

RECENT REPORTS June – July 2011 from Paul Daw

RARITIES.

EUROPEAN BEE-EATER: Two observers very familiar with this species, independently heard a Bee-eater calling on Mull. It was flying fairly high over Duart Castle, Mull, heading northwards, on 14 June *ca* 08.30 (Su & Luke Gough).

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW. One was reported at Ballygown, Mull on 5 July (Chris Smith). There have been unconfirmed reports of this species before in Argyll but if this sighting, of a bird which was seen well, is accepted it will be a new species for the Argyll list.

WILDFOWL (and GAMEBIRDS):

Whooper Swan. One was at the north end of Loch Frisa, Mull on 5 June (Anand Prasad) and a single was at various locations on Islay in June (per Ian Brooke)..

Greylag Goose. A total of 380 were at Nave Island, Islay on 23 July (Bob Davidson).

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

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

Shoveler. One in eclipse was at Tayinloan on 29 July (Katie Pendreigh).

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

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

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

Common Scoter. The first returning bird at West Coast Salmon, Kintyre was seen on 22 July and by 27 July, 30 were counted there (Katie Pendreigh).

Velvet Scoter. A single bird was at West Coast Salmon, Kintyre was on 22 July (Katie Pendreigh).

Red-breasted Merganser. Females with a broods of 4 and 7 were still present at Otter Ferry on 11 July (Tom Callan).

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

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

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

Red-throated Diver. A female with a very late chick, hatched on 27 July, was still present at Loch Melldalloch, Cowal on 31 July (Tom Callan). Four were seen near the mouth of West Loch Tarbert during the ABC Field Trip on 30 July (Malcolm Chattwood).

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

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

Manx Shearwater. A total of 470 flying S in 3 hrs at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 17th was the best southerly movement of July there (Eddie Maguire).

European Storm-petrel. Twelve flew south past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 19 June (Eddie Maguire) and one was in Gunna Sound on 5 July (John Bowler). On 19 July a total of 62 flew S over a 5hr period at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (following NW 4 wind for several day) (Eddie Maguire).

RAPTORS, RAILS etc.:

White-tailed Eagle. An adult was reported from Traigh Bhi, Tiree on 12 July (John Bowler) and one was reported in the N of Islay on 15 June (Peter Roberts).

Hen Harrier. A nest with recently fledged young was found E of Loch Frisa, Mull on 18 July (Anand Prasad). A pair of Hen Harriers were hunting over the field opposite Spion Kop, Kintyre on 31 July. The lucky observers,

Valerie Wells and David Bridge, watched the male hunting just outside of their garden and saw him catch a vole and devour it.



Hen Harrier- Colonsay © Jim Dickson

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

Osprey. One was seen around Loch Gruinart, Islay from mid-June to early July (per Ian Brooke).

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

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

Water Rail. Five were heard calling at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve early on 24 June (James How).

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

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

WADERS:

Red Knot. Three late birds were at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 1 June and 10 at Hough Bay on 15 June (John Bowler). First 'returning' birds at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory were 4 adults flying S on 7 July (Eddie Maguire).

Sanderling. Returning migrants included 80 at Gott Bay, Tiree on 27 July and 135 there including two leg-flagged birds, on 29 July (John Bowler). Three were on the beach at Ardalanish, Mull on 20 July (Anand Prasad).

Little Stint. An adult bird was with Dunlin at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 9 and 10 June (Keith Gillon per John Bowler).

Dunlin. A flock of ca60 flew N past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 9 June (Eddie Maguire).

Ruff. One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 29 July (Toby Green per John Bowler).

Black-tailed Godwit. An adult was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 13 and 29 July with 12 at Whitehouse on 16 July (John Bowler). A total of 81 were at Gartnatra, Islay on 7 July (Stephen Welch).

Bar-tailed Godwit. One flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 1 June (Eddie Maguire) and a first summer bird was at Traigh Ghrianal, Tiree on 18 June (John Bowler). A total of 187 were counted at Gartnatra, Islay on 7 July (per Ian Brooke).

