

**The Twenty Eighth  
ARGYLL BIRD REPORT  
With Systematic List for the year  
2016**

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**ISSN 1363-4386**  
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# Introduction

Welcome to the 28<sup>th</sup> Argyll Bird Report which we hope you will enjoy and perhaps encourage you to become more involved with the birdlife of our region, from simply enjoying observing the species we have, to perhaps taking part in survey work or other studies.

2016 was an interesting year for bird-watching in Argyll with 231 species recorded, of which two were new – Swainson's Thrush and Isabelline Wheatear. A record of Thayer's Gull from Islay in 2014 was recently accepted by the BBRC as a first for Scotland and Argyll. Under new taxonomic changes however the British Ornithologists' Union now adopt the International Ornithological Congress list, therefore from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 the 'Thayer's' reverts back to a sub-species of Iceland Gull. Northern race Long-tailed Tits on Mull were also new for Argyll. Other good finds during the year included - Black Kite, Pacific Golden Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Snowy Owl, Icterine Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, White-throated Sparrow and a returning Pied-billed Grebe. Accounts of the new species for Argyll are fully documented in this report as well as papers on the history of Storm Petrels in Kintyre and a write up of the Argyll Rookery survey carried out in 2017, organised by members of the Argyll Bird Club.

In general many species had a poor breeding season in 2016 with numbers down in part due to the wet spring and summer. Recent trends, as shown by the BTO Breeding Bird Survey, indicate that decreases continue for breeding waders, particularly Lapwing, Curlew and Redshank. Other declines in species such as Kestrel, Skylark and Greenfinch as well as trans African-Eurasian migrants relevant to Argyll such as Wood Warbler, Garden Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher and Whinchat have been noted in the UK. The latter group being adversely affected for a variety of largely human related issues, such as degradation and fragmentation of habitats. Some other species are doing relatively well and include - Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Nuthatch, Redstart, Tree Pipit, Goldfinch and Siskin. To get a more accurate picture of trends in Argyll more BBS study squares would be required and many are still available for interested volunteers.

Some regions in Argyll, such as parts of Islay, Mid-Argyll, Mull and Tiree have reasonably good levels of observer cover resulting in a good number and quality of bird records. Other areas such as Cowal, Kintyre and North Argyll, although having small pockets of good coverage, the number of reports received does not always reflect their potential. As such we actively encourage you to be aware of any shortfalls and welcome your records. Often concentrating on a local patch can give rise to exciting discoveries and good quality information as well as being very enjoyable. Records of species where the distribution is very sparse or numbers are decreasing are particularly sought for under reported species such as Goshawk, Green Woodpecker, Nightjar, Ptarmigan and Ring Ouzel.

Jim Dickson (Jan 2018)

# Bird Recording in Argyll

## Submitting your bird records

The Argyll bird recorders maintain the Argyll bird database on behalf of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the Argyll Bird Club and in recent years have been receiving in excess of 30,000 records per year. We welcome all bird records however please look at the guidance sheet on the Argyll Bird Club website under Bird Recording which gives threshold guidelines on what to report. The recorders are happy to input casual reports however when larger volumes of records are submitted we recommend that these are sent in *Excel* spreadsheet format compatible with the Argyll bird database. We can send you a template or for regular record providers we can send an automated input form. Please email [abcrecorder@outlook.com](mailto:abcrecorder@outlook.com) for more details. Records sent to the BTO's BirdTrack and WeBS can be accessed by the recorders as well as records sent to Birdguides.

## Rare birds

Details and photographs of all rare bird sightings should be sent in (preferably emailed) as soon as possible after the sighting to **Jim Dickson**, 11 Pipers Road, Cairnbaan, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8UF. Tel: 01546 603967 E-mail: [Argyllbirder@outlook.com](mailto:Argyllbirder@outlook.com) Please use the standard form (available from Jim). These will be judged locally by the Argyll Bird Records Committee (ABRC) whose members are listed on p. 2, sent on to the *Scottish Birds* Records Committee (SBRC), or passed to the *British Birds* Rarities Committee (BBRC), depending on the species/level of rarity.

The list below is made up of the ABRC list of Argyll rarities and the SBRC list of Scottish rarities (those marked #) details rare species whose occurrence in Argyll needs to be fully documented i.e. details of the circumstances surrounding the sighting and a detailed description of the bird and if possible photographs and field notes.

Records of rarities in the systematic list are accompanied by the names of the observers, starting with the finder(s)/identifier(s), (or, in the absence of this information, the person who first reported the bird to the recorder), followed by the observer(s) who submitted details of the record, if different.

Species for which descriptions are required by the Argyll BRC and the Scottish BRC (#). A full list of BBRC species can be found at [www.bbrc.org.uk](http://www.bbrc.org.uk)

Bewick's Swan	White-billed Diver #
Bean Goose	Cory's Shearwater #
European White-fronted Goose	Great Shearwater #
(race <i>albifrons</i> )	Balearic Shearwater
Egyptian Goose	Great Cormorant (race <i>sinensis</i> )
American Wigeon	Eurasian Bittern
Green-winged Teal	Night-heron #
Garganey (lone females/juveniles)	Cattle Egret #
Red-crested Pochard	Great White Egret
Ring-necked Duck	Purple Heron #
Ferruginous Duck	White Stork
Lesser Scaup #	Glossy Ibis
Surf Scoter (except adult males)	Eurasian Spoonbill
Smew	Red-necked Grebe
Ruddy Duck	Black-necked Grebe

Honey-buzzard	Short-toed Lark #
Black Kite #	Wood Lark #
Montagu's Harrier #	Shore Lark
Goshawk	Red-rumped Swallow #
Rough-legged Buzzard	Cetti's Warbler #
Red-footed Falcon #	Greenish Warbler #
Hobby	Pallas's Leaf Warbler
Spotted Crake	Yellow-browed Warbler
Common Crane	Radde's Warbler #
Avocet	Dusky Warbler #
Black-winged Stilt #	Barred Warbler
Stone Curlew #	Lesser Whitethroat
Little Ringed Plover	Dartford Warbler #
Kentish Plover #	Subalpine Warbler #
American Golden Plover	Icterine Warbler
Temminck's Stint	Melodious Warbler #
White-rumped Sandpiper #	Blyth's Reed Warbler #
Pectoral Sandpiper	Marsh Warbler #
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Reed Warbler
Spotted Redshank	Rose-coloured Starling
Red-necked Phalarope (away from traditional breeding areas)	Common Nightingale
Long-tailed Skua (imms only)	Bluethroat
Sabine's Gull	Red-flanked Bluetail #
Ring-billed Gull	Red-breasted Flycatcher
Yellow-legged Gull #	Tree Sparrow
Caspian Gull #	Yellow Wagtail (all races)
Black Tern	Citrine Wagtail #
White-winged Black Tern #	Richard's Pipit
Roseate Tern	Olive-backed Pipit #
Little Owl	Rock Pipit (Scandinavian race <i>littoralis</i> )
Nightjar	Water Pipit
Alpine Swift #	European Serin #
European Bee-eater	Common Redpoll (all races other than Lesser)
Wryneck	Arctic Redpoll #
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker #	Scottish Crossbill #
Red-backed Shrike	Parrot Crossbill #
Great Grey Shrike	Common Rosefinch
Woodchat Shrike #	Hawfinch
Firecrest	Cirl Bunting #
Crested Tit	Ortolan Bunting #
Willow Tit	Little Bunting #
Marsh Tit	Corn Bunting
Bearded Tit	

# Sighting Highlights of 2016

*Jim Dickson*

*~ January ~*

**LITTLE AUK** Three were in the Sound of Mull on 1 Jan, then many reports of one-two birds during Jan to Feb throughout Argyll including some found inland. **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** A drake was at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay from 4 Jan. **MEDITERRANEAN GULL** One-two birds were at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll from 13 Jan. **RED-NECKED GREBE** One was at Loch na Cille, Mid-Argyll from 17 Jan.

*~ February ~*

**MANX SHEARWATER** An early single was off Aird, Tiree on 2 Feb. **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** A drake was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree from 17 Feb. **GREAT CRESTED GREBE** Five were off Blairmore, Cowal on 23 Feb. **THAYER'S GULL** A juvenile was at Gartbreck, Islay on 27 Feb. **SNOWY OWL** A male was SE of Glen Orchy, North Argyll on 27 Feb. **VELVET SCOTER** Four were at West Loch Tarbert, Kintyre on 27 Feb.

*~ March ~*

**WHITE-BILLED DIVER** One was at sea between Mull and Ardnamurachan on 5 Mar. **RED-NECKED GREBE** One was at Loch Indaal, off Bowmore, Islay from 6 Mar and another was off Loch Crinan, Mid-Argyll on 18 Mar. **OSPREY** An early single was at Danna, Mid-Argyll on 12 Mar. **COMMON POCHARD** Five were at Ardnave, Islay on 13 Mar. **STOCK DOVE** Four were at Sanaigmore, Islay on 15 Mar. **COMMON CHIFFCHAFF** First report was at Balephuill, Tiree on 14 Mar. **WHITE WAGTAIL** First report was at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 15 Mar. **NORTHERN WHEATEAR** First report was at Ross of Mull, Mull on 23 Mar. **GREY PHALAROPE** One was at Kerrara, Mid-Argyll on 26 Mar. **SAND MARTIN** First report was at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay on 27 Mar. **BARN SWALLOW** First report was at Balvicar, Seil Island, Mid-Argyll on 28 Mar. **RING OUZEL** First report was nr Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll on 29 Mar. **SANDWICH TERN** First report was at Bruichladdich, Islay on 30 Mar.

*~ April ~*

**HOUSE MARTIN** First report was at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 6 Apr. **WILLOW WARBLER** First report was at Barr Glen, Kintyre on 7 Apr. **BLACKCAP** First report was at Balephuill, Tiree on 10 Apr. **CUCKOO** First report was at Kilmartin, Mid-Argyll on 13 Apr. **SEDGE WARBLER** First report was at RSPB, Loch Gruinart, Islay on 13 Apr. **COMMON SANDPIPER** First report was at Otter Ferry, Cowal on 14 Apr. **TREE PIPIT** First report was of three at Kilmichael Forest, Mid-Argyll on 15 Apr. **LAPLAND BUNTING** One was at Happy Valley, Tiree on 15 Apr. **COMMON REDSTART** First report was at Taynish NNR, Mid-Argyll on 16 Apr. **ARCTIC TERN** First report was at Ardbeg, Islay on 17 Apr. **CORN CRAKE** First report was at Balinoe, Tiree on 19 Apr. **WOOD WARBLER** First report was in Kilmichael Glen, Mid-Argyll on 19 Apr. **CACKLING GOOSE** Two were on Islay from 19 Apr. **THAYER'S GULL** Re-appeared at Bruichladdich, Islay on 20 Apr. **LITTLE TERN** First report was at Traigh Bhagh, Tiree on 20 Apr. **WHINCHAT** First report was at the Moine Mhor

NNR, Mid-Argyll on 20 Apr. **GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** First report was at Loch Laich, North Argyll on 20 Apr. **PIED FLYCATCHER** A male was at Knock, Mull on 21 Apr. **HAWFINCH** A male and a female were at Loch Uisg, nr Lochdon, Mull on 23 Apr and a male (perhaps same) was at Lochdon, Mull from 23 Apr. **COMMON WHITETHROAT** First report was at Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll on 24 Apr. **RING-NECKED DUCK** A drake (possibly returning from previous years) was at Loch Finlaggan, Islay from 28 Apr. **DOTTEREL** Five were on Oronsay, Colonsay on 30 Apr. **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** First report was at Garmony, Mull on 30 Apr.

*~ May ~*

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL** A drake was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 1 May. **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** One was at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay from 2 May. **GARGANEY** A drake was at Westport Marsh, Kintyre on 2 May. **POMARINE SKUA** A sub-adult was at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 3 May. **COMMON TERN** First report was at Loch Feochan, Mid-Argyll on 5 May. **MARSH HARRIER** One was at Cnoc Reamhar, Jura on 6 May. **GARDEN WARBLER** First report was at Minard, Mid-Argyll on 6 May. **COMMON SWIFT** First report was at Kilmichael Glassary on 6 May. **PIED-BILLED GREBE** An adult male (returning from previous years) was at Loch Feorlin, Mid-Argyll from 6 May. **GREEN WOODPECKER** One was at Innellan, Cowal on 6 May. **RED KITE** One was at Coillabus, Islay on 7 May. **COOT** One was at Westport Marsh, Kintyre on 8 May. **GREEN SANDPIPER** One was at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 9 May. **HAWFINCH** A female was at Octofad, Islay from 10 May. **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** One was at Loch Kinnabus, Islay on 10 May. **BLACK KITE** One was nr Machrihanish, Kintyre on 11 May. **MARSH HARRIER** One was at Achnahard, Mull on 11 May. **EURASIAN REED WARBLER** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 11 May. **DOTTEREL** One was at Vaul, Tiree on 13 May. **GREEN WOODPECKER** One was at Killiechronan, Mull on 15 May. **WOOD SANDPIPER** One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 16 May. **SUBALPINE WARBLER** A male was at Kinnabus, Islay on 16 May. **MARSH HARRIER** One was at Tayinloan, Kintyre on 18 May. **QUAIL** One was at Aros Moss, Kintyre on 18 May. **TURTLE DOVE** One was at Oban, Mid-Argyll on 19 May. **RED KITE** One was at Claddach, Islay on 22 May. **PECTORAL SANDPIPER** One was at Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree on 27 May. **TURTLE DOVE** One was at Upper Killeyan, Islay on 28 May.

*~ June ~*

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 3 Jun. **LITTLE STINT** One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 3 Jun. **MARSH WARBLER** One was at Scarinish, Tiree on 4 Jun. **QUAIL** One was at Lochbuie Mull on 4 Jun. **MARSH HARRIER** One was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 5 Jun. **TURTLE DOVE** One was at Beinn Hough, Tiree on 6 Jun. **ICTERINE WARBLER** One was at Scrinish, Tiree on 9 Jun. **QUAIL** One was at Ford, Mid-Argyll on 9 Jun. **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** One was at Vaul, Tiree on 10 Jun. **TURTLE DOVE** One was at Kinnabus, Islay on 15 Jun.

*~ July ~*

**SANDWICH TERN** Thirty-plus were off Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 3 Jul. **MEDITERRANEAN GULL** An adult was at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 4 Jul. **ARCTIC TERN** 750 were at Gott Bay, Tiree on 8 Jul. **COMMON ROSEFINCH** A male was at Ballochgair, Kintyre on 11 Jul. **POMARINE SKUA** Three were seen from the Oban to Mull



ferry on 16 Jul. **SOOTY SHEARWATER** One was at sea between Coll and Mull on 16 Jul and another off the Cairns of Coll on 20 Jul. **CURLEW SANDPIPER** One was at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 24 Jul. **STORM PETREL** Forty-six were seen from the Tiree to Barra ferry on 27 Jul.

*~ August ~*

**MARSH HARRIER** One was at Grasspoint, Mull on 2 Aug. **COMMON SWIFT** Eighteen were over Oban, Mid-Argyll on 4 Aug. **SPOTTED SANDPIPER** A juvenile was at Ard Mor, Tiree from 14 Aug. **GREEN SANDPIPER** One was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 14 Aug. **BALEARIC SHEARWATER** First report was of one off Jura on 15 Aug. **GREEN SANDPIPER** One was at Balvicar, Mid-Argyll on 17 Aug. **MEDITERRANEAN GULL** One was at the Green, Tiree from 19 Aug. **LITTLE STINT** One was at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll on 20 Aug. **MEDITERRANEAN GULL** One-two birds were at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre from 20 Aug. **COOT** One was at Loch Gorm Islay on 15 Aug and at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay on 22 Aug. **CURLEW SANDPIPER** Record numbers were passing Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre with 180+ birds in late Aug. **GREEN SANDPIPER** One was at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 23 Aug. **HOBBY** A juvenile was at Barrapol, Tiree on 28 Aug. **PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER** An adult was at Middleton, Tiree from 29 Aug. **SOOTY SHEARWATER** Thirty were off Hynish Tiree on 30 Aug and 35 were off Frenchman's Rocks, Islay on 31 Aug.

*~ September ~*

**HOBBY** A juvenile (same as bird at Barrapol, Tiree in Aug) was at Hynish, Tiree on 1 Sep. **STOCK DOVE** One was at Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll on 2 Sep. **EURASIAN REED WARBLER** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 3 Sep. **LESSER WHITETHROAT** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 3 Sep. **BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** Four juveniles were together at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 4 Sep. **TURTLE DOVE** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 4-5 Sep. **GREEN WOODPECKER** One was at Glen Massan, Cowal on 6 Sep. **SNOW BUNTING** Fifteen were at Carradale, Kintyre on 6 Sep. **LITTLE STINT** Four were at Loch Gruinart, Islay from 10 Sep. **SOOTY SHEARWATER** Thirty-five were off Hynish, Tiree on 11 Sep. **GREY PHALAROPE** Singles passed Hynish, Tiree on 11 and 12 Sep. **DOTTEREL** A juvenile was at Beinn a' Ghraig, Mull on 10 Sep and a juv was at Balephuill, Tiree on 12 Sep. **COMMON ROSEFINCH** A juvenile was at Balephuill, Tiree on 12 Sep. **TURTLE DOVE** One was at Craignure, Mull on 13 Sep. **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 22 -23 Sep. **SABINE'S GULL** A juvenile was off Hynish, Tiree on 23 Sep. **AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** An adult was at Kenovay, Tiree from 26 Sep. **JACK SNipe** First report was of one at Middleton, Tiree on 26 Sep. **YELLOW BROWED WARBLER** One was at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 27 Sep. **SABINE'S GULL** A juvenile was off Aird, Tiree on 29 Sep. **SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** Two juveniles were together at Vaul Bay, Tiree on 30 Sep. **GREY PHALAROPE** Two were at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 30 Sep.

*~ October ~*

**RING OUZEL** One was in Scammadale, Mid-Argyll on 1 Oct. **YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** A record 23 birds were seen in Oct, including 12 on Tiree. **LAPLAND BUNTING** Thirteen were at Barrapol, Tiree on 2 Oct. **LESSER WHITETHROAT** Singles were at Scarinish and Heylipol, Tiree on 10 Oct. **RED KITE** One was at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll

on 14 Oct. **GREAT GREY SHRIKE** One was at Grasspoint, Mull on 16-17 Oct. **RING OUZEL** Singles were at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 17 Oct and at Hynish, Tiree on 19 Oct. **BRAMBLING** Nine were at Balephuill, Tiree on 20 Oct. **WAXWING** First report was of one at Balephuill, Tiree on 20 Oct. **EURASIAN REED WARBLER** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 22 Oct. **RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** One was at Balephuill, Tiree on 22 Oct. **SURF SCOTER** A juvenile flew past Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 27 Oct. **AMERICAN WIGEON** A drake was at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay on 29 Oct. **GREEN WOODPECKER** One was near Tobermory, Mull on 31 Oct.

~ *November* ~

**WAXWING** Thirty were at Port Askaig, Islay on 4 Nov and 28 were at Connel, Mid-Argyll on 5 Nov. **HAWFINCH** One was in an Oban garden, Mid-Argyll on 5 Nov. **RING NECKED DUCK** A first-winter drake was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 5 Nov. **'NORTHERN' LONG TAILED TIT** At least two were in a flock of 'western' birds at Loch Scridain, Mull on 7 Nov. **SOOTY SHEARWATER** One was off Hynish, Tiree on 8 Nov. **SKY LARK** 300+ were at the Laggan, Kintyre on 12 Nov. **GREEN WINGED TEAL** A drake was at Clachan Mor, Tiree on 15 Nov. **LITTLE EGRET** One was at Machir Bay, Islay on 20 Nov. **RED KITE** One was at Kinnabus, Islay on 21 Nov. **GREEN WINGED TEAL** A drake was at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay from 22 Nov. **WAXWING** Thirty were in Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll on 24 Nov. **LITTLE EGRET** One was at Kennacraig, Kintyre from 26 Nov. **ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** A first-winter was at Machir Bay, Islay from 27 Nov- 3 Dec.

~ *December* ~

**GREEN WINGED TEAL** A drake was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 2 Dec. **WAXWING** Twelve were at Benmore Gardens, Cowal on 4 Dec. **COOT** One was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 5-19 Dec. **GREAT GREY SHRIKE** One was at the Moine Mhor NNR, Mid-Argyll on 16 - 17 Dec. **GREY PHALAROPE** One was at Ardtalla, Islay on 25 Dec.



**Subalpine Warbler** Kinnabus, Islay on 16 May (Jim Dickson).

## Symbols and abbreviations

<i>ABR</i>	<i>Argyll Bird Report</i>
ABRC	Argyll Bird Records Committee
ARSG	Argyll Raptor Study Group
AOB	apparently occupied burrows
AON	apparently occupied nest-sites
AOS	apparently occupied sites
BBRC	<i>British Birds</i> Rarities Committee
BBS	Breeding Birds Survey
BOURC	British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
<i>ca</i>	<i>circa</i> = approximately
<i>cf</i>	<i>confer</i> = compare
CBC	Common Birds Census
<i>et al.</i>	et alia = and others
excl.	excluding
imm.	immature
inc.	including
juv./juvs.	juvenile/juveniles
Machrihanish SBO	Machrihanish Seabird Observatory
max.	maximum
min.	minimum
Moine Mhor NNR	Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve
NEWS	None Estuarine Wader Survey
NNR	National Nature Reserve
n/r	not recorded (in tables of counts, where no count was made)
nr.	near
RSPB Loch Gruinart	Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve
SAMS	Scottish Association for Marine Science
Sd.	Sound
SBO	Seabird Observatory
<i>SBR</i>	<i>Scottish Bird Report</i>
SBRC	<i>Scottish Birds</i> Records Committee
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
Taynish NNR	Taynish National Nature Reserve
Ters.	Territories
TIARG	Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group
TTV	Timed Tetrad Visit in connection with the Bird Atlas.
<i>Viz</i>	<i>Videlicet</i> = namely
WeBS	Wetland Bird Survey
2CY, 3CY etc	Bird ages: second-calendar year, third calendar year etc.

**Birds of Conservation Concern.** (BoCC 4) was published in *British Birds* (December 2015 Vol.108) and the updated species status has been applied to this report.

**RED LIST** is the highest conservation priority with species needing urgent action.

**AMBER LIST** is the next most critical group followed by Green (not given here) species that don't fall into the Red or Amber category.

## Systematic List for 2016

The following systematic list includes entries for 231 Category A and C species recorded in Argyll during 2016 (*cf.* average 222 species during the years 1993- 2015) and is slightly down on the recent higher average of 235 species (2009-2015). Two new species were added to the Argyll list in 2016 (Swainson's Thrush and Isabelline Wheatear, *see page 141*), which stood at 354 species seen up to the end of 2016. Spotted Crake was added to the species total for 2015 as a late submission and the totals above have been amended accordingly with 229 species now recorded in 2015. Two new sub-species were added: 'Northern' Long-tailed Tit in 2016 and Thayer's Gull (*see page 139*) was recently added after BBRC accepted a bird recorded in 2014. Three category E species were recorded of which two were new: Bufflehead and Rose-ringed Parakeet, the other record being Muscovy Duck. All species that have occurred in Argyll are listed here other than Category B (i.e. species not recorded in Argyll since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1950): Red-crested Pochard, Wilson's Storm, White-faced Storm Petrel, American Bittern, Sora, Little Crake, Great Snipe, Pallas's Sandgrouse and Cirl Bunting. They are not referred to further in the following Systematic List. Gaelic names are included wherever possible. For description rarities the observer's names are given with the finder noted first.

### MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor* Eala

**AMBER LIST A** *widespread and fairly common breeding species on the mainland and Tiree: scarcer on the other large islands. Not recorded recently on Colonsay until 1999. Flocks gather at favoured localities throughout the year, especially during moult but in decreasing numbers in autumn and winter.*

**Winter/spring** The highest count reported was 38 at the 4 main freshwater lochs on *Tiree* during the WeBS Count on 20 Jan including a count of 27 at Loch a' Phuill. The only counts in double figures elsewhere were peak counts of 21 at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 21 Jan, 13 at Ulva Lagoons *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Feb, 20 at Loch Sween *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Mar, 14 at Tainish *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Feb and 22 Feb, and 10 (including 5 imms) at New Danna *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** First pair noted on eggs was at Loch Ederline *Mid-Argyll* on 7 Apr. A poor breeding season on *Tiree* with a total of 10 nesting pairs at 8 sites with b/8 and b/6 at Loch Bhasapol, b/3 at Loch a' Phuill, b/2 and b/2 at The Reef and b/1 at Loch Riaghan. Families remaining in to Aug were f/7 and f/2 at Loch Bhasapol and f/3 at Loch a' Phuill. Elsewhere, pairs with young were noted at: RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* b/5 on 26 May, Furnace *Mid-Argyll* b/5 on 28 May, Lochdon *Mull* b/5 on 29 May, Craigendive (Loch Striven) *Cowal* b/1 on 2 Jun, Loch Gorm *Islay* b/5 on 3 Jun, Ford *Mid-Argyll* b/2 on 6 Jun, Connel *Mid-Argyll* b/4 on 8 Jun, Loch Etive *North Argyll* b/3 on 8 Jul, Ardencaple *Mid-Argyll* b/6 and b/1 on 7 Jul, Bellochantuy *Kintyre* b/4 on 23 Aug and Dunstaffnage Bay *Mid-Argyll* b/2 on 25 Sep.

**Autumn/winter** The highest count reported was 62 at the Ulva Lagoons *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Oct. Higher counts elsewhere included: 52 on the four main freshwater lochs on *Tiree* including 35 at Loch a' Phuill on 17 Oct with 44 there on 14 Nov, 15 at Sound of *Islay Jura* on 27 Aug, 10 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Sep, 14 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Sep, 10 at Aros Castle *Mull* on 17 Nov and 31 Dec and 24 at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 26 Nov.

### BEWICK'S SWAN (TUNDRA SWAN) *Cygnus columbianus* Eala-bheag

**AMBER LIST** *Formerly more frequent, mainly on Islay and in Kintyre but now a very rare autumn and spring migrant: only two records since 1996: three adults at Ardnave Loch Islay in Nov 2003 and four birds at Stewarton Kintyre in Mar 2005.*

No records.

## **WHOOPEE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus* Eala-fhiadhaich

**AMBER LIST** *A common passage migrant: smaller numbers wintering. Loch a' Phuill (Tiree) is a site of national importance for wintering birds. A few birds summer in most years and breeding has been recorded.*

**Winter/spring** The highest count reported was 115 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 21 Mar. A *Tiree* island total of 112 on 11 Feb included 12 juvs. Elsewhere higher numbers included 43 on *Colonsay* on 28 Feb, 37 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 29 Feb, 80 at Bunessan *Mull* on 14 Mar, 72 at Drimfern *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Mar, 39 at Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Mar and the same flock grounded later in low cloud at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* with 71 there the following day and 80 were at Ciliach Point *Mull* on 19 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** Up to 7 were recorded at three sites on *Tiree* during the summer, elsewhere 2 were at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* and a single on Oronsay *Colonsay* in Jun but with no indication of breeding. A single summered on the hill lochs nr. Ulva Lagoon *Mid-Argyll*. A long staying bird (15+ years) was found dead at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 5 Sep.

**Autumn/winter** Early arrivals included: 1 at Calgary *Mull* on 29 Sep, 8 at Kilchoman *Islay* on 29 Sep, 6 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 30 Sep, 57 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 30 Sep, 16 at Kinnabus *Islay* on 30 Sep, 5 at Ulva Lagoon *Mid-Argyll* on 30 Sep and 20 at Campbeltown *Kintyre* on 1 Oct. The peak count for passage birds at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* was 269 (22% juvs) on 31 Oct. A *Tiree* island count of 135 had 24.4% juvs on 5 Dec. High counts elsewhere included: 100 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 18 Oct, 22 past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 18 Oct, 40 at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 24 Oct, 62 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 28 Oct, 51 at Ulva Lagoons *Mid-Argyll* on 30 Oct, 79 at Treshnish farm *Mull* on 28 Oct, 48 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 29 Oct, 72 at Ganavan *Mid-Argyll* on 31 Oct and 24 at Loch Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 17 Nov.

## **BEAN GOOSE** *Anser fabalis* Muir-ghèadh

**AMBER LIST** *A vagrant recorded in only ten of the 33 years between 1980 and 2012. Two races have occurred in Argyll: A. f. fabalis or 'Taiga' Bean Goose from northern Europe is the more frequent, and A. f. rossicus or 'Tundra' Bean Goose from further east which has occurred in Mar 2004, twice in Nov-Dec 2011 and three records from 2012.*

No records.

## **PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus* Gèadh-gorm

**AMBER LIST** *There are variable numbers on passage, with occasional large flocks but relatively few over-winter.*

**Winter/spring** The only flocks of more than 5 birds comprised 18 on *Colonsay* on 30 Mar, 20 at Loch Gorm *Islay* on 13 Mar, 120 over Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 31 Mar, 200 over Keillbeg (Loch na Cille) *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Apr and 6 at Loch Spelve *Mull* on 10 May. Smaller numbers were reported from *Kintyre*, *North Argyll* and *Tiree*. No reports from *Coll*, *Cowal* or *Jura*.

**Autumn/winter** The first birds of autumn were 13 at Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 16 Sep followed by 114 over Calgary *Mull*, 71 over Balemartine *Tiree* on 29 Sep and 17 over The Oa *Islay* on 30 Sep. The next largest flock reported was of 26 at Ciliach Point *Mull* on 16 Nov otherwise the only reports of 1-6 birds were from *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll*, *North Argyll* and *Tiree*. No reports from *Cowal* or *Jura*.

## **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons* Gèadh-bhlàr

**RED LIST** *Both the nominate European and the Greenland races have occurred in Argyll. The Greenland race A. a. flavirostris winters in a small number of traditional haunts, and is also a passage migrant. Argyll holds about 50% of the world population of this race in winter*

and all the locations where they occur regularly are sites of international importance in the UK. The European race *A. a. albifrons* is a rare vagrant.

**‘GREENLAND’ WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *A. a. flavirostris*

**Winter/spring** The highest area count was on *Islay* where 5,183 birds on 15-16 Mar. The SNH co-ordinated count produced an Argyll total of 8,695 birds (Table 1). In *Kintyre* higher counts included 1,432 at the Laggan on 15 Mar and 604 at Tayinloan on 15 Mar. In *Mid-Argyll* the highest count was 194 at Ulva (Loch Sween) on 23 Mar. On *Mull* 6 were at Bunessan on 1 Apr. In *North Argyll* 36 were at Appin during Jan-Feb and 135 were on Lismore on 20 Feb. On *Tiree* an all island count peaked at 855 on 15-17 Feb. The last spring report was of 15 at Loch Gruinart Islay on 26 Apr.

**Autumn/winter** The first report was of a (feral?) adult at Craigens *Islay* with Greylags on 19 Sep. The first arrivals noted were of 7 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 1 Oct. A notable passage of 178 birds on *Tiree* on 19 Oct. The SNH co-ordinated count in Dec produced a total of 8,900 birds in Argyll (Table 2). The highest area counts were on *Islay* with 5,585 birds on 13-14 Dec. Higher counts elsewhere included: *Coll* with 210 on 13 Dec; *Kintyre* with 1,207 at the Laggan on 14 Dec and 615 at Tayinloan on 14 Dec; *Mid-Argyll* with 135 were at Danna on 13 Dec; *Mull* with 167 over Treshnish farm on 28 Oct; *North Argyll* with 80 at Inverfolla on 12 Nov and *Tiree* with 687 on 13-14 Dec.

Table 1. Number of White-fronted Geese in Argyll areas in spring (per SNH).  
March 2016.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Lorn	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
2,319	211	0	0	n/c	741	36	0	5,183	25

There were also 180 on Bute, which is outwith the Argyll recording area.

Table 2. Numbers of White-fronted Geese in Argyll areas in winter (per SNH).  
December 2016.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Lorn	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
2,149	201	0	13	210	687	53	0	5,585	2

There were also 80 on Bute, which is outwith the Argyll recording area.

**‘EUROPEAN’ WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *A. a. albifrons*

*The European race A. a. albifrons is a scarce visitor in small numbers.*

No records.

**LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser erythropus* Geadh-bhlàr-beag

*A vagrant: two records; both on Islay in Mar 1980 and Mar 1986.*

No records.

**GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser* Gèadh-glas

**AMBER LIST A resident: with an increasing breeding population. Some may be native birds that have colonised from the Outer Hebrides, while birds of introduced origin breed in Mid-Argyll. Now that it is no longer possible to distinguish between them, WeBS refers to them as ‘British/Irish’ and identifies Tiree as a site of national importance. Migratory flocks are also reported from most areas.**

**Winter/spring** Highest numbers were on *Tiree* and a peak all-island count of 2,047 birds on 19-20 Jan. Also 1,772 there on 15-17 Feb of which 527 at Loch a’ Phuill and 1,681 all-island count

on 14-16 Mar. Peak counts in other areas included: *Coll* with 118 at Caoles Dunes on 18 Feb; *Colonsay* with 208 nr Scalasaig on 26 Mar; *Islay* with 473 all-island count on 19-20 Jan; *Jura* with 60 at Loch nan Breag on 16 Mar; *Kintyre* with 360 at Machrihanish on 14 Feb and also Gigha with 610 on 14 Feb; *Mid-Argyll* with 217 at Poltalloch on 11 Feb; *Mull* with 90 at Iona on 16 Jan and *North Argyll* with 87 at Inion on 13 Mar. In Mar, the SNH co-ordinated goose count recorded a total of 4,300 birds in Argyll (Table 3).

**Breeding/summer** On *Colonsay* 43 broods were found and 39 broods gave a total of 147 young and on *Oronsay* *Colonsay* 24 broods gave a total of 87 young. The first young were noted on *Tiree* on 30 Apr and counts there in Aug showed 34.8% were juvs giving a mean brood size of 2.60 (N= 226 broods). Reports of breeding birds were noted in all areas except *Kintyre*.

**Autumn/winter** The peak all-island count on *Tiree* was 2,357 on 29-30 Aug. Also 2,246 there on 14-15 Nov and 2,026 on 13-14 Dec. Peak counts in other areas included: *Colonsay* with 124 at East Loch Fada on 22 Oct; *Cowal* with 48 at Killail on 5 Aug; *Kintyre* with 644 at the Laggan on 23 Nov and also Gigha with 350 there on 26 Nov; *Islay* with 1,200 at Loch Gorm on 31 Aug; *Mid-Argyll* with 222 at Slockavullin on 23 Dec; *Mull* with 183 at Loch na Keal on 26 Oct and *North Argyll* with 65 at Inveresragan on 15 Nov. The SNH co-ordinated count in Dec produced a total of 4,849 birds in Argyll (Table 4).

Table 3. Numbers of Greylag Geese in Argyll areas in spring (per SNH).  
Mar 2016.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Lorn	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
1,608	237	0	0	n/c	1,681	221	21	530	2

Table 4. Numbers of Greylag Geese in Argyll areas in winter (per SNH).  
Dec 2016.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Lorn	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
1,473	291	n/c	12	274	2,026	174	5	556	38

## SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens* Gèadh-bàn

*The small introduced population on Coll breeds on a small off-shore island and is now very sedentary. Stragglers among wintering goose flocks of other species are probably often genuine vagrants.*

**Winter/spring** No reports received from the feral population on *Coll*.

**Breeding/summer** At least 5 pairs were on Soa Island *Coll* on 15 May. 14 adults were at Arileod *Coll* on 15 Aug and no juvs reported this year.

**Autumn/winter** 14 were at Port na Luing *Coll* on 17 Oct.

## GREATER CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis* Gèadh-dubh

*The resident population on Colonsay was introduced in 1934. Regular breeding has taken place since 1992 in Mid-Argyll in increasing numbers, with increasingly frequent breeding attempts elsewhere. A transatlantic origin seems probable for at least some of the medium-sized and small individuals seen in winter goose flocks on Islay and Tiree. See also Lesser Canada Goose below.*

**Winter/spring** The largest flock reported was 246 at Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor area) *Mid-Argyll* on 31 Jan. Highest counts from each region included: *Colonsay* with 163 on 27 Feb, 34 at Killail *Cowal* on 8 Mar, 64 on Gigha *Kintyre* on 25 Mar, only 1-8 birds on *Islay* during Jan-May, 67 at Pair nan Each *Jura* on 16 Mar, 110 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 17

Feb, 59 on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Feb, 84 at Loch Sween *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Mar, 35 at Glen More *Mull* on 11 Apr, 2 on the Treshnish Isles *Mull* on 28 Jun and 1 Jul were the first reports there by the TIARG, 139 at Appin *North Argyll* on 1 Feb and 1-2 birds on *Tiree* Jan-Apr.

**Breeding/summer** Broods of young or other evidence of breeding was reported from all regions apart from *Coll*, *Islay*, *Kintyre* and *Tiree*. The first broods noted were at Glas Eilean *Jura* on 25 May. Highest counts were all from *Mid-Argyll* and included: 72 birds at Loch Craignish on 4 Jun, 160 at Camas Bruaich Ruaidhe (nr Connel) on 6 Jul, 165 at Loch Craignish on 23 Jul and 147 at the Add Estuary on 23 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** The largest flock was of 255 birds at Barloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 30 Dec. Elsewhere in *Mid-Argyll* higher counts included: 184 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) on 15 Dec, 130 at Loch Feochan on 20 Oct, 70 at Ulva Lagoon on 23 Oct and 168 at Loch Craignish on 11 Nov. Higher counts in the other regions included: 69 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 9 Aug, 70 at Sandbank *Cowal* on 24 Oct, 1-7 on *Islay* in Oct, 50 at Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* on 2 Aug, 42 at Torosay *Mull* on 19 Aug and 184 at Inversragan *North Argyll* on 15 Dec. No reports from *Coll* or *Tiree*.

**LESSER CANADA and TODD'S CANADA GOOSE** *Branta c. interior/parvipes*  
*Lesser Canada B. c. parvipes and Todd's Canada B. c. interior are races being considered by the BBRC. The race parvipes breeds W Alaska, E to Yukon Territory and most winter Washington and Oregon. The race interior breeds NE Canada from Hudson Bay to Baffin Island and NW Greenland wintering in SE USA. There is however some overlap in breeding ranges and variability in size and plumage of races, therefore separation is not always possible.*

**Autumn/winter** A Lesser *parvipes* race bird was reported and photographed at Gruinart *Islay* on 21 Oct and remained in the area until at least the end of Oct. 2 Todd's *interior* race were reported and photographed in the Gruinart area from 19 Oct and remained until at least the end of Oct.

**CACKLING GOOSE** *Branta hutchinsii/minima*

*This species group has recently been accepted by the BOURC as a split from other 'Lesser Canada Goose' types. A transatlantic origin seems probable for most of these hutchinsii birds being from the Canadian High Arctic. The first accepted Argyll record was in 1984 and many subsequent records are still under consideration by the BBRC.*

**Winter/spring** All reports came from *Islay*. A single bird was at Cornabus (The Oa) on 23 Jan and presumably the same individual seen on several occasions in The Oa area until 13 Mar, however 2 were just to the north at Loch Eighinn (Machrie) on 5 Mar. Singles, which could all relate to the same individual were seen at Bridgend merse on 7 Feb, Emeraconart (Ballygrant) on 6 Mar, however 2 were at Gruinart on 20 Apr.

**Autumn/winter** A good run of records with the first noted at Gruinart *Islay* on 18 Oct, with 2 there on 19 Oct. Reports of up to 4 birds in this area may have been confused as 2 of birds were noted to be Todd's Canadas on 19 Oct. Birds generally remained in the Gruinart and Bridgend merse areas until late Oct, however a single was seen regularly in the Emeraconart (Ballygrant) area until Dec. The last report was of a single at Ballinaby (Loch Gorm) *Islay* on 30 Dec.

*Note: not all of these records have been submitted to BBRC however are presented here for completeness of what were frequently reported and photographed birds.*

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis* Cathan

**AMBER LIST** *Approximately two thirds of the Greenland population winter in Argyll, mostly on Islay with smaller numbers elsewhere. Coll, Colonsay, Islay, and Tiree are sites of*



*international importance for wintering birds of the Greenland population of this species. A few birds occasionally summer and a few introduced birds have bred on the Rinn of Islay.*

**Winter/spring** In Mar, the SNH co-ordinated goose count (Table 5 below) recorded a total of 43,980 birds in Argyll and is lower than counts of 45,026 (Mar 2015), 47,479 (Mar 2014) and 53,585 (Mar 2013). Peak counts in other regions of Argyll included: *Coll* with 1,050 Creag nan Clamhan on 20 Feb; *Colonsay* with 1,300 on 26 Feb; *Kintyre* with 28 on Gigha on 14 Feb; *Mid-Argyll* with 1,500 at Toberonochy (Luing) on 28 Feb; *Mull* with 200 on Iona on 16 Feb and *Tiree* with 4,268 on 14-16 Mar. No reports were received from *Cowal*, *Jura* or *North Argyll*.

**Summer** One remained at Gruinart Flats *Islay* until 2 Jun and 1 was on Iona *Mull* on 22 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** The first returning birds were 3 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 25 Sep, with the first wave of arrivals there on 1 -4 Oct in groups of up to 150 birds, then the main arrivals from 17 Oct with 3,460 at Loch Gruinart rising to 30,230 on 19 Oct. First arrivals elsewhere were of 5 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 8 Oct, 52 at Totronald *Coll* on 13 Oct, 5 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 16 Oct and 63 on *Tiree* on 17 Oct. The SNH co-ordinated goose count over 13-14 Dec recorded a total of 53,143 birds in Argyll (49,945 in Dec 2015) and (46,671 in Dec 2014) with regional totals given below in Table 6. The *Islay* all island total for 13-14 Dec gave 45,714 however numbers peaked in the 15-16 Nov count with 54,363 birds with most being in the Gruinart area. Elsewhere large site counts included: 2,625 at Oronsay *Colonsay* on 22 Oct, 4,510 on *Tiree* on 13 Dec over two sites and 657 at Toberonochy *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Dec.

*Under the SNH 'Sustainable Goose Management Strategy' to reduce crop damage and improve habitat for Greenland White-fronted Geese, culling (shooting) of Barnacle Geese has been used as a management tool on Islay in recent years. In winter 2015/16 the bag limit was set at 2,160 and in 2016/17 at 2,790. This bag limit was reached in both these winters.*

Table 5. Numbers of Barnacle Geese in Argyll areas, in spring. (per SNH).  
Mar 2016.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
4	807	0	n/c	4,268	322	1,413	37,166	25

Table 6. Numbers of Barnacle Geese in Argyll areas, in winter. (per SNH).  
Dec 2016.

Kintyre	Mid-Argyll	Mull	Coll	Tiree	Colonsay	Oronsay	Islay	Jura
6	566	0	1,062	4,510	34	1,251	45,714	0

## **BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla* Gèadh-got

**AMBER LIST A** *passage migrant, in varying numbers: few in winter. Most birds seen in Argyll are of the Pale-bellied race B. b. hrota. Birds of the dark-bellied race B. b. bernicla have occurred, mainly on Islay and Tiree, with less than 20 records. There has been one record of the Black Brant B. b. nigricans on Islay in winter 1989/90.*

### **'PALE-BELLIED' BRENT GOOSE** (*B. b. hrota*)

**Winter/spring** Most records from Jan to Mar were on *Islay* and included higher counts at Loch Indaal with 67 at Gortan on 9 Jan and 50 at Bowmore on 7 Mar. Last birds had left by 21 Mar however 50 flew past Bruichladdich on 1 May. The only other reports were singles at Vaul, Barrapol, Loch a' Phuill and Middleton *Tiree* in Jan/Feb, 4 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 12 Feb, 40 at Craighouse *Jura* on 17 Mar, 2 at West Parkfergus *Kintyre* on 26 Mar, 34 at Keils *Jura* on 29 Mar, 35 at Balephetrish Bay and 9 at The Green *Tiree* on 20 Apr, 84 at Balephetrish Bay *Tiree* on 1 May, 4 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 1 May, 19 at Feadan *Jura* on 5 May, 23 at Lochbuie *Mull* on 6 May and 3 at Oronsay Farm *Colonsay* on 11 -12 May.

**Autumn/winter** The first of autumn were: birds calling in flight at night at Scarinish Tìree on 3 Sep, 53 at Loch Gruinart and 2 at Port Ellen Islay on 9 Sep and 4 at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 9 Sep. Highest numbers were on Islay with peak counts of 230 at Gruinart flats on 28 Sep and 91 off Bowmore on 31 Oct. Elsewhere higher counts included 40 at Crossapol Bay Tìree on 28 Sep and 88 at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 19 Oct. Smaller numbers were noted on Mull with 14 at Treshnish farm on 14 Sep; Colonsay with 6 at Oronsay on 5 Oct and 1 at Loch Eatherna Coll on 16 Oct. There were no reports during the year from Cowal or North Argyll.

**‘DARK-BELLIED’ BRENT GOOSE** (*B. b. bernicla*)

No records.



**Pale-bellied Brent Geese** Kintyre September 2016 (Eddie Maguire)

**RED-BREASTED GOOSE** *Branta ruficollis*

*A vagrant: two records; an adult on Islay, first seen on 27th Oct 2001 and another adult on Islay from Oct 2012 into Apr 2013.*

No records.

**EGYPTIAN GOOSE** *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

*An introduced species that has naturalised and breeds as a feral species in England, Denmark and the Netherlands: One record; an adult at Strath Farm, Kintyre on 22 May 2015*

No records.

**COMMON SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna* Crà-ghèadh

**AMBER LIST A** *widespread, but not very numerous, breeding species around sandy coasts. The majority are absent from mid-Aug to late Oct when they migrate to moulting grounds.*

**Winter/spring** Highest numbers were found on Islay with a peak of 281 at Loch Gruinart on 19 Jan. Other counts of 10 or more birds, apart from those shown in Table 7, included: 38 at The

Strand *Colonsay* on 23 Feb, 18 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 17 Feb, 16 at Gigha Bay *Gigha* on 14 Feb. In *Kintyre* 10 at the head of West Loch Tarbert on 19 Mar and 12 at Machrihanish SBO on 16 May. In *Mid-Argyll* 21 at Loch Sween on 1 Feb, 14 at Loch Gilp on 26 Apr, 18 at Clachan Bridge on 11 Feb, 18 at Loch Craignish on 8 May and 12 at Loch Crinan on 8 May. On *Mull* 18 at Fiddon on 31 Mar and 12 at Carsaig on 10 May. On *Tiree* 28 at Miodar on 15 Feb and 16 at Salum Bay on 5 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** A total of 28 pairs were found on *Colonsay* with 10 fledged broods totalling 70 young found. On *Islay* breeding confirmed at Gruinart and Ardnave but no data provided. At Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* 6 broods totalling 37 young (mean brood size = 6.1) *cf* 2015 with only 1 small brood and best year 2010 with 8 broods and 75 young. In *Mid-Argyll* 2 prs at Blackmill Bay (Luing) and 4 prs with large broods at the Add Estuary. On *Mull* b/4, b/7 and b/15 on Iona, b/3 on Treshnish Isles and 10 ads with 14 young at Fiddon. On *Tiree* b/10 and b/6 at Salum, b/10 at Loch Aulraig and b/3 on Soa Island. Prs also noted on *Coll*, *Cowal* and *Jura*.

**Autumn/winter** Very few were noted away from *Islay* (Table 7). In *Mid-Argyll* 12 were at the Add Estuary on 20 Aug, 14 at Loch Crinan on 21 Aug, 1 at Loch Gilp on 13 Nov. In *Kintyre* 1 was at the Laggan on 17 Nov, 4 at Gigha Bay (*Gigha*) and 2 at Machrihanish SBO on 30 Nov. On *Colonsay* 2 were on Oronsay on 20 Nov and 6 were at Cnoc an t' Suide (Fiddon) *Mull* on 23 Dec.

Table 7. *Maximum monthly counts of Shelducks on Islay at Loch Gruinart, Loch Indaal,*

Lochs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	281	33	126	75	49	20	n/c	2	5	27	89	82
Indaal*	6	13	45	25	12	20	1	0	0	0	2	14

\* WeBS Counts for Bowmore to Gartbreck.

## MANDARIN DUCK *Aix galericulata*

**An introduced species which has bred regularly, at Loch Eck (Cowal), in recent years. The present size of the Argyll population (whose origin is unknown) suggests that it may well now be self-sustaining.**

**Spring/summer** A male was on the River Sorn (Woollen Mill) *Islay* on 31 Mar (first record for *Islay*). 2 females were at Loch a' Chroisg (Ford) *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Apr. A male was at Loch Leathan *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Apr. A male was in a garden at Strachur *Cowal* on 19 Apr. A female was at Glen Strae *North Argyll* on 24 Apr and 24 Jun (several nest boxes on poles noted in that area).

**Autumn** A female with a fledged imm was at Loch Ederline (Ford) *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Aug. *There were no reports received from the past regular sites at Loch Eck, Cowal.*

## EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope* Glas-lach

**AMBER LIST A scarce and local breeding species: common passage migrant and winter visitor to all areas.**

**Winter/spring** Many sites held up to 50 birds. Sites with counts of 50 or more, other than those listed in Table 8 included: 55 on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jan, 110 at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* on 19 Mar with 125 there on 2 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** A male was at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* on 9 May. Probable nesting of 2 pairs at 2 sites on *Tiree*, 3 pairs at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* and 1 pair at Loch Tulla *North Argyll* in May. 5 adults were at Loch Tulla *North Argyll* on 5 Jun, a pair at Gott Bay *Tiree* on 7 Jun and a male at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Early returning birds included 1 at Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jul and 3 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jul. Sites with counts of 50 or more, other than those listed

in Table 8, included: 67 at Ulva Lagoon *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Sep, 50 at Ballachuan Loch (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Oct, 67 at Appin *North Argyll* on 16 Oct, 50 at Dalrannoch *North Argyll* on 22 Oct, 350 at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 23 Oct, 52 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 23 Oct, 52 at Loch Lossit *Islay* on 1 Nov, 50 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 9 Nov, 65 at Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Nov, 400 at Kilmichael floods *Kintyre* on 14 Nov and 100 on Isle of Gigha *Kintyre* on 26 Nov.

Table 8. *Maximum monthly counts of Wigeon at regularly monitored sites that held 50 or more birds in winter, viz.: Lochs Gruinart and Indaal, Islay; Lochs Crinan, Etive, Gilp and Sween, Mid-Argyll; Holy Loch, Cowal and on Tiree.*

Lochs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart*	215	53	187	75	6	n/c	0	0	5	190	455	320
Indaal**	143	30	39	28	n/c	0	0	0	0	670	690	55
Crinan	174	156	78	37	0	0	3	24	54	211	199	119
Gilp	75	19	100	0	0	0	0	0	45	493	480	94
Etive	119	85	105	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	66	62	94	100
Sween	59	39	107	4	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c
Holy Loch	63	102	69	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	26	75	56	59
Tiree	221	301	166	44	4	0	0	17	69	238	448	336

\* Including Loch Gruinart Floods \*\* WeBS Counts for Bowmore to Gartbreck.

## AMERICAN WIGEON *Anas americana*

*A rare visitor: 13 or more records.*

**Autumn/winter** An adult male was seen at RSPB Loch Gruinart reserve *Islay* on 29 Oct [Fiona McGillivray, James How]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.

## GADWALL *Anas strepera* Lach-ghlas

**AMBER LIST** *A scarce but regular passage migrant and winter visitor with most recent records from: Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, and Tiree. Breeds sporadically on Islay and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** At Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* a pair was there on 10 Jan to 11 Feb and a pair on 11 to 12 Apr. At RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* 1 was there during Feb to Mar with 6 there on 24 Apr. A pair was at Gruline *Mull* on 9 Jan and nearby at Knock on 15 Mar. At Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* a pair flew S past on 24 Apr and a male on 2 May. A pair was at Ardtur (Appin) *North Argyll* on 4 Apr. A single was at Ardgartan *Cowal* on 6 May.

**Breeding/summer** On Oronsay *Colonsay* 2 pairs were there on 12 Apr increasing to 3 pairs on 23 Apr and a b/4 noted on 19 May. At RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* there was 1 breeding pair. On *Tiree* a pair was at Kilmoluaig on 23 Apr to 12 May, a pair at Heylipol on 3 to 8 May, 6 birds were at Loch Bhasapol on 1 May and 3 were at Loch a' Phuill on 12 to 13 May. Broods were noted in Jun at 2 sites.

**Autumn/winter** At RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* 2 f/imms were there on 18 Sep, 3 on 14 Oct and last report of 1 on 3 Dec. On *Tiree* 1 was at Loch an Eilein on 26 Oct and 1 was at Loch a' Phuill on 15 Nov. On *Mull* 3 were at Gruline on 30 Sep, 1 at Loch na Keal on 24 Oct and 2 at Knock on 1 Dec.

## EURASIAN TEAL *Anas crecca* Crann-lach

**AMBER LIST** *A widespread but uncommon breeding species: common passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Winter/spring** The only counts of 50 or more birds away from the sites listed in Table 9 below were are: 111 at Loch Kinnabus *Islay* on 9 Feb, 58 at Ulva Lagoon *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan, 170 at

Bousd *Coll* on 24 Feb, 142 at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* on 19 Mar and 80 at Lochdon *Mull* on 26 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** At least 33 pairs at likely breeding locations on *Tiree* in late Apr. On *Colonsay* a b/1 at East Loch Fada on 9 Jun and a b/4 there on 18 Jun. On *Islay* 3 pairs at RSPB Loch Gruinart and ‘present’ at Ardnave Loch. In *Mid-Argyll* 3 pairs on Ballachuan Loch (Seil) on 28 Apr and 2 pairs nr Dunadd (River Add) on 16 Apr. In *North Argyll* 2 pairs in Glen Strae North Argyll on 24 Apr.

**Autumn/winter** Counts of 50 or more birds, other than those listed in Table 9, included: 115 at Loch Gorm *Islay* on 25 Sep, 55 at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 12 Nov and 52 at Kilmichael floods *Kintyre* on 14 Nov.

Table 9. *Maximum monthly counts of Teal at RSPB Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal Islay, Loch Crinan Mid-Argyll and on the Tiree freshwater lochs (i.e. all monitored sites which regularly held 100+ birds in the winter months).*

Lochs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart*	337	70	127	64	14	12	7	102	131	965	570	886
Indaal	107	8	40	8	0	0	0	0	40	n/c	n/c	163
Crinan	58	102	44	10	0	2	1	49	75	54	95	87
Holy L.	85	94	55	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	13	12	78	105
Tiree	349	287	203	66	8	2	5	35	88	165	190	258

\* Including Loch Gruinart Floods.

## GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas carolinensis*

**A rare visitor: 23 or more records since 1980, mostly on Islay or Tiree: some records may well involve returning individuals.**

**Winter/spring** A male remained at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* from 2015 until at least 4 Jan [Gary Turnbull]. Different males were on *Tiree* at Loch a’ Phuill on 17 Feb and at Loch Bhasapol on 1 May [John Bowler].

**Winter** A male was at Clachan Mor *Tiree* on 15 Nov and probably the same bird at Loch Bhasapol *Tiree* on 2 Dec [John Bowler]. A male was at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* from 22 Nov until 31 Dec [Toby Green *et al*]. All records were accepted by the ABRC.

*It is difficult to accurately work out how many records involve returning birds from previous winters.*

## MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos* Lach-riabhach

**A common breeding, passage and wintering species**

**Winter/spring** Counts of 30 or more birds, other than those listed in Table 10, included: 38 at Poltalloch *Mid-Argyll* on 31 Jan, 83 at Loch Sween *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Feb, 39 at Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Feb, 32 at Benderloch *North Argyll* on 10 Feb and 31 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 29 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** Pairs were noted at breeding sites from early Mar and first b/14 noted on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 22 Apr and latest newly hatched still in late Jul. On *Islay* there were 69 pairs at RSPB Loch Gruinart. Breeding was noted in all areas of Argyll.

**Autumn/winter** Counts of 40 or more birds, other than those listed in Table 10, included: 48 at Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 3 Sep, 70 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Sep peaking at 102 on 16 Oct, 55 at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Oct, 68 at the Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Dec, 80 at Gruline *Mull* on 30 Sep and 104 at Knock *Mull* on 31 Dec.

Table 10. *Maximum monthly counts of Mallards at RSPB Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal, Islay, Loch Crinan, Loch Etive, Holy Loch and Tiree freshwater lochs (i.e. all regularly monitored sites which held 50+ birds in the winter months).*

Lochs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart*	111	58	36	15	61	65	11	200	43	134	101	192
Indaal**	53	29	20	18	1	2	-	10	16	53	40	38
Crinan	49	43	4	12	6	16	47	54	-	23	16	9
Etive	180	84	64	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	134	107	102	169
Holy Loch	112	104	63	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	148	32	69
Tiree	69	69	38	18	11	38	11	10	49	41	67	52

\* Including Loch Gruinart Floods \*\* WeBS Counts for Bowmore to Gartbreck.

### **AMERICAN BLACK DUCK** *Anas rubripes*

*A vagrant; one record; at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 15 Jun 2001.*

No records.

### **NORTHERN PINTAIL** *Anas acuta* Lach-stiùireach

**AMBER LIST** *A very scarce breeding species on Tiree and a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor; regular only on Islay and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** The highest count was of 110 at RSPB Loch Gruinart Islay on 25 Jan. Monthly counts there are given in Table 11 below. On Tiree island peak counts were: 14 on 15 Mar and 22 during Apr. 3 were at The Isle of Danna Mid-Argyll and a male was nearby at the Ulva Lagoons Mid-Argyll on 24 Jan and again on 21 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** A female was paired with a Mallard at Ardskenish Colonsay on 23 May. Up to 11 pairs were present on Tiree during the breeding season with at least 4 broods seen in Jun-Jul. 2 were at RSPB Loch Gruinart Islay on 16 May but no evidence of breeding.

**Autumn/winter** On Islay 4 imms were at RSPB Loch Gruinart on 18 Sep and a peak count there of 61 on 15 Dec. At Gartnatra (Loch Indaal) Islay there were 43 on 23 Oct and 25 on 29 Oct. At Machrihanish SBO Kintyre 3 flew S on 6 Sep, 1 on 15 Sep, 2 on 29 Sep and a flock of 11 f/imms on 30 Sep. At Loch a' Phuill Tiree there were 2 on 15 Aug and a peak of 5 on 29 Sep, also a Tiree island count of 8 on 10 Oct. 7 flew west across Gunna Sound to Tiree from Coll on 10 Oct.

