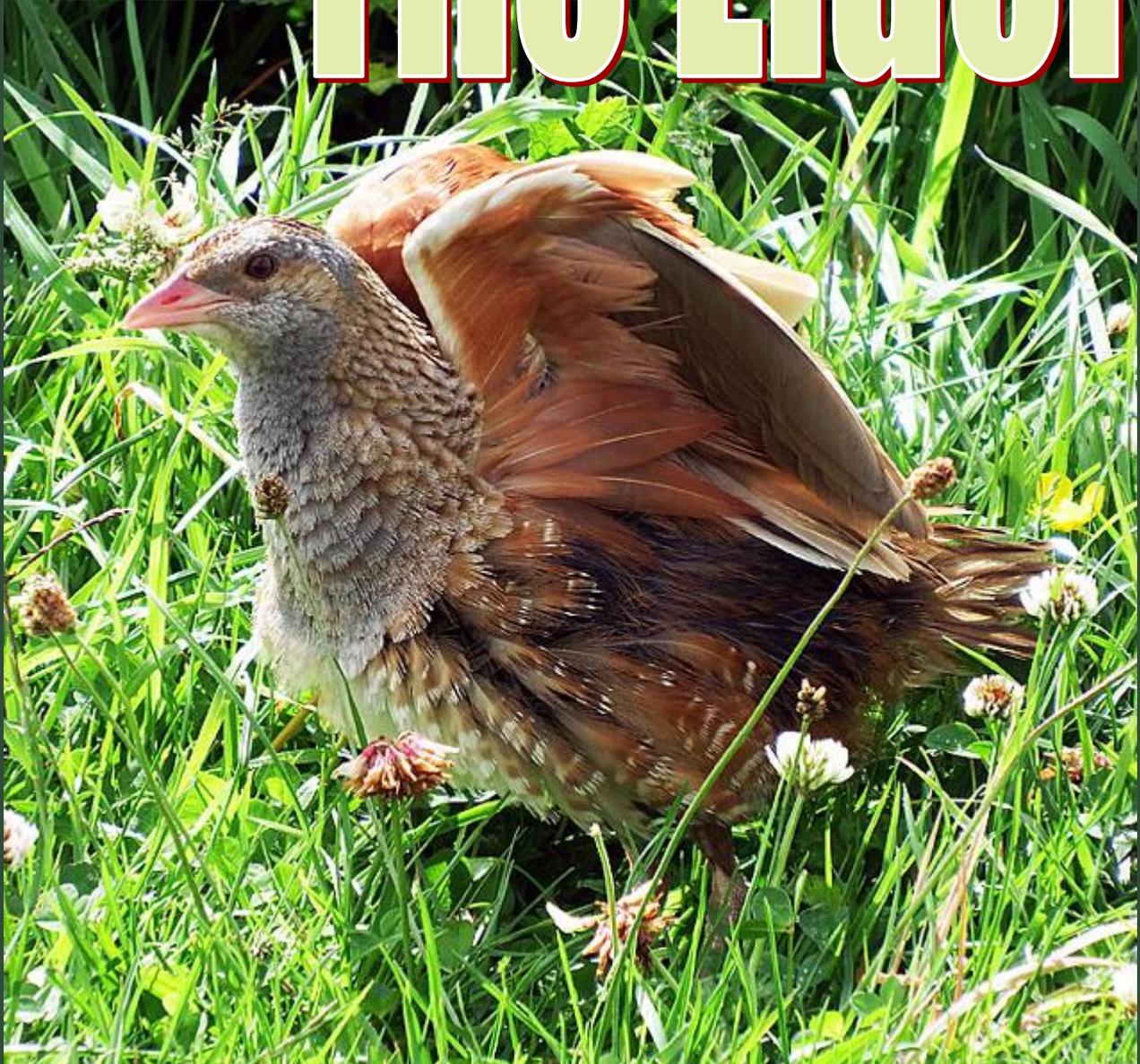


September 2016
Number 117

The Eider



Corncrake on Oronsay, 10 July ©Morgan Vaughan

Recent bird sightings, pages 14-18

Nestboxes for Swifts, Page 19

Papers for the AGM, pages 4-10

It's difficult to gauge what kind of field trip will appeal to more members. Earlier this year we planned our first foray out of Argyll for some time—to the RSPB's reserve on Loch Lomond. We thought this would have attracted more participants, but in the end the trip had to be cancelled due to a lack of support. Perhaps it was the wrong time of the year? Anyway we plan to run the trip again in the spring, and hope for a better turnout. We try to organise a field trip each month, and not surprisingly we tend to re-visit old favourites, such as the Sound of Gigha and the Add Estuary. As a new venture, David Jardine is organising a trip to Kerrera at the end of October, which I suspect few club members have visited, and which provides an ideal opportunity for you to get to know this island. We would, of course, welcome ideas for future field trips—are you happy with outings just in Argyll or should we venture further afield? Do contact one of the committee members with any ideas you have or raise them at the forthcoming AGM. Papers for the AGM appear in this issue, so members who receive the electronic version may want to print out the relevant pages to bring to the meeting. We look forward to seeing you at the Cairnbaan Hotel on 12th November.

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Club News

FIELD TRIPS 2016

If there is a chance that adverse weather might lead to the cancellation of a field-trip, please check the club's website or contact the organiser the night before or prior to setting off.

Saturday 1 October. Holy Loch (Cowal). Led by Nigel Scriven (contact details: Phone 01505 706652. Mobile 07901 636353. E-mail njscriven@gmail.com). Meet Nigel in the Broxwood Car Park in Sandbank

(map reference NS154813) at 10.00hrs.

Saturday 29 October. Exploration of Kerrera. Led by David Jardine (contact details: Phone 01546 510200. E-mail dcjardine@btinternet.com). Meet at the Gallanach Ferry Terminal (map reference NM834283) at 10.20hrs. Please bring a packed lunch.

Saturday 26 November. Loch Gilp and the Add Estuary. Led by Jim Dickson. (contact details: Phone 01546 603967. E-mail meg@jdickson5.plus.com). Meet at

Acknowledgements

Very many thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue—Malcolm Chattwood, Clive Craik, Jim Dickson, Jim Duncan, Bob Furness (including photocopying & dispatch), Mike Harrison, Gordon Holm, Mary Macintyre, Eddie Maguire, Jimmy Maxwell, Irene Miller, Rab Morton, Katie Pendreigh, Linda Petty (proof reading), Morag Rea, Nigel Scriven, Murray Sim, Morgan Vaughan and Kevin West.

10.00hrs in Lochgilphead at the Corran Car Park, opposite the caravan park, on the A83, close to the roundabout (A83/A816) at the western end of the town.

INDOOR MEETINGS 2016/2017

Autumn Meeting and AGM. Saturday 12 November 2016 at the Cairnbaan Hotel (<http://www.cairnbaan.com/>), near Lochgilphead (phone: 01546 603668) - see programme below.

Spring Meeting. Saturday 4 March 2017 at the Royal Marine Hotel (<http://www.royalmarinehotel.co.uk/index.asp>), Dunoon (phone: 01369 705810). The programme will appear in the December *Eider*.

Raffle prizes. Donations of raffle prizes for indoor meetings are always welcome.

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 26 (2014)

The latest bird report is now available. If any members have not received their copy please contact Bob Furness (contact details on back page). Additional copies of the report can be purchased from Bob for £10.00 including postage. Cheques should be made payable to the 'Argyll Bird Club'. We would like to sell as many copies as possible before the next report is published, so if you know of any outlets that would be willing to stock it, please let Bob know.

THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB'S WEBSITE (www.argyllbirdclub.org)

Do visit our website to find out about up-to-date arrangements for meetings, recent sightings of birds, including photographs, and lots more.

Programme for the ABC's Autumn Meeting

Saturday 12 November at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead, Argyll

Time	Session
0930	Doors open, coffee and tea
0950-1000	Welcome and introduction— <i>Mike Harrison</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1000-1030	Recent bird sightings and photographs— <i>Jim Dickson</i> , Argyll Bird Recorder
1030-1100	Birding in Nepal— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1100-1120	Coffee/tea
1120-1200	Highland renewal; improving estates for wildlife— <i>Alan Fielding</i>
1200-1230	Seabirds and offshore windfarms— <i>Julie Miller</i>
1230-1400	Lunch (available in the hotel if required)
1400-1440	AGM
1440-1500	BTO Surveys and updates— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1500-1540	Birding in Trinidad and Tobago— <i>Gordon Holm</i>
1540-1600	Tea/coffee
1600-1620	Diver identification and ecology— <i>Bob Furness</i>
1620-1630	Raffle and closing remarks

Papers for the AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

To be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday 12 November 2016

Scottish Charity Number SC008782

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 15 APRIL 2015-14 APRIL 2016

The Argyll Bird Club is a registered Scottish charity number SC008782. The club can be contacted through the secretary, Mrs Anne Archer, Springbank, Tighnabruaich, Argyll PA21 2EJ. The club is an unincorporated association managed by a committee of members elected by the membership at the annual general meeting. The members of the committee serve as the Trustees of the charity.

