estuary. There we discovered that in fact there were two similar birds, one—a presumed female—having a much longer bill than the other. Unfortunately, we soon lost sight of the former (which remained a

Baird’s Sandpiper (photo: Jim Dickson)



“possible”) but were able to spend about an hour watching the latter, comparing it with a nearby juvenile Little Stint and establishing its identity beyond all doubt. Crucially, we had several opportunities to see the tell-tale webbing between the toes.

The next day, I was down at the estuary again, this time exposed to the elements in a fierce southerly gale. It was some time before I located a greyish-looking stint in among the hundreds of Dunlin present, but one advantage of the windy conditions was that I could approach to within a few metres of any bird of interest without putting it to flight. Crouching in the mud with my tripod in its lowest possible position, I ended up watching the “Semi-p” for a prolonged period at ridiculously close range. To my surprise, it was neither of the previous day’s juveniles, but instead an adult still bearing remnants of its breeding plumage.

Though we did not know it at the time, Tiree was also playing host to two Semipalmated Sandpipers, an adult and a juvenile. The Tiree and Islay records formed part of an exceptional influx of this normally very rare species, an influx centred on western Scotland and associated with north-westerly gales some days earlier. Argyll, the Outer Hebrides and Dumfries & Galloway all had their first accepted records of Semipalmated Sandpiper during this period. The appearance of the Baird’s Sandpiper was probably part of the same phenomenon.

After these occurrences, the presence of a juvenile Pectoral Sandpiper on the floods at Loch Gruinart on 27th September 1999 came as no great surprise. This species is the most regular North American shorebird to occur in Britain, and Lees and Gilroy recently argued (*British Birds*, December 2004) that it should not be considered a vagrant at all. Instead, they believe that Europe may lie on a normal migration route between American and/or Siberian breeding areas and as yet unidentified wintering grounds somewhere in Africa. Be that as it may, between 1999 and 2004 I saw a minimum of six individuals at Loch Gruinart in autumn and two in spring, including three together on 13th and 14th September 2000. I became more familiar with their curious abrupt “ringing telephone” call than I ever had been in Canada.

Autumn 2000 did not see a repeat of the “fall” of American shorebirds that occurred in September 1999, but I was nevertheless able to add a new species to the Argyll bird list in the form of a White-rumped Sandpiper. This was an adult bird that I encountered on the estuary on 13th August. It stayed all day and was seen by several local observers. Full details of the sighting can be found in the 17th *Argyll Bird Report*.

Springtime specials

On the whole, migrant waders—just like most other kinds of birds—are more in evidence in autumn than in spring. Although Dunlin can be present in their thousands on Loch Gruinart in both seasons, there is much more chance of seeing scarcer species such as Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper or Spotted Redshank in autumn. Wood Sandpiper is the most obvious exception to this general rule, but the spring seasons of 2002 and 2003 also produced two exciting North American shorebirds. I discovered both birds in almost exactly the same spot on the flooded fields in front of the RSPB hide. Constructed in 1998, this hide is wonderfully situated at the edge of the floods and provides unparalleled opportunities for viewing wildfowl, waders and other birds at medium to close range. However, it is also worth scanning the floods from the viewing platform up above because not all the birds are visible from the hide, especially when water levels are low.

On the evening of 11th May 2002, I visited the viewing platform for the third time that day. At the back of one of the floods, about 250m away from my vantage point, was a wader walking thigh-deep in water. At first glance it appeared to be a Greenshank, but something about it was not quite right, and I had an inkling of what it might be. Although it was distant, the light was good, so I kept looking at it through the telescope in the hope that it might reveal its legs. This did not happen, but on being dive-bombed by a Lapwing the bird suddenly took off and revealed a square white rump rather than the familiar Greenshank pattern. From the length of its bill and its size relative to

nearby Lapwings and Redshanks, I identified it as a Greater Yellowlegs and immediately phoned out the news. Only later was I able to confirm that it had long, bright yellow legs.

The Greater Yellowlegs stayed for three days and eventually provided much better views from the hide. It was by far the rarest of my local patch shorebirds, with only seven previous Scottish records. Interestingly, the most recent of these came from St Kilda and involved a bird that stayed for around ten days, departing on 9th May 2002—just two days before the individual turned up at Loch Gruinart. It seems possible that they were one and the same bird.

In August 2002, my wife left Islay to spend the academic year studying in Glasgow, leaving me in charge of two children and a business. These commitments severely curtailed my birdwatching and as a result I remember 2002 as being rather a quiet autumn. She finally returned home the following spring, to the great relief of everyone concerned. I still remember the surge of euphoria that I felt on the morning of 25th May 2003 when, for the first time in months, I was able to go out birding for an unlimited time without having to worry about the logistics of the day ahead.

My first stop that morning was the hide, where I had spent so many happy hours in the past. As I scanned the floods in a leisurely fashion, I noticed a distant medium-sized wader that had a different shape to a Redshank. I was looking into the sun at the time, and I could see little more than a silhouette, but the bird’s proportions reminded me of the previous year’s Greater Yellowlegs. However, it appeared to have a short, straight, slender bill—surely it



American Golden Plover (photo Tristan ap Rheinallt)

could not be a Lesser Yellowlegs? At this point I could not see the leg colour or indeed the legs themselves as they were largely submerged. Nor could I see any plumage details. Nevertheless, I felt that I could rule out every other possibility except perhaps Wood Sandpiper. Although I wasn't able to assess the bird's structure, I became increasingly convinced as I watched it that its shape and steady motion were definitely wrong for that species. There followed a very frustrating hour or so during which the bird remained in more or less the same spot while the light became worse and worse. I added very little in the way of useful information and although it seemed that the wing-tips extended well beyond the tail—a strong point in favour of Lesser Yellowlegs—I could not be certain.