Table 11. *Maximum monthly counts of Pintails at RSPB Loch Gruinart (including Loch Gruinart Floods), Islay.*

Loch	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	110	12	34	11	0	0	0	0	12	64	46	61

### **GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula*

**AMBER LIST** *A regular spring visitor to Islay and Tiree and has bred in Kintyre in 1994, on Islay in 1997, and on Coll in 2004.*

**Spring** A male was at Westport Marsh Kintyre from 2 to 7 May and presumably the same male again on 8 Jun (only the second Kintyre record, first was in 1994). A pair was at RSPB Loch Gruinart Islay on 10 to 12 May and again on 28 May.

### **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** *Anas discors*

*A vagrant: three or four records; all adult males with, one on Tiree in May/Jun 1986, one on Tiree in May 1998 and (possibly the same) one on Islay, also in May 1998, and one on Mull on 1 May 2010 with presumably the same bird off Gigha, Kintyre on 2 May 2010.*

No records.

# **NORTHERN SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata* Lach-a'-ghuib-leathainn

**AMBER LIST** *A scarce and localised breeding species restricted to Islay and Tiree. It is more numerous as a passage migrant and winter visitor: also largely restricted to Islay and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** Counts from Loch Gruinart *Islay* and *Tiree* are given in Table 12 below. Elsewhere, a pair flew S past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 14 Apr and 25 May. A pair flew over the Connel Bridge *North Argyll* on 19 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** On Oronsay *Colonsay* 1 was there on 20 Apr with a pair on 23 Apr and 10 (imms?) there on 12 Aug. Up to 13 pairs were noted at 8 sites on *Tiree* and at least 5 broods of young were seen. On *Islay* up to 13 pairs were noted at RSPB Loch Gruinart and 1 pair at Ardnave Loch. Two pairs were noted at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* from 2 Apr and up to 4 males and 3 females there on 3 to 8 May with breeding noted on 8 May and a female with a brood of 8 on 13 May being the first recorded breeding at this site since 1994.

**Autumn/winter** The only other records away from *Islay* and *Tiree* (Table 12 below) concerned 2 at Kilmichael floods (N of Campbeltown) *Kintyre* on 14 Nov and 1 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 24 Nov.

Table 12. *Maximum monthly counts of Shovelers at RSPB Loch Gruinart (including Loch Gruinart Floods) and on Tiree.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Gruinart	31	12	9	8	13	12	n/c	n/c	4	21	24	26
Tiree	11	32	14	26	26	23	2	1	3	12	11	14

# **COMMON POCHARD** *Aythya ferina* Lach-mhàsach

**RED LIST** *An increasingly scarce winter visitor and passage migrant, in small numbers, particularly to: Tiree, Islay, and a few Mid-Argyll lochs. There has been no confirmed breeding in recent years.*

**Winter/spring** On *Islay* 2 were present at Ardnave Loch on 19 to 20 Jan, 17 Feb, 3 Mar and 5 birds there on 13 Mar, with possibly the same birds at Loch Gruinart with 3 at Crois Mhor on 22 Feb and 1 on 11 Mar and again 2 at Uiskentuie (Loch Indaal) on 9 and 12 Mar. A female was at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 23 to 24 Apr.

**Autumn/winter** 1 drake was at Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 25 Oct and 2 drakes were at Loch a' Phuill, *Tiree* on 25 Oct-5 Nov, whilst a single was at Ardnave Loch *Islay* from 17 to at least 26 Nov.

# **RING-NECKED DUCK** *Aythya collaris*

*A rare visitor: 21 previous records.*

**Winter/spring** An adult male was at Loch Finlaggan *Islay* from 29 Apr until at least 15 Jun [David Shallcross et al].

**Autumn/winter** A 1CY male was at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 5 Nov [John Bowler].

Both records were accepted by the ABRC.

## **FERRUGINOUS DUCK** *Aythya nyroca*

**A vagrant: one record; a drake was at Loch Bhasapol, Tiree on 21 to 29 Apr 2003.**

No records.

## **TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula* Lach-thopach

**A widespread winter visitor: most numerous on Islay and Tiree. Breeds in small numbers on: Colonsay, Islay, Mull, and Tiree with scattered pairs found throughout mainland Argyll.**

**Winter/spring** Other than those listed in Table 13, the only sites with counts of 10 or more were: 10 at Ardencaple (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Jan, 12 at Loch Ballygrant *Islay* on 15 Jan, 17 at Loch Seil *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jan and 20 at Loch Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 28 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** On *Tiree* 4 broods were located (*cf* 9 in 2015). Elsewhere birds present in the breeding season: 4 prs at Ardencaple (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 5 May with b/2 noted on 28 Jul, a male at Turraman Loch *Colonsay* on 18 May, 2 males at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 10 Jun, present at Loch Ballygrant *Islay* on 4 Jul, a pair bred at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay*, present/bred at Ardnave Loch *Islay* and a male at Loch Ba *Mull* on 24 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Other than those listed in Table 13, the only sites with counts of 10 or more were: 120 at Loch Gorm *Islay* on 20 Sep, 10 at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 12 Nov, 11 at Glenastle (The Oa) *Islay* on 21 Nov and 20 at Loch Ballygrant *Islay* on 25 Nov.

Table 13. Maximum monthly counts of Tufted Ducks at Ardnave Loch (*Islay*) and at the four main freshwater lochs on *Tiree* (mostly at Loch Bhasapol and Loch a' Phuill).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ardnave	n/c	16	22	8	4	2	2	n/c	5	4	7	12
Tiree	78	79	89	87	62	12	5	11	17	70	139	92

## **GREATER SCAUP** *Aythya marila* Lach-mhara

**RED LIST A winter visitor and passage migrant with large numbers wintering at Loch Indaal (Islay): a site of national importance, but scarce and irregular elsewhere. Small flocks of migrants are sometimes seen during autumn sea-watches.**

**Winter/spring** Highest counts came from Loch Indaal *Islay* with 79 there on 1 Jan, numbers gradually reducing to 64 on 24 Jan, 44 on 3 Feb, 30 on 12 Feb, 10 on 21 Feb and then 1 on 11 Mar however a count of 49 off Bowmore on 20 Mar then last 1 there on 27 Mar. On *Tiree* 1 was at Loch an Eilein on 26 Apr to 1 May and 3 were at Loch Bhasapol on 1 May. 3 were at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 8 May.

**Autumn/winter** At the Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* a male passed S on 31 Aug, then 3 on 12 Sep, 2 on 29 Sep and a flock of 40 on 18 Oct. On *Islay* a fem/imm was at Loch Gorm on 11 and 15 Sep, 4 were off Uiskentuie (Loch Indaal) on 19 Sep and a peak count of 70 at Loch Indaal on 23 Oct. On *Tiree* an imm was at Loch a' Phuill on 26 Sep with possibly the same bird then staying to 31 Dec and 2 there on 7 Nov.

## **LESSER SCAUP** *Aythya affinis*

**A vagrant: five records; Islay in Nov 1998, Loch Leathan, Mid-Argyll in Dec 2005, Loch a' Phuill, Tiree in Nov 2006, Loch Skerrols, Islay in Jan 2009 and Loch a' Phuill, Tiree in Nov 2015.**

No records.



## **COMMON EIDER** *Somateria mollissima* Lach-Lochlannach

**AMBER LIST A** *resident breeding bird: common on all suitable coasts, especially on the Clyde. The Firth of Clyde is a site of national importance for Eiders. Large flocks of moulting drakes and first-year birds gather at some sites during Jun to Sep.*

**Winter/spring** The only counts of 50 or more birds, other than those at sites listed in Table 14, were: 454 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 9 Feb with 80 on 5 Jun and 126 there on 13 Jun, 60 were at Bowmore *Islay* on 2 Jan, 146 in combined counts at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Feb, 220 at Ardbeg *Islay* on 20 Mar, 67 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 23 Apr, 140 at Oromsary (Loch Caolisport) *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Jan, 80 at Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Feb, 100 at Loch Melfort *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Apr, 65 at Pennyghael *Mull* on 17 Apr, 50 at Iona *Mull* on 13 May and 68 at Aird *Tiree* on 17 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** On *Colonsay* the first nests with eggs were noted on 28 Apr on Oronsay and the first broods were noted from 13 Jun, also a group of 15 adult females with a total of 43 young together in Jun. In *Cowal* the first b/5 noted on 20 May. In *Kintyre* the first broods were noted at Machrihanish SBO on 30 May. In *Mid-Argyll* the first brood were noted at Connel on 24 May and Minard on 30 May. At the Add Estuary there was a group of 11 adult females with 41 young on 3 Jun. On *Mull* 7 pairs were nesting on Iona in May and first broods noted there on 2 Jun. On *Tiree* the first broods were noted on 1 Jun. At Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* 'eclipse' plumaged birds were noted from mid-Jun and the first bird flying again from 30 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** The 2016 co-ordinated count of Eider in the Firth of Clyde in Sep gave a total of 941 for the Argyll part of the area, including 265 in Loch Fyne. In addition 222 were in east *Kintyre* (Skipness to Southend). Away from the sites listed in Table 14, counts of over 50 included: 70 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 27 Oct, 164 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 21 Nov, 290 at Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* on 4 Nov, 67 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *North Argyll* on 15 Nov, 210 at West Hynish *Tiree* on 17 Aug and 260 at Hynish *Tiree* on 10 Dec.

Table 14. *Maximum monthly counts of Eiders at Holy Loch and Loch Long (Cowal) and Loch Creran (North Argyll) and Sound of Gigha (Kintyre).*

Lochs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Holy L.	32	41	48	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	57	61	51	67
Craignish	25	36	23	6	-	3	11	11	24	53	55	95
Creran	29	29	n/c	21	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	143	49	n/c	35
Long*	153	74	n/c	38	n/c	n/c	131	n/c	79	n/c	77	n/c
Sound of Gigha	178	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c

\* Ardentinny to Strone Point

## **KING EIDER** *Somateria spectabilis*

**A vagrant: at least 14 Argyll records; all of single males. The most recent was in Kintyre in Feb/May 2008.**

No records.

## **HARLEQUIN DUCK** *Histrionicus histrionicus*

**A vagrant: one record; a female was at Claggain Bay, Islay on 20 to 30 Oct 1987 and was only the fifth Scottish record.**

No records.

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis* Eun-buchainn

**RED LIST** *An uncommon winter visitor, most frequent in Sound of Gigha (Kintyre), Coll, Islay, and Tiree. Usually marine but occasionally seen on inland lochs. Occasional summer records. Now Red Listed as a 'Vulnerable' species – all records required.*

**Winter/spring** The highest number recorded were in the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* with 15 on 2 Jan, also 3 there on 25 Mar. Elsewhere in *Kintyre* 1 was at Machrihanish SBO on 13 Mar. At Loch Indaal *Islay* a peak count of 8 on 23 Feb, with last report there of 1 off Port Charlotte on 13 Mar. Elsewhere on *Islay* 5 were off Kintra on 14 Mar. On *Tiree* 6 were at Hough Bay on 4 Jan, 1 at Loch a' Phuill on 20 Jan, 3 at Balephetrish Bay on 27 Jan, 2 at Aird on 2 Feb then 2 at Balephetrish Bay and 2 at Hough Bay on 11 Feb. 1 was at Eriska *North Argyll* on 29 Feb and 1 was at Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Mar.

**Summer** A female was with a group of female Eiders and their young at Ardrihaig (Loch Gilp) *Mid-Argyll* on 24 -25 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** First report was of 3 off Skipness Point *Kintyre* on 22 Aug followed by 4 at Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* on 14 Oct, 1 at Traigh Ghrianaidh *Tiree* on 21 Oct, 1 at Urugaig *Colonsay* on 22 Oct, 1 at Lochbuie *Mull* on 23 Oct and 1 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 27 Oct. Highest numbers were at Loch Indaal *Islay* with 15 on 4 Nov and at Rhunahaorine Point (Sound of Gigha) *Kintyre* with 10 on 27 Dec. Elsewhere 3 were at Feall Bay *Coll* on 12 Nov, 2 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Nov, 1 at Gialum Bay *Gigha* on 26 Nov and a peak of 4 at Hough Bay *Tiree* on 2 Dec. The only inland report was of a 1CY male at Loch Ederline *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Dec.



**Common Scoters** *Kintyre* June 2016 (Eddie Maguire)

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra* Lach-bheag-dhubh

**AMBER LIST** *Present throughout the year at Loch Indaal (Islay) and in the Sound of Gigha (Kintyre): a scarce winter visitor elsewhere. The very small breeding population may well now be extinct.*

**Winter/spring** Regular sightings were received from three sites throughout the year (Table 15) with the highest counts of 76 off Port Charlotte (Loch Indaal) *Islay* on 6 Mar and 59 at the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 2 Jan. The only reports away from these areas were 1 at Balephetrish Bay and 2 at Traigh Bhi *Tiree* on 11 Feb, 1 at Iona *Mull* on 30 Mar and 2 at Cullipool (Luining) *Mid-Argyll* on 7 May.

**Breeding/summer** Two pairs bred in the Loch Gorm area of *Islay*. A single male was at Scalasaig *Colonsay* on 14 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** A flock of 50 males passed Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 4 Jul. The highest counts were of 243 (mostly males) at Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 31 Jul, 142 off Port Charlotte (Loch Indaal) *Islay* on 13 Dec and 109 at inner Loch Indaal *Islay* on 2 Nov. Records away from the three sites in Table 15 included 9 at Salen Bay *Mull* on 16 Aug, 2 at Carradale Point *Kintyre* on 12 Sep, 1 at Aird *Tiree* on 29 Sep, 30 at Coraig Bay *Tiree* on 19 Oct, 2 at Treshnish Point *Mull* on 13 Oct, 1 at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 24 Oct and 4 at Loch Scridain *Mull* on 12 Nov.

Table 15. *Maximum monthly counts of Common Scoter at Loch Indaal (Islay), Machrihanish SBO (Kintyre) and Sound of Gigha (Kintyre)*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Loch Indaal	50	67	76	35	0	0	0	0	55	34	196	142
Machrihanish SBO	n/c	n/c	4	0	0	33	50	2	35	4	3	n/c
Sound of Gigha	59	n/c	40	n/c	n/c	90	243	50	n/c	n/c	6	20

### **SURF SCOTER** *Melanitta perspicillata*

**A rare visitor: at least 18 previous records.**

**Autumn** A juvenile flew past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 27 Oct [Eddie Maguire]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.

### **VELVET SCOTER** *Melanitta fusca* Lach-dhubh

**RED LIST** *Scarce but regular in and around the Sound of Gigha, and in much smaller numbers, at Loch Indaal, Islay. The wintering population in the Sound of Gigha is now much reduced from the population in the 1970s when over 50 were present. Now Red Listed as a 'Threatened' species – all records required.*

**Winter** Two were at the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 16 Jan. Four were at Kennacraig (West Loch Tarbert) *Kintyre* on 27 Feb. A male flew S with Common Scoters off Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 24 Mar.

**Summer** A male paired with a female Common Scoter was at Easter Ellister *Islay* on 2 and 12 Jun (presumably the 'escaped' bird as per previous years).

**Autumn/winter** Four were at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 24 Oct.

*A continued reduction in numbers.*

### **COMMON GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula* Lach-bhreac

**AMBER LIST** *A common winter visitor: birds are regularly present in all areas from early Oct to late Apr with occasional summer records.*

**Winter/spring** The highest count was 142 at Ormsary (Loch Caolisport) *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Jan followed by (counts of 20 or more) with 59 on *Tiree* WeBS (four freshwater lochs) on 18 Jan, 42 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 11 Feb, 42 at Loch Sween WeBS *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Mar, 32 at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 27 Feb, 25 on *Tiree* WeBS (four freshwater lochs) on 15 Mar, 25 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Mar and 20 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Mar. 2 at Loch Finlaggan *Islay* on 29 May was the last spring report.

**Breeding/summer** A report of 4 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on the unusual date of 22 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** An early f/imm was at Bunessan *Mull* on 6 Aug and next reports not until 1 at Vaul *Tiree* on 4 Oct, 1 at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 9 Oct, 2 at Loch Gorm *Islay* on 10 Oct and 1 at Ulva Lagoon *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Oct. Numbers remained low, however a few higher counts with

20 at Blackmill Bay (Luining) *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Oct, 46 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 7 Nov, 12 at Appin *North Argyll* on 1 Dec and 24 at Knock *Mull* on 19 Dec.

**SMEW** *Mergus albellus* Siolta-bhreac

*A rare winter visitor: about 10 records since 1954; last records were at Loch Poit na h-I (Pottie), Mull on 16 May 2004 and off Bowmore, Islay on 21 Dec 2012.*

No records.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator* Siolta-dhearg

*A common resident breeder: large moulting flocks gather, particularly in Loch Indaal (Islay) and Sound of Gigha (Kintyre) during late summer. The Sound of Gigha (Kintyre) is a site of national importance for wintering birds. Small numbers are found on fresh water.*

**Winter/spring** The highest count was of 40 birds at the head of Loch Indaal *Islay* on 13 Mar. Elsewhere the only counts of 30 or more were: 38 at the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 2 Jan, 32 at Ballimore *Cowal* on 10 Apr, 39 at Dunoon *Cowal* on 17 Apr and 36 at Gott Bay *Tiree* on 27 May. The largest flocks noted in other areas were: *Coll* (5), *Colonsay* (8), *Jura* (23), *Mid-Argyll* (14), *Mull* (22) and *North Argyll* (24).

**Breeding/summer** The breeding population on *Tiree* was estimated to be 10 pairs located at five different sites. Elsewhere pairs were noted in *Cowal*, *Islay* and *Mid-Argyll*. On *Tiree* a b/10 was at Loch Riaghan on 29 Jun, a b/9 at Hynish on 31 Jul and a f/10 at Ruaig on 5 Sep. In *Cowal* a b/6 was at Otter Ferry on 18 Jul. In *Mid-Argyll* a b/6 was at Camas Bruaich Ruaidhe (nr Connel) on 6 Jul and a b/6 at New Danna on 24 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** The highest count was of 355 birds at the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 31 Jul followed by 152 at Gartnatra (Loch Indaal) *Islay* on 22 Sep. The only other counts of more than 40 birds also came from these two areas with 172 at the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 7 Sep and 102 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 2 Nov. The largest flocks in other areas were: *Coll* (6), *Colonsay* (22), *Cowal* (12), *Mid-Argyll* (33), *Mull* (20) and *North Argyll* (9) and *Tiree* (19). No reports from *Jura*.

**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser* Siolta

*A scarce breeding species mainly in: Cowal, Mid-Argyll, Mull, and N Argyll. The population is more widespread in winter but in small numbers.*

**Winter/spring** During this period reports were of 1-9 birds from *Cowal*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *North Argyll*. The largest counts reported were 9 at Croig *Mull* on 30 May, 6 at Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Feb, 5 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan, 4 at Killiechroan *Mull* on 5 Jan, 4 at Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jan, 4 at Loch Tulla *North Argyll* on 17 Jan, 4 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Mar, 4 at Lochdon *Mull* on 28 Mar and 4 at Eleraig *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Apr.

**Summer/breeding** Reported from 6 sites in *Mid-Argyll* with a b/3 at the Add Estuary on 25 Jul and 8 imms there on 29 Aug, 2 sites on *Mull* where b/1, b/5 and b/7 at Loch Cuin on 1 Jul and from 2 sites in *North Argyll*.

**Autumn/winter** No count made of the usual large gathering of moulting 'redheads' at Loch Riddon *Cowal*. All reports were of 1-9 birds from *Cowal*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *North Argyll* with the highest count of 9 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Oct followed by 7 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Oct, 7 at Killail *Cowal* on 27 Nov, 6 at Loch Avich *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Oct, 6 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Oct and 6 at Appin *North Argyll* on 1 Dec.

**RUDDY DUCK** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

*A vagrant: four records; all since 1984, the most recent was at Claddach Loch, Islay on 12th May 1999.*

No records.

**COMMON QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix* Gearradh-gort

**AMBER LIST A** *rare and irregular summer visitor: mainly to Kintyre and the islands.*

**Summer** Calling birds were reported from The Laggan (nr Campbeltown) *Kintyre* on 18 May, at Lochbuie *Mull* on 4 Jun and at Ford *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jun.

**RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE** *Alectoris rufa* Cearc-thomain-dhearg-chasach

*Birds (some hybrids with Chukar A. chukar) have been introduced to several areas. Although this species is in Category C of the British list, populations in Argyll do not appear to be self-sustaining. Since about 2006 records, especially on the mainland and Islay, have been more frequent presumably as a result of widespread releases.*

**Winter/spring** Most reports were in small numbers from *Cowal* and *Islay* with highest count of 23 at Cnoc na Croise (Bunnahabhain) *Islay* on 22 May.

**Autumn/winter** In *Kintyre* a report from Killean estates in Sep gave a release of 3,000 birds. A subsequent lack of sightings may be suggestive of both the lack of observers in the area and the shooting purpose behind the release. Highest count on *Islay* was 16 at Redhouses on 21 Sep. Elsewhere there were records from *Cowal* at Craigendive (Loch Striven) noted as present on 31 Oct and 5 at Shellfield on 24 Nov.

**RED GROUSE (WILLOW GROUSE)** *Lagopus lagopus scotica* Coileach-fraoic

**AMBER LIST A** *sparsely distributed, resident, breeding bird.*

**Winter/spring** Records received involved low numbers (max. 4) from *Islay*, *Cowal* and *Mull*.

**Breeding** Widespread during the breeding season in low numbers with most reports from *Cowal*, *Kintyre*, *Islay* and *Mull*.

**Autumn/winter** Few records were received with most from *Islay* and *Mull*. A max. count of 10 at Loch Caol *Mull* on 15 Sep.

**PTARMIGAN (ROCK PTARMIGAN)** *Lagopus muta* Tàrmachan

*A localised resident breeding bird: generally above 800m in north and east Argyll, and on Mull. All records required.*

**Spring** Only two reports: 2 on Dun Da Ghaoithe (W of Craignure) *Mull* on 25 May and 3 on Coire Criche, Meal nan Gobhar (Head of Loch Etive) *North Argyll* on 11 Jun.

**Summer/autumn** Only one report: 2 at Coire Cruachan *North Argyll* on 29 Aug.

**BLACK GROUSE** *Tetrao tetrix* Caoileach-dubh

**RED LIST A** *scarce, localised, resident breeder. Numbers may now be stabilising after a steep decline. Very thinly distributed in all mainland areas: with a few on Islay and Jura. All records required.*

**Spring/Breeding** A good record of 7 at Clachadow (Glen Lonan) *Mid-Argyll* in early to mid-Apr are assumed to be lekking birds and single bird nearby at River Lonan. Two males were at Feorlin *Mid-Argyll* in mid-May. RSPB lek surveys (relies on volunteers, SNH & FES staff to repeat a sample of core leks) recorded a total of 69 displaying males at 24 lek sites throughout Argyll. The sample of repeat monitoring was low with only 9 repeat sites surveyed from 2015, and the 2016 population showed a 32% decline (from 31 to 21) in lekking males. The largest

leaks recorded were 12 in the Southend area *Kintyre*, 9 males in the Tullochgorm area *Mid-Argyll* and 5 males on a farm in NE Loch Aweside *Mid-Argyll*.

**Autumn/winter** Birds were reported from *Mid-Argyll* as present in the Clachadow (Glen Lonan) area in Sep, and 3 males were in the Moine Mhor NNR area from Oct into Dec.

**WESTERN CAPERCAILLIE** *Tetrao urogallus* Capall-coille

**RED LIST A** *once rare resident. There have been a few records from Mid-Argyll, and they are known to have bred in Cowal in 1993. However, with no recent records in either locality, or elsewhere, it seems likely that Capercaillie is currently extinct in Argyll.*

No records.

**GREY PARTRIDGE** *Perdix perdix* Cearc-thomain

*A very localised distribution. Introductions, which take place in several areas, do not appear to result in self-sustaining populations. All records required.*

No records.

**COMMON PHEASANT** *Phasianus colchicus* Easag

*May be abundant, in those parts of Argyll, where birds are released for shooting. Reports from Jura and North Argyll are rare.*

Most records came from *Islay* and *Mull* with fewer from *Cowal* and the odd report from *Coll*, *Mid-Argyll*, *North Argyll* and *Tiree* usually in single figures but some groups occasionally reaching high teens (under recorded across Argyll). With the exception of a reported 13,000 released at Killeen estate *Kintyre* there were few other reports from this area.

**GOLDEN PHEASANT** *Chrysolophus pictus*

*The last positive report concerning the introduced population on Mull was in 2009.*

No records.

**RED-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia stellata* Learga-ruadh

*A scarce widely distributed breeder (on moorland lochs), winter visitor, and passage migrant.*

**Winter/spring** Reported widely on the sea in small numbers: around islands, in sea lochs, and along the mainland coast especially in more sheltered areas. Particular concentrations occur in certain favoured locations, such as: 14 on Loch Indaal *Islay* on 25 Feb, 17 at outer Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Mar and again on 13 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** Birds were reported at breeding sites from Apr until late Aug. BTO Atlas data suggest there may be around 100 pairs in Argyll (Wilson *et al.* 2015 SWBSG Report 1504), but there is a lack of recent monitoring data from breeding sites of this species.

**Autumn/winter** Small numbers were reported from all coastal areas apart from innermost sea lochs throughout autumn and winter. Numbers on the sea increased in Aug. Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* reported that 220 flew south on 19 days of observation in Sept, with a peak of 67 birds seen in 7 hrs on 29 Sep. There were 14 at Uiskentuie (Loch Indaal) *Islay* on 14 Sep, 10 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 9 Oct, and 12 at Bruichladdich Pier *Islay* on 18 Oct. In 8 hrs of NW gale on 18 Oct, 38 flew past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*. There were 34 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 2 Nov, with 40 there on 4 Nov and 37 on 22 Nov.

**BLACK-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia arctica* Learga-dhubh

**AMBER LIST A** *very scarce breeder in Mid and North Argyll: scarce in winter but more numerous on passage. Breeding has been confirmed at 13 sites between 1985- 2015 and an*

*average of 2.7 chicks fledged annually. The Sound of Gigha, Kintyre and Kilfinan Bay, Cowal are sites of national importance for wintering birds. Knapdale Lochs Special Protection Area is designated for breeding black-throated divers.*

**Winter/spring** Birds were widely distributed in small numbers around islands, in sea lochs, and along the mainland coast especially in more marine areas. There were 14 in one flock seen from the Kennacraig *Kintyre* to *Islay* ferry on 27 Feb, 8 at West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre* on 5 Mar and 13 on Loch Caolisport *Mid-Argyll* on 14 Mar. Some birds were reported to be in breeding plumage from the start of Mar while some remained in winter plumage until midsummer.

**Breeding/summer** Birds were seen on several freshwater lochs in Jun but no data have been provided on breeding numbers or productivity this year. 5 were on Loch Tulla *North Argyll* on 7 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** Single birds were seen at many sites, especially around *Islay, Tiree, Mull* and *Kintyre*. Larger groups included: 6 at Achallader *North Argyll* on 15 Aug, 9 off Bruichladdich Pier (Loch Indaal) *Islay* on 18 Oct and 8 at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 27 Dec.

## **GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer* Muir-bhuachail

**AMBER LIST** *A numerous winter and passage visitor. Birds in breeding plumage are regularly recorded from Apr to mid-Jun. Pre-migratory gatherings occur off some coasts in late Apr and early May and a few individuals summer. The Sound of Gigha and the seas around Tiree and Coll are sites of international importance for wintering birds and: Loch na Keal Mull, Loch Indaal Islay, West Loch Tarbert Kintyre, and Lochs Beg & Scridain Mull are sites of national importance.*

**Winter/spring** Birds were reported from all coastal areas, especially sea lochs and coasts of: *Colonsay, Gigha, Islay, Kintyre, Mull, and Tiree*. Highest numbers seem to be reported in spring, although this may in part relate to better conditions for counting and more birdwatching activity. A mid-Mar survey of 377 km of the Mull coast found 487 birds in total, which led to an estimate of 578 birds around Mull assuming a similar density in unsurveyed sections. Larger numbers throughout Argyll included: 32 in Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 2 Jan, 61 off Gigha *Kintyre* on 20 Jan, 55 at Hynish *Tiree* on 31 Jan, 33 in outer Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Feb, 43 off *Tiree* on 11 Feb, 70 seen from the Kennacraig *Kintyre* to *Islay* ferry on 15 Feb, 100 in Loch na Keal *Mull* on 22 Feb, 94 there on 27 Feb, 94 on 16 Mar, 79 on 9 Apr, 39 in Outer Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Mar, 33 at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 6 Mar, 55 at Loch Scridain *Mull* on 13 Mar, 43 at Loch Buie *Mull* on 14 Mar, 119 at Loch Tuath *Mull* on 15 Mar. Smaller numbers were reported in May but with some in full breeding plumage, the largest counts that month being 25 on 18 May at Loch na Keal *Mull*. During Jun, numbers fell further, mostly to just the occasional one or two birds widely distributed off *Kintyre* and the Argyll islands, but with 16 in Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Jun.

**Summer** There was no indication of breeding in Argyll, but non-breeders, some apparently in full summer plumage, were present throughout the summer at many sites. Records came especially from *Colonsay, Kintyre, Islay, Mull, and Tiree* where mostly single birds were reported in Jun-Sep, with the fewest (five records totalling 7 birds) in Aug.

**Autumn/winter** Several individuals were reported in Sep, but numbers began to build up in Oct, counts of 10 to 30 birds were not uncommon from: *Coll, Colonsay, Islay, Kintyre, Mull, and Tiree* in Oct to Dec, with smaller numbers at many other locations with fully marine coastlines. Largest numbers included: 22 past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 18 Oct, 48 in Outer Loch Indaal *Islay* on 2 Nov, with 116 there on 7 Nov, 45 at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 19 Dec and 45 in Carsaig Bay *Mull* on 19 Dec.

**WHITE-BILLED DIVER** *Gavia adamsii* Learga-bhlàr

*A vagrant: 10 records; all since 1986, most recently on Mull in 2009, off Tiree in Oct 2011 and off Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre in Mar 2013.*

*Winter/spring* An adult in winter plumage was seen and photographed at sea between NW Mull and Ardnamurachan Highland on 5 Mar [Ewan Miles]. Record was accepted by the SBRC.

**BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS** *Thalassarche melanophrys*

*A vagrant: one record; an adult flew north past Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 27 October 2008.*

No records.

**FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis* Eun-crom

*AMBER LIST A common but localised breeding species in all areas apart from Cowal and North Argyll. Large numbers occur on passage off western headlands.*

*Winter/spring* All Jan-Mar records came from the western fringes of Argyll, from Tiree, Coll or Islay. Large numbers attended nest sites somewhat erratically from Jan onwards. For example, there were 600 on sites at Ceann a' Mhara Tiree on 23 Jan, 500 there on 17 Feb and 1000 there on 11 Apr. There were 187 at the Mull of Oa Islay on 22 Mar. Moderate numbers were seen passing headlands in spring; for example 226 flew past Aird Tiree in 1 hr on 2 Feb, including one 'blue' bird of the darkest DD plumage. A blue phase bird was present at the cliffs at Urugaig Colonsay on 24 Apr.

*Breeding* At Ceann a' Mhara Tiree there were 970 occupied sites (AOSs) with some birds incubating eggs on 20 May, 793 AOSs with many birds incubating but no visible chicks yet on 17 Jun, 453 AONs most with mid/large chicks on 19 Jul, suggesting a moderately successful breeding season. Also on Tiree, there were 50 AOSs in the quarry on Balephetrish Hill on 20 May, the same number as in the previous year. Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group (TIARG) reported that there were 271 AOSs on Lunga plus Sgeir a' Chaisteil (Treshnish Isles) Mull, a further slight decline of that population which had been nearly 700 AOSs in 1994. On Colonsay sample sites had 240 AOSs at Urugaig, 9 at Kiloran, 10 at Port Lobh and 39 at Lamallum. A blue phase bird was present again on a nesting ledge at Urugaig Colonsay on 18 Jun.

*Autumn/winter* Numbers seen at sea in Aug and Sep were highest off Tiree, with tens to hundreds passing per hr on different dates. As usual, very few were seen in Oct, the only records that month being two in Corraig Bay Tiree on 18 Oct and 30 flying past Aird Tiree on the same date. However, about 400 birds were back on the cliffs at Ceann a' Mhara Tiree on 15 Nov, and 900 there on 14 Dec. There were also six birds on nest sites at Turnaichaidh Islay on 11 Dec and eight there on 16 Dec, but there were very few records from elsewhere in Argyll in Nov-Dec.

**CORY'S SHEARWATER** *Calonectris borealis*

*A rare passage migrant: nine records; mostly in Aug or Sep. Last report was off Tiree in Aug 2005.*

No records.

**GREAT SHEARWATER** *Puffinus gravis* Fachadh-mòr

*A rare passage migrant: mostly in autumn with last reports from Sep 2007.*

No records.



## **SOOTY SHEARWATER** *Puffinus griseus* Fachadh-dubh

*A passage migrant: almost exclusively recorded Jul-Oct. Sometimes seen in large numbers from western headlands, islands, and on ferry crossings during Aug-Sep.*

**Autumn** First report was 1 between *Coll* and *Mull* on 16 Jul, followed by 1 at Cairns of *Coll Coll* on 20 Jul, 1 in *Gunna Sound Tiree* on 1 Aug, and 2 off *Hynish Tiree* on 6 Aug. The next report was of 8 off *Aird Tiree* on 27 Aug, then 30 off *Hynish Tiree* on 30 Aug, 10 from the *Oban* to *Barra* ferry *Coll/Tiree* on 31 Aug and from then there were records most days from *Tiree* of small numbers through to late Sep and a peak of 35 on 11 Sep. Peak counts of 35 off *Frenchman's Rocks Islay* on 31 Aug and 3 off *Caliach Point Mull* on 29 Sep. None were reported in Oct, but 1 flew SW off *Hynish Tiree* on 8 Nov.

## **MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus* Fachadh-bàn

**AMBER LIST** *Breeding colonies have been confirmed only on Sanda Islands and Treshnish Isles. Large numbers are seen on passage, especially during Aug-Sep.*

**Spring** The first record in spring came from *Aird Tiree* where one was seen on the exceptionally early date of 2 Feb. There were 4 at *Mull Sound Mull* on 25 Mar, which is a more typical first spring date. On 27 Mar there were 50 at *Cailiach Point Mull*. Numbers increased rapidly in May, with 3,240 at *Staffa Mull* on 8 May, 1,200 off *Balephuill Bay Tiree* on 20 May, 5,000 feeding off *Traigh nan Gilean Tiree* on 21 May, and 15,000 in rafts off *West Hynish Tiree* on 28 May.

**Breeding/summer** There were no data on breeding at *Sanda Islands Kintyre* or *Treshnish Isles Mull*. Large numbers were seen at sea throughout the summer, but probably originate mostly from colonies outside *Argyll*. There were 16,500 between *Tiree* and *Coll* on 19 Jul, 10,000 off *NW Coll* on 20 Jul, and 23,530 passing *Aird Tiree* in 2 hrs on 8 Aug. Counts of thousands were frequent from *Coll*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mull* and *Tiree*. Since breeding birds should have eggs in Jun and early Jul, and chicks in the nest in late Jul and Aug, it seems probable that birds from the huge colony on *Rum*, and possibly other colonies, must commute into or through *Argyll* waters to feed while breeding.

**Autumn** Numbers seen in Sep were mostly much lower than the numbers in Jun-Aug, suggesting that migration from the massive colony on *Rum* (where chicks fledge in Sep) may occur less through *Argyll* waters than foraging activity of chick-rearing adults. However, there were 23,500 off *Mull* on 10 Sep. A record of 250 birds off *Dunoon Cowal* on 11 Sep was unusual for that area. The largest count after mid-Sep was of 151 in 2.5 hrs passing *Aird Tiree* on 29 Sep. The last record of the year was of 4 birds passing *Aird Tiree* on 22 Oct.

## **BALEARIC SHEARWATER** *Puffinus mauretanicus*

**RED LIST** *A scarce passage migrant (Aug-Dec) since 1992 but in very small numbers: usually seen with Manx Shearwaters.*

**Autumn** More records than average from *Tiree* with 1 at *Gunna Sound* on 23 Aug, 1 W off *The Green* on 26 Aug, 1 off *Aird* on 27 Aug, 1 off *Hynish* on 29 Aug, 1 SW off *Hynish* on 30 Aug and 1 W off *West Hynish* on 30 Aug. 1 was off *Frenchman's Rocks Islay* on 3 Sep and 1 was off *Calgary NW Mull* on 27 Sep.

## **MACARONESIAN SHEARWATER** *Puffinus baroli*

*A vagrant: one record; one off Frenchman's Rocks, Islay on 30 Jun 1974. A record from 2000 is still under consideration during a full review of records by the BBRC.*

No records. (See list of rejected, pending etc records on pages 121-122).

## **EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus* Pàraig

**AMBER LIST A** *a summer visitor. The main breeding colonies are on Sanda Islands and Treshnish Isles with a few pairs on Soa and Staffa. Breeding birds first come ashore in late May or Jun. Most sightings away from breeding colonies are during Jul-Sep, when non-breeders wander extensively. Breeding European Storm-petrel is a feature of Treshnish Isles SPA.*

**Spring** The first spring record was of 5 birds between *Coll* and *Tiree* seen from the ferry on 19 Jun. There were 8 near *Colonsay* on 27 Jun, 3 off *Tiree* on 28 Jun, and 3 off *Coll* on 30 Jun.

**Breeding** TIARG reported that many birds were heard churring in burrows on Lunga and Sgeir a' Chaisteil (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*. Although no counts were made at the colonies, TIARG caught 237 birds in one 18m mist net set for 4 hrs on the boulder beach and 146 birds in three 18m nets set at the Village over two nights. Storm Petrels caught at the Treshnish Isles included birds first ringed at Mousa, Fair Isle, North Ronaldsay, Bellmullet Co Mayo (3), Northumberland (2), Calf of Man (3), Aberdeen, Eilean nan Ron (4), Faraid Head, Ardglass (3), Isle of May, Fife Ness (3), Ailsa Craig, Londonderry (7), Sanda (3) and Donegal (2). Retrapped birds at the Treshnish Isles included birds ringed up to 24 years previously, indicating the long life span of this small seabird. No information was available from Sanda Islands *Kintyre*, the other main breeding site. (See article on pages 123- 130).

**Autumn** The largest counts were of 46 birds seen from the ferry between Barra and *Tiree* on 27 Jul and 40 birds seen from the ferry north of *Coll* on 31 Aug. Small numbers were reported from shore-based seawatching from Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*, *Coll* and *Tiree*. The last record was two off Hynish *Tiree* on 23 Sep.

## **LEACH'S STORM-PETREL** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* Gobhlan-mara

**AMBER LIST A** *a scarce, but regular, autumn passage migrant off western headlands; particularly after strong westerlies. There are occasional reports in spring and summer.*

**Autumn** There were only two records: 1 from the Oban to Barra ferry north of *Coll* on 31 Aug and 2 off Hynish *Tiree* on 11 Sep.

## **NORTHERN GANNET** *Morus bassanus* Sùlaire

**AMBER LIST** *Most gannets in Argyll waters probably come from Ailsa Craig (30 km east of Mull of Kintyre) and St Kilda (190 km northwest of Tiree). Gannets are common inshore in Argyll waters from Apr to Oct, and often seen high up sea lochs. They are also reported in small numbers Nov to Mar.*

**Winter/spring** As usual, only small numbers were reported on a few dates in Jan with all records from *Tiree*, apart from 1 seen off *Mull* on 20 Jan. Slightly larger numbers were seen in Feb off *Islay*, *Coll* and *Tiree* with the highest count of 62 off Aird *Tiree* on 2 Feb. Numbers increased considerably in Mar with records from *Islay*, *Mull*, *Tiree* and *Cowal*. There were more reports and larger numbers during Apr, from a wider range of areas, including most of coastal Argyll and including up many of the sheltered sea lochs where gannets rarely occur in winter.

**Summer** Birds were reported from all marine areas of Argyll in May-Jul but mostly in small numbers, with few flocks exceeding 10 birds except in offshore areas. There were 150 off Hynish *Tiree* on 12 May, at least 50 feeding in Kilbride Bay *Cowal* on 13 May, 100 in Skipness Bay *Kintyre* on 9 Jun, 100 off Inverneill *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Jun, 100 off NE *Colonsay* on 22 Jun, 288 passing Hynish *Tiree* in 1 hr on 28 Jun, 620 passing Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* in 3 hrs on 3 Jul, 350 at Southend *Kintyre* on 16 Jul, 300 NW of *Coll* on 20 Jul. During Aug, observations from Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* showed at least 100 adults on 17 dates flying overland across *Kintyre* to take a short cut, presumably commuting to/from Ailsa Craig.

**Autumn/winter** Hundreds per hour flew past seabird hotspots such as Frenchman's Rocks *Islay*, Aird *Tiree* and Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on various dates from Aug to Oct. For example, 2,200 passed Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* in 3 hrs on 12 Aug, 1,600 passed there in 3 hrs on 2 Sep, and 1,122 were off Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 3 Sep. There was only one report from Nov, of 224 passing Hynish *Tiree* on 8 Nov. Only 12 birds were seen in Dec, 11 from *Tiree* and 1 from *Islay*. Tracking studies indicate that these midwinter birds are more likely to be from Icelandic colonies than from Scottish ones (Garthe et al. 2016, Marine Biology).



**Northern Gannet** *Kintyre* September 2016 (Eddie Maguire)

#### **GREAT CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo* Sgarbh

**Breeds in:** Cowal, Jura, *Kintyre* (including *Gigha*), Mid-Argyll, Mull, and North Argyll, with around 230 pairs in recent years. Less numerous than Shag, but numbers have increased recently. Small numbers occur on some inland waters.

**Winter/spring** There were small numbers (mostly 1-5 birds) at many estuarine (predominantly sea loch) sites across Argyll. Larger numbers were: 10 at Gorton *Islay* on 11 Jan, 11 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan, 21 at Bunnahabhain Bay *Islay* on 26 Jan, 14 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Feb, 50 at Eriska *North Argyll* on 27 Feb, 24 at Glas Eilean (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* (where they breed) on 6 Mar with 27 there on 10 Mar and 40 there on 25 Mar. There were 40 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 28 Mar.

**Breeding** Glas Eilean *Mid-Argyll* is an important colony, but although there were at least 40 adults present, the number of nests was not counted this year. There were 18 AONs at Eilean Dubh (Lynn of Lorn) *North Argyll* despite presence of mink there which has driven out other seabird species but some cormorants remain on relatively inaccessible cliff areas. Confirmed nesting was reported for the first time on *Colonsay*, with 3 nests at Pigs Paradise *Colonsay*. There were 18 nests on Glunimore Island (Sanda Islands) *Kintyre*.

**Autumn/winter** Birds were fairly well dispersed throughout the sea lochs and sheltered coasts of Argyll throughout autumn and winter. The largest recorded groups were: 48 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 22 Nov, 20 at Am Feadan *Jura* on 24 Nov, and 21 at Ardnave *Islay* on 26 Nov.

#### **GREAT (Continental) CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*

**A rare but increasingly frequent visitor to Scotland. Increasing as a breeder at inland sites in England where some hybridisation occurs with nominate Atlantic Great Cormorant. One was at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 13 Oct 2014.**

No records.

**EUROPEAN SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* Sgarbh-an-sgumain

**RED LIST A** *common resident, breeding on the mainland coast, outer isles, and on islands in sea lochs. Widespread in winter and spring but very rare inland at all times.*

**Winter/spring** As usual, birds were widely distributed on sea coasts in the early part of the year. The largest numbers reported were: 90 feeding off West Hynish *Tiree* on 10 Jan, 41 in Miller's Bay (Knapdale) *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Jan, 65 in Cuan Sound *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jan, 60 at Eilean Mhic (Coinnich) *Islay* on 15 Mar, and 400 in Calgary Bay *Mull* on 9 May.

**Breeding/summer** John Bowler reported that at Ceann a' Mhara *Tiree* there were ca.100 AONs on 11 Apr, decreasing to 81 on 20 May, by which time most nests held eggs. By 17 Jun there were 77 AONs, with most nests holding small chicks (mean brood size 1.86). TIARG reported that there were 218 AONs on Lunga, and 2 on Sgeir a' Chaisteil (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*. TIARG have been carrying out a colour ringing study of this population to assess survival rates as part of the BTO 'RAS' programme. Resightings data suggest adult survival in this population has varied from year to year within the range 80 to 100% per year. A shag found dead at Balevullin *Tiree* on 6 Jun had been ringed at Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* as an adult in Jun 2013. At Sanda Islands *Kintyre*, there were apparently no birds ashore during Apr, presumed to be due to presence of mink. However, 15 pairs were nesting on 6 Jun, this being a huge decrease in numbers compared to the 950 pairs that nested there in 1985-88 and 500 pairs in 2000. There were 8 pairs nesting at Rubha a' Mhill (Bunnahabhain Bay) *Islay* and 5 or 6 pairs at Tangytavit *Kintyre*. There were 490 feeding in Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 7 Jun, and 870 there on 27 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Although west coast shags tend not to migrate extensively, there can be large aggregations in autumn and some large local movements. There were 580 in Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 20 Aug, 110 at Gialum Bay (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 21 Aug, 100 at Gunna Island *Coll* on 31 Aug, and 300 at Ardentallen House *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Nov.

**ASCENSION FRIGATEBIRD** *Fregata aquila*

**A vagrant: two records; an immature bird was found exhausted at Loch a' Phuill (Tiree) on 9 Jul 1953 and died later and remarkably another juvenile was seen briefly at Bowmore harbour, Islay on 5 Jul 2013. These are the only records for the Western Palearctic.**

No records.

**EURASIAN BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris* Chorra-ghràin

**AMBER LIST A** *rare visitor: six records of single birds since 1980; at Dervaig, Mull in Jan-Mar 1982, near Rhunahaorine Point, Kintyre on 4 Dec 1982, at Dervaig, Mull on 23 Dec 1983, one found dead at Appin, North Argyll on 19 Sep 1999, at Craobh Haven, Mid-Argyll Dec 2009 to Feb 2010 which later died in care and at Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll on 19 Mar 2013 killed by a vehicle.*

No records.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

**A vagrant: three records; two in the nineteenth century, then reports of an adult on Coll (Apr 1987), and on Tiree (Apr to Jun 1987), which was probably the same individual.**

No records.

**CATTLE EGRET** *Bubulcus ibis*

**A vagrant: two records; one on Islay in Oct 2009 and one on Mull on 27 Oct 2011 with the same bird on Tiree on 17-25 Nov 2011.**

No records.

### **SNOWY EGRET** *Egretta thula*

*A vagrant: one record; at Balvicar, Mid-Argyll on 5 Nov 2001 which was subsequently seen at various locations in Argyll until 13 Jun 2002. This remains the only British record to date.*

No records.

### **LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta* Corra-gheal-bheag

*A scarce visitor: no records prior to 1958 but several since, mostly in spring and autumn. It has been seen more frequently in Argyll since breeding colonies have become established in England and Ireland.*

**Winter** One was at Machir Bay Islay on 20 Nov and presumably the same bird again flying past Bruichladdich Islay on 21 Nov. This could well have been the same individual again seen at Kennacraig Kintyre on 26 Nov and coincidentally seen by Toby Green who found the Machir Bay bird!

*After 8 or 9 birds in 2014 and only 3 in 2015 this is a very poor showing with perhaps only 1 bird. This species is no longer assessed by the ABRC however supporting details and photographs are encouraged prior to publishing records.*



**Little Egret** Islay November 2016 (Toby Green)

### **GREAT WHITE EGRET** *Ardea alba* Corra-bhàn-mhòr

*A rare visitor: up to 10 records between 1986 and 2015. This species is increasing as a breeding in the Netherlands and France and also England since 2012.*

No records.

### **GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea* Corra-ghrithreach

*A widespread resident: breeding in all areas except Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** Birds were widely distributed in small numbers, especially along the Argyll sea loch coasts, with the largest counts being 15 at Caolas Mor (Oronsay) *Colonsay* on 29 Jan and 21 there on 1 Feb, 15 at Druim na Claididh (Appin) *North Argyll* on 1 Feb, 18 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Feb, 12 at Loch nam Breac *Jura* on 16 Mar, 14 at Taynish (Loch Sween) *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Apr, and 20 at Calgary *Mull* on 27 Apr.

**Breeding** In many areas of Argyll herons nest as individual pairs or groups of two or three nests rather than in large heronries, and these scattered pairs are easily overlooked so breeding numbers are probably much higher across the county than totals recorded. There are few large heronries in Argyll, but there were 34 AONs at Ardachy (Loch Etive) *North Argyll*, 22 AONs in Ballachuan Hazel Wood *Mid-Argyll*, 14 AONs at Ardtur (Appin) *North Argyll*, 14 AONs at Garvard *Colonsay*, 9 AONs at Aros Park *Mull*, 8 AONs at Arinagour *Coll*, 7 AONs at Kilmun *Cowal*, 4 AONs at Gruinart *Islay*, 3 AONs at East Loch Fada *Colonsay*, 3 AONs at Seal Island

(Oronsay) *Colonsay*, 3 AONs at Gallochoille (Gigha) *Kintyre*, 2 AONs at Creagan *North Argyll*, 1 AON at Bellanoch *Mid-Argyll*.

**Autumn/winter** Birds were widely distributed in small numbers, especially along the Argyll sea loch coasts. WeBS counts in Aug-Dec mostly gave totals between 5 and 25 individuals on each of the Holy Loch *Cowal*, Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll*, Loch Etive *North Argyll*, Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll*, Loch Gruinart *Islay*, and Loch Sween *Mid-Argyll*. Elsewhere, there were 15 at Clachan Mor *Tiree* on 27 Aug, and 21 at Druim na Claidh (Appin) *North Argyll* on 1 Dec.

### **BLACK STORK** *Ciconia nigra*

**A vagrant: one record; a bird seen flying over NW Mull on 26 May 2013.**

No records.

### **WHITE STORK** *Ciconia ciconia*

**A vagrant: three records; singles at Benderloch, North Argyll in Apr 1971, on Islay in Apr/May 1978, and at Campbeltown, Kintyre in May 1978.**

No records.

### **GLOSSY IBIS** *Plegadis falcinellus*

**A vagrant: nine records since 1901; the most recent being one at Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll on 25 and 26 Sep 2009, Colonsay from 27 Dec 2013 to 5 Feb 2014 and Tiree on 13 Jan 2014.**

No records.

### **EURASIAN SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia*

**A rare visitor: eight records; the most recent of these involving four juveniles on Islay in 1998 and two together on Mull on 23 Jun 2010.**

No records.

### **PIED-BILLED GREBE** *Podilymbus podiceps*

**A vagrant: three records; one at Loch Peallach, Mull in Jun 1998, one at Salen Bay, Mull on 22 Mar to 6 Apr 2011 and one at Loch Feorlin, Mid-Argyll on 30 May to 6 Jun 2014.**

**Spring/summer** An adult male at Loch Feorlin *Mid-Argyll* first seen in 2014, but not reported in 2015, was there again from at least 6 May until 5 Aug. [D Anderson, S Lawrence, J Dickson, D Jardine, B Urquhart *et al*]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

### **LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Spàg-ri-tòn

**A local breeder in small numbers: widespread in sheltered coastal waters in winter with concentrations at Loch Etive, North Argyll and Loch Sween, Mid-Argyll.**

**Winter/spring** There were records from all areas of Argyll apart from *Jura*. Most records were of one or two birds, with largest numbers: 18 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan and 15 there on 17 Feb, 7 at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* on 2 Apr, and 7 at Rubha Fiola (Lunga) *Mid-Argyll* on 1 May.

**Breeding** Breeding was reported from many sites throughout much of Argyll, often with 2 pairs present rather than just one. Sites with confirmed breeding include, for example, Canal Loch Coll (first confirmed breeding on *Coll*), Loch an Sgoltaire *Colonsay*, Turraman Loch *Colonsay*, East Loch Fada *Colonsay* (total of 7 prs on 6 lochs on *Colonsay*), Loch Melldalloch *Cowal*, Loch nan Cadhan (Ballygrant Woods) *Islay*, Aoradh *Islay*, Westport Marsh *Kintyre*, Dubh Loch (Duachy) *Mid-Argyll*, Loch nan Druimnean *Mid-Argyll*, Lochan Iliter (Luìng) *Mid-Argyll*, Kilmory Castle *Mid-Argyll*, Ardencaple House (Seil) *Mid-Argyll*, Loch Seil *Mid-Argyll*,

Achafolla (Luìng) *Mid-Argyll*, Mishnish Lochs *Mull*, Benderloch *North Argyll* and Ardtur (Appin) *North Argyll*,

**Autumn/winter** There were records from all areas of Argyll except for *Jura*. Highest counts included: 19 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Sep, 26 there on 19 Oct, 23 on 15 Nov and 22 on 15 Dec, 9 at Loch nan Cadhan (Ballygrant Woods) *Islay* on 25 Nov, and 12 at Kilmun Church (Holy Loch) *Cowal* on 28 Dec.

### **GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus* Gobhlachan-laparan

**An uncommon winter and passage visitor: with 1-8 records annually since 1984 and recorded in all months except Jun.**

**Winter/spring** There were 7 records, involving up to 11 birds, one of the highest totals yet recorded in Argyll. There were 5 at Loch Long (near Blairmore Farm) *Cowal* on 23 Feb, one at Eiriska *North Argyll* on 29 Feb, one at Airds Bay (Taynuilt) *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Mar, 1 at Eilean Traighe (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Mar, 1 in Gunna Sound *Tiree* on 20 Mar, 1 at Loch Scridain *Mull* on 28 Mar, and 1 at Craignure Jetty *Mull* on 12 Apr.

**Autumn/winter** There were only three records in autumn/winter: 1 at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 31 Aug, 1 at Bruichladdich Pier *Islay*, and 1 at Blairmore Farm (Loch Long) *Cowal* on 20 Nov.

### **RED-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps grisegena* Gobhlachan-ruadh

**RED LIST A scarce winter and passage visitor: most records are in Sep-Mar; at least 42 records.**

**Winter/spring** One was at Loch na Cille *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan and 6 Mar [Morag & Norman Rea, Paul Daw, Dougie Chirnside, Lottie Goodlet]. One was off Bowmore harbour *Islay* on 6 to at least 15 Mar [Colin Bushell, John Nadin, Jimmy Steele *et al*]. One was at Loch Crinan, off Duntrune Castle *Mid-Argyll* on 18 Mar [Jim Dickson]. All records were accepted by the ABRC.

### **SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus* Gobhlachan-mara

**RED LIST A regular winter and passage visitor to sea lochs and sounds: occasionally on inland waters. The Sound of Gigha, Loch na Keal, Mull and Loch Indaal, Islay are sites of national importance for wintering birds.**

**Winter/spring** Counts at the best known sites (Loch Indaal *Islay*, Loch na Keal *Mull* and the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre*) are summarised in Table 16. Elsewhere, largest counts were 4 at Ganavan *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Feb, 3 at Ardmucknish Bay *North Argyll* on 13 Feb, 4 at North Ledaig *North Argyll* on 3 Mar, 7 at Loch Ba *Mull* on 16 Mar, and 4 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 19 Mar. There were no records during Jun or Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Counts at the three main sites are in Table 19. Elsewhere, largest count was 3 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 19 Nov.

Table 16. *Maximum numbers of Slavonian Grebes counted in 2016 at the three main sites for this species in Argyll (n/r = no data).*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
L. Indaal	7	2	7	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	8	8	33	6
L. na Keal	n/r	56	33	2	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	3	11	12	2
S. of Gigha	26	n/r	n/r	23	n/r	n/r	n/r	6	3	n/r	2	14

### **BLACK-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps nigricollis* Gobhlachan-dubh

**AMBER LIST A rare passage migrant and winter visitor: 14 records since 1936, with decreasing reports, the last records were in 2003.**

No records.

**EUROPEAN HONEY-BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus*

**AMBER LIST** A rare passage migrant: 12 records since 1980.

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

**BLACK KITE** *Milvus migrans*

A vagrant: three records; one at Vaul, Tiree on 16th May 1997, one near Dalmally, North Argyll on 31 May 2010 and one at Kilmichael GLEN, Mid-Argyll on 3 May 2014.

**Spring** One was filmed in flight just inland from Machrihanish village Kintyre on 11 May [Aidan MacCormick]. Record was accepted by the SBRC.

**RED KITE** *Milvus milvus* Clamhan-gobhlach

A re-introduction programme in Scotland since 1996 has involved releases in Highland, central, and south west Scotland. Genuine vagrants have occurred in the past, but most recent Argyll records involve these released birds. All records are requested, ideally with details of wing tags if present.

**Spring/summer** There were only two spring sightings. Both were on Islay; at Coillabus (The Oa) on 7 May and the other at Claddach on 22 May.

**Autumn** Two sightings. One was at Ormsary Mid-Argyll on 14 Oct and one was at Kinnabus Islay on 21 Nov.



**White-tailed Eagle** Islay June 2016 (Mike Peacock)

**WHITE-TAILED EAGLE** *Haliaeetus albicilla* Iolair-mhara

**RED LIST** A rare but increasing resident breeder in Argyll: wandering immatures (and sometimes adults) occur widely. Most are derived from re-establishment projects in north-west Scotland since 1975. Birds from similar projects in Ireland and the east coast of Scotland have also appeared in Argyll recently. All records are requested, ideally with details of wing tags if present.

Unsurprisingly, for such a striking and sought after bird, over 235 records were received in 2016, a slight decline since 2015, which perhaps reflects the increasing familiarity of this species in Argyll. The majority were from Islay and Mull, although in the former case this



probably reflects the numbers of birders rather than birds present. Birds were reported from all Argyll recording areas, including areas where they were not reported in 2015. On *Cowal* an imm was at Bar Mor on 3 Jul and singles was at Lephinmore on 18 Jul and at Meall Reamhar on 7 Dec, and in *Kintyre* an adult was at Putechan on 8 Apr, possibly the same bird was on Sanda the following day, and an adult was off Machrihanish SBO on 8 May. The total sightings reported for the other recording areas were: *Coll* (3), *Colonsay* (including Oronsay) (1), *Islay* (76) *Jura* (5), *Mid-Argyll* (37), *Mull* (ca 100), *North Argyll* (12) and *Tiree* (4). There were reports of 3 or more birds on 15 occasions, all of which were on *Mull* except 3 imms at Aird Luig (Luig) *Mid-Argyll* on and 3 at Loch Leathan *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Apr. 10 were at the head of Loch na Keal *Mull* on 24 Feb and 9 were at Carsaig *Mull* on 15 May. A pair was seen chasing and eating a Gannet at Arinagour *Coll* on 18 Oct.

