
ARGYLL BIRD REPORT

with Systematic List for the year

1995



Volume 12 (1996)

PUBLISHED BY THE
ARGYLL BIRD CLUB



COVER ILLUSTRATION
Corncrake on Iona
Drawing by Margaret Staley

The Twelfth
ARGYLL BIRD REPORT
with Systematic List for the year
1995

Edited by
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Assisted by
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Systematic List by
T. ap Rheinallt

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ABOUT THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB

The Argyll Bird Club was formed in 1985. Its main purpose is to play an active part in the promotion of ornithology in Argyll. It is recognised by the Inland Revenue as a charity in Scotland.

The Club holds two one-day meetings each year, in spring and autumn. The venue of the spring meeting is rotated between different towns (Dunoon, Oban, Lochgilphead and Tarbert) while the autumn meeting and AGM are held in Inveraray, a conveniently central location.

The Club organises regular field trips for members. It also publishes the annual *Argyll Bird Report* and a quarterly members' newsletter, *The Eider*, which includes details of club activities, reports from meetings and field trips, and feature articles by members and others.

Each year the subscription entitles members to the *Argyll Bird Report*, four issues of *The Eider*, and free admission to the two annual meetings. There are four kinds of membership: current rates (at 1 October 1996) are: Ordinary £8; Junior (under 17) £3; Family £12; Corporate £20. These are due to change to £10, £3, £14 and £25 after the AGM on 2 November 1996. Subscriptions (by cheque or standing order) are due on 1 January. Anyone joining after 1 October is covered until the end of the following year.

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Further copies of this report can be obtained from Nigel Scriven, whose address is given above. Price £5 including postage. Most previous annual *Argyll Bird Reports* are also available at £4 including postage.

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Editorial

Many thanks are due to all those who have contributed to this report, particularly to Tristan ap Rheinallt for the enormous amount of demanding work he has done, this year as in previous years, in producing the detailed Systematic List.

Tristan has given a lot of thought to improving the way in which the bird records can be summarised and presented in a manner that is both informative and easy to read. This has resulted in considerable improvements in the format of the Systematic List. I know that Tristan will be grateful for your opinions and for any suggestions for further changes.

You may notice that this year's *Argyll Bird Report* differs from the previous three in lacking colour illustrations. This is because the costs of their inclusion have become prohibitive for a small club such as ours. The total printing costs for this report in recent years have been as follows.

1992	£1591 (no colour)
1993	£817 (colour cover)
1994	£1147 (colour cover)
1995	£1931 (colour cover and plate)
1996 (this issue)	£1200 (no colour)

The reduction in 1993 marked the switch to Harlequin Press in Oban, who have undertaken the job every year since then. Increasing costs in 1994-95 were caused by increasing length and by inclusion of colour pictures in the text. The reduction in costs this year (1996) was necessary because printing costs had grown to exceed income from subscriptions, an obviously unacceptable situation.

The message is clear. We will have to increase club income substantially, both by increasing the annual subscription and by increasing the membership. We can all help bring about the latter.

I would also like to thank Harlequin Press for their helpful co-operation and meeting of tight deadlines.

J C A Craik
Editor of *Argyll Bird Report*
October 1996

Systematic list for 1995

Tristan ap Rheinalt

19 Shore Street, Port Wemyss, Isle of Islay, Argyll PA47 7ST

ORNITHOLOGICAL REVIEW OF 1995

Introduction

The systematic list below includes entries for 202 species (not including escapes), five of which refer only to 1994 or earlier years. Of the latter, the most significant are Bridled Tern on Tiree in 1994 (first Argyll record), Bluethroat on Coll in 1994 (second Argyll record), and Cory's Shearwater in Kintyre in 1992 (third of four Argyll records).

This leaves a total of 197 species recorded in Argyll during 1995 (cf 211 in 1994 and 212 in 1993), with claimed sightings of a further three currently under consideration by the rarities committees. The apparent drop in the number of species may be more apparent than real. For reasons that are unclear, the number of records received in 1995 was well down on 1994, with the result that some resident species and regular visitors barely received a mention. Significant omissions from the systematic list for 1995 include Red Kite *Milvus milvus*, Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*, Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* (for the second successive year), Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* and, remarkably, Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*. Compensating to some extent for these omissions, there were the first sightings of Ptarmigan since 1991 and the first reports of Dotterel since 1992.

The systematic list also includes details of two recent deletions from the Argyll list: Yellow-legged (Herring) Gull and Scottish Crossbill.

