

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

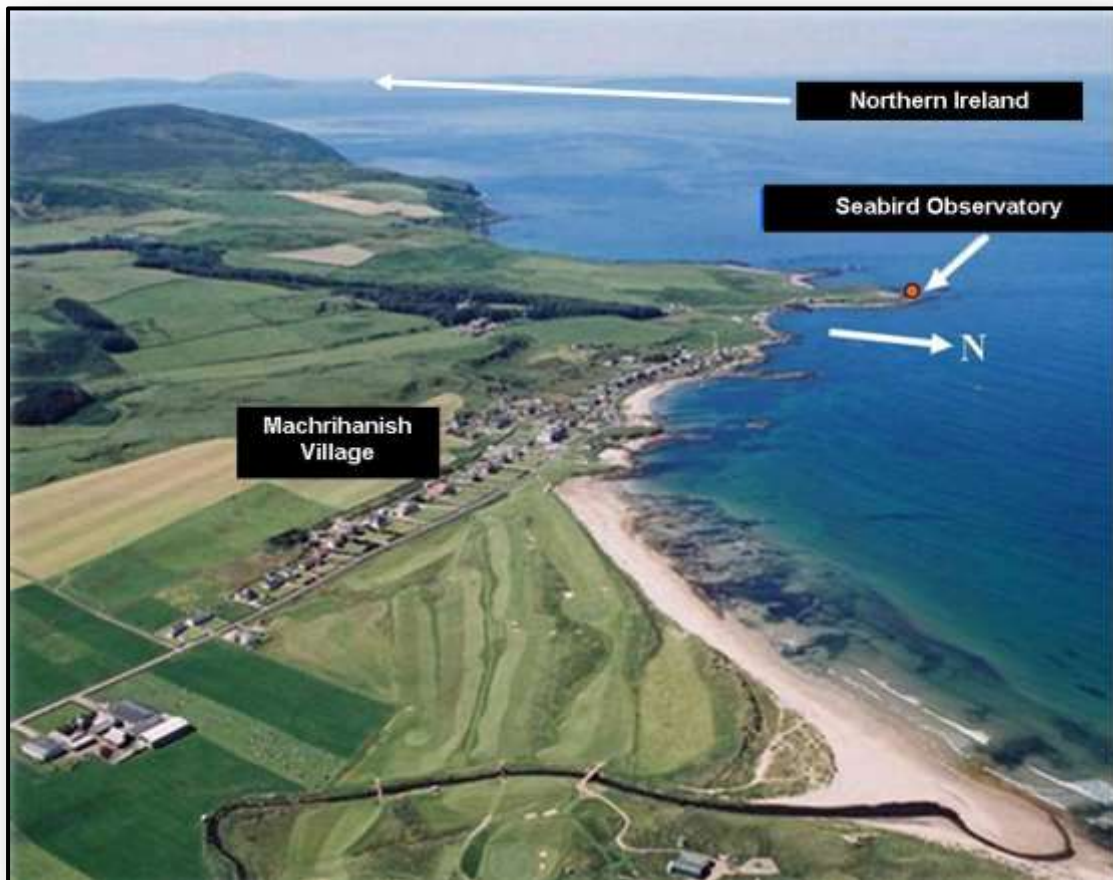


2016 Report

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (MSBO)
SW Kintyre – Argyll PA28 6PZ
Established September 1993

2016 Report
Compiled by Eddie Maguire

Unless stated photographs in this report are by the warden
Cover photos – **Dunlins / MSBO** and a juvenile **Northern Gannet**



The beautiful village of Machrihanish / Photo – Stuart Andrew

Contents...

Introduction and Highlights 2016...	4
Overland passage of Northern Gannets in south Argyll...	4
Unprecedented autumn passage of Curlew Sandpipers at Machrihanish...	5
North American duck off MSBO...	6
Monthly Reports...	6
Acknowledgements...	53
Movements of Goldfinch in Argyll 2009 – 2016...	54



Sub-adult Pomarine Skua 4th May



First-winter Iceland Gull 24th March

Introduction to 2016 Report...

The MSBO was manned daily 1st March – 31 October with casual observations later. The **2016 Report** portrays the year with a monthly summary of the main ornithological events accompanied by a selection of **83** photographs. Visit www.machrihanishbirdobservatory.org.uk

Highlights of the year...

Resolute daily observations ultimately produced records of scarce/unusual species and excellent totals of many regular passage visitors. Without doubt, the most extraordinary events of the year involved an 8km overland passage by almost three hundred adult **Northern Gannets** and an unprecedented passage of **Curlew Sandpipers**.

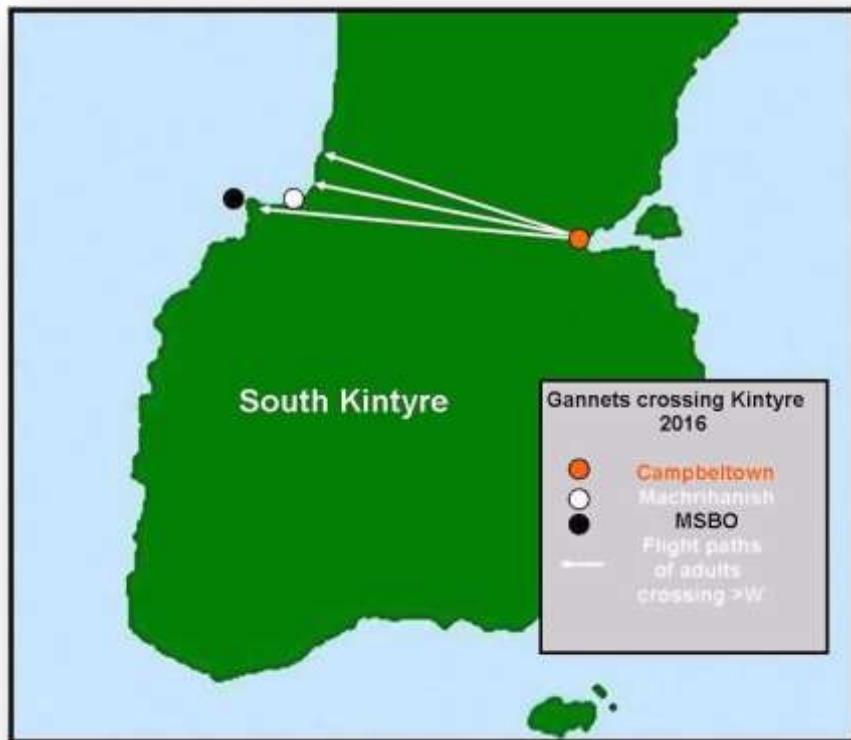
Summary of overland passage by Northern Gannets in south Argyll...

During August-October 2016, the MSBO warden arranged regular surveillance at Campbeltown harbour, S Kintyre, Argyll to determine the scale of overland passage by Northern Gannets *Morus bassanus*. Passage of small numbers crossing over from Campbeltown Loch (Clyde) to Machrihanish Bay (Atlantic) was already established (Maguire 2015), however, additional observations at Campbeltown harbour would clarify how often this occurred, and how many birds were involved.

During August to October a total of **286** adult Gannets crossed 8km overland from the head of Campbeltown Loch to Machrihanish Bay on 53 dates.

Incredibly, birds crossed Kintyre on all dates when observations were carried out in August (17 dates) and September (25 dates) but only on 11 / 31 dates of observation in October (see map below).

The full results of this coordinated surveillance are now the subject of a paper that will be published in the forthcoming **Argyll Bird Report** (Volume 27) in March 2017.



Unprecedented passage of Curlew Sandpipers at Machrihanish August 2016...