**Please continue to send in all sightings, which will be particularly useful as birds expand their breeding range into new areas on the mainland and the islands.**

**Breeding** 30 pairs produced 25 large or fledged chicks. Not all mainland sites were fully monitored and the situation at these was confused by the absence of previous nesting pairs in known nesting areas. A new pair was successful on *Mull*. On the mainland, a female from the Irish reintroduction that attempted to breed in Argyll in 2013-14, was found at a new site in 2016 (40+ km away) paired with a bird from the East Coast reintroduction. They were successful and fledged one chick (R Broad, D Sexton, RSPB Scotland). 61 large or fledged chicks were produced across the whole of Scotland in 2016, a little down for the first time (66 fledged in 2015) (D Sexton).

#### **WESTERN MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus* Clamhan-lòin

**AMBER LIST** *A scarce, but recently more or less annual, passage migrant: records in every year but one since 1986. Most records Apr-Jun.*

**Spring/summer** Four migrants were reported; a female was at Cnoc Reamhar *Jura* on 6 May, 1 (sex not stated) was at Achnahard *Mull* on 11 May, a female at Tayinloan *Kintyre* on 18 May, followed by an immature male at Loch Bhasapol *Tiree* on 5 June.

**Autumn** There were three autumn records: an adult female was seen at Grasspoint *Mull* on 2 Aug, a male was over Turnaichaidh *Islay* on 27 Aug with probably the same at Loch Gorm on 3 Sep, followed by a late bird at Gruinart *Islay* on 17 Oct.

#### **HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus* Brèid-air-tòin

**RED LIST** *A sparse but widespread breeding species: Argyll holds around one quarter of the Scottish breeding population. Seen regularly: away from breeding areas, on migration, and in winter with reports from all recording areas.*

During the year around 580 records were received, from all Argyll recording areas except *North Argyll*. On 15 Aug 4 ringtails were on *Tiree* and 4 birds were regularly reported from Gruinart *Islay* from Oct – Dec.

**Breeding** A National Hen Harrier Survey was carried out in 2016 and the full findings will be written up in due course. Information is available from the Argyll Raptor Study Group, but not for some of the sample 10 km squares, nor is the estimated total population.

Table 17. *Outcome of monitored Hen Harrier territories in Argyll in 2016* (ARSG / Roger Broad).

Area	Sites checked	Sites occupied	Sites where eggs laid	Sites successful	Sites failed	Outcome unknown	Min no. large young	Young per successful site
Coll	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	0.00
Mull	42	42	39	25	14	0	61	2.44
Colonsay	9	4	2	2	0	0	6	3.00
Islay	16	16	12	11	1	0	35	3.18
Mainland*	19	16**	11	7	3	1	19	2.71
Total	100	84	69	47	20	2	126	3.15***

\* *Mainland includes sites in Mid Argyll (8) and Kintyre & Knapdale (11).*

\*\* *Includes on mixed ad/imm pair*

\*\*\* *Calculated for 40 broods from all areas where fledged brood size accurately known.*

**Mull:** There were at least 42 pairs of breeding harriers; all the males were adults. 37 nests were monitored. Two additional pairs were successful but the nests were not located. Food passes were recorded by three pairs but these probably failed before nests could be located. There was one exceptional clutch of nine eggs. 14 of the 37 nests failed completely with eggs or small young and one with 3 large young. 25 nests fledged at least 61 young. 26 of the 37 nests were concentrated in 4 loose colonies of 5, 6, 7 and 8 pairs. (P Haworth).

**Islay:** Six 10 km squares were surveyed and supplementary records for part of an additional square were collected and two squares (mostly unsuitable habitat) were also surveyed where no harriers were found. A total of 32 sites were confirmed breeding along with 4 probable breeding sites and 6 sites where possible breeding occurred. Outwith the survey squares, one additional site was confirmed and two possible sites were also found. Three immature males were located but none of these were paired. It was not part of the extensive survey to confirm clutch or brood size although this more detailed information was collected for 5 sites and is included with data collected annually on the RSPB Reserves in the table above.

**Roosts** No details of roost counts were received.

## **PALLID HARRIER** *Circus macrourus*

**A vagrant: two records both in 2011; one on Mull on 20 and 24 Sept and one in Kintyre on 22 Sept.**

No records.

## **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis* Glas-sheabhag

**A sporadic visitor of uncertain status: last confirmed record was at Glen Creran, North Argyll in Jan 2010.**

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

## **EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus* Speireag

**A widespread, resident, breeding species.**

During 2016 birds were reported from all Argyll recording areas. Regularly seen in gardens where the prey species noted included: Blackbird, Starling, Chaffinch and Siskin.

**Breeding** Eleven sites were checked in 2016 (Colonsay 5, Cowal 6). Six sites were occupied and eggs were laid at all of them. All six were successful to the large young stage but brood sizes were unknown (ARSG per Roger Broad).

## COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo* Clamhan

***A resident breeding bird: common in all areas and the most abundant raptor in Argyll.***

During 2016 numerous records were received from all Argyll recording areas. The following counts give some idea of the numbers present: 18 were once again noted during the goose count on *Tiree* 19/20 Jan (17 in 2015) and 16 were around *Tiree* on 14/15 Nov. 29 were noted at Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 8 Sep, 8 were at Finlaggan *Islay* on 26 Feb, 8 at Lochbuie *Mull* on 30 May and 8 at Eilean Traigh (Loch Etive) *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Dec.

### ***Breeding***

Table 18. *Outcome of monitored Common Buzzard territories in Argyll in 2016 (ARSG / I Hopkins). NB: includes data for Bute, which is outwith the Argyll Recording area.*

			Sites where breeding proven				
Area	Sites checked	Sites Occupied	Sites failed	Sites successful	Outcome unknown	Number fledged*	Large young per successful site
Tiree	14	14	0	2	0	4	2.00
Colonsay	58	18****	2	8	0	14	1.75
Islay	12	10	2	5	0	8	1.60
Luing	5	5**	0	0	0	0	0
Mid-Argyll	3	2	0	2	0	3	1.50
Kintyre	7	7	0	6	0	7	1.17
Cowal	21	18**	1	9	0	14	1.55
Bute	50	19***	2	11	1	19	1.72
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>1.60</b>

\* Large young on last visit assumed to have fledged. \*\*\* Includes 3 sites with single birds.

\*\* Includes 1 site with a single bird.

\*\*\*\* Includes 5 sites with single birds.

Rabbits appear to be making a come-back on Bute (Ian Hopkins).

## ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus* Bleidir-molach

***A rare visitor: (several old reports); 13 records since 1963, latest records; on Tiree on 17 Sep 1997 and at Gleann Mor, Islay on 11 and 19 Nov 2014.***

No records.

## GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos* Iolair

***A scarce, but widespread, resident breeding species. Immatures tend to wander and may be recorded in areas where breeding does not occur.***

Away from breeding sites, birds were reported from all Argyll recording areas except *Coll* and *Tiree*. There was one record of 5 birds together: at Loch na Cuilce *Mull* on 27 Jun, while 4 were seen together at between Salen and Loch na Keal *Mull* on 24 Feb, in Glen Shira *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Aug and at Carsaig *Mull* on 29 Dec.

***Breeding*** Monitoring returned to normal levels with around 60% of territories checked (2015 was a 'national survey year'). Breeding performance was the best for several years, with 44% of monitored territories producing young.

Table 19. *Golden Eagle Breeding performance by area 2016* (ARSG / Roger Broad).

	Ts checked	Ts Occupied	Ts where eggs laid	Ts known to have fledged young	% of occupied Ts that fledged young	Min no. of large young	Young per successful pair
N Argyll	3	1 pr +1	1	0	0		
S Argyll	29	27 prs	19	14	53.86	14	1.0
Mull	29	25 prs	16	11	44.00	11	1.0
Other Islands	8	8	4	2	25.00	2	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>60pr +1</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>44.26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1.0</b>

Table 20. *Golden Eagle Summary Information 2007-2016.*

Year	Ts Checked	Ts occupied	Ts where eggs laid	Ts known to have fledged young	% of occupied Ts that fledged young	Min number of large young	Number of young per successful pair
2016	62	60 prs +1	40	27	44.26	27	1.00
2015	105	92	57	18	19.56	18	1.00
2014	71	70	41	20	28.57	20	1.00
2013	64	61	37	20	32.78	23	1.15
2012	65	61	36	18 (21)	31.14% (36.06%)	19 (22)	1.05 (1.04)
2011	60	54	25	17	31.48	17	1.0
2010	65	61	37	20 (25)	32.78% (40.98%)	28	1.10 (1.12)
2009	66	59	40	16	27.11%	18	1.12
2008	73	64	42	33 (35)	51.5% (54.68%)	36 (38)	1.09
2007	69	63	41	25 (26)	39.6% (41.2%)	25 (26)	1.00

( ) = figures in brackets include sites with large young in nest at last visit.

### **OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus* Iolair-iasgaich

**AMBER LIST A** *summer migrant, breeding in small but increasing numbers: occurs more widely on passage.*

**Spring** The first arrival reported was one at Loch Awe station *North Argyll* on 1-3 Mar. This is the earliest reported returning bird this century. It was followed by other early birds at Danna *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Mar, Loch Ederline *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Mar and Ballygrant Woods *Islay* on the same day. The main *Mid-Argyll* population arrived in early Apr, with sightings at Carradale *Kintyre* on 9 Apr, but the first on *Mull*, at Lochdon, was not noted until 29 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** 18 pairs and 3 singles were located with nests. 15 pairs were confirmed to have laid eggs but the outcome at another site was uncertain. Of the pairs that were confirmed to lay, 10 pairs were successful, 4 pairs failed and the outcome at one site was uncertain. The average brood size of successful pairs was 2.10 large young/successful site, saw a return to an 'average' breeding success following the poor year in 2015 (ARSG/ Roger Broad). On the

islands, birds were reported regularly from *Islay* and *Mull*, one was at Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 29 Jun.

Table 21. *Osprey Summary Information 2007-2016.*

Year	Sites occupied	Sites successful	No. large young	Young per successful site
<b>2016</b>	<b>18 prs+3 singles</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21*</b>	<b>2.10</b>
2015	17prs+3 singles	10	17	1.70
2014	18	16	34	2.12
2013	17	13	29	2.23
2012	19	14	39	2.78
2011	16	6	13	2.16
2010	20	13	30	2.30
2009	15	12	28	2.33
2008	15	11	22*	2.00
2007	12	11	22	2.00

\* excludes breeding information for one pair where outcome unknown

**Autumn** Migrant birds were at Milton and Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 4-5 Aug. Sightings declined during Aug with one at Lochdon *Mull* from 21-24 Aug the last there, and one at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Aug the last reported in the core area. The last records were of single birds at Peninver *Kintyre* on 8 Sep and in various locations on *Islay* from 10-14 Sep.

**Reports of chicks colour-ringed near Loch Awe.**

A chick ringed in 2015 was found dying near Empada, Guines-Bissau (reported on 6 Feb 2016). A chick from 2012, which was photographed in Somerset from 1 Sep - 3 Oct 2012, Gambia on 31 Jan 2013, and at Sine Saloum, Senegal on 8 May 2013, was photographed again, at Kird Dam (Bute) on 16 Jul 2016.

**WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus* Snagan-allt

**AMBER LIST** *A secretive and under-recorded resident: occurs at low density on the mainland but in larger numbers on the outer islands. Immigration is thought to occur in winter.*

**Winter/spring** The only records from the mainland were 4 at Lochan Luing *Kintyre* in Jan, 2 responding to a tape at Loch Ederline *Mid-Argyll* in Feb and 1 at Ardtur (Appin) *North Argyll* in Apr, but there were regular reports from the islands with sightings or calling birds on: *Islay*, *North Argyll* (Lismore), *Mid-Argyll* (Luing at 2 sites, also Kerrera and Seil), *Colonsay* (3 sites) and *Tiree*.

**Summer/breeding** Birds were heard calling at 5 sites on *Tiree* during the summer. In May-Jun, birds were also recorded calling at 2 sites on *Colonsay*, at 2 sites on *Islay* including at least 10 calling birds at RSPB Loch Gruinart and a pair at Ardnave, and at single sites on Oronsay *Colonsay* and 3 sites in *Mid-Argyll*. One calling from cliff-top bracken on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* on 25 Jun-2 Jul was the third year birds have been recorded there by TIARG, following calling in the same location in 2014 and 2015, although the 2016 call structure was notably different. There were no confirmed breeding records.

**Autumn/winter** Birds were more widespread with records from 5 sites on *Islay* in Sep-Nov, 2 sites on *Coll* in Oct-Nov, 2 sites on *Colonsay* in Sep-Oct, 2 sites on Oronsay *Colonsay* in Oct, 6 sites in *Mid-Argyll* with 2 sites on Seil in Jul-Nov, 3 sites on Luing in Aug-Dec and at Loch Ederline (Ford), 1 site at Lochan Luing *Kintyre* where 3 birds responded to a tape-lure on 27

Dec and 3 sites on *Tiree* including a group of at least 5 birds squealing at Balephuill from Jul through Dec with up to 2 birds also seen there.

# **SPOTTED CRAKE** *Porzana porzana* Traon-breac

**AMBER LIST** *A rare and irregular summer visitor: also recorded as an autumn migrant in the past.*

**Spring/summer** After a good year in 2014 when 4 birds were recorded, just one was recorded in 2016, a male calling at Totronald RSPB *Coll* on 19 Apr.

**2015.** One bird calling on *Coll* on 21 and 28 July was submitted late and therefore omitted from ABR27 and was the only record that year.

# **CORN CRAKE** *Crex crex* Traon

**RED LIST** *A localised summer visitor, now breeding mainly on: Coll, Colonsay, Iona (Mull), Islay and, Tiree. Following recent conservation activities a long-term decline in numbers is being reversed.*

**Spring/summer** Arrivals were a little later than normal this year, with the first bird reported at Balinoe *Tiree* on 19 Apr followed by singles at Totronald RSPB *Coll* and Iona *Mull* on 20 Apr and *Islay* on 25 Apr. As in 2015, no birds were heard calling on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* by TIARG but a single male called on Sgeir a' Chasteil most nights 25 Jun-2 Jul with one flushed there on 29 Jun. The only mainland records were of a bird calling at Machrihanish Airfield *Kintyre* from mid May to at least 1 Jun and a male calling on Easdale Island *Mid-Argyll* from 20 May with 2 calling there on 26 May. Young birds and broods were noted on *Tiree* and Oronsay *Colonsay* in Jul-Aug. The overall Argyll total was 8 calling males up on 2015 with small increases in numbers on *Tiree* and *Coll*, although numbers were down on *Colonsay / Oronsay*, *Islay* and Iona *Mull*.

**Autumn** The final male birds stopped calling as usual in the first 2 weeks of Aug and most birds had left by mid-Sep but odd birds were seen at Gruinart *Islay* to 16 Sep, with the very last at Sorobaiddh Bay *Tiree* on 9 Oct.

**Breeding** Table 22 below summarises the results of surveys of calling Corn Crakes in Argyll in 2016 and shows earlier years for comparison. The reduction in the Argyll totals after 2007-12 is due in part to a re-assessment of the numbers on *Coll*.

Table 22. *Number of calling Corn Crakes in Argyll areas, 2007-2016 (RSPB/ Andy Robinson).*

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Coll	180	118	122	116	121	103	64	91	78	89
Tiree	391	413	392	391	385	371	348	396	333	346
Iona	30	50	46	34	24	31	25	28	32	28
Mull	4	8	2	7	6	2	3	3	3	6
Colonsay/ Oronsay	73	67	61	72	58	71	53	86	55	52
Islay	70	82	84	81	85	86	87	98	102	84
Smaller islands*	7	n/r	2	2	12+**	2	1	4	2	5
Mainland			5	3+				2		3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>738</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>613</b>

\* includes records from McCormaig Islands, Gigha, Lismore, Staffa, Treshnish Isles etc. NB At least one calling bird recorded on the Treshnish Isles in every year except 2008 and 2010.

\*\* includes 8 or 9 on mainland and smaller islands plus 4 on the Treshnish Isles.

### **COMMON MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus* Cearc-uisge

**A localised, sparsely distributed, resident breeding species: most numerous on Islay and in Mid-Argyll.**

**Winter/spring** Birds were well scattered early in year. On *Tiree* there were singles at Sandaig and Balephuill in Jan. Birds were present at Kilbride *Coll* in Feb but there were no records from *Mull*. From *Mid-Argyll*, 1 was in Oban in Feb and birds were present at Ardencaple House (Seil) in Jan-Mar with a high count of 10 there on 4 Jan. 2 birds were at Ardtur (Appin) *North Argyll* on 5 Apr with another nearby at Benderloch *North Argyll* on 7 Apr, whilst a group of 6 birds was at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* in Mar-Apr. On *Islay* 1 was on a distillery pond at Port Charlotte on 26 Feb and at least 2 birds were present at RSPB Loch Gruinart in Apr.

**Summer/breeding** Confirmed breeding involved a pair with 4 young chicks at Bishop's Glen (Dunoon) *Cowal* in May, a pr with 5 young chicks at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* in May, a pr with 4 juvs at Benderloch *North Argyll* in May, a fledged juv at Kilkenneth *Tiree* in Jun, followed by a new brood of 2 small chicks there in July and an imm bird nearby at Moss in Aug, a pr with 3 juvs on the Crinan Canal at Kilmahumaig *Mid-Argyll* in Jul, 6 adults with 2 imm birds at Ardencaple House (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* in Aug and a pr with 2 imms at Ballyhough Loch *Coll* in Aug. Possible/probable breeding prs were at Sandaig *Tiree* in Jun-Aug and at Canal Loch (Breachacha) *Coll* in Jun, whilst at least 3 prs bred at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay*.

**Autumn/winter** Birds remained scattered later in the year. On *Islay* at least 2 remained at RSPB Loch Gruinart in Sep-Nov, 2 were at Bruichladdich in Oct and there were singles at Port Charlotte in Oct and at Loch Indaal in Nov. On *Tiree* 3 birds remained at Kilkenneth on 3 Sep and on *Coll* there were 5 birds at Ballyhough Loch in Oct and up to 2 at the Canal Loch (Breachacha) in Sep-Dec. Elsewhere, at least 1 bird remained at Ardencaple House (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Oct, 1 was at Ederline Farm *Mid-Argyll* in Oct-Dec, 2 were at Bellanoch *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Nov, 1 was at Benderloch *North Argyll* on 1 Nov and 1 was on the Lusragan Burn in Connel *North Argyll* in Dec.

### **COMMON COOT** *Fulica atra* Lach-a'-bhlàir

**A former scarce and irregular breeder and an uncommon winter visitor.**

**Winter/spring** This species currently remains very scarce and there was only 1 record in spring: a single was at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* on 8 May.

**Summer** No records.

**Autumn/winter** 1 was at Loch Gorm *Islay* on 15 Aug and possibly the same at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 22-23 Aug and 1 was at Loch Bhasapol *Tiree* (a former regular wintering site) on 5-19 Dec.

### **COMMON CRANE** *Grus grus*

**AMBER LIST A rare visitor: eighteen records; some records of up to three together between 1966-2013. Up to nine individuals were recorded in 2012.**

No records.

### **EURASIAN STONE-CURLEW** *Burhinus oedicnemus*

**RED LIST A vagrant: one record; one at Loch Gruinart Flats, Islay on 23-24 May 1997.**

No records.

## PIED AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

AMBER LIST A *vagrant: four records; at Loch Seil, Mid-Argyll in 1936, Mull in 1977, Kintyre in 1986, and Kintyre in 2002.*

No records.

## EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus* Gille-Brighe

AMBER LIST A *widespread and common breeding species: in all recording areas. Flocks congregate at favoured locations outside the breeding season and numbers often rise noticeably during spring and autumn passage.*

**Winter/spring** Counts were received on a regular basis throughout the year from 10 sites (see Table 23). Other notable winter records were 142 at Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* on 21 Jan, 15 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 24 Jan, 150 at Ardyne Point *Cowal* on 10 Feb, 75 at Traigh Bhagh *Tiree* on 10 Feb, 55 at Dunoon *Cowal* on 11 Feb, 53 at Port Appin *North Argyll* on 13 Feb, 50 in Oban Harbour *Mid-Argyll* on 18 Feb and 28 at Arinagour *Coll* on 21 Feb. 100 were at Sandbank *Cowal* on 23 Feb, and 100 at Calgary *Mull* on 31 Mar, 62 at Laggan Bay *Islay* on 10 Apr, 100 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 2 May, 112 at Ballimore Boathouse *Cowal* on 3 May, 26 at Loch Amlaich *Coll* on 9 May, 35 on Iona *Mull* on 11 May and 100 at Calgary *Mull* on 16 May.

**Breeding/summer** The first chicks seen were on 27 May on *Tiree*. 23 pairs were found breeding in the wetland compartments of The Reef *Tiree*, and a colour-ringed bird which had been marked in Dublin Bay, Eire in Nov 2014 returned to the site it nested at in 2015 on Soa Island *Tiree*. 9 breeding pairs were found at Gruinart *Islay* and on the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, 8 pairs (4 confirmed breeding) were found on Lunga, 2 pairs each on Sgeir an Caisteal and Cairn Burgh Mhor, and single pairs (one chick) on Sgeir an Eirionnaich and on Sgeir an h-Iolair (one chick). Elsewhere breeding was proved on Oronsay *Colonsay*, Killail and Otter Ferry *Cowal*, Machrihanish airfield *Kintyre* (3 pairs) and Rubh Leth Thorcaill *Mull*. A non-breeding flock of 96 was noted at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Jun and 85 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on the same date.

**Autumn/winter** Away from the regularly counted sites (Table 23) the larger counts were 331 on *Tiree* on 18 Jul, 100 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 20 Jul, 200 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 7 Aug, 200 at Killail *Cowal* on 14 Aug and 408 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 19 Sep

Table 23. *Maximum WEBS monthly counts of Oystercatchers at The Strand (Colonsay), Blairmore Loch Long and Holy Loch (Cowal), Loch Gruinart, Loch Indaal (Islay), Loch Craignish, Loch Crinan, Loch Gilp, Loch Sween (Mid-Argyll), Loch Creran and Loch Etive (North Argyll) in 2016.*

Lochs	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	236	203	271	102	91	85	95		99	133	252	100
Indaal	110	171	74	41	35	50	38	155	62	120	373	124
L. Long	164	87		48			28		97		92	
Holy L	195	287	176						297	269	221	232
L. Craignish	36	42	61	41	41	25	17	5	20	10	22	7
L. Crinan	24	28	32	22	17	28	48	44	1	26	14	31
L. Gilp	236	188	220	123	86		182	300	226	283	237	204
L. Sween	17	19	19	28								
L. Creran	79	79		36					60	40		104
L. Etive	21	102	70						1			
The Strand	48	76				4				72		35



### **AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis dominica*

**A rare autumn visitor: 22 records; all 2001-2014.**

**Autumn** An adult was found at Crossapol *Tiree* on 26 Sep then relocated nearby at Kenovay on 30 Sep, Heylipol on 3 Oct and again at Crossapol on 6 to 10 Oct [John Bowler, Jim Dickson *et al*]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.



**American Golden Plover** *Tiree* October 2016 (Jim Dickson)

### **PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis fulva*

**A vagrant: four records; all on Tiree, in Oct 2000, in Aug/Sep 2006, in Oct 2008 and in Aug/Sep 2009.**

**Autumn** An adult was at Middleton *Tiree* on 29 Aug and stayed in this area until 1 Sep [Keith Gillon, John Bowler]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

### **EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria* Feadag

**A moderate but probably decreasing number breed on moorland in several parts of Argyll. Large numbers are present at traditional sites by the coast in winter and also during spring and autumn passage, especially on: Islay, Tiree, and Mull.**

**Winter/spring** The largest numbers throughout the year were reported from *Tiree* and Gruinart *Islay* (see Table 24), where a peak count of 5,678 was noted during an all-island count of *Tiree* on 11 Apr. There were no records from *Cowal* and *Jura*. Away from *Tiree* and *Islay*, 20 were at Fidden *Mull* on 13 Jan, 170 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 2 Feb, 25 at Glen Forsa *Mull* on 7 Feb, 42 on Iona *Mull* on 14 Feb and 750 at Breachacha *Coll* on 19 Feb. 45 were at Fidden *Mull* on 2 May and 50 at Lochbuie *Mull* on 15 May, but it is not known whether these were migrants or local breeders off-duty on the low ground.

**Breeding/summer** Very few reports were received from birds in breeding habitat: 2 were on Sron a'Ghearrain *North Argyll* on 5 Jun and one on Beinn a'Chochull *North Argyll* on 7 Jun. 5 at Shiaba *Mull* on 14 May and 10 east of Glenegedale *Islay* on 14 Jul might have been locally breeding birds.

**Autumn/winter** A bird was back at Sandaig *Tiree* on 24 Jun, but no more were seen there until 5 Jul when 35 were present and 300 were back by 30 Jul. 9 at Loch Beg *Mull* on 21 Jul and 24 at Scallastle Bay *Mull* on 26 Jul are likely to have been local birds. 6 migrants were at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Aug, and 5 flying south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 29 Sep. Later in the year there were few large flocks away from *Tiree* and *Islay*, with 39 at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 24 Oct, 110 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 27 Oct the largest groups noted on these islands

Table 24. *Maximum monthly day-counts of Golden Plovers on Tiree and Gruinart Islay in 2016.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	J	J	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tiree	3020	3780	2000	5678	2500	1		560	1190	2055	2800	1100
Gruinart	179	500	790	45	6			12	2	550	702	405

## **GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola* Feadag-ghlas

**AMBER LIST** *An uncommon passage migrant, recorded most frequently in Kintyre and on the islands: also, a winter visitor in small numbers, mostly on Islay and Tiree.*

**Winter** During winter, sightings were confined to the islands. During Jan 1 was at Loch Gruinart Islay on 4 Jan and 4 were between Gartbreck and Bowmore Islay on 17 Jan. A single bird was on Oronsay Colonsay on 2 & 8 Feb and 7 were at Loch Gruinart Islay on 14 Feb and 8, possibly the including the same birds, were at Ardlarach Islay on 22 Feb. During Mar 1 was at Caolas Tiree on 3 Mar and 4 at Ardlarach Islay on 13 Mar.

**Spring** The first firm evidence of spring migration was of 1 seen flying north at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 3 Apr. A single bird was at New Danna Mid-Argyll on 17 Apr and 1 was on Oronsay Colonsay on 24 Apr, 2 & 9 May and it or another was at Traigh nam Barc Colonsay on 26 Apr. A summer plumaged bird flew north at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 10 May and another in summer plumage was found at Ardlarach Islay on 19 May.

**Autumn/winter** The first returning birds in autumn were 2 at Loch Gruinart Islay on 26 Jul. One juv was at Clachan Mor Tiree on 17 Aug and 1 adult at Vaul Tiree on 28 Aug, which was also seen there on 8 & 16 Sep, plus 1 at Loch Stanail Tiree on 4 Sep. 2 were at Otter Ferry Spit Cowal on 16 Sep, 1 at Loch Laich North Argyll on 21-22 Sep and 5 at Loch Creran North Argyll on 16 Oct were the only mainland records. 12 at Loch Gruinart Islay on 26 Sep was the largest number reported in autumn. 5 juvs were on Tiree on 1 Oct, a single was at Breachacha Bay Coll on 10 Oct and 10 were at Bridgend Merse Islay on 12 Oct. Later in the year 1 was on The Strand Colonsay from 22 Oct – 15 Dec and 5 were on Islay (Loch Gruinart or Gartbreck) during Nov and Dec. 3 were between Gartbreck and Bowmore Islay on 18 Dec, a single bird was at Loch a' Phuill Tiree on 19 Dec and 2 at Ardnave Islay on 27 Dec were the last reported.

## **NORTHERN LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus* Curracag

**RED LIST** *A localised breeder and widespread wintering species: numbers highest on Tiree and Islay.*

**Winter/spring** Large numbers were reported throughout the year at Gruinart Islay and Tiree (see Table 25). 90 were at Fidden Mull on 15 Jan, 50 at Ardnave Islay on the same date, 55 at Toberonochy (Luing) Mid-Argyll on 23 Jan and 300 at Bridgend Islay on 25 Jan. 103 were back on Oronsay Colonsay on 8 Feb, 5 at Benderloch North Argyll on 10 Feb, 35 at Breachacha Coll on 19 Feb, 14 at the Holy Loch Cowal on 23 Feb, 70 at Killinallan Islay on 28 Feb. In Mar, birds began to disperse with only 30 being found at Fidden Mull on 4 Mar, while 20 were at Loch Ba Mull on 13 Mar, 39 at Westport Marsh Kintyre on 19 Mar, 4 at West Tarbert (Gigha) Kintyre on 25 Mar and one was at Loch Tulla North Argyll on 10 Apr.

**Breeding** Birds were on eggs and territory on Tiree from mid-Mar. The first broods on Tiree were noted at Loch an Eilein and The Reef on 29 Apr and on Coll on 6 May. 45 Pairs were found in the wetland compartments at the Reef Tiree. At Gruinart Islay there were 202 pairs (cf 218 in 2015). 67 pairs were noted on Oronsay Colonsay and 31 pairs were found on Colonsay. At Fidden Mull, 10 pairs were found with at least 5 large young on 3 Jun. Elsewhere breeding was confirmed at Westport Marsh Kintyre, Drimvore Mid-Argyll, Fidden Mull and possible breeding reported at Knockangle Point Islay and Ruainach (Iona) Mull.

**Autumn/winter** Post-breeding flocks reported included 115 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 7 Jul and 245 at Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 18 Jul. Later 400 were at Crossapol Dunes *Coll* on 6 Sep, 250 at Ballinaby *Islay* on 20 Sep, 121 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 25 Oct, 115 on *Coll* on 11 Nov, 9 at the Holy Loch *Cowal* on 15 Nov, 39 at Rhunahaorine *Kintyre* on 18 Nov, 26 on Gigha *Kintyre* on 26 Nov and 21 on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Dec. During the year there were no reports from *Cowal* or *Jura*.

Table 25. *Monthly Maximum counts of Lapwings at Loch Gruinart Islay and on Tiree in 2016.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	167	347	122						79	395	180	509
Tiree	3655	3405	715					3135	1295	n/c	2555	2860

N.B. These counts exclude breeding pairs.

### **LITTLE RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius dubius*

**A vagrant: four records; on Islay in May 1983, at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre in Jul 2007 and Jul 2009 and on Islay in May 2013.**

**Spring** One was at Loch Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 10 May [David Wood]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.

### **COMMON RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula* Trilleachan-tràghad

**RED LIST A widespread and fairly common breeding species: present throughout the year. Flocks congregate at favoured locations outside the breeding season and especially on passage.**

**Winter/spring** Reports throughout the year were received from *Tiree*, where large counts are regular, and from Bowmore-Gartbreck *Islay* (see Table 26). Elsewhere during winter, 28 were at Cullipool (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Jan, 44 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 13 Jan, 27 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan, 39 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 21 Jan and 72 at Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* on the same date. 30 were at Ballimore Boathouse *Cowal* on 25 Jan, while elsewhere on *Cowal* 54 were at Ardyne Point on 10 Feb. On *Mull*, 60 were reported at an unspecified location on 7 Feb, while in *North Argyll* 33 at Connel airfield on 3 Mar was the highest winter count. 30 inland at Buachaille Breige (Achallader) *North Argyll* on 9 Apr is an interesting record, however more typical migrants were 40 on Iona *Mull* on 10 May, 550 at Ruaig *Tiree* on 15 May, 106 at Carradale Bay *Kintyre* on 16 May, 40 at Totronald *Coll* on 17 May, 158 at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 18 May and 52 at Lochbuie *Mull* on 21 May.

**Breeding** A fairly good breeding season was reported on *Tiree* where a late b/3 was found on 7 Jul at the Reef. Two pairs were confirmed breeding at Croig *Mull* and on the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, one pair bred on Lunga and one pair probably bred on Sgeir a' Chaisteil. Elsewhere confirmed breeding was reported from Gallanach *Coll*, Killail *Cowal*, Ardnave and Gruinart (both *Islay*), Luing *Mid-Argyll* and Benderloch *North Argyll*.

**Autumn/winter** 40 flying south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 17 Jul and 60 on 19 Jul were the first signs of autumn passage and 20 were back at Killail *Cowal* on 26 Jul. Interesting counts during the autumn, away from *Islay* and *Tiree* where there were regular flocks, included 28 on Oronsay on 14 Aug, 71 at Ardminish Bay (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 21 Aug, 11 at Glas Eilean *Jura* on 28 Aug, 71 on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Sep, 164 at Traigh nam Barc *Colonsay* on 17 Sep, 17 at Calgary *Mull* on 28 Sep, 33 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Oct, 22 at Totronald *Coll* on 17 Oct and 31 at Loch Laich *North Argyll* on 22 Oct. The following notable sightings were made towards the year end: 170 Sorobaidh Bay *Tiree* on 8 Nov, 178 at The Strand *Colonsay* on 15 Nov, 70 at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 30 Nov, 10 at Feolin Ferry *Jura* on 4 Dec, 40 at Bagh Osde *Cowal* on 8 Dec and 83 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 19 Dec.

Table 26. *Maximum monthly day-counts of Ringed Plovers on Tiree, Gruinart and Bowmore–Gartbreck (both Islay) in 2016.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tiree	155	165		95	815	22	25	350	338	250	170	145
Bowmore			30	78	115	30	4	87	65		38	6
Gruinart	100	13	3	295	85	5	10	3	83	30	105	7

# **KILLDEER** *Charadrius vociferus*

*A North American vagrant: three records; on Colonsay in Jan 1984, Oronsay, Colonsay in Oct 2006 and Islay in Jan 2011.*

No records.



**Dotterel** *Tiree* May 2016 (Jim Dickson)

# **EURASIAN DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus* Amadan-mòintich

**RED LIST** *A scarce migrant: mostly seen in late Apr and May. There are occasional breeding records in North Argyll.*

**Spring** The first noted was a migrant at the south end of Oronsay *Colonsay* on 29 Apr and 5 were there the following day which lingered until 5 May. One of these, or another was also seen on 9 May. Later 1 was seen at Vaul Golf Course *Tiree* on 13 May.

**Summer** There were no reports from breeding habitats.

**Autumn/winter** A juvenile (1CY) bird was found on Beinn a' Ghraig *Mull* on 11 Sep and the following day it, or another 1CY bird, was seen at Balephuill *Tiree*.

# **WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus* Eun-Bealltainn

**RED LIST** *A regular passage migrant: usually in small numbers and mainly on the islands. More frequent in spring (Apr-May) than in autumn (Jul-Oct) and is recorded regularly in summer but rarely in winter.*

**Winter/spring** There were two winter records: 1 was at Saligo Bay *Islay* on 6 Jan and 2 were at Salen *Mull* on 29 Feb. The first migrants noted were 3 at Milton *Tiree* on 17 Apr, when 12 were also seen at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*; 20 were seen flying south there the following day and 15 were at Sorobaiddh Bay *Tiree* on 20 Apr. 6 were at Totronald *Coll* on 21 Apr, 3 at Gruinart *Islay* on 22 Apr, 40 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 23 Apr, 10 at Keillbeag *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Apr, 27 were on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 27 Apr and 33 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 28 Apr. In early May the larger counts included 25 at Braibruich *Islay* on 1 May, 16 at Barsloisnoch

*Mid-Argyll* on 1 May, 10 at Langamull *Mull* on 5 May, 40 at Bruchladdich *Islay* on 6 May 35 at Port na Birlinne *Mull* on 7 May, but numbers on *Tiree* were low with 7 on 9 May the peak count. There were no records during the year from *Cowal*, *Jura* and *North Argyll*.

**Summer** Good numbers were reported in Jun with 2 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 3 June, singles on Iona *Mull* on 4 Jun and on several dates on *Tiree* and *Islay*, 4 at Fidden *Mull* on 7 Jun, and small groups were regularly seen on Oronsay *Colonsay*, peaking at 21 on 22 Jun.

**Autumn** Most sightings in autumn were of 1-3 birds from late Jul- mid-Sep. 2 flying south on 7 Jul at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* were the first returning birds, followed by another there and 1 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 11 Jul. 3 were at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 11 Aug, 1 at Cliad *Coll* on 13 Aug, 1 at Ardminish Bay (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 21 Aug, 4 at Gartnatra *Islay* on 1 Sept, 8 on *Tiree* on 12 Sep and 5 at Langamull *Mull* on 16 Sep. There were no further sightings until 1 on *Coll* on 20 Oct, which was the last recorded.



**Whimbrel** *Tiree* May 2016 (Jim Dickson)

### **EURASIAN CURLEW** *Numenius arquata* Guilbneach

**RED LIST** *An increasingly rare breeding species in suitable habitat: more numerous on passage and in winter. All breeding records of this declining species are welcome.*

**Winter/spring** Regular counts were received throughout the year from Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal, and Gartmain (all *Islay*), Holy Loch *Cowal*, Loch Crinan, Loch Gilp and Loch Etive (all *Mid-Argyll*) (see Table 27). Other interesting reports during winter were 100 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 3 Jan, 237 on an all-island count of *Tiree* on 19 Jan, 64 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Jan, 138 at Sandbank *Cowal* on 11 Feb, 27 on Eilean nan Ron (Oronsay) *Colonsay* on 15 Feb, 45 at Bagh na Coille *Coll* on 20 Feb, 41 at Druim na Claidh (Appin) *North Argyll* on 27 Feb, 41 at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* on 19 Mar, 40 at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 28 Mar and 150 at Pennyghael *Mull* on 14 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** 16 pairs bred at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* (20 in 2015). Confirmed breeding was reported from several other sites on *Islay* – Beannan Tir Mhacaimh, Bolsay, Cnoc Thornasaig, Druim Iriseig, Gortan Uile-naomha, Knockangle Point, Lochan Clach a' Bhuaile and Robolls Hill. At least three pairs had young at Loch Beg *Mull* on 4 Jun; elsewhere on *Mull*, 10 were in breeding habitat at Gruline on 10 May, and two were noted displaying at the Aros Est, Gorsten and Aridhglas. Two at Blarghour, Loch Awe *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Mar suggest that breeding may still occur in this area. Other possible breeding was also reported from Millhouse *Cowal* on 10 Apr, and at South Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 13 May. Small numbers of non-breeding

birds were seen on other islands during the summer e.g. 8 at An Fhaodhail *Tiree* on 12 Jun and 1 on Iona *Mull* on the same date, while 55 at Luib Fhinn *Mull* in Jun is an interesting record.

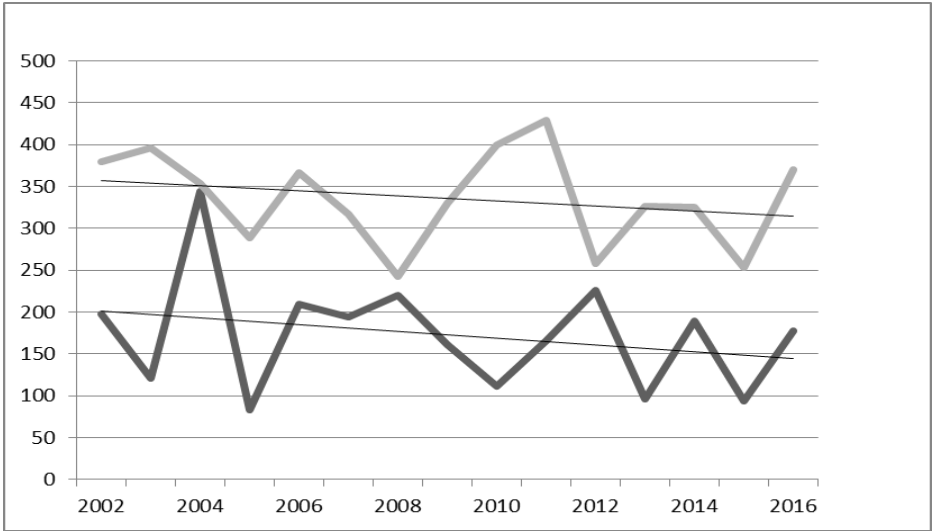


Figure 1: *Maximum count of Curlews at Loch Gruinart (light coloured line) and December count of Curlews at Loch Gruinart (dark line), 2002 – 2016. The narrow lines show the trend for these counts, which like national trends are also declining. The wintering number has declined by around 25% in 15 years, and the maximum count, which usually occurs during the migration period by around 10%.*

**Autumn/winter** The first returning migrants were 30 flying south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 2 Jul. Increased numbers were seen during the autumn away from the well counted areas eg 23 at Port Ramsay (Lismore) *North Argyll* on 7 Aug, 113 at Clachan Mor *Tiree* on 13 Aug and 15 at Ardencaple (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Aug, 53 at Port na Luing *Coll* on 6 Sep, 75 at Middleton *Tiree* on 9 Sep, 113 at Loch Riddon *Cowal* on 16 Sep, 32 on The Strand *Colonsay* on 17 Sep. Towards the end of the year 45 were at Machir Bay *Islay* on 5 Nov, 27 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 26 Nov, 47 on Gigha *Kintyre* on 26 Nov, 24 at the head of Loch na Keal *Mull* on 19 Dec and 63 at Tayinloan *Kintyre* on 27 Dec.

Table 27. *Maximum monthly counts of Curlews at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal (Islay), and WEBS counts from Holy Loch (Cowal), Loch Crinan and Loch Gilp (Mid-Argyll), and Loch Etive (North Argyll) in 2016.*

Loch	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	126	69	36	65	2	7	22	19	370	119	91	181
Indaal		124	11	9	5	6		75	22	25	148	
Gartbreck	142	120	11	9	5	6	38	41	70		142	150
Holy L	97	152	135						130	96	77	104
Crinan	32	37	22	31	1	4	56	57		25	18	22
Gilp	30	34	20	19			14	21	15	28	28	30
Etive	35	37	62						10	28	16	10

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa islandica* Cearra-gheb

**RED LIST** A regular passage migrant, especially on Islay, Tiree, and south Kintyre with occasional winter records: scarce elsewhere. Most Argyll records have been presumed to relate to the Icelandic race *L.l.islandica* but at least one individual of the nominate race *L.l.limosa* has been identified (a bird leg flagged as a chick in The Netherlands and seen on Tiree in 2009).

**Spring** There were no winter records. One at Gruinart Islay on 29 Mar was the first migrant noted and 3 were found at Gott Bay Tiree on 3 Apr. Numbers increased from mid-Apr when there was 1 on Oronsay Colonsay on 15 Apr, 28 at Loch a' Phuill Tiree on 19 Apr, 33 at Loch an Eilein Tiree on 22 Apr and 25 at Lochdon Mull on 27 Apr. However, bad weather on 28 Apr meant that migration was suspended when 300 were grounded on the shinty field in Lochgilphead Mid-Argyll in a snow storm, with 110 there on 29 Apr and 189 new birds arrived overnight on 1 May. The poor weather continued and the numbers built on Tiree when there were 394 present on 2 May. Unusually 2 were at Killail Cowal on 2 May, and following 29 at Gruinart Islay on 4 May numbers were much lower in the islands and 1 was at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 9 May. During Apr only one colour-ringed bird was noted on Tiree – it had been ringed on Iceland and winters in Portugal.

**Summer** A few remained over summer including 6 at An Fhoadhail Tiree on 9 Jun. 5 were on Oronsay Colonsay on 28 Jun, followed by 12 at Loch a' Phuill Tiree on 10 Jul indicating the start of the autumn migration.

**Autumn** 22 juvs were at the Add Est Mid-Argyll on 8 Aug, 41 at Loch a' Phuill Tiree on 15 Aug, 4 at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 20 Aug and 52 at the Add Est Mid-Argyll on the same date. Numbers peaked in late Aug when 50 were at Ardnave Islay on 24-25 Aug, 10 were at Aird (Luing) Mid-Argyll on 25 Aug and 88 were on Tiree on 30 Aug. 8 were at Totronald Coll on 6 Sep, 36 were at Loch Gruinart Islay on 13 Sep and 25 at Sandaig Tiree on 29 Sep. During Oct counts were only in single figures, with 3 at Ardlarach Islay on 19 Oct the last noted. During the year there were no reports from Jura and North Argyll.

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica* Roid-ghuillbneach

**AMBER LIST** A mainly autumn migrant and winter visitor: the largest numbers occurring on Islay. Birds are also regular on Tiree and at a few other island and mainland sites.

**Winter/spring** Away from Islay, where large numbers were seen and counted regularly (see Table 28), smaller numbers were noted elsewhere: 39 at Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll on 18 Jan, 20 on Tiree on 19 Jan and 16 on The Strand Colonsay on the same date. 1 was at Loch Creran North Argyll on 1 Feb, 32 at Otter Ferry Cowal on 10 Feb, birds were present at Breachacha Coll on 19 Feb, 9 at Loch na Keal Mull on 27 Feb and 36 at Lochdon Mull on 29 Mar. Away from Islay, where 60 were at Ardnave on 11 May, small numbers of spring migrants were noted on Mull and Tiree.

**Summer** On Islay 31 were at Loch Gruinart on 6 Jun and 11 at Ardnave on 22 Jun, while 8 were at Soa Point Tiree on 7 Jun, 2 on Oronsay Colonsay on 13 Jun and 3 at Ardskenish Colonsay on 17 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** The peak counts were again on Islay (Table 28). The first suggestion of autumn migration was of one at Loch Crinan Mid-Argyll on 9 Jul. Only small numbers were reported until mid-Aug when 12 were at Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll on 12 Aug, 13 at Gott Bay Tiree on 18 Aug and 12 at Bridgend Islay on 27 Aug. 3 flying south at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 31 Aug were indicative of an increase in migration and 42 were found on Tiree on 5 Sep, 2 at Port na Luing Coll on 6 Sep, and unusually one at Glenbarr Kintyre on 8 Sep. 6 were at Blackmill Bay (Luing) Mid-Argyll on 10 Sep, 21 at Loch a' Phuill Tiree on 14 Sep and 10 at Langamull Mull on the same date. Further sightings included 13 on Oronsay Colonsay on 29 Sep, 8 at the

head of Loch na Keal *Mull* on 9 Oct, 7 at Loch Laich *North Argyll* on 22 Oct, 17 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 8 Dec, 31 on *Tiree* on 13 Dec and 20 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 26 Dec. During the year there were no records from *Jura*. A leg-flagged 1CY bird at Balephetrish Bay *Tiree* on 2 Dec had been ringed at Makkevika, Møre & Romsdal, Norway on 7 Oct.

Table 28. *Maximum monthly counts of Bar-tailed Godwits at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal Islay in 2016.*

<i>Lochs</i>	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	255	206	109	108	130	31	4		71	110	138	152
Indaal	130	170	10	40	58			12	69	103	174	101

## **RUDDY TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres* Trilleachan-beag

**AMBER LIST** *A common and widespread passage migrant and winter visitor: mainly from mid Jul to early Jun. Mid summer records are not unusual.*

**Winter/spring** Regular counts were received throughout the year from Oronsay *Colonsay*, Loch Gruinart *Islay*, Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* and *Tiree* (see Table 29). Other counts during winter included 36 at Rhunahaorine Pt *Kintyre* on 2 Jan, 7 at Laine Sgeir *Mull* on 4 Jan, 22 at Rubh Aird Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jan, 50 at Dunoon *Cowal* on 27 Jan, 65 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 10 Feb, 15 at Eriska *North Argyll* on 29 Feb, 51 at Gartbreck *Islay* on 13 Mar, and 3 at Loch nam Breac *Jura* on 16 Mar. During spring passage 230 were at Balephetrish Bay *Tiree* on 8 Apr, 45 at Achnahard *Mull* on 8 May, and there was a fall of 70 after a heavy downpour at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 21 May.

**Summer** Only modest numbers were noted during Jun: 10 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 6 Jun was the highest count; a male was singing at this site on 13 Jun. Smaller numbers were seen on *Islay* and *Tiree*.

**Autumn/winter** 40 flying south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 20 Jul were the first confirmed migrants and 3 returned to Dunoon *Cowal* on 29 Jul; numbers there rose to 105 on 17 Aug. Other sightings included 17 at Scallastle Bay *Mull* on 19 Aug, 20 at Port Lobh *Colonsay* on 5 Sep, 39 on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Sep, 90 at Largiemore *Cowal* on 4 Oct and 54 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on the same date. Later in the year 3 were reported on *Coll* on 23 Oct, 65 were at Balephetrish Bay *Tiree* on 14 Nov, 14 at Feolin *Jura* on 4 Dec, 100 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 9 Dec, 23 at the head of Loch na Keal *Mull* on 19 Dec and 27 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Dec.

Table 29. *Maximum monthly counts of Turnstones at Loch Gruinart (Islay), Campbeltown Loch (Kintyre) Oronsay (Colonsay) and Tiree in 2016.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	144	3	17	41					6	62	31	28
Oronsay	2	18	32	1	2			+	6	8	2	3
Tiree	80	95		230	55	35	5	72	75	97	65	10
Dunoon	34	50	6	17			3	105	60		43	
Campb'ton Loch								22	31	45	42	

## **RED KNOT** *Calidris canutus* Luatharan-gainmhhich

**AMBER LIST** *An uncommon passage migrant: mostly in autumn, and mainly on Islay and south Kintyre. A few winter, mainly on Islay, and occasional birds occur in summer.*

**Winter/spring** During Jan- Mar up to 20 were seen at Otter Ferry spit and Ballimore Boathouse (both *Cowal*) and these may have also been the same birds 9 of which were at Loch Gilp *Mid-*



Argyll on 8 Feb. Small numbers were reported elsewhere including one at Pennyghael *Mull* on 15 Jan, 5 at Gartbreck *Islay* on 20 Jan, and 2 at Port Ramsay (Lismore) *North Argyll* on 20 Feb. Spring migration was noted from 10 Apr when 34 were at Gartbreck *Islay* and singles were seen at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 25 Apr, and on *Tiree* on 25-26 Apr. Small numbers were seen up until mid-Jun, including 2 on Iona *Mull* on 10 May, 26 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on the same day, 14 at Traigh Bhagh *Tiree* on 5 Jun and 20 at Blackrock *Islay* on 10 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** The first autumn migrant was seen at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 2 Aug. 195 were noted passing south there during Aug, with a peak count of 65 on 22 Aug. Elsewhere during Aug notable records included 10 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 14 Aug, 1 at Ardmish Bay (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 21 Aug, 11 at Gartbreck *Islay* on 28 Aug and 1 on Iona *Mull* on 30 Aug. During Sep, 8 were at Vaul *Tiree* on 6 Sep, 14 were at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 7 Sep, a single was at Traigh nam Barc *Colonsay* on 17 Sep (the only report during the year from this area), and 14 were at Gartmain *Islay* on the same date. A single bird was at Killiechronan *Mull* on 30 Oct and another was at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Nov. The remaining Nov records were on *Islay* with the largest count in Argyll during the year being 85 at Loch Gruinart on 1 Nov. There were no reports during Dec.

**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax* Gibeagan

**RED LIST** *An uncommon passage migrant with most records in autumn.*

**Spring** During spring migration 1 was found at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 1 and 9 May, 2 were there on 10 May and 3 on 11 May. 2 were at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 12 May and 1 was at Canal Loch *Coll* on 12-14 May, another single bird was present on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 16 May. 3 were also found at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 6 Jun.

**Breeding** Two males and a female were present at a site in Argyll from mid-May to mid-Jul. Display was noted in late May and 2-3 young were seen on 11 and 19 Jul. This is the first confirmed breeding of this species in Argyll.

**Autumn/winter** Migrants were noted from mid-Aug when 1 was at Hough *Tiree* on 8 Aug and another single at Totronald *Coll* on 11 Aug, followed by 7 juvs at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 14-15 Aug, 1 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 18 Aug, a juv female at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Aug and two juvs at Toberonochy (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Aug. During late Aug and Sep, most records were from *Tiree* when 9 juvs, including 8 at Middleton, were found on 29 Aug; 5 juvs were at Sandaig on 3 Sep and 4 at Greenhill machair on the same day. Three single birds were still present on *Tiree* on 19 Sep, with the last noted there a male at Sandaig on 26 Sep. Elsewhere an ad and juv were at Totronald *Coll* on 6 Sep, 1 was at Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* on 9 Sep and at Loch Gruinart *Islay* 1 was found on 28-29 Sep and 3 were there on 30 Sep. 1 at Ardnave *Islay* on 1 Oct was the last record of the year.

**BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER** *Limicola falcinellus*

*A vagrant: two records; both on Tiree, one in May 1994 and one in May/June 2005.*

No records.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea* Luatharan-crom

**AMBER LIST** *A scarce but annual passage migrant: most records in autumn.*

**Spring** Only one bird was found in spring; a summer plumaged adult was briefly at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 3 Jun.

**Autumn** There was a record passage in *Kintyre*; given the number of records it is difficult to accurately estimate the total number of birds involved. An adult at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Jul was the first reported, but no more were seen until 19 Aug when 24 juvs were found at The Green *Tiree*, and were seen on the island the following two days. During the next week record

numbers were reported at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* when it is estimated 180-190 birds passed (E J Maguire). After 26 Aug, most sightings were of 1-3 birds on *Tiree*, until 1 found at Sgeir na Sgarbh *Islay* on 5 Sep, except 9 which were at Kennacraig *Kintyre* on 27 Aug. During Sep, apart for the last 2 birds noted at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 10 Sep, all sightings were from the islands, with 3 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 10 Sep and 3 at Middleton *Tiree* on 16 Sep the largest groups noted. A juv at Vaul *Tiree* on 17 Oct was the last, and only, record in Oct.

# **TEMMINCK'S STINT** *Calidris temminckii*

**RED LIST A rare passage migrant: five records; one at Machrihanish, Kintyre in Jul 1974, one at Fiddon, Mull in Sep 1985, one at An Fhaodhail, Tiree in Aug 1992, one at Loch Gruinart, Islay in May 2000 and one at RSPB Loch Gruinart, Islay on 22-23 May 2014.**

No records.

# **SANDERLING** *Calidris alba* Luatharan-glas

**AMBER LIST A mainly passage migrant, most numerous in: Islay, south Kintyre, and Tiree. Regular wintering is confined to: Coll, Colonsay, Islay, and Tiree. A few non breeders occur on the islands in summer.**

**Winter** *Tiree* remained the stronghold of this species (see Table 30); no records were received from *Cowal*, *Jura* and *North Argyll*. Other than *Tiree*, 83 were reported at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 4 Jan, 25 at Rhunahaorine Point *Kintyre* on 16 Jan, 10 at the Strand *Colonsay* on 19 Jan, 15 at Eilean na h-Atha *Coll* on 20 Feb and 60 at Machrihanish Bay *Kintyre* during Mar.

**Spring** Spring migration counts were lower on *Tiree* and peaked at 425 on 8 Apr (a month earlier than 2015), although it was protracted with 310 being seen on 2 Jun. This peak is *ca* 50% of that in 2015. During spring passage, two marked birds, one from Greenland, the other from Ghana, were noted on *Tiree*. Elsewhere 30 were at Bruichladdich *Islay* on 19 Apr, 1 was at Loch Beg *Mull* on 2 May, 19 were on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 14 May and 30 on Iona *Mull* the following day. A flock of 130 were at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 18 May.

**Autumn** 26 on Soa *Tiree* on 8 July were the first noted in autumn and at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* return passage was noted on 16 Jul and built to 170 on 25 Jul. 9 ads at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Jul and the first reported juv was there on 11 Aug. On *Tiree*, the proportion of juvs peaked at 22% of a total of 398 seen on 19 Sep, declining to 18% on 26 Sep and 6-8% during Oct. Elsewhere 60 were at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 21 Sep, 1 at Langamull *Mull* on 14 Sep, 25 at Traigh nam Barc *Colonsay* on 17 Sep, 39 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 10 Oct, 48 at The Strand *Colonsay* on 17 Oct, 15 Breachacha *Coll* on 23 Oct and 100 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 30 Oct.

**Winter** Wintering colour-ringed/flagged individuals on *Tiree* from Greenland (4<sup>th</sup> winter) and Iceland (7<sup>th</sup> winter) had both been seen there in previous winters, along with three other birds from Iceland. Away from there the only birds reported in Nov and Dec were 102 at the Strand *Colonsay* on 15 Nov, 16 flying south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 16 Nov and 30 at Machrihanish Bay *Kintyre* on 24 Nov. On *Islay* 81 were at Loch Gruinart on 11 Nov, 40 there on 15 Dec and 6 at Blackrock on 22 Nov.

Table 30. Maximum monthly counts of Sanderlings on *Tiree* in 2016. Counts from *Tiree* are not always of the whole island.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Tiree</i>	175	350		425	350	330	192	411	398	386	130	295

## DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* Graillig

AMBER LIST A *very localised breeding species mainly on Tiree. Numbers are highest on passage but large numbers winter on Islay and Tiree with smaller numbers elsewhere.*

**Winter/spring** Regular counts were undertaken at two sites on *Islay* and on *Tiree*, where the largest concentrations occur (Table 31). Elsewhere 50 were at Rhunahaorine Pt *Kintyre* on 16 Jan, 31 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 31 Jan, and 20 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Feb. Spring migration peaked in early-mid May when 3,000 were at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 10 May, 2,280 on *Tiree* on 6 May, 500 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 9 May, 239 at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 18 May and 24 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* the same day. Two birds colour-ringed in Galicia, NW Spain were at Vault *Tiree* on 23 May. Other migrant flocks noted were 60 on Iona *Mull* on 6 May, 100 at Breachacha *Coll* on 17 May, 100 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 18 May and 100 at Traigh nam Barc *Colonsay* on the same date.

**Breeding/summer** It was a good breeding season at the Reef (wetland compartments) *Tiree* where 51 singing males were found (54 on 2015). A bird was seen at Benmore Lodge *Mull* on 26-31 May in the same location where breeding was found in 2014. Three pairs were breeding at Gruinart *Islay* and breeding was also reported at Ardnave *Islay*. 12 were at Black Mount (Loch Tulla) *North Argyll* on 24 Apr, and one was still present on 5-7 Jun, which is suggestive of local breeding.

**Autumn/winter** Autumn passage was first noted when 20 were seen flying south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 7 Jul, over 200 were seen there on 25 Jul and 140 were there the following day. 187 were at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Jul, 66 at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Aug, when 6 were also noted at Connel airfield *North Argyll* and 400 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*. 12 were at Arinagour *Coll* on 31 Aug, 57 on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Sep, and 48 on *Colonsay* on 17 Sep. Towards the year end a flock of 51 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Nov may have moved to Otter Ferry *Cowal* where 50 were seen on 9 Dec. Throughout the year no records were received from *Jura*.