At long last the bird took flight and came much closer to the hide, where the light was better. When it emerged from behind a small island I was able to see the bright yellow legs and other key features. At this point I rang the news out. As with its larger and rarer cousin a year earlier, the bird immediately flew off and was nowhere in sight when other birdwatchers began to

arrive. But just like the Greater Yellowlegs, it was relocated before too long and then stayed around for several days.

Cool pics

There was one big difference between the Lesser Yellowlegs and the North American shorebirds I'd seen previously on Islay—it was photographed (see *Birding Scotland* Vol. 6, No. 3). This was very much a sign of the times, and a few months later I embraced the no-longer-new digiscoping trend. It was a well-timed move because only days after I began to experiment with my new Nikon Coolpix, Jim Dickson discovered a juvenile American Golden Plover at Ardnave. It was only the second record of this species for Argyll, but surely long overdue for Islay where large flocks of Golden Plovers are a regular feature in autumn and winter. This individual stayed in the same general area from 21st September to at least 2nd November and I even saw it from my house on one occasion. My photos were distant and rather poor—certainly not a patch on Jim's—but they were recognisable. I realised that the process of documenting rare birds would never be the same again.

Apart from a Pectoral Sandpiper in front of the hide in late April 2004, that was it as far as my experience of North American shorebirds on Islay was concerned. Over the years, I had seen at least 19 individuals of eight different species on my local patch, together with another Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Frenchman's Rocks. Naturally, much of the excitement of seeing these birds arose from the fact that they were rare and unusual, but there was a lot more to it than that. To me, the fact that such tiny creatures are able to travel unaided from places as far away and as inaccessible to me as Baffin Island or Victoria Island is nothing short of miraculous. Of course, migration is a wondrous and thrilling phenomenon no matter what species is involved, be it Sanderling, Arctic Tern or Blackcap. Nonetheless, the thought that these wanderers had crossed the entire Atlantic to land almost on my doorstep, whereas their siblings were quite possibly busy feeding on some estuary or beach in Latin America, deepened my appreciation of the amazing journeys that birds are capable of making.

Tristan ap Rheinallt

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Sea Eagle spectacular—June 2006

The giant bird disappeared briefly from view as it raided the gull colony in the Sound of Mull. It reappeared with an adult Herring Gull struggling in its talons. A second White-tailed Eagle, probably its mate, was flying nearby and all 200 or so gulls were up in a huge cloud, brilliant white in the sunlight.

Grappling with its prey and fending off hordes of angry gulls, the first eagle struggled to gain height. Soon it found a thermal over the Craignure golf course and began to circle upwards. After five minutes it had left all the Herring Gulls behind except one persistent pursuer. A buzzard joined in the attack. The two lark-sized birds dived and harassed the leviathan, causing it to roll, somersault and plummet in a breathtaking display of aerobatics and a chorus of "Ooh" and "Aaah" from the three of us spellbound on the shore.

While the second eagle seemed to be summoning courage for another attack, the first was effortlessly and rapidly gaining height in its thermal. In another ten minutes or so it had become a tiny speck, almost invisible, but in binoculars the trailing wing of its prey could still be seen flapping grotesquely in the slipstream. At perhaps 2,500 feet or more, the eagle left the thermal and began a downward glide directly across the Mull mountain range, back to its eyrie and hungry young on the other side. Soon both eagles had vanished.

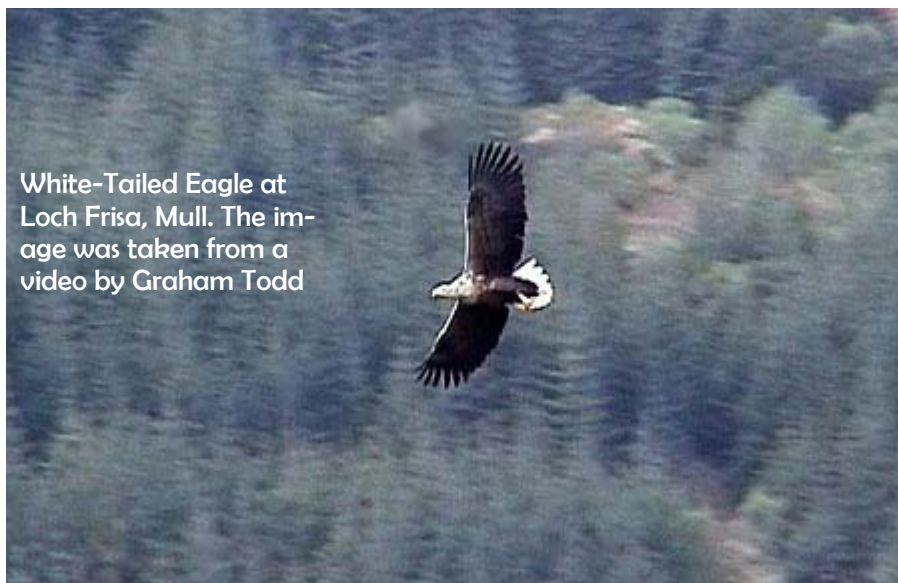
It was a spectacular sight, one that increasing numbers of visitors to Mull can enjoy every year. It was also an unforgettable lesson in how bigger birds of prey conserve energy. The eagle (6kg) carrying its prey (1kg) had soared upwards in rising warm air, flapping its wings only to avoid its tormentors. Then it had glided back to earth under gravity, again with scarcely a wingbeat. Both stages of the journey, from sea level to beyond the mountain tops and back down again, had been made with almost no effort.