A remarkable passage of this species occurred at Machrihanish during the period 20th – 26th August 2016. Record numbers (mainly fly-by's) appeared during a fall of many other wader species forced down to sea level by bands of rain / poor visibility. The top day count of **80** including **72** that passed >S was described as one of the highest UK visible migration counts for this species (www.trektellen.org).

A summary of this passage reveals that a total of ca. **180** (mainly juveniles) were logged in the area during the week 20th (18) – 26th (4) with an outstanding Argyll record one-day total of **55** on 21st followed by an astonishing total of at least **80** birds on 22nd. Most were offshore on passage and many more must surely have occurred as observers at MSBO were, frustratingly, finding numerous flocks of small waders passing >S, all at sea level, but too far offshore to secure any confident identifications.



A rather smart-looking juvenile Curlew Sandpiper 20th

Remarkably the heavy passage of **Curlew Sandpipers** at Machrihanish coincided precisely with extraordinary numbers arriving at marshes in SE England as revealed by **Birdguides...**

An impressive fall occurred from 19th when an eastward-moving front collided with a south-easterly airflow across the North Sea.

*Big numbers began to drop in at east coast sites with counts into the thirties, forties and even fifties appearing at classic locations such as Cley and Titchwell marshes, Norfolk. It was Lincolnshire's Frampton Marsh, though, that wiped the floor, with a total of 143 on 21st rising to 243 on 22nd and an amazing 258 on 23rd (**Birdguides: Review of the Week 17th - 23rd August / Josh Jones**).*

North American duck off MSBO...

Bird of the year was a fly-by juvenile (female) **Surf Scoter** (*Melanitta perspicillata*) that passed >S on 27th October. A series of photographs taken in very poor light conditions provided all essential plumage details that confirmed the identification.

This is the 2nd MSBO record / 17th Argyll occurrence. The 1st MSBO record involved a first-winter male that was photographed passing >S off MSBO on 18th September 2011. The record was accepted by Argyll Bird Club Records Committee.



Record shot of the fly-by Surf Scoter (juvenile female) on 27th October

March Report

Highlights included a male **Velvet Scoter** that passed >S on 24th (a scarce passage visitor), a female **Long-tailed Duck** was spotted offshore on 13th and the peak count of **Common Eider** reached 40 on 16th.

The top count of **Great Northern Diver** was 24 on 22nd (flat calm sea).

A first-winter female **Merlin** on 13th was strictly in hunting mode and had a go at Starlings and a Pied Wagtail.

A regular flock of ca. 60 **Sanderlings** were thought to have wintered at Machrihanish Bay. **Purple Sandpipers** were often on view with a maximum count of 10 on 16th and the first migrant **Greenshank** appeared on 19th.

A first-winter **Iceland Gull** was nearby on 24th and 26th and the first **Sandwich Tern** of the year was on cue early afternoon on 31st.

An immaculate male **White Wagtail** on 15th was the first to arrive this year. However, on 16th a remarkable early spring total of at least 12 birds were present. This number is unprecedented here for mid March and is closer to a peak daily passage count in the area during mid-late April. The catalyst for this premature northward movement by this Continental species was undoubtedly an extensive high pressure system over the UK at this time. Only 2 were logged on 17th and further late month appearances included 2 on 24th and one on 30th.

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory Report 2016

The first **Twite** at the feeding station this year (2) arrived on 15th. One of these was an MSBO colour ringed bird (autumn 2014). A pair was trapped and colour ringed on 23rd. More arrived at the feeding station from 29th and 10/18 present on 30th were trapped / colour ringed. Males were constantly singing.



Male Velvet Scoter passing >S with Common Scoters on 24th



Purple Sandpiper on 28th

April Report



Red Knot on 25th



Whimbrel on 24th



Sandwich Tern on 15th

Counts of **Common Eider** included 46 on 5th (31 were adult drakes) and 67 birds on 23rd (49 were adult drakes). On 14th, a male **Hen Harrier** was hunting over Machrihanish Golf Course, (John Keith) and an **Osprey** and a pair of **Shovelers** passed >S. The wintering flock of 40-50 **Sanderlings** was present all month and **Purple Sandpipers** peaked at only 5 on 14th.

A drake **Tufted Duck** and a **Grey Plover** passed >S on 3rd, our second **Iceland Gull** of the year passed >S on 6th and pair of **Gadwall** arrived on 24th and stayed to 30th.

The first **Whimbrels** of the year (flock 12) passed >S on 17th and a peak of 40 was present on 23rd. A single **Red Knot** appeared on 25th.

Three **Bar-tailed Godwits** were on the shore on 18th and the leucistic **Herring Gull** that has been in the area for some time was seen on 30th and a **Little Tern** passed >S.

Small numbers of regular **Sandwich Terns** increased to 9 on 15th. Best counts later were 15 on 20th, 20 on 21st and 22 on 24th. Present daily to end of month.

Two **Northern Wheatears** arrived on 3rd (first local record this year). One was present on 5th then regular ones / twos from 13th.

A light passage of **Barn Swallows** occurred on 3rd with a total of 12 >N / 6hrs (first local record this year and a record day total for early April) then small numbers were daily from 10th. Ten **Sand Martins** were foraging over the beach on 4th (first local record this year) and a flock of 100+ were foraging over the beach / inshore at Machrihanish Bay on 17th.

White Wagtail numbers increased slowly as the month progressed with one on 3rd, 2 on 9th, one on 11th, 3 on 13th, one on 14th, 5 on 16th, 3 on 18th. The arrival of high pressure produced 18 passing >N on 20th then small numbers seen daily to 29th. Thirty + birds were present on 30th.



Sparrowhawk on 8th

April Records from around Kintyre

At Westport on 2nd the marsh was bustling with wetland species. The prominent species were 4 **Shovelers**, 7 **Little Grebes** and 6 **Moorhens**. A supporting cast included 18 **Greylag Geese**, 11 **Greater Canada Geese**, 140 **Teal**, 125 **Wigeon**, and 16 **Curlews**. Six pairs of **Lapwings** were displaying and at least four birds were incubating by 29th. A 10min watch at the marsh on 7th revealed that **Shovelers** had increased to 6 (3 pairs) and there appeared to have been a major decrease in numbers of **Little Grebes** (from 6 to 3) and **Moorhens** (from 7 to 1) in just 5 days. However, numbers of **Little Grebes** were higher by the end of the month. There is a lot of emergent vegetation at the marsh and this certainly hampers accuracy of counts of all waterfowl.

An **Osprey** was at Carradale Bay on 9th (Alasdair Paterson) and one at Loch Lussa on 30th (Robert Shaw). An adult **White-tailed Eagle** was at Bellochantuy on 8th (Davie Robertson / Michael Sim) and an adult was on Sanda Island on 9th (Mike Taylor). Still on Sanda, a total of 233 **Black Guillemots** were counted around the island on 21st (Rab Morton).

At Campbeltown 12 **Northern Wheatears** in one field by Anderson Park on 14th was unusual (Donald Brown / farmer spreading fertiliser).

A **Willow Warbler** at Barr Glen on 7th (Angus Murray / per Jim Dickson) was the first reported in Argyll this year. At Kilkivan Quarry, the largest **Jackdaw** colony in Kintyre, 400+ birds were present on 21st. At Campbeltown, there was an active **Raven** nest at Anderson Park all month and two **Magpies** were seen regularly in the vicinity of the Grammar School (John Martin et al). The only other record of this species involved a single bird on the track to Carradale Bay on 7th (James McKinven).