Whimbrel. Two were at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory early on the morning of 7 June and one with a damaged leg was found nearby on 16 June (Eddie Maguire), 16 were at Loch Gruinart on 13 June (per Ian Brooke) and one or two birds were at various sites on Tiree during June and July (John Bowler).

Greenshank. Singles seen at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 7, 13 and 26 June were unusual for the time of year (Eddie Maguire). Two migrants flew SW at Auchalick Bay, Loch Fyne, Cowal on 26 June (David Warden) and singles were at Tayinloan, Kintyre on 16, 17 and 29 July (Katie Pendreigh).

Common Sandpiper. Numbers at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree peaked at 10 on 29 July with smaller numbers elsewhere on the island (John Bowler).



Common Sandpiper

Turnstone. One was at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 7 June (Eddie Maguire). At least 27 were at Killail, Otter Ferry on 31 July (Tom Callan)

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

Arctic Skua. At least two dark morph birds were at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory from late May until 4 June and one flew N on 18 June. Two dark morph birds were harassing Kittiwakes in the Sound of Sanda on 15 June and one was at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 25 July (Eddie Maguire). Two dark morph birds were harrying terns off SW tip of Lismore on 26 June (John Bowler).

Great Skua. A pair were holding territory at a site on Tiree during June/July (John Bowler). One was at Eilean Beag, Islay on 23 July (Bob Davidson). One flew NE into Machrihanish Bay, Kintyre on 2 July and one flew S on 4 July (Eddie Maguire).

Mediterranean Gull. An adult was showing well at Ardrishaig, Mid-Argyll from 16 July onwards (Bill Allan, David Jardine, Jim Dickson).



Mediterranean Gull (at back) © Bill Allan

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

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

Little Tern. At least 57 pairs on Tiree fledged more than 45 young (John Bowler).

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

Arctic Tern. Tiree had a total of ca286 AONs at 13 sites in June – with many small chicks at the end of June. It was a very mixed breeding year with some colonies failing and others producing dozens of fledged young from mid July (John Bowler). Twenty pairs were counted along The Big Strand, Islay on 23 June (Peter Roberts) and two were at Tayinloan on 7 and 10 July (Katie Pendreigh). Sixteen pairs were breeding at Big Scone Island, Machrihanish in June but all apparently failed and the colony was deserted by 12 July. A first summer bird was present there on 7 – 8 July (Eddie Maguire).

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

Kittiwake. Numbers were down again at Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree, with just 205 AON there on 21 June, although with many birds on eggs (John Bowler).

DOVES, OWLS, WOODPECKERS etc.:

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

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

Common Swift. Three were over Ardminish Bay, Gigha, Kintyre on 3 June (Malcolm Chattwood) and one flew high over Dalmally, Mid-Argyll on 14 June (Paul Daw). Two flew N at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 22 June. Eddie Maguire reports that “poor weather (high winds, rain and low temperatures during mid-late May), and perhaps a lack of flying insects, appears to have discouraged birds from staying/breeding in Campbeltown. The best count over Burnside Square was only 9 birds on 21 June. However numbers picked up in July with 50 over Campbeltown on 14th and 60 or more on 29th (Derrick Goode)”. Eight were over Crinan Harbour, Mid-Argyll on 5 July (Mid-Argyll). One was seen over Carnan Mot, Tiree on 2 July (John Bowler) and 4 were over Gartbreck, Islay on 4 July (Bob Davidson).

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

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



"Mull" Roller

Photo © Bob McGowan

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

PASSERINES:

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

Barn Swallow. Breeding success of first broods appears to have been very low in some areas of South Kintyre, apparently because of a lack of flying insects. At Knockrioch Farm, The Laggan ca 6 pairs failed at

chick stage and an observant farmer commented that, *“unusually, no hordes of flies were noted around his cattle”* (Donald Brown per Eddie Maguire).

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

Red-rumped Swallow. One was reported at Ballygown, Mull on 5 July (Chris Smith). There have been unconfirmed reports of this species before in Argyll but if this sighting, of a bird which was seen well, is accepted it will be a new species for the Argyll list.