The Herring Gull colony on Sgeir nan Gobhar is one of my study colonies, as is

Glas Eileanan a little further out in the Sound and home to one of the largest colonies of Common Terns in the British Isles. This year, for the first time since I began recording in 1984, no terns nested there. Any connection with the Sea Eagles, I wonder? Ah well, that's life I suppose—life as it was in the Victorian age! And who's complaining? Certainly not me. But I've ringed many thousands of seabirds in that part of Mull over the last 20 years, and I really would like to know how many of the rings are ending up in eyries!

Clive Craik

White-Tailed Eagle at Loch Frisa, Mull. The image was taken from a video by Graham Todd



'Eider count'—or a brief history of the newsletter

I said to the editor recently how much I appreciated the professional standard that the Eider had reached. We discussed how it had changed over the years, and he indicated he would like to know how many editions there had been since the inception of the club, so that issue numbers could appear on future Eiders.

Although I was not a founder member of the club, I did join in the first year and at various times I was Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Because of holding these posts I remembered that in my loft was a large heavy box containing records of the early years of the club, which might well hold the early newsletters. Never volunteer! I was immediately allocated the task of compiling a short history of the newsletter.

Whilst rummaging around I found a few other interesting documents, including the programme for the launch meeting of the club held at the Argyll Hotel, Inveraray on March 30th 1985, so this must have been the official start of the Argyll Bird Club.

The next document was in the form of a

letter addressed to each member by name. It was a three-page information sheet compiled by the founder Chairman, Colin Galbraith. It was dated January 22nd 1986, and seems to qualify as the first newsletter.

This was followed by three actual newsletters; July 1986, December 1986 numbered 3 and April 1987 numbered 4. Unfortunately there was no editorial in any of these, so I'm not sure who the editor was, although I would guess it may have been Dr Arthur R Jennings.

Newsletter 5, dated June 1987, saw Steve Eccles installed as editor. Steve continued until May 1989. Numbering of editions stopped at 10 in October 1988, and throughout this period A4 text was the style.

The editorship was taken on by Julia Weststead in summer 1989, and with the exception of one edition edited by Mike Madders, Julia continued right through until autumn 1993. The winter edition of 1989 saw the newsletter renamed the *Eider* and this has been the title ever since. During

Julia's stint, more and more illustrations, mainly by Philip Snow, were incorporated and eventually photographs were used, but always in black and white as the *Eider* was then a photocopied publication on coloured paper.

Robert Clarke took over from Julia for the winter edition 1993 and continued until the summer edition 1995. The style changed to a very professional layout, but with fewer illustrations. Regrettably, Robert left at very short notice.

The autumn 1995 edition saw Nigel Scriven take over on a stand-in basis. This issue was not published until December and contained an appeal for a new 'volunteer' editor. Clearly, Nigel was inundated with offers, as he also edited the March 1996 edition! He must have now acquired a taste for job, because he remained as editor until the March 2002 issue. All this he did whilst holding the positions of Vice Chairman and then Chairman, which must have been an enormous workload. The publication remained mainly text, with a few illustrations by Eddie Maguire at the start of the period.

Our present editor took over for the June 2002 edition, and we have seen continuous development to this day. Initially illustrations by Margaret Staley were incorporated, but the development of the internet and computer software allowed colour photos to be increasingly used in an electronic version of the *Eider*. We now see many superb colour photos being used, most of which are supplied by our own members.

If my research is accurate, the June 2006 *Eider* was number 77. The only possible query was in the period after Robert Clarke left, when one edition seems to have been missed. Other than that, there have been four editions every year since 1987. Thus, you are now reading issue 78!

Peter Staley



Sanda trip—June 2006

There appeared to be less interest in the Sanda trip this year. This may be because BT took a month to repair my land line at home, so if people had been trying to contact me unsuccessfully, I can only apologise and blame it on the May thunderstorm and BT.

David and Janet Palmar have become Sandaphiles, and were keen to repeat their visit of last year. Their enthusiasm, and the disturbing news about the observatory warden, convinced me that it was still worth going despite the low numbers. So,

on the 17th June with David and Janet Palmar, Catriona Morrison, and a student from Glasgow University, I went across to the island for the weekend.

We were welcomed aboard the Seren Lass by Peter, who assured us that the engine was brand new, guaranteed, and had been running well. Because of the tide, we couldn't set off to land before midday. At very low tide the boat grounds before the end of the Sanda pier, and the risk of sucking weed into the cooling system is very high.

After landing we had tea in the pub before heading off along the beach for the afternoon, with David stalking Eiders with duckling close in to the waters edge for photos. We found Ringed Plover nests, but with eggs and not chicks. The Peregrines were active with both parents screeching overhead. They were on one of their usual cliff sites that the ravens use from time-to-time when the Peregrines aren't there. The Ravens must have been successful elsewhere, as there seemed to be a gang of

Sanda Island trip—June 2006



David Palmar stalking Eiders (left) and on the boat home (photos: Nigel Scriven)

five flitting about the glen and top of the hill.