May Report

Common Shelducks had the advantage of an improved breeding season following low duckling productivity last season (only one small brood). So far we have 5 pairs with a total of **33** ducklings. Passage was noted on many dates. Small flocks were recorded regularly, many well offshore, and all were passing >N: the largest flock was 12 on 16th.

Common Eider ducklings (broods 2 and 3) finally appeared on 30th (7-10 days later than usual).

Scarce fly-by's at MSBO included an adult **White-tailed Eagle** on 8th, a **Grey Plover** on 10th, a **Black-tailed Godwit** and a **Green Sandpiper** on 9th, a sub-adult **Pomarine Skua** on 4th and the same first-winter **Glaucous Gull** on 1st and 22nd.

There was a fine spread of other migrants too including a drake **Gadwall** on 2nd, a pair of **Shoveler** on 25th, 7 **Red Knots** on 10th, 3 **Whimbrels** on 16th and 100+ **Dunlins** on 18th. On 21st, there were 80 **Sanderlings**, 70+ **Ruddy Turnstones**, 34 **Sandwich Terns** and 40 **White Wagtails**.

A vagrant **Black Kite** by Ballygroggan Farm, Machrihanish on 11th was a superb find by a very fortunate visitor (Aidan McCormack). The sighting was confirmed from a video clip (Jim Dickson / Argyll Recorder pers. comm.). This location is only 2km south of MSBO!

A male **Merlin** was seen briefly on 3rd.



A vagrant Black Kite by Machrihanish on 11th May / Photo by Aidan McCormack



Grey Plover on 10th



Pomarine Skua (sub-adult) on 4th / Photo Assistant Warden Iomhar McMillan



First-winter Glaucous Gull on 1st



Whimbrel on 10th



Ruddy Turnstone on 5th

Also in May, a flock of ca. 40 **Ringed Plovers** arrived on the point on 15th and were still present next day. These birds had much darker upperparts (chocolate brown) than 2 pairs on territory by MSBO and were likely from one of the northern populations.

A flock of 7 **Red Knots** passed >N on 10th and flocks of **Dunlins** were frequent with up to 100 on the shore at times. Birds were singing on many dates.

Sanderlings were present in Machrihanish Bay 16th (60) – 28th (10) with the best count there being 80 on 21st. Small numbers of **Ruddy Turnstones** were on the point early in the month. There was a good fall of birds on 21st when 70+ arrived just after an extremely heavy downpour accompanied by thunder / lightning.

May Records from around Kintyre

A fine-looking male **Garganey** was at Westport Marsh 3rd – 7th (Eddie Maguire / Iomhar McMillan / Angus Murray). However, it was not found during an hour of observation on 8th or later.

This is the 2nd Kintyre record.

*(In 1994 up to 3 **Garganey** appeared at Westport Marsh from 19th May. Breeding was confirmed on 24th June when a brood of 4 was seen. This was apparently only the third instance of proven successful breeding in Scotland - **Birds of Argyll** / ap Rheinallt et al 2007).*



The male Garganey on 4th flanked by Teal



The male Garganey with Teal and a Shoveler on 4th

Also at the marsh this month, a female **Shoveler** appeared with a brood of 8 ducklings on 13th and a **Moorhen** with a brood of at least 4 on 25th.

Little Grebes are highly likely breeding too. A **Coot** was found on 13th: the last record of this species breeding at this marsh – or anywhere else in Kintyre – was way back in 1994.

Emergent vegetation will very soon preclude further observation at this site.

At least 4 pairs of **Lapwings** were on eggs on 4th.

First-class finds elsewhere on the peninsula included a **Quail** seen / heard at The Laggan on 18th (Jim Dickson), a female **Marsh Harrier** by Tayinloan on 18th (Phil / Tammy Holgate), an **Iceland Gull** (age not stated) at Bellochantuy on 25th (Graeme Garner / per Argyll Bird Club) and an **Icterine Warbler** was reported at the Mull of Kintyre (per Argyll Bird Club).

A pair of **Hen Harriers** and 6 **Cuckoos** was at Lussa Loch on 25th (Martin / Andy Conway) and at least 6 **Cuckoos** were at Largiebaan on 22nd (Kevin Waite).

Five **Common Swifts** arrived over Campbeltown on 10th and **Magpies** at Southend included singles on 3rd (Grant Edmonson) and 9th with 2 there on 12th (Sandra McIntosh).



An incubating Lapwing by the track down to the marsh on 4th

June Report

As expected, late migrants proved largely disappointing for most of the month with the only notable exceptions being a single **Teal** and a **Tufted Duck** and several records of **Common Scoters** including a flock of 25 males.

An arrival of 30 **Common Shelduck** on 5th was puzzling. A newly fledged brood 4 appeared on 14th. The May / June number of broods recorded was **6** with a total of **37** ducklings (mean brood size = **6.1**).

The best ever year for **Shelduck** productivity at Machrihanish was **2010**. The May/June number of broods recorded was **8** with a total of **56** ducklings (mean brood size = **7**). A further crèche of 19 ducklings, just hatched, and not included in the **2010** mean brood size brought the total number of ducklings hatched in this area to **75** - a superb breeding performance possibly aided by a prolonged spell of very dry weather.



A ca. one week old Shelduckling on 18th

A male **Teal** passed >S on 9th and an eclipse adult male **Tufted Duck** appeared briefly on 10th. There was light mid-summer southerly passage of mainly adult male **Common Scoters** with a total of 32 birds logged between 16th (1) and 27th (6) with most (25) on 24th. Only 2 female occurred (27th).

Common Eider eclipse period commenced mid-month and last adult males (singles) seen in flight before complete flightless moult period was on 24th and finally 27th.

Newly hatched broods of this species appeared as follows: b/1 on 4th, b/5 and b/7 on 5th, b/6 on 13th, b/3 on 14th, b/4 on 15th, b/2 on 19th and b/2 on 26th.

The May/June number of **Eider** broods recorded was 10 with a total of **35** ducklings Mean brood size = **3.5**.

At least 2 **Whimbrels** were present on 4th and **Ruddy Turnstones** were frequent, with up to 6 in the area and surprisingly they were still roaming around the shore to 24th. At least one was still present on 28th – a superb June showing.



Part of the Common Scoter flock (adult males) on passage on 24th

Small numbers of **Sandwich Terns** were present daily: max count was 17 on 27th. Many, apparently adults, were hanging around the Arctic Tern colony.



Sandwich Tern with sand eel on 28th



A celebrity at MSBO – A mid-summer White Wagtail on 16th

June Records from around Kintyre

Dwelling house roof-nesting by **Herring Gulls** continues in Campbeltown. Broods of 3 were noted at 18 and 21 Calton Avenue, 67-69 Davaar Avenue and 11 Albyn Avenue. Broods were also seen / heard on rooftops at Longrow South, Argyll Street and Hall St.

The majority are nesting behind chimney breasts so difficult to determine just how many pairs are involved.



Herring Gulls on a Campbeltown rooftop – one of a brood of 3 at 21 Calton Avenue

July Records

The breeding success of **Common Eider** at Machrihanish positively improved this summer: the May/July number of broods recorded was **11** with a final total of **37** ducklings (mean brood size = **3.4**). The survival rate of ducklings appears to be excellent too with several large crèches, guarded by many adult females, apparent in the bay.

A flock of ca. 50 male **Common Scoters** passed >S on 4th. Ten passed >S (including 7 adult males) on 20th.

Surprisingly, a **Northern Gannet** in juvenile plumage >N on 19th. This distinctive age category has never been recorded off MSBO at this time of year.

The earliest juvenile seen here in autumn 2015 was on 24th September and in 2014 it was 26th September (expected dates).

In **The Birds of Scotland** Forrester et al (2007) state... '*First fledging on Ailsa Craig has exceptionally occurred on the last day of July... most fledge in September*'.