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

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

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

Whinchat. A pair at Haunn, Mull had young on 14 July (Anand Prasad) and a recently fledged young was at Carnduncan, Islay on 17 July (Peter Jackson).

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



Juvenile Common Stonechat © Jim Dickson

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

Grasshopper Warbler. Up to 11 birds reeling on and off on Tiree during June was a record total for the island (John Bowler).

Sedge Warbler. Good numbers at Keillbeg, Loch na Cille, Mid-Argyll on 25 July included several juveniles (Tom Callan) and a juvenile was in the garden at Tayinloan on 27 July (Katie Pendreigh).

Willow Warbler.



Willow Warbler family – Cairnbaan 11 July © Jim Dickson

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

Spotted Flycatcher. Good numbers reported in many parts of Argyll this summer including 8 (adults feeding juvs.) at Corran, Kintyre (Malcolm Chattwood).

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

Magpie. One was present on the outskirts of Campbeltown (Meadows Avenue area) throughout June and July (Margaret McCallum *et al* per Eddie Maguire) and one was seen at various locations on Islay throughout June (per Ian Brooke).

Eurasian Jay. One was seen at Langamull (near Calgary), Mull on 19 June: always a scarce species on the island (Anand Prasad).

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

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

Siskin. Reports of a good breeding season (despite the weather!) in Argyll this summer and 15 were in a garden at West Tarbert, Kintyre on 26 June (Barbara McMillan).

Goldfinch. Eddie Maguire has just heard that a Goldfinch found at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 15 April 2011 had been ringed as an adult at Thorpe Marsh, Doncaster, South Yorkshire on 11 December 2010.

Twite. Fifteen were seen at Ardnave, Islay on 23 July (Bob Davidson) and at least 23 were at Haunn, Mull on 30 July (Anand Prasad).

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

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

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

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

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

Paul Daw:

13 August 2011.

RECENT REPORTS mid-MAY to mid-JUNE 2011 from Paul Daw

Following a 'lull' in postings of recent Argyll bird sightings on the website due to changes in the website hosting arrangements we are now attempting to keep this feature up-to-date.

All bird sightings (not just rarities) in the Argyll recording area (see Bird Watching in Argyll tab on this website) are welcome. The sooner after the birds are seen the better. We are keen to include photographs. Please confirm that you are happy for any you send to appear on the ABC website. We will always

acknowledge their source. Following the unseasonal severe gale on 23 May an impressive variety of rare and scarce seabirds not usually seen at this time of the year appeared at some coastal locations.

NB. The great majority of Islay records were extracted from Ian Brooke's blog thanks to sterling work by Tom Callan.

WILDFOWL (and GAMEBIRDS):

Whooper Swan. An adult female with the Darvic ring "BDC" present in Campbeltown Loch from mid-April to late May had been ringed at WWT centre Martin Mere, Lancashire on 10 Feb 2011 (Eddie Maguire).

Greater Canada Goose. A pair were on a nest at Loch Melldalloch, Cowal on 18 May (Tom Callan). Their range in Argyll still seems to be increasing year by year.

Snow Goose. Two were reported at Treshnish, Mull on 11 May. The feral flock that breeds on Coll originated from birds that escaped from a wildfowl collection at Treshnish Point prior to 1970 but none have been reported in the area for many years. These recent birds may well also have been escapes (Anand Prasad).

Pale-bellied Brent Goose. Four were at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 22 May (Simon Lawrence).

Common Shelduck. First young on Campbeltown Loch reported at 'Stinky Hole' on 26 May (Eddie Maguire) and a pair with a brood of 6 were at The Ring Stone, Tiree on 28 May (John Bowler). Sixty were counted at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 13 June (Michal Sur).

Garganey. One was reported at Loch Gruinart, Islay 16-24 May (James How)

Common Scoter. Five flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 12 May (Eddie Maguire).

Red-legged Partridge. Two were seen at Bridgend, Islay on 9 June (Pia Roberts).