The weather in 1995

After a cold start to the year, with some snow, January and February were dominated by the familiar regime of westerly winds and associated rainfall. March and April brought alternating snowy and wet, windy conditions, with average temperatures in March being exceptionally low. In late April, however, northeasterly winds allowed western Scotland much sunny weather and high temperatures (reaching 21°C at Lochgilphead). Subsequent southerly winds caused the warm, sunny conditions to continue into May.

Early June was characterised by some rather unsettled, often wet conditions. This gave way to prolonged spells of hot, often sunny weather in late June, much of July and most of August. These made the summer of 1995 one that will live long in popular memory: it is not often in Argyll that medium-sized rivers run dry and large

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ponds disappear. At Dunstaffnage, monthly maximum temperatures were 27.6°C, 26.0°C and 28.6°C on 28th June, 31st July and 1st August respectively.

A cooler end to August preceded a dry early September, followed by typical autumn conditions with plenty of low-pressure systems and associated westerly winds.

The year ended with its second most memorable feature, an intensely cold spell that lasted from Christmas Eve to the New Year. With night temperatures as low as -15°C in some areas, and a succession of sunny, cloudless days on which the air temperature rarely rose above -8°C, grassland and shrubs developed remarkable plates of hoarfrost that glistened beautifully in the bright sun. The frost plates grew steadily throughout this period, some eventually reaching 2 to 3 cm in diameter before being blown away.

January to March

Over 10,000 White-fronted Geese were on *Islay* at the beginning of the year, with a peak count of 10,417 on 11th January. Barnacle Goose numbers there reached 28,298 at the end of March. In amongst flocks of these species was a white-phase Snow Goose, present until at least 11th April, and two or three small-race Canada Geese. Numbers of Wigeon, Teal, Pintail and Shoveler at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay* reached record levels, the birds apparently attracted to the flooded fields at the reserve. These same flooded fields were also responsible for an increase in records of Pochard, Tufted Duck and Goldeneye at the reserve in both winter periods.

The period was not noteworthy for records of scarce and rare species. A dead Little Auk at Laggan Bay *Islay* on 17th January was the only record early in the year, while the first of only two Velvet Scoters seen in 1995, a first-winter male, was at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 25th February. The presumed returning adult Ring-billed Gull was at Port Charlotte *Islay* from 22nd February to at least 16th March.

April

The year's only Black Redstart, a male, was at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 1st April. A first-year Bewick's Swan stopped briefly on a small lochan near Portnahaven *Islay* on the 4th. The year's only record of Tree Sparrow came from Strathcoil *Mull*, where one was observed on the 5th and 6th. A Stock Dove at Loch Fada *Colonsay* on the 9th was only the second record for the island since the 1930s. On the 10th, a Swift at Bowmore *Islay* and at least four others with hirundines nearby at Laggan Bay were the earliest ever recorded in Argyll. A count of 157 Great Northern Divers at Loch Indaal on the 27th was a record for *Islay*. A female Velvet Scoter was at Loch Indaal the same day.

A sad and significant event was the draining of Westport Marsh *Kintyre* in mid-month. This site, unique in *Kintyre*, held breeding Lapwing, Little Grebe, Shoveler, Coot and, outstandingly, Garganey (in 1994). It also attracted a variety of migrant waders and other birds. It is unfortunate that, despite the many efforts made by local birdwatchers, its preservation could not be assured.

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May

For those interested in rarities, May was a very good month by Argyll standards; southerly winds no doubt contributed to the influx of unusual birds. Two scarce migrants were seen on *Coll* during the month: a Spotted Crake on the 3rd and 14th, and a drake Garganey on the 21st. A Spotted Redshank at Loch Gruinart from the 6th to the 11th was only the sixth Argyll record since 1980; at times it shared a field of view with a first-summer Little Gull, one of five recorded in Argyll during the year. A Bee-eater was near Fiddon *Mull* on the 15th; three days later, a Pectoral Sandpiper was seen and photographed nearby by the same observers. An immature Crane at Bowmore from the 17th to the 20th was the third *Islay* and eighth Argyll record. Also on the 17th, two Dotterel were near Beinn Ime *Cowal* and a further five at Scoor *Mull*. A female Marsh Harrier was at Loch Tallant *Islay* on the 24th, and a Little Egret nearby over Bridgend woods on the 27th. A Green Sandpiper, rare in Argyll in spring, was at Machrihanish SBO on the 29th, while a "thrush-sized, mustard-coloured" bird at Easter Ellister *Islay* the following day turned out to be a female or first-year male Golden Oriole, only the fourth record for the island. The last of the spring's rarities, a Little Egret, was at Loch Melfort *Mid-Argyll* from 30th May to 1st June; it may well have been the bird seen three days earlier on *Islay*.