Table 31. *Maximum monthly counts of Dunlin at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal Islay and on Tiree in 2016.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	43		117	15	3024			26	370	123	120	310
Indaal	102	102	150	4	189	12	239	180	400	200	102	104
Tiree	125	160	nc	85	2280	90	60	65	95	24	65	95

## PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima* Luatharan-rioghail

AMBER LIST A *widely, but sparsely, distributed winter migrant along rocky coasts from Sep to May.*

**Winter/spring** During winter the maximum counts of wintering birds were 2 at Laine Sgeirr *Mull* on 4 Jan, 25 at Dunoon *Cowal* 8 Jan, 1 on Danna *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Jan, 5 at Gortan, Loch Indaal *Islay* on 11 Jan, 1 at Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* on 21 Jan and 38 at Hynish *Tiree* on 31 Jan. 2 were at Bousd *Coll* on 24 Feb, 16 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 23 Feb and 48 were on *Tiree* on 15 Feb. During March records came from other sites including 5 at the Battery Ronachan *Kintyre* on 20 Mar, 3 at Ardminish Bay (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 25 Mar and 12 on the Staffa Islets *Mull* on 28 Mar. Numbers peaked at 30 at Dunoon *Cowal* on 4-5 Apr, while 5 at Hynish *Tiree* 4 May, were the last there and 2 at Rubha Dubh *Colonsay* on 19 May the last seen in spring.

**Autumn/winter** 1 flying south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 27 Sep was the first autumn record. No more were reported until 1 was found at Balnahard Bay *Colonsay* on 23 Oct. This was the first of the main autumn movement. 57 flew south in 5 hours at Machrihanish SBO

*Kintyre* on 29 Oct and the first of autumn on *Tiree* were 3 at Balephetrish Bay on 2 Nov. At Dunoon *Cowal*, 10 were found on 2 Nov, rising to 26 there on 17 Dec. Only 6 were reported on the shores of Loch Indaal *Islay* from 31 Oct to 19 Dec, but 65 were at Hough Bay *Tiree* on 2 Dec, suggesting a further, later, arrival of birds. 2 at Lainne Sgeir *Mull* on 4 Dec were the only birds reported from this area.



**Purple Sandpiper** *Kintyre* November 2016 (Eddie Maguire)

**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** *Calidris bairdii*

*A vagrant: 10 records; four on Islay (in Jun 1979, Sep 1999, Sep 2005 and Sep 2011), five on Tiree (in May/Jun 2007, Sep 2009, Sep 2011, Sep 2013 and Sep 2015) and one at the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll in Sep 2008.*

No records.

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta* Luatharan-beag

*A scarce but annual passage migrant: with the majority of records in autumn.*

**Spring** There was only one spring record; a single adult was with Dunlin at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 3 Jun.

**Autumn** One was at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Aug. The following month there was an influx of juvenile birds on *Islay* where 4 were found at Gruinart on 10 Sep, with 1 also being seen there on 13 & 15 Sep. 1 was also at Gartbeck on 13 Sep, 3 at Bridgend Merse on 17 Sep and the last, 1 at Loch Gruinart on 26 Sep.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** *Calidris fuscicollis*

*A vagrant: six records of singles; on Islay in Aug 2000 and Oct 2005 and on Tiree in Aug and Sep 2011, Aug 2012 and Aug 2014.*

No records.

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** *Tryngites subruficollis*

*A rare spring and scarce autumn visitor: 34 records of up to 43 birds since the first in 1971.*

**Autumn** A juvenile was on *Tiree* at Middleton on 2 Sep then nearby at Sandaig on 3 to 5 Sep [Keith Gillon, John Bowler], and a group of 4 juvs were at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 4 Sep [John Bowler]. Both reports were accepted by the ABRC.

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** *Calidris melanotos*

*A scarce mainly autumn visitor: at least 53 records.*

**Spring** One, a 2CY or older, was at Sorobaidh Bay *Tiree* on 27 May [John Bowler]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.

**SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** *Calidris pusilla*

*A vagrant: five records (seven birds); two each on Tiree and Islay in Sep 1999 and singles on Tiree in Sep 2012 and Sep 2013 and on the Isle of Luing, Mid-Argyll in Sep 2013.*

**Autumn** Two juveniles were together briefly at Vaul Bay *Tiree* on 30 Sep [Jim Dickson, John Bowler]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus lobatus* Deargan-allt

**RED LIST A** *very rare breeding species and irregular passage migrant.*

**Spring/summer** One was seen feeding with a group of Razorbills at Traigh Bhagh (Crossapol) *Tiree* on 11 Jun [Keith Gillon].

**Breeding** Birds were noted at confidential breeding sites between 23 May and 8 Aug. Up to 20 birds were present during Jun with 6 possibly 7 nesting males. In Jul, 4 males and a female were present at one site and up to 4 mm at a second site. Broods were noted at one site and behaviour suggesting broods being fed noted at the other site. A fledged juv was seen on 8 Aug.

**GREY PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus fulicarius* Liathag-allt

*Irregular passage migrant particularly associated with autumn gales: rare in winter and spring none in Apr-May, single records in Jun and Jul.*

**Spring** For the second year in succession one was sighted in spring: 1 was off Rubha Seanach, Kerrera *Mid-Argyll* on 26 Mar.

**Autumn** There were only three records. Singles flew SW past Hynish *Tiree* on 11 & 12 Sep and 2 were at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 30 Sep.

**Winter** One was at Ardtalla *Islay* from 25-27 Dec.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos* Luatharan

*A widespread and common breeding summer visitor and spring and autumn passage migrant in small numbers: occasional mid-winter records.*

**Winter** There was a single report of one at Pennygown *Mull* on 12 Feb.

**Spring** The first records on 14 Apr at Eleraig *Mid-Argyll* and Otter Ferry *Cowal*, were one week later than the first in 2015. First records from other regions were at Killiechronan *Mull* on 17 Apr, at Invergaunan (Glen Orchy) *North Argyll* on 19 Apr, Claddach *Islay* on 20 Apr, at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 24 Apr, An Feadan *Jura* on 24 Apr and Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 28 Apr. None were reported in *Kintyre* until 3 May when one was at Machrihanish. Most records in spring were of 1-2 birds, but on 8 May 10 were reported at Loch Tulla *North Argyll*, 7 at Achnahard *Mull* on 8 May, and 5 at Duine (Loch Craignish) *Mid-Argyll*, and on 10 May 14 were at Loch Kinnabus *Islay*.

**Breeding/summer** Breeding was confirmed at Port Olmsa *Colonsay*, Connel *Mid-Argyll* where one pair had two chicks, Lunga Treshnish Isles *Mull* and at Benderloch *North Argyll*. 2 Ters. were located on the Taynish CBC *Mid-Argyll*, 8 Ters. were noted on the north shore of Loch na

Keal *Mull* on 10 May and on *Colonsay* 22 Ters. were found (25 Ters. in 2015). Probable breeding was reported from Arinagour *Coll*, Killail, Otter Ferry spit, Portavadie Ferry Slip (all *Cowal*), Ardnave *Islay*, Ardencaple (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* and Milton, Mannal, Happy Valley, West Hynish and Scarinish (all *Tiree*)

**Autumn** During late Jun and Jul, larger post-breeding /migrating groups were noted as follows: 8 at Benderloch *North Argyll* on 2 Jul, 11 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Jul and 9 there on 23 Jul. A total of at least 175 were recorded moving south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* between 2 Jul and 24 Aug, with peak daily counts of 28 on 8 Jul, 15 on 11 Jul and 16 on 28 Jul. There were only two records during Sep when 1 was at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Sep and 1 lingered at Balinoe *Mid-Argyll* from 1 Sep to 25 Oct.

### **SPOTTED SANDPIPER** *Actitis macularius*

**A vagrant: two records; at Loch Indaal, Islay in Jun 1984 and at Heylipol, Tiree in Aug 2009.**

**Autumn** A juvenile was at Ard Mor (west of Balephetrish Bay) *Tiree* on 14 to 22 Aug [Dante Shepherd, John Bowler, Jim Dickson]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

### **GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus* Luatharan-uaine

**AMBER LIST A scarce, but almost annual passage migrant with the majority of records in autumn: seldom in spring.**

**Spring** There was a single spring record of one close inshore at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 9 May.

**Autumn** Three were reported in Aug; singles were at Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* on 14-15 Aug, Balvicar Lagoons (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 18 Aug and the other coming in off the sea at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 23 Aug. These were followed by a very late bird at Finlaggan *Islay* on 2 Nov.

### **SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus* Gearradh-breac

**AMBER LIST A scarce passage migrant: more or less annual in autumn.**

No records

### **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** *Tringa melanoleuca*

**A vagrant: two records; on Islay, in Oct 1985 and May 2002.**

No records.

### **COMMON GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia* Deoch-bhuidhe

**AMBER LIST A scarce breeding species: only in Mull and North Argyll in recent years. A widespread migrant: more numerous in autumn than spring and there are regular winter records in some localities.**

**Winter** A total of at least 20 different wintering birds were found during Jan-Feb (same as 2015). 3 were at Dervaig *Mull* on 5 Jan, 3 at Clachan Seil *Mid-Argyll* on 11 Feb and 3 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 18 Feb, 2 at Benderloch *North-Argyll* on 10 Feb and 1 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 14 Jan were the largest groups in the areas where they were reported.

**Spring** One was inland at Kilchurn Castle *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Mar, 4 were at Sandbank *Cowal* on 6 Apr and the first on *Tiree* was at Loch a' Phuill on 14 Apr. Singles were reported in several locations during Apr and May on *Islay* and *Mull* and 6 were at Clachan Beag (Loch Fyne) *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Apr, 2 at Loch Anlaimh *Coll* on 9 May and 3 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 11 Jun.

**Breeding/summer** 6 were reported close to a breeding site in *North Argyll* on 10 Apr and 7 were in the same area on 6 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** The first migrants noted were singles at Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 30 Jun and the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Jul. During Jul numbers increased with 4 at Croig *Mull* on 17 Jul, 5 at the Reef *Tiree* on 19 Jul, 5 (2 ads & 3 juv) at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jul, and 5 at Fidden *Mull* on 31 Jul. Sightings of 1-2 were regular from the islands later in the autumn, but 4 were on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 7 Aug, 4 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Aug, 2 at Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre*, and 3 at Loch Laich *North Argyll* on 21 Sep. During Nov- Dec, at least 19 wintering birds were reported from *Islay* (5+), *Mid-Argyll* (11+), including 7 at Ardoran on 15 Nov, and *Mull* (3). There were no records throughout the year from *Jura*.

#### **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** *Tringa flavipes*

**A vagrant:** *Eight records; at North Argyll in 1951, Mid-Argyll in Oct 2000, Islay in May 2003, Islay and Colonsay in Sep 2005, Islay in May 2007, Islay in Apr 2009, Tiree in Oct 2011 and Oct 2015.*

**Spring** One was at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 2 to 8 May [James How *et al*]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

#### **WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola* Luatharan-coille

**AMBER LIST** *A scarce passage migrant: recorded in 22 of the 30 years 1980-2009, with the majority of records in late spring.*

**Spring** A lean year, with one at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 16 May the only bird sighted.

**Autumn** No records.

#### **COMMON REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus* Cam-ghlas

**AMBER LIST** *A localised breeder, mainly on the islands: widespread passage migrant and wintering species.*

**Winter/spring** Regular counts were made at Loch Gruinart *Islay* and on *Tiree* (Table 32). Wintering numbers were low with 11 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan, 23 at the Holy Loch Cowal on 23 Feb, 12 at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll*, 20 at Gartbreck *Islay* on 22 Feb and 14 at Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* the more notable counts. Migration was noted from Apr when 24 were at Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Apr and 25 were at Loch Scridain *Mull* on 19 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** 42 pairs were noted in the wetland compartments at the Reef *Tiree*. 10 Ters. were found on *Colonsay* (same as 2015) and 17 pairs on Oronsay *Colonsay*. 134 pairs were noted at Gruinart *Islay*, a slight decline from 2015 (139 pairs). Two pairs with young Fidden *Mull* on 3 Jun were first young noted and confirmed breeding was also noted at Loch Cuin (Dervaig) *Mull*.

**Autumn/winter** Autumn migration was noted from 2 Jul when 5 flew south at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*. Post breeding groups of 12 were at Langamull *Mull* on 17 Jul and 10 at Croig *Mull* on the same date. 45 were noted at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 20 Jul. Numbers increased during Aug when 71 were at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Aug, 65 on Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Aug, 10 were at Ardencaple (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Aug and 290 were noted passing Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 20 Aug. 79 were at the Add Est *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Sep, 40 were on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 13 Sep and 47 at Bridgend *Islay* on the same date. 12 at Loch Laich *North-Argyll* on 2 Oct was the largest group found in this area, while 51 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Oct, 27 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 19 Nov, 22 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 20 Nov and 67 at the Holy Loch Cowal on 19 Dec were the largest flocks noted towards the year end.

Table 32. *Maximum monthly counts of Redshanks at Loch Gruinart (Islay), and on Tiree in 2016.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gruinart	70	6	91	47	31		23	23	84	23	24	23
Tiree	43	30	21	38				69	5	43	22	12

### **JACK SNIPE** *Lymnocyrtus minimus* Gobhrag-bheag

*A scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor, which is possibly under recorded: most records are from Islay, Mid-Argyll, and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** Nine were reported in spring. The first was a single found on Danna *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Jan and another was found at the Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Jan. 3 were found on a NEW Survey at Gortanoid *Islay* on 15 Jan. The remaining records were of single birds at Heylipol *Tiree* on 22 Jan, Kilbride *Coll* on 19 Feb and Culbuie *Islay* on 16 Mar. The last report was on the late date of 22 Apr on Oronsay *Colonsay*.

**Winter** Fifteen reported in the autumn/winter is the highest total this century. The first was found at Middleton *Tiree* on 26 Sep and another was at Kileonan *Kintyre* between 28 Sep and 4 Oct. There was a small influx from mid-Oct when singles were found at Balephuill *Tiree* on 11 Oct, Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 13 Oct, Ardlarach (Luig) *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Oct, 1 at Bolsay *Islay* on 20 Oct, 3 at Cailach Point *Mull* on 22 Oct and singles on *Tiree* at Barrapol on 28 Oct and the Reef on 31 Oct. There were four records on *Islay* in Nov; singles were at Avinlussa on 2 Nov, The Oa on 24- 26 Nov, at Gruinart on 25 Nov and at Ardnave on 26 Nov. Unusually there were no records in Dec.

### **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

*A vagrant: three records; on Islay in June 1986, Apr 2009 and May 2013. There are also four acceptable records (1891-2009) of unidentified to species (Long or Short-billed) Dowitchers.*

No records.

### **EURASIAN WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola* Coileach-coille

**RED LIST A** *widespread, but probably under recorded, breeder. Numbers are augmented in winter by immigrants from Scandinavia and other parts of Scotland: a small proportion of native birds leave for Ireland and possibly elsewhere.*

*Roding birds are under recorded and all records are welcome for this species, which is believed to have declined as a breeding species in Argyll (Bird Atlas 2007-11).*

**Winter/spring** The first record of the year was of 1 at Ardencaple (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Jan. Most Jan-Mar records were of 1-2 birds noted in *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, *North Argyll* and *Tiree*, however, at least 25 were flushed from the roadside between Grasspoint and Lochbuie *Mull* on 15 Feb, 7 were flushed from the verges of the road between Castle Lachlan and Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 5 Mar and 4 were in a woodland verge at Traigh an Luig *Islay* on 25 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** Roding birds were reported from 18 Mar at Bridgend *Islay* and also from Craignure *Mull*. Other records were received from *Islay* and *Mull* which may have been roding birds. At Colonsay House *Colonsay*, there were 15 registrations in 75 minutes during the national Woodcock Survey on 18 May (cf 7 in 2015) and 22 and 9 registrations on 11 and 18 Jun respectively. By comparison, a similar survey in Knapdale Forest *Mid-Argyll* had 4, 7 and 3 registrations. The only other record during the summer was one at Cnoc an Iltich (Gigha) *Kintyre* in Jun. There were no reports in Jul, Aug (as in 2014 and 2015).



**Autumn/winter** The first report in autumn was of 3 at Salen *Mull* on 24 Sep, while the first on *Tiree* was at Milton on 8 Oct (three days earlier than 2015), but there were no other records until the middle of the month when singles were at Carnan Mor and Cornaigbeg (both *Tiree*) on 17 Oct, but the main arrival occurred from early Nov, when 4 flushed from the verges of the East Loch Awe road *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Nov and 7 were at Gruinart *Islay* on 25 Nov. At least 15 were flushed from the verges of the road between Tobermory and Calgary *Mull* on 4 Dec. There were also other sightings of 1-2 wintering birds in *Coll*, *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Mid-Argyll*, *North Argyll* and *Tiree*.

**COMMON SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago* Naosg

**AMBER LIST A** *widespread and locally common breeding species: particularly on the outer islands. Higher numbers occur on passage and as winter visitors: mainly on the islands.*

**Winter/spring** During winter most sightings were of fewer than 5 birds on the islands. 8 at Dervaig *Mull* on 5 Jan, and 19 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 19 Jan were notable. 7 were on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jan, 22 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 11 Feb, 12 at Breachacha *Coll* on 19 Feb and 8 at Gialum Bay (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 25 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** Possible drumming was noted on Oronsay *Colonsay* on the very early date on 2 Feb, but was not reported again until 1 Apr at Gruinart *Islay* and 14 Apr on Oronsay *Colonsay*. Drumming was also reported at Ardnave *Islay*, Bridgend and Connel (both *Mid-Argyll*). Breeding was confirmed at the Reef *Tiree*, where there were 80 displaying birds in the wetland compartments during May (108 in 2015) and a decline was also reported at RSPB loch Gruinart *Islay* to 48 displaying males (from 56 in 2014). 55 displaying birds were found at the RSPB reserve on *Coll* and at least 9 breeding pairs were noted on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* and another bird was noted on Sgeir an Eirionnaich (Treshnish Isles). 1 at Strone Farm *Cowal* on 12 Jun was unusual for there.

**Autumn/winter** Larger groups and sightings from other regions were reported following the breeding season. 1 was at Feolin *Jura* on 28 Aug, 391 were on *Tiree* on 12 Sep, including 330 at Greenhill/Middleton and 285 were at Barrapol *Tiree* on 24 Sep. 13 were at Claddach *Islay* on 30 Sep and 70 at Balemartine *Tiree* on 9 Oct. Numbers declined thereafter with 17 at Dervaig *Mull* on 23 Oct, 14 at Killinallan *Islay* (7 of which were flushed by a Hen Harrier) on 1 Nov, 65 at An Fhaodhail *Tiree* on 14 Nov, 12 at Ardnave *Islay* on 26 Nov and 7 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 27 Dec being the more notable records.



**Pomarine Skua** *Kintyre* May 2016 (Iomhar McMillan)

## **POMARINE SKUA** *Stercorarius pomarinus* Fasgadair-donn

*A scarce but regular passage migrant: mainly seen in autumn but has been recorded in all months.*

**Spring/summer** A sub-adult was off Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 4 May. 4 were off Gott Bay *Tiree* on 11 May. 2 were seen from the Oban to Colonsay ferry *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Jun. 1 was seen from the Oban to Mull ferry *Mid-Argyll/Mull* on 16 Jul.

**Autumn** 4 were off Coraig Bay and 1 was off Aird (both north coast) *Tiree* on 8 Aug. An adult was off Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 31 Aug. A juv was seen from the Kennacraig to Islay ferry Gigha *Kintyre* on 9 Sep. A juv was off Hynish *Tiree* on 8 Nov.

## **ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus* Fasgadair

**RED LIST** *Previously the most common skua in Argyll with small numbers regularly seen in summer near large seabird colonies, this species has become scarce. The small breeding colonies on Jura and Coll have been in serious decline in recent years. Passage birds can be widespread in spring and especially autumn, but variable in numbers from year to year.*

**Spring** An exceptionally early bird was seen off Cailiach Point Mull on 23 Mar. The next of the spring was one at sea off Lagavulin *Islay* on 26 Apr then at Aoradh *Islay* on 8 May. 1 or 2 birds were seen on various dates during May-Jul off *Colonsay, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull, Coll* and *Tiree*. The only record of more than 2 birds was a group of 5 at Barnabuck (Kerrera) *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Jul. About half of the birds where colour phase was reported were dark phase, suggesting that these birds were from the local low latitude population.

**Breeding** No data were available on breeding numbers or success for the colonies in *Coll*, (although 2 birds on 4 Jun and 3 Aug), and *Jura*. Up to 5 at any one time were seen by TIARG in Jun-Jul around the Treshnish Isles *Mull*. In view of the rapid decline in breeding numbers at Argyll colonies, it would be good to have counts from the remaining sites to see if any are still breeding in Argyll.

**Autumn** Small numbers were seen off *Coll, Islay, Jura, Kintyre, Mull, North Argyll* but especially *Tiree* in Aug-Oct. Most autumn records were during Aug, but the peak count was 27 birds off Aird *Tiree* in 2 hrs on 29 Sep. The last record of the autumn was of one between *Tiree* and *Coll* on 22 Oct.

## **LONG-TAILED SKUA** *Stercorarius longicaudus* Fasgadair-stiùireach

*A scarce and irregular passage migrant: spring and autumn records off western coasts and islands.*

No records.

## **GREAT SKUA** *Stercorarius skua* Fasgadair-mòr

**AMBER LIST** *Previously an uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor but an increasing summer visitor which now breeds or holds territory in very small numbers on: Coll, Treshnish Isles Mull, Tiree, Colonsay, Islay and Staffa.*

**Winter/spring** The first spring record was one at Iona *Mull* on 30 Mar. Birds were then seen at Croig *Mull* on 6 Apr and Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 7 Apr. There were reports for most dates from then through to autumn, but primarily from breeding sites rather than from passage of birds through Argyll, as all reports were from *Tiree, Mull, Coll, Colonsay* or *Islay*, or from ferries travelling to/from those islands.

**Breeding** TIARG recorded 4 AOTs on Lunga, at least 1 on Fladda and 5 or 6 on Bac Mor (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*. Two pairs held territory on *Tiree* and one of these fledged 2 young. No data were received on the current breeding status at *Coll, Islay, Staffa Mull, Iona Mull* or *Colonsay*.

**Autumn/winter** Small numbers (mostly single birds) were seen on passage in Aug to Oct from a variety of coastal sites but especially *Tiree*. The peak counts were of 10 birds N of *Coll* on 31 Aug, 10 birds at Port Lobh *Colonsay* on 4 Sep and 10 birds off Aird *Tiree* in 90 mins on 29 Sep. The last records of the year were of a single bird at Caliach Point *Mull* on 18 Oct and another single bird at Davaar Island *Kintyre* on 25 Oct.

**ATLANTIC PUFFIN** *Fratercula arctica* Buthaid

**RED LIST A** *very localised breeding species with main colonies on Sanda Islands and Treshnish Isles: only very occasionally recorded in winter.*

**Winter/spring** There were only a handful of sightings in Jan-Apr, off *Colonsay*, *Islay*, *Mull* and *Tiree*. Reports increased during May though from these same areas.

**Breeding** On the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, the estimated breeding population was 2,976 Apparently Occupied Burrows (AOBs) on Lunga plus Sgeir a' Chaisteil, based on counts of visible adults ashore. Counts from the sea on 6 Jun at the Sanda Islands *Kintyre*, where mink have reached the seabird colonies recently, were of 80 birds at Sanda Island, 70 birds at Sheep Island and 30 birds at Glunimore Island; counts of visible birds ashore are often assumed to be equivalent to the number of AOBs. Small numbers are thought to breed on Staffa *Mull*. On 28 Jun, 196 flew past Hynish *Tiree* in 1 hr. The first fledglings were seen on 19 Jul in Gunna Sound *Tiree*.

**Autumn/winter** On 6 Aug, 234 flew past Hynish *Tiree* in 1 hr. Only one or two birds were seen on dates after 6 Aug, and the only record after 19 Aug was of one bird seen from the ferry north of *Coll* on 31 Aug.

**BLACK GUILLEMOT** *Cepphus grylle* Gearra-breac

**AMBER LIST A** *widespread, resident breeding species: on coasts, islands, and in sea lochs. Black Guillemot is a protected feature of Clyde Sea Sill MPA.*

**Winter/spring** Birds were widely distributed along Argyll coasts in small numbers. Larger counts included: 21 at Druim na Claidh (Appin) *North Argyll* on 10 Apr, 25 at Ceann a' Mhara *Tiree* on 11 Apr, 233 at Sanda Islands *Kintyre* on 21 Apr, 28 at Urugaig *Colonsay* on 24 Apr, 18 at Oban Harbour *Mid-Argyll* on 30 Apr, and 40 at Cnoc na Croise *Islay* on 16 May. Because Black Guillemots are believed to remain in much the same area throughout the year these counts are likely to indicate the size of the local populations in these sites (though including immature as well as adult birds), possibly better than counts during the breeding season (when adults may be in burrows/cavities at nests so not detected).

**Breeding** Widely distributed along Argyll coasts where nesting habitat is available. Black Guillemots are highly susceptible to mammalian predators such as mink and rats, so tend to avoid breeding in areas accessible to these predators. However, they will use artificial sites. Four pairs nested in boxes on the tern rafts at South Shian (Loch Creran) *North Argyll*. Four pairs nested on Eilean Mor (Dunstaffnage) *Mid-Argyll* and three of those were using nest boxes. One pair nested on the Finlaggan ferry in a drain hole! The count of 233 birds at Sanda Islands *Kintyre* is worrying because this represents a very large decline in that colony (there were 349 there in 2013), and coincides with mink becoming established on Sanda.

**Autumn/winter** Birds were widely distributed along Argyll coasts in small numbers, with few reports of large groups, the only count exceeding 20 birds being 22 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 22 Nov.

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda* Falc

**AMBER LIST A** *locally common breeding species, although much less numerous and with smaller colonies than Common Guillemot. Large numbers of passage migrants may be seen from headlands with smaller numbers regular in sea lochs in winter.*

**Winter/spring** Very few were seen in Jan although there were from 1 to 10 birds at Otter Ferry Cowal, Ardrishaig Mid-Argyll, Loch Beg Mull, Iona Mull and Port Askaig Islay. Slightly more were reported in Feb but the only counts exceeding 10 were 20 at Otter Ferry Cowal on 14 Feb and 20 at Arinagour Coll on 25 Feb. However, larger numbers were recorded in Mar with 49 at Port Charlotte Islay on 13 Mar, and 220 at Baile Mor (Iona) Mull on 30 Mar. Numbers increased further in Apr with 128 at Sanda Islands Kintyre on 1 Apr and 400 at Ceann a' Mhara Tiree on 11 Apr.

**Breeding** At Ceann a' Mhara Tiree there were 266 birds on the cliff on 20 May with some birds on eggs and large numbers feeding at sea around the island. On 17 Jun there were 197 birds on the cliff, most with eggs. By 19 Jul many chicks had fledged and only 32 adults remained on the cliff. At Colonsay there were 42 birds on at the Uragaig sample site and an adult was resighted at Pigs Paradise which had been ringed there in 1998 (18 years earlier). At Sanda Islands Kintyre counts from a boat recorded 80 birds at Sanda Island, 50 at Sheep Island and 300 at Glunimore Island. TIARG counted a total of 553 adults on Lunga and Sgeir a' Chaisteil (Treshnish Isles) Mull, suggesting an increase in numbers at that colony compared to totals in the last few years. There were 372 flying past Hynish Tiree in 1 hr on 28 Jun, a date which would imply that these were likely to be breeding adults commuting between breeding and feeding sites as chicks would either be at nest sites or flightless on the sea at that time of year. 'Hundreds' of adults accompanying chicks were seen on the sea from the Oban-Barra ferry off NW Coll on 20 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** After post-breeding dispersal in Jul-Aug, reports were mostly of small numbers. However, there were 200 at Otter Ferry Cowal on 18 Oct and 100 there on 21 Nov, 25 Nov and 1 Dec. Apart from smaller numbers remaining around Otter Ferry Cowal until late in Dec, the last records elsewhere were 5 at Loch Spelve Mull on 19 Dec, and 2 at Achnahard Mull on 25 Dec.

## **LITTLE AUK** *Alle alle* Colcach-bheag

**A scarce and irregular winter visitor: usually seen during sea-watches or after severe gales.**

**Winter** There were about 20 reports in Jan, mostly of one or two birds, and mostly from Tiree and Islay, but also from Mull, Mid-Argyll, Cowal, Jura and Kintyre. The largest count was of 3 from the Tobermory to Kilchoan ferry (Sound of Mull) Mull on 1 Jan followed by 2 off Aird Tiree on 12 Jan and 2 off Findlay's Rocks (Iona) Mull on 16 Jan. One was found in a garden at Bridge of Awe North Argyll and one on the road outside Ford Mid-Argyll, while three birds were found dead, on Jura and in Kintyre, implying a small 'wreck' took place. There were four reports in Feb, all of single birds, at Tiree and Mull, with both birds at Mull being found dead. There were no reports later in the year.

## **COMMON GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge* Eun-dubh-an-sgadain

**AMBER LIST A** *highly colonial, and locally abundant, breeding species. Adults with small young appear on the sea far from colonies in late summer. Large numbers of passage migrants may be seen from headlands and smaller numbers are regular in sea lochs in winter. Breeding Common Guillemots are a feature of North Colonsay & Western Cliffs SPA.*

**Winter/spring** Mostly small numbers were reported in Jan-Feb, especially from Islay, Coll and Tiree, but there were 200 off Coraig Bay Tiree on 27 Jan, 6,400 (including some razorbills as well as guillemots) flying past Aird Tiree in 1 hr on 2 Feb, and 4,000 flying south off Frenchman's Rocks Islay on 25 Feb. About 1,000 were back on nesting ledges at Ceann a' Mhara Tiree on 11 Apr and birds were then also widespread around the Tiree coast.

**Breeding/summer** At Ceann a' Mhara Tiree, 2,291 were on ledges on 20 May with a few eggs visible. On 17 Jun there were 2,045 on ledges, many on eggs but no chicks yet present, and

1,000 adults were on the sea nearby. By 19 Jul an estimated 560 chicks had fledged from the colony and just 146 adults were present brooding about 40 large chicks. At Sanda Islands *Kintyre* a count from a boat gave *ca* 4,000 birds at Glunimore Island on 6 Jun. At Uragaig sample site *Colonsay* there were 109 birds. Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* reported that the first bird seen flying past carrying fish was on 17 Jun and birds were seen daily from then to the end of Jun commuting past with fish. The first adult with a chick on the sea at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* was seen on 6 Jul, followed by large numbers in the following days, suggesting high breeding success. At the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, 8,758 birds were counted at Lunga and Sgeir a' Chaisteil (c.f. 6,434 in 2014). Breeding success was noted as being very high, with lots of chicks fledging at the start of Jul. More than 30 adults attending chicks were on the sea between *Tiree* and *Mull* on 12 Jul, and 'hundreds' of adults attending chicks were on the sea off NW *Coll* on 20 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** There were no reports of high mortality of juveniles in the autumn. Only small numbers of birds were reported in Aug-Oct in most areas, although large numbers of 'auks' (Common Guillemots and/or Razorbills) were seen passing *Tiree*, especially during Sep and Oct with often 100 and up to 700 per hour. As usual, there were very few reports in Nov and Dec, indicating that birds had generally moved offshore from Argyll by early winter.

### **BRÜNNICH'S GUILLEMOT** *Uria lomvia*

*A vagrant: one record; found dead at Loch Caolisport, Mid-Argyll on 11 Oct 1969.*

No records.

### **BRIDLED TERN** *Onychoprion anaethetus*

*A vagrant: one record; present on Tiree on 30 Jun to 9 Jul 1994 and was the fourth Scottish record.*

No records.

### **LITTLE TERN** *Sternula albifrons* Steàrnag-bheag

**AMBER LIST** *A scarce summer visitor with regular breeding restricted to: Coll, Islay, and Tiree. Scarce passage migrant and irregular breeder elsewhere.*

**Spring** Records came mainly from *Islay* and *Tiree*, the first being 6 on 20 Apr at *Tiree*. Outwith those areas, there was 1 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 30 Apr, and several at *Coll* throughout May.

**Breeding** On *Tiree*, there were about 44 pairs in total, spread across several sites, and fledged at least 25 chicks. Birds nested on Gunna Island *Coll* but no count of numbers was provided. None were seen in the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* where a colony had been present in the past. Five pairs bred at RSPB Ardnave *Islay*, and small numbers nested at various other sites around *Islay*.

**Autumn** Many birds had already left breeding areas during Jun. The last autumn record was of 2 at Aird *Tiree* on 8 Aug.

### **GULL-BILLED TERN** *Gelochelidon nilotica*

*A vagrant: two records; both on Tiree, in Sep 2008 and in Apr 2010.*

No records.

### **CASPIAN TERN** *Hydroprogne caspia*

*A vagrant: one record; an adult seen between Ardpatrik Point, Mid-Argyll and Gigha, Kintyre in Jun 1981.*

No records.

### **WHISKERED TERN** *Chlidonias hybrida*

*A vagrant: one record; an adult at Machrihanish, Kintyre on 9 Jul 2007.*

No records.

### **BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias niger* Steàrnag-dhubh

*A scarce and irregular passage migrant usually in Sep; 20 records (24 birds) between 1980 and 2011.*

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

### **WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN** *Chlidonias leucopterus*

*A vagrant: one record; an adult at Balephetrish, Tiree on 2 and 3 Sep 1999.*

No records.

### **SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis* Sàrnag-mhòr

**AMBER LIST A** *regular passage migrant but very rare, and irregular, breeding species.*

**Winter/spring** The first records of the spring were on 30 Mar, when 1 was seen at Bruichladdich Islay, and on 31 Mar when 1 passed Machrihanish SBO Kintyre. Records were frequent but involving small numbers (mostly 1, 2 or 3 birds) throughout Apr. The largest counts in Apr were of 8 on 10 Apr at Gartbreck Islay, 9 at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 15 Apr, 15 there on 20 Apr, 20 on 21 Apr and 22 on 24 Apr, and 10 in Kilnaughton Bay Islay on 20 Apr. In May the highest count was of 34 at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 21 May.

**Breeding/summer** Birds were present throughout Jun-Jul at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre with at least 1 pair thought to have nested alongside the common tern colony. A juvenile was seen there on 3 Jul and several were there from 7 to 11 Jul. Small numbers (mostly 1-3 birds) were seen in Jun-Aug elsewhere in Cowal, Kintyre, Islay, and Tiree.

**Autumn/winter** Records came mainly from Kintyre. The largest group was 31 at Ardminish Bay (Gigha) Kintyre on 21 Aug. The second last report was from Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 27 Sep, but a much later bird was a juvenile seen at Vaul Bay Tiree on 17 Oct.

### **FORSTER'S TERN** *Sterna forsteri*

*A vagrant: one record; at Oban Bay and Loch Feochan, Mid-Argyll from 8 to 11 Jan 2003.*

No records.

### **COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo* Steàrnag-chumanta

**AMBER LIST A** *locally common summer visitor: considerably more numerous than Arctic Tern close to the mainland, but often less so on outer isles. Many colonies are severely affected by mink predation and often unproductive where no trapping is undertaken. Seabird 2000 found that Argyll held the second largest colony in Britain and the largest in Scotland.*

**Breeding Common Terns are a feature of Glas Eileanan SPA.**

**Spring** There were only two reports from Apr; two at Duncuan Island Mid-Argyll on 3 Apr, and several at Bruichladdich Islay on various dates from 19 Apr. The species was seen regularly throughout May in many coastal areas of Argyll. Most spring records were of small numbers, with flocks of more than 6 birds being unusual. However, there were 7 at Eilean Musdile North Argyll on 10 May, and 20 at Otter Ferry Cowal on 19 May.

**Breeding/summer** In the study area monitored by Clive Craik common terns had a very poor season. Only 3 pairs laid at Eilean an Ruisg (Loch Feochan) Mid-Argyll and eggs were taken by a herring gull causing the terns to desert. One pair on Sgeir an Eitich (Ganavan) Mid-Argyll also deserted. However, about 30 pairs on Ardachy Islets (Loch Etive) North Argyll produced many

chicks. As in 2015, the mink-proof tern rafts in Loch Creran *North Argyll* were abandoned by terns this season apparently again in response to disturbance by a Peregrine. None bred this year at RSPB Ardnave *Islay*. About 250 pairs of ‘commic’ terns, including many common terns, nested on islets at the east end of the Sound of *Mull*. Small numbers were seen at various sites around *Tiree* in May but none nested there. Two pairs on islets in Tayvallich Harbour *Mid-Argyll* fledged at least two chicks.

**Autumn** Birds were reported only in very small numbers in Cowal, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* *Islay* and *Tiree* in Aug-Sep. Last records were: 1 on Gott Bay *Tiree* on 26 Sep and 1 in Salen Bay *Mull* on 28 Sep.

### **ROSEATE TERN** *Sterna dougallii* Steàrnag-stiùireach

**RED LIST** *A rare migrant; prior to 1980 it occasionally bred in Argyll. The most recent records were from Kintyre in 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2012.*

No records.

### **ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea* Steàrnag

**AMBER LIST** *A summer visitor and localised breeding species particularly on: Coll, Colonsay, Islay, Jura, Mull, and Tiree. Many colonies are severely affected by mink predation and are often unproductive where no trapping is undertaken. Seabird 2000 counted 1,823 pairs in Argyll & Bute.*

**Spring** The first birds reported were 2 at Ardbeg *Islay* on 16 Apr and 1 at Blackpark *Islay* on 22 Apr. Reports came from several locations from 1 May onwards, mostly from *Tiree*, *Mull* and *Islay*. The largest group was 90 birds off SW *Coll* on 13 May.

**Breeding** There were 309 pairs (=AONs) nesting at 16 sites across *Tiree* in early Jun, with the first fledged chicks seen on 27 Jun. The breeding season was described as ‘good’ with at least 210 chicks fledged from the 7 main colonies. There were 88 AONs at Eilean Ghaoidemal (Oronsay) *Colonsay* on 18 Jun. There were 33 pairs at RSPB Ardnave *Islay*, and 6 pairs at Big Scone Island (Machrihanish) *Kintyre*. At Sgeir an Eitich (Ganavan) *Mid-Argyll* there were 13 nests with eggs on 24 May, but these had all been deserted by 20 Jun. TIARG reported that c.100 pairs bred on an islet NE of Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*. About 250 pairs of ‘commic’ terns, including many Arctic terns, nested on islets at the east end of the Sound of *Mull Mull*. A high count of 750 birds at Soa, *Tiree* included ca 600 1<sup>st</sup>-summer birds on 8 Jul.

**Autumn** Birds were widely distributed in more marine areas of Argyll in early Aug but only very small numbers remained after mid-Aug. There were many records during Sep but almost all of only one or two birds and mostly from *Islay* or *Tiree*. The last records were on 29 Sep with 1 at Coraiga Bay and 28 past Aird *Tiree*.

### **IVORY GULL** *Pagophila eburnea*

**A vagrant: four records; on Islay in 1867, at Campbeltown, Kintyre in 1873, between Coll and Mull in 1969, and at Ardnave Point, Islay on 23 and 24 Apr 2000.**

No records.

### **SABINE’S GULL** *Xema sabini*

**A scarce and irregular passage migrant mainly in autumn.**

**Autumn** A juvenile was off Hynish *Tiree* on 23 Sep and another juv was off Aird *Tiree* on 29 Sep [John Bowler]. Both records were accepted by the ABRC.

## **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla* Ruideag

**RED LIST** *Normally a strictly marine species. The main breeding area is on Colonsay, with other colonies on: Islay, Treshnish Isles, and Tiree. Scarce in winter and very scarce inland. Breeding Kittiwakes are a feature of North Colonsay & Western Cliffs SPA.*

**Winter/spring** Numbers were generally low in Jan-Mar, although there were 116 passing Aird Tiree in 1 hr on 12 Jan, 3,650 passing there in 1 hr on 2 Feb, 92 seen from the Oban-Tiree ferry on 18 Feb, 100 at Lismore North Argyll on 20 Feb, and 75 at Port Ellen Islay on 5 Mar. Larger numbers were not noted until May when birds were back attending colonies in large numbers (although some were back on ledges at Ceann a' Mhara Tiree from 11 Apr onwards).

**Breeding** At Ceann a' Mhara Tiree some 150 birds were back on ledges on 11 Apr, when increasing numbers were also noted offshore, and on 20 May there were 235 AONs but mostly still nest building activity and no eggs. There were 233 AONs on 17 Jun, and 182 AONs on 19 Jul with 278 chicks close to fledging. TIARG reported that at the Treshnish Isles Mull there were 423 AONs on Lunga (cf. 325 in 2015); the breeding was earlier than usual. In addition there were up to 550 birds roosting on intertidal rocks. At the Urugaig Colonsay sample site there were 20 AONs and 3,530 AONs on a near complete cliff colony survey on Colonsay. There were 30-50 AONs at Glunimore Island (Sanda Islands) Kintyre on 6 Jun. There were some exceptionally large numbers present during Jun, including 1,200 at Traigh Ghrianaidh Tiree on 27 Jun and again on 30 Jun, with most of those being 1 year old (2<sup>nd</sup> calendar year) birds, so possibly birds from more northern populations.

**Autumn/winter** The first juvenile at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre was seen on 7 Aug. However, on 8 Aug, 414 birds passed the observatory in 7 hrs and 40% of those were juveniles, suggesting a productive breeding season. During Aug to Oct, large numbers passed sea watching sites; there were 3,500 passing Crinan Mid-Argyll in 1 hr on 7 Aug, 1,250 in a flock at the east end of the Sound of Mull Mull on 23 Aug, 1,000 loafing on rocks at Gigha Kintyre on 27 Aug, 3,650 passing Hynish Tiree on 30 Aug, 700 (of which 45% were juveniles) passing Machrihanish SBO Kintyre in 6 hrs on 6 Sep, over 1,000 feeding in dense groups between Tiree and Coll on 12 Oct, 895 passing Aird Tiree in 1 hr on 18 Oct, 1,500 were off Frenchman's Rocks Islay in 1 hr on 18 Oct. Numbers reported dropped very fast during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of Oct. Very few were seen after 25 Oct, with mostly just single birds off Tiree and Mull from Nov into Dec, the only report of numbers in double figures during Nov-Dec being 26 passing Hynish Tiree in 1 hr on 8 Nov.

## **BONAPARTE'S GULL** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

*A vagrant: eight or nine records; Islay in Jun and Sep 1975, Tiree in Apr 2010, the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll in Aug 2012, Traigh nan Gilean and Loch a' Phuill, Tiree in Jun 2013, a first-winter at Loch Gilp, Mid-Argyll in Jan 14 with an adult there in Dec 14 and possibly the same adult at Loch Caolisport, Mid-Argyll in Mar 14, again Mar-Apr 2015 and a first-winter at Sorobaidh Bay Tiree in Mar 2015.*

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* Faoileag-a'-chinn-duibh  
**AMBER LIST** *A patchily distributed resident breeder: reduced or absent at some sites due to mink predation and scarce in many areas in winter.*

**Winter/spring** Generally scarce but widespread in most of Argyll during winter, but there were 180 at Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll on 17 Jan, 60 at Eilean Traighe (Ormsary) Mid-Argyll on 28 Jan, 44 at Brox Wood (Sandbank) Cowal on 11 Feb, 43 at Blairmore Farm (Loch Long) Cowal on 23 Feb, 48 at Loch Indaal Islay on 1 Mar, 48 at Ardlarach Islay on 13 Mar, 51 at Crois Mhor (Loch Gruinart) Islay on 15 Mar, 86 at Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll on 19 Mar, 47 (mostly 1<sup>st</sup> year birds) at



the Head of Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Apr, 175 on *Tiree* on 8 Apr, 78 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 8 Apr, 160 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Apr, 90 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 11 Apr. A colour ringed was at Killail *Cowal* on 6 Mar. It had been ringed in Norway, indicating that at least some of the birds wintering in Argyll originate from Scandinavia.

**Breeding** On *Tiree*, birds were late arriving at colonies, not reaching full attendance until mid-May. Numbers of AONs were: 103 at The Reef, 95 at Greenhill, 65 at Loch Bhasapol, 54 at Loch a' Phuill, 24 at Heylipol Church pool, 15 at Barrapol, 8 at Loch an Eilein, 6 at Loch Riaghain, 2 at Balevullin Pools, 1 at Loch Aulaig and 5 at Soa. Productivity was good on *Tiree* with the first fledglings on 1 Jun, and large numbers of fledged young by mid Jul at many colonies, with birds dispersing from mid-Jul and few remaining by late Aug. Three pairs bred at Ardnave *Islay* and 3 pairs at RSPB Gruinart *Islay*. There were 27 pairs at Duncuan (Loch Gilp) *Mid-Argyll* and first juvenile at head of Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** The species was widely distributed in autumn and winter, though mostly in small numbers. However, there were 190 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Aug, 200 at Druimachro (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 26 Nov, and 122 at the Head of Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Dec.

### **LITTLE GULL** *Hydrocoloeus minutus* Crann-fhaoileag

*An annual visitor, most frequently in autumn but may be encountered at any time of the year.*

**Winter** As in recent years most records came from Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* with an adult on 13 Jan, a near-adult (4CY) there on 17 Jan, an adult with a 4CY on 10 Feb and again on 11 Feb (possibly only 2 birds involved). Nearby a first-winter (2CY) was off Inverneill *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Jan.

**Autumn** A juvenile (1CY) was at the Holy Loch *Cowal* on 10 Aug and a 1CY was at the Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 12 Aug.

**Winter** An adult was at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Dec.

### **ROSS'S GULL** *Rhodostethia rosea*

*A vagrant: four records; an immature at Frenchman's Rocks, Islay on 15 August 1976, an adult at Aird, Tiree on 9 August 2006, a first-winter bird at Ormsary, Mid-Argyll from 14 Dec 2006 to 15 Jan 2007 and later at Portavadie, Cowal from 13-25 Feb 2007 and a first-winter past Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 12 Nov 2010.*

No records.

### **LAUGHING GULL** *Larus atricilla*

*A rare visitor: ten records; all between 1974 and 2015.*

No records.

### **MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Larus melanocephalus*

*AMBER LIST A scarce visitor mainly in autumn and winter.*

**Winter** Two adults were at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Jan and a second-winter (3CY) was there on 17 Jan, with a new adult there (with a white colour-ring) on 31 Jan and an adult (new or from earlier) also there on 31 Mar.

**Spring/summer** A second-summer (3CY) was at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Jul.

**Autumn** A juv (1CY) was at The Green *Tiree* on 19 Aug and presumably the same bird nearby at Aird *Tiree* on 31 Aug. A 1CY bird was at the Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 19 to 26 Aug and 2 birds (ages not given) were reported from Machrihanish beach *Kintyre* on 20 Aug. A 1CY was at Balemartine *Tiree* on 4 Sep.

**Winter** No winter reports, which is unusual.

**COMMON GULL (MEW GULL)** *Larus canus Faoileag-chumanta*

**AMBER LIST** *A widespread and common resident breeding species but reduced or absent at some sites due to predation by mink.*

**Winter/spring** Widely distributed in winter across Argyll with largest numbers reported from *Tiree*, including: 1,870 on 19 Jan, 650 in Sorobaidh Bay on 21 Jan, 370 at Sandaig on 22 Jan, 235 at The Reef on 27 Jan, 220 in Traig Bhaigh on 2 Feb, 820 on *Tiree* on 15 Feb, 250 at Sandaig on 17 Feb, 218 at Loch a' Phuill on 11 Apr. Elsewhere, high counts included: 230 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Jan, 300 at Eilean na h-Atha *Coll* on 20 Feb, 250 at Bousd *Coll* on 24 Feb, 300 at Loch Finlaggan *Islay* on 6 Mar, 200 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 15 Mar, 155 at Taynish (Loch Sween) *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Apr, 145 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Apr, 117 at Druim na Claidh (Appin) *North Argyll* on 10 Apr, 250 at Calgary *Mull* on 24 Apr, and 250 at Langamull *Mull* on 30 Apr.

**Breeding** Widely distributed, mostly in small numbers. On *Tiree*, breeding numbers (AONs) were: 122 at Loch a' Phuill, 99 at The Reef, 65 at Heylipol Church pools, 60 at Barrapol, 60 at Greenhill, 21 at Cornaigmore, 20 at Crossapol, 16 at Loch Aulaig, 14 at Ruaig Slaibh, 13 at Happy Valley, 12 at Loch Bhasapol, 10 at Soa, 7 at Balinoe, 7 at Balevullin, 6 at Hough, 5 at Mannal. Productivity on *Tiree* was good, with the first fledglings from 20 Jun and most fledged by early Jul. An all-white 'leucistic' bird was seen at Heylipol *Tiree* on 23 May. Six pairs nested at Machrihanish Airfield *Kintyre*. Clive Craik monitored 12 sites, mostly in *Mid-Argyll*. At Eilean Inshaig (Loch Craignish) *Mid-Argyll* where mink were controlled, there were 44 pairs on 23 May, and they had 42 fledglings on 8 Jul. At Glas Eilean (Lynn of Lorn) *Mid-Argyll* 12 pairs produced only 2 chicks. At Sgeir an Eitich (Ganavan) *Mid-Argyll* there were 24 pairs on 24 May, but these deserted by mid-Jun. At Eilean an Ruisg (Loch Feochan) *Mid-Argyll* there were 9 pairs on 23 May, but these failed, apparently due to a herring gull which was seen repeatedly taking eggs from these nests. About 5 pairs bred on the Treshnish Isles *Mull*.

**Autumn/winter** Widely distributed, but often in small numbers. Large counts included: 240 at Kilkenneth *Tiree* on 8 Aug, 410 at Balephetrish Bay *Tiree* on 13 Aug, 266 at Ruaig *Tiree* on 29 Aug, 260 at Breachacha Bay *Coll* on 10 Oct, 176 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 14 Oct and 152 there on 22 Nov, and 430 on *Tiree* on 13 Dec.

**RING-BILLED GULL** *Larus delawarensis*

*A scarce to rare visitor: usually annual with one to four records in late winter and spring, although there are records for every month of the year.*

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus Farspag-bheag*

**AMBER LIST** *A widespread breeding species: generally present from Mar to Sep. Some colonies are much affected by mink predation. A few remain in winter. Seabird 2000 found 3,235 pairs in Argyll and Bute but numbers have since declined.*

**Winter/spring** Only two birds were seen in Jan, one at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 19 Jan, and one at Sandaig *Tiree* on 20 Jan. There were 9 reports in Feb, from *Mid-Argyll* and *Islay*. A count of 6 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Mar was followed by almost daily reports from many parts of Argyll, the largest number that month being 15 at Knocklearoch *Islay* on 24 Mar, feeding in a ploughed field. Numbers increased further in Apr, highest counts being 39 at Loch Bhasapol *Tiree* on 11 Apr with 55 there on 25 Apr.

**Breeding** On *Tiree*, there were at least 86 pairs nesting in at least 6 sites, with chicks fledging from mid-Jul but in fairly small numbers. There were 9 pairs at RSPB Ardnave *Islay*, 2 at Ardskenish *Colonsay*, 4 at Pigs Paradise *Colonsay*, 2 at Glas Eilean *Jura*, 2 at Sanda Island and 3 at Sheep Island (Sanda Islands) *Kintyre*, 2 at Eilean Buidhe (Portavadie) *Cowal*, and 6 or 7 pairs on Treshnish Isles *Mull*. No doubt this species breeds at many other sites in Argyll, but typically in very small numbers, often associated with other species of gull.

**Autumn/winter** Widely distributed across Argyll during autumn, but records especially from *Tiree*, *Mid-Argyll*, and *Islay*. Larger autumn counts included: 31 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 22 Aug, 25 off Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 3 Sep, 72 on *Tiree* on 9 Sep, mainly feeding in cut silage fields. Numbers reported declined in Oct and Nov. There were 10 at Glenkin *Cowal* on 8 Dec. This was one of only three records in Dec, the other two being 1 at Kilchoman *Islay* on 3 Dec, and 2 at Kyles of Bute *Cowal* on 8 Dec.

## **EUROPEAN HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus* Faoileag-an-sgadain

**RED LIST A** *widespread and abundant resident breeding species that forms large flocks outside the breeding season. Recently several large colonies have been abandoned, and very few now breed inland.*

**Winter/spring** Widespread across Argyll, especially on sheltered coasts, at harbours, fish farms and on pasture land near the coast. There were: 140 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Jan, 160 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jan, 465 on *Tiree* on 19 Jan, 270 at Sandaig *Tiree* and 220 at Sorobaidh Bay *Tiree* on 22 Jan, 205 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1 Feb, 100 at Gigha *Kintyre* on 25 Mar, 150 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Apr, and 125 at Druim na Claidh (Appin) *North Argyll* on 10 Apr. A leucistic adult was at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on many dates through May and into Jun.

**Breeding** On *Tiree*, numbers of breeding pairs were: 30 at Milton, 15 at Rubha Chraiginis, 14 at The Ringing Stone, 12 at Ceann a' Mhara, 6 at Salum, 5 at Hough dunes, 5 at Balevullin, and 1 at The Reef. There were 19 AONs at Glas Eilean (Mucraidh) *Jura*. At the Sanda Islands *Kintyre* there were 180 pairs on Sanda Island, 150 pairs on Sheep Island and 3 pairs on Glunimore Island. There were at least 19 pairs on the Treshnish Isles *Mull*. Clive Craik monitored 12 colonies, reporting numbers and productivity much as usual. There were 91 pairs at Eilean Mor (Dunstaffnage) *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Jun, with many fledged young on 13 Jul. 21 pairs bred at RSPB Ardnave *Islay*. There were 40 pairs on Eilean Buidhe (Portavadie) *Cowal*. At least 5 pairs nested on rooftops in Campbeltown *Kintyre*, with three chicks fledging from most of those nests.

**Autumn/winter** Widespread, with highest counts: 265 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Aug, 250 feeding at the fish farm waste discharge at Knock *Mull* on 30 Sep, 250 feeding off Glengorm Castle *Mull* on 15 Oct, c.200 at Gruinart Flats *Islay* on 22 Nov, and c.200 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Dec.

## **YELLOW-LEGGED GULL** *Larus michahellis*

**AMBER LIST A** *vagrant: two records; one at Loch Gruinart, Islay on 1-7 Sep 2002 (in this case the race/sub-species 'atlantis' was not ruled out) and an adult at Drumlemble, Kintyre on 21-22 Feb 2014.*

No records.

## **AMERICAN HERRING GULL** *Larus smithsonianus*

***A vagrant: two previous records; a first-winter bird on Tiree in 2007 (two records on Tiree from 2007 still under consideration by the BBRC) and a first-winter near Campbeltown, Kintyre on 6 Feb-27 Mar 2014.***

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).



**Iceland Gull** *Tiree* October 2016 (Richard Whitson)

## **ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucooides glaucooides* Faoileag-liath

**AMBER LIST A** *scarce but regular winter visitor: most frequent Jan-Mar, with numbers varying widely from year to year. There are a few summer records.*

**Winter/spring** On *Islay* 1 was on Eilean Mhic Coinnich (Portnahaven) on 3 Feb and 19 Mar. 1 was at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 12 Feb. A 2CY was at Ardnave on 17 Feb to 12 Apr. 1 was at Machir Bay on 29 Mar. In *Kintyre* a 2CY was at Back's Water (Kilmichael) on 22 Jan and 7 Apr. A 2CY was at Machrihanish SBO on 25 and 26 Mar with a different 2CY there on 6 Apr. A 2CY was at Gialum Bay (Gigha) on 14 Feb and 25 Mar. A 2CY was at Carradale Bay on 6 Apr and 1 was at Bellochantuy on 25 May. In *Mid-Argyll* a 2CY was at the head of Loch Fyne on 1 Jan until 24 Apr. A 2CY was in Oban Bay on 5 Jan until 25 May. A 2CY was at Toberonochy (Luining) on 23 Jan. A 2CY was on Maiden Island (Kerrera) on 22 Apr. On *Mull* 1 was at Knock (Loch na Keal) on 24 Jan and in the Loch na Keal area until 16 May. A 2CY was at Tobermory on 7 Mar. On *Tiree* there were 3-4 2CY birds in Jan with singles at Balephuill on 11 Jan, at Salum on 11-19 Jan, at Crossapol Point on 12 Jan, at Ruaig on 19 Jan, at Loch Stanail on 20 Jan and at Sandaig on 22 Jan, with perhaps the same birds at Crossapol on 8 Feb, at Loch a' Phuill on 11 and 17 Feb and at Moss on 17 Feb.

**Summer** On *Mull* 1 was at Treshnish (NW Mull) on 5 Jul and 1 was at Tobermory on 31 Jul. On *Tiree* a 2CY, perhaps from the spring, was at Loch a' Phuill on 9 May and remained on the island, being noted at Sandaig, Heylipol, Crossapol, Hough, Greenhill, Barrapol and Kilkenneth until last seen on 14 Dec.

**Autumn/winter** On *Islay* 1 was at Gartmain (Loch Indaal) on 8 Nov and 1 at Loch Gruinart on 29 Nov. On *Mull* 1 was at Loch na Keal on 28 Sep, with 2 juvs there on 27 Dec, and a 3CY at Tobermory on 4 and 8 Oct.

## **'KUMLIEN'S' ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucooides kumlieni*

***A sub-species of Iceland Gull, from arctic NE Canada, with no Argyll records prior to 2011 however an influx of eleven birds during late winter 2011/12 reflected record numbers in the UK and Europe.***

**Winter/spring** A dark juvenile (2CY) was on *Tiree* at Balinoe on 18 Jan and then seen at various locations including Crossapol, Sorobaidh Bay, Loch an Eilein and Loch a' Phuill until 26 Apr.

**THAYER'S GULL** *Larus glaucooides thayeri*

**The Canadian High Arctic race of Iceland Gull, breeding from Banks Island to S Ellesmere and Baffin Island, south to N Southhampton Island and NW Greenland. Winters on the Pacific coast of North America from British Columbia S to California and New Mexico.**

**2014** A juvenile (2CY) was first noted, as a dark *kumlieni* at Gartbreck *Islay* on 27 Feb [Adam Cross, Sean Jacques], it was then relocated and identified as a *thayeri* at Bruichladdich on 2 -11 Mar [K Gibb, D Morrison, M A Wilkinson] and again at Gortan on 20 Apr and Bruichladdich on 25 Apr, now as a 'first-summer' 2CY *thayeri* [Jim Dickson *et al*].