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

Red-throated Diver. A pair were in Calgary Bay, Mull on 24 May (Anand Prasad). Two flew over Ardrishaig Harbour calling on 15 June (Malcolm Chattwood) and four were seen flying over Ashens (near Tarbert), Mid-Argyll calling on 20 June (Paul Daw).

Great Northern Diver. Nine were at Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree on 30 May (John Bowler).

European Storm-petrel. Following the severe gale on 23 May one was seen close inshore at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 May (Eddie Maguire).

Northern Gannet. Following the severe gale on 23 May at least 5 were reported 'ashore' in Kintyre, including birds at Rhunahaorine Point, Glenbarr, Westport and Machrihanish Dunes golf club. An adult was found dead at around 440m, just below the summit of Beinn an Tuirc, Carradale on 25 May (Eddie Maguire).

Great Cormorant. Recently fledged young were seen on Glas Eilein (Loch Fyne) on 11 June and the colony here appeared to have increased in size since last year (Tom Callan).

Great White Egret. An adult in breeding plumage was unexpectedly found at Inveraray, Mid-Argyll on the morning of 21 May standing on the shore opposite war memorial (Paul Daw). Sadly it didn't stay there for long although there was a report of a "large white egret the size of a heron" near Otter Ferry, Cowal on the evening of 23 May (per Tom Callan).

RAPTORS, RAILS etc.:

White-tailed Eagle. One was seen over the Garvellachs on 11 June being mobbed by Great Black-backed Gulls so maybe nesting nearby (Ian Frances per Andy Robinson).

Hen Harrier. A pair were seen from the pub at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 2 June, circling over a nearby hill top (Tom Callan), a male flew through a garden at Port Charlotte, Islay on 9 June (Bob Davidson) and a male was hunting over a field behind the house at Tullochgorm (Minard) on 12 June (Paul Daw).

Osprey. Singles were reported on Islay at Port Charlotte on 27 May (Bob Davidson) and at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve on 14 June (per Ian Brooke), one flew over Oude Dam Loch (nr Kilmelford), Mid-Argyll on 31 May (Bill Allan) and one was seen taking a fish at Lochdon, Mull on 12 June. Perhaps surprisingly it's reported that only a couple of the Osprey nests around Loch Awe were blown out by the gale on 23 May and the rest seem to have survived OK (John Taylor).

Common Kestrel. Three hovering over Powder Dam, Cowal on 27 May were presumed to include a juv. and one near Otter Ferry on 29 June was carrying food for young (Tom Callan).

Merlin. A female was seen at Tayinloan, Kintyre on 19 May (Katie Pendreigh).

Peregrine Falcon. A male Peregrine was at the Tobermory church tower on Mull off and on for at least 45 minutes on 3 May. Unnoticed a few feet above the heads of some pedestrians it dived on a pigeon and nearly caught it (Anand Prasad).

Spotted Crake. One was recorded calling near Ardnave, Islay on 3 June (Michal Sur).

Corn Crake. Two singing birds were recorded on Eileach an Naoimh (Garvellachs) on 11 June (Ian Frances per Andy Robinson) and one was heard calling near Feochaig, S Kintyre on 15 June (per John Taylor).

WADERS:

Ringed Plover. A survey of The Reef, Tiree in May found 46 pairs (John Bowler).

Northern Lapwing. A survey of The Reef, Tiree in May found 264 pairs, slightly down on previous totals (John Bowler).

Sanderling. A group of 12 were at Tayinloan, Kintyre on 19 May (Katie Pendreigh) and a flock of 30 flew S past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 26 May (Eddie Maguire). There were still some 300 around West Tiree on 30 May including 120 at Hough Bay, but only ca 50 birds on 31 May. Many birds were in full summer plumage. A total of some 21 different leg-flagged/colour-ringed individuals recorded included one that had been ringed in Poland in September 2009, as well as one ringed in Ghana, 3 in Portugal and 16 in Iceland, whilst of the Icelandic-ringed birds 2 had wintered on Tiree, one in Norfolk, 2 in Ireland, 4 in France and 3 in Spain. A leucistic bird at Traigh Bhagh on 26 May had all white flight feathers (John Bowler).

Little Stint. An adult was found at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 9 June (Keith Gillon/John Bowler).