This report was approved by the club's committee on 11 August 2016, at which time the committee members were as follows:

Mike Harrison (Chairman), Nigel Scriven (Vice-chairman), Bob Furness (Hon. Treasurer) Anne Archer (Hon. Secretary), Neil Brown, Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Gordon Holm, David Jardine, Steve Petty, Andy Robinson, Blair Urquhart

Anne Archer and Gordon Holm were elected to the committee on 14 November 2015.

Management and membership

During the year the committee managed the club in accordance with the amended constitution of the club which was adopted at the Annual General Meeting held on 23 October 1999. The committee met in Inveraray on four occasions during the year. The operational focus of the committee continues to be on the club's meetings, field trips, bird report, newsletter and website while ensuring that these activities are underpinned by sound finances and that the club's charitable status is maintained. The committee also spent time discussing the possible extension of its communication/publishing activities into social media.

Our number of memberships has remained similar to last year's total. In April 2016 at the end of the financial year we had a total of 200 memberships, including a good number of family memberships, though (as usual) a few members had not responded to a request for subscription re-

newal, so the number may increase as these late payments arrive. We have approximately 300 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships. The club thanks Sue Furness for her work as membership secretary.

Objectives and activities

The aims of the Argyll Bird Club are to promote interest in and conservation of the birds of Argyll and their habitats. During the year the club held two indoor meetings, at the Cairnbaan Hotel in November 2015 and at Seil Island Hall in March 2016, at which invited speakers gave talks on subjects of ornithological and/or conservation interest. Talks at the November meeting covered the BTO's continuing House Martin survey, the history and current status of the Eider population on the Clyde, migrants on Tiree through the year and, moving further afield, the new RSPB reserve at Loch Lomond and photographic and ornithological tours of Orkney and Costa Rica. The meeting was followed by a celebratory dinner to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Argyll Bird Club in 1985. Professor Des Thompson, FRSE, commended the club for its activities over the years and urged the club to continue its work to preserve and protect Argyll's natural heritage. In March, the topics covered included the association between seabirds and cetaceans around Scotland's west coast, the use of DNA in raptor studies, conservation of birds in Argyll's forests and a wildlife tour of Namibia. Also included was a talk on the use of social media to encourage wildlife recording; a topic relevant to current committee discussions (see below).

The club thanks the speakers and organisers for their contribution to the success of these meetings, and the members who write up the talks for publication in subsequent editions of *The Eider*.

The club continued its programme of monthly field trips with visits to Mull, Skipness, Tainish, Colonsay, Appin, the Sound of Gigha (twice, autumn and spring), the Add Estuary, Ormsary and Luig. The club thanks the leaders of these

walks for contributing their time and effort and the members, often the leaders of the walks, who write the reports of the walks, which are published in *The Eider*.

The club newsletter, *The Eider*, continues to thrive under the editorship of Steve Petty. Four editions were published during the year containing news, views, articles, reports of club activities, recent bird sightings and much more. The newsletter is published in both paper and electronic formats; electronic publishing provides substantial savings in copying and postage costs. During the year, work was undertaken to scan all older editions of *The Eider*, from its first publication in December 1986 and these are available through the club website.

The club website is one of our principal tools for promoting interest in the birds of Argyll. Ably maintained by Jim Dickson, Paul Daw and Bob Furness, the website had over 37,000 page visits in the year to August 2015, a 16% increase over the previous twelve months, with visits from seven overseas countries alongside those from the UK. With 65% return visits and over 40% of visits being to the Sightings page, the effort put in by the team to keep the site up to date with information about the birdlife of Argyll is clearly valued by users.

During the year the committee has been considering the extension of the club's publishing activities into social media. No decision has yet been reached.

The club's activities towards promoting the conservation of the birds of Argyll generally fall into three areas: recording the occurrence of the birds; publishing those records; and supporting fieldwork and conservation activities relating to the birds. The recording team led by Jim Dickson received more than 21,000 individual records for 2014 for processing and entry into the database, and downloaded another 13,000 from the BTO's BirdTrack system. Aside from requests for data extracts from commercial organisations and academic researchers, the main vehicle for publishing this data is the *Argyll Bird Report*, compiled by a small team led by Jim Dickson. Volume 26 of the report, covering 2014, was published in February 2016 and distributed to members either by post or in person at the Spring meeting at Seil. Sales of the report are an important source of revenue for the club and

we have had a particularly good year in that regard.

The club thanks all who are involved in ornithological recording in Argyll including the Argyll Bird Records Committee, the Recorder and his team of assistants, the observers and organisations which submit records to the database and the writers who assist in the preparation and publication of the *Argyll Bird Report*.

During the year, the committee has been considering the form of a possible future publication relating to birds or birdwatching in Argyll to build on the success of *Birds of Argyll*, which was published in 2007. No decision has yet been reached.

Finance

Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £11,180.75, an increase of £740.25 from the previous year (see table, next page). Income from subscriptions was very slightly higher than for the previous year. Fluctuations in subscription income arise due to changes in numbers of members, but also from late payments arriving from members who forgot to renew in January; these often arrive around the end of the financial year in early April so may happen to fall in one year or the next. Income from bank interest was zero as Treasurers' Accounts no longer get interest, so this source of income has now fallen out of the accounts. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contribute items to be raffled. Sales were mostly of the latest *Argyll Bird Report* but also of the book which is still selling steadily and has not quite run out. We do not reclaim Gift Aid every year so this does not feature in this year's accounts. The income from data provision is welcome, though the level of this income may fall as the numbers of requests for data are likely to decline with declining renewable energy development in Argyll. Payments for the club dinner largely balance expenditure for the dinner except that dinners of invited guests were paid by the club. We were fortunate to receive a donation of £500 towards club funds.

Expenditure included printing of the *Argyll Bird Report* and associated postage and envelope costs. Jim Dickson successfully negotiated a reduction in the report printing costs while retain-

Accounts for the 31st year of the Argyll Bird Club. 15 April 2015 to 14 April 2016. Scottish Charity Number: SC008782		
	2015/2016	2014/2015
INCOME		
Subscriptions	2582.23	2412.23
Sales	1152.00	638.98
Raffles	250.00	273.00
Data fees	378.00	1300.00
HMRC Gift Aid	0.00	612.54
Donations	500.00	0.00
Payments for club dinner	765.00	0.00
TOTAL	5627.23	5236.75
EXPENDITURE		
Bird report	1365.00	1930.00
Newsletter photo-copying	338.00	179.84
Postage	629.40	635.26
Public meetings	1085.37	958.45
Insurance	113.00	233.63
Licenses/website	0.00	108.50
Envelopes	64.71	33.05
Grants	450.00	977.76
Club dinner	765.00	0.00
Refunded cancelled dinners	76.50	0.00
TOTAL	4886.98	5056.49
Surplus/deficit for year	740.25	180.26
Brought forward	10440.50	10260.00
Assets at end of year	11180.75	10440.50

ing the same printer. Insurance costs were third party cover for club activities. Costs of meetings included room hire, refunding of speakers' expenses and part of the cost of lunches at the March 2016 meeting. Grants made during 2015-16 included a donation to Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, and grants towards costs of ringing Twite and towards the travel costs for Common Bird Census fieldwork. The accounts show a moderate surplus for the year. The Accounts have been audited by Dr Bernie Zonfrillo.

Declaration

The committee members declare that they have approved the committee's report above.

Signed on behalf of the committee by

Mike Harrison (Chairman) on 11 August 2016

Bob Furness (Treasurer) on, 11 August 2016

MINUTES OF THE 30TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB—HELD AT THE CAIRN-BAAN HOTEL ON SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2015

42 Members were present.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Colin and Renee Birks, Roger Broad, Lilly Cregeen, Paul Daw, Tony and Shelley Fouracre, Sue Furness, Dave Heeley, Sallie Jack, Peter Roberts, Callum Satchel, Nigel Scriven and Blair Urquhart.

2. Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 29th AGM held on 22 November 2014 had been published in the September 2015 issue of *The Eider*. Acceptance of the minutes as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Ian Hopkins and seconded by Norman Rea, was unopposed.

3. Matters arising not covered in the following items

There were no matters arising from the minutes which would not be covered by the items on the agenda.

4. Chairman`s report

Mike Harrison delivered his report:

The aims of the Argyll Bird Club are to promote interest in and conservation of the birds of Argyll and their habitats and I will begin my report of our activities over the past year by looking at what we have done to promote interest in our birds and their habitats. Here at Cairnbaan at our Autumn meeting last year we heard about the birds and habitats of the island of Lismore; about how the conflicting interests of farmers and conservationists regarding White-tailed Eagles can be managed; how different forestry management practices impact on bird diversity; some aspects of working in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park; how the impact of weather conditions on bird feeding behaviour was investigated in an Argyll garden; and were given both a description of the BTO's breeding bird survey and an account of the experiences of a BBS surveyor. Our Spring meeting in Inveraray opened with a talk on Clyde seabirds, with special focus on Herring Gulls, and this was followed by talks on the tracking of Golden Eagles; an account of the status of Grey Herons in Argyll generally and on Colonsay in particular; another farmer/conservationist conflict, this time over geese on Islay. Moving from birds to habitats we heard about the Atlantic hazelwoods of Argyll; and finally a look across the country at the life of Bearded Tits in the Tay reedbeds. Approximately 60 members attended one or both of these meetings.

Our programme of monthly field trips continued throughout the year. Argyll is a big place and we try to move both the field trips and the indoor meetings around the county so that it is not always the same people who have the furthest to travel. This year there were visits to Appin and Ledaig Point in North Argyll; Loch Gilp, the Add estuary and Tainish in Mid-Argyll; Ormsary in Knapdale; Skipness and the Sound of Gigha in north Kintyre; and trips over the sea to the islands of Lismore and Colonsay. The end of May saw twelve members spend a weekend on Mull by way of celebration of the Club's 30th anniversary. The field trips were enjoyed by about 35 members in total over the year. You will notice that we did not visit Cowal this year. We could do with some more locations and leaders for our field trips, so if you have a local patch suitable

for a day visit by a group of 10-15 birders, especially in Cowal, please let the committee know.

The club website is one of our principal tools for promoting interest in the birds of Argyll. Ably maintained by Jim Dickson, Paul Daw and Bob Furness, the website had over 37,000 page visits in the year to August, a 16% increase over the previous twelve months, with visits from seven overseas countries alongside those from the UK. A full report will be included in *The Eider* but suffice to say that with 65% return visits and over 40% of visits being to the Sightings page, the effort put in by the team to keep us up to date with the birdlife of Argyll is clearly valued by users.

Our newsletter, *The Eider*, continues to go from strength to strength under Steve Petty's editorship with more than 20 pages of Club news, articles, book reviews, and recent reports published every three months. Newsletters like this cannot be sustained without a constant supply of material, so how about writing up your experiences of birds or other wildlife and sending them to Steve for publication?

Our activities towards promoting the conservation of the birds of Argyll generally fall into three areas: recording the occurrence of the birds; publishing those records; and supporting ornithological fieldwork and conservation work relating to the birds. The recording team led by Jim Dickson received more than 21,000 individual records for 2014 for processing and entry into the database, and downloaded another 13,000 from the BTO's BirdTrack system. Far from being overwhelmed by this large number the team are always looking for more—the more data that are available the better able we are to support and conserve our bird species. So please send in your records. And we should also acknowledge the work of the Argyll Bird Records Committee which considers the increasing number of reports of rare birds in the county. But the collection of data is only half the story; the other half relates to how they are used. Several requests for data extracts were received during the past twelve months, from both commercial organisations and academic researchers, but the main vehicle for publishing the data is the *Argyll Bird Report*, compiled by a small team led by Jim Dickson. Volume 25 of the report, covering 2013, was published in February and distributed to

members at the Spring Meeting in Inverary. Work on Volume 26 is already in hand and the report should be available at the Spring Meeting next year. Sales of the report are an important source of revenue for the club and we have had a particularly good year in that regard.

The club has made three small grants of funds this year, supporting Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, funding new nets for a constant effort ringing site in Kintyre, and supporting the continuation of Breeding Bird Survey work at Tainish National Nature Reserve.

None of these activities which have taken place over the last year happened by themselves and our thanks are due to my fellow office-bearers and committee members, the records committee, the recorder and his recording and bird report teams, the editor of *The Eider*, the website team, the meeting organisers, and the leaders of the field trips. That sounds like a lot of people, but is in fact only 20 individuals. So if you would like to lend a hand and spread the load, please get in touch.

As the Club enters its 31st year I believe it is in good heart.

5. Secretary's report

Mike Harrison, who had acted as Secretary for the past year, delivered his report:

The outcome of last year's AGM was a ten man (literally, where are our lady members?) committee with no secretary. Four committee meetings were held over the year to manage the business of the club and plan our activities. Financing the *Argyll Bird Report* continues to exercise our minds as it is by far the largest single item of expenditure. Requests for sponsorship were made to CalMac and ScottishPower but without success. However, efforts to get both the report and our book *Birds of Argyll* back into Waterstone's bookshop in Oban were successful and the increased sales through this and other outlets took the pressure off the finances to the extent that we do not need to implement the subscription increase with which we threatened you at the last AGM.

To try to promote the club to a wider audience the Spring meeting in Inveraray was advertised in the local newspapers of Argyll. As far as we could tell, no-one attended the meeting as a result of the advert and we have not repeated that

experiment.

Communication routes to both members and non-members have had plenty of discussion without any conclusions being reached. One aspect of this relates to the possible use by the club of social media, Facebook, Twitter etc. We plan to have a speaker on this topic at the Spring meeting and will perhaps be able to make some progress thereafter. Another aspect of communication is the possible use of the club email list for non-Club business. Some options for this were set out in the September edition of *The Eider* and we will return to this under Any Other Business later in the meeting.

The Club's submissions to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator were accepted and the Club continues to enjoy charitable status. The Club continued its insurance against third party claims.

My thanks go to David Jardine for keeping the minutes of the meetings while I have been doubling up as chairman and secretary and to my fellow committee members.

6. Treasurer's report for financial year 2014-2015

Bob Furness delivered his report which had been published in the June 2015 edition of *The Eider*:

Our cash balance at the end of the year stood at £10,440.50, an increase of £180.26 from the previous year. Income from subscriptions was very slightly lower than for the previous year, but much the same as in 2013. Fluctuations in subscription income arise due to changes in numbers of members, but also from late payments arriving from members who forgot to renew in January; these often arrive around the end of the financial year in early April so may happen to fall in one year or the next. Income from bank interest was zero as Treasurers' Accounts no longer get interest, so this source of income has now fallen out of the accounts. Raffles at the indoor meetings continue to provide useful income, as well as entertainment, and we are grateful to members who contribute items to be raffled. Sales were mainly of the book which is still selling steadily and has not yet run out, but included small numbers of bird reports too. We do not reclaim Gift Aid every year so this was a welcome addition to this year's accounts. The relatively large income from data provision is

also welcome, though the level of this income is likely to fluctuate and may not be this high in future.

Expenditure included printing of the *Argyll Bird Report* and associated postage and envelope costs, but these costs were down on the previous year when we had two bird reports within a single financial year. Insurance costs included insurance of the club's telescope and binoculars now available for monthly field trips, as well as third party cover for club activities. The web site licence costs also happen not to fall in each financial year and the costs paid in 2014-15 cover two years of leasing our web site. The fee that we pay for the web site includes a component based on volume of hits the web site receives. It is satisfying to report that this fee has increased, indicating that the web site is attracting increasing numbers, presumably mostly in response to the excellent and up to date bird observations being listed on the Recent Reports page. Grants made during 2014-15 included materials to fence off and establish signs at a little tern colony to reduce human disturbance, support for twite colour ringing, purchase of mist nets for a Constant Effort ringing site, and the ground rent for Machrihanish Seabird Observatory. Despite spending nearly £1,000 on grants, the accounts show a small surplus for the year, thanks especially to income from data provision from the bird records database. The Accounts have been audited by Dr Bernie Zonfrillo.