In view of the fact that the juvenile off MSBO on 19th July was flying N it has to be considered probable that it originated from one of the **Gannet** colonies south of MSBO. Breeding sites to the south include Scar Rocks (N entrance to Solway Firth), Irelands Eye (Dublin) and Grassholm (S Wales). Ailsa (Clyde), the nearest colony to MSBO (ca. 45km), is also a possibility.

Fly-by waders were a major feature late month. Thunderstorms / overnight rain on many dates before / after dawn during the period 19th – 29th brought many hundreds of early returning passage birds down to sea level.

Ringed Plovers passed >S almost daily with a total of 193 on 5 dates 19th – 24th and a top day count of 80 on 21st.

Dunlins were, as usual, the commonest fly-by species: a summary of passage reveals that a total of **806** were logged passing >S on 11/12 dates 19th-30th with a peak count of **200+** on 25th.

During the same period a total of some **400 Sanderlings** fled S on 5 dates 21st – 28th with a top count of **170+** on 25th.

There was a splendid passage of **Redshanks** from 2nd (5) with totals of 10 on 6th, 25 on 8th and 50+ on 9th. Small numbers passed >S most days up to 19th then 45 on 20th and 30 on 24th.

Two **Greenshanks** passed >S together on 23rd followed by 2 **Black-tailed Godwits** on 25th.

Whimbrels put in an above average early autumn showing with a total of 8 on 6 dates 7th – 23rd.

Five summering **Ruddy Turnstones** were frequent 1st – 18th. Returning birds appeared from 19th when at least 18 were on the shore then 40+ passed >S on 20th.

Best southerly passage counts later were 10 on 22nd and 22 on 24th.

A cracking male **Ruff** - almost still in full breeding-plumage - appeared for several hours on 19th. Most of his crowning glory had gone but he was still a pretty boy!



Adult Dunlins (60+) on passage >S on 25th



Ruff on 19th



Arctic Skua (dark phase adult) on 8th / Photo Assistant Warden Iomhar McMillan

Arctic Skuas (all dark adults) passed >S on 8th (2) and 13th (one). Strangely, these are only the second and third records of this species at MSBO this year. The best movement of **Black-legged Kittiwake** noted was only 90 passing >S / 1hr on 17th.



An adult Black-legged Kittiwake on 17th

Breeding **Sandwich Terns**? The earliest ever juvenile recorded here was found by the small Arctic Tern colony on 3rd - 4th. In view of this very early date and the presence of many apparent adults around the colony all spring / summer it seems likely that, *just maybe*, it was locally bred. At least 9 juveniles were present later but note that birds from colonies in nearby Co Antrim and Co Down are capable of rapid dispersal.



Juvenile Sandwich Tern on 26th

July Records from around Kintyre

Dwelling house roof-nesting by **Herring Gulls**.

At Campbeltown, three more half-grown broods were located: a b/1 at 15 Davaar Avenue, a b/3 was reported at 63 Crosshill Avenue (for the second year running / Alastair Mitchell pers. comm.) and a b/2 at 60 Longrow South (fledged on 23rd).

This brings the total of known roof-nests this year to 9 (See MSBO June Report).

A **Barn Owl** at Langa (Kilchenzie) was reported taking Swallow and Jackdaw fledglings (Rory Colville / per Alan & Jane Taylor).

A singing male **Common Rosefinch** was reported at Ballochgair (Peninver): on 11th (Bob Relph pers. comm.). The last Kintyre record of this very rare visitor was one photographed at MSBO in November 2014.

Broods of **Twite** were seen at Southend (b/4) on 19th, Mull of Kintyre (b/4) 24th and on Davaar Island 2 pairs, both with b/4, on 25th (all records Rab Morton).

August Report

A pair of **Gadwall** were foraging along the shoreline on 7th and a male **Greater Scaup** passed >S on 31st (a rare species at MSBO in August). Two female-type **Common Scoters** passed >S on 14th and 4 followed on 31st. The first male **Common Eiders** (2) seen in flight after eclipse / flightless moult period was on 30th.

Heavy passage of **Northern Gannets** occurred on two dates: on 11th, poor visibility promoted a narrow-front inshore passage with a total of **1,800** birds passing >S / 3hrs from 07:30hrs and another early juvenile was photographed. On 12th, similar weather persisted and a total of **2,208 Gannets** passed >S / 3hrs from 07:30hrs. A juvenile passed >S at MSBO on 28th.

Manx Shearwaters were present offshore daily, mainly in small numbers (<100). Top counts for this time of year were negligible with only ca. 200 on 7th and 360 passed >S / 3hrs on 11th.

A blustery NW wind on 8th brought 7 **Storm Petrels** (singles) passing >S within sight of the shore - the first record this year.

A total of 90**Shags** passed >N / 30mins on 1st.

A female **Sparrowhawk** was present briefly / photographed on 8th. This or others were noted on five dates later.



Sparrowhawk (female) in hunting mode on 8th

Southerly passage totals of **Oystercatcher** were rather low with only 12 flocks totalling 202 birds on 12 dates 10th-15th.

A total of 162 **Ringed Plovers** passed >S on 6 dates with a peak daily total of 50 (flock) on 20th.

A summary of **Red Knot** passage reveals that the first returning adult appeared on 2nd and a further 157 birds passed >S on 10 dates later including flocks of 65 on 22nd and 33 on 21st.

A total of 491 **Sanderlings** passed >S on 12 dates 1st -31st with peaks of 63 on 1st, 170 on 21st, 90 on 22nd and 55 on 25th.

Passage of **Curlew Sandpipers** was amazing. A total of at least **18** were logged on 20th including **14** that passed >S with other waders during the morning and four off passage by the old lifeboat station. On 21st, **39** passed >S with other waders and **16** were off-passage later (day total = **55**). On 22nd, **80** were logged including **72** passing >S with other waders throughout the day. Later there were 21 on 23rd, 14 on 24th, 3 on 25th and 4 on 26th.

A summary of this passage reveals that a total of around ca.**180** (mainly juveniles) were logged in the area on 7 dates 20th (18) – 26th (4) with an Argyll record one-day total of **55** on 21st followed by an astonishing total at least **80** birds on 22nd (Eddie Maguire / Iomhar McMillan / Miriam Lord et al).

The top day count of **72** that passed >S south on 22nd has been described as one of the highest UK visible migration counts for this species (www.trektellen.org).



Curlew Sandpipers (arrowed) with Dunlins off Machrihanish on 22nd

Southerly passage of **Dunlins** was excellent too with a total **900** passing >S on 12 dates 1st - 26th including notable day totals of **90** on 3rd, 44 on 8th, **400+** on 21st, 40 on 22nd, 51 on 23rd, 85 on 24th and 64 on 25th.

Four Icelandic **Black-tailed Godwits** arrived on 20th and singles passed >S on 23rd and 26th followed by 7 on 31st. Three **Bar-tailed Godwits** passed >S on 31st. A single **Whimbrel** was present 4th - 8th and birds passing >S later included 3 on 13th and singles on 18th and 20th.



This Whimbrel took advantage of a 5 day stay 4th – 8th



This adult Black-tailed Godwit was off-passage briefly on 20th

Around **543 Redshanks** passed >S on 8 dates 12th (65) – 27th (17). This included a grand day total of **290** on 20th with other respectable day totals of 60 on 21st and 40 on 24th. Two **Greenshanks** on passage >S on 18th paused briefly and were photographed. Another passed >S on 24th.