Walking further along the shore to the gull colony, we came across marked nests of one of the Glasgow University students, so we went up off the shore to reduce disturbance to the study area. A little further on we found some early Shag chicks big enough to ring.

We stayed in the farmhouse B&B this time, and had very comfortable rooms, with excellent views front and back. The evening meal was taken in the pub, and while not haute cuisine, was perfectly good. Over the winter the kitchen extension had been completed, making the catering much easier to manage compared to the tiny work space they had last year. Ever popular with yotties, numbers are swelled by the ribs that come across the North Channel from the Antrim coast. No doubt attracted by the three cask ales at the bar. At that time of year darkness

comes late, and with initial thoughts of waiting up for Manxies coming in, tiredness got the better of us, and we turned in.

I mentioned at the start of the piece of the disturbing news about the warden of the observatory. Rab Morton has been banned from Sanda by the owners, after a serious falling out. I have now listened to both sides, and I don't know where the truth lies, probably somewhere in between. I have to say that the current outcome could never have been in Rab's interest, and therefore hard to believe that there was any malintent in his course of actions. Whatever the misdemeanours that are alleged, they are perceived as being heinous enough to warrant no further activities on Sanda. This situation has prevailed since the end of April.

Fortunately, all mist nets that had been up were left furled, and while some had been subsequently taken down by visiting ringers, a few had remained in place. These I

found on the Sunday morning and took down for security. Unfortunately for us, the wind got up on the Sunday afternoon. And, while the Sanda boat was on its way from Campbeltown to pick us up, it encountered big seas and had to turn back. Finding ourselves stormbound, we were forced to spend Sunday evening in the pub, we did get off on the Monday morning.

Without Rab's intimate knowledge of what was happening on the island, we came to it cold, and had to do our best to find what was about. There was definitely a missing ingredient to the Sanda experience.

Quite what the future holds for a Sanda Bird Observatory without a voluntary warden is hard to predict, but is a considerable challenge for the Observatory Trust to address.

Nigel Scriven

ABCDEF: the lighter side of life (Garvellachs trip—May 2006)

The second excursion of the Argyll Bird Club Distinguished Expeditionary Force (ABCDEF) took place over the weekend 26-28th May 2006. Boatman Duncan Phillips carried eight of us through choppy seas over to Garbh Eileach, the largest island in the Garvellachs, lying between Luing and Mull.

On the boat was Richard W (I've got a new gadget), Richard A (I don't want anything new), Roger G (anyone got any spare gas?), Rosemary L (I wanna be alone), David P (that'd make a cracking shot), Janet P (here's your tripod dear), Ian H (I've still got my binos) and David M (who's for another walk?). We landed

at the jetty near the cottage just before 7.00pm on Friday evening, in fine dry weather for putting up the tents.

After dinner most of us strolled across the island towards the bealach. On cliffs to the north we found a single clump of the limestone-loving Mountain Avens and many Early Purple Orchids (photos opposite). Song Thrushes and Blackbirds were in full song. In the marshy area that was once a meadow, Grasshopper Warbler and Sedge Warbler were heard. Fulmars, Wheatears and Oystercatchers were seen by the cliffs. As we descended to camp we saw at least two Woodcock roding over the birchwoods.

By next morning, with a calm sea, steady

Early Purple Orchid in flower on Garbh Eileach (photo: David Merrie)





The campsite on Garbh Eileach (photo: David Merrie)

rain had set in and we expected a repeat of our Scarba experience. However, this time it was sporadic rain, and we avoided a soaking until just before lunch when a downpour accompanied us back to our

tents (photo above). As we lazed over our soup and sandwiches the sun appeared. We hung our stuff out to dry, the wind rose, coolly blowing from the south and the sun stayed with us until the end of our

visit.

We went our various ways, divided as Nethersole-Thompson would have said into arasers and leggers. The morning saw the leggers heading north-east through glades of brilliant bluebells and birch-woods, which have spread markedly since the last permanent inhabitants left some decades ago. The tracks and walls wound through thickets where once would have been open country. Here Willow Warblers warbled, Chaffinches chortled, and Robins, Wrens and Wood Pigeons rose ahead of us. Someone saw a Great Tit. Red Deer are numerous, and their roads showed us the best routes, though these were often muddy and slippery.

At the north end of the island a cliff hangs above a green sward, dotted with primroses. From here we could overlook the small island of Dún Chonnuill, where Roger Broad had found a Corncrake the day before. We could neither see nor hear one. The island should have been mobbed by nesting gulls, but only a few Herring, Lesser and Greater Blackbacks were to be seen. Along the shore we met Oystercatcher, Common Sandpiper, a Shag and



The 'ABCDEF' Garvellachs trip
May 2006

The island of A' Chuili, southwest of Garbh Eileach (top right), the Bealach nan Tara-bairt on Garbh Eileach (top right) and Ian Hopkins inspecting the cliffs for nests (photos David Merrie)

Table 1. Comparison between 1975 and 2006 for landbirds on Garbh Eileach in the Garvellachs

Status category	Species
Present in 1975 and 2006	Golden Eagle, Common Snipe, Woodcock, Wood Pigeon, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Common Wheatear, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Common Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Hooded Crow, Chaffinch. All evidently breeding
Present 1975, but not in 2006	Mallard (A Chuili), Sparrowhawk, Buzzard, Peregrine (A Chuili), Curlew, Rock Dove, Collared Dove, Cuckoo, Swift, House Martin, Raven, Twite, Lesser Redpoll, Reed Bunting, Bullfinch
Present 2006, but not in 1975	Kestrel, Common Sandpiper, Swallow, Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Great Tit, Yellowhammer

several Common Gulls. Four of us met at the highest point of the western cliffs where we had a good view into a Golden Eagle's eyrie with a 2-3 week old chick. The parent birds planed along the cliffs above our heads.