Purple Sandpiper. Two flying S during a WSW gale on 23rd were the only birds logged at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory all month (Eddie Maguire).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper. One was photographed at Fidden, Mull on 27 May (Brian Rains).

Black-tailed Godwit. A group of 13 were still at Loch Gruinart on 20 May (Michal Sur)

Whimbrel. Late migrants included: 2 on 26 May, 3 on 29 May and 4 on 31 May at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (Eddie Maguire), 2-4 at Langamull, Mull on 17 May (Anand Prasad) and, on Tiree, 2 at Balephetrish Bay on 24 May, one at Loch Charastoin 24 May, 2 at Hough machair on 30 May and 2 at West Hynish on 6 June (John Bowler).

Greenshank. Two were at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 8 June (James How) and one was at the Add Estuary on 16 June (Jim Dickson).

Turnstone. Two adults, possibly moulting out of breeding plumage and one immature seen at Otter Ferry on 14 June were the first there since 25 May (Tom Callan).



Turnstones © Tom Callan

Red-necked Phalarope. On 23 May a female flew in and landed near the Sabine's Gull at Killiechronan (Loch na Keal), Mull (per Alan Spellman).

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

Pomarine Skua. Two pale adults flying S on 18 May and one on 22 May were unusual but were eclipsed by the total of 32 seen in 5 hrs on 24 May following the gale the previous day.

Arctic Skua. Passage at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory was good on the morning of 20 May with a total of 11 flying S in 4hrs (total included 8 dark morph adults and 3 pale morph adults). In addition, 4 dark morph adults flew S on 22 May, 2 dark morph were present all morning on 23 May and 6 dark morph birds flew S in 5hrs during a NW7 gale on 24 May (Eddie Maguire). One was found in the middle of the Add Estuary at 07.30 on 24 May (Jim Dickson).

Long-tailed Skua. Four adults flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory 24 May following the gale. A rare spring appearance here (Eddie Maguire).

Great Skua. Following the gale on 23 May a total of 6 flew S at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory in 5hrs on 24 May. Two singles birds flew S on 28 May (Eddie Maguire). One was at Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree on 30 May but none had appeared at potential breeding sites (John Bowler).

Sabine's Gull. Associated with the severe gale on 23 May there was an unprecedented flurry of spring records. One was in Calgary Bay, Mull with another on the beach there on the beach there on 23 May. One was still on the beach on 24 May but left after being surrounded by visitors (Anand Prasad). An adult photographed (below) at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory at 13:00hrs on 24 May following the gale (Eddie Maguire). On 23 May a splendid adult bird brought in by the gales was found feeding close inshore with Arctic Terns at Sandaig at 20.00hrs by Christian de Zegher. It was still there in the gloom at 21.00hrs (Christian de Zegher/John Bowler) and another was reported, also on 23 May, at Loch na Keal, Mull (near Killiechronan) (per Alan Spellman). There was also records of one on Coll on 25 May (Simon Wellock) and one seen 'at sea' off Mull on 17 May (Marcus Conway).



Sabine's Gull – Machrihanish Seabird Observatory 24 May 2011 © Eddie Maguire

Summary: At least 3, possibly 4 birds on Mull, one at Machrihanish, one on Tiree and one on Coll. So at least six Sabine's Gulls in all – the first spring records for Argyll.

Glaucous Gull. Two first-winter birds on 17 May at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory were unusual for the time of year (Eddie Maguire).

Sandwich Tern. An obvious influx at Machrihanish on 30 May, with an estimated 55 birds by Big Scone Island, had increased to 67 on 31 May (Eddie Maguire). One was at Gott Bay, Tiree on 16 May (John Bowler), one was at Port Charlotte, Islay on 30 May (per Ian Brooke), 3 were at Killeen (near Tayinloan) on 1 June (Katie Pendreigh), 2 were at Ardminish Bay, Gigha on 3 June (Malcolm Chattwood) and one was photographed (below) at Hynish, Tiree on 17 June (Martin Taunton).