In response to a question as to why subscriptions were not raised a small amount each year Bob explained that being a small club, the bank would not allow the use of direct debit and the difficulty of changing standing orders on a regular basis meant that little financial advantage would be gained by changing the subscription on an annual basis. Rather it was more economical to make changes to standing orders once every five years or so.

Adoption of the Treasurer's Report and Accounts, proposed by Douglas Barker and seconded by Malcolm Chattwood, was unopposed.

7. Membership Secretary's report

Bob Furness delivered the Membership Secretary's report, which had been published in the June 2015 edition of *The Eider*, on behalf of Sue

Furness:

Our number of memberships has remained similar to last year's total. In April 2015 at the end of the financial year we had a total of 195 memberships, including a good number of family memberships, though (as usual) a few members have not yet responded to a request for subscription renewal, so the number may increase as these late payments arrive. We have approximately 300 members in the club if we count individuals rather than memberships.

8. Election of office bearers and committee members

All the office bearers and committee members had indicated that they were willing to stand for re-election.

For the post of Chairman, Mike Harrison was proposed by John Anderson, seconded by Janet Palmar and elected unopposed.

For the posts of Vice-Chairman and Treasurer respectively, Nigel Scriven and Bob Furness were proposed by Malcolm Chattwood, seconded by Steve Petty and elected unopposed.

For the post of Secretary, Anne Archer was proposed by Mike Harrison, seconded by David Jardine and elected unopposed.

For election to the committee, Gordon Holm was proposed by Mike Harrison and seconded by Steve Petty.

Retiring committee members Neil Brown, Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, David Jardine, Steve Petty, Andy Robinson and Blair Urquhart were proposed en-bloc for election to the committee by Mike Harrison and seconded by Bob Furness. No other nominations were made and, as the number of nominations did not exceed the maximum number of committee members, the eight nominees were confirmed as committee members.

For the post of Membership Secretary, Sue Furness was proposed by David Palmar, seconded by John Anderson and elected unopposed.

9. A.O.C.B.

Use of the membership email list. The committee has historically restricted the use of the membership email list to Club business and recognises that it should not be used for any form of commercial advertising. However, from time

to time other events or matters come up which may deserve wider circulation to members before publication of the next edition of *The Eider*. Guidance was sought from the members present as to how this could be accommodated. Option 1, to use the current list for items approved by the committee, was supported by 15 members. Option 2, to create a new email list of members who specifically asked to receive this type of communication, was supported by 12 members. Option 3, to post the information on the website rather than use email, was supported by 11 members. During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- use of the website would reach more than just club members,

- use of social media might be helpful,
- maintaining two email lists could be difficult,
- other events in Argyll which may be of interest to members should be included.

The general point was made that the more information that was made available the better it would be. A combination of options 1 and 3, i.e., an email to announce a posting on the website, was also suggested. After confirming that the committee is already considering the use of social media the Chairman thanked the members for their guidance on the use of the membership email list.

JMH 19.11.15



Agenda for the 31st AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

The AGM will be held on Saturday 12th November 2016 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, Lochgilphead.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2015 AGM
3. Matters arising not covered in the following items
4. Annual report and accounts
5. Election of office bearers and committee members

The current office bearers and committee members are listed on the back page. A maximum of 12 members can be elected and nominations are invited.

6. A.O.C.B.



©Jim Dickson

ABC field trip to Loch Gilp, the Add Estuary and Tainish NNR on 28 May

Eleven club members met at the Corran Car Park in Lochgilphead in somewhat colder conditions than forecast. An easterly breeze and cloudy skies meant that the light was rather dull and it was definitely a day to keep our jackets on. After some introductions to new folk taking part in an outing we started to pick out a few species at the meeting area with probably the best find at this stage being a Common Swift that zoomed overhead. On previous trips to the head of Loch Gilp we usually started by walking along to the front green. However on this occasion, due to the tide being fully out and some disturbance by dogs running around on the mud, we set off for Ardrishaig to scan the loch and look further out into Loch Fyne.

Looking out to Duncuan Island at the mouth of Loch Gilp we 'scoped' about 20 or so Common Terns in with nesting Black-headed Gulls. In Ardrishaig we noticed a few nesting Common Gulls and also a nest hole with Black Guillemots popping in and out. Just offshore female Eiders had some tiny chicks, more Black Guillemots were out on Loch Gilp along with a few Red-breasted Mergansers. Scanning further out in to Loch Fyne small groups of Gannets were noted, Shags and a few Cormorants were present. But, no Manx Shearwaters or Kittiwakes were evident on this occasion. Calling Rock Pipits could be heard and were eventually spotted on the rocky shore below us.

Next stop was at Dunaddy on the Crinan Canal where we watched up to ten House Martins feeding at close range catching insects over the canal. We were hoping to see Garden Warblers that had a territory here. However they were

not wanting to show, although Blackcaps and Siskins seemed to be singing all around and a Wood Warbler was heard further along the canal. More time was spent scanning the Add Estuary from the Islanadd Bridge where several species were seen with newly fledged young including Eider, Canada Geese and Shelduck. Sky Larks were in good voice across the Moine Mhor moss and our first Whinchat was noticed nearby. A single Common Sandpiper was noted at the river side and small numbers of breeding Redshanks were picked out in the distance. However, the highlight was a single Osprey hunting above the estuary and was very obliging by working its hovering searches for fish in our direction and eventually not too far over our heads giving great views. Back to our cars and driving around to Crinan Ferry we collectively noted Stonechats, Cuckoo, Sedge Warblers, Reed Bunting, Whinchat and Linnets. At Crinan Ferry the first signs of the sun coming out and a bit of warmth helped us to decide to have lunch there, during which time we had great views of a bright Lesser Redpoll and a Common Redstart was heard singing not far away.

After lunch we headed for the 'rain forest' at Tainish NNR just past Tayvallich although not the best time of day for songsters. Most of the noises we heard were from very loud humans and the area was much busier than usual probably because it was a Bank Holiday weekend? Once away from the background noise we could hear Garden Warblers and Blackcaps, lots of Wrens, several Common Redstart, a couple of Tree Pipits and perhaps best of all a loud Wood Warbler, which after a bit of a wait eventually showed

itself well. Some damselflies and hawker dragonfly were noted along with Specked Wood butterflies and Jimmy and Morag Maxwell found a Marsh Fritillary butterfly (photo opposite).

The final leg of this trip was a quick look further down the road past Tayvallich at the Ulva Lagoon 'puddle' which was very quiet bird-wise, although a Chiffchaff was heard. We returned to our Lochgilphead starting point just before 17.00hrs after a leisurely day's birding and up 63 species tallied.

Combined species list: Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Shelduck, Mallard, Red-breasted Merganser, Cormorant, Shag, Grey Heron, Buzzard, Osprey, Oystercatcher, Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Herring Gull, Lesser Black Backed Gull, Greater Black Backed Gull, Common Tern, Black Guillemot, Common Guillemot, Collared Dove, Sky Lark, Sand Martin, Swallow, House Martin, Tree pipit, Meadow Pipit,



Marsh Fritillary ©Jimmy Maxwell

Rock Pipit, Pied Wagtail, Wren, Dunnock, Robin, Redstart, Whinchat, Stonechat, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Wood Warbler, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Hooded Crow, Raven, Starling, House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnet, Redpoll, Reed Bunting.

Jim Dickson



ABC field trip to Skipness on 26 June

©Mike Harrison

The weather forecast had caused concern to be raised by several people planning to come on this trip, which prompted me to check the distant view to the west from my window before I left home. However, Islay, as well as Northern Ireland, were bathed in sunshine and the breeze was light. Having met the other eight club members at Skipness as arranged, we set off feeling quite posi-

tive, and I had warned the caterers at the Fish Cabin to expect nine hungry birdwatchers for lunch.