The western and higher part of the island is of a reddish limestone and the summit is a cracked limestone pavement, with miniature rock gardens in the interstices with Herb Robert, Hart's Tongue Fern and others. The seaward cliffs are rich with Roseroot, Thrift, Birdsfoot Trefoil and Kidney Vetch.

Impressive cliffs arch out either side of the Bealach nan Tarabairt (photo in box). Beautifully wave polished rocks of many hues line the base, and grassy shelves provide a platform between the cliffs and the sea. Oystercatchers were nesting here. But there was no sign of the many Tysties that I recorded during a visit in 1975.

In the afternoon the leggers legged it to the south end, the photographers photographed, and the arasers arsed near the campsite. More glades of bluebells, more Willow Warblers and a few Yellowhammers enlivened the route. We sat looking across to the island of A' Chuili (photo in box). Where were the thousands of gulls and hundreds of auks that had been here in 1975? Where were the Manx Shearwaters? A score or so of Herring Gulls went lazily to and fro. Fulmars weaved about off the upper cliffs. We considered ourselves lucky to spot a small raft of 55 Kittiwakes, and about 20 each of Razorbills and Guillemots dipping and diving about a patch of water as it drifted eastwards through the sound. Gannets swung and hung on the wind.

We strolled back for tea, having a nice view of a Sedge Warbler singing from the top of a willow bush. Here the arasers had had a productive afternoon with Mergansers and a single Tystie in the bay, Rock Pipit and Meadow Pipits with a family and Yellowhammers behind the camp. Fine views were had of the pair of eagles trav-

ersing the island's ridge to the west.

In the evening we heard Snipe and put one up high on the hill by an old croft. A Whitethroat was heard in the marsh. A Kestrel was seen near the bealach. A pleasant dram or two were consumed by the more sociable members in the big tent I was forced to bring after finding that mice had devoured part of the groundsheet of my small tent over winter.

The wind blew strongly at night, tents flapped and the temperature dropped. After yesterday's wanderings, today saw

more watching and waiting. There were more Yellowhammers, a Dunnock and Wheatears. Good views were obtained of some of the Song Thrushes, which showed the dark back and heavy mottling on the breast typical of the Hebridean race. Sea watching was profitable over the calming sea—Arctic Skuas, a Cormorant, two Manx Shearwaters, three Eider distantly and another raft of c.60 Kittiwakes and accompanying auks.

All were packed and ready to leave by mid-afternoon. Some were sun basking, others took last minute photographs, while other scanned for that extra species for our list. The boat was delayed by earlier clients, so we didn't leave until 7.00pm, across a now choppy sea with a following wind. We added Puffin before we were out of the island's range, giving us a total of 41 species.

However, there were many differences between this visit and my last in 1975, mainly with a huge decrease in the numbers of seabirds. These changes are summarised in the two tables. The main findings were a drastic reduction in numbers of Tystie, Herring Gull and Manx Shearwater and reduced numbers of Shags. Other changes were not so pronounced.

David Merrie

Table 2. Comparison between 1975 and 2006 for seabirds on Garbh Eileach in the Garvellachs

Species	Status
Eider	A few breeding and seen with young 1975, three far offshore in 2006.
Red-breasted Merganser	None 1975, 1 offshore 2006
Great Northern Diver	Three in east bay in 1975, none 2006
Northern Fulmar	Breeding on A' Chuili, no change
Manx Shearwater	c.1000 between A' Chuili and Garbh Eileach 1975, two offshore 2006
Northern Gannet	Not noted 1975, passing frequently 2006
European Shag	Breeding on A' Chuili and Garbh Eileach in moderate numbers 1975, present but fewer in 2006
Arctic Skua	Not noted 1975, two offshore 2006
Black-headed Gull	One seen in 1975, none in 2006
Common Gull	Small numbers not breeding 1975, possibly breeding 2006
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Small numbers breeding both 1975 and 2006
Herring Gull	Hundreds breeding A' Chuili 1975, small numbers in 2006
Greater Black-backed Gull	Small numbers
Kittiwake	Small numbers present offshore 1975, c.60 offshore in 2006
Razorbill	Small numbers present offshore 1975, c.20 offshore in 2006
Guillemot	Small numbers present offshore 1975, c.20 offshore in 2006
Tystie	At least 50 sitting birds on A' Chuili and a few pairs breeding on Garbh Eileach 1975, one offshore 2006

Adaptable Pied Wagtails

I recently had my roof slated and the skip uplift was three weeks late. When the lorry finally arrived I went to the skip to move a piece of old roofing felt to make it more secure. After lifting the felt I discovered a pied wagtail's nest with five newly hatched chicks. The nest had been built within a section of discarded gutter (top photo).

We moved the nest, gutter and felt from the skip and created a skip substitute using old crates (bottom photo). The parents were back at the nest feeding the chicks within ten minutes of the skip being taken away. At the time of writing parents and chicks are doing well!

Iain Logan

Photos: Iain Logan



The British List—seventh edition

The seventh edition of *The British List: a Checklist of Birds of Britain* is published this month in the BOU's journal *Ibis* (148: 526-563) and replaces the sixth edition *A Checklist of Birds of Britain and Ireland* (Knox (Ed.) 1992).