The breeding season

Despite the excellent summer, the breeding success of some species appeared to be influenced more by the cold weather at the beginning of the spring, and perhaps by the amount of rain that fell in early June. Thus the mean brood size of Barn Owls on *Islay* was very low, while Lapwing at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve appeared to have poor fledging rates. Hen Harriers, on the other hand, experienced good hatching success. The *Islay* Chough population had a good year in terms of productivity, but the number of occupied nest-sites was still far lower than in the mid-1980s. Numbers of nesting Mandarin in *Cowal* rose from one to 5 pairs; this species looks set to become a permanent member of the Argyll avifauna.

Food supplies for Common and Arctic Terns were plentiful, and chick weights were high, though some Argyll colonies still suffered heavy losses to predation as did colonies of certain other seabirds. Predation (presumably by mink *Mustela vison*) was also thought to be responsible for low breeding numbers and success of wildfowl, waders and gulls at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* and perhaps of waders at Moine Mhor NNR *Mid-Argyll*. Fortunately well away from any mink, a survey of breeding seabirds on Lunga in the Treshnish Isles *Mull* in late June produced estimated counts of 1,631 Puffin nests and 1,000-2,500 pairs of Storm Petrel.

For the third successive year, there were no records of Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* from the traditional breeding site, and it seems likely that this species is now extinct as a breeder in Argyll.

Scarce summer visitors included a Quail, heard calling at Roundhouse *Coll* on 13th June; this was Argyll's only record of the year. At Moine Mhor NNR, a singing male Brambling was present from 15th to 27th June, perhaps Argyll's first summer record.

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On 9th July, a total of 73 Swifts flying southeast over Port Wemyss and Orsay *Islay* represented what was probably Argyll's highest-ever count.

August and September

As so often in Argyll, autumn provided few records of scarce passerines, though a female Pied Flycatcher at Braigo on 18th August was the first on *Islay* since 1989.

Seawatchers, on the other hand, had an excellent autumn, thanks to frequent westerly winds. A Mediterranean Shearwater off Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 13th August was the first of an astonishing 34 birds claimed at various sites during the autumn; none have yet been accepted by SBRC, however. Small numbers of Leach's Petrels were seen between mid-August and early October. On 9th September, a juvenile Sabine's Gull flew south past Frenchman's Rocks, the first of four birds seen there during September and October; details of several further records, at this and other sites, have not been received. On 11th September, an enormous raft estimated to contain about 8,000 Manx Shearwaters was off Machrihanish SBO. Numbers of Sooty Shearwaters also peaked in mid-September, with 101 flying south past Frenchman's Rocks on the 15th. Two Grey Phalaropes flying south past Machrihanish SBO on 24th September were the first of a total of 18 birds seen at this site and Frenchman's Rocks up to 17th October, in what was a very good autumn for this species. Otherwise, reports of scarce waders were few and far between: only one Green Sandpiper was seen, for example.

Migrant geese first put in an appearance in the latter half of September, with the first White-fronted Geese on *Islay* on the 22nd, and the first Barnacle Geese two days later. Also on the 24th, a skein of over 100 Pink-footed Geese flying southeast over Loch Don *Mull* was the first record and the highest count of the autumn.

October to December

Unusually large numbers of Arctic Terns were still around in early October, with 18 at Port Charlotte on the 2nd. A Little Auk flying south past Frenchman's Rocks on the 7th was the only record of the second winter period, in what was a poor year for this species. The presumed returning Snow Goose was on *Islay* from the 10th, while three possible vagrant Canada Geese were found two days later; one of these (a small-race bird) stayed to the end of the year. Two Dotterel were at Machrihanish on the 10th, the third Argyll record of the year. At least one Hoopoe was at Oban *Mid-Argyll* in late October, with the same or another at Loch Don. On 27th October, a count of 260 Great Northern Divers in the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* was the second-highest ever in Argyll. Two adult Bewick's Swans were at The Laggan *Kintyre* on 29th and 30th October.