Sandwich Tern – Hynish, Tiree 17 June 2011 © Martin Taunton

Arctic Tern. A total of 25 arrived at the Big Scone colony at Machrihanish on 17 May and at least 30 birds have settled at the colony (Eddie Maguire). A total of 35 were counted at Nave Island, Islay on 30 May (Michal Sur) and 150 were feeding off the mouth of Balephetrish Bay, Tiree on 14 May (John Bowler).

Common Tern. A total of 25 were foraging off Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 24 May and at least 10 birds have settled at the Big Scone colony.

Black Guillemot. An impressive total of 59 were counted from Port Askaig to Smaull, Islay on 7 June (per Ian Brooke).

Puffin. One flew N past Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 18 May (Eddie Maguire).

DOVES, OWLS, WOODPECKERS etc.:

Tawny Owl. The first chick out of the nest box in the garden at Otter Ferry (below) was noted on 26 May and by 16 June all three nestlings were begging in a 300m E of nest site (Tom Callan).



Tawny Owl chick – Otter Ferry 26 May 2011 ©Tom Callan

Long-eared Owl. One was reported on Lismore on 17 May (Marina Curran-Colthart (LBAP officer per Andy Robinson).

Short-eared Owl. One was hunting over Moine Mhor, Mid-Argyll at dusk on 14 June (Malcolm Chattwood).

Common Swift. The extremely windy conditions later in the month seem to have discouraged birds in the Campbeltown area. Unusually, none were noted over Burnside Square during the last week of May (Derek Goode et al). The first (3) at Bridgend (nr. Lochgilphead) were not seen until 31 May (Malcolm Chattwood). Away from known breeding areas birds were reported at Ardminish Bay, Gigha on 3 June (Malcolm Chattwood), Sanaigmore, Islay on 12 June (Peter Roberts) and Dalmally, Mid-Argyll on 14 June (Paul Daw). **European Roller.** One was found on telephone wires ca2.5 miles along Glen Aros road from junction with A849 by John Bannen on 16 June. It was seen later in day and photographed (below) by Pam Brown. This is the first record in Argyll since one on Tiree in May 1992 but not the first for Mull. One was shot at Achaforse High Wood on 10 September 1927 – they made sure of their rarities in those days!



European Roller. Glen Aros, Mull 16 June 2011 ©Pam Brown

PASSERINES:

Sand Martin. A large gathering of c. 250 was feeding low over the strand at Machrihanish Bay, Kintyre on 15 May (Eddie Maguire).

House Martin. Several people have remarked on their late arrival or in some cases, non-appearance. They were finally starting nest building at Treshnish, Mull on 31 May (Anand Prasad).

Barn Swallow. On 14 June at least 6 pairs were nesting on the walls of Kilchurn Castle, Mid-Argyll (Paul Daw) and at least 4 pairs at Otter Ferry where a big reduction in numbers locally since mid-May was noted (Tom Callan).

Tree Pipit. One singing at Carnan Mor on 8 June was an unusual visitor for Tiree (John Bowler).

Rock Pipit. A detailed description has been provided by a visitor, David Hatfield, of a Rock Pipit seen near Langanmull, Mull that appeared to match the plumage of the Scandinavian race *Anthus petrosus littoralis*. If accepted this would be the first Argyll record of this race.

Common Redstart. A beautiful male was photographed (below) near Bellanoch, Mid-Argyll on 12 June (Bill Alexander) and an alarming pair at Ashens (near Tarbert) on 20 June presumably had young nearby (Paul Daw).



Common Redstart. Bellanoch, Mid-Argyll 12 June 2011 ©Bill Alexander.

Common Stonechat. Following the significant reduction in numbers noted following the harsh winter it's good to report adults with young at: Keills (loch Sween) on 17 May (Andy Robinson), Bunnahabhainn, Islay on 20 May (Jon Shutes), Inver Cottage, Jura and Beinn na Doire, Jura on 9 June (Paul Daw) and Ardnave, Islay on 10 June (Michal Sur).

Sedge Warbler. Large numbers of singing males all over Tiree from second week of May including one singing at Ceann a' Mhara and 8 males singing at The Reef on 27 May (John Bowler).