*This record was submitted to the BBRC and accepted as the 3<sup>rd</sup> record for the UK and the first record for Scotland and Argyll. (See article on pages 139-140).*

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus* Muir-mhaighstir

**AMBER LIST A scarce but regular winter visitor: most frequent Jan-Mar.**

**Winter/spring** On *Coll* 1 was at Arinagour on 27 Mar. On *Colonsay* a 2CY was at Pig's Paradise on 24 Apr. In *Cowal* a 2CY was at Arrochar on 20 Mar to 29 Apr. On *Islay* a 2CY was at Machir Bay on 3 Jan to at least 15 Apr with another 2CY there on 17 Feb and perhaps one of these at Kilchoman on 29 May. 1 was at Lower Killeyan (The Oa) on 22 Jan. A 2CY was at Bowmore on 31 Jan and perhaps the same at the head of Loch Indaal to Uiskentuie until 17 Mar and possibly the same again at Bowmore on 17 May. 1 was at Claddach on 18 Mar and perhaps the same again on 25 Apr. 1 was at Saligo on 6 Apr. In *Kintyre* a 2CY was at Machrihanish SBO on 1 May and again on 22 May. In *Mid-Argyll* a 2CY was at the head of Loch Fyne on 1 Jan and there until 18 Feb. A 2CY was in Oban Bay on 12 to 17 Feb, 24 Mar and 24 Apr. A 2CY was at the head of Loch Gilp on 12 Feb to 3 Mar. A 2CY was at Loch Crinan on 13 Mar. On *Mull* 2 (2CY's) were at Knock (head of Loch na Keal) on 4 Feb to 19 Mar with 1 there to 5 Apr. 1 was at Cailiach Point (NW *Mull*) on 27 Mar. On *Tiree* 2CY birds were at Sandaig on 20 Jan and 9 Feb, at Traigh Bhi on 23 Jan, at Traigh Ghrianal on 17 Feb and at Loch a' Phuill on 14 to 29 Apr.

**Summer** A 2CY was at Tobermory *Mull* on 3 Jun. A 3CY was at Meningie on 5 Jul and nearby at Loch a' Phuill to 10 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** On *Islay* 1 was at Bridgend merse on 30 Dec. On *Mull* a juvenile (1CY) was feeding on a dead porpoise at Loch na Keal on 27 Dec. On *Tiree* single juvs were at Loch a' Phuill on 26 Nov, Hough Skerries on 2 Dec, Balephetrish Bay on 8 Dec and Loch Bhasapol on 19 Dec.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus* Farspag

**AMBER LIST A common resident: breeding widely but in small numbers on small islands along the coast.**

**Winter/spring** Records were mostly of small numbers, from all coastal areas of Argyll. Largest counts were: 34 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 7 Jan, 20 at Crossapol Point *Tiree* on 9 Jan feeding on a dead Orca, 24 at the head of Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Jan, 19 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 31 Jan, 25 at Corrynachenchy *Mull* on 21 Apr, and 50 at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 18 May.

**Breeding** On the Treshnish Isles *Mull*, breeding was confirmed on Sgeir an Eirionnaich (23 pairs), Lunga (14 pairs), Sgeir an Fheoir (6 pairs) and Sgeir na h'Iolaire (1 pair), Sgeir a' Chaisteil (2 pairs), Bac Mor (10 pairs), Fladda (30 pairs), Cairn na Burgh More (2 pairs), Cairn

na Burgh Beg (3 pairs). On *Tiree*, there were 7 pairs at Baugh Moor, 6 at the Ringing Stone, 2 at Bhirceapol, 2 at Milton, 1 at Balevullin, 1 at Rubha Chraiginis. There were 5 pairs at Glas Eilean *Jura*, and 2 pairs at RSPB Ardnave *Islay*. There were 6 pairs at Eilean Buidhe (Portavadie) *Cowal*. At the Sanda Islands *Kintyre* there were 4 pairs on Sanda Island, 10 on Sheep Island and 6 on Glunimore.

**Autumn/winter** Widely distributed on coasts of Argyll in small numbers. Larger groups included: 29 at Clachan Mor *Tiree* on 13 Aug, 185 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 5 Sep, 25 at Rubh Aird (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Sep, 27 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 17 Oct, 24 at Kinnabus (Oa) *Islay* on 17 Oct, 30 at Port na h-Atha (Oronsay) *Colonsay* on 23 Oct, 31 at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Nov, 28 at Blairmore Farm (Loch Long) *Cowal* on 20 Nov, and 35 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 8 Dec.

### **ROCK DOVE** *Columba livia* Calman-creige

*A resident breeder except in Cowal: concentrated on the islands and in Kintyre. Large flocks often gather on arable fields outwith the breeding season. The genetic integrity of most populations is now in doubt because of interbreeding with feral pigeons: those on the islands being probably nearest 'pure' Rock Dove. Feral Pigeons are recorded from most areas, but there is little information on population size.*

**Winter/spring** The highest counts from the islands were: 59 at Oronsay airstrip *Colonsay* on 12 Feb, 30 at Kilbride *Coll* on 23 Feb, and 30 at Port Lobh *Colonsay* on 26 Mar, 42 were at Kiloran Dunes *Colonsay* on 26 Apr, 55 were on Iona *Mull* on 8 May, 25 at Achnahal *Mull* on 11 May and 200 at Gruinart flats *Islay* on 22 May. The highest count on the mainland was 20 at Balvicar (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 3 Jan.

**Summer/breeding** Birds were reported to be present during the breeding season in all areas except *Coll*, *Jura*, and *North Argyll* but confirmed breeding was only reported from *Tiree*. 45 were at Crossapol *Tiree* on 17 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** The largest count reported was 400 at Sunderland Farm *Islay* on 4 Nov. Other large counts were: 50 at Carradale Bay *Kintyre* on 3 Sep, 220 at Upper Kenovay *Tiree* on 5 Sep, 138 Port Charlotte to Octofad *Islay* on 10 Sep, 84 at Craighens (Gruinart) *Islay* on 17 Sep, 70 at Saligo *Islay* on 20 Sep, 150 at Octomore (Port Charlotte) *Islay* on 28 Sep, 70 at Carn (Port Charlotte) *Islay* on 11 Oct, 22 at Urugaig *Colonsay* on 22 Oct, 35 at Sandaig *Tiree* on 28 Nov, and 21 at Cuan (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Dec.

**FERAL PIGEON** There were 51 at Dunoon *Cowal* on 11 Feb and up to 27 regularly in a garden in Connel *Mid-Argyll*. 8 were at East Loch Tarbert pier *Kintyre* on 16 Jul. Under reported from Oban *Mid-Argyll* however counts of 6 on 18 Feb and 30 on 12 Apr. Small numbers were also reported from: *Colonsay*, *Kintyre*, and *Mull*.

### **STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas* Calman-gorm

**AMBER LIST** *A very scarce and local resident: only regularly reported from Cowal and Mid-Argyll in recent years. All records required please.*

**Winter/spring** Four were at Sanaigmore *Islay* on 15 Mar.

**Autumn/winter** One was at Blarbuie (Lochgilphead) *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Sep.

### **COMMON WOOD PIGEON** *Columba palumbus* Calman-fiadhaich

*A common resident breeding species: less numerous on Mull, scarce on Coll, and rare on Tiree. Large flocks which form on the mainland in winter may include immigrants.*

**Winter/spring** Highest counts reported in the spring were: 40 at Ormsary *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Jan, 66 at Loch Skerrols *Islay* on 27 Feb, and 25 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Mar. 9 were at Corrynachenchy *Mull* on 6 Mar and 1 was at Balephuill *Tiree* on 11 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** Breeding was confirmed from *Coll* and *Mid-Argyll* and thought probable in *Cowal* and *Islay*. In Glen Cruitten *Mid-Argyll* up to 20 were present through the period and 6 were at The Lodge *Coll* on 13 May. A flock of 80 was at Arrochar *Cowal* on 28 May, 15 were at Barr a'Chaistealain *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Jul, and 15 were at Port Askaig *Islay* on 17 Aug. Some 20 migrant birds passed through *Tiree* in groups of up to 3 in Apr-Jun with 1 over-summering for the first time at Balephuill in Jul-Aug.

**Autumn/winter** A flock of 30 was feeding on barley stubbles at Octomore (Port Charlotte) *Islay* on 28 Sep, 100 were at Sandbank *Cowal* on 24 Oct and a flock of 155 were moving S at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 11 Nov.

### **EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto* Calman-a'-chrios

*A widespread but sparsely distributed species throughout Argyll: usually associated with human settlement. It is resident at many locations, but is mainly a late spring migrant or summer visitor to some islands.*

**Winter/spring** Higher counts were: 9 on *Tiree* in Feb, 8 on Gigha *Kintyre* on 14 Feb, and 5 at Bridgend *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Mar. Smaller numbers were reported from: *Coll*, *Cowal*, *Islay Mull*, and *North Argyll*.

**Breeding/summer** Birds were reported from all areas except *Jura*. Fledged young were reported at Craignure *Mull* on 8 Apr and pairs were reported from *Cowal*. In May, up to 10 were on *Tiree* and at Lochbuie *Mull*. 8 were at The Lodge *Coll* on 13 May and 20 were at Cnoc na Croise *Islay* on 29 May. Up to 20 were on *Tiree* in Jul and 20 were at Salen *Mull* on 19 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** Higher counts included: 44 at Octofad *Islay* on 15 Sep, 17 at Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Nov and 22 at Tayinloan *Kintyre* on 26 Nov.

### **EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur* Calman-tùchan

**RED LIST** *A scarce but almost annual passage migrant: most frequently recorded during May and Jun.*

**Spring/summer** Up to four birds: 1 at Ganavan (Oban) *Mid-Argyll* on 19 May, 1 at Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 28 May, 1 on *Tiree* from 6-8 Jun, and 1 at Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 15 Jun.

**Autumn** A first-winter was at Balephuill *Tiree* on 4-5 Sep and 1 was at Craignure *Mull* on 13 Sep.

### **COMMON CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus* Cuthag

**RED LIST** *A common summer visitor that is more frequent and widespread on the mainland: less numerous on the outer islands.*

**Spring** The first confirmed reports were at: Kilmartin *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Apr, Duart Bay *Mull* and Lochan Add *Mid-Argyll* on 14 Apr, Auchnaha *Cowal* on 16 Apr, and Foreland House *Islay* on 17 Apr. Widespread arrival soon followed with birds reported from *Jura* on 24 Apr and *North Argyll* on 27 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** Birds were reported from all areas. Five birds were at Am Fearden *Jura* on 24 Apr, 5 were at An t'Seana-chroit (Appin) *North Argyll* on 5 May, 5 were at Balure (Loch Spelve) *Mull* on 12 May, 5 were at The Lodge *Coll* on 13 May, 6 were at Largiebaan *Kintyre* on 22 May, 4 were at Catnish (Glen Orchy) *North Argyll* on 28 May, and 5 (3M, 2F) were on overhead wires at Corra Farm *Cowal* on 7 Jun, 22 singing males/Ters were located on *Colonsay* in Jun and 4 singing males at RSPB Gruinart *Islay*. Only 3 reports were received in Jul. The

only juveniles reported were on *Tiree* from 12-18 Aug and these were the final reports of the year.

### **BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*

*A vagrant: one record; a first-winter bird found dead near Southend, Kintyre on 8 Nov 1950.*

No records.

### **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO** *Coccyzus americanus*

*A vagrant: two records; one found dead on Colonsay on 6 Nov 1904 and one found dying at Barcaldine, North Argyll in late Sep 1969.*

No records.

### **BARN OWL** *Tyto alba* Comhachag

*A patchily distributed breeding species: probably most numerous in Kintyre. It is widespread on Cowal, Islay, and Mull but only a rare visitor to Coll, Colonsay, and Tiree. All records are requested.*

Around a third of the year's records came from *Islay*: there were no records from *Coll*, *Colonsay* or *Jura*. Most records were of single birds although 2 were reported several times on *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull* and *North Argyll*. There were several sightings through the year from *Tiree* including an unusual mid-summer record of one at Balephuill on 23 Jun. Barn Owls had a slightly better breeding season as can be seen from the table below with an average of 2.54 young per successful site (2.1 in 2014).

Table 33. *Outcome of monitored Barn Owl territories in Argyll in 2016.* (ARSG/ David Jardine).

Area	Sites occupied	Sites where eggs laid	Sites successful *	Sites failed	Outcome unknown	Min no. large young/fledged	Young per successful site
Mull	2	2	1	0	1	1+	1.0+
Islay	3	3	2	1	0	3+	1.5+
Kintyre/ Knapdale	38	16	11	0	5	31	2.82
Cowal	10	4	1	0	3	2	2.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>37+</b>	<b>2.54**</b>

\* Fledged young or large young in nest on last visit

\*\* Calculated for 13 nesting attempts where fledged brood size accurately known.

### **EURASIAN SCOPS OWL** *Otus scops*

*A vagrant: one record; found dead at Scarinish, Tiree on 6 Apr 1997.*

No records.

### **SNOWY OWL** *Bubo scandiacus*

*A vagrant: six records; a male on Coll on 27 Jan 2007 and an immature female on Tiree on 29 Jan 2007. Four old records between 1870 and 1892 are also considered acceptable.*



**Winter** An adult male was near the top of Bienn Udlaidh then flew down the hillside and was relocated 90 minutes later just north of Beinn Bhreac-laith (NW of Tyndrum) *North Argyll* on 27 Feb [George Allan]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

**TAWNY OWL** *Strix aluco* Comhachag-dhonn

**AMBER LIST A** *widespread and common resident breeding bird: absent from Coll and with only single records for Colonsay and Tiree.*

Birds were reported from: *Cowal, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull, and North Argyll*. Three birds were at Kilmichael Glassary *Mid-Argyll* on 13 May and at Gariob *Mid-Argyll* on 3 Jun; all other records were of 1 or 2 birds. Birds were heard calling in day light at 1800hrs on 5 May at Ardencaple (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* and at 1400hrs at Aros Park *Mull* on 27 Sep. This is a still a much under-recorded species and all records are welcome.

**Breeding** Seventeen sites are known to have been successful, raising 27 large young (*cf* 19 sites and 25 young in 2015).

**LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus* Comhachag-adharcaiche

**A very scarce resident breeding bird and winter visitor: almost certainly under recorded. All records are requested.**

**Spring** Only two singles were reported; 1 on Eorsa, Loch na Keal *Mull* and 14 Feb and the other at dusk at Lochdon *Mull* on 5 May.

**Breeding** Only three occupied sites were reported. A pair of birds were displaying south of Tobermory *Mull* on 22 Apr, at least 1 juvenile was calling in the Gallanach Planataion *Coll* on 14 Jun and a pair were present in scrub at Loch Turraman *Colonsay* during May and Jun, although breeding was not confirmed.

**Summer/autumn** Single birds were reported at Friesland *Coll* on 23 Jun and at Baugh *Tiree* on 25 Jun.

**SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus* Comhachag-chluasach

**AMBER LIST A** *widely but thinly distributed breeder and winter visitor. Numbers fluctuate and distribution varies with the abundance of small rodents, especially field voles (Microtus agrestis).*

There were only 68 records of this species, which was reported during the year in all areas except *Kintyre, North Argyll, and Tiree* with most records referring to one or two birds.

**Winter/spring** There were reports of 4 birds together on *Mull* at Loch Beag on 14 Apr and Lochdon on 30 Apr, and of 2 together at Kilbride *Coll* on 19 Apr. Other interesting sightings included singles at Tarbert *Jura* on 30 Mar, Toman Dunaiche (Feorlin) *Mid-Argyll* on 11 May, Ardfin *Jura* on 18 May and Oronsay *Colonsay* on 22 May.

**Breeding** Five known areas were checked but only one breeding pair was found at these. Pairs were noted at six further sites. An adult and a juv were seen on *Coll* on 14 Jun. Two pairs were located on *Mull* but the breeding outcome is unknown. A pair was present at a known site on *Islay* and two new pairs were located on the island but their breeding outcome is unknown. One pair was located in *Kintyre* but it failed to rear any chicks. No pairs were located in *Cowal* (ARSG / D Jardine).

**Autumn/winter** Four birds were reported from Achnahard *Mull* on 10 Jul; however there were few records in the autumn, with none reported after one on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 30 Oct.

**EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus europaeus* Sgraicheap-oidhche  
AMBER LIST A rare and irregular summer visitor and passage migrant: has bred in the past in Kintyre and Cowal. Last accepted record was at Glen Forsa, Mull on 3 Aug 2010.  
No records.

**COMMON SWIFT** *Apus apus* Gobhlan-mòr  
AMBER LIST A summer visitor, breeding locally on the mainland: wandering birds and passage migrants may occur anywhere.

**Breeding/summer** The first sightings were in *Mid-Argyll* with 3 at Kilmichael Glassary on 6 May (one bird entered a roof space), a single bird at Connel on 7 May with 4 there regularly from 9 May and 3 in Oban on 9 May. Other early records included: 6 in Campbeltown *Kintyre* on 10 May, 5 in Dunoon *Cowal* on 11 May and 3 in Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 11 May. One was near a known nesting site in Kilmichael Glassary *Mid-Argyll* on 13 May and 4 there on 22 May were being harassed by starlings currently occupying swift nest boxes. The first island records were of single birds at Treshnish *Mull* on 21 May, near Bruichladdich *Islay* on 22 May and at Vaul *Tiree* on 6 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in nest boxes at Kilmichael Glassary *Mid-Argyll* where up to 10 birds were regularly seen through the summer. Counts of 12 or more birds included: 12 at Dunoon *Cowal* on 20 Jul, 18 over Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Aug and 14 over Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Aug. 10 were still around Kilmichael Glassary on 18 Aug where a chick was still in a nest box on 24 Aug. Late records came from Loch Frisa *Mull* on 8 Sep and Oronsay *Colonsay* on 12 Sep.

**ALPINE SWIFT** *Apus melba* Gobhlan-monaidh  
A vagrant: two records; one at Largsbaan, *Kintyre* on 15 Apr 1993 and one on the Treshnish Isles, *Mull* on 11 Jul 1994.  
No records.

**EURASIAN HOOPOE** *Upupa epops* Calman-cathaidh  
A scarce passage migrant, with most records in spring.  
No records.  
**2010.** A single bird was seen and photographed on *Jura* on 14 Apr [David Fairhurst] and was mistakenly omitted from **ABR Vol 23**.

**EUROPEAN BEE-EATER** *Merops apiaster*  
A rare migrant: seven or eight records since the first in 1981. Latest records being: two birds on *Mull* on 24 to 26 Apr 2010, one in *Glen Aros Mull* on 27 May 2014 and upto four on *Islay* on 26 Jun and 1 Jul 2015.  
No records.

**EUROPEAN ROLLER** *Coracias garrulus*  
A vagrant: seven records between 1887 and 2011. Last record was on *Mull* on 16 Jun 2011.  
No records.

**COMMON KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis* Biorra-crùidein  
AMBER LIST A scarce but regular visitor with most records in autumn and winter at a few regular mainland locations. The only proven breeding record was in *Kintyre* in 1993.

**Winter/spring** Sightings were sparse but widespread including singles at Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Jan, at Dervaig *Mull* on 23 Jan, 1 Feb and 29 Mar, and at Bridgend *Islay* on 15 Feb and 31 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** No reports of confirmed breeding. A single was at the Crinan Canal in Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Single birds were at Garmony *Mull* on 5 Aug and 13 Sep, at Kennacraig *Kintyre* on 24 Aug, at Dervaig *Mull* between 6 Aug and 22 Oct, at Cairndow *Cowal* on 1 Oct, at Ardrishaig and Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Oct, with 1- 2 birds there occasionally to 26 Dec, at Inveraray *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Oct, at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 25 Oct, at Bridgend *Islay* on 28 Oct, at Furnace *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Nov and at Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Dec.

## **EURASIAN WRYNECK** *Jynx torquilla* Geocair

**RED LIST A rare and irregular passage migrant in spring and autumn; eleven records since 1969. Last record was at The Oa, Islay in Aug 2013.**

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc records on pages 121-122).

## **GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis* Snagardach

**Rare: but recorded regularly in Cowal in recent years as well as in Mid-Argyll, Mull and N Argyll. Breeding may have occurred in Kintyre in 1998. All records required.**

**Spring** One was at Innellan Hill *Cowal* on 22 Mar and heard calling there on 6 May. One was at Killiechronan Wood *Mull* on 15 May.

**Breeding/summer** No reports.

**Autumn/winter** Reports of singles from Glen Massan *Cowal* on 6 Sep and Tobermory *Mull* on 31 Oct.

## **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major* Snagan-daraich

**A resident breeder: widespread on the mainland and Mull, with occasional records on Islay.**

**Winter/spring** Reports of 1 -2 birds from sites in all mainland areas, although only 1 report from *North Argyll* at Appin on 5 Apr. On *Islay* singles at Ellabus, Kildalton and Bridgend in Mar-Apr, and one was heard drumming near Craighouse *Jura* on 17 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** Reported from: *Cowal, Islay, Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, Mull and North Argyll*. At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 2 Ters. Sightings of juveniles were reported from Otter Ferry *Cowal*, and in *Mid-Argyll* from Bridgend (Lochgilphead) and Tayvallich.

**Autumn/winter** Sightings of 1 -3 birds were reported from: *Cowal, Islay, Mid-Argyll and North Argyll*.

## **COMMON KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus* Clamhan-ruadh

**AMBER LIST A widespread, but declining, breeding bird. There is emigration from some areas in autumn and immigration to others.**

There were only 113 records in 2016 of this once very common raptor: records were received from all Argyll recording areas except *Jura*. As usual sightings increased noticeably in most recording areas from late summer onwards. All records involve one or two birds, but three were seen together at Ulva Lagoons *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Oct.

### **Breeding**

Table 34. Outcome of monitored Kestrel territories in Argyll in 2016. NB: includes data from *Bute*, which is outwith the Argyll Recording area.

Area	Sites occupied	Sites where eggs laid	Sites successful	Sites failed	Outcome unknown	Min number large young	Young per successful site
Colonsay	1	1	1	0	0	2	2.0
Islay	3	2	1	0	1	2	2.0
Kintyre	4 + 3 singles	1	1	0	0	3	3.0
Bute	1 + 1 single	1	0	1	0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 prs + 5 singles</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.33</b>

### **RED-FOOTED FALCON** *Falco vespertinus*

*A vagrant: three records; one at Macharioch, Kintyre on 19 August 1990, one at Todd Hill, Kintyre on 12 July 2005 and one near Port Charlotte, Islay on 2 May 2010.*

No records.

### **MERLIN** *Falco columbarius* Mèirneal

**RED LIST** *Breeds very locally on open moorland and bogs: more widely distributed on passage and in winter on low coastal ground and farmland.*

Of around 175 records, almost half were from *Islay*, where birds were seen regularly throughout the year. Around a fifth of the records also came from *Tiree* where there were records from throughout the year apart from May until mid-Sep. There were at least 15 records each from *Mull* and *Colonsay* (incl. *Oronsay*). Elsewhere, there were a few records from *Mid-Argyll*, two from *Cowal*, and single records from *Coll* and *North Argyll*, but none from *Jura*.

**Breeding** Birds were reported and nesting suspected in 5 known areas (*Islay* 2, *Mid-Argyll* 2 and *Cowal*) and at an additional site a single adult was also seen in suitable nesting habitat. Three other sites on *Islay* were apparently unoccupied. Eggs were confirmed at 3 sites but the final outcome is only known for one of these that had 2 large chicks on the last visit. (ARSG per Roger Broad).

**Autumn** The first bird back on *Tiree* was on 4 Aug, but on *Oronsay Colonsay* was not noted until 13 Oct. On autumn passage at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*, singles were seen on 1, 18, 19, 21, 26 & 28 Oct.

### **EURASIAN HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo* Gormag

*A rare visitor: mostly in spring and autumn.*

**Autumn** On *Tiree* a juvenile was at Barrapol on 28 August [John Bowler] and presumably the same juv was seen again at Hynish on 1 Sep [Keith Gillon]. Both reports were accepted by the ABRC.

### **GYRFALCON** *Falco rusticolus* Seabhag-mhòr-na-seilg

*A rare visitor: several records prior to 1950 but only eight recent records, between 1973 and 2015 with last record on Islay in 2010.*

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** *Falco peregrinus* Seabag

*A widespread but scarce breeding species in all areas of Argyll, with about 70 occupied territories in 2005. There have been indications of a decline in numbers breeding away from coastal areas. Found throughout the year in most areas.*

Around 250 records were received, including records from all recording areas. Around 135 were from *Islay*, followed by 45 from *Tiree*, 23 from *Colonsay* (inc *Oronsay*) but only 13 from *Mull*. During the TIARG visit 25 Jun - 2 Jul, a male was seen on *Lunga* (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* on 25-26 Jun. At the beginning of the year the adult which regularly seen perched on the top of Connel Bridge *Mid-Argyll/North Argyll* was reported until 20 Jan, then on 2 Apr and 10 Aug. Attacks were reported on Manx Shearwater, Snipe, Common Gull, Rock Dove, Redwing, Starling and Linnet.

**Breeding**

Table 35. *Peregrines in Argyll and Bute 2016* (ARSG/ Roger Broad). NB: includes data for *Bute*, which is outwith the Argyll Recording area.

Area [no. of known sites]	Sites checked	Sites occupied	Sites where eggs laid	Sites successful (large young)	Sites failed	Outcome unknown	Min no. large young	Young per success -ful site
Mull [18]	2	2						
Islay & Jura [28]	3	2	2	2	0		4	
Other Islands * [13]	7	3prs + 1 single	2	2	0	0	2+	
Mainland (excl. Cowal) [50]	3	1	1	1	0	0	2	
Cowal [26]	13	5prs + 1 single	5	2	3	0	5	
Bute [3]	4	2prs + 1 single	1	1	0	0	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15 prs + 3 singles</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14+</b>	<b>1.62**</b>

\* Coll, *Tiree*, *Colonsay* & *Oronsay*.

\*\* calculated for the 8 pairs (all areas) where fledged brood size accurately known.

**RED-EYED VIREO** *Vireo olivaceus*

*A vagrant: two records; singles at Arinagour, Coll on 3 Oct 1992 and at Caoles, Tiree on 9 Oct 2008.*

No records.

**EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE** *Oriolus oriolus*

**RED LIST** *A rare and irregular passage migrant: mainly in spring.*

No records.

**BROWN SHRIKE** *Lanius cristatus*

*A vagrant: one record; a first-winter at Balephuill, Tiree from 22 Oct to 20 Nov 2011.*

No records.

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** *Lanius collurio*

**RED LIST A rare passage migrant: 18 records between 1954 and 2014.**

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

**LESSER GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius minor*

**A vagrant: three records; Mull in 1974, Coll in 1988 and Tiree in Aug 2008.**

No records.

**GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor* Feòladair-glas

**A rare passage migrant and winter visitor. Most recent records: Tiree in Nov 2008, at Slockavullin, Mid-Argyll in Dec 2009 and near Dalmally, Mid-Argyll in Oct 2015.**

**Autumn** One was near Grasspoint Mull on 16 -17 Oct [Stephen Hiscock *et al*] and one was at the Moine Mhor Mid-Argyll on 16-17 Dec [Mike Hoit, Jim Dickson *et al*]. Both records were accepted by the ABRC.

**WOODCHAT SHRIKE** *Lanius senator*

**A vagrant: two records; a juvenile near Port Ellen, Islay on 16 Sep 1996 and a female at Balephuil, Tiree on 19-21 May 2013.**

No records.



**Red-billed Chough** *Islay* September 2016 (Jim Dickson)

**RED-BILLED CHOUGH** *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax* Cathag-dhearg-chasach

**The Argyll islands hold almost the entire Scottish population. Islay is the stronghold, with smaller numbers on Oronsay and Colonsay. All records away from Islay are appreciated.**

**Winter/spring** On *Islay* monthly maxima at Ardnave were 40 in Jan, 28 in Feb and 41 were at Machir Bay on 15 Jan and 30 were there on 27 Feb. Elsewhere 4 were at Lossit Point on 3 Feb and 8 were at The Oa on 18 Feb. On *Colonsay* most reports were from the Oronsay RSPB Reserve where counts exceeded 10 birds on 3 occasions with a maximum of 17 on 3 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** 46 pairs bred on *Islay*, although at least 10 pairs failed (SCSG). This includes 5 pairs at Ardnave (6 in 2015) and one pair at Gruinart (2 in 2015). Elsewhere on *Islay* five birds were seen at Upper Killelan on 22 Jun and a flock of 30 non-breeders were at Ardnave on 28 May; other than these the largest summer count was of 38 birds at The Oa on 22 Jul. On *Colonsay* 9 pairs were confirmed breeding, with one other site possibly occupied. One pair failed, and the other 8 pairs fledged at least 20 young. There were 5 non-breeding birds on *Colonsay*.

**Autumn/winter** Records from *Colonsay* generally referred to flocks in single figures although 11 birds were noted on Oronsay on 14 Aug and 10 on 20-22 Nov. On *Islay* the largest flock

noted was 60 at Ardnave on 23 Jul and 42 were there on 28 Aug; 56 were at Kilchoman on 3 Oct and 6 Nov, declining to 54 at the end of Nov. Around The Oa, 5 at the Monument on 20 Oct was the highest count reported.

### **EURASIAN MAGPIE** *Pica pica* Pioghaid

**A local breeder restricted to Cowal. Elsewhere, has been a scarce and sporadic visitor (mainly in spring): in recent years appearing to be becoming more widespread.**

**Winter/spring** The highest counts both came from *Cowal* with 10 at Glen Masson on 25 Feb, and 3 at Dalinlongart on 9 Mar. On *Tiree* 1 was at Caolas on 30 Mar and 2 were at Scarinish on 2 Apr, these being only the second and third records for the island. A single was at Tobermory *Mull* on 4 Apr and 14 Apr. In *Kintyre* the gardens adjacent to the Campbeltown Grammar School held 2 during Feb to Apr, presumably the same pair that spent most of 2015 there. Southend had singles on 26 Mar, 3 to 12 May and 1 was at Carradale on 7 Apr. In *Mid-Argyll* 1 was at Balvicar (Seil) on 10 -11 Apr and 1 at Glencruitten (Oban) on 29 Apr and 1 was in a garden at Kinloch (Benderloch) *North Argyll* on 8 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** Breeding was again restricted to *Cowal* although no confirmed nesting reported. Single birds were seen at Tayvallich *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Jun and at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 14 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Only a single report out with the *Cowal* stronghold with 1 at Clachan Bridge *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Sep. In *Cowal* the only reports received were 3 at Sandbank on 24 Oct and one at Toward on 25 Oct.

### **EURASIAN JAY** *Garrulus glandarius* Sgraicheap

**A widely distributed (but scarce) woodland resident on most of the mainland: rarely reported from the islands. There is some immigration in autumn.**

**Winter/spring** There were frequent reports from widely-spaced locations in *Cowal* and *Mid-Argyll* in Jan and Feb. Many of these birds attracted attention owing to their noisy chatter. Notable sightings in *Cowal* were 10 at St Catherines on 2 Jan and 6 visiting a garden in Dunoon on 4 and 24 Feb. Elsewhere 1-3 birds were reported. On *Mull* singles were at Lochdon on 17 Jan, at Arle on 2 Apr and 2 at Glen More on 27 Apr. There were no reports from *Coll*, *Colonsay*, *Kintyre* or *North-Argyll* or *Tiree*.

**Breeding/summer** No direct evidence of breeding activity was noted and no reports of fledglings received. Most reports came from *Cowal* and *Mid-Argyll*. In *Kintyre* 2 were at Loch Lussa on 25 May. In *North-Argyll*, a noisy (family?) group of 4 or 5 was at Barcaldine on 11 Jul and 2 were at East Salachail (Glen Creran) on 4 Aug. In *Cowal* 4 were at Otter Ferry on 25 Jul and 7 on 17 Aug. On *Mull* 3 were at Tobermory on 17 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** Highest count was in *Cowal* with 7 at Otter Ferry on 2 Sep followed by 6 at Melfort (Kilmelford) *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Oct. In *North-Argyll* singles were at Inverawe House on 8 Sep, Barcaldine on 23 Oct and Loch Tulla on 6 Nov, and 2 at the head of Loch Creran on 1 Dec. The last report was of a single at Strathcoil *Mull* on 26 Dec.

### **WESTERN JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula* Cathag

**A resident breeder, common throughout much of mainland Argyll: scarce on Mull and does not breed on Coll or Tiree. Breeding colonies are often located in towns and villages.**

**Winter/spring** Records were received from all areas except *Coll* and *Tiree*. Flocks in excess of 30 were seen in many areas and the highest count was 400 at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 21 Apr. The two largest flocks in *Mid-Argyll* were 250 at Balvicar on 20 Jan and 130 at Barsloisnoch on 1 Mar. On the islands highest counts included 120 on Iona *Mull* on 12 Apr, 38 at Kiloran Dunes

*Colonsay* on 26 Mar and 70 at Loch Clach a' Bhuaile *Islay* on 20 Mar. There were 50 at North Ledaig *North-Argyll* on 2 Apr and 45 at Dunoon *Cowal* on 18 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** The only confirmed reports of breeding were recently fledged young at Otter Ferry *Cowal* from 10 Jun and at Croisebrig *Colonsay* on 16 Jun. An adult flew south over the Cruachan Visitor Centre (Loch Awe) *North-Argyll* on 9 Jun, a first record for this site. Larger counts included: 100 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 28 May, 120 at Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Jun, 60 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 23 Jun, 50 at Fionnphort *Mull* on 15 Jul and 60 at Inveraray Castle *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Sep.

**Autumn/winter** Higher counts included: 350 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 14 Sep, 60 at Ardantive Bay (Kerrera) *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Oct, 37 at Kiloran Dunes *Colonsay* on 23 Oct, 80 at the Treshnish Farm (NW) *Mull* on 24 Oct, 74 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Dec and 120 on Kerrera *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Dec. One was mobbing a White-tailed Eagle at Loch A'Phuill *Tiree* on 7 Nov.

## **ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus* Ròcas

*A resident breeder, common throughout much of Argyll, but scarce on Mull and does not breed on: Colonsay, Coll, or Tiree. There can be a post breeding influx of juveniles to some islands, e.g. Mull and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** Early records came from a wider area compared with 2015. In *Cowal* the only report was of 3 were at Innellan on 8 Jan. Higher counts elsewhere included: 50 at Toberonochy (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Jan, 42 at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 6 Jan, 80 at Beinn Chladan (Fionnphort) *Mull* on 15 Jan, 40 at Blarreen *North-Argyll* on 16 Jan, 65 at Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Jan, 57 at Appin *North Argyll* on 13 Feb, 60 at Clachan (Lismore) *North Argyll* on 20 Feb and on *Islay* 34 were at RSPB Loch Gruinart on 10 Mar, 20 at Blackpark on 13 Mar and 20 at Eilean Mhic Coinnich (Portnahaven) on 15 Mar.

**Breeding/summer** A single AON on Kerrera *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Mar was possibly the first breeding record for the island. In contrast there were 20 AONs at Toberonochy (Luing) on 28 Mar. In mainland *Mid-Argyll* Inverneill Farm had 43 AONs on 25 Mar, Ford had 18 AONs on 9 Apr and Slockavullin had 8 AONs on 16 Apr. In *North-Argyll* Tralee (Benderloch) had 25 AONs on 5 Apr. On *Islay* there were 131 AONs at RSPB Loch Gruinart, with young being fed on 13 Apr. On *Mull* up to 55 adults were on Iona from 8 May. On *Tiree* a single there on 9 May was the only record for the year, as was a single on Oronsay *Colonsay* from 14 May. Larger flocks after this time included 48 at Tralee (Benderloch) *North-Argyll* on 24 May, 20 at Ardlamont House *Cowal* on 4 Jun, 60 at Pennyghael *Mull* on 22 Jun, 25 at Cnoc Dhomhnuill (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Jun and 30 at Fionnphort *Mull* on 15 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* held 245 on 17 Sep, 45 were at Benderloch *North-Argyll* on 28 Sep, 4 at Toward *Cowal* on 25 Oct, 20 at The Oa *Islay* on 26 Nov and 200 at Killegruer (Glenbarr) *Kintyre* on 3 Dec. No records were received from *Mull* and very few from *Mid-Argyll* during this period. (See article on pages 131-138).

## **CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone* Feannag-dhubh

*A sedentary resident: mainly in east Cowal and parts of Mid-Argyll, in a variety of mainly low ground habitats. It hybridises readily with Hooded Crow where ranges overlap.*

**Winter/spring** Records from *Cowal* included 6 at Innellan on 8 Jan, 9 at Dunoon on 11 Feb, and 2 at Ardgarten on 6 May. In *Mid-Argyll* 2 were at Loch Gilp on 8 Jan, 4 at Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) on 22 Jan, 1 at Ormsary on 28 Jan, 2 at Bridgend (Kilmichael Glassary) on 16 Apr, 1 at Ardcastle Wood on 7 May. Singles were at Linndhu House *Mull* on 31 Mar, at Garvard *Colonsay* on 1 Apr and at Port Ellen *Islay* on 21 May.



**Summer/autumn/winter** In *Mid-Argyll* 3 were near Ford on 24 Jun, 1 was at Loch Nell on 1 Aug, 2 were at the Add Estuary on 14 Aug, 1 was at Blackmill Bay (Luing) from 10 Sep until 15 Oct, 2 were at Achnacraobh (Kilchrenan) on 6 Oct, singles were at Loch Avich on 12 Oct, Finchairn (Loch Awe) on 14 Oct and the Add Estuary on 26 Nov, with 2 at Lochgilphead on 28 Nov and 2 at Barsloisnoch on 24 Dec. In *North Argyll* 2 were at Port Ramsay (Lismore) on 7 Aug, whilst 1 at Kilkenneth *Tiree* on 14 Dec was the first on the island for several years.

#### **HYBRID CROW** *Corvus corone x cornix*

**Hybrids between Carrion and Hooded Crow are most prevalent where the ranges of the two species overlap. Any records are welcome as they will help to document the change in position of the hybrid zone, which is known to have moved north westwards in the past.**

Under recorded, particularly in overlap zone from *Cowal* to *Mid-Argyll*.

**Winter/spring** In *Mid-Argyll* 5 were at the head of Loch Gilp on 18 Jan, 2 at Tayvallich on 19 Jan, 6 at Barsloisnoch on 22 Jan and 1 at Ormsary on 28 Jan. A single was recorded from Port Mor *Colonsay* on 26 Mar.

**Summer/autumn** The only report was of a single at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Aug.

**Winter** In *Mid-Argyll* 4 were at Drimvore on 7 Dec and 6 were at Barsloisnoch on 24 Dec.

#### **HOODED CROW** *Corvus cornix* Feannag-ghlas

**A widespread, and very common, resident breeding species.**

**Winter/spring** Counts of 10 or more included: 12 at Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 1 Jan and 20 at Danna Isle *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Jan, 16 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Jan, 120 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 15 Jan, 89 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Jan, 10 at Sorisdale *Coll* on 20 Feb, 15 at Croe Water *Cowal* on 26 Feb, 40 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 29 Feb, 10 at Kennacraig *Kintyre* on 12 Mar, 35 on Kerrara *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Mar, 10 at Loch Scridain *Mull* on 28 Mar, 16 at Loch a' Chumhainn *Mull* on 31 Mar, 60 at Millhouse *Cowal* on 11 Apr, 12 at Bridgend (Kilmichael Glassary) *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Apr, 25 at Calgary *Mull* on 27 Apr, 12 at North Ledaig *North-Argyll* on 29 Apr and 52 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 29 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** There were very few confirmed reports of breeding. On Oronsay *Colonsay*, two nests had 4 and 5 eggs respectively on 24 Apr. On Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* for the third consecutive year the number of birds was notably lower than previous years (TIARG). On *Colonsay* (exc. Oronsay) 33 Ters. produced 23 broods and 50 young, also 2 nests failed. A family group was seen at Kilchoman *Islay* on 21 Jun, fledglings were reported on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul, a brood of 4 was at East Loch Tarbert Pier *Kintyre* on 16 Jul and fledged families were noted around *Tiree* on 31 Jul and an adult with two fully grown juveniles were at the Cruachan reservoir road *North-Argyll* on 1 Aug. A flock of 23 were at Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Counts of 20 or more included: 40 at Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 30 Aug, 20 at Balnahard *Colonsay* on 18 Sep, 33 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 7 Oct, 21 at Machir Bay *Islay* on 2 Nov, 40 at Coshandrochaid (Ulva Laggan) *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Nov, 45 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 23 Dec and 71 at Barsloisnoch (Moine Mhor) *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Dec.

#### **NORTHERN RAVEN** *Corvus corax* Fitheach

**A common resident breeding species on both the mainland and islands: large flocks may occur, especially in winter.**

**Winter/spring** Although records came from all areas, the majority were from *Islay*, with only single records from *Cowal* and *North-Argyll*. Singletons or pairs were the norm but there were 9 at The Oa *Islay* on 22 Mar, 10 at Garmony Point *Mull* on 29 Mar, 4 at Clachan Bridge *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Apr and 12 at Ulva Ferry *Mull* on 12 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** Records were again widespread, with the majority from the islands. On *Tiree* there were 8 active nests at 7 sites by 1 Mar. In *Kintyre* on Gigha 1 was ON by 25 Mar and 1 ON in Campbeltown on 30 Apr. On *Mull* at Lunga (Treshnish Isles) up to 6 were seen during the TIARG visit at end of Jun. Counts included: 10 at Loch Buie *Mull* on 5 May, 5 at The Oa *Islay* on 5 May, 14 at Balevullin *Tiree* on 30 May and 10 at Carradale Bay *Kintyre* on 16 May. Breeding data (Table 36) show that it was a successful year, with almost double the number of fledged young than in 2015.

Table 36. Outcome of monitored Common Raven territories in Argyll in 2016. NB: the table includes data for Bute, which is outwith the Argyll Recording area.

Area	Sites checked	Sites occupied	Sites where eggs laid	Sites Successful	Sites failed	Outcome unknown	Min no. young fledged	Young per successful site
Tiree	13	12	12	4	0	8	14	3.5
Colonsay	22	11	9	7	2	0	25	3.57
Islay/Jura	3	2	2	2	0	0	6	3.0
Mid-Argyll	14	13	12	8	1	3	21+	2.62+
Kintyre/Knapdale	15	15	11	7	3	1	20+	2.85+
Bute	26	14	12	12	0	0	34+	2.83+
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>120+</b>	<b>3.36**</b>

\*\* Calculated for 25 pairs (all areas) where fledged brood size accurately known

**Autumn/winter** There were records from all areas except *Jura*. While the majority of these came from the islands, *Mid-Argyll* and *Kintyre*, there was a slight increase in records from *Cowal* and *North-Argyll* compared with the early months of the year. Higher counts included: 13 at Druim Mor *Colonsay* on 7 Aug, 30 at Bloody Bay *Mull* on 13 Aug, 6 at Mull of Oa *Islay* on 13 Aug, 4 at Ardconnel *Mid-Argyll* on 5 Sep, 9 at Cornaigmore *Tiree* on 30 Aug, 22 at Ardnave Point *Islay* on 16 Sep and 13 at Rhunahaorine Point *Kintyre* on 27 Dec.

## **GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus* Crìonag-bhuidhe

**A common resident breeding species: augmented by passage migrants in spring and especially autumn but scarce on Coll and Tiree.**

**Winter/spring** Mainland records were from: *Mid-Argyll* (4) and *North Argyll* (3) whilst reports from the islands included: *Coll* (2), *Islay* (6), *Jura* (1), *Mull* (2) and *Tiree* (2). Counts included: 4 at Loch Allan *Islay* on 14 Jan, 6 at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Feb and 7 near Jura House *Jura* on 16 Mar.

**Summer/breeding** Sightings were reported from all mainland areas. There were records from all the islands including *Jura* and *Coll* where there was a report of 2 singing males on 14 May. 2 breeding Tere. were reported from Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*. Post breeding flocks of 20 birds at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 22 Jul and 30 birds near Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 24 Jul were observed.

**Autumn/winter** Counts in single figures were evident from a number of sites across *Coll*, *Colonsay*, *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, *North Argyll* and *Tiree*, with higher counts of 10 at Balephuill *Tiree* on 30 Sep, and in *Mid-Argyll*, 15 at Bellanoch on 14 Oct and 10 at Cairnbaan on 28 Oct. 1 at The Glebe, Scarinish, *Tiree* on 19 Dec was the first mid-winter record for the island.

**COMMON FIRECREST** *Regulus ignicapilla* Crìonag

*A rare migrant/visitor: 12 records between 1980 and 2015.*

No records.

**EURASIAN BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus* Cailleachag-cheann-ghorm

*A widespread and common resident breeder: an infrequent visitor to Coll and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** Reported in low numbers from many locations including: *Colonsay* (2), *Islay* (8), *Jura* (2), *Mull* (10), *Mid-Argyll* (9) and *North Argyll* (5). There was a single record from *Cowal* of 19 birds near Otter Ferry on 24 Jan.

**Summer/breeding** Reported from locations in: *Colonsay* (2), *Cowal* (3), *Islay* (4), *Kintyre* (4), *Mid-Argyll* (27), *Mull* (20) and *North Argyll* (5). At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 35 Ters. Breeding was probably widespread but there were only three records of fledged young: from *Cowal* at Otter Ferry and *Mid-Argyll* at Tayvallich and Kilmichael Glassary.

**Autumn/winter** Reported from locations in: *Colonsay* (7), *Cowal* (7), *Islay* (13), *Kintyre* (2), *Mid-Argyll* (21), *Mull* (2), *North Argyll* (3) and *Tiree* (2) with singles at Balephuill on 6 Oct and at Vaul on 15 Oct.

**GREAT TIT** *Parus major* Currac-bhaintighearna

*A widespread and common resident breeder: only an infrequent visitor to Coll and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** Reported from locations in: *Cowal* (3), *Islay* (9), *Jura* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (18), *Mull* (7), *North Argyll* (4) and a rare spring passage bird at Balephuill *Tiree* on 11-12 April. No reports from: *Coll* or *Colonsay*. Larger counts were at 11 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 24 Jan and in *Mid-Argyll* with 13 at Cairnbaan on 6 Feb and 20 at Lochgilphead on 12 Mar.

**Summer/breeding** Breeding was confirmed with sightings of fledglings from *Cowal* at Otter Ferry, *Mid-Argyll* at Tayvallich and Kilmichael Glassary and *North Argyll* at Benderloch. Records also came from locations in: *Colonsay* (4), *Cowal* (6), *Islay* (9), *Kintyre* (6), *Mid-Argyll* (29), *Mull* (12) and *North Argyll* (9). At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 15 Ters.

**Autumn/winter** Reported from locations in: *Colonsay* (4), *Cowal* (10), *Islay* (9), *Kintyre* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (16), *Mull* (3) and *North Argyll* (3), plus a singles at Roundhouse *Coll* on 11-12 Oct, at Arinagour *Coll* on 31 Oct, at Kilmoluaig *Tiree* on 9 Oct and at Vaul *Tiree* on 17-20 Oct. The only counts of 10 or more were 12 at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 24 Oct and up to 20 regularly through Dec at Otter Ferry *Cowal*.

**EUROPEAN CRESTED TIT** *Lophophanes cristatus* Gulpag-stuic

*A vagrant: two records; one near Water of Tulla, North Argyll in November 1991 and one at Tobermory, Mull in Oct to Nov 2002.*

No records.

**COAL TIT** *Periparus ater* Smutag

*A widespread and abundant resident breeder: except on Coll and Tiree. Found almost exclusively in woodland: especially conifers.*

**Winter/spring** The only records received were of a bird calling near Port Askaig *Islay* on 11 Feb, 4 at Dalvore *Mid-Argyll* on 4 May and 2 at Kenovay *Tiree* on 3-4 May.

**Summer/breeding** At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 8 Ters. Only other reports received: 2 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 27 May and 8 near Kilmartin *Mid-Argyll* on 18 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** A scarcity of reports; only from RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 9 and 12 Oct and at the Glebe, Scarinish *Tiree* on 9-24 Nov.

**WILLOW TIT** *Poecile montanus* Currac-ghiuthais

**RED LIST** *A vagrant: one record; near Water of Tulla, North Argyll on 1 Jun 1991.*

No records.

**EURASIAN SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis* Uiseag

**RED LIST** *A widespread breeding species: common in some areas. Many emigrate in winter, with remaining birds mainly in coastal and low lying localities.*

**Winter/spring** Reported from sites at *Colonsay* (5), *Islay* (23), *Mid-Argyll* (7), *Mull* (5) and *Tiree* (1) as well as at Connel Airfield *North Argyll* and Tayinloan *Kintyre*. The largest counts as usual were on *Islay* including: 113 at Killinallan on 28 Feb, 80 at Saligo on 5 Mar, 60 at Grianan on 27 Feb and 60 at RSPB Loch Gruinart on 22 Feb. Elsewhere the only count above 30 was of 36 at Oronsay *Colonsay* on 27 Feb.

**Summer/breeding** Reported from sites at: *Coll* (1), *Colonsay* (8), *Islay* (27), *Kintyre* (14), *Mid-Argyll* (11), *Mull* (31) including birds singing on Staffa, *North Argyll* (1) and *Tiree* (12). There were no records from *Cowal* or *Jura*. High counts included: 50 at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 1 May, 90 at the Glebe (Scarinish) *Tiree* on 11 May, 60 at Kilkenneth *Tiree* on 29 May and 24 at Leac Buidhe (Oronsay) *Colonsay* on 1 Jun. At least 3 males held territories on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* at the end of Jun (TIARG).

**Autumn/winter** Reported from sites at: *Coll* (1), *Colonsay* (5), *Islay* (15), *Kintyre* (2), *Mid-Argyll* (5) and *Tiree* (9). Higher counts of 40 or more included: 300 at West Park Fergus *Kintyre* on 12 Nov – the largest flock in the area for many years, 100 near the Machrie Hotel *Islay* on 17 Oct, 50 at Gartbreck *Islay* on 13 Sep, 49 at Clachan Mor *Tiree* on 1 Oct, 45 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 20 Sep, 41 at Gott Bay *Tiree* on 13 Jul, 40 at Barrapol *Tiree* on 21 Sep and 40 at Seal Cottage (Oronsay) *Colonsay* on 18 Sep.

**SHORE LARK (HORNED LARK)** *Eremophila alpestris*

*A vagrant: one record of three birds; on Islay on 18 to 19 Oct 1976.*

No records.

**GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK** *Calandrella brachydactyla*

*A vagrant: three records; one on Tiree in Aug 2008, another Tiree in Oct 2010 and one on Oronsay, Colonsay in Oct 2011.*

No records.

**SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia* Gobhlan-gainmhich

**AMBER LIST** *A summer visitor: localised breeding species and passage migrant. All breeding records required.*

**Spring** The first bird was at Gruinart Farm *Islay* on 26 Mar followed by 4 at Loch Leathan *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Mar. Birds were reported from: *Mull* on 29 Mar, *Tiree* on 2 Apr, and *Kintyre* on 4 Apr. The first large flock, over 100 birds, was at Machrihanish Bay *Kintyre* on 17 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** More than 80 pairs nested at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* with a further 45 pairs at 7 other sites on *Tiree*. Other colony counts reported included: 18 AOB at Kiloran Dunes *Colonsay*,

8 AOB at Camas Cuil an t-Saimh (Iona) *Mull*, and 21 AOB at Ledmore *Mull*. Large flocks seen in Jul included: 20 at Loch Melldalloch *Cowal*, 20 at Fionnphort *Mull*, 70 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay*, 30 at Ulva Lagoons *Mid-Argyll*, and 60 at Camas Bruaich Ruaidhe (Connel) *Mid-Argyll*.

**Autumn** On *Tiree*, up to 80 were seen at Loch a'Phuill and up to 40 at Loch an Eilein and Loch Bhasapol during Aug. Numbers quickly declined in Sep with 15 at Bowmore *Islay* on 9 Sep and 6 at Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* on 10 Sep. Two very late birds were at Ganavan *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Oct.

### **BARN SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica* Gobhlan-gaoith

***A widespread, common, summer visitor and passage migrant.***

**Spring** The first arrival was at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 22 Mar with the main arrival commencing on 28 Mar when singles were at Balvicar Bay *Mid-Argyll* and Blackrock (Loch Indaal) *Islay*. Birds reached: Bunessan *Mull* and Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 3 Apr, Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* on 8 Apr, and Dail (Loch Etive) *North Argyll* on 9 Apr. The northward passage of 12 birds in 6 hrs on 3 Apr at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* constituted a record day total for early Apr. No large flocks were reported but: 15 were at Balure (Loch Spelve) *Mull* on 14 Apr, 12 were at Ardgarten *Cowal* on 3 May, 15 were at Port Ellen *Islay* on 21 May, and 20 were at Kintra *Islay* on 27 May.

**Breeding/summer** Breeding was confirmed from: *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, *North Argyll*, and *Tiree*, where it was considered that fewer were breeding than in 2015. The first fledglings were noted at Balephuill *Tiree* on 26 Jun.

**Autumn** Post-breeding flocks started to build in Aug with 100 at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Aug, 130 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 17 Aug, 42 at Oronsay Farm *Colonsay* on 25 Aug, 59 at The Reef *Tiree* on 29 Aug, 40 at Largiemore *Cowal* on 12 Sep, 300 moving south in groups at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 15 Sep, and 35 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 26 Sep. Single figure numbers were reported in Oct from: *Colonsay*, *Islay*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, and *Tiree*. After a single at Tayinloan *Kintyre* on 9 Nov the final bird was seen at Loch Beg *Mull* on 12 Nov.

### **COMMON HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbicum* Gobhlan-taighe

**AMBER LIST A common summer visitor on the mainland: less numerous on the islands with only one recently recorded breeding attempt on Tiree.**

**Spring** The first arrival was at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 6 Apr, followed by 1 at Dail (Loch Etive) *North Argyll* on 9 Apr and 2 at Killiemore (Loch Scridain) *Mull* on 14 Apr. Two reached Corra Farm *Cowal* on 21 Apr and 15 were at Island House *Islay* on 25 Apr, but it was May before arrival was widespread. The largest flocks reported were 20 at Finlaggan *Islay* on 6 May and 20 at Druim Teamhair *Islay* on 20 May.

**Breeding/summer** Breeding was reported from: *Cowal*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, *North Argyll*, and, for only the second time, *Tiree* where a pair reared 3 young at Scarinish.

**Autumn** Ten were seen at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Aug and 6 were at Cuan Sound *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Aug. By Sep reports were in single figures from: *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, and *Tiree*. The last bird was at Kintra *Mull* on 23 Sep.

### **RED-RUMPED SWALLOW** *Cecropis daurica*

***A vagrant: two records; one at Loch Tuath, Mull on 5 Jul 2011 and one at Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree on 20 May 2014.***

No records.

### **LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus* Ciochan

***A widespread and fairly common resident: scarce on Colonsay and a rare visitor to Coll and Tiree.***

**Winter/spring** Reported from locations in: Cowal (1), Islay (2), Kintyre (1), Mid-Argyll (4), and North Argyll (2). No reports from Colonsay, Coll, Jura or Tiree. Higher counts included: 10 near Bonawe North Argyll on 8 Jan, 32 at Loch Allan Islay on 14 Jan and 15 at Kildalton Islay on 24 Feb.

**Summer/breeding** Reported from locations in: Colonsay (1), Cowal (5), Kintyre (1), Mid-Argyll (5) Mull (5) and North Argyll (1). At the Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll CBC site birds were noted as present. Higher counts included: in Cowal 16 at Otter Ferry on 11 Jun and 12 near Kilfinan on 25 Jul and in Mid-Argyll 14 birds at Cairnbaan on 21 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** Reported from locations in: Colonsay (4), Cowal (6), Islay (6), Mid-Argyll (2), Mull (2) and North Argyll (2). Reported numbers were generally in single figures but counts of 12 or more included: 14 at Ulva Mull on 13 Oct, 12 at Millhouse Cowal on 14 Oct, 12 near Cullipool (Luing) Mid-Argyll on 15 Oct, 15 at the head of Loch Creran North Argyll on 22 Oct, 15 at Colonsay House Colonsay on 22 Oct and 14 at Otter Ferry Cowal on 11 Dec.

### **‘NORTHERN’ LONG-TAILED TIT** *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*

***The nominate race of this species from Scandinavia and NE Europe occasionally occurs in late autumn in the ‘Northern’ Isles and east coast of Britain but has not previously been accepted from Argyll.***

**Autumn/winter** On 7 Nov at least 2 birds showing the distinctive pure white heads of this race were photographed in a flock of 10 Long-tailed Tits that quickly flew by the observers at Loch Beg Mull [Bryan Rains, Stephen Hiscock]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

*Record numbers of this race were recorded in eastern Britain during late autumn in 2016 after prolonged easterly winds.*

### **GREENISH WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

***A vagrant: two records; one trapped on 27 May 1983 at the Mull of Kintyre lighthouse, later taken into care and died, and one trapped at Sanda, Kintyre on 31 Jul 1987.***

No records.



**Yellow-browed Warbler** Coll October 2016 (Toby Green)

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus* Ceileiriche-buidhe  
*A rare passage migrant: at least 46 records between 1954 and 2015, the majority on Tiree. A record 12 or 13 individuals were recorded in 2013.*

**Autumn** A record showing with at least 23 birds seen between 27 Sep and 7 Nov. On *Tiree* at least 12 birds in total, with one at Carnan Mor on 27 Sep, one at Moss on 1 Oct, one at Balephuill on 6-10 Oct, another there on 7-10 Oct, another on 12 Oct, another on 17 Oct-7 Nov, another on 19-20 Oct, another on 19-29 Oct, also one at Hynish on 7 Oct, one at Heylipol church on 8-11 Oct, one at Kilmoluaig on 9 Oct, one at main road farm Balephuill on 10 Oct [John Bowler, Jim Dickson, Mark Newell, Richard Whitson *et al*]. On *Mull* 3 were at Strathcoil on 8 Oct [John Ogg]. On *Islay* one was at Port Mor on 8-9 Oct [Jonathan Platt *et al*] and one was at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 22 Oct [David Wood]. In *Mid-Argyll* one was on Kerrera on 9 Oct [per Mary Redman], one was at Ormsary on 9 Oct [Stuart Crutchfield] and one was Bellanoch (Crinan Canal) on 14-17 Oct [Colin Macfarlane, Jim Dickson *et al*]. On *Coll* one was at Uig on 17 Oct [Toby Green]. On *Colonsay* one was on Oronsay on 9-11 Oct [Morgan Vaughan] and one was heard in Colonsay House gardens on 23 Oct [David Jardine, Amy Millard, Morgan Vaughan]. All records were accepted by the ABRC. (*See list of records on pages 121-122*).