The British List includes changes made to the British List up to and including the BOU Record Committee's (BOURC) 33rd Report (*Ibis* 148: 594) and the BOURC's Taxonomic Sub-committee's 3rd report (*Ibis* 147: 821-826).

The 33rd BOURC report details the following changes which are included in the new edition of The British List -

Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma feae*. An individual observed at sea c.12 miles south of St. Mary's, Scilly on 8 July 2001 becomes

the first British record.

Rufous-tailed Robin *Luscinia sibilans*. Added to Category A on the basis of the first-winter individual seen on Fair Isle, Shetland on 23 October 2004.

Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*. Following a comprehensive review of all records, this species is removed from the British List. A paper detailing the review is currently in preparation for publication in *British Birds*.

Masked Shrike *Lanius nubicus*. Added to Category A on the basis of one seen at Kilrenny, Fife from 29 October to 14 November 2004.

Also considered were:

Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*. A

review of the record from Radipole Lake, Dorset, 23 November 1962 concluded that there were circumstances concerning the plumage and condition of the specimen that led BOURC to conclude that the bird was unlikely to have been a natural vagrant and the species is placed in Category E.

The British List now stands at 572 species (Category A = 552; Category B = 10; Category C = 10).

The British List can be viewed online at www.bou.org.uk/recbrlst.html

The BOURC 33rd report can viewed online at www.bou.org.uk/recreps.html

Copies of the July issue of *Ibis* in which

The British List is published can be purchased from the BOU priced £7.50 (orders to: email sales@bou.org.uk, tel 01 865 281 842 or web www.bou.org.uk/store2.htm)

For further information, you can contact:

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Press release from the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (18 July 2006)

Butterflies of South West Scotland

Futter, K., Sutcliffe, R., Welham, D., Welham, A., Rostron, A. J., MacKay, J., Gregory, N., McCleary, J., Tait, T. N., Black, J. & Kirkland, P. 2006. *Butterflies of South West Scotland: and Atlas of their Distribution*. Gendaruel: Argyll Publishing. ISBN 1-912831-95-0. Hardback, price £12.99.

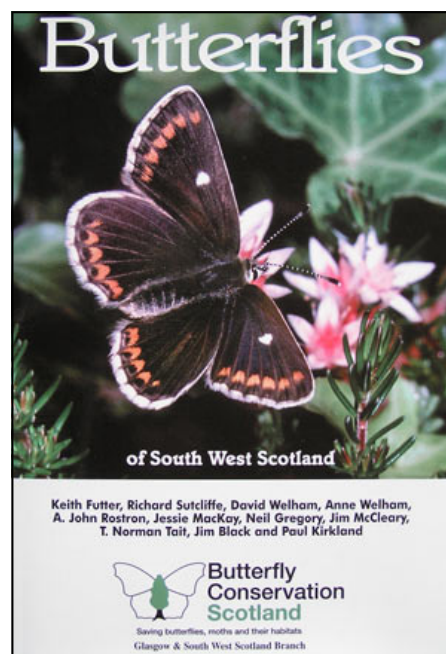
I had a love affair with butterflies in my youth. But, shamefully I have taken little interest in them since, until I saw and bought this recently published tome in my local book shop. Since then I have been avidly inspecting every butterfly that has crossed my path!

The book has been produced by the Glasgow and South West Scotland Branch of Butterfly Conservation Scotland. This is not just an atlas, but provides a wealth of information on butterflies in South West Scotland,

which includes Argyll. The first few chapters discuss why butterflies are recorded, the area and habitats covered, conservation, and recording and survey methods. The species accounts are comprehensive and split into four sections—identification, life cycle, habitat, and distribution and status. There are one or more colour photographs of each species, distribution and abundance maps (5km square resolution, covering the period 1995-2004) and phenograms (showing the flight period during 1995-2004). There are 32 species accounts, and of these, 25 occur in Argyll.

The authors are to be congratulated on producing a really excellent volume. A hardback book with loads of information and superb colour photos, and just £12.99 – it's got to be a bargain!

Editor



Programme for the ABC's Autumn Meeting—Saturday 4th November 2006 Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead

0930	Doors open, coffee and tea
0950-1000	Welcome and introduction—David Wood
1000-1015	Recent bird sightings—Paul Daw
1015-1100	William MacGillivray: Scotland's unknown ornithological hero—Michael Thomas
1100-1120	Coffee/tea
1120-1200	Conserving Glasgow's farmland birds—Liz Parsons
1200-1240	Conserving Scotland's red squirrels—Mel Tonkin
1240-1340	Lunch (available in the hotel)
1340-1410	Annual General Meeting (ABC members only)
1410-1450	Bittern ecology and conservation—Gillian Gilbert
1450-1530	Constant Effort Ringing in Kintyre—Neil Brown
1530-1600	ABC trips: Sanda2005/06 and Dumfries & Galloway 2006—Nigel Scriven
1600-1615	Raffle and coffee/tea—end of meeting

Argyll Bird Club—Treasurer's Report for the Financial Year 2005-2006

The **Argyll Bird Club** had a surplus of £11,259.71 in financial year 2005-06. This was mainly due to the club receiving substantial grant income (£9,950) that will be used in the production of the *Birds of Argyll* book, and to the fact that we did not produce an *Argyll Bird Report* during this year.