We spent a little time in the woods at the car park where a family of Wrens was very much in evidence as well as Blackbirds, with a Chaffinch drinking from the burn. But, many midges in this area prompted us to keep moving although we

had not managed to see a Grey Wagtail here as in the past. The hoped-for Tree Creeper was spotted as well as Blue Tit, Song Thrush and Spotted Flycatchers, with Chiffchaff calling and then, a Greater Spotted Woodpecker was found, again in an area where it had been noted during past ABC trips. Proceeding along Campbell's Glen, Siskins were present as well as good numbers of juvenile Swallows looking momentarily like House Martins (without white rumps) owing to their short tails. There were also two House Martins (the real thing), but no Sand Martins. Hooded Crows were in evidence but only one Collared Dove, a distant Common Buzzard and high in the trees Goldcrests flitted about as well as a beautiful, bright and very vocal male Bullfinch. Nearby Pied Wagtails, a Dunnock and a robin made themselves heard as well as a Blackcap, and a Coal Tit foraged for insects at the top of some pine trees. As we turned towards the coast, Starlings with juveniles were in evidence and Wood Pigeon were noted in the fields along with a Skylark high up battling with the breeze, which was now bringing in a fine smurry rain. A Herring Gull flew overhead, the first of many as we proceeded along the coast and Gannets were spotted fishing further out to sea as well as two Red-throated Divers, and Shag and Cormorant quite close in to the shore. At last a grey wagtail was seen and the first of many Oyster Catchers as



Juvenile Spotted Flycatcher
©Mike Harrison



Dark Giant Horsefly *Tabanus sudeticus* photographed during the trip ©Mike Harrison

the Fish Cabin (and lunch) came into view. In a small sandy bay surrounded by rocks and grass, a Ringed Plover anxiously ran to and fro as we passed hastily by, and here also a Common Sandpiper and several Rock Pipits were being observed by a Great Black-backed gull and a nearby a Grey Heron. At the top of an isolated tree a pipit was silently perched and thoughts were of tree pipit, but it soon became clear this was a Meadow Pipit, but a Reed Bunting soon made up for our disappointment and was followed by several House Sparrows and finally, a delicious lunch.

List for the day in order of appearance—Wren, Spotted Flycatcher, Chaffinch, Tree Creeper, Blue Tit, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Siskin, Hooded Crow, Collared Dove, Common Buzzard, Chiffchaff, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Goldcrest, Blackcap, House Martin, Swallow, Pied Wagtail, Dunnock, Robin, Meadow Pipit, Coal Tit, Bullfinch, Starling, Woodpigeon, Skylark, Gannet, Shag, Red-throated Diver, Herring Gull, Oystercatcher, Grey Wagtail, Cormorant, Rock Pipit, Ringed Plover, Reed Bunting, Great Black-backed Gull, Common Sandpiper, Grey Heron, House Sparrow, Carrion Crow.

Katie Pendreigh

Recent bird sightings May to July 2016

Subalpine Warbler
Islay, 16 May 2016
©Jim Dickson

Presented here are records of rare and unusual species as well as counts and movements of more common birds in Argyll during this period. I wish to thank to everyone who sent in records and I apologise for any errors or omissions. Ideally records should be submitted using the Argyll Bird Recording System or the BTO BirdTrack system. For information about either scheme please email

abcrecorder@outlook.com

A more detailed and up-to-date account of recent sightings, including a list of spring migrant arrival dates, is available on the Argyll Bird Club website.

Machrihanish SBO = Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, Kintyre.

Swans, ducks, geese and game-birds

PALE-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE. High count: Eighty-four were at Balephetrish Bay, Tiree on 1 May.

WIGEON. First returning birds noted: An adult male at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 9 Jul and three there on 23 Jul.

GADWALL. A male flew past Machrihanish SBO on 2 May was the only mainland record.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL. A male was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 1 May (John Bowler).

SHOVELER. Bred successfully at Wesport Marsh, Kintyre with eight young noted on 8 May, a notable record away from Islay and Tiree.

GARGANEY. A male at Westport Marsh, Kintyre on 3-7 May was only the second Kintyre record (Eddie Maguire). Two were at the RSPB Gruinart Reserve, Islay on 10 May (James How *et al.*).

RING-NECKED DUCK. A fine adult male was at Loch Finlaggan, Islay from 21 Apr, and remained there until at least 15 Jun.

GREATER SCAUP. Three were at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 8 May (unusual at this location). At least three were on Tiree on 1 May.

LONG-TAILED DUCK. A female was at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 24-25 Jun.

COMMON SCOTER. A count of 26 in Gott Bay, Tiree on 21 May was an unusually high count. There was a high count of 243 at the Sound of Gigha, Kintyre on 31 Jul.

VELVET SCOTER. A male was paired with a female Common Scoter at Easter Ellister, Islay on 22 Jun and thought to be from the captive collection once kept nearby (photo next page).

QUAIL. One was heard at the Laggan, Kintyre on 18 May, one was calling at Loch Buie, Mull on 4 Jun and one was calling near Ford, Mid-Argyll on 9 Jun.



Female Common Scoter with male Velvet Scoter, Easter Ellister, Islay on 22 June ©Kevin West

Seabirds (divers, grebes, shearwaters, petrels, egrets and herons)

SOOTY SHEARWATER. One was between Coll and Mull on 16 Jul and one was off the Cairns of Coll on 20 Jul.

MANX SHEARWATER. An impressive 15,000+ were noted in huge rafts off West Hynish, towards Skerryvore, off Tiree on 28 May. Three hundred and fifty were counted off Machrihanish SBO on 2 Jul.

STORM PETREL. Forty-six were counted from the Tiree to Barra ferry on 27 Jul.

PIED-BILLED GREBE. One was reported from Loch Feorlin, Mid-Argyll from 6 May.

Raptors to rails

MARSH HARRIER. An immature male was at Loch Bhassapol, Tiree on 5 Jun (Keith Gillon), a female type was at Cnoc Reamhar, Jura on 6 May (Louise Muir) and a female was reported from Tayinloan, Kintyre on 18 May (Phil and Tammy Holgate).

BLACK KITE. One was seen and filmed near Machrihanish Village, Kintyre on 11 May (Aidan MacCormick).

RED KITE. One was seen at Portnahaven, Islay on 22 May (Mary Redman).

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE. Numerous reports. Outwith usual areas—an adult, well offshore, flew north past Machrihanish SBO on 8 May was only the third record there. A sub-adult was at Crossapol, Coll on 16 May.

CORNCRAKE. Two were calling on Easdale Island, Mid-Argyll in mid-May. One was calling near Machrihanish, Kintyre from mid-May. Preliminary findings indicate 346 calling males on Tiree which would be a 2.7% increase on 2015.

COOT. One was at Westport Marsh, Kintyre on 8 May.

Waders

GOLDEN PLOVER. Higher counts—a peak count of 1,800 at

the Reef, Tiree on 2 May with up to 700 elsewhere on the Island in early May.

GREY PLOVER. A summer-plumaged bird flew past Machrihanish SBO on 10 May. Two were at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 26 Jul.

RINGED PLOVER. A high count of 158 was made at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 18 May. A good passage on Tiree with a peak count of 550 at Ruaig on 15 May.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER. One was at Loch Kinnabus, Islay on 10 May (Dave Woods).

DOTTEREL. A female was at Vaul Golf Course, Tiree on 13 May (Jim Dickson).

RED KNOT. Seven flew past Machrihanish SBO on 10 May. A peak count of 14 was made at Traigh Bhagh, Tiree on 5 Jun.

SANDERLING. A high count of 130 flew past Machrihanish SBO on 18 May and a peak count of 170+ returning birds flew past there on 25 Jul. There was a high count of 192 at Gott Bay, Tiree on 31 Jul.

CURLEW SANDPIPER. A red adult was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 3 Jun. A faded-red adult was seen briefly then flew south at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 24 Jul.

DUNLIN. A high count of 239 was made at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 18 May. Strong passage was noted on Tiree in May with hundreds at various sites and a peak count of 1,600 at Vaul Bay on 23 May. A peak of 3,034 birds was recorded at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 10 May. Return passage included high counts of 187 at Loch Gilp and 132 at Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll on 24 Jul, 200+ past Machrihanish SBO on 25 Jul (with 806 logged there between 19-30 Jul).

LITTLE STINT. One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 3 Jun (John Bowler).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER. One was at Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree on 27 May

(John Bowler).

TURNSTONE. A high count of 70+ at Machrihanish SBO on 21 May.

RUFF. During May two were on Tiree and up to three were on Islay. An adult male, still in breeding plumage, was at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 19 Jul.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT. Returning passage included 11 at Soa, Tiree on 8 Jul, one at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll from 9 Jul, one at Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll on 24 Jul, two at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 26 Jul, one at Seil Island, Mid-Argyll on 28 Jul and five at Hynish, Tiree on 31 Jul.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT. An impressive 189 birds arrived at the head of Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 1 May. A total of at least 394 were around Tiree on 2 May. Returning adults included one on Tiree on 7 Jul with 12 there on 10 Jul. The first one at Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll on 23 Jul with two the following day, and the first two were at Machrihanish SBO on 25 Jul.