A Great Grey Shrike at Machrihanish on 2nd November, only the third Argyll record since 1985 of this increasingly scarce species, was the only notable rarity seen during November and December. Winter thrushes were scarce in November as in late October, with passage flocks not exceeding a few hundred birds. Numbers of White-fronted Geese on *Islay*, on the other hand, reached record levels in November, with 14,495

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counted on the 28th. On the same date, there were 29,332 Barnacle Geese on the island.

A flock of 800 Twite at Mulindry (River Laggan) Islay on 20th December was the largest reported in Argyll since 1978, and emphasises the importance of Islay as a wintering area for this species. The spell of cold weather at the end of the year led to many sightings of Woodcock on open ground, while Fieldfares and Redwings were more frequently recorded. No large-scale movements of any species were reported, however.

BIRD RECORDING IN ARGYLL

Advice to contributors

When submitting records, sightings should be listed in Vooous order (as in this report) and should include the following details: species, EURING code if possible, number of individuals, sex and age if known, date, and location (with grid reference). More detailed guidelines can be found in ABR 11.

Rare birds

Details of rarities should be sent to me as soon as possible after the sighting, if possible on a standard form. They will be judged locally by the Argyll Bird Records Committee (whose members are listed on p. 3), sent on to the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC), or sent on to the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) as appropriate.

The list below details rare species whose occurrence in Argyll needs to be fully documented. It is made up of the ABRC list of Argyll rarities (in lower case) and the SBRC list of Scottish rarities (in capitals), but excludes the large number of UK rarities assessed by BBRC. The only change from last year's list is that records of adult Long-tailed Skuas may now be acceptable without a full written description. Asterisked species have occurred in Argyll in the past; the status of Water Pipit in Argyll is currently under review.

NO RECORD OF ANY OF THE SPECIES AND PLUMAGE PHASES LISTED BELOW WILL BE PUBLISHED UNLESS ADEQUATE SUPPORTING DETAILS (INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION) ARE AVAILABLE. In addition, brief details may be requested for occurrences of scarce species not on the list where the circumstances appear to warrant this.

List of SBRC and ABRC species and subspecies, 1995

Black-necked Grebe*

CORY'S SHEARWATER*

GREAT SHEARWATER*

MEDITERRANEAN SHEARWATER*

Bittern*

LITTLE EGRET*

PURPLE HERON

WHITE STORK*

SPOONBILL*

Bean Goose*

European White-fronted Goose*

GREEN-WINGED TEAL*

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Garganey (except adult male, or
female accompanied by adult male)*

Red-crested Pochard*

RING-NECKED DUCK*

FERRUGINOUS DUCK

SURF SCOTER*

Smew*

Ruddy Duck*

HONEY BUZZARD*

MONTAGU'S HARRIER

Goshawk*

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD*

HOBBY*

CRANE*

Avocet*

STONE CURLEW

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER*

KENTISH PLOVER

Temminck's Stint*

PECTORAL SANDPIPER*

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER*

Red-necked Phalarope*

Long-tailed Skua (except adult)*

MEDITERRANEAN GULL*

SABINE'S GULL*

RING-BILLED GULL*

HERRING GULL (yellow-legged

race *michahellis*)