Greenshank on 18th



Greenshank on 18th

A very vocal **Green Sandpiper** came in off the sea on 23rd (Eddie Maguire / Iomhar McMillan) and reappeared briefly on 24th (Eddie Maguire / Miriam Lord). Southerly movements of **Common Sandpiper** occurred on 10 dates 1st (12) – 24th (3) with totals of 7 on 3rd including 3 together and 11 singles on 4th. None were logged 9th – 15th.

A mainly light southerly passage of **Ruddy Turnstones** was obvious almost daily with peak counts of 11 on 14th, **40** in off the sea on 20th then 15 were present on 24th with 12 on 25th and 10 on 31st.

A distant adult **Pomarine Skua** (photographed) passed >S on 31st and a pale adult **Arctic Skua** passed >S on 7th.

A juvenile **Little Gull** was located dip-feeding offshore on 12th and a juvenile **Mediterranean Gull** (photographed) arrived during an easterly f3 with continuous rain on 19th. It was last seen on 26th.

Two juvenile **Black-legged kittiwakes** appeared offshore on 7th. NW blustery conditions on 8th produced the first light inshore southerly passage of this species. Of 414 passing >S / 7hrs 165 of these (40%) were juveniles.

A pair of **Sandwich Terns** with a juvenile in attendance appeared on 7th. Four, including a juvenile, were sheltering from blustery conditions on 8th. Adults passing >S included 3 on 12th and 2 on 31st. Two adults were present 17th – 25th. A juvenile **Arctic Tern** was sheltering on 20th and a flock of ca. 50 **Common Terns** sheltered on 19th (continuous rain). At least 16 were juveniles.



Record shot of an adult Pomarine Skua passing >S on 31st



Juvenile > first-winter plumaged Mediterranean Gull on 26th



Juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake on 8th

A total of 22 adult **Black Guillemots** in breeding plumage (including 3 together) passed >S / 5hrs on 12th. This is the best passage seen off MSBO for many years.

White Wagtails were scarce at the beginning of the month then ones and twos were present daily from 13th. Later, the best counts included 8 on 20th, 14 on 18th, 20+ on 22nd and 10+ on 31st. **Grey Wagtails** were noted daily with a max of 7 on 24th.



Grey Wagtail on 24th

August Records from around Kintyre

A pair of **Mute Swan** with b/4 was reported at Bellochantuy on 23rd (Marjory Fraser). At Campbeltown, a flock of ca. 50 **Canada Geese** were at the N entrance to the loch on 2nd (Malcolm Cook *pers. comm.*) and 20 **Greylag Goose** at Strath Farm (The Laggan) on 13th.

A **Merlin** was by Drumlemble on 26th (Rab Morton).

There was an interesting observation of **Ruddy Turnstones** crossing overland at Campbeltown. On 27th, 53 flying around the head of the loch (by the harbour) gained height quickly then headed rapidly west over the town until out of sight (Rab Morton).

Two **Greenshanks** were at Campbeltown Loch on 16th (Iomhar McMillan).

A **Barn Owl** was by Machrihanish village at 23:00hrs on 2nd (Dean Rollindson).

It appears that **Common Swifts** at Campbeltown had a negligible breeding season this summer. Surprisingly, the only August sightings over Burnside Square were 5 on 8th and 3 'screaming' there on 16th.

Nine **Grey Wagtails** were at Stewarton on 24th (Iomhar McMillan) and 80+ **House Sparrows** at Drumlemble on 16th.

September Report



Great Skua (juvenile) passing >S on 25th

Summary of the Month...

September is renowned by birders as the best month of the year for exciting seawatching. Disappointingly, a severe paucity of strong WNW winds for most of the month denied observers at MSBO the sight of thousands of seabirds within sight of the shore. Classic conditions continued to evade us when a westerly f7 gale arrived on 29th. On this date, many regular species occurred during the gale including a superb passage of **Red-throated Divers** (67 passing >S / 7hrs) and a well above average daily showing of some very anxious-looking juvenile **Northern Gannets** (14).

Hordes of **Black-legged Kittiwakes** were visible on the horizon but stubbornly, they remained there.

The rest of the period was still interesting with a good variety of migrants. Passage of **Red-throated Divers** was most exceptional with a total of **220** passing >S on 19 dates. Over **100** pale-bellied **Brent Geese** were logged along with sightings of **Pintail**, **Greater Scaup**, **Tufted Duck**, **Common Scoters**, **Golden** and **Grey Plovers**, **Red Knots**, **Curlew Sandpipers**, a **Purple Sandpiper**, a **Whimbrel**, **Black-tailed Godwits**, **Great Skuas** and a fine presence / first-rate passage of **White Wagtails** and **Greenland Wheatears**.

The first returning pale-breasted **Brent Geese** were two adults with 2 juveniles in tow passing >S on 9th. Three flocks totalling **88** passed >S on 28th and 2 flocks totalling 18 followed on 29th.



Pale-bellied Brent Geese on passage on 9th



Red-throated Diver: an adult still in summer plumage passing >S on 29th



Red-throated Divers – adults passing >S high over the sea on 27th



A juvenile Great Skua passing >S on 25th

Female-type **Pintails** passing >S included 3 on 6th, one on 15th, 2 on 29th and a fine flock of 11 on 30th.

A male **Tufted Duck** was off-passage on 12th.

Three **Greater Scaup** passed >S on 12th followed by 2 on 29th.

Light southerly movements of **Common Scoters** was expected and there was one on 2nd, 6 on 6th, 7 on 9th, 8 on 25th, one on 27th and 3 on 29th.

Four passed >N on 4th.

Southerly movements of **Red-throated Diver** was excellent with two on 5th, 7 on 6th, 5 on 8th, 3 on 10th, 7 on 11th, 12 on 12th, 4 on 13th, 19 / 5hrs on 16th (including two high flying loose groups of 8 and 5), 6 on 17th, one on 18th, 5 on 19th, 9 on 23rd, one on 24th, 15 / 6hrs on 25th, 5 on 26th, 22 / 5hrs on 27th (including loose groups of 7 and 4), 3 on 28th, then a whopping total of **67** / 7hrs on 29th (westerly gale): the largest loose group was 8 and then finally 27 / 7hrs on 30th.

*Summary of passage: during September a total of **220** birds passed >S on 19 dates.*

Rafts of over 1,000 **Manx Shearwaters** were well offshore on 6th: all >S later.

A light horizon movement of 300 passed >S / 2hrs on 10th. As last year, this was another very disappointing autumn for movements of this species.

A summary of the overland passage by **Northern Gannets** is truly astonishing: a total of **263** adult Gannets crossed overland from Campbeltown Loch (Clyde) to Machrihanish Bay (Atlantic) on 17 dates during August and 25 dates in September (CR / RM / EM / IM).

At MSBO a total of **1,600** >S / 3hrs on 2nd. Southerly movements of juveniles included one on 15th, 3 on 23rd, one on 24th, 2 on 25th, 5 on 26th, 2 on 27th, one on 28th, **14** on 29th (westerly gale) and 2 on 30th.



A striking juvenile Northern Gannet passing >S on 28th

A female / immature **Hen Harrier** was over Lossit Estate on 17th.

A single Lapwing was off-passage all morning on 6th. Two **Grey Plovers** were photographed passing >S well offshore on 22nd and a bedraggled **Golden Plover** sheltered during a shower on 28th. Another 5 birds passed >S on 29th.



Grey Plovers offshore on passage >S 22nd



A rather scruffy Golden Plover off-passage after a heavy shower on 28th

Thirty **Ringed Plovers** passed >S on 29th and southerly movements of **Red Knots** included four small flocks totalling 31 on 2nd, 4 on 4th, 9 on 8th, one on 12th, 2 on 25th, 4 on 27th and one on 29th.