WHIMBREL. A peak of 16 near the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 1 May, a count of 10 at Langamull, Mull on 5 May and 40 at Bruichladdich, Islay on 6 May. Returning passage birds included two at Machrihanish SBO on 7 Jul and a peak of three there on 20 Jul. The first bird at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll was on 11 Jul with two there from 20 Jul.

GREEN SANDPIPER. One flew past Machrihanish SBO on 9 May (Eddie Maguire).

WOOD SANDPIPER. One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 16 May (John Bowler).

GREENSHANK. A high count of seven was made at Loch Tulla, North Argyll on 5 Jun. Returning autumn birds were at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll with two and at the Add Estuary Mid-Argyll with up to three from 1 Jul onwards peaking at five on 23 Jul. On Mull four were at Dervaig on 17 Jul and up to five at Fidden at the end of Jul.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS. One was at RSPB Gruinart Reserve, Islay on 2-8 May (James How *et al.*).

Skuas, gulls, terns and auks

POMARINE SKUA. A sub-adult was seen off Machrihanish SBO on 4 May (photo opposite). Four were reported off Scarinish, Tiree on 11 May (per BirdTrack) and three were reported off the Oban to Mull ferry on 16 Jul.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL. A 'near' adult in summer plumage was at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 4

Little Tern, Tiree on 12 May ©Jim Dickson



Jul (Jim Dickson).

RING-BILLED GULL. One (age not stated) reported from Dervaig, Mull on 16 May (further details are required please).

ICELAND GULL. One was at Bellochantuy, Kintyre on 25 May. Several reports from Tiree in May to Jul probably refer to just one bird, and one or two 2CY (second-calendar-year) birds were on Mull during May.

GLAUCOUS GULL. One (age not stated) was at Gartmain, Islay on 16 May. A 2CY bird was at Machrihanish SBO on 1 and 22 May, a 2CY was at Tobermory, Mull on 3 Jun and a poorly 3CY was on Tiree on 5-10 Jul.

SANDWICH TERN. A high count of 34 were at Machrihanish SBO on 21 May. A very early juve-



Pomarine Skua,
Machrihanish SBO on
4 May ©Eddie Maguire

nile was noted at Machrihanish, Kintyre on 3 Jul and perhaps indicates local breeding. A peak of 30+ adults were also there on 3 Jul.

ARCTIC TERN. A high count of 750 at Gott Bay, Tiree on 8 Jul included 600+ second-year birds.

BLACK TERN. A flock of 15-20 was reported off Garmony, Mull on 22 May (Jacqui Murphy). If accepted, this would probably be the most ever seen together in Scotland.

Doves, cuckoos, owls, swift, kingfisher and woodpeckers

TURTLE DOVE. One was in a garden at Ganavan, near Oban, Mid-Argyll on 19 May (Frank Robert), one was at Upper Killyan, The Oa, Islay on 28 May (Dave Wood), one was at Beinn Hough, Tiree on 6 Jun (Keith Gillon), one was at Balephuill, Tiree on 8 Jun (John Bowler) and one was at Kinnabus, Islay on 15 Jun (Phill Catton).

WOODPIGEON. Up to three were on Tiree in May and three or more there in Jun.

STOCK DOVE. Two were reported from Kinnabus, The Oa, Islay on 19 May (per Peter Roberts).

LONG-EARED OWL. One was reported from Coll on 14 Jun and one was in a garden at Baugh, Tiree on 25 Jun.

SHORT-EARED OWL. Outwith the usual strongholds of Islay and Mull, one was seen and photographed at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 18 Jul.

COMMON SWIFT. First reports: three were at Kilmichael Glassary, Mid-Argyll on 6 May, one was at Connel, Mid-Argyll on 7 May and six were over Campbeltown, Kintyre on 10 May. Nine were counted over Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll on 26 Jul.

GREEN WOODPECKER. One was at Innellan, Cowal on 6 May (Alan Reid) and one was at Killiechronan Wood, Mull on 15 May (Arthur Brown).

Passerines (larks to buntings)

WILLOW WARBLER. At Aros Moss, Kintyre ringing site on 22 Jul a spectacular 'fall' of an estimated 300-500 birds was witnessed—"the constant calls and signing was awesome" (Neil Brown).

SUBALPINE WARBLER. One was at Kinnabus, The Oa, Islay, feeding in Sycamores on 16 May (Dave Wood *et al.*). See photo at start of article. This was the first record for Islay and the second for Argyll.

LESSER WHITETHROAT. On Mull one was reported from Loch Frisa on 6 May (Paul Shaw) and one was reported from Loch Buie on 13 May (Ian Burgess).

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER. Several widespread reports of birds 'reeling' until the end of Jul and into Aug.

MARSH WARBLER. A male was in song at Scarinish, Tiree on 4 Jun (Keith Gillon, John Bowler).

REED WARBLER. A male was seen and sang briefly at Balephuill, Tiree on 11 May (John Bowler).

ICTERINE WARBLER. One was reported from Bor-gadale, near the Mull of Kintyre on 5 May (Chris Brown) and a male in song was at Scarinish, Tiree on 9 Jun (Keith Gillon, John Bowler) The last Argyll record was in 1993.

NUTHATCH. One was calling at Ardkinglass Woodland, Cowal on 6 May, one was in a garden at Stronafian, Cowal on 30 Jun, one was in a garden at Barcaldine, North Argyll on 28 Jun (photo below), one was in a garden at Dalmally, Mid-Argyll on 16 Jun, one was in a garden near Otter Ferry, Cowal on 17 Jul and one was in a garden at Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll on 24-25 Jul.

RING OUZEL. Reports from three areas in North Argyll and two areas on Mull.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER. A good number of reports were received this summer including one at Tayvallich (see photo on next page).

PIED FLYCATCHER. A male was at Scarinish, Tiree on 7 May.

TREE SPARROW. One remained at Baugh, Tiree until 2 May with another at Kirkapol on 9 Jun. On Mull, one was at Ardtun on 17 May and one was at Scoor on 18 May.

WHITE WAGTAIL. A peak of 16 was counted near the

Nuthatch, Barcaldine on 28 June ©Clive Craik



Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 4 May, and at least 40 were at Machrihanish SBO on 21 May.

SISKIN. A flock of 60, including many juveniles, was near Drimvore, Mid-Argyll on 9 Jul.

TWITE. A count of 100+ at Portrigh, Carradale, Kintyre was notable for the mainland.

COMMON REDPOLL. Up to six birds on Tiree during May with suspected nesting at up to three sites there in Jun. Also several reports from Treshnish Farm, Mull in May with breeding suspected.

COMMON ROSEFINCH. An adult male was seen at Ballochgair (north of Peninver), Kintyre on 11 Jul (Bob Relph).

CROSSBILL. A count of 15 in Kilmichael Forest, Mid-Argyll on 2 Jun.

HAWFINCH. A female was in a garden at Octofad Farm, the Rhinns, Islay on 10-11 May (Tony & Irene Miller *et al.*) (photo opposite).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW. One (a tan-striped individual) was in a garden at Vault, Tiree on 16 Jun (Keith Gillon, John Bowler). (photo opposite) This is only the second for Argyll with the previous record being in Cowal on 19 Jun 2014.

Escapes/introductions

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET. One was in a garden at Bullwood, Dunoon on 17 Jun (Michael Kent) and seen again there on 8 Jul (Cherry Cook).

STOP PRESS (up to 13 August).

MANX SHEARWATER. 23,500+ were off Tiree on 8 August.

SOOTY SHEARWATER. One was off Coll/Tiree on 1st and two were off Tiree on 6 August.

MARSH HARRIER. A female was at Lochdon, Mull on 2 August.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER. A juvenile was found on Tiree on 14 August

Jim Dickson, Argyll Bird Recorder



Top photo: Hawfinch, Islay on 10 May ©Irene Miller

Middle photo: White-throated Sparrow, Vault on 16 June ©Keith Gillon

Bottom photo: Spotted Flycatcher, Tayvallich on 18 June ©Morag Rea

Nest boxes for Swifts



Eight boxes at Laroch House (above the tearoom). The lower two boxes on the left have entrances from below and are the ones the Swifts prefer ©Murray Sim

The Robin's Nest Tearoom in Taynuilt should be renamed 'The Swift's Nest' because of the effort the owner Murray Sim has put into the conservation of the Swifts, which return annually to Taynuilt to nest.

For nine or more years Murray has dedicated considerable time and money to increase the number of Swift offspring by buying and erecting nest boxes on the side of his house, called Laroch (above the tearoom, photo above), and on the adjacent Graham's grocers shop (photo below). Initially Murray erected four boxes of the bottom entrance type boxes, two on each building.