Our assets at the end of the year stood at £23,293.46, which represents by far the highest level in the club's history. But much of this money will soon be used to pay for the printing of the *Birds of Argyll*.

Income from subscriptions was less than in 2004/05, but this was only in small part due to a reduction in membership numbers; most of the difference was due to efforts to gather late payments of overdue subscriptions in 2004/05 and some lump sum payments for multiple years. In fact, subscription income in 2005/06 was the second highest on record, reflecting our buoyant level of membership.

Income from bank interest increased due to the high balance in the account. Raffle income continues to be a useful offset to the cost of providing free coffees and teas at indoor meetings. Postage costs in 2005/06 were less than the previous year. A slowly increasing number of members taking the electronic *Eider* and the fact that we have not had a bird report to mail kept postage down. Expenditure on public meetings can mostly be attributed to room hire and refreshment costs. For the second year the club paid insurance to cover risks of field outings.

Bob Furness, 9 June 2006

Notes relating to the accounts opposite

Expenditures in 2005/06 related to production of the *Birds of Argyll* book are 'Bird Recorder Expenses' totalling £94.93. Grant income is towards costs of printing the book.

The accounts were signed by R.W. Furness (Hon. Treasurer) on 9 June 2006.

B. Zonfrillo certified from the vouchers/cash books and other information shown to him, that the balance sheet was accurate.

Accounts for the 21 st Year of the Argyll Bird Club 16 April 2005—15 April 2006		
	2005/2006	2004/2005
Income		
Subscription	2147.23	2920.17
Sales	14.00	170.16
Bank Interest	225.03	104.70
Fees and advertising	23.50	70.00
Other (raffles, donations, etc)	233.00	398.00
Grants	9950.00	4367.00
Total	12592.76	8030.03
Expenditure		
Bird Report	0.00	0.00
Newsletter photocopying	0.00	240.00
Postage	209.18	392.76
Bird Recorder expenses	94.93	73.11
Public meetings	538.24	631.25
Publicity	380.70	506.78
Equipment/software purchases	0.00	349.88
Insurance	100.00	150.00
Tourist Board membership	0.00	12.15
Returned subscriptions	10.00	10.00
Total	1333.05	2365.93
Surplus/Deficit for year	11259.71	5664.10
Brought forward	12033.75	6369.65
Assets at end of year	23293.46	12033.75

Minute of 20th Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday, 5 November 2004

1. Apologies: John Armitage, Linda Byron and Mike Gear

2. Minute of AGM, 6th November, 2005: Proposed by Peter Staley, seconded by Norman Rae, approved by members and signed by the Chairman

3. Matters Arising: None

4. Chairman's Report: David Wood thanked members for attending the AGM and for their continued support, reporting that the club was going from strength to strength. He thanked members of the Committee and Sue Furness, Membership Secretary, for all their work and reported that David Merrie together with the Club Secretary John Anderson and Helen Anderson, who assisted him, were standing down and thanked them very much for

all they had done. Steve Petty was thanked for the excellent work he had carried out on the website and the *Eider*, as was Paul Daw and his assistants for their work on club publications and data inputting. Members joined with David in showing their appreciation.

David reported the death in April of Doug Trigg, who had done a tremendous amount of excellent work for the club from its earliest years and expressed his deepest sympathy to Elaine, his widow. Doug had played an important part in the club's nestbox scheme and carried out an immense amount of work on ringing Mute Swans and many other birds, as well as working tirelessly not only with birds, but as a bedrock nature conservationist.

The first draft of the *Birds of Argyll* book was reported as being almost complete and it would be a substantial publication. Sample pages were on display at the meeting and in the *Eider*. Tristan ap Rheinallt, Paul Daw and himself were taking this forward and he hoped it would be published during the first half of 2006.

David outlined the reasons given by the Scottish Executive for declining the SNH proposal to introduce the European Beaver into Knapdale.

He reported the club had received a grant of £10,000 from SNH for data handling. Part of the grant would be used to get all editions of the *Argyll Bird Report* onto

CDs, which could then be sold to other organisations. The grant would also fund developments in the club's handling of bird data. This would address the needs of volunteers entering bird records. He hoped that, once the new systems were up and running, the annual *Argyll Bird Reports* would be published soon after the year to which they related.

David expressed his pleasure in working with the club and found that the excellent turn out of 77 members for this open meeting made it very much worthwhile.

5. Secretary's Report: John Anderson reported that the Committee had met four times since the last AGM. He had enjoyed working with an excellent and active Committee, but was standing down because of one of his sisters had become ill and he and Helen were providing support. Also standing down from the Committee was David Merrie, who for the last 30 years, has done a tremendous amount of important work in the setting up and monitoring of divers' rafts. John hoped members would come forward to fill the vacancies that were arising, as the work is very interesting and challenging. He thanked David Wood and the others who were producing the *Birds of Argyll* book, pointing out that this involves a vast amount of work and is a major undertaking for the club.

John highlighted field trips as being an important and enjoyable part of the club's activities, and encouraged members to participate and perhaps help to organise some in the future. He reported that the club's promotional leaflet had proved to be successful in attracting new members and while these leaflets had been distributed by the local Tourist Information Centres, since the reorganisation of Visit Scotland, they no longer undertake this. It would be helpful if members would distribute copies locally to libraries, shop windows and local events etc. David Wood holds the stock.