Red Knot off-passage on 12th



Dunlin – Photo Steve Seal

September continued apace with 91 **Dunlins** passing >S on 2nd followed by 8 on 8th, and 10 on 23rd. Six were on the shore 20th – 21st. Small flocks of **Sanderlings** passing >S included 39 on 2nd, 20 on 29th and 4 on 30th. There were nine on the shore on 5th, one on 8th, one on 15th and 60 on 21st. Two **Curlew Sandpipers** passed >S on 10th. A few **Black-tailed Godwits** passed >S with a single on 23rd and 2 on 27th. After a reasonable showing during August the only record of **Whimbrel** this month was one on 12th. **Redshanks** totalled 129 passing >S on 5 dates 1st – 20th with the highest day counts of 34 on 2nd, 26 on 7th and 40 on 20th. A single **Common Snipe** was spotted creeping among seaweed on 17th. The first **Purple Sandpiper** of the autumn passed >S on 27th. **Ruddy Turnstones** were regular all month with top day counts of 11 on 8th and 31 on 10th.

Two **Great Skuas** passed >S on 25th. A total of 700 **Black-legged kittiwakes** passed >S / 6hrs on 6th. Aged samples (314 birds) revealed that around 45% were juveniles. A further movement of 380 passed >S / 4hrs on 10th. Aged samples (190 birds) revealed that only 21% were juveniles. There was very light southerly movement of **Sandwich Tern** with 3 on 5th, 5 on 11th, one 12th and 4 on 27th. Single adult **Common Terns** passed >S on 6th and 11th.

Counts of **White Wagtails** between Machrihanish village and MSBO included 25 on 5th, 42 on 6th, a total of 18 passed >S early morning on 7th. Most of these rested on the point briefly before moving on. Heavy passage occurred again on 8th with a total of ca. 50+ in the Machrihanish area. Fewer (<10 per day) were present 9th – 20th. Around 20 were in the area on 22nd - 25th with singles on 26th and 30th. A **Pied Wagtail** roost at Machrihanish Water all month held 100+.. There was a superb showing of **Northern Wheatear** including many Greenland-types on 19 dates 4th (2) – 30th (one). The top day total was 30+ on 5th. Most rested on the point briefly before continuing S. Following this peak the best daily counts later were 10+ on 7th, 14 on 8th and 9 on 12th.



Pied Wagtail on 7th



White Wagtail on 24th – impressive numbers passed south this month



Northern Wheatear on 14th – likely Greenland race *O. o. leucorrhoa*

September Records from around Kintyre

At Strath Farm (The Laggan) 5 adults **Whooper Swans** flew >W on 30th and 80-90 **Greylag Geese** were present on 7th.

An **Osprey** was seen at Ardnacross (just N of Peninver) on 8th (Miriam Lord / Dan Snowdon).

At Campbeltown on 14th a flock of 53 **Ruddy Turnstones** were seen leaving the loch and flying high over the town to the west (Rab Morton).

Two **Greenshanks** were at the 'stinky hole', Campbeltown on 9th (Steve / Tracy Seal).



Greenshank on 9th – Photo Steve Seal

At Killegruar Campsite (Glenbarr) there was a **Bar-tailed Godwit** and 5 + **Greenland Wheatears** by the shore on 8th (Miriam Lord / Dan Snowdon) with 7 there on 13th followed by 2 on 23rd, 3 on 26th and one on 27th (Miriam Lord / Dan Snowdon / Pip Ashley).

Four were at Machrihanish Holiday Park on 20th (Martin Conway).

At Carradale Bay there were 15 **Snow Bunting** on 6th (Jill Pearson) and a female-type was flushed from the roadside By Campbeltown Airport on 8th (Steve / Tracy Seal).

October Report

Most of the month was dominated by persistent easterly winds. Things changed on 18th when a NW gale delivered an excellent passage of **Red-throated** (38) and **Great Northern Divers** (22) along with a respectable flock of southbound **Greater Scaup** (ca. 40).

Rarity of the year was a fly-by juvenile female North American **Surf Scoter** (photographed) on 27th – the second MSBO record.

Other interesting sightings included 2 **Little Grebes** (only the second MSBO record) a late **Barn Swallow** (26th) and, early in the month, probable Greenland-type **Northern Wheatears** on 6 dates with late birds on 23rd -24th and 30th.

An adult **Whooper Swan** flew in off the sea on 6th and adults passing >S later included a flock of 22 on 18th and 3 on 31st.

The first record of **Barnacle Geese** this autumn involved 5 birds passing >S on 16th.

Brent Geese were logged on the shore on 17 dates with a max of 4 on 14th. The only southerly movements were 15 on 15th and 9 on 27th.



Juvenile pale-breasted Brent Goose coming in off the sea on 13th

During a NW gale event on 18th a flock of ca. 40 **Greater Scaup** passed >S.

The first autumn record of **Goldeneye** was 2 juveniles on 25th.

Southerly movements of **Common Scoters** included 4 on 6th, 3 on 15th and 5 on 31st.

Southerly passage totals of **Red-throated Divers** included 2 on 1st, 4 on 2nd, singles on 5th and 8th and 5 on 17th. Then, a surprisingly high October one-day passage total occurred during a NW gale event on 18th when a total of **38** passed >S / 8hrs. These were followed by 6 on 20th, 3 on 26th, one on 27th and one 30th.

*Summary of October passage: a total of **59** birds passed >S on 10 dates. Cumulative fly-by totals for September / October reveal that a total of **279** Red-throats passed >S on **29** dates.*



Red-throated Diver passing >S on 18th

The first migrant **Great Northern Diver**, an adult still in breeding plumage, passed >S on 16th. Nine adults passed >S / 4hrs on 17th. During a NW gale event on 18th a noteworthy total of 22 (majority adults) passed >S / 8hrs.

The first bird seen on the sea was an adult, still in breeding plumage, 25th - 29th.

Little Grebes are a rare visitor at MSBO. Two were sheltering on 4th.

(This is the second MSBO record. At this time of year this species prefers sheltered sea lochs and normally, except on passage, strictly avoids west-facing open coastal areas).

A notable gathering of **100+ Shags** was at Big Scone Island off Machrihanish village on 1st.

Northern Gannets became very scarce off MSBO from mid-month. For example, during a strong westerly wind on 26th only 9 birds passed >S: these included 7 adults, a sub-adult and a juvenile.

Monthly totals of juveniles this autumn were a single in August, 31 in September and 14 in October - a noteworthy total of **46**.

Table

Autumn passage totals of juvenile Northern Gannets off MSBO 2010-2016

Year	Totals
2010	18
2011	48
2012	7
2013	14
2014	14
2015	9
2016	46

A **Merlin** passed >N high over the sea on 4th. Singles were seen on 12th, 18th, 19th, 21st, 26th and 28th.

Southerly passage totals of **Red Knots** included 3 on 3rd, one on 4th and 2 on 27th.

One passed >N on 7th.

Thirty **Sanderlings** were present on 15th increasing to 100+ on 30th. Late autumn passage of **Purple Sandpipers** occurred on 29th with a total of 57 passing >S / 5hrs (3 flocks / largest ca. 40). A further 14 birds passed >S on 30th.

Late autumn southerly passage of this species can be a feature at MSBO, often in early November.

Dunlins were a lot scarcer with birds passing south on only 3 dates: max 25 on 9th. Around 20 - 25 **Common Redshanks** settled in the area.



Common Redshank on 19th

Ruddy Turnstones were also scarce with only singles on 3 dates 7th - 23rd. A **Black-tailed Godwit** was seen several times on 6th.