Roseate Tern*

Black Tern*

Little Owl

BEE-EATER*

Wryneck*

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

SHORT-TOED LARK

WOODLARK

Shore Lark*

RICHARD'S PIPIT*

TAWNY PIPIT

WATER PIPIT

NIGHTINGALE*

Bluethroat*

CETTI'S WARBLER

SAVI'S WARBLER

AQUATIC WARBLER

MARSH WARBLER

Reed Warbler*

ICTERINE WARBLER*

MELODIOUS WARBLER

DARTFORD WARBLER

BARRED WARBLER*

Lesser Whitethroat*

PALLAS'S WARBLER

Yellow-browed Warbler*

FIRECREST*

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER*

BEARDED TIT

Marsh Tit

Willow Tit*

Crested Tit*

Nuthatch*

Red-backed Shrike*

WOODCHAT SHRIKE

SERIN

Scottish Crossbill

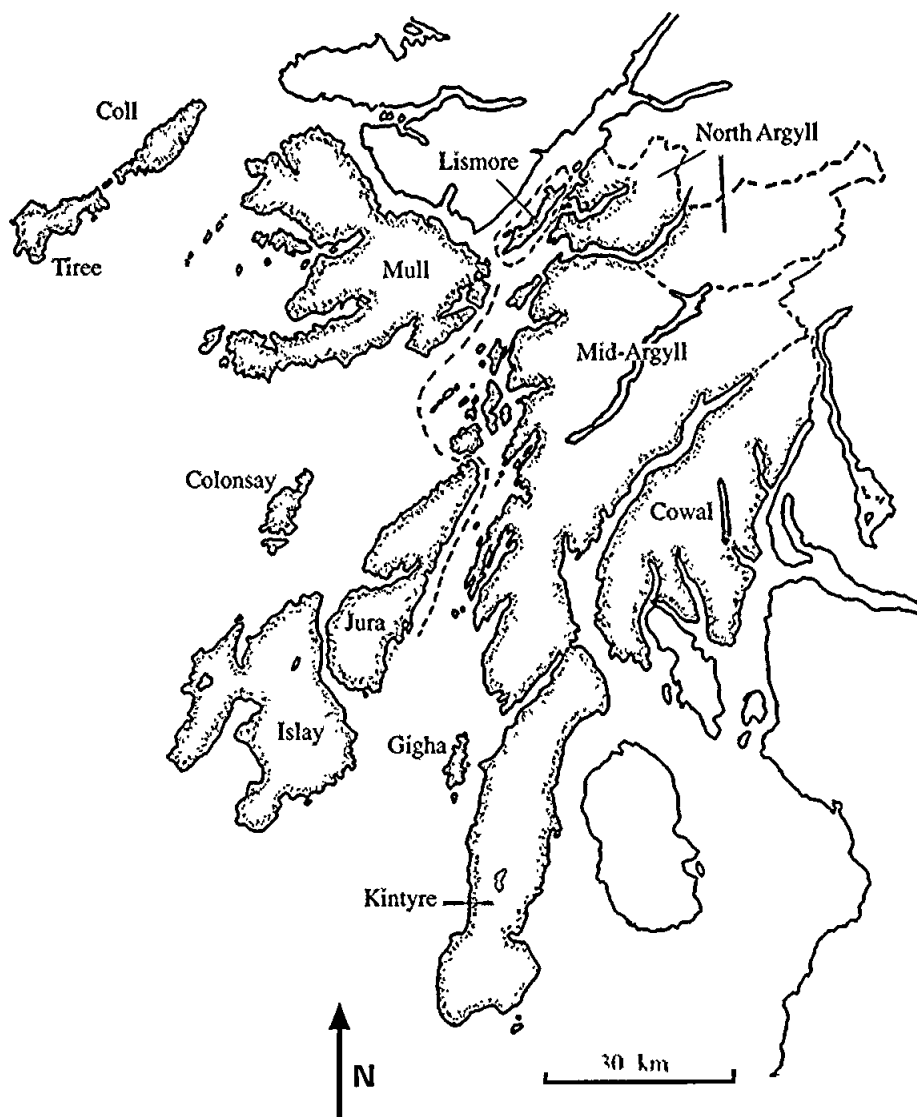
COMMON ROSEFINCH*

Hawfinch*

CIRL BUNTING*

ORTOLAN BUNTING

LITTLE BUNTING*



Map showing the areas of Argyll used in this Report

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INTERPRETATION OF THE SPECIES ACCOUNTS

In the species accounts below, English and scientific names are as in the latest *Scottish Bird Report*; the sequence of species follows the Voous order as in the same report. Names of species not on the Western Palearctic list follow Howard and Moore (1991).

Each species heading in the report contains the following information:

	Common name	Scientific name	Gaelic name	EURING code
e.g.	RAVEN	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Fitheach	1572

Each heading is followed by a summary of the bird's known status and distribution within Argyll, together with any other relevant information. Significant 1995 records are then listed in approximate chronological order. For scarcer species, records for 1995 may be followed by late records or recent acceptances from earlier years.

For the purposes of this report, Argyll is divided into 12 areas, which are named on the accompanying sketch map (p. 12). Note that, for the moment at least, boundaries of the Argyll recording area remain unchanged despite recent local government reorganisation.

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 me), followed by the observer(s) who submitted details of the record, if different. All these records have been accepted by the relevant rarities committee.