**Table 37. Yellow-browed Warbler distribution by Argyll regions**

	Pre 2006	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Tot
<b>Tiree</b>	4	0	4	2	4	3	1	3	11	3	6	12	53
<b>Coll</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Col'say</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
<b>Islay</b>	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	8
<b>Mull</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
<b>Kintyre</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
<b>Mid-Arg</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
<b>Tots</b>	7	0	4	2	4	4	1	4	13	5	6	23	<b>73</b>

**WESTERN BONELLI'S WARBLER** *Phylloscopus bonelli*

*A vagrant: one record; at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 8 Sep 2006 and confirmed as a Western.*

No records.

**BONELLI'S WARBLER (EASTERN or WESTERN)** *Phylloscopus bonelli* or *P orientalis*

*A vagrant: one record; a singing male on Islay in May 1976, was not specifically assigned to either Western or Eastern Bonelli's Warbler.*

No records.

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* Ceileiriche-coille

**RED LIST** *A scarce but widely distributed summer visitor to mature broadleaved woodlands.*

*Infrequent on Islay and Jura and only occurs as a rare passage migrant on Coll and Tiree.*

**Spring/breeding** First arrivals noted were at Kilmichael Glen *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Apr, 2 at Barcaldine *North Argyll* on 23 Apr, 4 in song at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Apr and 2 in song at Bellanoch *Mid-Argyll* on 1 May. Thereafter into May and Jun there were several reports of singing birds mainly from sites in: *Cowal* (3), *Jura* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (11), *Mull* (11) and *North Argyll* (5). Single migrants were on *Tiree* at Meningie on 11 May and at Sandaig on 16 May. No reports were received from *Islay* or *Kintyre*.

**Summer/autumn** Only one report after mid-Jun, with 2 at Ballygrant Woods *Islay* on 10 Jul.

### **COMMON CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita* Caifean

*A summer visitor and local breeding species: occasionally recorded in winter. More frequent on passage on some of the islands.*

**Spring/breeding** Early birds were noted at Balephuill *Tiree* on 14 Mar, 1 in song at Minard Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Mar, 3 at Bardrishaig (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Mar and 1 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 31 Mar, thereafter the main arrivals were from 2 Apr and singing males and territorial birds were widely reported from sites in *Coll* (1), *Colonsay* (4), *Cowal* (6), *Islay* (10), *Kintyre* (2), *Mid-Argyll* (25), *Mull* (15), *North Argyll* (3) and *Tiree* (4). Some sites held several singing males e.g. 4 at Kilmory Woods (Lochgilthead) *Mid-Argyll*. No reports were received from *Jura*.

**Autumn/winter** Reports decreased during Aug and only singles were reported at 5 sites in Sep and a max of 3 on *Tiree* on 30 Sep. Reported from 9, mostly island sites, across Argyll in Oct, with max of 4 on *Tiree* on 9 Oct. In Nov, two reports from *Islay*; at Port Charlotte on 1 Nov and at RSPB Loch Gruinart on 25 Nov.

Birds showing features of the 'Scandinavian' race *abietinus* were noted on *Tiree* at Balephuill on 28-30 Sep, 6-8 and 21 Oct, at The Glebe (Scarinish) on 9 Nov, at Vaul on 14 Nov and at Mannal on 25 Nov.

### **'SIBERIAN' CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

*A rare visitor: an eastern race of Chiffchaff, still regarded as a sub-species of Common Chiffchaff, rather than a distinct separate species. Rare in Argyll, although small numbers of this race occur during late autumn in Scotland.*

**Autumn/winter** Singles were at Balephuill *Tiree* on 7 and 23 Oct, and 3, 8-9 Dec.

### **WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus* Ceileiriche-giuthais

**AMBER LIST** *A widespread and abundant summer visitor.*

**Spring/breeding** The first arrivals were single singing males at Barr Glen *Kintyre* on 7 Apr, at Loch Beg *Mull* on 9 Apr, at Garmony *Mull* on 9 Apr, at Ormsary *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Apr, then 2 at Balephuill *Tiree* on 10 Apr and from 5 sites on *Islay* on 10 Apr. Thereafter arrivals were more numerous and widespread from 11 Apr. During May to Jun reported from sites in: *Coll* (3), *Colonsay* (5), *Cowal* (11), *Islay* (24), *Kintyre* (14), *Mid-Argyll* (53), *Mull* (62), *North Argyll* (12) and *Tiree* (11 Ters. noted at 5 sites in Jun). There were no reports received from *Jura*. At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 112 Ters. where the long term average = 90). Higher counts included 16 Ters. at Kilmichael Forest *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Apr, 20 Ters. at Corra (Otter Ferry) *Cowal* during a 2.5 hr walk on 21 Apr, 11 at Glen Strae *North Argyll* on 24 Apr, 20 at Barr Iola *Cowal* on 14 May, 25 at Loch na Gilleann *Islay* on 14 May, 12 at Lochbuie *Mull* on 15 May and 26 at Ballinamoill (Mull of Kintyre) *Kintyre* on 29 Jun.

**Summer/autumn** A spectacular 'fall' of migrant birds occurred at the Aros Moss constant ringing site (nr Campbeltown airfield) *Kintyre* on 22 Jul when ca 300-500 birds were present in a small area and 95 birds were trapped and ringed. Reports decreased during Aug and Sep and recorded from only 5 sites in Oct, all singles apart from 2 at Balephuill *Tiree* on 1 Oct and 2 at Treshnish farm *Mull* on 24 Oct with last 1 reported there on 26 Oct.

### **EURASIAN BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla* Ceann-dubh

*A scarce but increasing summer visitor and regular passage migrant especially in autumn: an increasing number winter in Argyll.*

**Winter** Only one report, a male at Kintallen (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Feb.



**Spring/breeding** The first arrival was a female at Balephuill *Tiree* on 10 Apr followed by a male there on 13 Apr, then reports of single singing males in *Mid-Argyll* at: at Arduaine Gardens on 15 Apr, at Kilmory (Lochgilhead) on 15 Apr, at Taynish NNR on 16 Apr and Bellanoch on 16 Apr. Arrivals were more numerous and widespread after 19 Apr. From late Apr until the end of Jul birds were reported from sites in *Coll* (2), *Colonsay* (9 Ters.), *Cowal* (4), *Islay* (10), *Kintyre* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (27), *Mull* (21), *North Argyll* (3) and *Tiree* (3). At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 14 Ters. (long term average = 6 Ters.). No reports were received from *Jura*. For *Tiree* reports were of migrant birds only, with a max count of 6 birds on the island on 9 May. A singing male was at Balephuill in early Jun.

**Autumn** Reports decreased during Aug with reports only from *Cowal* and *Mid-Argyll*. There were 8 reports of single birds in Sep with a max of 3 on *Tiree* on 22 Sep. Numbers increased during Oct, presumably migrant birds, with reports from 14 sites and a max count of 9 on *Tiree* on 17 Oct. Recorded from four sites in Nov, including 3 at Balephuill *Tiree* on 2 Nov with 2 there on 19 Nov and 2 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 6 Nov. Last reports were singles at Salen *Mull* on 10-11 Dec and at Scammadale *Mid-Argyll* on 22-25 Dec.

### **GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin* Ceileiriche-garaidh

*A scarce but increasing summer visitor: breeding in woodland and scrub habitats.*

**Spring/breeding** First arrivals were singing males at Ardkinglass Woodland *Cowal* and at Woodhouse (Minard) *Mid-Argyll* on 6 May, followed by a migrant at Balephuill *Tiree* on 10 May and 1 at Aros Park *Mull* on 11 May. Further migrants on *Tiree* were singles at Carnan Mor and at Balephuill on 28 May and 1 in sub-song at Balephuill on 2 Jun. A single bird was ringed in Kilmartin *Mid-Argyll* on 29 May. Singing birds were noted between 6 May and 9 Jul from sites in: *Cowal* (1), *Islay* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (7) and *Mull* (2). At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 5 Ters. (long term average = 3 Ters.). No reports were received from *Coll*, *Colonsay*, *Jura*, *Kintyre* or *North Argyll*.

**Autumn** The only reports concerned migrants with singles on *Tiree* at Carnan Mor on 17 Sep and Balephuill on 6 Oct, then a late record of 1 at Uig *Coll* on 17 Oct.

### **BARRED WARBLER** *Sylvia nisoria*

*A rare passage migrant: 17 previous records: all have been in autumn and the majority on Tiree.*

No records.

### **LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca* Gealan-coille Beag

*A rare/scarce passage migrant in both spring and autumn: most recent records have been from the islands.*

**Spring** No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc records on pages 121-122).

**Autumn** Singles were on *Tiree* at Balephuill on 3 Sep, at The Manse (Scarinish) on 10 and 17 Oct and at Heylipol on 10 Oct.

### **‘SIBERIAN’ LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca blythi*

*Recently reinstated as a race and not currently assessed. DNA analysis can be used to separate from the Central Asian race *S. c. halimodendri*. One showing characteristics of this race was at Balephuill *Tiree* in Oct 2014.*

**Autumn** Both birds on *Tiree* in Oct (see above) showed some features of this race but not conclusive on field evidence alone.

## **COMMON WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis* Gealan-coille

*A summer visitor with numbers fluctuating from year to year: breeding is most widespread in low lying areas, particularly in coastal scrub.*

**Spring/breeding** The first arrivals were single males in song at Coshandrochaid (Loch Sween) and at Loch na Cille (Keills) *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Apr with the next report not until 2 May when a singing male was at Otter Ferry *Cowal*. Thereafter reports were more widespread and numerous from 5 May from sites in: *Coll* (2), *Colonsay* (37 Ters.), *Cowal* (7), *Islay* (17 island sites with 18 Ters. at RSPB Loch Gruinart), *Kintyre* (10), *Mid-Argyll* (19), *Mull* (22), *North Argyll* (1) and *Tiree* (3). At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there was 1 Ter. (long term average = 6). No reports were received from *Jura*. Elsewhere higher site counts included: 6 singing males at Barr Iola and 8 males at Barr Lagan, both *Cowal* on 14 May and 4 males at Torr Mor *Kintyre* on 28 May.

**Autumn** Most birds had departed by mid-Aug and the last birds recorded were singles on *Tiree* at Carnan Mor on 10 Sep and at Balephuill on 12-13 Sep, also 1 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Sep.

## **SUBALPINE WARBLER** *Sylvia cantillans*

*A vagrant: one record; a bird of the 'eastern race' S. c. albiatriata was at Balephuill, Tiree on 28 May 2012.*

**Spring** One, probably a first-year male, showing features of 'western race' was in Sycamores at Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay* on 16 May [David Wood *et al*]. Record was accepted by the SBRC.

## **COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia* Ceileiriche-leumnac

**RED LIST** *A summer visitor: breeding locally in open habitats with dense ground vegetation, including young conifer plantations. Numbers fluctuate from year to year.*

**Spring/breeding** The first arrival was a singing male at Loch Laich *North Argyll* on 19 Apr followed by singles in *Mid-Argyll* at Lochgilphead meadows on 20 Apr and at Craobh Haven on 21 Apr, thereafter widespread arrivals in *Cowal*, *Islay* and *Mid-Argyll*. Singing birds were at sites in: *Colonsay* (15 Ters.), *Cowal* (2), *Islay* (13 island sites with 7 Ters. at RSPB Loch Gruinart), *Kintyre* (4), *Mid-Argyll* (15), *Mull* (7), *North Argyll* (1) and *Tiree* (4) including juvs seen at Balephuill from 9 Jul. No reports were received from *Coll* or *Jura*. At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* there were 2 Ters. (long term average = 3 Ters.).

**Autumn** There were only four reports during Aug and one report in Sep with the last record of a juv at Balephuill *Tiree* on 3 Sep.

## **BOOTED WARBLER** *Iduna caligata*

*A vagrant: two records; one at Balemartine, Tiree on 20 Sep 1998 and one at Balephetrish, Tiree on 31 Aug to 2 Sep 2006.*

No records.

## **ICTERINE WARBLER** *Hippolais icterina*

*A rare passage migrant: four records; on Islay 28 Aug 1976; at Taynuilt in Jun 1984; on Tiree in Jun 1987 and on Islay on 4 to 5 Sep 1993.*

**Spring** A singing male was in the garden of The Glebe (Scarinish) *Tiree* on the morning of 9 Jun and song recorded [Keith Gillon, John Bowler]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** *Hippolais polyglotta*

*A vagrant: two records; one at Totronald, Coll on 8 Jun 2012 and one at The Glebe, Scarinish, Tiree on 18 Sep to 4 Oct 2014.*

No records.

**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Uiseag-oidhche

*A locally common summer visitor: breeding in suitable habitats.*

*Spring/breeding* The first arrivals were singles at Claddach and at RSPB Gruinart Islay on 13 Apr, followed by singles at East Loch Fada Colonsay on 23 Apr and Coshandrochaid (Loch Sween) Mid-Argyll on 24 Apr. Thereafter arrivals were more numerous and widespread from 3 May, with singing males at sites in: Coll (1), Colonsay (widespread), Cowal (1), Islay (19), Kintyre (4), Mid-Argyll (9), Mull (14), North Argyll (3) and Tiree (widespread). Many sites held several singing birds. At the Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll long running CBC site there were 2 Ters. (long term average = 8 Ters.). No reports were received from Jura and in the other regions generally under recorded.

*Autumn* Reports decreased during Aug with very few by the end of the month and only four reports into Sep with the last singles on Tiree at Milton on 25 Sep and at Balephuill on 29 Sep.

**BLYTH'S REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

*A vagrant: two records; one at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 3 Jun 2008 and one at Balephuill, Tiree in Sep 2011.*

No records.

**MARSH WARBLER** *Acrocephalus palustris*

**RED LIST** *A rare passage migrant: three records; one at Balephuill, Tiree on 8-10 Jun 2007, one at Carnan Mor, Tiree on 28 May 2012 and one at Mannal, Tiree on 28 May 2014.*

*Spring* An elusive singing male was in the garden at The Glebe (Scarinish) Tiree on 4 Jun singing on and off from mid-day until about 9pm and gave only a brief glimpse. The song was however recorded. [Keith Gillon, John Bowler]. Record was accepted by the SBRC.

**EURASIAN REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

*A rare visitor in spring and summer: 10 records; eight from the islands and two from Aros Moss, Kintyre.*

*Spring* One was seen and photographed at Balephuill Tiree on 11 May, being four days earlier than one at the same spot last year [John Bowler]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.

*Autumn* One was seen and photographed at Balephuill Tiree on 3 and 4 Sep but was generally very elusive [John Bowler]. A very late bird was at Balephuill Tiree on 22 Oct and due to a very short wing projection was considered to be a Blyth's Reed however was later accepted by the SBRC as a Eurasian Reed, albeit with unusual features [John Bowler].

**CEDAR WAXWING** *Bombycilla cedrorum*

*A vagrant: Two records; a juvenile was at Vaul, Tiree on 21 to 29 Sep 2013 and an adult male at The Glebe, Tiree on 10 Jun 2015.*

No records.

**BOHEMIAN WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulous* Canarach-dearg

*An irruptive winter visitor in varying numbers: not seen every year but some large influxes have occurred recently.*

**Autumn/winter** First reports were 3 from *Tiree* between 20 and 23 Oct and 1 from Ballygrant *Islay* on 29 Oct. Larger numbers included: 30 at Port Askaig *Islay* on 5 Nov, 28 at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Nov, 30 at Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll* on 24 Nov, 10 at Craignure *Mull* on 30 Nov, 12 at Benmore Gardens *Cowal* on 4 Dec and 30 at Ardrishaig *Mid-Argyll* on 30 Dec.

### **EURASIAN NUTHATCH** *Sitta europaea*

**A rare but increasing visitor: currently spreading north and west in Scotland.**

**Spring/summer** 1 was at Toward Estate *Cowal* on 8 Apr. A pr seen Apr-May at Stronafian (nr Glendaruel) *Cowal* seen carrying food and presumed breeding nearby. 1 m calling at Ardkinglass gardens *Cowal* on 6 May. 1 was at Barcaldine House *North Argyll* on 27 to 28 Jun with 2 there on 2 Jul, 3 on 18 Jul, 1 on 18 to 30 Jul. 1 m was calling at Dalmally *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Jul. 1 was at Corra (Otter Ferry) *Cowal* on 17 Jul. 1 was at Manse Brae/Cuilarstich Burn (Lochgilphead) *Mid-Argyll* on 24 and 27 Jul and perhaps the same bird heard calling nearby at Whitegates (Lochgilphead) *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Jul.

**Breeding** There were no confirmed reports of breeding although suspected.

**Autumn/winter** 1 was at Blaitintibberth (Bellanoch) *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Aug. 1 was at Strone (Holy Loch) *Cowal* on 23 Aug. 1 was at Ford *Mid-Argyll* on 3 Sep. 1 was at Corra (Otter Ferry) *Cowal* on 4 and 17 Sep with this or another nearby at North Lodge *Cowal* on 5 Sep. 1 was at Benmore gardens *Cowal* on 5 Sep. 1 was at Arrochar *Cowal* on 11 Sep with 2 there on 13 Sep. 1 was at Taynuilt *Mid-Argyll* on 19 Sep. 2 were at Inveraray Castle *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Sep. Up to 5 were at Barcaldine House *North Argyll* on 7 Sep then 1 on 20 Sep, 30 Sep and last 1 there on 3 Oct. 1 was at Kinlochlaich farm *North Argyll* on 21 Sep. 1 was at Maymore (Glendaruel) *Cowal* on 25 Sep. 1 was at Balindore (Taynuilt) *North Argyll* on 7 -10 Oct and 4 Dec. 1 was at Inverawe House *North Argyll* on 17 Oct.

*This is our best series of records to date and indicates expansion is gathering pace.*

### **EURASIAN TREECREEPER** *Certhia familiaris* Snaigear

**A widespread and fairly common resident: rare on Tiree and Coll.**

**Winter/spring** Single birds or pairs were recorded from sites at: *Colonsay* (1), *Cowal* (3), *Islay* (9), *Kintyre* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (4), *Mull* (1) and *North-Argyll* (2).

**Summer/breeding** At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 5 Ters. At Colonsay House gardens *Colonsay* 6 Ters. were found during a survey on 25 Apr. Possible breeding was reported from: Coshandrochaid (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* with a pair seen entering the eaves of a ruined cottage on 20 Mar, Achamore (Gigha) *Kintyre* with a singing male on 23 Mar. Other records were from sites in *Islay* (3), *Kintyre* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (7), *Mull* (10) and *North Argyll* (3). There were no records from *Coll*, *Jura* or *Tiree*.

**Autumn/winter** Single birds were seen on *Coll* on 15 and 16 Oct, and other reports received from sites in: *Colonsay* (1), *Islay* (7), *Mid-Argyll* (5) and *North Argyll* (2).

### **WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes* Dreathann-donn

**A common resident breeder in all areas: numbers often decline following hard winters; additional birds winter on the islands.**

Birds were probably widespread and numerous in all recording areas, although not always reported for all areas throughout the year.

**Breeding** At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 56 Ters. and at least 15 Ters. were established on the Treshnish Isles *Mull*. An increase in probable breeding was recorded on *Tiree* with 21 singing males in 11 Ters. observed between 1 and 31 May.

Records of fledged young included: Iona *Mull* on 4 Jun, Treshnish Isles *Mull* on 29 Jun, and on *Tiree* at Balephuill and Carnan Mor on 6 Jul.

### **COMMON STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris* Druid

**RED LIST** A *common resident on: Coll, Islay, part of Kintyre, and Tiree: less common on most of the mainland. Flocks containing juveniles appear in many parts in late summer and numbers are boosted by immigration in winter from north-west Europe.*

**Winter/spring** Reported from all areas. There were no mainland records of larger flocks (100 or over) but they were widespread on the islands. On *Colonsay* the Oronsay flock was 100 on 8 Feb and a similar number sighted at Port Mor on 26 Mar. On *Islay* 210 were recorded at Loch Gruinart on 15 Jan, 105 at the Oa on 18 Jan and 280 at Ardnave on 20 Jan. In *Mid-Argyll* 130 birds were at Toberonochy (Luing) on 4 Jan and on *Mull* a flock of 150 was at Fidden on 15 Jan. On *Tiree* 400 were at The Reef on 7 Jan, 900 at Loch an Eilein on 5 Feb and 600 at Middleton on 9 Feb. At Ardyne Point *Cowal*, 80 birds on 10 Feb was the biggest mainland flock reported.

**Breeding/summer** From Apr to Jun breeding birds were widely reported from all areas. Fledged starlings emerging from nest boxes intended for swifts were reported from Kilmichael Glassary *Mid-Argyll* on 8 May followed by a second brood on 16 Jun. A flock of 20 including adults feeding juveniles was noted at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 18 May and 2 nests with young were seen at Oronsay Farm *Colonsay* on 21 May. Following the first fledgling seen on 25 May the mass fledging across *Tiree* started on 26 May. By 8 Jun the number of juvs foraging for kelp fly at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* had reached 30 increasing to 55 on 19 Jun. From early Jul, flocks of adults with juvs built up widely with the largest aggregations on *Tiree* with 1,750 at Ruaig on 31 Jul and 900 at Heylipol on 28 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** Moderate flocks of up to 100 birds in autumn were recorded from all areas except *Coll, Jura* and *North Argyll*. From Sep onwards some substantial flocks built up, mainly on the islands, with some notable examples: on *Islay* with 600 were at Kilchoman on 9 Sep, 500 at Loch Gruinart on 14 Sep and 800 on 19 Sep, 500 at Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 17 Sep and 600 at Balephuill *Tiree* on 9 Oct. *Tiree* numbers remained high until the end of the year with 1,200 at Balephetrish on 13 Dec. On the mainland the largest recorded flock was in *Kintyre* with flocks in the Machrihanish/Drumlemble area exceeding 1,000.

### **ROSY STARLING** (ROSE-COLOURED STARLING) *Sturnus roseus* Druid-dhear

*A rare summer and autumn visitor: has occurred more frequently in recent years.*

No records.

### **WHITE-THROATED DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus* Gobha –uisge

**AMBER LIST** A *widespread resident breeder but scarce on Islay and generally absent from: Coll, Colonsay and Tiree.*

**Winter/spring** All reports related to 1-2 birds, from sites in *Mid-Argyll* (7), *Cowal* (4), *Mull* (4), *Islay* (7) and *North Argyll* (3).

**Breeding** Birds were present at sites suitable habitat: in *Cowal* (2), *Islay* (2), *Mid-Argyll* (6), *Mull* (4) and *North Argyll* (2). The only nesting data received was of a clutch of 5 at Slockavullin *Mid-Argyll* on 8 May.

**Autumn/winter** Most reports were of 1-2 birds spread throughout Argyll (including *Kintyre*), with sightings of 4 together at Otter House (Kilfinan) *Cowal* in Sep and 5 from Bridgend *Islay* in Nov; reports from *Cowal* suggest sightings from areas where not normally seen.

## **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** *Catharus ustulatus*

*A transatlantic vagrant more or less annual in Scotland in autumn. No previous Argyll records.*

**Autumn** A first-winter bird was found in the undergrowth of a garden at Balephuill *Tiree* on the morning of 22 Sep. The bird became more elusive as the day went on and only very brief views were obtained the following day [John Bowler, Jim Dickson *et al*]. Record was accepted by the BBRC and now becomes a new species for Argyll. (*See article on pages 141-142*).

## **RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus* Dubh-chreige

**RED LIST** *A summer visitor; breeding very locally in upland areas but declining in numbers: more widespread, though still very scarce, on migration. All records required please.*

**Spring** Only two reports: a bird alarm calling at Lochan Add *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Mar and 1 at Lochbuie *Mull* on 2 May.

**Breeding/summer** Birds were reported from four likely breeding areas: at Ben Lui *Mid-Argyll* at Ben an Dothiadh, Beinn n' Chochuill and Ben Cruachan all *North Argyll*. A female at Salen Bay *Mull* on the 28 Jun may refer to a migrant bird. Most Argyll breeding pairs are likely to be in highland glens of *North Argyll* and any future records would be valuable to monitor this decreasing breeding species.

**Autumn** Single first year birds were at Scammadale Glen *Mid-Argyll* on 1 Oct and 3 probably different birds on *Tiree* between 17-20 Oct.

## **COMMON BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula* Lon-dubh

*A widespread breeding species: common and locally abundant resident. There is immigration in winter and noticeable autumn passage in some years with some remaining during winter.*

**Winter/spring** In late winter birds were widely reported in small numbers from all areas. Only counts of 10 or more was 15 at Dunollie *Mid-Argyll*. First nest building was reported in mid-Mar and eggs (C4) in early Apr with a half grown brood by mid-Apr. A male present in Connel *Mid-Argyll* from 2015 to 8 Feb had been ringed in Stavanger, Norway on 15 Apr 2013.

**Summer/breeding** Birds were noted breeding from all areas of Argyll. The first fledglings would appear to have been in Apr with a second clutch (3 eggs) noted on the 2 May the next fledgling noted was on 25 May from *Tiree*. No notable flocks were recorded.

**Autumn/winter** Throughout this period birds were widely reported in small numbers. Groups of 10 or more included: 15 at Scarinish *Tiree* and 20 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* both on the 24 Oct, 40 at Cairnban *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Oct and 80 recorded there on the 28 Oct and 25 were at Balephuill *Tiree* on 7 Nov.

## **FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris* Liath-thruisg

**RED LIST** *A passage migrant and winter visitor: abundant in autumn but relatively few remain in winter or pass through in spring*

**Winter/spring** Widely reported in low numbers however 13 reports of 50 or more birds (*cf* 3 in 2015). Flocks of over 100 included: 135 at Culbuie *Islay* on 7 Jan, 120 Gobagrennan *Kintyre* and 60 Peninver *Kintyre* on 20 Feb; 100 Carnduncan *Islay* on 25 Feb, 595 at Blackpark *Islay* on the 20 Mar and 250 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 3 Apr. The last 2 were at Loch nan Cadhan *Islay* on 14 Apr.

**Autumn/winter** The first reports were of low numbers in early Oct, with records scattered from *North Argyll* to *Tiree*. A further 50 reports from late Oct included 11 flocks of 100 or more birds and notable arrivals from late Oct including: 150 in two flocks (with Redwings) at Ardnaskie *Mid-Argyll* and 160 at Evanachan *Cowal* on the 19 Oct, 100 at Treshnish *Mull* on 21 Oct, 350 at

Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on the 22 Oct, 300 at Treshnish *Mull* on 24 Oct, 300 at Mishnish Lochs *Mull* on the 25 Oct, 300 were at Sanigmore *Islay* on 25 Oct and 260 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Oct. Large numbers continued with waves of birds all day on the 26 Oct passing over Kintallan (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll*, 1,250 passed over Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Oct, with 4,000 passing west there the next day in just two hours and 300 were at Traigh na Luig *Islay* on the 2 Nov. Passage was concentrated in *Mid-Argyll* and on *Islay*. Some of these flocks contained other thrush species, particularly Redwings.



**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* September 2016 (Jim Dickson)

### **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos* Smeòrach

**RED LIST A** *widespread and common resident breeding species with some locally bred birds departing in the autumn. There is a noticeable autumn passage, with other birds arriving for the winter.*

**Winter/spring** Widely reported in low numbers. Larger flocks included: 20 on Gigha *Kintyre* on the 14 Feb and 17 at Coshandrochaid *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Mar.

**Summer/breeding** There were over 250 records of breeding or presumed breeding birds across all areas of Argyll. A bird was heard singing whose imitation included an Osprey alarm call. The first fledged young were noted on *Tiree* on 28 Apr where 20-30 singing males were recorded. 8 Ters were recorded at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*. Highest count was of 20 at Kilchoman *Islay* on 31 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Reported in only low numbers. A max of 8 at Sorobaidh Bay *Tiree* on 15 Oct and 6 at Vaul *Tiree* included a brightly coloured migrant bird on 5 Nov.

### **REDWING** *Turdus iliacus* Sgiath-dhearg

**RED LIST A** *passage migrant and winter visitor: abundant in autumn but relatively few remain during winter. Occasional individuals are recorded in late spring or summer. The species bred on Mull in 1991 but there have been no subsequent breeding records.*

**Winter/spring** There were regular reports during Jan to Apr with 14 records of 50 or more birds and flocks with 100 or more included: 118 at Brackley *Kintyre* on 18 Jan, 500 around *Tiree* on

20 Jan and 300 there on 16-17 Feb, 100 at Bridgend *Islay* on the 3 Mar, a fall of ca 200 at Balephuill *Tiree* on the 11 Mar, 200 at Redhouses *Islay* on 27 Mar and 200 at Stroneskar *Mid-Argyll* 28 Mar. Late spring records involved small numbers in early May from *Tiree*, *Islay* and Lunga *Mid-Argyll* with the last 6 birds at Port na Birlinne *Mull* on 7 May.

**Autumn/winter** The first arrival was a very early single bird at Barrapol *Tiree* on 30 Aug with the next 6 at Carnan Mor *Tiree* on 27 Sept followed by more widespread arrivals during Oct. Main arrivals occurred from mid-Oct when flocks over 200 birds included: 342 around *Tiree* on the 19 Oct, 667 at Loch Clach a' Bhuaile (Kilchoman) *Islay* 23 Oct, 300 at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Oct, with some 7,000 birds heading west in two hours over Knapdale forest (Cairnbaan) *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Oct and 700 at Balephuill *Tiree* on 29 Oct. These birds were part of a large movement including Fieldfare, possibly heading SW to Ireland. Smaller numbers were noted thereafter with *Tiree* holding 4-500 birds for the rest of the winter.

### **MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus* Smeòrach-mhòr

**RED LIST A** *widespread but thinly distributed resident breeding species. On Coll and Tiree it is only an occasional visitor. Flocks are sometimes seen on passage.*

**Winter/spring** During Jan to Feb, reports of 5 or more birds included: 10 at Inion *North Argyll* on 8 Jan, 6 at Cnoc Dhomhnuill (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 23 Jan Feb and 6 at Strachur *Cowal* on the 20 Feb. Birds were noted in all areas except *Coll*. 1 was at West Hynish *Tiree* on the 13 Feb.

**Breeding/summer** Pairs were noted and Ters. held at sites in: *Colonsay* (6), *Cowal* (8), *Islay* (9), *Kintyre* (5), *Mid-Argyll* (12) *Mull* (14) and *North Argyll* (4). The first singing was reported on 24 Jan and presumed breeding from Feb. Higher counts included: 11 at Milbuie *Colonsay* on 28 Jun and 25 at Barravullin *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** Numbers remained small with higher counts including: 13 at Danes Leap *Cowal* on 6 Sep, 14 at Glen Aros *Mull* on 30 Sep and 10 at Ardlarach (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Oct. 1 was at The Glebe *Tiree* on 9 Nov.



**Spotted Flycatcher** *Mid-Argyll* June 2016 (Morag Rea)

### **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata* Breacan-glas-sgiobalta

**RED LIST A** *summer visitor breeding widely, but sparsely, in mature woodlands; particularly where there are gaps in the canopy or along edges. Regular passage migrant on the islands.*

**Spring** The first arrivals were noted at Garmony *Mull* on 30 Apr, at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, Torosay Castle *Mull* and Grasspoint *Mull* on 7 May, and at Ardnave *Islay* on 8 May. There was an obvious arrival on 9 May with 5 at Balephuill and 1 at Scarinish on *Tiree*, plus 1 at Treshnish



Farm and 2 at Craignure on *Mull*. Birds were more widespread in the rest of May with additional records from sites on *Colonsay* (1), *Islay* (6), *Kintyre* (4), *Mid-Argyll* (7), *Mull* (8), *North Argyll* (1) and *Tiree* (2).

**Breeding/summer** Possible, probable or confirmed breeding birds were recorded in Jun-Aug from sites in: *Colonsay* (3), *Kintyre* (4), *Islay* (3) including 3 pairs at RSPB Loch Gruinart, *Mid-Argyll* (20), *Mull* (4) and *North Argyll* (4). At the Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* long running CBC site there were 4 Ters, the highest total there since 2002, whereas at Ben Cruachan *North Argyll* only 1 bird was noted on 9 Jun and no breeding was confirmed for the first time since 2012. 4 passage birds were recorded on *Tiree* in Jun with the last at Balephuill on 13 Jun. There were no records from *Coll*. A nest at Kilmartin *Mid-Argyll* contained 5 eggs on 29 May, adults were observed feeding young at Kintallan (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 12-22 Jun, whilst fledglings were noted at Kilmartin *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Jul, at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Jul, at Bridgend (Kilmichael Glassary) *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Jul, at Barcaldine *North Argyll* on 25 Jul and at Slockavullin *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Aug.

**Autumn** There were just 2 autumn passage birds noted: 1 was at Treshnish Farm *Mull* on 13 Sep and a late bird was at Scarinish *Tiree* on 20 Oct.

**2015.** A report missed in ABR 27 concerned one just N of Port Ellen *Islay* on 22 Apr and is the earliest ever report for Argyll (previous earliest was on 28 Apr).

## EUROPEAN ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula* Brù-dhearg

**A widespread and common resident breeder: a migrant only on Tiree. Small numbers now breed regularly on Coll. Autumn passage is noticeable on the islands with many migrants over-wintering.**

**Winter/spring** In late winter, birds were widespread in all areas but the highest counts were of an estimated 20 at Balvicar (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 26 Feb. Migrants were at Balephuill *Tiree* on 24-28 Apr and 7-9 May but no birds were present on *Tiree* in the breeding season.

**Breeding/summer** Records of possible to confirmed breeding were from sites in: *Coll* (4), *Colonsay* (5), *Islay* (10), *Kintyre* (8), *Mid-Argyll* (22) including 19 territories at the Taynish NNR CBC site, *Mull* (46), and *North Argyll* (8), the latter including a high total of 7 singing males at the Cruachan Power Station study site on 12 May. One bird was collecting food for young in the nest at Corra Farm (Otter Ferry) *Cowal* on 2 May and the first fledgling was seen at Kintallen (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 21 May. A fledged juv at Heanish *Tiree* on 2 Jun and then at Balephuill *Tiree* from 24 Jun had possibly come from *Coll*.

**Autumn/winter** Birds were widespread in all areas in winter. Apart from the lone summering juv at Balephuill, the first returning passage bird on *Tiree* was at The Glebe (Scarinish) on 28 Aug with high counts of 10 at Balephuill on 18 Sep and 13 at Balemartine/Mannal on 19 Oct. Elsewhere, high counts included 6 at Arrochar *Cowal* on 9 Oct, 5 at Dorlin Point (Loch Avich) *Mid-Argyll* on 12 Oct and 6 at Bridgend Hide *Islay* on 27 Oct.

## COMMON NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos* Spideag

**RED LIST A vagrant: four records; one on Islay in April 1973; one at West Loch Tarbert, Kintyre in May 1989; one at Balephuill, Tiree on 2 May 2004 and one at Vaul, Tiree on 8 Sep 2011.**

No records.

### **BLUETHROAT** *Luscinia svecica*

*A rare passage migrant: five records; a female in Kintyre in May 1975; and males of the red-spotted race 'svecica' on Coll in 1994, on Colonsay in 2009 and on Tiree in 2009; also a first-winter on Tiree in Oct 2010.*

No records.

### **RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula parva*

*A rare passage migrant: ten records; on Islay in Nov 1974 and Oct 1975, Colonsay and Gigha in 2010, two singles on Tiree in Oct 2012, and two in Jun and two Sep/Oct on Tiree in 2014.*

*Autumn* A first-winter was at Balephuill Tiree on 22 Oct [John Bowler]. Record was accepted by the ABRC.

### **COLLARED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula albicollis*

*A vagrant: an adult male was at Carnan Mor Tiree on 27 May 2014.*

No records.

### **EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca* Breacan-glas

**RED LIST** *A scarce summer visitor and passage migrant breeding very locally in oak woods in parts of the mainland and possibly Mull. An increase in the breeding population in the 1990s-2000s was attributable to the Argyll Bird Club nest-box scheme but numbers have since declined; possibly due to Pine Marten predation of boxes, with no confirmed breeding records in recent years. Rare but near-annual on passage on the islands, especially Tiree.*

*Spring* The first report was of a male at Knock Mull on 21 Apr, then 1 at Kilmarnock Hill Cowal on 6-10 May and a male next to the road at Scarinish Tiree on 7 May.

*Breeding* No records.

*Autumn* A nice run of autumn passage records came from Tiree including single first-winters at Carnan Mor on 24 Aug and 10-12 Sep, and 2 different first-winters at Balephuill on 4 Sep and 9-13 Sep.

### **BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochuros* Ceann-dubhan

**RED LIST** *A less than annual passage migrant: most records have been in spring (late Mar to May) or late autumn (Oct to mid-Nov).*

No records.

### **COMMON REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Ceann-dearg

**AMBER LIST** *A summer visitor: locally common in open woodland. It is a scarce passage migrant on: Coll, Colonsay, Islay and Tiree.*

*Spring* First arrivals were at Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll on 16 Apr, at Crinan Mid-Argyll on 20 Apr, at Drimfern Mid-Argyll on 23 Apr and at Loch Buie Mull on 30 Apr. These were followed by records at Ardencaple House (Seil) Mid-Argyll on 5 May, at Dalvore Mid-Argyll on 6 May, at Fearnoch (Taynuilt) Mid-Argyll on 7 May, Loch Tulla North Argyll on 8 May and Loch Gruinart Islay on 9 May.

*Breeding/summer* Birds were fairly widespread at likely breeding locations in May-Jun with records from 1 site on Islay, 5 sites in Mid-Argyll, 3 sites on Mull and 3 sites in North Argyll. A high total of 12 Ters. was recorded in the CBC plots at Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll (long term average = 7 Ters), the same as in 2015. Birds were still present at the head of Linn Mhuirich Mid-Argyll on 22 Jun but there were no confirmed breeding records.

**Autumn** Only two reports: a female or juvenile at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Aug and an first-winter male at Carnan Mor *Tiree* on 24-27 Sep.

**BLUE ROCK THRUSH** *Monticola solitarius*

*A vagrant: one record; a first summer male present at Skerryvore, Tiree on 4 to 7 Jun 1985 and found dead on 8 Jun. Accepted as the first record of a genuinely wild bird in Britain.*

No records.

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra* Gocan

**RED LIST** *A sparse but widespread, summer visitor*

**Spring** Arrivals were later than in 2015, with the first at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 20 Apr, followed by birds at Croig *Mull* on 24 Apr, at Loch Tallant *Islay* on 25 Apr, at Drimvore *Mid-Argyll* on 26 Apr, at Lochdon *Mull* on 29 Apr and at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 30 Apr. Elsewhere, by the end of May, further records had also been received from additional sites in: *Cowal* (1), *Islay* (12), *Mid-Argyll* (4), *Mull* (7) and *North Argyll* (1) but none from *Kintyre*, *Colonsay* or *Coll*. A female at Meningie *Tiree* on 12 Jun must have been a late passage bird.

**Breeding/summer** At least 9 Ters. in the Moine Mhor area *Mid-Argyll* on 24 May (down on previous years). Confirmed breeding was recorded at Loch Spelve *Mull* where fledged young were seen on 2 Jul, at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* where juvs were seen at 3 sites on 9 Jul, at Rowanfield *Mid-Argyll* where a pair had 2 juvs on 17 Jul and a family party was seen at Dervaig *Mull* on 20 Jul, whilst 3 juvs at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 8 Aug were probably of local origin. Possible or probable breeding was recorded at further sites in: *Colonsay* (1), *Cowal* (1), *Islay* (5) including 7 pairs at RSPB Loch Gruinart, *Mid-Argyll* (4), *Mull* (7) and *North Argyll* (4).

**Autumn** Small numbers of birds were seen in Aug at the Add Estuary and Crinan Ferry *Mid-Argyll*, at Oronsay airstrip *Colonsay* and at Smaull *Islay*, whilst singles were at Craigens (Loch Gruinart) *Islay* on 10 and 19 Sep and 2 were at Auchnaskeioch *Cowal* on 22 Sep with 1 nearby at Drum Cottage on the same day. The last birds of the year were at Totornald RSPB *Coll* on 20 Oct, at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 21 Oct and at Iona *Mull* on 26 Oct.

**EUROPEAN STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquatus* Clacharan

*A widespread resident, but some leave breeding areas during winter. Numbers can decline dramatically after severe winters.*

**Winter/spring** To the end of Mar, single birds and pairs were noted at sites in: *Coll* (3), *Colonsay* (2), *Cowal* (1), *Islay* (8), *Jura* (3), *Mid-Argyll* (6), *Mull* (3), *North Argyll* (1) and *Tiree* (3). There were no records from *Kintyre*.

**Breeding/summer** Presumed breeding pairs were recorded at sites in: *Coll* (4), *Colonsay* (34 Ters.), *Cowal* (3), *Islay* (23) including 18 pairs at RSPB Loch Gruinart, *Kintyre* (9), *Mid-Argyll* (15), *Mull* (17), *North Argyll* (4) and *Tiree* (5+ sites involving 7+ pairs). The first fledglings were noted on 20 May at Balephuill *Tiree*, with successful breeding also noted elsewhere on *Tiree*. Successful broods were also noted at Dubh Loch (Duachy) *Mid-Argyll* on 27 May, at Kilchoman *Islay* on 18 Jun, at Ardencaple House (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 7 Jul, on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul, at Ulva Lagoons *Mid-Argyll* on 17 Jul and at Ben Cruachan *North Argyll* on 1 Aug. At least 4 families totalling 16 birds were noted between Drimvore and Crinan Ferry (Moine Mhor) *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul. 16 were counted at Crinan Ferry *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Aug and 12 were at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Aug.

**Autumn/winter** From Oct to Dec birds were recorded at sites in: *Coll* (1), *Colonsay* (4), *Cowal* (7), *Islay* (24), *Jura* (1), *Kintyre* (2), *Mid-Argyll* (4), *Mull* (2), *North Argyll* (2) and *Tiree*

(scattered singles and pairs around the island). There were no unusually high counts with the highest being of 12 birds at Cnoc Carrach (The Oa) *Islay* on 17 Oct.

## **NORTHERN WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe* Brù-gheal

***A common summer visitor; and passage migrant.***

**Spring** First arrivals were later than in 2015, with the very first at Haunn *Mull* on 21 Mar, followed by birds at Calgary *Mull* on 22 Mar, at Loch Spelve *Mull* on 24 Mar, at Lochbuie *Mull* on 27 Mar, at Cnoc Corr *Colonsay* and Carsaig Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 27 Mar, at Lower Killean *Islay* on 29 Mar and at Iona *Mull* on 30 Mar. Birds were noted more generally thereafter to the end of Apr at sites in: Oronsay *Colonsay* (5), *Colonsay* (2), *Cowal* (5), *Islay* (8), *Kintyre* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (17), *Mull* (9), *North Argyll* (2) and *Tiree* (6). Higher counts were: 43 at Strone Farm *Cowal* on 29 Apr with 41 at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on the same date and 55 Dunadd to Dalvore (Moine Mhor) on 1 May, 24 at Corra Farm (Otter Ferry) *Cowal* on 21 Apr, 16 at Dhiseig *Mull* on 14 Apr and 12 at Campbeltown *Kintyre* on 14 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** From May to end Aug records of possible/probable breeders were noted at sites in: *Coll* (2), *Colonsay* (7), *Cowal* (4), *Islay* (16), *Kintyre* (9), *Mid-Argyll* (16), *Mull* (46), *North Argyll* (3) and *Tiree* (9). Numbers increased at Ben Cruachan *North Argyll* to 8 breeding pairs from 5 pairs in 2013-15. The first fledged young were noted at Ceann a' Mhara *Tiree* on 17 Jun and successful breeding was widespread on the island. Elsewhere fledged birds were noted at Loch Sween *Mid-Argyll* on 25 Jun, at Saulmore near Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Jun, on Luing *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul and on Lunga *Mull* at the end of Jun (TIARG). 3 family parties were noted at Ben Cruachan *North Argyll* on 1 Aug and a juv was at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Aug.

**Autumn** Only small numbers (7 or less) were seen in Sep-mid Oct at sites in: *Colonsay* (3), *Cowal* (3), *Islay* (12), *Mid-Argyll* (2) and *Mull* (3). The last of the year was at Ardnave *Islay* on 24 Oct.

## **'GREENLAND' WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe. o. leucorhoa*

***A scarce passage migrant: probably under-recorded.***

**Spring** The first of spring were early at Kilchiaran *Islay* and Risabus (The Oa) *Islay* both on 25 Mar, followed by scattered records of 1-4 birds at 16 sites around *Islay* on 28 Mar to 30 Apr including a flock of 50 reported from Smaull Farm on 20 Mar. Elsewhere 1 was a Treshnish Farm *Mull* on 24 Apr and there were singles at 4 sites on *Tiree* on 1-10 May, with the last of the spring at Knockangle Point *Islay* on 31 May.

**Autumn** A very early autumn bird was reported at Kilchoman *Islay* on 6 Jul and 20 were reported from Killinallan *Islay* on 25 Jul. More typical arrivals were of 1 at Ardlarach *Islay* on 28 Aug and 2 at The Reef *Tiree* on 29 Aug. There were then regular sightings around *Tiree* throughout Sep-Oct including peaks of 24 around the island on 5 Sep and of 45 on 12 Sep, with the last at Mannal on 30 Oct. Elsewhere there were 2 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Sep, 8 at Langamull *Mull* on 14 Sep, 1 at Eilean Dubh *Colonsay* on 23 Oct, plus reports of 1-12 birds at 15 sites on *Islay* including 12 at Loch Gruinart on 10 Sep, and at 4 sites in *Kintyre* with regular reports of 1-14 birds from Machrihanish SBO, plus a high count there of 30 on 5 Sep and a late bird there on 30 Oct.

## **ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe isabellina*

***A vagrant from SE Greece to Turkey and eastwards with no previous Argyll records.***

**Autumn/winter** A first-winter bird was found just inland of Machir Bay *Islay* on 27 Nov to 3 Dec and presumably this was the same bird seen in this area on 23 Nov [G Turnbull, M

Peacock, P Roberts, J Dickson *et al*]. Record was accepted by the BBRC and becomes the first record for Argyll and only the 9th in Scotland. (See article on pages 142-144).

**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis* Gealbhoonn-nam-preas

**AMBER LIST A** *widespread resident breeder although nowhere numerous. It is scarce on Coll and Jura and does not breed on Tiree. Recent observations would suggest that birds are quite frequent in pre-thicket/thicket conifer plantations as well as in more traditional habitats. Increased numbers in autumn presumably relate to migrants.*

**Winter** To the end of Mar 1-5 birds were reported from all areas. Largest numbers were not necessarily flocks, but counts in an area. First song noted on 8 Mar at Ra Chreag (Glen Lochy) Mid-Argyll.

**Breeding** Birds were recorded in all areas except *Jura*, and probably bred in all areas except *Tiree*. Confirmed breeding in Mid-Argyll included a nest with 4 young at Kilmartin on 14 May, fledged young at Kintallen Mid-Argyll on 21 May and 2 adults with 2 juvs at Cairnbaan Mid-Argyll on 23 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** From Aug-Dec 1-6 birds were reported from all areas except *Kintyre, Jura and Mull*.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus* Gealbhoonn

**RED LIST A** *resident breeding bird commonly associated with human habitation. Distribution is rather localised in sparsely inhabited areas. Larger flocks gather in late summer and autumn where traditional agriculture persists.*

**Winter/spring** There were reports from all areas except *North Argyll and Kintyre*. Flocks of over 20 were noted for Mid-Argyll, *Islay, Colonsay, Coll and Tiree*. The RSPB Garden Birdwatch on 31 Jan prompted several useful counts including 32 at Bridgend Mid-Argyll and 25 at Octomore (Port Charlotte) *Islay*. Meanwhile on *Tiree* there were up to 20 at Balephetrish and up to 40 at Balephuill during Jan. At Oronsay Farm *Colonsay* numbers peaked at 24 on 8 Feb. Elsewhere, there were 20 on Danna (Loch Sween) Mid-Argyll on 1 Jan, 20 in Arinagour *Coll* on 18 Feb, 20 in Balvicar (Seil) Mid-Argyll on 20 Mar, and 35 in Skipness *Kintyre* on 14 Mar.

**Summer/breeding** Reported from all areas except *Coll and Jura*. First fledglings reported were 2 at Bridgend Mid-Argyll on 25 Apr, followed by 2 at Balephuill *Tiree* on 9 May, then 5 at Connell Mid-Argyll on 11 May and 4 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 23 May. Thereafter post-breeding flocks began to build, with 30 at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 3 May, 50 at Lochan Ceann a Choin (nr Ford) Mid-Argyll, and 60 at Ruaig *Tiree* on 23 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** Reported from Aug onwards from all areas except *Jura*. Two late fledglings were seen at Balephuill *Tiree* on 28 Aug. The largest flock was 101 in Bridgend Mid-Argyll on 7 Aug. Other sightings of 50 or more included: 80 at Drumblembie *Kintyre* on 16 Aug, 50 at Octofad (Port Charlotte) *Islay* on 19 Sept, and 50 at Ruaig *Tiree* on 2 Oct.

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus* Gealbhoonn-nan-craobh

**RED LIST** *Nowadays mostly a very scarce migrant but after a gap of nearly 30 years breeding was recorded on Islay in 2009.*

**Spring/summer** 1 was at Baugh *Tiree* on 28 Apr to 2 May. 1 was at Ardtun (Bunessan) *Mull* on 17 May. 1 was at Scoor (SE of Loch Assapol) *Mull* on 18 May. 1 was at Kirkapol *Tiree* on 9 Jun.

**Autumn** 1 was at Achadunan (head of Loch Fyne) Mid-Argyll on 17 Sep.

**WESTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava flavissima* Breacan-buidh  
**RED LIST** *A scarce passage migrant: birds of the Blue-headed race M. f. flava occur from time to time, and there have been at least two records of the Grey-headed race M. f. thunbergi (in 1985 and 2005).*  
No records.

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola*  
*A vagrant: one record; a first-winter bird was at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 27 to 29 Sep 2012.*  
No records.

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea* Breacan-baintighearna  
**RED LIST** *Widespread resident breeding species, although does not breed on Tiree and Coll; some emigration in winter.*  
**Winter/spring** Singles were recorded in *Islay* and *North Argyll* in Jan and Feb. Birds were more widespread in Mar with 1 or 2 reported from: *Cowal*, *Jura*, *Kintyre*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, and *North Argyll*, and 4 at *Loch Cam Islay* on 17 Mar.  
**Breeding/summer** Pairs were reported from all areas except: *Coll*, *Jura*, and *Tiree*. Breeding was confirmed at: *Colonsay Hotel Colonsay*, *Connel Mid-Argyll*, *Benmore Lodge (Loch Ba) Mull*, and *Cruachan Power Station North Argyll*.  
**Autumn/winter** Reports of 1 or 2 birds were received from all areas except *Coll* and *Jura*. There were 3 birds at: *Connel Mid-Argyll* on 18 Sep, *Otter Ferry Spit Cowal* on 6 Oct, and *Ardbeg Islay* on 25 Nov. At *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre* birds were present almost daily with a max. of 5 on 20 Oct. 1 at *Balephuill Tiree* on 6 Oct was the only record of the year, where it has become increasingly scarce on passage in recent years.

**PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba yarrellii* Breac-an-t-sìl  
*A widespread and common breeder: absent from many areas in winter. Returning birds generally arrive in late Feb to early Mar and depart Aug-Oct.*  
**Winter/spring** Recorded from all areas. Larger groups included: 29 at *Tayinloan Kintyre* on 2 Jan, 12 on pasture at *Ardachy (Loch Etive) North Argyll* on 17 Feb, at least 20 at *Millhouse Cowal* on 24 Mar, 20 at *Corrynachenchy Mull* on 21 Apr, and 100 roosting at *Kilmoluaig Tiree* on 23 Apr.  
**Breeding/summer** Recorded in all areas except *Jura* with breeding confirmed in: *Cowal*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, *North Argyll*, and *Tiree*. Notable gatherings included 80 roosting at *Balephuill Tiree* on 1 Jul and 25 at the *Moine Mhor Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul.  
**Autumn/winter** There were some large passage gatherings from Aug through to Sep. The roost at *Balephuill Tiree* increased to 140 on 18 Aug, 260 on 24 Aug, and 350 on 4 Sep. Other notable gatherings included: 100 roosting at *Machrihanish Water Kintyre* on 8 Sep, 80 at *Machir Bay Islay* on 15 Sep, 20 at *Colonsay Golf Course Colonsay* on 17 Sep, 26 at *Baile Mor (Iona) Mull* on 24 Sep, and 50 at the *Add Estuary Mid-Argyll* on 26 Sep. After 30 at *Bridgend Merse Islay* on 3 Oct numbers tailed off rapidly, although birds were seen right through until 27 Dec when 14 were at *Tayinloan Jetty Kintyre*.

**'WHITE' WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba alba*  
*A passage migrant, usually recorded in spring: extent of autumn passage obscured by identification difficulties. May have bred.*  
**Winter/spring** Reported from all areas except *Coll* and *Jura*. Favourable weather conditions brought early arrivals at *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre* with the first bird on 15 Mar, 12 on 16 Mar,

and 2 more on 17 Mar. Two were at Carnan Eoin *Colonsay* on 1 Apr. Daily passage increased at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 20 Apr with 18 birds and peaked with 30+ on 30 Apr. The first 9 were on *Tiree* on 21 Apr and 35 were grounded at Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 25 Apr. Elsewhere: 8 were at Drimvore *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Apr, 14 at Barsloisnoch *Mid-Argyll* on 1 May, 4 at RSPB Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 2 May, 2 at Killail *Cowal* on 3 May, and 3 were at Port Langamull *Mull* on 5 May. With the exception of 40 grounded by a heavy downpour at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 21 May only small numbers were then reported up to 28 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** First report was of 3 at the Add Estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Aug. Passage at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* started on 13 Aug and continued with 14 on 18 Aug and 20 on 22 Aug. Eight on *Tiree* on 4 Sep preceded a passage of 135 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* over 5-8 Sep. Elsewhere: 10 were at Traigh nan Gilean *Tiree* on 10 Sep, 10 were at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 13 Sep, and 10 were at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Sep. The final record was from RSPB Ardnave *Islay* on 24 Oct.

### **RICHARD'S PIPIT** *Anthus richardi*

**A vagrant: three records; singles on Islay, on 28 Sep 1971 and 10 Sep 1973 and on Colonsay on 18 Oct 2013.**

No records.

### **TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis* Riabhag-choille

**RED LIST** *A summer visitor breeding commonly on the mainland: also widespread on Jura and Mull, but very scarce on Islay.*

**Spring** First reports were from *Mid-Argyll* when 3 were in Kilmichael Forest on 15 Apr followed by 2 at Taynish NNR on 16 Apr and 2 singing at Tullochgorm on 17 Apr. One was at Dervaig *Mull* on 19 Apr, and 1 at Stronafian *Cowal* on 21 Apr. Most reports were from *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull* but single birds were at Loch Tulla *North Argyll* on 8 May, and Claggain Bay *Islay* on 9 May.

**Breeding/summer** Eight Ters. were recorded at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, 3 at Cruachan Power Station *North Argyll*, 3 at Blarbuie Burn (Kilmichael Forest) *Mid-Argyll*, and 2 at Slockavullin *Mid-Argyll*. Breeding was confirmed at Colintrave *Cowal*.

**Autumn** Flight calls of two birds were heard at Cruachan Power Station *North Argyll* on 18 Aug. The last record was of a single bird near a known breeding site at Strone Road End *Cowal* on 19 Sep.

### **MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis* Snàthag

**AMBER LIST** *An abundant breeding species: most leave higher ground and some islands in winter, and significant flocks occur on passage. Those wintering in Argyll occur mainly in coastal and low lying localities.*

**Winter/spring** Larger flocks included: 30 at Sanaigmore *Islay* on 25 Feb, 60 heading NE at Achuaran (Lismore) *North Argyll* on 28 Mar, 200 at Glen Forsa *Mull* on 4 Apr, 70 at Happy Valley *Tiree* on 15 Apr, 50 on the shinty field at Kilmory *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Apr, 100 at Am Feadan *Jura* on 24 Apr, and 180 at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** Birds were reported during the breeding season from all areas. Breeding was confirmed from: *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Mid-Argyll*, *Mull*, *North Argyll*, and *Tiree*.

**Autumn/winter** Flocks built up in Jul with: up to 50 on *Tiree*, 80 at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul, 220 at Drumbhuidhe *Tiree* on 27 Aug, 120 at The Oa *Islay* on 30 Aug, 150 at Carnan Mor *Tiree* on 4 Sep, 140 at Drimvore *Mid-Argyll* on 6 Sep, and 120 at Balemartine *Tiree* on 9 Oct.

Flock sizes decreased thereafter with 16 at Loch Caithlim (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 10 Dec being the last notable record.

**RED-THROATED PIPIT** *Anthus cervinus*

*A vagrant: one record; at Tobermory, Mull on 7 May 1975.*

No records.

**EURASIAN ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus petrosus* Gabhagan

*A common resident breeding species on coasts, sea lochs and islands with some emigration and passage in autumn: scarce passage and winter visitor elsewhere.*

*Winter/spring* Single figure reports were received from all areas. Larger counts included: 11 at the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 2 Jan, 10 on Lismore *North Argyll* on 9 Jan, 10 at Leac Bhuidhe (Oronsay) *Colonsay* on 25 Jan, and 10 at Craignure *Mull* on 12 Apr.

*Breeding/summer* Breeding was confirmed from: *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, and *Mull*. 9 birds were on Sgeir na Guisaich (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* on 6 Jun, and 11 were noted at Fingal's Cave (Staffa) *Mull* on 14 Jul.

*Autumn/winter* Reports included: 8 at The Oa *Islay* on 21 Sep, 8 at Loch nam Breac *Jura* on 24 Oct, 4 at Benderloch *North Argyll* on 1 Nov, 5 at Otter Ferry *Cowal* on 11 Nov, and 8 at Hough Bay *Tiree* on 2 Dec. Two at the top of Ben Hynish *Tiree* (140m) on 10 Dec was an unusual record.

**'SCANDINAVIAN' ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus littoralis*

*A Rock Pipit sub-species. Rare visitor but true status in Argyll is still unclear. Only three accepted records, from Mull on 13 May 2011, at Machrihanish SBO, Kintyre on 18 May 2014 and the Add Estuary, Mid-Argyll on 1 Apr 2015.*

No records.

**WATER PIPIT** *Anthus spinoletta*

*AMBER LIST A vagrant: only one accepted Argyll record; at West Hynish, Tiree on 19 Nov 2013.*

No accepted records. (See list of rejected, pending etc. records on pages 121-122).

**BUFF-BELLIED PIPIT** *Anthus rubescens*

*A vagrant: one record; a first-winter bird at Ruaig, Tiree on 27 Sep 2012.*

No records.