During a NW gale event on 18th a total of 230 **Black-legged Kittiwakes** passed >S / 8hrs. Aged samples revealed that 56 / 120 (46%) were juveniles.

This same gale event produced a light southerly passage of 280 large **Auks** (Razorbill and Common Guillemot).

Single late **Barn Swallows** passed >S on 15th and 18th (NW gale).

Probable Greenland-type **Northern Wheatears** were present on 1st, 3rd, 5th, 2 on 6th with further singles on 8th and 9th. One was photographed on 23rd and this individual was likely the same present on 24th. A late bird was photographed on 30th.



Northern Wheatear on 30th

White Wagtails were present on all dates 1st - 6th with 3 on 2nd and 6th.

A late **Whinchat** was a good find at Machrihanish Holiday Park on 21st (Martin Conway: Martin also found one there on 21st October 2014!).

A total of 33 **Hooded Crows** passed >S on 7th (many were well out over the sea). Two flocks of **Starlings**, both exceeding **1,000+**, were in the Machrihanish / Drumlemble area on 16th.

A migrant **Goldcrest** was photographed by MSBO on 15th.

Three **Dippers** were bathing at Machrihanish Water mouth on 12th.

Only 30 **Twite** were ringed / colour-ringed during September / October. Strangely, very few migrants arrived at MSBO this autumn.



Hooded Crow on 7th



A migrant Goldcrest on 15th

October Records from around Kintyre



Juvenile Northern Gannet at Campbeltown: photo – Ruth Campbell

Whooper Swans were scarce with only two records: 20 at Campbeltown Loch on 1st and 15 at Kilmichael (by Campbeltown) on 20th.

The only record of **Red-throated Divers** was 5 in Kildalloig Bay on 2nd (Rab Morton).

Some juvenile **Northern Gannets** were troubled by adverse weather conditions. At Campbeltown loch: 2 juveniles were sheltering by the harbour from a strong SE wind on 5th (Charlie Robertson). Both birds were moribund next day (Eddie Maguire). Later, two individuals were taken into care and 2 others were around the harbour on 8th. One was found dead on 9th.

Ailsa Craig is the most obvious origin of these juveniles: a persistent easterly airflow obviously prevented them from orientating south.

During August-October a total of **286** adult Gannets crossed overland from the head of Campbeltown Loch (Clyde) to Machrihanish Bay (Atlantic) on **53** dates.

At Mull of Kintyre on 10th, a female / immature **Hen Harrier** was watched flying high out over the sea on a bearing for N Ireland (Chris Harper).

The high tide roost of **Ruddy Turnstones** by the Ferry Terminal at Campbeltown held 45 birds on 12th and 32 on 29th (Rab Morton).

A **Great Skua** was loafing on Campbeltown Harbour on 25th (Charlie Robertson). What was probably the same bird was reported on Davaar Island later the same day.

At Glenbarr a **Barn Owl** was calling regularly at night during August / September (Theresa Herrod et al).

November Report

MSBO closed to the public on 31st October after a resolute **245** days (8 months) of manning from 1st March. This November Report consists of a few casual observations at MSBO and some interesting records from around The Laggan farmlands and Kintyre.

Two late **Brent Geese** were still present on 1st with another on 12th and one passed >S on 16th. The first returning **Shelduck** appeared on 28th and 2 were there on 31st. A **Northern Shoveler** by the old lifeboat station at Mill Bay on 24th was an interesting find.



Northern Shoveler on the shore on 24th

Three juvenile **Common Scoters** passed >S on 10th.



Juvenile Common Scoter on 10th

A total of 8 **Common Goldeneyes** were off the old lifeboat station on 31st.



Common Goldeneye on 31st

At Machrihanish Bay there were 6 **Great Northern Divers** on 3rd and 9 on 5th.



Great Northern Diver on 5th

Flocks of waders included 70 **Ringed Plovers** on 31st, 30 **Sanderlings** on 24th and 12 **Purple Sandpipers** passed >S on 4th.



Purple Sandpiper on 16th / Photo Assistant Warden Iomhar McMillan

Two **Common Ravens** on 31st were both carrying golf balls. Both birds buried the balls in sand.



Common Raven on 30th with a golf ball



A wintering Robin

November Records from around Kintyre

A flock of 8 adult **Whooper Swans** passed >E over Campbeltown on 3rd.
At The Laggan, there was six at Bleachfield (including a juvenile) 10th-12th and 4 adults at The Strath east pool on 14th then 8 adults there on 20th.



An adult Whooper Swan at Strath east pool on 10th

Thirty-six **Greater Canada Geese** were at Bleachfield, The Laggan on 18th, 24 were at Kilmichael (by Campbeltown) on 20th and 40 passed >E over Campbeltown on 29th.

Six hybrid **Canada X Barnacle Geese** were at Strath Farm, The Laggan on 23rd.
At The Laggan, there were 211 **Greylag Geese** at Bleachfield on 17th and 521 at Strath Farm on 20th and 644 there on 23rd. At Kilmichael (by Campbeltown) there was 140 on 20th and 80 on 23rd.

At The Laggan on 23rd, ca. 1,000+ **White-fronted Geese** (Greenland race *flavirostris*) over Stewarton on 2nd were apparently the first to arrive in South Kintyre and at Strath farm there was 468 on 20th and 530 on 23rd. At Kilmichael (by Campbeltown) there was 380 on 20th and 290 on 23rd.

This is the second consecutive year that arrivals have been very late. In the past the main arrival date was around 10th October. As last autumn, perhaps the geese are staging longer in Iceland.

The first returning **Shelduck** at The Laggan was one at Strath east pool on 17th.
At Kilmichael (by Campbeltown) on 14th the duck counts included 52 **Teal**, **400+ Wigeon** and 2 **Northern Shovelers**.



Greylags at Strath on 20th



White-fronts at Strath on 20th

At Campbeltown Loch inner harbour on 4th a total of **290 Common Eider** included 176 adult males, 33 immature males and 81 females.

A **Little Egret** was seen / photographed at West Loch Tarbert on 26th (Toby Green et al / per Jim Dickson).

At least 4 first-winter **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were at Campbeltown on 31st. Also at Campbeltown, the **Ruddy Turnstone** high tide roost by the Ferry Terminal held 42 birds on 4th and 41 on 15th (Rab Morton) and 18 **Black Guillemots** were off the harbour on 25th.



Black Guillemot at Campbeltown on 25th

Sky Lark numbers were high at The Laggan with 300+ at West Parkfergus on 12th.

The largest concentration seen in this area for many years.

The only large flock of **Chaffinches** reported was 170+ at Strath, The Laggan on 14th.

There was a very recent sighting of one of our colour ringed Twite.

Ring no. **L568088**. Ringed MSBO on 24th September 2014.

Seen at Largs Ferry Terminal, North Ayrshire, on 27th November 2016.

Colour ring code **39C** (Paul Tatler).

Unusually, this bird was N of MSBO during winter.

The Observatory will reopen on 1st March 2017

Acknowledgements...

MSBO was supported in many ways by the following...

Argyll Bird Club
Cathie Clare (Campbeltown)
Campbell Keyte (Machrihanish)
Charlie Robertson (MSBO / Campbeltown Gannet Project)
Dave Millward & Jo Goudie (MSBO website)
Iomhar McMillan (Assistant Warden)
Jim Dickson (Argyll Recorder)
Martin & Leticia Conway (MSBO Committee)
Machrihanish Golf Club
NG Electrical Services (Neil Galbraith)
Pip & Carol Ashley (MSBO Committee)
Rab Morton (UK Twite Study Project at MSBO)
Scottish Owl Centre (Rod Angus)
Steve Bracken (Marine Harvest)
Stirling University (Marine Research Laboratory)



Arctic Tern 20th June

Movements of Goldfinch in Argyll 2009 – 2016

Eddie Maguire

Introduction

Prior to 2007 there was no information on movements of Goldfinches in Argyll (ap Rheinallt et al 2007). The very recent wealth of BTO notifications on the movements of Goldfinches to / from Argyll now is intriguing. Just two sites in the county are responsible for the majority of these movements.