I have attempted to ensure that all place names in the systematic list feature on the 1:50,000 (Landranger Series) Ordnance Survey maps. An exception is The Laggan (Kintyre), which refers to the roughly triangular area west of Campbeltown, bordered by the B843, the A83, and Machrihanish Bay. Within this area, Westport Marsh (also absent from the map) is situated at approximately NR65/25. The Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (SBO) is situated at Uisaid Point on the western outskirts of Machrihanish (NR628209). On Colonsay, A'Choille Mhor is the wood on the southern and eastern slopes of Beinn nam Fitheach (NR40/96 and NR41/96). In Mid-Argyll, Kilmichael Glen extends northeastwards from Kilmichael Glassary at NR85/93. On Mull, the Mishnish Lochs are the series of lochs extending from NM46/52 to NM48/53.

On Islay, the term 'Loch Gruinart' may refer to the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve at Loch Gruinart, or to parts of the loch lying outside the reserve. No distinction has been made except where presenting counts of breeding pairs within the reserve, when the term 'Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve' is used. The same reasoning applies to the use of the terms 'Moine Mhor' and 'Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve (NNR)' (Mid-Argyll); I have used the former term to cover an area extending west to the landward edge of Loch Crinan and north to Barsloisnoch.

Figs. 1 and 2 are from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) goose counts. Figs. 3 to 13

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are based principally on data from the Wetland Birds Survey (WeBS), although higher counts have been included where available. It should be noted that the Jan 1995 WeBS count at Loch Indaal (Islay) was in fact carried out on 1st Feb (and the Feb count on 8th Feb).

Special studies carried out in 1995

Regular monitoring of certain species and groups of species in Argyll continued in 1995; examples are the goose counts carried out by SNH and the monthly WeBS counts at several sites. Other single-species studies, either new in 1995 (e.g. Corn Bunting) or continued from previous years (e.g. Hen Harrier), are briefly described in the species accounts.

Three further multi-species studies are summarised here to avoid repetition of details in the species accounts.

(1) BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Birds Survey (BBS)

This new nationwide survey, supported by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and RSPB, commenced in 1994. Its objective is to extend and improve the monitoring of population changes of common breeding birds. The intention is to census birds annually in more than 2,000 randomly chosen one-km squares in the UK, using a line-transect method.

In 1995, 17 such squares were surveyed in Argyll. They were located in Kintyre (NR68/29), Colonsay (NR35/88, NR38/95), Cowal (NR92/75, NS03/92, NS08/84, NS12/80), Mid-Argyll (NM82/24, NM83/19, NN01/04, NN06/15, NR77/70, NR79/92), Mull (NM30/21, NM39/39, NM44/21), and N Argyll (NN10/35). All these squares were also surveyed in 1994, but an additional 4 squares surveyed in 1994 were not surveyed again in 1995.

In the systematic list below, BBS data are quoted for non-aquatic species which are widely distributed or for which little other information was available. Comparisons with 1994 use only data from squares surveyed in both years.

More volunteers are urgently required locally for this survey (see p. 3 for details of BTO Regional Representatives in Argyll).

(2) Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) study of seabird breeding success [J C A Craik]

As part of a wider study of seabird breeding success, selected species were monitored in a study area along the west coasts of Kintyre, Mid-Argyll, and N Argyll, and at additional sites in Loch Fyne (Cowal/Mid-Argyll), Mull and Lismore. Further details can be found in *ABR* 11.

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(3) Systematic seawatching at Machrihanish SBO (Kintyre) [E J Maguire] and Frenchman's Rocks (Islay) [T ap Rheinallt]

Movements of seabirds, wildfowl and waders past these two sites were monitored regularly during certain months of the year. With a few exceptions, all individual birds flying past were identified and logged. Hours of observation during each month were as follows:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Mach. SBO	0	38	42	101	82	71	82	175	121	80	0	0	792
F. Rocks	0	0	0	12	15.5	0	19.5	54	38.5	19	0	0	163

This information can be used to convert total counts in the systematic list to hourly rates, and *vice versa*. It should be noted, however, that the validity of directly comparing hourly rates between the two sites is questionable. This is because observations at Frenchman's Rocks were always made during the first few hours of daylight, when seabird movement is normally at a maximum, whereas those at Machrihanish SBO were more evenly spaced throughout the day. At both sites, the vast majority of birds flew south during all months.

More comprehensive data for Machrihanish SBO can be found in Maguire (1996).