6. Treasurer's Report: Bob Furness reported that the Statement of Accounts for the year 16th April 2004 to 15th April 2005 had been published in the *Eider*. The ABC had a surplus of £5,664 in the financial year 2004-05, plus £6,369.65 brought forward from the previous year. The Club's assets at the end of the year stood at £12,033.75. A large amount of this money had been received from SNH towards the production of the *Birds of Argyll* and there would be considerable expenditure on this throughout this year. Also having an impact on the accounts was the fact that we did not produce an *Argyll Bird Report* in the last financial year. Therefore this expenditure, of approximately £1,500, could be expected in the current financial year. In view of the healthy state of the club's bank balance,

Bob recommended there should be no increase to the current subscription rate at present. The Statement of Accounts was proposed by Paul Daw, seconded by David Merrie and approved. Bob was thanked for all his work.

7. Membership Secretary's Report: In the absence of Sue Furness, Bob Furness reported that membership had increased. He considered the club to have over 300 members, as most of the approximately 200 subscriptions were family ones. Sue and he were experiencing some difficulty handling the membership database and if any members did not receive the *Eider*, Bob asked that they contact him.

8. Field Trips:

13th November, 2005: Crinan Moss to Danna Island-Organiser David Merrie.

Trips planned for 2006 (Dates to be finalised).

April: Sound of Gigha, organiser Paul Daw.

May: Coll. Simon Wellock, RSPB Officer, will help to organise.

May: Garvellachs, organiser David Merrie
Sanda Island, organiser Nigel Scriven

Possible member's cruise off the Western Isles on MV Chalice (Website mvchalice.com)

It was suggested that a survey should be run in the *Eider* to ascertain which day of the week members would like to go on field trips, as well as where they would like to go.

9. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members: The following existing Office Bearers and Committee Members were elected:

Chairman: David Wood, proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by Paul Daw.

Secretary: Katie Pendreigh, proposed by John Anderson, seconded by David Wood.

Other Committee Members: Nigel Scriven (Vice-Chairman), Bob Furness (Treasurer), Richard Allan (BTO representative), Roger Broad, Tom Callan, Paul Daw (Argyll Bird Recorder), Mike Gear, Steve Petty (Editor of the *Eider*) were proposed by Mike Walls, seconded by Ian Hopkins.

New Committee Members: Ian Hopkins, proposed by John Anderson, seconded by Tom Callan. Danielle Clark, proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by Paul Daw.

10. AOB:

Diver Rafts: David Merrie reported having recently met with the Manager of Forestry for Argyll and informed members of their agreement to seek assistance with the monitoring of diver rafts between Oban and Kintyre (over 30 rafts). David invited members to contact him if they were interested.

Scottish Ornithological Club: David Merrie also reported on the departure of the of the SOC's Centre Manager, Bill Gardner, who will be an enormous loss. The SOC's President will convene an extraordinary meeting of their Management Committee on 10th November, 2005 to which David and two others have been invited.

Microphone System: Peter Staley requested that the club should purchase a small audio microphone system in view of the increasing numbers attending meetings, to ensure those at the back could hear all speakers. It was also agreed that the Committee should discuss the logistics of future meetings and venues.

There being no other competent business, the Chairman was thanked for all his hard work, which was raising the profile of the Club and Bob Furness for organising an excellent meeting.

Katie Pendreigh, 16 November 2005

Agenda for the 21st Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club

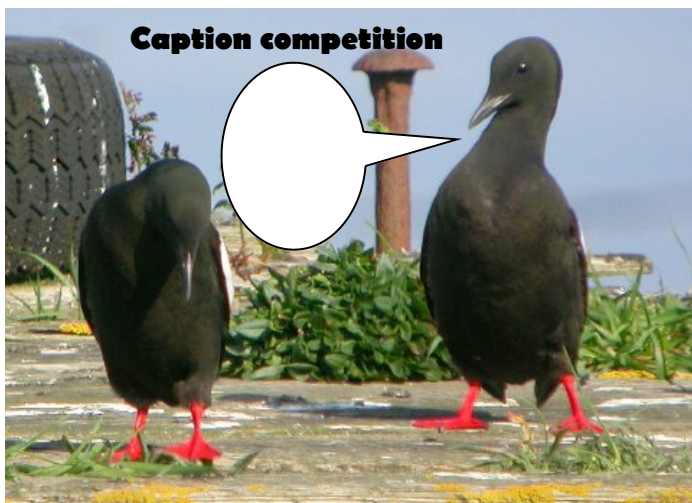
The AGM will be held at 13.40 hrs on Saturday 4th November 2006 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead (see programme for the Autumn Meeting programme on page 17)

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2005 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising not covered in following items
4. Chairman's Report
5. Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Membership Secretary's Report
8. Future field trips
9. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members. A maximum of 12 can be elected and nominations are invited (current officials are listed on the back page)
10. AOCB (please notify the Chairman before the meeting)

Katie Pendreigh, Secretary, 12th June 2006

Articles for the next issue of *The Eider* should with the Editor before the 25th November 2006 (see the box opposite for more information)



Can you provide a suitable (and printable!) caption for this photo of displaying Tysties? It was taken by Tom Callan at Otter Ferry this spring. The best reply will appear in the next *Eider*. Any suitable photos for future issues would be most welcome! Editor

Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2005/2006)

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

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), Danielle Clark-De Bisschop (Colintraive), Paul Daw (Minard), Mike Gear (Appin), Ian Hopkins (Bute) and Steve Petty (Tighnabruaich)

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 page 2)

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



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 during the first week in March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor before the 25th 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 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 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 the box opposite).