**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla* Breacan-caorainn

*An uncommon winter visitor in varying numbers: there have been a few summer records.*

*Winter/spring* Scarce this winter with reports from only four areas. On 1 Jan singles were at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* and at Kinnabus (The Oa) *Islay*, followed by 2 at Kinnabus *Islay* on the 2 and 4 Jan, 1 at Muasdale *Kintyre* on 11 Jan, 2 at Port Ellen *Islay* on 15 Jan, 1 at Dervaig *Mull* on 16 Jan, and 1 at Drimvore (Moine Mhor) *Mid-Argyll* on 18 Feb.

*Autumn/winter* First of the autumn was a single female at Balephuill *Tiree* on 7 Oct, joined by a male on 19 Oct, with a peak of 9 there on 20 Oct, with the last 4 there on 24 Oct. First arrivals on the mainland were singles on 16 Oct at both Crinan Ferry *Mid-Argyll* and Bishop's Glen (Dunoon) *Cowal*. The first on *Islay* was 1 at Kilchoman on 17 Oct, staying until 19 Oct, 1 at Octomore (Port Charlotte) on 19 Oct, 1 at Loch Gruinart on 31 Oct and 1 Nov, and 1 again at



Octomore on 2 Nov. Singles were at Arileod *Coll* and Urugaig *Colonsay* on 23 Oct. On *Mull* there were 6 at Grasspoint on 24 Oct and 1 at Salen on 5 Nov.

**COMMON CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs* Breacan-beithe

**An abundant resident breeder: except on Coll (breeds only in very small numbers) and Tiree. Foraging flocks gather outwith the breeding season when numbers are augmented by winter visitors.**

**Winter/spring** Reported from all areas. Largest counts were from Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* with 115 on 1 Jan, increasing to peak at 240 on 23 Jan and 28 Jan, with 190 still there on 18 Feb. On *Islay* 70 were at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 4 Jan, 77 at Kilchoman on 31 Jan, and 130 were at Grianan (Kintra) on 27 Feb. In *Cowal* 50 were at Corra Farm (Otter Ferry) on 24 Jan. On Oronsay *Colonsay* numbers peaked at 16 on 25 Jan. Some flocks were still around in Apr and included 35 at Corra Farm *Cowal* on 11 Apr, rising to 36 on 3 May, 25 at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Apr, and on *Mull* there were 25 at Aros on 13 Apr, 130 at Calgary on 27 Apr, and 50 at Bunessan on 9 May.

**Summer/breeding** Widespread and recorded in all areas, except *Jura* and *Tiree* where the last spring bird was on 15 May. The CBC site at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* held 19 territories, down from 31 in 2015, and the lowest since records began in 1990. First confirmed breeding was a male carrying food at Corra Farm *Cowal* on 17 May. First fledged young was seen at Benderloch *North Argyll* on 25 May, then at Kintallen (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 16 Jun. Thereafter flocks including juveniles increased, with 50 at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Reports were widespread, and from all areas except *Jura*. Larger counts from *Mid-Argyll* included 80 at Achafolla (Luìng) on 15 Oct, small flocks moving west totalled 350 at Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Oct, and a garden count of 65 there on 18 Nov. In *Kintyre* there were 170 at Stewarton on 14 Nov. On *Colonsay* there were 30 at Port Mor on 22 Oct. On *Tiree* a peak of 9 across the island on 9 Oct. In *Cowal* 120 were at the Kyles of Bute viewpoint on 8 Dec. On *Islay* the largest flock was of 100 at Sunderland Farm (Loch Gorm) feeding on barley stubble. Elsewhere on the *Islay* were 25 were at West Carrabus (Bridgend) on 3 Dec, 27 at Port Charlotte on 13 Dec, and 38 at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 19 Dec.

**HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Gobhach

**RED LIST A rare visitor: 22 records between 1953 and 2014.**

**Spring** Two, a m + f were in a garden at Lochuisg Cottage (Loch Uisg) *Mull* on 23 Apr [Chris & Paul Philo] then a male was in a garden 6.5 miles to the NE at Hazelbank Cottage (Lochdon) within 30 minutes of the last Loch Uisg sighting, therefore perhaps could involve the same bird and remained there until 24 Apr [V Howells, I Chapman, J Dickson, A Spellman]. A female was in a garden nr. Octofad Farm *Islay* on 10 May [Tony & Irene Miller *et al*].

**Autumn** One was in a garden at Dalintart, Oban *Mid-Argyll* sometime around 5 Nov [Eileen Ballantyne, Pete Willis]. All records were accepted by the ABRC.

**COMMON ROSEFINCH** *Erythrina erythrina*

**A scarce to rare visitor which may have bred: 24 records between 1989 and 2014, mostly in May and Jun however more frequent reports of juveniles in the autumn recently.**

**Summer** An adult male was at Ballochgair (N of Peninver) *Kintyre* on 11 Jul [Bob Relph].

**Autumn** A juvenile was at Balephuill *Tiree* on 12 Sep [John Bowler]. Both records were accepted by the ABRC.

## **EURASIAN BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Corcan-coille

**AMBER LIST A** *widely but thinly distributed resident. Scarce or absent on most of the islands apart from Islay and Mull. Flocks occur in winter.*

**Winter/spring** Early year records came from sites in: *Colonsay* (1), *Cowal* (1), *Islay* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (8), *Mull* (1) and *North Argyll* (1), with counts all in single figures.

**Summer/breeding** Presence noted across all areas except *Coll*, *Colonsay*, *Jura*, *Kintyre* and *Tiree*. The only report of fledged young was at *Druimyeon More* (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 21 Aug.

**Autumn** Relatively scarce this year with nearly all sightings in single figures and fewer sites overall. Reported from sites in: *Cowal* (3), *Islay* (6), *Kintyre* (1), *Mid-Argyll* (7) and *North Argyll* (3), and highest count was of 15 at *Bealachandrain Cowal* on 10 Dec. Decline may reflect Scottish BBS trend (down 35% on 2015).

## **EUROPEAN GREENFINCH** *Chloris chloris* Glaisean-daraich

**A locally common resident and partial migrant: with fewer breeding on the islands than on the mainland. Small groups are widespread outside the breeding season.**

**Winter/spring** Early year records were generally in single figures, and from all areas except *Jura*, and *Colonsay*. A group of 10 was seen at *Blackmill Bay* (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Jan, and 15 were at *Cairnbaan Mid-Argyll* on 14 Jan. Highest count was of 80 at *A'Chleit* (Muasdale) *Kintyre* on 11 Jan.

**Summer/breeding** Reported present in all areas except *Kintyre*. First confirmed breeding (fledged young) reported at *Connel Mid-Argyll* on 20 May, then 3 fledglings at *Kilchoman Islay* on 30 May, 1 at the *Glebe* (Scarinish) *Tiree* on 4 Jun, and 3 at *Killail Cowal* on 7 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** Reported present in all areas, except *Kintyre* and *Jura*, nearly all in single figures. Highest counts were 8 at *Cullipool* (Luing) *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Oct and 10 at *Loch Gruinart Islay* on 17 Nov. The decline in numbers may reflect the Scottish BBS trend (down 35% on 2015, and down 55% since 1995).

## **COMMON LINNET** *Linaria cannabina* Gealan-lìn

**RED LIST A** *sparsely distributed partial migrant, breeding mainly on Islay, Tiree, and in Kintyre. Flocks occur locally in some areas in autumn with most reports from Colonsay, Islay, and Kintyre.*

**Winter/spring** Only reported from *Islay*, with 200 at *Kinnabus* (The Oa) on 2 Jan. Present in a mixed flock of 100 with *Twite* at *Keills* on 24 Mar, and in a mixed flock of 40 with *Twite* at the *Monument* (The Oa) on 25 Mar and 7 were at *Loch Gruinart* the same day.

**Summer/breeding** Recorded as present, mostly in single figures, from all areas except *Coll*, *Cowal*, *Jura* and *Kintyre*. On *Tiree* there were 16 at *Balephuill* on 28 Apr, and on *Colonsay* 20 were on *Oronsay* on 8 May. The first fledged young were reported on 10 Jun at *Balephuill Tiree*. Subsequent groups containing juveniles were reported from *Tiree*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Colonsay*, including 45 at *Drimvore* to *Crinan Ferry* (Moine Mhor) *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Reports came from all areas except *Cowal* and *Jura*. Substantial flocks grew through Aug, declined in Oct and disappeared during Nov. The biggest flocks were on *Islay*, centred on three main areas, with the following peak counts, all on 20 Sep: *Saligo* with 250, *Loch Gruinart* with 280 and *The Oa* with 140. Numbers dwindled thereafter, though *Loch Gruinart* still had 120 by 8 Dec. The peak count on *Oronsay Colonsay* was earlier, on 3 Sep, with 200, tailing off to 7 on 12 Oct. Numbers on *Tiree* grew through Aug, with a peak count of 120 at *Balinoe* on 9 Sep, tailing off to 3 at *Balephuill* on 23 Oct, and the last 2 at *Meningie* on 5 Nov. In *Kintyre* there were 60 at *West Tarbert Bay* (Gigha) on 2 Oct, and in *Mid-Argyll* there were 125 at *Connel* on 11 Sep.

**TWITE** *Linaria flavirostris* Gealan-beinne

**RED LIST A** *local resident, mainly in coastal areas on the mainland and islands; winter flocks may comprise resident and migrants birds.*

**Winter/spring** Reported from all areas apart from *Cowal, Jura, Mull* and *North Argyll*. On *Islay* the first report was 500 at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 2 Jan, with numbers on The Oa at 100 through Feb and Mar, the Loch Gruinart area held 250 at Bun-an-uillt on 17 Feb, while 40-45 were at Machir Bay from Jan to Mar. Other flocks of up to 20 were at various locations around *Islay*. On *Colonsay* 40 were on Oronsay on 9 Jan and 25 on 27 Feb. *Tiree* held several groups of up to 20 with highest count of 55 at West Hynish on 13 Feb. In *Kintyre* the first report was of 2 at Machrihanish SBO on 15 Mar, rising to 18 on 30 Mar. Some flocks were still around later in spring, with 300 at Ballinamoill *Kintyre* on 30 May.

**Summer/breeding** Nest material was seen carried in the Cruachan Gorge area *North Argyll* on 21 Apr. The first fledged young were seen at Vaul *Tiree* on 29 Jun. After this, family groups with juveniles formed into small flocks; 100 were at Carradale Bay *Kintyre* on 16 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** Reported in all areas except *Cowal* and *Jura*, with the largest flocks on *Islay*, most reports from the Mull of Oa area, and a record high peak there of 1,114 on 17 Nov, up on 680 the previous year. Elsewhere on *Islay* notable flocks included 50 at Frenchman's Rocks on 3 Sep and 95 at Craighens (Gruinart) on 30 Oct. On *Colonsay* 10 were on Oronsay on 7 Aug peaking at 65 on 29 Oct and declining to 50 on 27 Dec. On *Tiree* 60 were at Balephuill on 4 Sep peaking at 240 on 13 Sep, with 150 there on 29 Sep, also 220 were at The Reef on 29 Sep and 80 were at Crossapol on 11 Dec. In *North Argyll* 50 were at Loch Fiart (Lismore) on 7 Aug, while in *Mid-Argyll* 15 were at Rubh' Aird (Luining) on 10 Oct. In *Kintyre* the **Machrihanish SBO Twite Study** continued catching and colour-ringing birds during autumn, but with only 30 new captures over the autumn. The drop in numbers may be linked to the increase in birds staying on *Islay*.

**LESSER REDPOLL** *Acanthis cabaret* Dearcan-seilich

**RED LIST A** *locally common partial migrant, breeding locally: numbers fluctuate from year to year. Post breeding flocks gather from July and most birds move south for the winter.*

**Winter/spring** First reports were 1 at Port Ramsay (Lismore) *North Argyll* on 9 Jan, 6 at Finlaggan *Islay* on 10 Feb, followed by 3 at Bishop's Glen (Dunoon) *Cowal* on 24 Feb. In *Mid-Argyll* there were 4 at Connel on 15 Mar, 1 at Drimvore (Moine Mhor) on 26 Mar and 1 was at Ceann a' Mhara *Tiree* on 11 Apr.

**Summer/breeding** Widespread reports as present in single figures in all areas except *Jura*. Highest counts included: 10 at the Lodge (Arinagour) *Coll* on 13 May, 6 at the Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul, 6 at Grishipoll Farm *Coll* on 13 Aug and 8 at Gallochoille (Gigha) *Kintyre* on 21 Aug. Successful breeding must have taken place widely, but none was confirmed. 4 Ters. were noted for the CBC at Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll* (6 in 2015).

**Autumn/winter** Reported from all areas, except *Cowal, Jura* and *Mull*, in single figures, however 60 were seen in willows nr. Coille *Islay* on 20 Sep and 50 were at Rhudle Mill (Dunadd) *Mid-Argyll* on 4 Nov. Last report was 5 at Victoria Bridge (Loch Tulla) *North Argyll* on 12 Dec.

**COMMON REDPOLL** *Acanthis flammea*

*Includes Mealy Redpoll C. f. flammea & Greenland Redpoll C. f. rostrata (latter now sometimes known as North- western Redpoll, which includes islandica). A scarce passage migrant: and irregular winter visitor. Mealy has bred on Tiree and also suspected of breeding on other islands.*

**Winter/spring** 1 was at Kintallen (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 31 Mar. 1 was at Gruinart farm *Islay* on 21 Apr, with 2 on 5 May and 1 on 13 May. 1 was at Tower Cottage (Glenegedale) *Islay* on 6 May. 1 was at Balephuill *Tiree* on 15 Apr with 4 there during May and 6 on 30 May. 1 was at Treshnish farm *Mull* on 7 May and 12 Jun. 1 was at Loch nan Gilleann (The Oa) *Islay* on 14 May. 2 were at The Glebe (Scarinish) *Tiree* on 27 May.

**Breeding** A pair with an active nest was found at The Glebe (Scarinish) *Tiree* on 9 Jun. A pair showing signs of nesting were at Treshnish Farm *Mull* on 12 Jun. 4 were at Balephuill/Carnan Mor *Tiree* in Jul with fledged juvs noted from 28 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** All reports from *Tiree*: up to 2 were at Balephuill in Aug with 4 there on 3 Sep (2 ads, 2 juvs) and singles seen occasionally to 19 Oct. 3 were at The Glebe (Scarinish) on 27 Aug and 1 was at Crossapol on 21 Nov.

*The reports given here are for birds that were showing some good characteristics of this species as well as more distinctive classic examples. Ideally good photographs are required, particularly for worn birds in late spring when 'Lessers' can be quite pale and look very similar to 'Mealies'.*

### **ARCTIC REDPOLL** *Acanthis hornemanni*

**A vagrant: three records: two of the Scandinavian/Russian race *exilipes* (Coues's Redpoll) with one on Islay on 22 Sep 2001 and the other on Tiree on 23 Oct 2004 and one of the nominate Greenland/Arctic Canada race *hornemanni* (Hornemann's Redpoll) on Islay on 10 Apr 2012.**

No records.

### **COMMON CROSSBILL (RED CROSSBILL)** *Loxia curvirostra* Cam-ghob

**An irruptive species: large numbers breed in good cone years but few stay when cones are scarce.**

**Winter/spring** The only reports received were all from *Mull* with 17 at Loch an 'Tor' on 2 Feb, 4 at Lochdon on 1 Apr and 8 at Gribun on 6 Apr.

**Summer/breeding** No reports of nesting. Most reports were from *Mull* from May to Jul (10 sites) with highest count of 6 at Loch Ba on 11 May, followed by *Mid-Argyll* with 15 at Kilmichael Forest on 2 Jun, 2- 4 birds over Kilmartin in Jul, 2 at Lochan Buic (Knapdale Forest) on 25 Jul and 'present' in Glen Shira on 28 Aug. On *Colonsay* 1 was at Colonsay House Gardens on 17 Jun and 2 were at Blackmount (Loch Tulla) *North Argyll* on 8 May.

**Autumn/winter** Only 2 reports from *Mull*: 2 at Salen on 19 Aug and 1 at Aros Park on 2 Oct. In *North Argyll* 2 were at Beinn na Stroine (Glen Lochy) on 3 Oct. In *Cowal* presence was noted on Beinn Narnain on 10 Oct and 4 were in Dunoon on 4 Nov. In *Mid-Argyll* presence was noted at Stuckgoay (Glen Shira) on 28 Aug, 1 was at Salachary (Bealach Mor) on 7 Sep, 1 was at Eas nam Croman (nr. Dalmally) on 25 Oct and 7 were at Balinoe (Kilmore) on 10 Dec. On *Islay* there was 1 at Ballygrant on 5 Aug, 1 at Auchenvogie Cottage (nr. Laggan Bridge) on 11 Oct, and 1 at Laphroaig on 25 Nov.

### **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis* Lasair-choille

**A widely distributed resident but absent as a breeding species on Tiree with recent breeding on Coll and Colonsay. Flocks occur in autumn.**

**Winter/Spring** Reported in single figures from all areas except *Coll*, and *Jura*. Flocks of 10 or more included: 16 at Bishop's Glen (Dunoon) *Cowal* on 18 Jan, while in *Mid-Argyll* there were 40 at Tayvallich on 5 Feb, and 14 at Cairnbaan on 9 Feb. There were two areas on *Islay* with notable flocks: 20 at Octomore (Port Charlotte) on 31 Jan and at Kilchoman the flock of 22 on 3

Jan peaked at 39 on 25 Feb. In *Kintyre* 20 were at the feeding station at Machrihanish SBO on 9 and 30 Apr.

**Summer/breeding** First fledged young were reported from Kintallen (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Jun, with juveniles also reported from Tullochgorm *Mid-Argyll* on 14 Jun, Kilchoman *Islay* on 18 Jun and elsewhere subsequently, often in family groups joining together into flocks, such as 40+ at Caol Scottish *Mid-Argyll* on 22 Jun, 35 counted between Drimvore and Crinan Ferry *Mid-Argyll* on 9 Jul, and 50 in Carradale Bay *Kintyre* on 16 Jul.

**Autumn/winter** As usual, autumn flocks were much larger and more numerous than earlier in the year and birds were noted in all areas except *Kintyre*. Flocks over 40 were common through Aug to Oct. In *Mid-Argyll* there were 50 at Balvicar (Seil) on 10 Sep and 45 at Crinan Ferry on 14 Oct. In *Cowal* there were 70 at Otter Ferry on 13 Aug and 40 nearby at Barr Iola on 22 Sep. On *Islay* the largest flock was 150 at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 25 Aug and notable flocks included: 95 at RSPB Loch Gruinart on 4 Sep, 58 at Lower Killeyan (The Oa) on 7 Sep, 60 at Coull Farm on 9 Sep, 60 at Bun-an-uillt (Gruinart) on 15 Sep and 60 at Kilchoman on 18 Oct. On Oronsay *Colonsay* the peak count was 20 on 12 Oct, while on *Tiree* 25 were at Balephuill on 10 Oct, with a peak island total of 55 the same day.

## EURASIAN SISKIN *Spinus spinus* Gealag-bhuidhe

**A locally common partial migrant: present in all areas apart from Coll and Tiree where it is an occasional visitor. Numbers fluctuate from year to year depending on cone crops.**

**Winter/spring** Few reports, mostly in single figures, from *Cowal*, *Islay*, *Mull*, *Mid-Argyll*, and *North Argyll*. Larger flocks noted were 20 at Craig (Loch Etive) *North Argyll* on 8 Jan, 16 in Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 2 Feb, 26 in Ardrishaig *Mid-Argyll* on 21 Feb, 12 Garmony Point *Mull* on 29 Mar, 30 Lindsaig *Cowal* on 21 Apr, 12 Corra Farm (Otter Ferry) *Cowal* on 24 Apr and 11 Cairnbaan *Mid-Argyll* on 29 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** Widely reported in single figures from all areas except *Coll*. Durring May: *North Argyll* 12 were at Victoria Bridge (Loch Tulla) on 8 May and 14 at North Ledaig on 25 May, in *Mid-Argyll* 32 were at Carsaig on 4 May and 20 at Taynish House on 28 May and in *Cowal* 20 were at Corra Farm on 1 May. The first confirmed breeding was a fledged juvenile at Kintallen (Tayvallich) *Mid-Argyll* on 13 Jun. A single female was at Balephuill *Tiree* on 4 May, followed by a male and female on 29 May, and 5 birds on *Tiree* on 5-18 Jun but no evidence of breeding. Family groups gathered to form larger flocks e.g. in *Mid-Argyll* 25 at Taynish NNR on 7 Jul, and a flock of 60 mostly juvs at Drimvore (Moine Mhor) on 9 Jul, and in *Kintyre* 20 at Largiebaan on 21 Jun.

**Autumn/winter** Reported from all areas except *Coll*, *Cowal*, *Jura* and *Kintyre*. Most records were in single figures however: 25 were at Dalvore (Moine Mhor) *Mid-Argyll* on 28 Nov, *Islay* with: 25 at Cluanach on 2 Nov, 102 at Redhouses on 3 Nov, 20 at Bridgend Hide on 3 Dec and 31 at Foreland on 11 Dec. On *Tiree* a single was at Scarinish on 19 Oct.

## SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* Gealag-an-t-sneachda

**RED LIST Occurring annually in varying numbers (on passage and in winter): along the coast and in the hills and has probably bred in North Argyll.**

**Winter/spring** Fewer reports than 2015. The first was on *Tiree* with 1 at Gott Tip on 19 Jan, followed by 1 at Loch an Eilein on 25 Apr and 1 at Balephetrish Bay on 25 Apr. On *Mull* 1 was at Craig (Glen More) on 28 Feb. On *Islay* 3 were on the shore at Cnoc Iolairean (Strand) on 29 Mar, followed by 2 on 7 Apr and 2 on 19 Apr at Bruichladdich. On the mainland the only record was in *Cowal* with 3 at Maol an t-Sratha (Glen Kinglas) on 20 Mar.

**Autumn/winter** The first report was in *Kintyre* with 15 at Carradale on 6 Sep, followed by 1 near Machrihanish airfield on 8 Sep. On *Mull* noted as 'present' at Glen More on 16 Sep and 3

were at Fidden on 30 Oct. On *Tiree* 1 was at Balemartine on 29 Sep, followed by 2 at Sandaig on 2 Nov and 2 at Mannal on 8 Nov. On *Islay* 1 was at the Monument (The Oa) on 30 Sep and 17 Oct, 1 at Sannaigmore on 12 Oct, followed by 4 there on 14 Oct and 1 on 25 Oct. 2 were at Claddach on 21 Oct, 1 at Bun-an-uillt (Gruinart) on 27 Oct, 4 at Ardnave on 30 Oct with 2 there on 4 Nov, 3 at Machir Bay on 22 Nov and 1 at Claddach on 5 Dec. In *Mid-Argyll* 3 were inland on Cnoc a' Bharaille (Knapdale) on 5 Dec.

**LAPLAND BUNTING** (LAPLAND LONGSPUR) *Calcarius lapponicus*

**AMBER LIST** *A scarce passage migrant: recorded most frequently in autumn.*

**Winter/spring** One report of a first-winter male with Meadow Pipits at Happy Valley *Tiree* on 15 Apr.

**Autumn/winter** More reports than usual. On *Tiree* the first was 1 at Carnan Mor on 4 Sept followed by 1 at Traigh Ghrianaidh on 13 Sep, 2 over Carnan Mor on 18 Sep, then 6 at The Reef on 21 Sep with 2 there on 30 Sep, 13 at Barrapol on 2 Oct, 11 at The Green on 3 Oct and 1 at Ballevullin on 17 Oct. On *Colonsay* 1 was at Turnigil on 17 Sep. On *Islay* 1 was at Lower Glen Astle (The Oa) on 19 Sep, 1 at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 17 Oct, 2 at Machrie Links on 17 Oct and 3 at Ardnave on 21 Oct.

**WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** *Zonotrichia albicollis*

*A North American vagrant: One was near Otter Ferry, Cowal on 19 Jun 2014.*

**Spring** One, a tan-stripped individual, showed well in a garden at Vaul *Tiree* on 10 Jun [Keith Gillon, John Bowler *et al.*]. Record was accepted by the BBRC.

**YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella* Buidheag-bhealaidh

**RED LIST** *A localised resident which is absent from Coll and Tiree and appears to be declining elsewhere. Currently, most birds breed near the coast. All records are welcome.*

**Winter/spring** On *Islay* higher counts included: 6 at Loch nan Cadhan (Ballygrant) on 10 Feb, with 37 there on 20 Apr, 21 at Kildalton on 18 Feb, with 5 there on 31 Mar and 12 at Loch Finlaggan on 6 Mar. In *Kintyre* up to 7 were regular in a garden in Campbeltown and up to 5 in a garden at Southend during Jan-Mar. In *Mid-Argyll* a high count of 36 was at Barraholm (Tayvallich) in mid-Jan reducing to 17 by 3 Apr, elsewhere 4 were at Duntrune (Loch Crinan) on 13 Mar, 3 at Balvicar (Seil) on 10 Feb, 2 at Kilmartin on 9 Apr, 2 at Drimvore on 11 Apr and singles noted at 5 other sites. On *Mull* 8 were at Lochdon on 12 Jan, 1 on Beinn Chladan (Ross of Mull) on 30 Mar and 5 south of Tobermory on 14 Apr.

**Breeding/summer** No confirmed breeding however singing and territories noted in *Mid-Argyll* (3 sites) and on *Mull* (2 sites). Recorded in small numbers from: *Kintyre* (1 site), *Islay* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (4 sites) and *Mull* (5 sites).

**Autumn/winter** In *Cowal* 1 was at Corra Farm (Otter Ferry) on 8 -10 Nov. On *Islay* 4 were at Gortantaoid (NE of Loch Gruinart) on 20 Sep, 1 at Cluanach on 23 Oct and 5 at Sunderland Farm on 15 Dec. In *Kintyre* 1 was at Mausdale on 28 Dec. In *Mid-Argyll* 3 were at Kilmartin on 1 Oct, 2 at Connell on 21 Oct and 2 at Ardentallen House (Loch Feochan) on 6 Nov. On *Mull* 2 were at Killiechronan on 26 Sep.

**ORTOLAN BUNTING** *Emberiza hortulana*

*A vagrant: one record; at Craignuire, Mull on 9 and 10 May 2009.*

No records.

### **RUSTIC BUNTING** *Emberiza rustica*

*A vagrant: five records; at Easter Ellister, Islay on 23 May 1980, one at Hynish, Tiree on 4 Jun 1987, singles at Balephuill Tiree on 21 May and 2-3 Jun 2014 and one on Iona, Mull on 27 May 2014.*

No records.

### **LITTLE BUNTING** *Emberiza pusilla*

*A vagrant: two records; one found dead at Skerryvore Lighthouse (about 15 km south-west of Tiree), on 27 Sep 1985 and one at Milton, Tiree on 23 Oct 2007.*

No records.

### **YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING** *Emberiza aureola*

*A vagrant: one record; at Kenovay, Tiree on 5 Sep 1981.*

No records.

### **COMMON REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus* Gealag-lòin

**AMBER LIST A** *locally distributed resident breeder: while nowhere abundant, small flocks sometimes gather outwith the breeding season.*

**Winter/spring** Reported in all areas except Cowal, Jura and Kintyre. Most widespread and numerous on Islay (15 sites) with peak counts of 27 at RSPB Loch Gruinart on 11 Feb, 12 at Sanaigmore on 25 Feb and 10 at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 25 Feb. On Coll 2 were at Arinagour on 18 Feb and 1 was at Uig on 25 Feb. At 2 sites on Colonsay, and regularly on Oronsay with a peak of 6 on 5 Feb. On Tiree present in small numbers Jan to Mar. In Mid-Argyll reported from 9 sites Jan to Mar. In North Argyll only report of 1 at Eriska on 27 Feb. On Mull present at 2 sites at Lochdon at the end of Mar.

**Breeding/summer** Reported present from sites in: Coll (1), Colonsay (43 Ters.), Islay (12), Kintyre (5, all Mull of Kintyre), Mid-Argyll (12), Mull (11), North Argyll (2) and Tiree (there were scattered pairs across the island). Highest counts included: 14 at A 'Crois (The Green) Tiree on 1 May and 6 at Borgadale Kintyre on 24 Jun. The only confirmed breeding were fledglings at The Reef Tiree on 29 Jul. There were no reports from Cowal or Jura.

**Autumn/winter** Reports from all areas except Kintyre and Jura. Most were from Islay (13 sites) of which 4 sites were on The Oa and all in single figures. On Colonsay 1 was at Port Lobh on 4 Sep, and several reports on Oronsay with a peak of 8 on 20 Oct. In Cowal 5 were at Kilfinan on 6 Oct. In Mid-Argyll 3 were at Loch na Cille (Keills) on 4 Sep, and 'present' at Dorlin Point (Loch Avich) on 12 Oct. On Mull only report received was 1 at Treshnish Farm Mull on 23-26 Oct. Presence noted at An Doirlinn (Eriska) North Argyll on 28 Aug. On Tiree noted at scattered sites in Sep-Dec with highest count of 12 at Balephuill on 23 Sep.

### **BLACK-HEADED BUNTING** *Emberiza melanocephala*

*A vagrant: eight records; all of singles, during May to Jul, the last record being on Colonsay in Jun 2005.*

No records.

### **CORN BUNTING** *Emberiza calandra* Gealag-bhuachair

**RED LIST A** *former resident on Tiree and Coll but has recently become extinct. Last accepted report was in Aug 2006 on Coll.*

No records.

**BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** *Molothrus ater*

*A vagrant: one record; at Ardnave Point, Islay on 24 Apr 1988 and was the first British record.*

No records.

**AMERICAN REDSTART** *Setophaga ruticilla*

*A vagrant: one record; a female or first-winter bird at Portnahaven, Islay on 1 Nov 1982 and was the first Scottish record.*

No records.

**NORTHERN PARULA** *Parula americana*

*A vagrant: one record; a first-winter at Balephuill, Tiree on 25-29 Sep 2010. This remains the only Scottish record to date.*

No records.

## Escapes and Introductions

This section includes species which are not on the British list or whose occurrence in the UK is EXCLUSIVELY within Categories B, D or E. Other species, whose occurrence in Argyll arises partly or wholly from introduced birds which may not or do not form self-sustaining breeding populations, include White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Barnacle Goose, Mandarin Duck, Red Kite, Red-legged Partridge, Grey Partridge and Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon). These are dealt with in the main systematic list.

**BUFFLEHEAD** *Bucephala albeola*

*Spring* A drake was in Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 15 Apr and photographed from the Oban to Mull ferry by Richard Turner. After submission to the BBRC it was deemed to be a genuine North American vagrant...and a first record for Argyll. A few months later further photographs were received, taken by Prezmeck Wronski at the same spot in Oban Bay on 21 Apr. On close inspection a yellow colour-ring could be seen on the bird's right leg indicating that it was from a wildfowl collection and therefore an escape. The BBRC were informed and the record is now treated here under Category E.



**Bufflehead** (with Eider) in Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* Apr 2016 (Prezmeck Wronski)

**ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET** *Psittacula krameri*

*Summer* A female or immature bird was seen and photographed in a garden at Bullwood, Dunoon *Cowal* on 17 Jun [Michael Kent] and it was seen again there on 8 Jul [Cherry Cook].

**MUSCOVY DUCK** *Cairina moschata*

*Category E. Probably widespread in Argyll as farmyard birds, but often survive independently, but under-recorded.*

*Spring* One was at Bonawe Furnace *Mid-Argyll* on 26 Mar [Andy Craven].



## List of Rejected Records, Pending Records and Records for which Details are Still Awaited.

Please note that the records below are listed for information purposes only, and do not form part of the data set for the years in question.

The following records of species on the ABRC, SBRC or BBRC lists have been rejected or found ‘not proven’ since the publication of ABR 27.

Species	Recording area	Date(s)	Committee
Honey-buzzard	<i>Mid-Argyll</i>	21/04/16	ABRC
Northern Goshawk	<i>Islay</i>	19/03/16	ABRC
Black Tern (15-20)	<i>Mull</i>	22/05/16	ABRC
Bonaparte’s Gull	<i>Mull</i>	05/09/16	BBRC
American Herring Gull	<i>Tiree</i>	15/02/16	BBRC
Gyr Falcon	<i>Islay</i>	22/12/16	BBRC
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Mull</i>	06/05/16	ABRC
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Mull</i>	13/05/16	ABRC
Water Pipit	<i>Islay</i>	11/04/16	ABRC

Most records are rejected not because the committee in question is convinced that a mistake has been made, but because the evidence provided is insufficient to establish the identification.

The following records of species on the BBRC, SBRC or ABRC for 2016 or before are still in circulation or being reviewed around the relevant rarity committees. In some instances the decision has been delayed pending receipt of further details.

Species	Recording area	Date(s)	Committee
Macronesian Shearwater	<i>Kintyre</i>	07/09/2000	BBRC
American Herring Gull	<i>Tiree</i>	22/03/2007	BBRC
American Herring Gull	<i>Tiree</i>	07/05/2007	BBRC

Details of the following claimed 2016 records of species on the BBRC, SBRC and ABRC lists have not been received.

Species	Place	Recording Area	Date(s)
Cackling & Todd’s Canada Geese	Various	<i>Islay</i>	Various 2015-2016
White-billed Diver	Off Tiree	<i>Tiree</i>	23/02/16
Ring-billed Gull	Dervaig	<i>Mull</i>	25/04 & 16/05/16
Northern Goshawk	Cnoc Garbh a’ Mhill	<i>Islay</i>	07/04/16
Yellow-legged Gull	Rubha Saltaig	<i>Tiree</i>	29/05/16
Yellow-legged Gull	Loch na Cuilce	<i>Mull</i>	27/09/16

Red-backed Shrike	Coille Mhor	<i>Islay</i>	11/10/16
Yellow-browed Warbler	Oronsay	<i>Colonsay</i>	20/10/16
Reed Warbler	Glen Bellart	<i>Mull</i>	11/05/16
Icterine Warbler	Borgadale Glen	<i>Kintyre</i>	05/05/16
Yellow Wagtail	Oronsay	<i>Colonsay</i>	?/04/16

## Getting Involved

**Argyll Bird Club** The ABC is a registered charity with membership open to all. The club aims to promote an interest in birds in Argyll. We are a friendly club for anybody interested in wild birds, living in, or visiting, Argyll, irrespective of their level of knowledge, experience or skill. Visitors are more than welcome to our two annual indoor meetings which are all-day events held on a Saturday in spring and autumn. The club produces a quarterly magazine, '*The Eider*' and also has a website with sections on 'Recent Sightings' with photographs, News with details of upcoming meetings and trips, 'Publications' and 'Surveys'. Volunteers are always welcome to help with committee matters, bird recording and the website and to contribute to *The Eider*.

**Scottish Ornithologists Club** The SOC exists to promote the study, enjoyment and conservation of wild birds and their habitats across Scotland and is a birdwatching club with 15 local branches across the country and a growing membership of over 3,000. Like-minded individuals with a passion for birds, nature and conservation are brought together through a programme of talks, outings, conferences and via the Club's quarterly members' journal, *Scottish Birds*. The SOC acts as the umbrella organisation for bird recording in Scotland, managing the network of recording birds in Scotland, or the Local Recorders' Network and the Scottish Birds Records Committee, the latter of which maintains the official Scottish List on behalf of the Club. The database of information Local Recorders collect is an extremely important archive of local bird information – a critical tool for their future conservation.

**British Trust for Ornithology** Through the efforts of volunteers participating in BTO surveys, the bird populations of the British Isles have been monitored more effectively and for longer than those of most other parts of the world. This has produced a uniquely rich and detailed body of scientific work. This will help us to understand the complex challenges facing wild birds at a time of great change in the environment. Volunteer surveyors, members and staff work in partnership to provide unbiased information about birds and their habitats.

In Argyll we have many volunteers who participate in the following surveys and you can get involved by contacting the bird recorder or any of the BTO representatives given on page 2:

**BirdTrack** is an exciting project, through a partnership between the BTO, the RSPB, Birdwatch Ireland, the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the Welsh Ornithological Society, that looks at migration movements and distributions of birds throughout Britain and Ireland. BirdTrack provides facilities for observers to store and manage their own personal records as well as using these to support species conservation at local, regional, national and international scales.

**Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)** is the main scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common breeding birds. It is a national volunteer project aimed at keeping track of changes in the breeding populations of widespread bird species in the UK. Wild bird populations are an important indicator of the health of the countryside, and knowing to what extent bird populations are increasing or decreasing is fundamental to bird conservation.

**The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)** monitors non-breeding waterbirds in the UK. The principal aims of WeBS are to identify population sizes, determine trends in numbers and distribution, and identify important sites for waterbirds.

# The History of the European Storm-petrel in South Kintyre, Argyll 1976-2016

*Rab Morton and Eddie Maguire*

## Introduction

This paper provides a summary of the history of the European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* (hereafter, Storm Petrel) in South Kintyre, Argyll over the last 40 years (1976-2016).

Around 13,000 birds were ringed on Sanda Island resulting in 1,981 British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) notifications of recoveries and controls. These were mainly around the West and North of Britain and East and West of Ireland, but included small numbers on the East coast of Scotland and England and several from abroad, including Norway, the Faroe Isles, Portugal and Africa. There were many 'exchange notifications' of ringed immature birds at a remarkable number of locations, all within 150 km of Sanda.

Analysis of all BTO notifications revealed that the majority of recoveries and controls at Sanda were in the sea areas of the Northern Irish Sea, North Channel and Firth of Clyde and at many locations around the mainland in Northern Ireland, especially in Co Down and Co Antrim where breeding populations are absent. The exchange rate of ringed birds between breeding colonies and mainland sites (where the non-breeding population is targeted) diminishes considerably over 150 km from Sanda suggesting that the sea areas within 150km of Sanda are used by a large number of immature Storm Petrels during the summer months; these sea areas are well clear of major breeding colonies in West and South-west Ireland and West and North-west Scotland.

The notable discovery in South Kintyre that the wandering non-breeding population could be tape-lured and drawn into mist-nets on the mainland and the subsequent application of this technique at coastal locations around the UK and Ireland by BTO ringers led to a very significant increase in the understanding of the movement of this pelagic species.

Storm Petrels breed only in the eastern north Atlantic, from Iceland and Norway south to Iberia and possibly the Canaries, and in the Mediterranean (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The breeding colony of Storm Petrels on Sanda Island was discovered in 1976 (Maguire, 1978) with the most recent estimates of 200 apparently occupied burrows in 2000 (Mitchell *et al.*, 2004) with no change noted there in 2013 (Rab Morton *pers. obs.*). The only other known breeding colonies in Argyll are on the Treshnish Isles (off Mull), with a few pairs on Soa and Staffa (Ap Rheinallt *et al.*, 2007) and Islay in the Inner Hebrides, Argyll (Balmer *et al.*, 2013); more colonies surely remain undiscovered.

Breeding Storm Petrels arrive at colonies in late May-June although egg-laying can be as late as July (Maguire, 1978 / Rab Morton *pers. obs.*). On Sanda, half-grown young have been found during October in cavities in the boulder beach below Elephant Rock by the lighthouse (Maguire, 1978). As with other burrow-nesting species, predation by invasive mammalian species is considered a serious issue (Balmer *et al.*, 2013). The most recent incursion of American Mink *Neovison vison* on Sanda (Rab Morton, *pers. obs.*) will likely result in rapid

extirpation of this small colony. Eradication of mammalian predators is absolutely necessary for the conservation of this species.



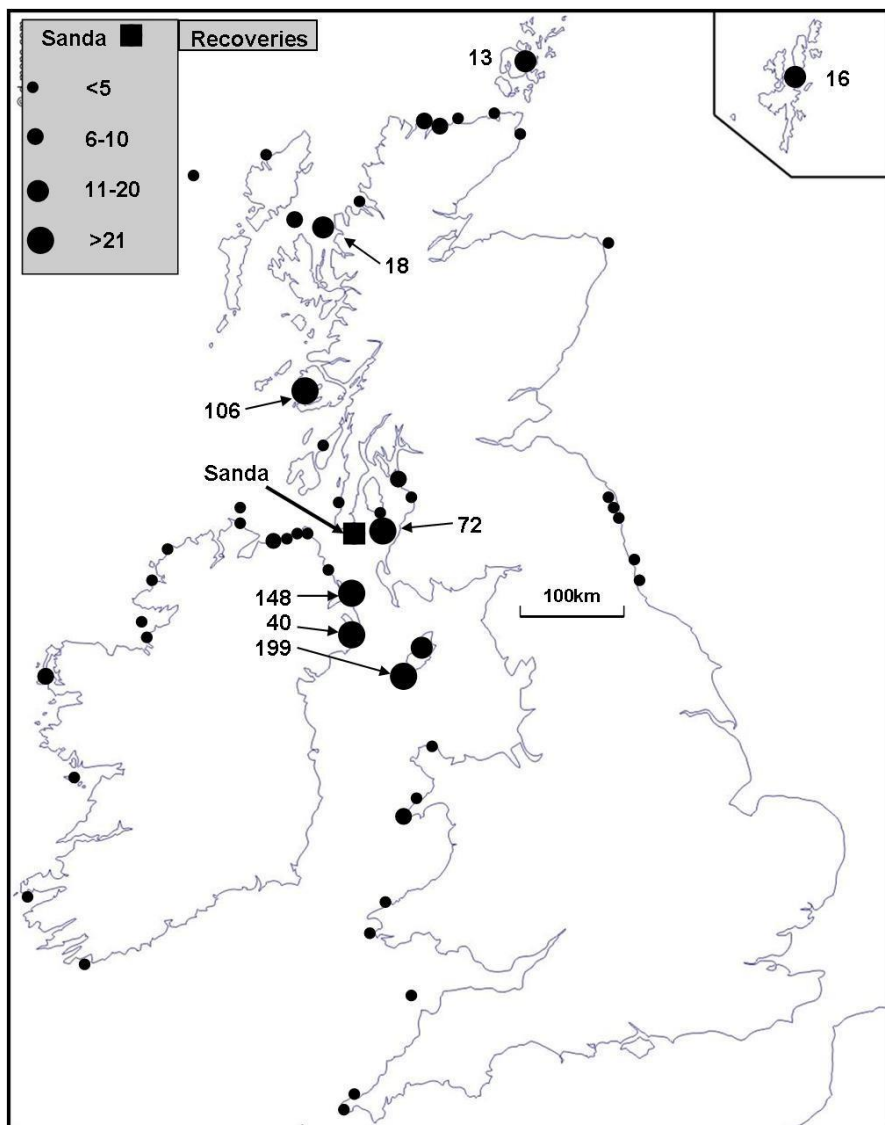
**Figure 1:** Storm Petrel on Sanda Island, South Kintyre © Rab Morton

### **Movements of Storm Petrels to / from Sanda as shown by ringing**

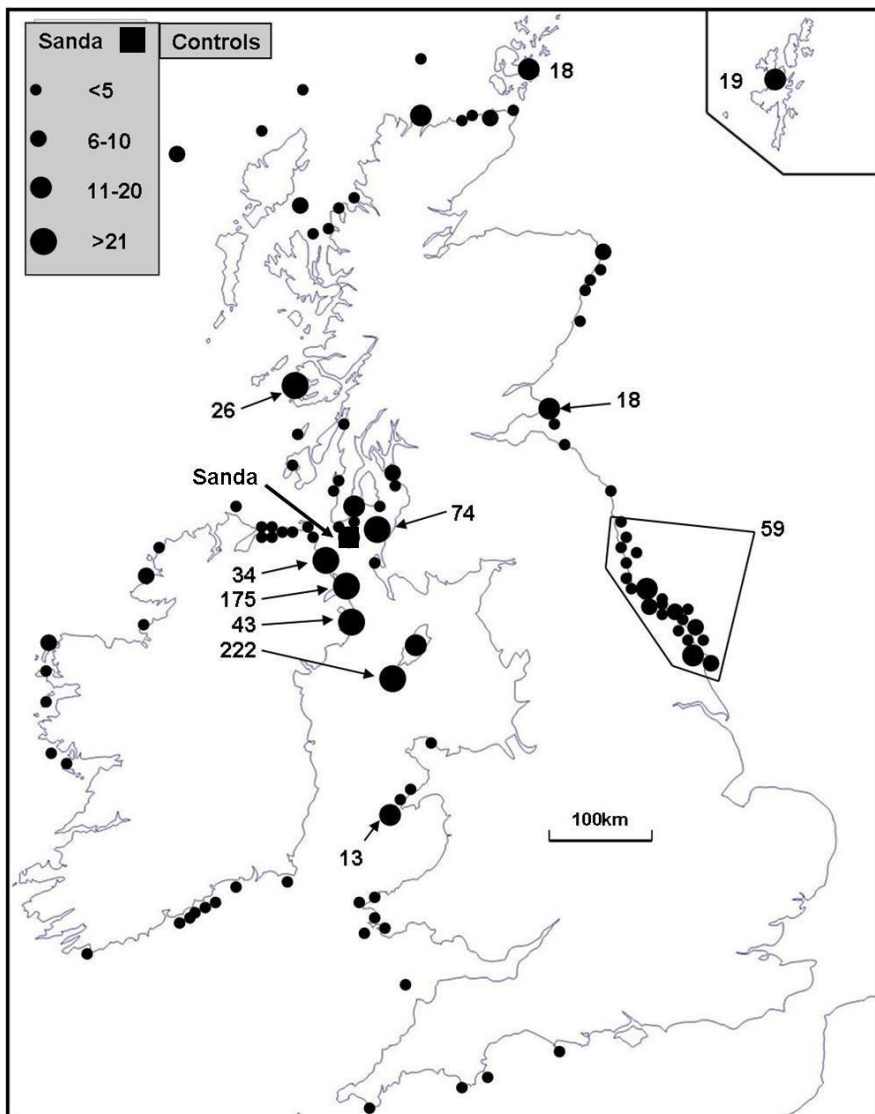
The small Storm Petrel colony on Sanda was monitored for 40 years (1976-2016) and a total of around 13,000 birds were ringed during this period; the average catch per summer season was around 325. Several ringing sites were employed on the island; by the lighthouse (colony) on the south side, and also on the north side (non-breeding site) overlooking the Sound of Sanda. The majority of birds trapped on the island when a tape-lure was employed were likely wandering non-breeders. This resulted in 990 BTO notifications of recoveries of birds ringed on Sanda at many locations around Britain and Ireland and foreign notifications of one in the Faroe Isles (751km), one in Norway (1,633km), 3 in Portugal (2,039km) and 2 in Africa (Western Sahara – 3,855km and Senegal – 4,694km). In addition, there were 991 notifications of controls at Sanda from many locations around Britain and Ireland and foreign notifications of 13 birds from Portugal and 3 from Norway (Table 1 and Figures 2 & 3).

**Table 1.** BTO notifications of recoveries and controls of Storm Petrel at Sanda, 1976-2016

<b>Country</b>	<b>Recovered</b>	<b>Controlled</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Scotland	355	294	<b>629</b>
England	301	323	<b>624</b>
Ireland	312	355	<b>667</b>
Wales	15	23	<b>38</b>
Faeroes	1	-	<b>1</b>
Norway	1	3	<b>4</b>
Portugal	3	13	<b>16</b>
W Africa	2	-	<b>2</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>1,981</b>



**Figure 2.** Numbers of Storm Petrels ringed on Sanda and recovered at locations in Britain and Ireland.



**Figure 3.** Numbers of Storm Petrels ringed at locations in Britain and Ireland and controlled on Sanda. The cluster of control notifications from the East coast of England may be related to an increased effort by many ringers following the capture of three Swinhoe's Storm-petrels *Oceanodroma monorhis* at Tynemouth.

The majority of notifications of Storm Petrels to and from Sanda involved exchanges of ringed immature birds that linked the sea areas of Northern Irish Sea, North Channel and Firth of

Clyde. The main non-breeding sites where there were many exchanges of immature birds includes Calf of Man Bird Observatory, Copeland Bird Observatory, Ailsa Craig and mainland locations at Sheepland Harbour, Co Down and Balleygalley Head, Co Antrim. Of a total of 990 Sanda-ringed birds recovered, 568 (57%) were caught at these locations. Also, of a total of 991 birds controlled on Sanda, 574 (57%) were ringed at these locations. Table 2 (below) reveals the comparable exchange rate of both recoveries and controls at all non-breeding sites where major exchanges occurred within 145km of Sanda. Treshnish (colony), 145km N of Sanda, is included in the table as there was a high recovery rate of Sanda-ringed birds there compared to unexceptional numbers of recoveries at all other breeding colonies over 150km from Sanda.

**Table 2.** Numbers of Storm Petrels recovered and controlled at sites within 150km of Sanda, 1976 – 2016

Location	Distance (km)	No. recovered	No. controlled	Totals
Treshnish Isles	145	106	26	<b>132</b>
Calf of Man BO	145	199	222	<b>401</b>
Sheepland Hbr	106	40	43	<b>83</b>
Copeland BO	66	148	175	<b>323</b>
Ballygally Head	47	3	34	<b>37</b>
Ailsa Craig	30	72	74	<b>146</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>1,142</b>

The nearest known large breeding colony to Sanda is at Treshnish Isles, Argyll. Many birds ringed on Sanda were caught there, possibly after recruiting to the colony and this may explain the disparity in the exchange rate - 106 recoveries from Sanda to Treshnish but only 26 controls from Treshnish to Sanda, however the number of birds caught will also be influenced by catching effort. The total number of BTO notifications of movements of birds at Sanda was 1,981 of which 1,142 (57%) were recoveries and controls within 145km of Sanda. This suggests that the sea areas within 150km of Sanda may be important in summer for a considerable number of the immature population, possibly summering in the area; however, heavy passage through the North Channel is also likely and further information on catching effort in all locations is required before conclusions can be drawn on these data. There was a substantial decline in the exchange rate of immature ringed birds at all locations over 150km from Sanda although non-breeding immatures are known to frequent breeding colonies (Ratcliffe *et al.* 1998). Not all breeding colonies are monitored. The nearest known colony south of Sanda is Bardsey (NW Wales - 300km) and notifications of exchanges of recoveries (8) and controls (12) from there were also unexceptional.

## Sexing the breeding population of Storm Petrels

The method of sexing the breeding population of Storm Petrels was determined by Rab Morton (Baker, 2016). During early summer 1990, a ‘singing’ male was watched by torchlight below a large boulder at the Sanda colony; the bird was ‘churring’, with open wings, displaying vivid snow-white greater underwing-coverts and its demeanour was reminiscent of a singing male Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. This intriguing display behaviour prompted a careful study of the underwing-coverts of breeding birds. Many were photographed and it was determined that the degree of white on the underwing-coverts varied considerably between the sexes. The underwings of known females (egg just visible in cloaca or laid in hand or bird holding bag) was found to be nondescript; both the colour and length of the broad band on the greater underwing-

coverts and white tips to the median underwing-coverts was unexceptional, much reduced, when compared to the profuse extent of white on the underwing of a male.



**Figure 4.** Underwing-coverts of male (left) and female (right) Storm Petrels © Rab Morton

Males have a large vivid patch of pure white on the underwing-coverts, particularly the greater underwing-coverts nearest to the body, along with broad white-tipped median underwing-coverts extending out to the carpal (Figure 4). This sexing method cannot be used for non-breeding birds (Rab Morton, *pers. obs.*).

### **Tape-luring Storm Petrels on the mainland**

During July and August there is a heavy passage / presence of wandering, non-breeding Storm Petrels off the west of Britain and Ireland with large numbers often present off West Scotland and in the Firth of Clyde (Maguire, 1999). Tape-luring the non-breeding population on the mainland was developed by Eddie Maguire. Initially, tape-luring Storm Petrels on the mainland was tested on the shore at Dunaverty, Southend in South Kintyre in the late 1970's. A small 4 shelf mist-net was set parallel to the shore below a cliff face and the amplified tape-lure was placed on the landward side of the net. Breath-taking results ensued. Success at other sites



around the Kintyre peninsula followed with further exciting trapping sessions at Mull of Kintyre and Machrihanish on the South-west coast and at the mouth of Campbeltown Loch and Carradale harbour on the East coast.

Additional catches were made at Tumberry Point, Ayrshire gave rise to the exciting possibility that perhaps the method could be applied almost anywhere in the UK, and in 1980, it came up trumps at Fife Ness, the most easterly mainland point in Fife when the first birds to be caught on the North Sea coast were lured ashore, as many have been since (Eddie Maguire, Rod Angus, Rab Morton, Alan Leitch, Bernie Zonfrillo and Tommy Daniels *et al.*). Apparently more Storm Petrels were caught on the shore at Fife Ness in one night than had ever been seen by birdwatchers at this popular sea-watching site (Dougie Dickson *pers. comm.*). The first successful mainland catch of Storm Petrels in England was at Portland Bill Bird Observatory, Dorset in the early 1980's (Eddie Maguire, Mick Rogers *et al.*).

The subsequent application and impact of this technique at coastal locations around Britain and Ireland by BTO ringers was rapid. With the species generally available for capture on the mainland, this unique method of tape-luring Storm Petrels into mist-nets was soon rapidly endorsed. Each summer, ringers make the most of this technique to catch the wandering immature population of Storm Petrels at a network of headlands and harbours around Britain and Ireland (and in many other countries) especially on dark, moonless nights. This, in turn, boosted the recovery / control rate of immature Storm Petrels at most ringing stations, including Sanda. Nocturnal tape-luring activities to trap Storm Petrels on the mainland can occasionally yield a more unusual catch, other than the intended target species, such as Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. However, no one could have foreseen that eventually a Storm Petrel tape-luring system placed on the landward side of a mist-net, set parallel to the shore, would lead to the astonishing capture of Swinhoe's Storm-petrels – a species new to Britain and Ireland, in British waters. Three were attracted to a Storm Petrel tape-luring system and caught at Tynemouth on the North-east coast of England (with subsequent retraps) (Cubitt, 1995). In addition, another mainland-based Storm Petrel ringing group also caught a Swinhoe's at Cove, Aberdeen – a species new to Scotland (Forrester *et al.*, 2007). Later, in 2013, two Swinhoe's were trapped at Fair Isle Bird Observatory (Shetland); one of these was retrapped in 2014 and the other was retrapped twice in August 2016 (Fair Isle Bird Observatory blog / August 2016).

## **Discussion**

The history of the Storm Petrel in S Kintyre over the past 40 years is remarkably varied. The discovery of the Sanda breeding colony in 1976 led to a 40 year ringing programme that yielded a great deal of surprises within the immature population and also several new ground-breaking procedures that engaged a large number of Storm Petrel enthusiasts around the coast of Britain and Ireland, including researchers at breeding colonies and BTO ringers on the mainland.

The mass BTO notifications of recoveries and controls appear to suggest that a potential summering or heavy passage area for the immature population of Storm Petrels exists within the Northern Irish Sea, North Channel and Firth of Clyde. In addition, the exchange rate of recoveries and controls at breeding colonies and mainland locations over 150km from Sanda plummets considerably and may support this hypothesis.

Discoveries in South Kintyre included how a method for sexing the breeding population of Storm Petrels was determined. Many were photographed and it was established that the degree and intensity of white on the underwing-coverts varied considerably between the sexes. Also, the breakthrough that the nomadic immature population could be trapped on the mainland by drawing them into mist-nets with the use of an amplified tape-luring system was an exciting development that led to a network of ringing stations at mainland locations around the coasts of Britain and Ireland. This tape-luring method was also directly involved in the discovery of four Swinhoe's Storm-Petrels at two mainland locations in England (3 birds) and Scotland (1 bird) - a species new to Britain and Ireland. The presence of this Far Eastern species in the North Atlantic is one of the most exciting discoveries and one of the greatest mysteries of European ornithology (Forrester *et al.*, 2007). Both the Kintyre discoveries were significant contributions to hands-on ornithology and both are extensively employed by BTO ringers and researchers.

## Acknowledgements

The authors thank the British Trust for Ornithology for the use of Data Request Stope ringing records for Sanda Island. The BTO Ringing Scheme is funded by a partnership of the British Trust for Ornithology, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (on behalf of Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage and the Department of the Environment Northern Ireland), The National Parks and Wildlife Service (Ireland) and the ringers themselves.

Thanks also to the many ringers who visited Sanda on numerous occasions and helped amass this valuable information.

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# A Survey of Rookeries in Argyll in 2017

David C Jardine & Eddie Maguire

## Introduction

The last complete census of Rook *Corvus frugilegus* in Argyll took place in 1975 when it was recorded there were 3,217 nests found in 78 rookeries (Castle 1976, Ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2007). Since then, while the population in Scotland has declined (BTO BBS results), localised increases were found in parts of Argyll up to 2001, so in spring 2017 the Argyll Bird Club decided to carry out a further census of the rooks in the county.

While most rooks are found in Kintyre and on Islay, they breed throughout most of Argyll and 33 new rookeries have been found since the national survey in 1975.

The aims of the survey were to:

- Record (and map) the location of all rookeries in the survey area;
- Count the number of nests in all rookeries in the survey area;
- Record other pertinent data, e.g. tree species in which nests are located;
- Provide an estimate of current breeding population in the survey area.

## Methods

A standardised methodology is used to count rook nests and allows comparisons with past and, hopefully, future surveys. The following methodology has been adopted from that used by national surveys (in 1975, 1980 and 1986) and most local, usually county-based, surveys.

A rookery is defined as any group of nests 100m or more from the next nearest group. Whilst this is an arbitrary definition it has the advantage of being relatively easy to apply in the field and is repeatable. A consequence of this definition is that a single rookery may be spread out over a large area or an area with many nests could comprise a number of rookeries.

The difficulties of counting nests in rookeries are well known; the most obvious problems concern the counting of nests in conifers, the counting of multiple nests, the difficulty (in large rookeries) of arriving at a similar total each time, and the inaccuracy that can result from counting nests from a distance.

Rookeries were largely counted between 15th and 30th April, as all nests would then be complete and in use, but the trees were not yet in full leaf obscuring the nests. Counts made earlier in the season were accepted as a visit may not have been possible during the best time. Where it was impossible to get an accurate nest count, e.g. where nests are in conifers, an estimate of number of nests was sought (but in the event this approach was not used). Observers were asked to record the tree species in which nests are built.

## Results

### *Number of nests*

A total of 2,519 nests were found during the survey. The distribution of these nests is provided in Figure 1 and Table 1. Details of all of the rookeries found are provided in Appendix 1.