Symbols and abbreviations

Species status categories

R	Resident and sedentary
B	Breeding species; breeding and wintering ranges may differ
S	Summer visitor; breeds unless otherwise stated
P	Passage migrant
W	Winter visitor
I	Introduced species; recorded in Argyll, may or may not breed here
V	Vagrant; fewer than 5 records since 1980

Categories of the British list

Category C	Species which, although originally introduced by man, have now established a self-sustaining breeding stock
Category D	Species which do not form part of the full list for one of several reasons, including possible escapes and introduced species whose populations may not be self-sustaining

Others

ABR	Argyll Bird Report
ABRC	Argyll Bird Records Committee
AON	apparently occupied nest-sites
b/-	brood of...
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee

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BBS	Breeding Birds Survey
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
c/-	clutch of...
CBC	Common Birds Census
AFFWAG	Argyll Farming, Forestry and Wildlife Advisory Group
GP	Gravel Pit
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
max.	maximum (the highest of 2 or more counts at a given locality during the period being analysed)
NCC	Nature Conservancy Council
NNR	National Nature Reserve
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAMS	Scottish Association for Marine Science
SBO	Seabird Observatory
SBR	Scottish Bird Report
SBRC	Scottish Birds Records Committee
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage

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RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata* Learga ruadh 0002
B W P Widely distributed but sparse breeding species. Breeding recorded in 26% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The only count exceeding 4 birds during Jan-Mar was 11 at West Loch Tarbert Kintyre on 18th Feb. Numbers seemed higher during Apr to early May, perhaps reflecting the presence of passage migrants. There were counts of 10 or more birds from 3 sites: max. 15 at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 5th Apr, max. 17 at Loch Indaal Islay on 27th Apr, and 10 at Loch Awe Mid-Argyll on 2nd May.

Breeding. In Kintyre and Knapdale Mid-Argyll, systematic survey work was aided by the exceptionally hot, dry weather during Jun-Jul, which allowed complete coverage of all suitable water bodies. The only areas excluded were 5 x 5 km blocks surveyed in 1994. As no divers were found in any of these blocks in 1994, the 1995 figures are assumed to give the complete picture. Breeding was proved at 17 sites but was successful at only 6 of these, with a total of 8 young reared. Comparison with data for lochs surveyed in 1988 indicates a decline in site occupancy and hence numbers of breeding attempts (see Table below), with the greatest decrease apparent in south Kintyre [RSPB].

Site occupancy and breeding success of Red-throated Divers in Kintyre and Knapdale Mid-Argyll in 1988 and 1995

		1988	1995
Occupancy	Pairs present	26	15
	Singles	1	2
	Site vacant	-	10
Breeding success	Pairs successful	7	5
	Pairs unsuccessful	17	8
	Pairs not breeding	1	2
	Outcome not known	1	0

On Coll, pairs were recorded on 15 lochs during a census of all suitable water bodies; a minimum of 6 pairs bred and produced 7 young (cf 13-14 pairs and 8 chicks hatched in 1994) [RSPB]. Elsewhere, successful breeding was reported from one site on Islay (2 young) and one in N Argyll (one young); at the latter site, breeding took place on a raft provided by Forest Enterprise. Further breeding season records from suitable habitat came from Jura (one pair) and Mull (5 pairs).

The highest coastal counts in summer were 8 at Loch Buie Mull on 28th Jun and 8 at Croig (near Dervaig) Mull on 29th Jun.

In autumn, a total of 74 (376 hrs) flew south past Machrihanish SBO during Aug-Oct; southward movement was also apparent at Frenchman's Rocks Islay during Sep-Oct, with a total of 85 (57.5 hrs). The highest counts during Oct-Dec were 28 in the Sound of Gigha Kintyre on 27th Oct, and max. 20 at Loch Indaal on 15th Dec. No other sites produced counts exceeding 6 birds during this period.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica* Learga dhubh 0003
B W P Scarce, though probably under-recorded in winter. Breeding now only in

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Mid-Argyll and N Argyll.

During Jan-May, birds were recorded in *Kintyre, Islay, Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*. The only counts exceeding 3 birds were max. 8 at West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre* on 18th Feb, 17 in the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 12th Apr, and 4 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 27th Apr.

Breeding. Nine known breeding sites in Argyll were monitored; all held summering pairs with additional adults associated with 2 of the sites. Breeding was confirmed at 8 sites, and 3 pairs successfully fledged a total of 3 young. All the successful pairs nested on rafts [RSPB].