Subsequently in 2014 he erected a further six of the dedicated German made Schwegler 'Starling free' design. Unfortunately they have not been successful, as the Swifts seem not to like the front entrance design. Laroch is the house in which Murray was brought up, and his love of Swifts comes from the time when they nested in the eaves and in cracks in the wall of the house, as they still do to this day. Meanwhile, House Sparrows enjoy the luxury boxes which the Swifts have rejected. Murray has watched as Starlings have attacked individual Swifts and on occasions grounded a bird. The sorry victim were unable to fly from the ground, so Murray housed them overnight in a dark place, before launching them from his hands in the morning. At such times he has noted

the characteristic shake of their bodies in flight in order to restore their feathers.

Come late summer the swifts leave around mid-August, when the bottom-entry boxes are closed off until near to the return date of 4-5 May. If these are left accessible, Starlings will occupy and build nests in the boxes prior to the return of the swifts.

Murray loves all birds but has a particular fascination with the 'devil birds'. He has read about them extensively and points out that they can fly very high indeed above the clouds. He has experienced at close quarters their powerful wing beat, strong and noisy. In Argyll Bird Club's *Birds of Argyll* it states: '*...the swift has always been a relatively scarce breeding species in Argyll... but that...the population is probably limited by the cool, wet climatea lack of suitable nest sites may also be a factor....* Murray has provided precious nests for these sublime visitors.

Mary Macintyre

Note. There were young Swifts in the boxes at the time of writing (per. Murray Sim).



Two bottom-entrance Swift boxes above the grocers shop ©Murray Sim

White-necked Jacobin—one of the many species of humming birds to be seen at the centre
©Gordon Holm



The Asa Wright Nature Centre, Trinidad

The Asa Wright Centre is in the Northern Highlands of Trinidad and is a world renowned birding site. It was originally a coffee, cocoa and citrus plantation set in old growth forest. It was owned by Newcombe Wright and his wife Asa. Both were famous for their interest in nature and allowed access to the plantation for viewing and

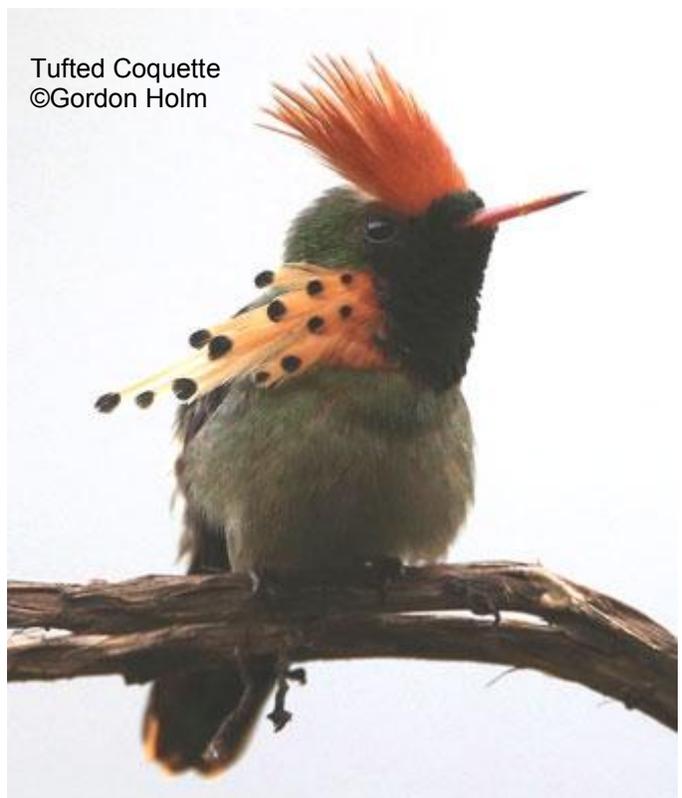
studying birds. On his death in 1967 the estate was acquired by a charitable trust and Asa continued to live there until her death in 1971. Under the guidance of the trust this has become a world-renowned birding site for both visitors and researchers.

The estate house contains the visitor centre and dining hall. The veranda looks over the Arima Valley and here many birds can be seen at feeders. Whilst most of these attract humming birds including the beautiful Ruby Topaz, the star is the Tufted Coquette (photo below), which does not come to the feeders, but collects nectar from the purple flowers of the

Motmot ©Gordon Holm



Tufted Coquette
©Gordon Holm





Vervain shrubs. This is the second smallest humming bird in the world. The male has a beautiful tuft and spotted winglets.

Many beautiful birds are attracted to the veranda and fruit is laid out for them. Guided walks are available and there are leks of the Golden and White-bearded Ma-

nakins on the estate. Rarely seen, but distinctly heard is the Bearded Bellbird.

If your stay is three days or longer, a guide will take you to the Dunston Caves where you will see Oilbirds (photo opposite). These birds are similar in size and look like nightjars, but feed at night on fruits. They navigate by echolocation, one of the few birds to use this technique, and locate fruits with specially adapted eyesight. The chicks are fed on rich oily fruits, and before fledging they may be 0.25kg heavier than their parents. In the past, sailors would capture the fledglings and boil them down to obtain a rich oil, thus giving them their name.

In addition to the birds there are many reptiles and mammals, which can be seen around the estate.

Gordon Holm

Goldfinch movements—an update

Prior to 2007 there was no information on movements of Goldfinches in Argyll (ap Rheinallt et al. 2007).

Apart from a bird ringed by a Campbeltown ringer and controlled in Belgium (*Argyll Bird Report 2013*), the information below represents all the known movements of Goldfinches to and from Argyll.

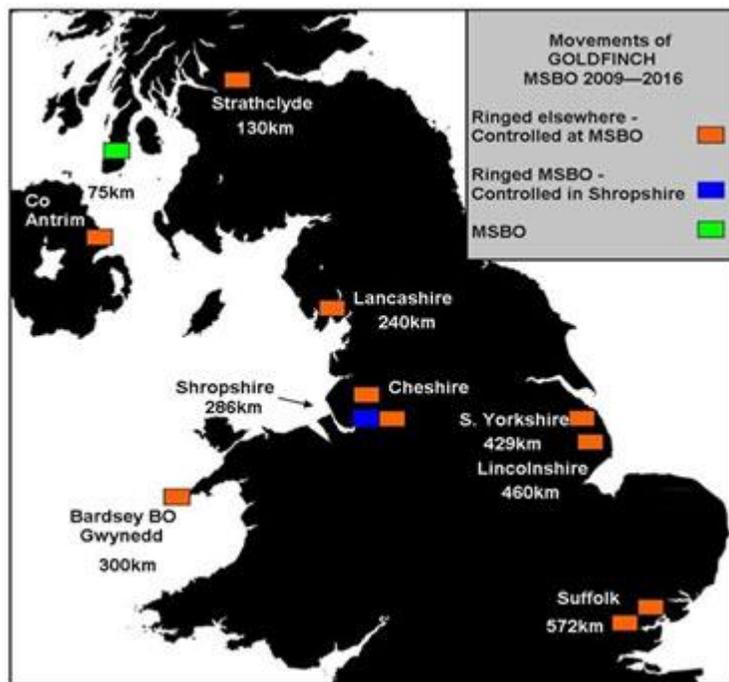
Details of three ringed birds controlled (caught) at Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (MSBO) during spring 2016 are:

Z707030. Ringed on 16th January 2016 at Petre Crescent, Rishton, Lancashire. Controlled at MSBO on 11th April 2016 (sexed as first-winter female).

Z884824. Ringed 17th March 2016 at Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth, Shropshire. Controlled at MSBO on 11th April 2016 (adult male).

Z951418. Ringed 25th February 2016 at Northorpe Fen, Lincolnshire. Controlled at MSBO on 9th April 2016 (first-winter male).

There are seven previous MSBO controls of this species. Four were ringed in winter



The ringing locations of all Goldfinches controlled (10) or recovered (1) at MSBO during 2008-2016.

in England (Cheshire, Shropshire, Suffolk and Yorkshire). The other controls involved birds ringed at Magee Island (Co. Antrim), Strathclyde Country Park and a Welsh-ringed bird from Bardsay Island (Maguire 2012).

Only one of hundreds of Goldfinches ringed at MSBO has been reported elsewhere and this was controlled in England (Shropshire).

These Argyll data add weight to analysis of BTO ringing recoveries showing that many Scottish Goldfinches travel south-east to winter in England.