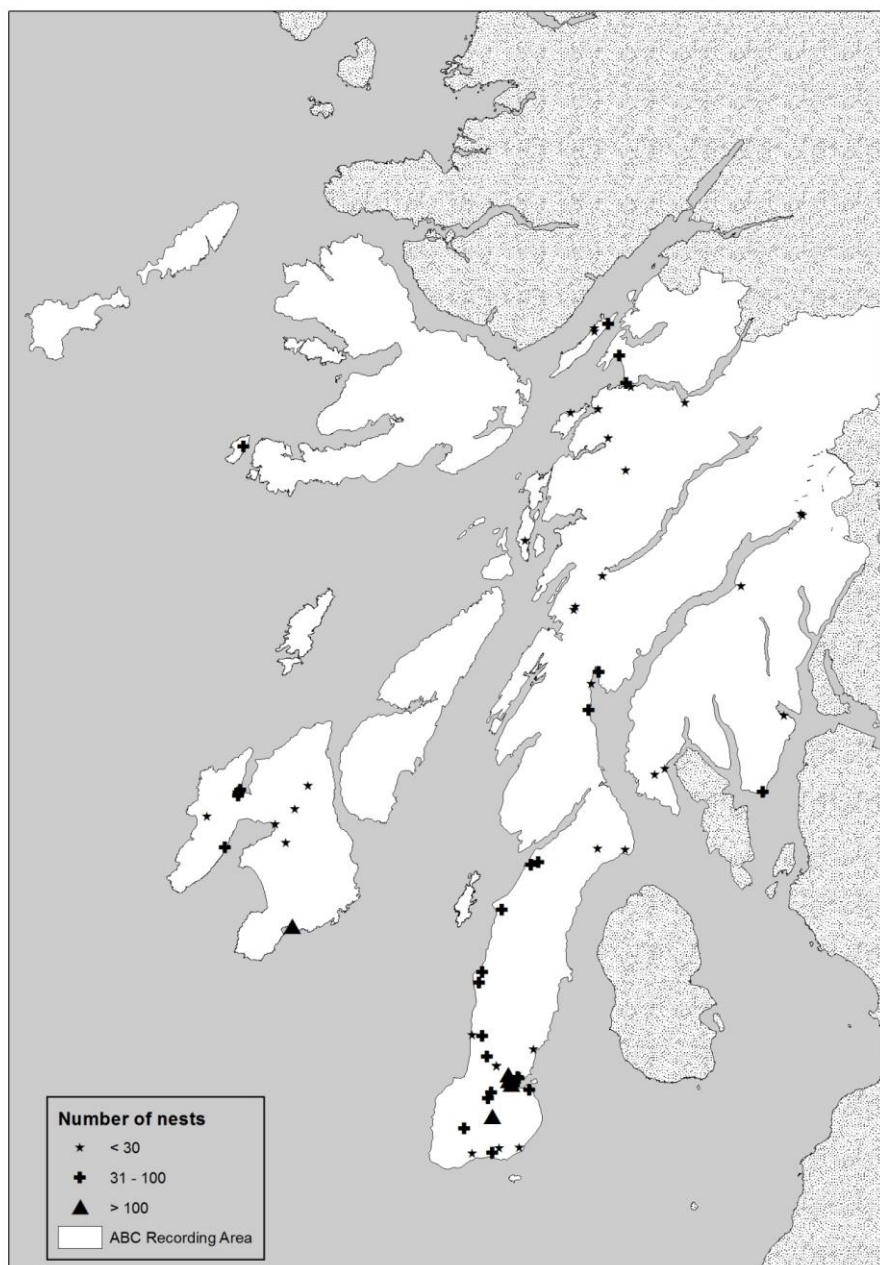


Figure 1 Distribution and size of Rookeries in Argyll, 2017.

	Number of Rookeries 2017	Number of Nests 2017	Number of Nests 1975	% change
Mull	1	42	48	-12.5
Islay	10	353	113	+212.4
N Argyll	6	128	186	-31.2
Mid-Argyll	14	219	479	-54.3
Cowal	5	106	264	-59.1
Kintyre	31	1671	2042	-19.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>2519</b>	<b>3132</b>	<b>-19.6</b>

Table 1 *Number of nests recorded in Rookeries by Argyll recording area in 2017.*

### *Rookeries – Tree species*

Tree species were reported from 54 of the rookeries (80.6%) found. Most rookeries were in Sycamore *Acer psuedoplatanus* woodlands (Table 2), with Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* and Beech *Fagus sylvaticus* woodland also being used.

Alder	3.70%	Conifer sp	3.70%
Ash	18.52%	Douglas Fir	1.85%
Beech	12.96%	Larch sp	1.85%
Birch	1.85%	Scots Pine	18.52%
Elm	3.70%	Sitka Spruce	3.70%
Lime	1.85%	Western Red Cedar	1.85%
Sycamore	83.33%		
Deciduous sp	1.85%		

Table 2 *Percentage of Rookeries in Argyll in 2017 comprising different tree species*

### *Rookeries - Nest tree species*

In 39 (58.2%) of the rookeries the number of nests in each species of tree was noted. The tree species was recorded for 1,313 nests (52.1% of all nests in the survey)

	No of nests	%		No of nests	%
Alder	35	2.67	Scots Pine	120	9.14
Ash	29	2.21	Sitka Spruce	42	3.20
Beech	121	9.22	Western Red Cedar	1	0.08

	No of nests	%
Birch	2	0.15
Elm	8	0.61
Lime	6	0.46
Sycamore	937	71.36
Deciduous sp	12	0.91

Table 3 *Tree species of 1,313 Rook nests in Argyll in 2017*

## Discussion

In preparation for the survey the original data cards for the 1975 Rookery Survey (which are held in Waterston House by the Scottish Ornithologists Club) were consulted and it was found that the quoted details for Argyll included data from sites in Morvern, which at that time was in Argyll. The corrected total for the Argyll recording area in 1975 was found to be 3,132 nests in 71 rookeries.

A total of 2,519 nests was found in 67 rookeries, compared with 3,132 nests in 71 rookeries in 1975 (just under a 20% decline). Two-thirds of these nests were found in Kintyre, a similar proportion to that found in 1975. The number of nests in the whole Kintyre had declined a similar amount (-19.2%) to the decline in the whole of Argyll since 1975. In South Kintyre, where regular counts have been conducted since 1975, numbers have fluctuated: 2,025 nests were found there in 1975, but declined to 1,397 nests in 1989, before rising to a peak of 2,514 nests in 1996 (Maguire 1996). Since then numbers have declined by 41% to 1,471 in 2017. No detailed studies have been undertaken to establish the cause of this decline, but changes in agricultural practice (such as reduction in pasture associated with lower livestock numbers, changes in cropping patterns and the impact of the use of veterinary products (eg Avermectins) on soil invertebrates) are believed to be one of the principal factors leading to population change in numbers in Rooks.

Islay is the second most important region for Rooks in Argyll; here the number of nests recorded has trebled since 1975, but has also declined since more recent counts. In 1985, 211 nests were found on the island and this increased to a peak in 2001 of 442 nests (Ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2007), but subsequently there has been a decline of 14% to 353 nests. On Islay, a reduction in persecution may have led to an initial increase in the number of Rooks, but more recently, like Kintyre, it is suggested that agricultural changes will be the principal driver of the population decline.

No nesting rooks were found on Jura, or on Mull itself, with the only rookery in this area being found on Iona. While the population on Iona and Mull is small, it is the regional population in Argyll which has suffered the smallest decline.

The number of rooks in North Argyll has declined by a third, while those in Mid-Argyll and Cowal are now less than half those recorded in 1975. These areas have significantly more forestry than other regions in Argyll and increasing woodland area, along with the agricultural changes found in other part of Argyll are thought to be the cause of these larger declines.

Sycamore has been planted widely in the agricultural areas of Argyll, largely because it is considered hardier than other broadleaf trees in salt-laden atmospheres. It also has a strong branching structure, therefore it was not surprising that it was the tree most commonly used by rooks for nesting. It is notable that the most common forest tree species in Argyll, Sitka spruce *Picea sitchensis*, is not greatly used by rooks. One other tree species commonly used for nesting (Beech) is also a non-native tree, but the other two important nesting trees for rooks in Argyll, Scots Pine and Ash are native. It remains to be seen if the advent of Chalara Ash disease in Argyll impacts on the distribution of this species, but as Sycamore is seen as a possible replacement for it in the landscape it is likely that any impact on available nest sites for rooks will be small.

As it appears that changes in agriculture, many driven by changes associated with the single farm payment, have been the principal cause in the decline in the population of rooks in Argyll, it is helpful that a full survey of the population has been carried out in 2017, prior to the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Community and the Common Agricultural Policy, which will undoubtedly lead to further agricultural change in Argyll.

### Acknowledgements

We thank all the contributors to the Rookery Survey - Irene Boston, Ian Brooke, Tom Callan, Phil Catton, Cherry Cook, Stuart Crutchfield, Drew Dick, Jim Dickson, Neil Hammatt, Mike Harrison, Robin Harvey, James How, David James, David Jardine, John Kinross, Rob Lightfoot, Eddie Maguire, Rab Morton, Yvonne McCrone, Louise Muir, Malcolm Ogilvie, Mike Peacock, Felicity Pollard, Peter Roberts, Lesley Silcock, John Taylor, Gary Turnbull, Lucy Ward, Emily Wilkins, who provided invaluable information on the distribution and number of nesting rooks in Argyll. Malcolm Chattwood kindly prepared Figure 1.

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## Appendix 1: List of Rookeries in Argyll – 2017

Recording Area	Grid Ref	Location	Number of nests
Islay	NR253586	Port Charlotte	44
Islay	NR224637	Rockside	2
Islay	NR275671	Aoradh Wood	38
Islay	NR278680	Gruinart	54
Islay	NR276676	Bushmills Woods	37
Islay	NR363457	Port Ellen, Tighcorgaman	118
Islay	NR353594	Mulindry	7
Islay	NR336624	Sornbank, Bridgend	8
Islay	NR368649	Esknish	29
Islay	NR389657	Kilmeny Church	16
Kintyre	NR658084	Lephinsthath House	3
Kintyre	NR691085	Southend village	66
Kintyre	NR645125	Amod Farm	53
Kintyre	NR684174	Garvachy	36
Kintyre	NR689184	Killeonan Farm	72
Kintyre	NR691145	Pennygowan	224
Kintyre	NR674277	Tangy Farm	44
Kintyre	NR658278	Tangy Glen	24
Kintyre	NR682243	Kilmaho	34
Kintyre	NR698228	Kilmichael Farm	3
Kintyre	NR698227	Kilmichael	3
Kintyre	NR669364	Glenbarr	41
Kintyre	NR674381	Glencreggan	73
Kintyre	NR702093	Mill Park, nr Southend	17
Kintyre	NR735094	Macharioch	28
Kintyre	NR726196	Kilkerran	71
Kintyre	NR721199	Stronvaar	3
Kintyre	NR751188	Kildalloig	89
Kintyre	NR717213	High Street, Campbeltown	137
Kintyre	NR718204	Witchburn Road, Campbeltown	119



Recording Area	Grid Ref	Location	Number of nests
Kintyre	NR719209	Saddell Street, Campbeltown	21
Recording Area	Grid Ref	Location	Number of nests
Kintyre	NR722198	The Cutting, Campbeltown	127
Kintyre	NR722196	Campbeltown Grammar school	10
Kintyre	NR732209	High Askomil	72
Kintyre	NR734207	Low Askomil / C'town	86
Kintyre	NR758255	Peninver	15
Kintyre	NR706484	Lenaig	37
Kintyre	NR754557	Stewartfield	47
Kintyre	NR766562	Clachan village	79
Kintyre	NR863584	Glenreadell	19
Kintyre	NR908582	McArthur's Walk, Skipness	18
Mid-Argyll	NM744089	Kilchatton Farm, Luing	16
Mid-Argyll	NM871031	Ford	19
Mid-Argyll	NM818292	Slaterich Farm, Kerrera	6
Mid-Argyll	NM880257	Cleigh, Kilmore	3
Mid-Argyll	NM864305	Benvoullin Gardens, Oban	22
Mid-Argyll	NM909204	Scammadale	22
Mid-Argyll	NN006315	Taynuilt	3
Mid-Argyll	NN198131	Achandunan, head of Loch Fyne	2
Mid-Argyll	NN196133	Glen Fyne	18
Mid-Argyll	NR853854	Ardrishaig (near Canal)	2
Mid-Argyll	NR848811	Invermeil	42
Mid-Argyll	NR865873	Kilmory Woodland Park	34
Mid-Argyll	NR827981	Nether Largie	10
Mid-Argyll	NR824976	Ri Cruin, Slockavullin	20
Mull	NM284243	The Manse, Iona	42
Cowal	NN098015	Strachur	20
Cowal	NR957705	Millhouse	3
Cowal	NR973715	Kames, beside Post Office	26
Cowal	NS133677	Toward - Loop road to lighthouse	46

Recording Area	Grid Ref	Location	Number of nests
Cowal	NS168802	Garden of Glensheil House	11
North Argyll	NM899392	Keils Crofts, Benderloch	33
North Argyll	NM858432	Church, Clachan, Lismore	17
Recording Area	Grid Ref	Location	Number of nests
North Argyll	NM858437	Bachuil House, Lismore	1
North Argyll	NM880444	Achuaran, Lismore	31
North Argyll	NM910347	North Connel	31
North Argyll	NM918341	Achaleven	15



**Rook** *Campbeltown Airport, Kintyre* (Eddie Maguire)

## **Thayer's Gull (*Larus glaucooides thayeri*) on Islay from 27th February to 25th April 2014: A new sub-species for Scotland and Argyll**

*Jim Dickson*

On 27 February 2014 visiting birders to Islay (Adam Cross and Sean Jacques) found an interesting dark looking 'Iceland' type Gull at Gartbreck on the east side of Loch Indaal, about 3km SW of Bowmore. They managed to get some photographs of the bird and at this stage identified it as a dark example of a juvenile Kumlien's Gull (a sub-species of Iceland Gull). The bird was not seen again however on 2 March another group of visiting birders (Kriss Gibb, Dennis Morrison and Mark Wilkinson) spotted an interesting dark looking Kumlien's type gull, this time on the opposite shore of Loch Indaal, near the shop in Bruichladdich. They managed to get a good look at the bird as it stood on rocks and took some photos before it flew off. After careful study they felt the bird showed dark enough primaries and tail to suggest it was a juvenile Thayer's Gull. Feedback was sought from various gull aficionados and most agreed that the bird did indeed look good for this sub-species of Iceland Gull (treated as a full species by authorities outwith the UK) not previously accepted in Scotland and with only two previously accepted records in Great Britain, although several have been accepted in Ireland. The record was then submitted to the BBRC.

With careful study of the photos taken of the Gartbreck bird in February, I along with Adam Cross and Sean Jaques concluded that it was the same bird involved, taking into account the different light conditions, certain plumage details were the same. The bird was last noted at Bruichladdich by Kriss Gibb *et al* on 11 March before they headed back off Islay. No further reports were received from any birders on Islay and it is not clear if the gull was actively looked for despite being a potential new sub-species for Scotland and only the third for Great Britain.

I was heading over to Islay for a weeks stay on 20 April and to be honest had forgotten about the probable Thayer's record as that was last seen some six weeks earlier. With no reports and such a large passage of time I had assumed the bird had gone....so to my astonishment, on my very first scan of Loch Indaal after coming off the ferry, I found myself looking at a Thayer's type gull about 50 metres off Gortan (between Bridgend and Bruichladdich). It was on an area of rocky shore and looked fairly settled, so I took a few minutes to study it and take some photos. The plumage was much paler than the images I had studied of it from Feb/Mar however the bill, size, structure, wing and tail detail were the same. The body plumage was now very bleached and was now in a first-summer type plumage. As such it did not really stand out as a dark plumaged juvenile gull. Confident that this was the same bird and indeed a likely 2CY Thayer's on account of various features noted I contacted some Islay birders to let them know this 'exciting' news! Peter Roberts, who lives in Bruichladdich, arrived within a few minutes and saw it. The fact that no-one else came to see it confirms my belief and many in the birding world that gulls are a bit of an esoteric speciality and therefore a turn-off....however the only previously accepted record of a juvenile Thayer's in Great Britain, in Lincolnshire during April 2012 attracted several hundred twitchers!

Over the next few days I made some casual scans through gulls present around Loch Indaal to try and relocate it but without success. On 25 April I stopped my car outside the shop in Bruichladdich and immediately saw this gull again as it stood about 20 metres away on the rocky shore, indeed on the very same rock that Kriss Gibb *et al* had photographed it. I quickly

grabbed my camera and reeled off as many shots as I could just in case it flew off, which it did so a few minutes later. On this occasion the bird was much closer than during my previous sighting and could now appreciate some details better. The photographs taken were also part of the overall submission to the BBRC for their consideration. Presumably much thought and discussion had gone into their decision making process as the bird was only recently accepted (as a first for Scotland and third for Great Britain) in the October 2017 British Birds rare birds report for 2016 (British Birds Vol. 110 p 589).

- Jizz: similar to Iceland Gull *but* with a dumpy pot-bellied look, a short primary projection, more like a small Herring Gull (cf nominate Iceland with long primary projection) and a sloping forehead and rounded crown, rather than the nice rounded head appearance of Iceland/Kumlien's.
- All dark bill (dark reddish tinge at base and blackish outer) and thicker at goyns.
- Showing very obvious dark primaries with narrow pale tips on closed wing and in flight P10 to P5 with dark outer and pale inner shafts giving the classic 'venetian blind' effect of a juv Thayer's. (Very dark Kumlien's types usually only dark on outermost primaries P8 or P7 at most). Silvery tone to underside of the primaries.
- Showing a good solid dark tail with only white tips.
- Showing a good solid darker secondary wing bar, which would be absent or much reduced in a dark Kumlien's.
- Heavily barred rump, upper and under tail coverts.
- Dark axillaries and under wing coverts.

*Thayer's Gull (Larus glaucooides thayeri)* was first accepted in Great Britain and Ireland with a bird in Co. Cork in 1990. The first accepted record in the UK was not until 6 Nov 2010 when an adult was discovered at Pitsea landfill site, Essex. This was followed by the first juvenile at Elsham in Lincolnshire in Apr 2012. The juvenile on Islay, Argyll was then followed by another juvenile at Mirfield, Yorkshire in Dec 2014 and an adult at Minsmere, Suffolk in March 2016. A juvenile bird very similar to the Islay bird at Dunbeg, Argyll in November 2011 was not submitted to BBRC. With identification criteria now better understood in a British context more records can be expected. The taxonomic position of Thayer's Gull is still not fully resolved but is currently being treated as a sub-species of Iceland Gull.



**Thayer's Gull** Islay March 2014 (Kriss Gibb)

## **Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) at Balephuill, Tiree on 22-23rd September 2016: A new species for Argyll**

*John Bowler*

The morning of 22 September 2016 was clear and sunny on Tiree with a light southerly breeze and I awoke early to check for new migrants by scanning the trees from our living room windows at Balephuill. There was lots of activity with some 5 Goldcrests new in, plus a male Blackcap, a Sedge Warbler and at least 4 Robins chasing each-other about. I was hoping for an early Yellow-browed Warbler, given the numbers that had been arriving over the previous days in Shetland, and was checking all the 'crests' closely. At 0830hrs a movement at the base of a large willow caught my eye and I focussed my bins on a small thrush-like bird that was facing away from me, having just hopped up onto a low branch. From behind, the rather uniform brown tones above and pale spotting on the greater coverts initially made me think I was looking at yet another first-winter Robin. However, it then turned around to face me and I realised that I was looking at something very different indeed! Instead of the expected uniform orange face and breast of a Robin, I found myself looking at a very small compact thrush with striking broad buff eye-rings and a warm buff wash to the face and breast including a buff line on the lores. There were thin dark lateral throat stripes leading to neat dark spotting restricted to the upper breast, whilst the belly was white and there was a grey wash down the flanks. I knew immediately that I was watching an American *Catharus* thrush, a skulking group of birds that I had long dreamt about finding on Tiree. Fortunately, I have seen all five species on trips to the Americas and the bold buff 'spectacles' combined with the neatly spotted buffy washed chest pronounced this to be a Swainson's Thrush!

The bird jumped off the branch on rather long pale pink legs and hopped across an open patch of leaf litter under the willows. At this point, the thrill of finding a new bird for Argyll, quickly shifted to the need to photograph the bird. I crept to the living room table where my camera was lying and returned with it to the window. The bird was still showing as I slowly pulled the camera out of its case and turned it on. However, just as I had zoomed in on the thrush, it hopped behind a low leafy branch and disappeared from sight. Not a problem I thought, the bird had been showing well and would surely return to the same open patch of ground, so I waited. At one point, what I assumed was the Swainson's Thrush re-appeared for a second but was immediately flushed away by a Robin. I continued to wait. After 30 long minutes, it had not returned, so I decided to head out into the garden. I took my bins and camera with me but I failed to connect with the thrush and I reluctantly headed up into my office to work, where I phoned in the news to Angus Murray and put out an e-mail to the Hebridean birding network. Remarkably, just two hours later, I received a return e-mail from Andrew Stevenson saying he was watching another Swainson's Thrush in his garden at Bornish on South Uist! What are the odds that two individuals of this skulking vagrant would turn up on the same morning in the gardens of two Hebridean birders? How many more Swainson's Thrushes turned up unseen that day on the Scottish west coast I wonder....

Repeated checks of the garden corner where the thrush had first shown drew a blank, although it showed very briefly at the base of a dense hedge bordering our neighbour's garden, whilst I was scanning from our upstairs bathroom window. Determined to see the bird properly again and to photograph it, I headed out into the garden in my lunch-break. Moving slowly around the garden, I finally glimpsed the thrush flying up out of our vegetable plot and then again as it flew

from the boundary hedge-line onto a stone-wall under some willows in our front garden. In doing so, it had revealed its striking black and white striped underwing pattern, whilst its pale buffy eye-ring glowed in the dark shade as it sat on the wall with what appeared to be a small slug in its bill. I picked up my camera and began to focus, but just as I did so, it flipped over the wall and into our neighbour's garden. I followed it very quietly and whilst searching for it on the ground under our neighbour's bushes, suddenly noticed that it was actually sitting in the open on top of a pile of logs watching me! I binned it briefly and then began focussing my camera on it once more but it immediately flipped onto a stone wall, down which it quickly hopped and disappeared into cover again. I could not relocate the bird after that, so returned to work and indeed I did not see the bird again for the rest of the day.

The following morning, Jim Dickson and two twitchers from Staffordshire named Darren and Chris arrived to join the hunt. All three went on to obtain flight views only, as the bird flicked three times between the two gardens in very blustery conditions but it singularly failed to show again on the ground. An additional birder, Cliff Davies, arrived in the afternoon off the delayed Glasgow plane and spent five fruitless hours searching for the bird in the rain. It had clearly gone to ground under the dense mass of brambles and Olearia hedging between the two gardens and remained unseen, save for a very brief final showing there to me at 1830hrs from the bathroom window again. Despite a wet and windy night, the bird appeared to head off overnight on 23 September and there was no sign of it the next day, despite frequent searches by myself and Jim Dickson.

*There were 18 accepted records of Swainson's Thrush in Scotland upto the end of 2015 and a further three birds were recorded and accepted by the BBRC in Scotland during 2016.*

## **Isabelline Wheatear (*Oenanthe isabellina*) at Machir Bay, Islay on 23rd Nov to 3rd Dec 2016: A new species for Argyll**

*Jim Dickson*

On 23rd Nov 2016 Gary Turnbull reported a pale Northern Wheatear at Machir Bay while he was taking some birdwatching clients on his tour. The bird was distant and as such he was unable to study the bird closely. This sighting appeared on Ian's Brooke's Islay bird blog that evening and when read my first thoughts were...that's really late - I wonder if an Isabelline has been ruled out? With no further reports I had to forget about this sighting... until 27th Nov, when Mike Peacock emailed some records shots of an interesting pale 'wheatear' he had found on the gravel track leading to the Machir Bay car park. Images of it were a bit small and distant, however going by the pallid look and 'jizz', particularly one of it on a pile of gravel, it instantly looked like an Isabelline, so I emailed back to Mike a minute later saying 'surely an Isabelline Wheatear'. Mike had suspected the bird didn't look right for a Northern Wheatear and that it was more likely an Isabelline or a female Desert Wheatear. He alerted fellow birder Peter Roberts who managed to see the bird later that day. Unfortunately at this stage the tail (detail) could not be seen clearly in the field nor the black alula or open wing to reveal the colour of the under-wing coverts.

Feedback on the photos from some other birders was mixed, as confirmation of supporting features was needed, however Martin Scott sent Mike's photos to Paul French (BBRC) who

immediately said it was an Isabelline! Later on Mike emailed through a couple more photos also taken on 27 Nov and these showed a bit of the isolated black alula contrasting with the fawn, non-dark centred greater coverts. As such I was happy it was an Isabelline and made plans to get over to Islay and make sure I got photos of the tail detail and underwing coverts to confirm the 'ID' this bird 'in the field'. I managed over to Islay on 1st Dec and at the same time there was a bit of disquiet about the bird's ID from some birders (via the internet) having seen the original photos and saying it was 'just' a pale Northern Wheatear!

I arrived at Machir Bay car park just before 10 am and searching with Mike and Peter it took just over 30 mins to find the bird in a large area of short grass and sandy mounds. The first view was through bins about 50 metres away as it flew away from me. The tail detail could be clearly seen - it was indeed an Isabelline going by the extent of the black tail band, being wider than the reduced white on the tail, coupled with the pallid open wing. Next task was to get some photos to clear up any doubt raised by some folk.

In the field the long legs and upright stance were apparent and the isolated black alula could be seen well. The bird kept bobbing its tail in a characteristic Isabelline Wheatear style. So over the next couple of hours I tried to capture on film the tail detail and underwing covert colour and managed a few record shots of these. The light wasn't great and the bird was generally in the 30-70 metre zone so just had to make do with that. Later that day I was getting various email and text messages while travelling back home to the mainland, saying that some folk were still doubting the ID from Mike's original photos. Back home at last, I was able to sort out my photos and email them out now that the essential field ID features had been 'confirmed'. The bird remained in the same area allowing some of the resident Islay birders to see it as well as a small number of folk who travelled over to Islay.

### **Main points noted in the field & from photos (and submitted to the BBRC):**

**Size/shape/jizz:** A large & very pale sandy/fawn coloured wheatear. Similar to a 1w (f) Northern but appearing more 'top heavy' with a thick necked appearance, largish head and a bulging chest at times. It never appeared to be 'slim'. The legs looked relatively long and now and again they were held completely vertical and the stance was very upright.

**Plumage: Head & upperparts:** At a distance the upperparts (nape, mantle & back) appeared pale sandy brown and the crown perhaps a shade darker. It showed a very slight paler supercilium going a short way behind the eye (probably not as far back as a 1w Northern) and was less well marked in front of the eye. It showed slightly darker (brown) lores/eyestripe, particularly on the right hand side however was more noticeable when seen in front view with the dark lores standing out more.

**Closed wing:** In comparison with what would be expected on a 1w Northern the main points noted were: wings were paler overall, with noticeably pale (sandy fawn) greater coverts without darkish centres, broad sandy buff edges to the secondaries with darker brown (not blackish) centres. Broad pale buff edges to the primary coverts with slightly darker centres (cf Northern with narrow pale edges and blackish centres). The median coverts were centred dark brown and not blackish as on Northern. The closed primaries were dark brownish rather than much darker brown or even blackish on Northern. The tertials showed very broad buff edges, much broader than on Northern. Finally the alula when it was exposed was black and contrasted with the fawn-buff greater coverts.

**Open wing:** In the field during brief flights the upper wing appeared pale buff and the same shade as the mantle and the underwing coverts were very pale whitish. From the photos taken of

the upperwing the alula can be seen as black and stands out against the paler wing. Also the underwing photos show the wing to be very pale indeed with whitish underwing coverts.

Underparts: Paler than the upperparts with a nice pale buff wash to the cheeks contrasting with a whitish chin & throat and showing a nice band of sandy buff across the upper chest contrasting with the rest of the more whitish underparts although a buff wash to the flanks and a bit on the undertail coverts.

Tail & rump: A lot of attention was paid to this area. In flight the black tail band appeared much broader than on Northern but of course a subjective judgement and it was necessary to get photos of this. The extent of black appeared as nearly to the same extent of white on the tail maybe 40:60 whereas on Northern it is more like 30:70 at most. Also from the photos it can be seen that the black tail band meets or goes beyond the undertail coverts. The 'T' bar in the central tail appeared shorter than would expect for Northern.

Bill: At times the bill looked relatively thick based and longer (than Northern).

Eye: Black.

Legs: Blackish and perhaps longer (than Northern). Feathered 'thighs' whitish with no evidence of dark spots often seen on 1w Northern.

Age/sex: Was aged as a 1w (first-winter) on account of the broad paler fringes to upperwing coverts & tertials and also narrow pale tips to the primaries. Although it was felt this bird was probably a female due to the brown rather than blackish lores, it may not be possible to sex a 1w bird?

Behaviour: It frequented an area of short grass within a circular area of sandy mounds. It was running about searching for food and occasionally flew short distances, frequently bobbing its tail up and down and occasionally cocking the tail upwards. At times the bird stood 'tall' on vertical legs and showed a bulging chest and pot-bellied appearance. It wasn't heard to call.

*This bird was accepted by the BBRC as a first-winter and was only the 8<sup>th</sup> Scottish record and a first for the west of Scotland. Previous Scottish records have been: one in Aberdeenshire in 1979, Shetland in 1994, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2016 and Orkney in 2005.*



**Isabelline Wheatear** Islay 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 (Jim Dickson)



# Argyll Ringing Recoveries

## Selected Highlights From 2016

*Nigel Scriven*

The individuals and groups that are involved in ringing birds in Argyll are many and varied, as is the range of birds ringed. There is no single Argyll ringing group to co-ordinate and collate ringing activities and the data generated. The information below is gleaned from the BTO on-line ringing report for 2016, which is a tiny selection from the vast quantity of information held on the national ringing database:

[www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports](http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports)

Birds included in the report may include records from previous years that only found their way into the BTO database in 2016, and had not previously been reported. Details for Argyll are found listed under the 'area' of Argyll. It is from these that birds ringed, or later found in Argyll are selected. Criteria for selection include foreign recoveries, interesting movements within the British Isles, and age of bird. Distances are from point of original ringing, not where previously seen, if there were multiple sightings. *Please report all rings found to [www.ring.ac](http://www.ring.ac)*

Species/ Ring No.	Age & finding details	Date ringed date found	Location /distance/direction/ time difference
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### **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Sighting and recovery of a migrant bird*

<b>1372564</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> yr Female	29-01-2015	Eorrabus, <i>Islay</i>
	Alive -neck collar seen	19-04-2015	Sydr-Grof, <i>Arnes Iceland</i> 1204km NW 2m 21d
	Fresh dead	09-02-2016	Eorrabus, <i>Islay</i> 0km 1y 0m 11d

### **GREYLAG GOOSE** *Recovery of an Icelandic bird*

<b>ISR</b>	Adult Female	18-07-2016	Blonduos, <i>Austur-Hunavatnssysla Iceland</i>
<b>141599</b>	Alive - neck collar seen	26-11-2016	Highfield, Gigha <i>Kintyre</i> 1788km SW 0y 4m 8d

### **CANADA GOOSE**

<b>5227846</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> yr	29-06-2010	Sanda Island <i>Kintyre</i>
	Alive -ring read in field	09-01-2016	Southend <i>Kintyre</i> 5k NE 5y 6m 11d

### **BARNACLE GOOSE** *Long lived, and an Irish migrant*

<b>1285013</b>	First-year	09-11-1994	Eorrabus <i>Islay</i>
	Freshly shot	29-02-2016	Cornabus, Port Ellen <i>Islay</i> 19km S 21y 3m 20d
<b>1190418</b>	Adult female	05-12-2010	Iniskea South <i>Mayo Eire</i>
	Freshly shot	14-03-2016	Kilchiaran <i>Islay</i> 300km NE 5y 3m 9d

### **EIDER** *A fairly unusual long distance movement for this species*

<b>MA03658</b>	Adult female	20-05-2011	Burnt Islands <i>Cowal</i>
	Fresh dead	20-01-2016	Ballyholme, Bangor <i>Co Down</i> 144k SSW 4y 8m 0d

**STORM PETREL** *Some long-lived birds, and some long distance movements (see p. 123)*

<b>2295342</b>	Adult	03-07-1994	Strumble Head <i>Pembrokeshire</i>
	Caught by ringer	21-06-2004	Lunga, Treshnish Isles <i>Mull</i>
	Caught by ringer	26-06-2016	Lunga, Treshnish Isles 503k N 21y 11m 23d
<b>2349952</b>	Adult	07-08-1998	North Sands, <i>Hartlepool</i>
	Caught by ringer	29-07-1999	Sanda <i>Kintyre</i> 286k WNW 286
	Caught by ringer	26-06-2016	Lunga, Treshnish Isles 383k N 21y 11m 23d

**GANNET** *Another Ailsa Craig bird living a long life before perishing in Argyll*

<b>1232330</b>	Nestling	28-06-1986	Ailsa Craig <i>South Ayrshire</i>
	Freshly dead	06-06-2016	Campbeltown Loch 34k NW 29y 11m 9d

**SHAG** *An interesting movement*

<b>1455615</b>	Nestling	05-08-2010	Sanda <i>Kintyre</i>
	Unknown (ring only)	19-07-2016	Peel <i>Isle of Man</i> 130k SSE 5y 11m 14d

**WHITE-TAILED EAGLE** *Value of colour marks*

<b>ZY3783</b>	Nestling	06-06-2016	Site Confidential, near Gruline <i>Mull</i>
	Alive - colour marks seen	28-09-2016	Loch na Keal <i>Mull</i> 0km SE 0y 3m 22d

**HEN HARRIER** *Island to island movement*

<b>FR31381</b>	Nestling Male	17-06-2013	Balerominmore, <i>Colonsay</i>
	Dead	25-04-2016	Braigo <i>Islay</i> 27k SW 2y 10m 8d

**OSPREY** *Argyll-hatched bird sighted on winter grounds and return to Bute*

<b>1421529</b>	Nestling	10-07-2012	Site Confidential, near Loch Awe <i>Mid-Argyll</i>
	Alive - colour marks seen	01-09-2012	Hawridge Reservoir <i>Somerset</i> 597k SSW 0y 1m 22d
	Alive - colour marks seen	31-01-2012	Janjanbureh Camp <b>Gambia</b> 4830k S 0y 6m 21d
	Alive - colour marks seen	08-05-2013	Sine Saloum, Toubakouta <b>Senegal</b> 4,827k SSW 0y 9m 28d
	Alive - colour marks seen	16-07-2016	Kirk Dam, <i>Bute</i> 60k S 4y 0m 6d

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Long distance movement*

<b>FC02896</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr	22-11-2014	Booterstown <i>Dublin Eire</i>
	Long dead	01-06-2016	Poll Gorm, Oronsay 302k N 1y 6m 10d

**GOLDEN PLOVER** *Interesting movement*

<b>DK38697</b>	Adult	29-10-2014	Tre-Gwynt, Llanerfyl <i>Powis</i>
	Alive - colour rings read	25-04-2015	Heylipol <i>Tiree</i> 482k NNW 0y 5m 27d

**LAPWING** *Long lived bird – the record is 21y 1m 15d*

<b>DB21681</b>	Nestling	03-05-1999	Gruinart Flats <i>Islay</i>
	Unknown	13-06-2016	<i>Islay</i> 0k 17y 1m 10d

**RINGED PLOVER** *Interesting movement*

<b>NW39864</b>	Nestling Male	16-06-2013	Achiltibuie <i>Highland</i>
	Alive-colour rings seen	02-10-2016	Traigh Thodhrasdaill, Kilkenneth <i>Tiree</i> 197k SSW 3y 3m 16d

<b>CURLEW</b> <i>Another bird from Scandinavia, this time Finland</i>			
<b>SFH</b>	Adult male	31-05-2015	Muhos, Pohjois-Pohjanmaa <b>Oulu Finland</b>
<b>CT179132</b>	Alive - colour rings seen	04-03-2016	Loch Don Mull 1,946k WSW 0y 9m 2d
<b>BAR-TAILED GODWIT</b> <i>Interesting movement from Scandinavia</i>			
<b>NOS</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> yr male	07-10-2016	Makkevika, Giske <i>More og Romsdal Norway</i>
<b>K01167</b>	Alive - colour marks seen	02-12-2016	Balephetrish Bay <i>Tiree</i> 984k SW 0y 1m 25d
<b>WOODCOCK</b> <i>Another sad end of this vulnerable and declining species</i>			
<b>EZ09587</b>	First-year	23-02-2015	Ardtalla <i>Islay</i>
	Freshly dead (shot)	20-01-2016	Ardtalla <i>Islay</i> 0km 0y 10m 28d
<b>GREAT SKUA</b> <i>Argyll recoveries of birds ringed in the nest</i>			
<b>HW43007</b>	Nestling	07-07-1973	Foula <i>Shetland</i>
	Long dead (bird of prey)	08-06-2015	Nr Loch Feochan <i>Mid-Argyll</i> 463k SSW 41y 11m 1d
<b>HT92674</b>	Nestling	18-07-2007	Handa <i>Sutherland</i>
	Alive - colour rings seen	24-04-2016	Nr Loch Non Geadh, by Arinagour <i>Coll</i> 210k SSW 8y 9m 6d
<b>PUFFIN</b> <i>A long-lived bird - the record is 37y 7d</i>			
<b>EK29732</b>	Adult	29-06-1989	Lunga, Treshnish Isles <i>Mull</i>
	Caught by ringer	26-06-2016	Lunga, Treshnish Isles 0km 26y 11m 28d
<b>BLACK GUILLEMOT</b> <i>Unusually long movement, possibly storm-assisted</i>			
<b>EW66143</b>	Nestling	22-07-2012	Rockabill <i>Dublin Eire</i>
	Dead (storm)	29-01-2016	Kilnaughton Bay, Port Ellen <i>Islay</i> 227k N 3y 6m 7d
<b>RAZORBILL</b> <i>Some long-lived birds from Sanda</i>			
<b>M84239</b>	Nestling	01-07-1996	Sanda Island <i>Kintyre</i>
	Freshly dead	07-01-2016	Plage de la Normandeliere, Bretignolles-Sur-Mer <i>Vendee France</i> 998k SSE 19y 6m 13d
<b>M97677</b>	Nestling	22-06-1999	Sanda Island, <i>Kintyre</i>
	Freshly dead		West Bexington <i>Dorset</i> 547k SSE 16y 6m 8d
<b>GUILLEMOT</b> <i>A long-lived bird - the longevity record is 36y 11m 28d</i>			
<b>GK95485</b>	Nestling	07-07-1980	Isle of Canna <i>Highland</i>
	Long dead	23-12-2015	Lunga, Treshnish Isles <i>Mull</i> 64k S 35y 11m 22
<b>R97152</b>	Adult	25-06-2012	Garbh Eilean, Shiant Isles <i>Western Isles</i>
	Caught by ringer	30-03-2016	Traigh An Luig, Bruichladdich <i>Islay</i> 236k S 3y 9m 5d
<b>COMMON GULL</b> <i>Northern Ireland recoveries</i>			
<b>ET69908</b>	Nestling	24-06-2002	Kilmaronaig Islands, Loch Etive, <i>Mid Argyll</i>
	Alive (ring read in field)	31-07-2016	Whitehead <i>Antrim</i> 191k S 14y 1m 7d
<b>EL43970</b>	Nestling	23-06-2007	Kilmaronaig Islands, Loch Etive, <i>Mid Argyll</i>
	Sick (injury)	11-11-2016	Carrickfergus <i>Antrim</i> 195km S 9y 4m 19d

**BARN OWL**

<b>GC72555</b>	Adult female	02-08-2009	Logan Mains <i>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</i>
	Long dead (leg only)	12-07-2016	Ardyne Cowal 125k N 6y 11m 10d

**KESTREL**

<b>EY69454</b>	Nestling	18-06-2012	Allt Muigh Bhlaraidh, nr Aultnamain, <i>E Ross</i>
	Freshly dead	09-10-2016	Loch Goil Cowal 188k SSW 0y 3m 21d

**PEREGRINE** *Fortunately not on a grouse moor*

<b>GJ51464</b>	Nesting female	15-06-2008	An Criap, Glendaruel Forest, Strachur Cowal
	Alive (transponder tag)	28-04-2016	Site Confidential, near Roslin Lothian 129k E 7y 10m 13d

**SAND MARTIN** *A foreign movement reported this year*

<b>Z174525</b>	First yr	01-08-2014	Calliburn Croft, nr Campeltown Kintyre
	Caught by ringer	12-08-2015	Hiers-Brouage Charente-Maritime <b>France</b> 1,116k SSE 1y 0m 11d

**SWALLOW** *A migration movement*

<b>S358455</b>	Nestling	27-06-2016	Low Smerby, nr Peninver Kintyre
	Caught by ringer	12-09-2016	Litcham Norfolk 513k SE 0y 2m 16d

**WILLOW WARBLER** *A typical movement*

<b>CYY391</b>	First-year	26-07-2016	Lagganbeg, Kilninver, Oban Mid-Argyll
	Caught by ringer	14-08-2016	Oxwich Marsh Swansea 535k S 0y 0m 19d

**SEDGE WARBLER** *A foreign recovery not reported until 2016*

<b>D200186</b>	Adult female	17-05-2013	Aros Moss, Campbeltown Airport Kintyre
	Caught by ringer	15-08-2013	Tour Aux Moutons, Donges Loire-Atlantique <b>France</b> 936k SSE 0y 2m 29d

**BLACKBIRD** *Migrant bird wintering in Argyll*

<b>LB37574</b>	Adult female	30-10-2015	Cott, Sanday Orkney
<b>7476431</b>	Long dead	10-04-2016	Oban Mid-Argyll 361k SSW 0y 5m 11d

**CHAFFINCH**

<b>Z473786</b>	Adult female	11-03-2013	Fort Augustus Highland
	Freshly dead (bird of prey)	21-11-2016	Croabh Haven Mid-Argyll 117k SSW 1y 3m 19d

**TWITE** *A Highland migrant and some Machrihanish movements*

<b>Z033607</b>	Juv female	29-08-2014	North Erradale, Gairloch Highland
	Caught by ringer	11-09-2014	North Erradale, Gairloch Highland
	Caught by ringer	29-12-2014	Cemlyn Bay Anglesey
	Long dead	31-03-2016	Croggan, L. Spelve Mull 154 S 1y 7m 2d
<b>L974657</b>	First-year Male	28-09-2016	Machrihanish Kintyre
	Caught by ringer	16-11-2016	Point of Ayre, Isle of Man 144k SW 0y 1m 19d
<b>L586170</b>	Full grown male	08-10-2014	Machrihanish Kintyre
	Caught by ringer	18-02-2015	Connah's Quay Flintshire 298km SE 0y 4m 10d
	Caught by ringer	12-02-2016	Connah's Quay Flintshire 298km SE 0y 4m 10d
	Caught by ringer	28-09-2016	Machrihanish Kintyre

**LESSER REDPOLL** *Movements of a highly mobile species*

<b>Y484584</b>	First-year female	20-08-2014	Lagganbeg, Kilninver, Oban <i>Mid-Argyll</i>
	Caught by ringer	23-02-2016	Hednesford Hills <i>Staffordshire</i> 461k SSE 1y 6m 3d
<b>S358499</b>	Full grown male	10-10-2016	Calliburn Croft, by Campeltown <i>Kintyre</i>
	Caught by ringer	29-10-2016	Anglers Country Park, Wakefield <i>W Yorkshire</i> 338 SE 0y 0 m 19d

**GOLDFINCH** *Wide-ranging movements of this mobile partial migrant*

<b>Z951418</b>	Adult Female	25-02-2016	Northorpe Fen <i>Lincolnshire</i>
	Caught by ringer	09-04-2016	Machrihanish <i>Kintyre</i> 461k SE 0y 1m 16d
<b>L586437</b>	Full grown male	09-04-2016	Machrihanish <i>Kintyre</i>
	Caught by ringer	17-12-2016	Village Way, Farndon <i>Nottinghamshire</i> 413k NW 0y 8m 8d
<b>Z884824</b>	Adult male	17-03-2016	Cross Lane Head, Bridgnorth <i>Shropshire</i>
	Caught by ringer	11-04-2016	Machrihanish <i>Kintyre</i> 385k NNW 0y 0m 25d
<b>Z707030</b>	First yr female	16-01-2016	Petre Crescent, Rishton <i>Lancashire</i>
	Caught by ringer	09-04-2016	Machrihanish <i>Kintyre</i> 284k NW 0y 2m 24d
	Caught by ringer	27-11-2016	Petre Crescent, Rishton <i>Lancashire</i>

**SISKIN** *This species regularly travels across Europe*

<b>Z920467</b>	Adult male	21-03-2016	Chelmonston <i>Sufflok</i>
	Freshly dead	23-05-2015	Kilmun, by Dunoon <i>Cowal</i> 599k NW 0y 1m 4d
<b>Y484339</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> yr female	09-05-2016	Lagganbeg, Kilninver, Oban <i>Mid-Argyll</i> Moorsholm Mill, Moorsholm <i>Redcar &amp; Cleveland</i> 349k SE 2y 8m 19d

**Tawny Owls** *Kintyre* (Neil Brown)

# Recent Literature on Argyll birds

*Bob Furness and David Jardine*

Here we present a brief bibliography in alphabetical order by author name, of recent publications that relate to birds in Argyll (or are studies elsewhere of ecology of birds of conservation importance in Argyll), with a short description where considered appropriate. This bibliography adds to the one in Argyll Bird Report Volume 27. It includes new material not listed in the previous report but published by the end of 2017.

**Arbeiter, S., Franke, E., Helmecke, A. and Tanneberger, F. 2017** **Habitat preference of female Corncrakes *Crex crex*: implications for the conservation of breeding sites in a secretive species.** *Bird Study* **64: 255-263.** *This German study found that female corncrakes preferred areas with high cover of forbs and a distinct relief heterogeneity, which was associated with overall vegetation diversity.*

**Baines, D., Richardson, M. and Warren, P. 2017** **The invertebrate diet of Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix* chicks: a comparison between northern England and the Scottish Highlands.** *Bird Study* **64: 117-124.** *Ants were more numerous in the chick diet of Black Grouse in Perthshire, with larvae (both sawflies and moths) more numerous in the Pennines. Sawfly larval abundance was positively correlated with Black Grouse breeding success in the Pennines.*

**Bowler, J. 2017.** **Passage passerine migrants on a west coast island: the Isle of Tiree, Argyll.** *Scottish Birds* **37: 291-307.** *This paper lists migrant birds observed on Tiree, with detailed observations every year from 2004 to 2016 and a summary of records from before 2004. The list of impressive migrant birds seen on the island, including many North American rare migrants, will not come as a surprise to members of Argyll Bird Club. The paper also describes the seasonal timing of the most common migrants, white wagtails, 'Greenland' wheatears and goldcrests.*

**Bowler, J., Stevenson, A. and Aley, P. 2017.** **Swainson's thrushes in Scotland during the autumn of 2016.** *Scottish Birds* **37: 63-64.** *This includes details of the first record in Argyll, 22-23 September 2016 on Tiree.*

**Cosgrove, P., Kortland, K., Shields, D., Potter, R., Murray, J. and Cosgrove, C. 2017.** **Response of incubating golden and white-tailed eagles to forest road traffic: results of a pilot study.** *Scottish Birds* **37: 14-25.** *Incubating eagles sometimes responded to sound and visual stimuli from passing traffic on forestry roads. However, no discernible responses were recorded during 46 vehicle passes (61%), minor discernible responses were recorded during 29 vehicle passes (38%) and moderate discernible responses were only recorded once (1%). Forest road traffic did not cause incubating eagles to leave or abandon any nests studied during periods of observation.*

**Dickson, J.M., 2016.** **Yellow-browed Warblers in Argyll: A significant increase in sightings.** *The Eider* **Dec 2016 (no 118): 15-17.** *This is an up to date account of the Yellow-browed Warbler status in Argyll and looks at this within a UK context. Possible reasons for the recent increase in numbers are discussed.*

**Foster, S. Swann, R.L. and Furness, R.W. 2017. Can changes in fishery landings explain long-term population trends in gulls? *Bird Study* 64: 90-97.** *Correlations between numbers of gulls breeding in Canna and fish landings at the nearby port of Mallaig suggest a strong influence of discarded fish at trawlers on breeding numbers of herring, lesser black-backed and great black-backed gulls, as numbers correlated not only over the long term, but also for detrended data.*

**Hayhow, D.B., Benn, S., Stevenson, A., Stirling-Aird, P.K. and Eaton, M.A. 2017. Status of golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* in Britain in 2015. *Bird Study* 64: 281-294.** *A survey in 2015 found a 15% increase since 2003, to 508 territorial pairs. Most of Argyll was included in area F ("west Highlands"), where the increase was only 5% and where breeding success was lowest, despite the relative rarity of human persecution in Argyll. The data suggest that golden eagle numbers are close to carrying capacity in Argyll, with Mull holding one of the highest densities of golden eagle territories in Scotland.*

**Jardine, D.C. and Dickson, J.M. 2017. Pied-billed grebe breeding with little grebe in Argyll. *Scottish Birds* 37: 308-312.** *This paper describes the breeding of a male pied-billed grebe with a female little grebe at Loch Feorlin, Argyll, and gives photographs and descriptions of the hybrid chick, compared with examples of little grebe and pied-billed grebe chicks.*

**Jardine, D.C., Peacock, M.A. and Fisher, I.A. 2017. The Birds of Colonsay and Oronsay: An Island Avifauna and Bird Atlas. Argyll Bird Club. 384pp.** *This is an up to date account of the avifauna of these islands, incorporating information from archaeological excavations of the Mesolithic sites on Oronsay, an atlas of the breeding and wintering birds and details of the wide range of migrants which have occurred. It is in full colour, with 165 distribution maps, 100 graphs depicting population trends, and 174 photographs.*

**Michalska-Hejduk, D., Budka, M. and Olech, B. 2017. Should I stay or should I go? Territory settlement decisions in male Corncrakes *Crex crex*. *Bird Study* 64: 232-241.** *This Polish study found that Corncrakes shift their territories during the breeding season in response to agricultural activity as well as changes in the water level during the year. Territorial shifts might also be caused by the appearance of fertile females in different habitats at different stages of the breeding season.*

**Morley, T.I., Fayet, A.L., Jessop, H., Veron, P., Veron M., Clark, J. and Wood, M.J. 2017. The seabird wreck in the Bay of Biscay and Southwest Approaches in 2014: A review of reported mortality. *Seabird* 29: 22-38.** *This paper describes seabird mortality in early 2014 in the Bay of Biscay and the south-western approaches to the English Channel which included birds from Sanda, the Treshnish Isles and Colonsay. Over 50,000 birds were found (strandings and dead birds) and the authors suggest that reproductive success, recruitment and survival of birds from Argyll colonies may have been impacted by the wreck, although they do not refer to RAS results from the affected area.*

**Morton, R. and Maguire, E. 2017. Storm Petrels in South Kintyre. *Seabird Group Newsletter* 136: 3.** *This note reports on 2,001 movements of storm petrels, those ringed at Sanda then subsequently caught or found dead elsewhere, and those ringed elsewhere then caught at Sanda. Most movements were between sites within the UK and especially with sites in the northern Irish Sea, Irish North Channel, and Clyde, but included 1 in Faroes, 4 in Norway, 16 in Portugal, and 2 in West Africa.*

Scridel, D., Groom, J.D. and Douglas, D.J.T. 2017. Native woodland creation is associated with increase in a black grouse *Lyrurus tetrix* population. *Bird Study* 64: 70-83. *At a study area in Tayside, black grouse numbers showed a strong response to creation of new native woodland, with a 90% increase in number of lekking males.*

Steele, J. and Nadin, J. 2017. 'Canada geese' from Canada: do we see vagrants of wild birds in Scotland? *Scottish Birds* 37: 266-273. *Two wild species of 'Canada goose' are now recognised to occur in Scotland, Canada goose *Branta canadensis* with seven subspecies, and cackling goose *Branta hutchinsii* with four subspecies. The feral *B. Canadensis* is widespread, but records of apparently wild *B. canadensis* interior/parvipes are most frequently reported from Argyll (especially Islay) while records of *B. hutchinsii* also appear to be wild birds, again most often seen in Islay. This paper looks at records from throughout Scotland and assesses which wild populations are occurring and which birds might be from captive stock.*

Wakefield, E.D, Owen, E., Baer, J., Carroll, M.J., Daunt, F., Dodd, S.G., Green, J.A., Guilford, T., Mavor, R.A., Miller, P.I., Newell, M.A., Newton, S.F., Robertson, G.S., Shoji, A., Soanes, L.M, Votier, S.C., Wanless, S. and Bolton M. 2017. Breeding density, fine-scale tracking and large-scale modeling reveal the regional distribution of four seabird species. *Ecological Applications* 27: 2074-2091. *This paper (which was based on tags part funded by the Argyll Bird Club) provides new models of breeding-season seabird distributions around Britain based on recent studies of GPS-tracked seabirds, including samples from Colonsay and the Treshnish Isles.*

Wilson, M.W., Fernández-Bellon, D., Irwin, S. and O'Halloran, J. 2017. Hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* population trends in relation to wind farms. *Bird Study* 64: 20-29. *There was no statistically significant relationship between presence of wind farms and population trend of hen harriers in Ireland.*



**Twite** *Tiree* October 2016 (Richard Whitson)



# Acknowledgements

I am indebted to all those who submitted records. A full list of contributors appears below. Apologies to anyone whose name may have been inadvertently omitted.

The production of the report was very much a team effort and many thanks go to John Bowler, Malcolm Chattwood, Bob Furness, Mike Harrison, Robin Harvey, David Jardine, Nigel Scriven and Andy Robinson for writing the species accounts. Grateful thanks are due to Morag Rea who sifted through thousands of records (Machrihanish SBO and Tiree records) and to Ian Brooke (Islay records) and placed them onto the database. Thanks also to Malcolm Chattwood who ably manages the Argyll bird database and to the Argyll Bird Records Committee which in 2016 comprised: John Bowler, Stuart Crutchfield, David Jardine, Malcolm Ogilvie and Andy Robinson.

John Bowler and David Jardine made a significant contribution checking over the text. Alan Spellman provided many records from Mull, and Eddie Maguire provided records from the Machrihanish Seabird Observatory in Kintyre.

I am very grateful to everyone who has taken part in the BTO surveys, such as the wetland and breeding bird surveys and also BirdTrack recording, all of which provide valuable information. Various bird ringing projects are active in Argyll and particular thanks to Neil Brown for his constant effort site studies and to Rab Morton and Eddie Maguire in relation to Twite studies. Many thanks also to the BTO coordinators involved: John Bowler, Arthur Brown, Nigel Scriven, Geoff Small and David Wood. Information from the RSPB is invaluable and many thanks go to James How and his team on Islay, John Bowler on Tiree, Ben Jones on Coll, Andy Knight and Morgan Vaughan on Oronsay and to Andy Robinson as the Argyll RSPB Conservation Officer. Roger Broad, and members of the Argyll Raptor Study Group, provided high quality data for raptors and other rare breeding species. David Jardine also provided information regarding his long running surveys on Colonsay. Tracey Johnson *et al.* at SNH provided Goose count data. Clive Craik provided data again on information from breeding seabird colonies. Robin Ward of the Treshnish Isles Ringing Group provided their annual trip report and David Fotheringham provided the Cruachan Power Station biodiversity review.

Many thanks to the following who gave permission for their photographs to be used to enrich this report: John Bowler, Neil Brown, Keith Gillon, Toby Green, Eddie Maguire, Iomhar McMillan, Mike Peacock, Morag Rea, David Shallcross, Morgan Vaughan, Richard Whitson, Prezmek Wronski and to Margaret Staley who provided line drawing artwork. Also to John Bowler, David Jardine, Eddie Maguire and Nigel Scriven for their articles and the ringing report section, and to Bob Furness and David Jardine for providing the recent literature update.

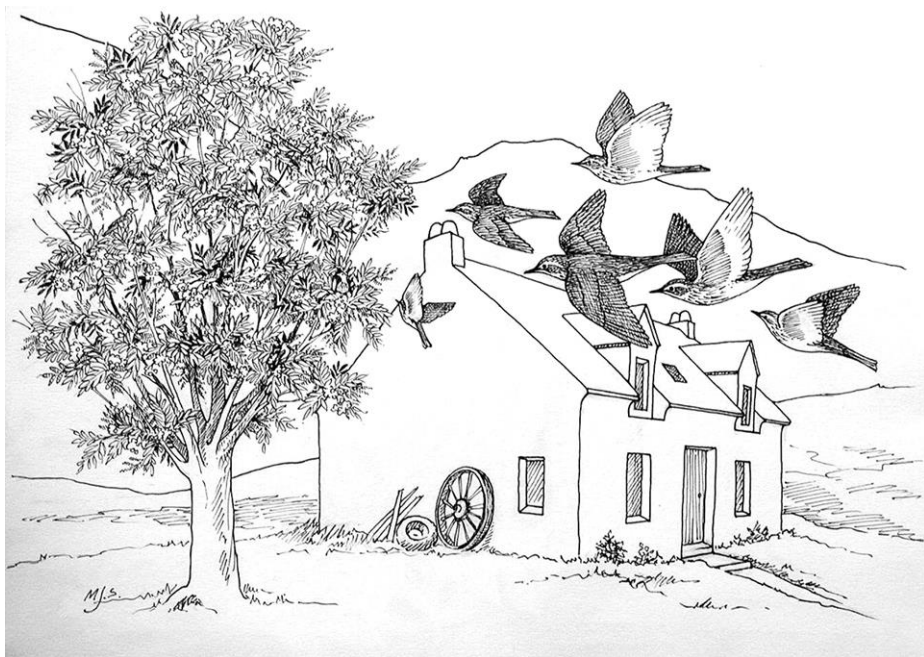
Jim Dickson

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**Redwings by Margaret Staley**

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**Argyll Bird Club**  
Scottish Charity Number SC008782

Founded in 1985, the Argyll Bird Club aims to promote interest in and conservation of Argyll's wild birds and their natural environment. The rich diversity of habitats in the county supports an exceptional variety of bird life. Many sites in Argyll are of international importance. The Club brings together people with varied experience, from complete beginners to experts, and from all walks of life. New members are particularly welcome.

**Activities**

Every spring and autumn there is a one-day meeting with illustrated talks and other activities. These meetings are held in conveniently central locations. Throughout the year there are field trips to local and more distant sites of interest.

**Publications**

The annual journal of the Club is the *Argyll Bird Report*, containing the Systematic List of all species recorded in the county during the year, together with reports and articles. The less formal quarterly newsletter, *The Eider*, gives details of forthcoming events and activities, reports of recent meetings, bird sightings, field trips, articles, and shorter items by members and others.

**Website**

[www.argyllbirdclub.org](http://www.argyllbirdclub.org)

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