Reed Warbler. One that was actively singing in reeds was seen well at Ard Imersay (nr Ardbeg) Islay on 2 June (Bob Davidson). Still only a rare passage migrant in Argyll.

Common Chiffchaff. Singing birds seem to have been more numerous and widespread this year. Two Chiffchaffs singing at different ends of Treshnish wood, Mull on 2 May were a potential new breeding species for this area. However they were not heard there after 14 May (Anand Prasad).

Pied Flycatcher. Only three have been reported so far this spring viz. a male by the visitor centre at Cruachan Power Station, Mid-Argyll on 26 May (Stan Laybourne per Angus Murray), a male at St Catherine's, Cowal on 5 June and a male at Loch Frisa, Mull on 12 June (per Alan Spellman).

Eurasian Nuthatch. The pair at Ardkinglas were still feeding young vigorously on 9 June (Glyn Toplis).

Lesser Grey Shrike. A description of the 'grey shrike' seen on Iona on 4 May has been submitted to BBRC as a Lesser Grey Shrike (Anthony & Alana Sharp).

Maggie. A single bird (or birds?) was/were reported from three sites in the N of Islay from 19 May to 14 June (per Ian Brooke).

Western Jackdaw. A pair of 1st year birds that had taken up residence at Ensay farm house, Mull in May were an unusual species for this area (Anand Prasad).

Rose-coloured Starling. One at Knockrome, Jura on 10 June was reported on BirdGuides but so far we have no further information on the observer etc. (per Jim Dickson)

Goldfinch. The first juvenile of the year was at the feeding station at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 27 May (Eddie Maguire).

Common Redpoll. One at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 19 May which appeared to be a Mealy-type was followed by 2 there on 30 May and two were at Gott on 13 June (John Bowler).

Common Crossbill. Still present in good numbers including 6 near Kilmory (Lochgilphead) on 19 May (Paul Daw) and 8 at Otter Ferry on 14 June (Tom Callan). A female type was seen briefly in the garden at Balephuill, Tiree on 12 June before heading off south (John Bowler).

Common Rosefinch. A male photographed on a bird feeder in a garden on Mull was present 22-23 May (Pam and Arthur Brown). An immature male was photographed (below) at Balephuill, Tiree on 9 June but was not seen subsequently (John Bowler).



Common Rosefinch. Balephuill, Tiree 9 June 2011 ©John Bowler

Bullfinch. Breeding records included a male feeding young at Treshnish, Mull on 19 May (Anand Prasad) and a pair with a brood of 4 at Loch Melldalloch, Cowal on 2 June (Tom Callan).

Paul Daw: 30 June 2011.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING: A bird was reported from Knockcrome, Jura 10 June (per Birdguides). A description will be required, can the observer please contact Jim Dickson with further details.

COMMON ROSEFINCH: In addition to the adult male reported from Pam & Arthur Brown's garden in Dervaig, Mull on 22-23 May there has been another report of a first-year male at Balephuill, Tiree on 9 June (John Bowler). There have now been sightings from Tiree in four of the last five years for this species. Both descriptions received for the ABRC.



Common Rosefinch Mull 22-23.5.11 © P & A Brown



Common Rosefinch Tiree 9.6.11 © J Bowler

REED WARBLER: One reported singing in a small reedbed near Ardbeg, Islay on 2 June (Bob Davison). Last Argyll record in 2004 on Tiree and last confirmed record on Islay was in 1981. Description submitted to the ABRC.

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



Sabine's Gull Tiree 23.5.11 © C Verstraete

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

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

RECENT REPORTS FEBRUARY-MAY 2011

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

RARITIES (see below for details).

Pied-billed Grebe on Mull 22 March and subsequently.



Pied-billed Grebe Salen, Mull 24.3.11 J Dickson

Great White Egret at Inveraray on 21 May.

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



Bonaparte's Gull Tiree 7.4.11 J Dickson

Buff-breasted Sandpiper on Mull 27 May.

Lesser Grey Shrike at Iona on 4 May.