Eddie Maguire

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Goldfinch ©Eddie Maguire

BTO Breeding Bird Survey—update

BBS has been running since 1994, and the results of the 21st survey for 2015 have just been reported. This and all the previous reports are available on-line at <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/bbs-publications/bbs-reports>. It's too soon for the 2016 results to be available yet. In Scotland there are 62 species for which there are enough data to generate trends, by occurring in 30 BBS squares. These three species are just below this threshold and increased coverage could soon see them included—Stock Dove, Tree Spar-

row and Greylag Goose. The ups and downs from year to year are evened out statistically when a longer-term trend is calculated. These trends then inform conservation priorities.

Please note that there are many species that are not monitored by BBS, and for which other techniques are more appropriate. There are squares available across Argyll, so please contact the BTO local rep (see back page) if you are interested in taking part: <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/regional-network/rn-directory>

Top ten winners and losers in Scotland 1995-2014 (long-term) and 2014-2015 (short-term) (% change)

Winners			
Rank	Species	1995-2014	2014-2015
1	Chiffchaff	+550	+23
2	Blackcap	+465	+10
3	GS Woodpecker	+414	-8
4	Goldfinch	+177	+36
5	House Martin	+135	+2
6	Tree Pipit	+118	-30
7	Whitethroat	+113	-30
8	Great Tit	+70	+11
8	Dunnock	+68	0
10	Siskin	+58	+30

Losers			
Rank	Species	1995-2014	2014-2015
1	Kestrel	-62	+45
2	Lapwing	-57	+14
3	Curlew	-57	-18
4	Swift	-54	+5
5	Greenfinch	-49	+17
6	Rook	-37	+16
7	Oystercatcher	-33	-8
8	Skylark	-26	-3
8	Hooded Crow	-26	-1
10	Linnet	-26	+65

Breeding seabirds on Sanda, Sheep and Glunimore Islands in 2016

Introduction and methods

On 6th June 2016, a boat trip was organized around the Sanda Islands to assess the breeding populations of seabirds.

Many digital photographs of the colonies were taken and all known nesting sites were scrutinised carefully with binoculars.

Northern Fulmar, Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel were not included in the 2016 survey, and the Black Guillemot count was undertaken during April 2016.

Results

The island counts are produced in Table 1. These results can be compared to a survey carried out in 2010 (see Table 2).

Notes

AOT= Apparently Occupied Territory

AON= Apparently Occupied Nest

Discussion

Fulmars were not counted as birds present on ledges do not necessarily represent active nest sites. This was first noted during 2006 and on the last full count (2010). Both Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel nest underground and are monitored by occupied nest sites—therefore, no counts were possible this year. Herring and

Great Black-backed Gulls appear to be doing well, however productivity levels were not available. Lesser Black-backed Gulls have slightly declined although there were never large numbers breeding. Common Gull declined to single figures but now show a significant increase, but again productivity data were not available.

During 2010, it was discovered Mink were killing large numbers of seabirds on Sanda and Sheep Islands, particularly Razorbills. The two main colonies on these islands are now deserted.

Interestingly, in 2013/2014 RSPB researchers noted that Black Guillemots were no longer using traditional nest sites, and instead, were nesting on cliffs. Was this change in nest site selection from boulder field to cliff a response to Mink predation?

The elevated adjustment to nest site se-

Table 1. Counts/estimates for the whole island group—6 June 2016

Species	Sanda	Sheep	Glunimore
Cormorant	0	0	18 AON
Shag	15 AOT	15 AOT	0
Common Gull	25-35 AOT	0	0
L B-b Gull	2 AOT	3 AOT	0
Herring Gull	c. 180 AOT	c. 15 AOT	3 AOT
G B-b Gull	4 AOT	10 AOT	6 AOT
Kittiwake	0	0	30-50 AOT
Common Guillemot	0	0	c. 4000 birds
Razorbill	80 birds	50 birds	c 300 birds
Black Guillemot	170 birds	61 birds	0
Puffin	80 birds	70 birds	30 birds

Table 2. Counts submitted to Joint Nature Conservatory Councils Seabird Monitoring Register for 2010. The species totals are for Sanda, Sheep and Glunimore Islands.

Species	Total
Fulmar	132 pairs
Manx Shearwater	300 pairs
Storm Petrel	200pairs
Cormorant	17 pairs
Shag	354 pairs
Common Gull	60 pairs
L B-b Gull	9 pairs
Herring Gull	210 pairs
G B-b Gull	21 pairs
Kittiwake	36 pairs
Common Guillemot	5000 birds
Razorbill	4000 birds
Black Guillemot	180 birds
Puffin	160 birds

lection was also noted in summer 2015 when no Black Guillemots were frequenting the traditional boulder-field shore sites on the north-west side of Sanda, which had been occupied so diligently for over 30 years. Birds were noted flying up to what were obviously cliff-nest sites. This very recent change to nest-site selection was likely a response to predation of clutches/chicks and probably of adults at boulder-field, ground-level nest sites (personal observations).

Conclusion

Unlike Sanda and Sheep Island, the numbers of breeding seabirds on Glunimore do not appear to have been affected by the recent incursion by Mink. The Shag and Razorbill colonies on both

Sanda and Sheep islands appear to have suffered most.

Species not surveyed in 2016 included Manx Shearwater, Storm Petrel and Puffin—all of which nest underground either in burrows or boulder fields, and must also be vulnerable to predation by Mink.

Perhaps the time has arrived for Scottish wildlife agencies to become involved and instigate a programme of Mink eradication. Data from these islands have contributed greatly to our knowledge of breeding populations and movements of ringed seabirds in south Argyll over almost 40 years?

Rab Morton



Shag colonies have declined greatly on Sanda and Sheep Islands, possibly due to predation by American Mink (illustration by Margaret Staley)

Articles for the December issue of the *Eider* should with the editor before the 20th November 2016

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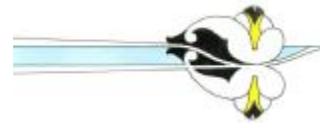
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The Eider



The *Eider* is the quarterly newsletter of the Argyll Bird Club. The editor welcomes articles about birds, wildlife conservation and ecology in Argyll, including articles of a wider natural history interest, notices of forthcoming events, book reviews, press releases and letters. Whenever possible, contributions should be submitted to the editor as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word or rtf format. But, this should not deter potential contributors, as hand-written scripts are also acceptable. If in doubt about whether an article is suitable, please contact the editor for advice.

Suitable illustrations greatly enhance the attractiveness of the *Eider*, and artists and photographers are encouraged to submit artwork and unedited digital photographs (jpeg files preferred) of birds and their habitats to the editor. Please do not embed digital images in word files. Digital photographs of Schedule 1 species taken at or near the nest will not be accepted for publication unless the photographer was covered by an appropriate SNH licence.

The *Eider* is published during the first week of March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor **before** the 20th day of the month prior to publication. However, it greatly helps if material can be submitted well before these deadline dates. Contributions are accepted in the order they are received, which may result in some late submissions being held over until the next issue.

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author/s and not necessarily those of the Argyll Bird Club.

Advertising rates: £80 for a full page, £20 for a quarter page, 7p per word for smaller adverts. Payment must accompany adverts, with cheques made payable to the Argyll Bird Club. Contact the Editor for further information.

More about the Argyll Bird Club

The club was established in 1985 and has around 400 members. Its main role is to encourage an interest in wild birds and their habitats in Argyll; an area of outstanding natural beauty and biological diversity.

The club endeavours to provide a friendly and sociable forum for members of all ages, to meet and enjoy their common interest. This in itself provides a challenge as the human population of Argyll is relatively small and widely dispersed. The club hosts two one-day meetings each year, in spring and autumn. The venue of the spring meeting is rotated between different towns, including Dunoon, Oban and Lochgilphead. The autumn meeting/AGM is held in a convenient central location, usually near Lochgilphead. The club organises field trips for members. It publishes the *Argyll Bird Report*. Additional or past copies can be purchased from the Treasurer. Your annual subscription entitles you to one copy of the *Argyll Bird Report*, four issues of the *Eider* and free admission to the two indoor meetings. New members are always welcome, whether you live in Argyll or not. Membership categories and rates are:

Ordinary	£10
Junior (under 17)	£3
Family	£15
Corporate	£25

Subscriptions are due on 1st January and can be paid by cheque or standing order. New members joining after 1st October are covered until the end of the following year. Further information can be obtained from the Membership Secretary (see the box opposite).