Have changes in the behaviour of Goldfinches, in particular their adaption to garden and woodland feeding stations made them more readily available for BTO ringers to catch?

Main Ringing sites in Argyll and notifications of recoveries / controls

At Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (MSBO) only nyjer seed is used as bait at the feeding / trapping station. There are only two recoveries from several hundred birds ringed since 2010 although 11 UK-ringed birds have been controlled.

At Kilmartin (Mid-Argyll) feeding / trapping station, peanuts and occasionally nyjer are the bait. There has been only one recovery and 4 UK-ringed birds have been controlled (D. C. Jardine pers comm.).

The only other BTO notification involving Argyll was a Goldfinch ringed in Hertfordshire and found dead on Jura.

Including the French-ringed bird found dead at Kilberry (Mid-Argyll) and the Campbeltown-ringed bird controlled in Belgium there are now **21** notifications regarding movements of Goldfinches to / from Argyll.

Table....

Locations of all Argyll UK Goldfinch recoveries / controls

	Argyll Recoveries	UK Controls
Scotland...		
Strathclyde	-	2
Dumfries and Galloway	-	1
England...		
Lancashire	-	2
South Yorkshire	-	1
Cheshire	-	1
Lincolnshire	1	1
Nottinghamshire	1	-
Shropshire	1	2
Suffolk	-	2
Hertfordshire	-	1
Wales...		
Gwynedd	-	1
Northern Ireland...		
Co Antrim	-	2
Totals	3	16

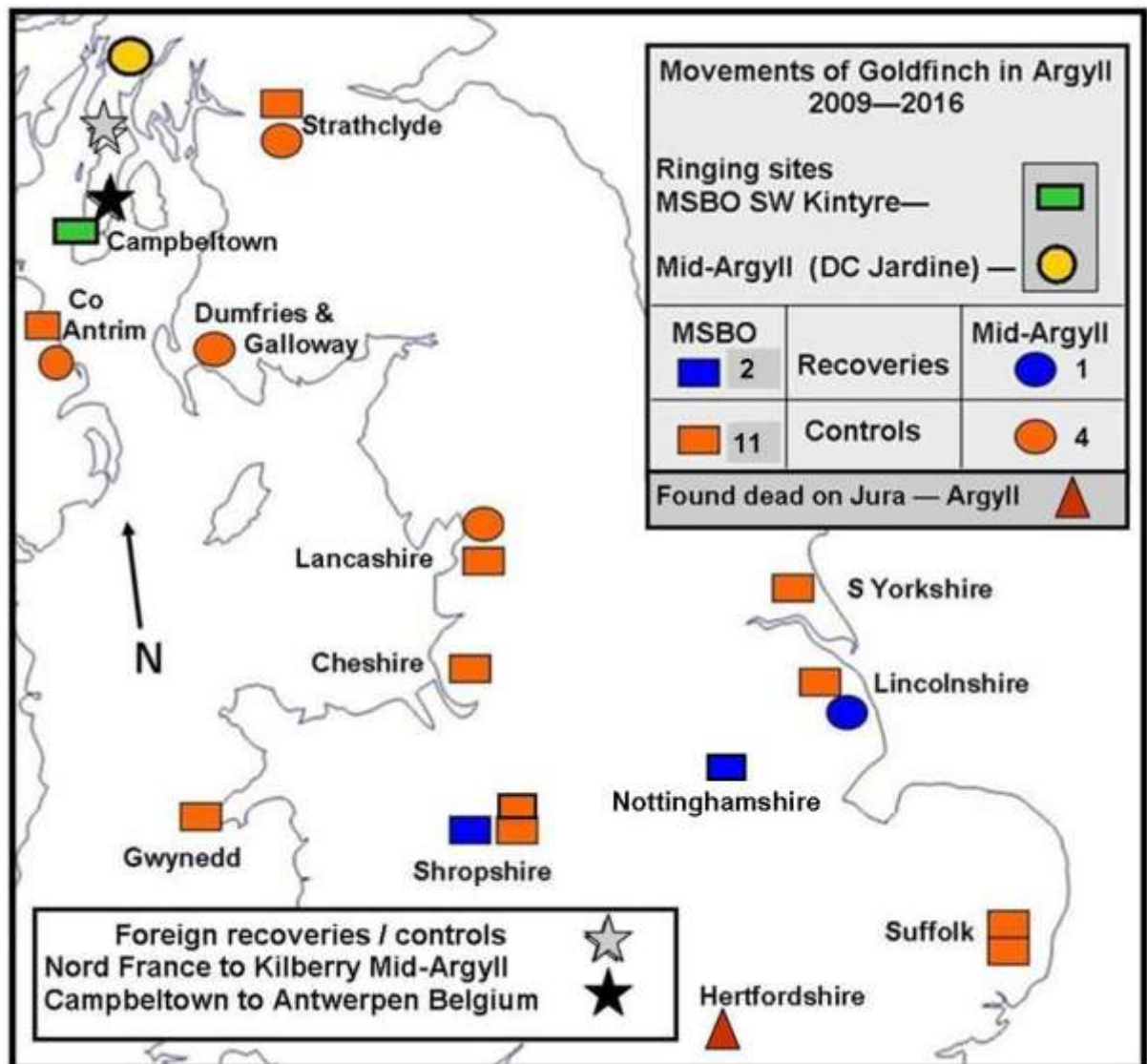


Goldfinch at MSBO



A charm on driftwood by MSBO feeding station

The map presented below is a visual summary of all movements of ringed Goldfinches >20km from the ringing sites at MSBO (2) and Mid-Argyll (1), all UK controls (16) and foreign notifications (2).



Note the strong SSE origin of the majority of controls

Discussion...

Changes in the behaviour of Goldfinches, in particular their adaption to garden bird feeders in the UK, may offer an explanation for the current wealth of information accumulated in Argyll by a few BTO ringers. The species has adapted to nyjer and sunflower seeds and peanuts at garden bird feeders. This must have greatly enhanced opportunities for all UK BTO ringers to catch Goldfinches in far greater numbers at garden and woodland feeding stations.

In addition, the increase in the UK Goldfinch population has been dramatic. It increased by about 80% between 2002 and 2012. While many of our familiar songbird species are in decline, one avian character in particular has been spotted increasingly frequently in UK gardens - the Goldfinch. Trends in common breeding birds in the UK (The Breeding Bird Survey) showed a 111% increase in Goldfinches during 1995-2013 (Hayhow et al, 2015).

It follows that the sudden wealth of recoveries/controls in Argyll may be as much a consequence of the population increase as it was to a change in feeding habits, although that undoubtedly has aided capture (D. C. Jardine pers. comm.).

References...

ap Rheinallt, T., et al 2007. **Birds of Argyll.**

Hayhow, D.B., et al 2015. ***The state of the UK's birds 2015.*** RSPB, BTO, WWT, JNCC, NE, NIEA, NRW and SNH, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

Eddie Maguire

E Mail – msbowarden@gmail.com

Mobile – 07919 660292

A few more Photos from MSBO



The male Ruff at MSBO in late July

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory Report 2016



MSBO



Gadwall (female)



Red Knot (juvenile)



Painted Lady Butterfly



Eiders at MSBO