WILDFOWL and GAMEBIRDS:

Whooper Swan. The WeBS count on Tiree found 168 on 7 February (including 120 at Loch a' Phuill) (John Bowler). A flock of 19 flew NW over Cairnbaan at 8pm on 6 March (Jim Dickson), 25 flew past Toward bay, Cowal on 13 March, 37 flew NW over Otter Ferry, Cowal also on 16 March (Tom Callan), flocks of 19 and 52

headed WNW over The Reef, Tiree on 23 March before the fog closed in (John Bowler) and 26 were on the mud at Loch Gilp on 18 April.

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

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

Barnacle Goose. Unusually, at least 255 were at Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) on 22 February, with 17

Greenland White-fronted Geese. All-island goose count on Tiree (14-15 March) found a high total of 4,190 Barnacle Geese (John Bowler).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Reeves Pheasant Achnabreck 21.4.11 © N Adcock

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

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

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

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

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

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

Red-necked Grebe. One was seen near Sgeirean a' Phortaire (Lagan Bay), Mull on 6 March (Bill Aspin).

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

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



Little Egret Islay 4.5.11 © A Robinson

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

RAPTORS, RAILS etc.:

Red Kite. The exceptional number of records in Argyll this winter continued.

A single first year bird was at Kiloran Dunes, Colonsay on 11 and 14 February (David Jardine), two were over Arinagour (one red tagged bird) on 17 March (Simon Wellock), two were on Colonsay on 21 March (one untagged, the other red 63 left & blue 63 right) (Jim Dickson).

There have been rumours of a pair nesting in the Loch Awe area but no hard evidence. It may only be a matter of time though?



Red Kite Colonsay 21.3.11 © J Dickson

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

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



Marsh Harrier Islay 3.5.11 © A Robinson

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

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

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

WADERS:

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

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



Dotterels Tiree 19.4.11 © J Bowler

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

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

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

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

Whimbrel. A flock of 56 were at Tayinloan on the evening of 6 May (Katie Pendreigh), 17 were at the head of Loch Gilp on 7 May (Bill Allan) and some 37 Whimbrel flew north over The Reef, Tiree on 17 May (John Bowler).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sabine's Gull. (see above)



Sabine's Gull MSBO 24.5.11 © E Maguire

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



Bonaparte's Gull Tiree 7.4.11 © J Dickson

Mediterranean Gull. Adults in winter plumage were reported at Loch Gilp on 27Feb (Jim Dickson) and Ardrishaig on 9 March (Andrew Stephenson) and near the mouth of West Loch Tarbert on 10 March (Marc Eden). A first-winter bird was offshore at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory on 29th April (Eddie Maguire).



Mediterranean Gull Loch Gilp 27.2.11 © J Dickson

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

Glaucous Gull. Two different second calendar year birds were seen on Tiree on 15 March – one at Barrapol and one at Sandaig. Two at West Hynish on 27 March were possibly the same birds (John Bowler). One was

first seen at the piers in Campbeltown on 22 March and another individual (first year) was on the Grammar School field in Campbeltown on 30 March. One was still present in town on 21 April (Neil Brown).



Glaucous Gull Campbeltown 1.4.11 © J Dickson

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

DOVES, OWLS, WOODPECKERS etc.:

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

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

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

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

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

PASSERINES:

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

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



Blue-headed Wagtail Tiree 5.5.11 © J Bowler

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

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

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

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

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

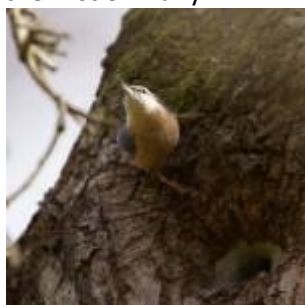
Grasshopper Warbler. One was seen well singing on fence wire at start of road to Crinan Ferry on 26 April. It showed heavy streaking on the throat that made it look as though it had a large round spot on throat with streaking on sides. Apparently this is not uncommon but one doesn't normally get a good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

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

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

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

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



Nuthatch Ardkinglass 18.4.11 © J Dickson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paul Daw

30 May 2011.