A post-breeding gathering of 7 at Loch Tulla *N Argyll* on 9th Aug was the largest inland count of the season. Otherwise, records during Aug-Dec were confined to *Kintyre* and *Islay*, where the only counts exceeding 3 birds were 45 in the Sound of Gigha on 27th Oct, and 11 at Loch Indaal on 15th Dec.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer* Muir bhuachaill 0004
W P *The Argyll coast is an important wintering locality. Summer-plumaged birds regularly recorded Apr to early Jun in all areas except Cowal. Pre-migratory gatherings occur off some coasts in early May. A few individuals summer.*

The only site producing counts exceeding 10 birds during Jan-Mar was West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre*, with max. 36 on 18th Feb. As with Red-throated Diver, numbers were higher during Apr-May, the highest count being 157 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 27th Apr, a record for the island. Other high counts were max. 29 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 10th Apr, max. 28 in the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 12th Apr, and 30 on the *Colonsay-Islay* crossing on 10th May.

There were only 3 summer records (mid-Jun to mid-Jul), many fewer than in 1993 and 1994: an immature regular at Machrihanish SBO during Jun-Jul, one near Aros Castle *Mull* on 20th Jun, and an adult on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 22nd Jun.

Southward movement past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* was apparent during Sep-Oct, with a total of 22 (57.5 hrs). The highest count of the autumn was an impressive 260 in the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 27th Oct, close to the record Argyll count of 268 at the same site on 25th Oct 1991. Other counts exceeding 10 birds were max. 13 at Machrihanish SBO on 18th Oct, and max. 21 at Loch na Keal *Mull* on 14th Nov.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis* Spagriton 0007
B W Uncommon. Breeds widely, mainly on small, low-lying eutrophic lochs. Breeding recorded in 18% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Small numbers gather in sheltered coastal waters in winter.

The only count exceeding 5 birds during the early part of the year was max. 8 at Loch Etive *N Argyll* on 8th Jan.

Breeding. Breeding season records came from 21 sites, in *Kintyre* (one), *Islay* (6), *Colonsay* (4, with a total of 5 pairs), *Cowal* (one), *Mid-Argyll* (7, with a total of 8 pairs), *Mull* (one) and *N Argyll* (one). However, there were only 2 reports of successful breeding. A pair at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* departed when the marsh was drained in Apr.

During Aug-Dec, Loch Etive was again the only site holding more than 5 birds, with max. 9 on 15th Nov.

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GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus* Gobhlachan Iaparan 0009
W P Uncommon, with 2-6 records annually since 1984. Recorded in all months except Jun.

There was a total of 5 reported sightings of singles during the year, probably involving only 3 birds: at Loch Indaal Islay on 18th and 20th Feb, in Machrihanish Bay Kintyre on 18th Sep, and again at Loch Indaal on 18th Nov and 15th Dec.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps grisegena* Gobhlachan ruadh 0010
W P Less than annual. Of 12 records (including the one below) during 1980-94, 10 were during the period Sep-Mar, with one in May and one in Jun.

1994 One was at Westport Kintyre on 2nd Dec, bringing the year's total to 2 birds.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus* Gobhlachan mara 0011
W P Regular wintering species in sealochs and sounds, particularly West Loch Tarbert (Kintyre), Sound of Gigha (Kintyre), Loch Indaal (Islay) and Loch na Keal (Mull).

Birds were recorded at 4 sites during Jan-Apr: 5 at West Loch Tarbert Kintyre on 20th Feb, max. 20 at Loch Indaal Islay on 25th Feb, one at Blairmore (Loch Long) Cowal from 17th Jan to 3rd Feb, and max. 9 at Loch na Keal on 26th Feb. The last bird of the spring was at Loch Indaal on 27th Apr.

The first returning birds were 2 at Loch Indaal on 31st Aug; numbers at this site built up to 25 on 7th Nov. The only other reports came from Loch na Keal, with max. 20 on 11th Dec.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis* Eun crom 0022
B W P Common but localised breeding species in all areas except Cowal, Lismore and North Argyll. Large numbers on passage off western headlands.

Rates of southward movement past Frenchman's Rocks Islay in the first half of the year — though less than in 1994 — were substantially greater than rates of movement past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre (see Table below). Unusually, northward movement past the former site exceeded southward movement in Apr, though only barely.

Breeding. In Jun, counts at sample census sites on Colonsay were 27 AON at Turnigil, 67 AON at Kiloran Bay, and 583 AON at Urugaig; the total of 677 compares with 679 in 1994 and 602 in 1993 at the same sites. The only other colony counts received were 435 AON on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) Mull (cf 677 in 1994 and 463 in 1993), and 120 AON at Ben Feall Coll (as in 1994).

In autumn, southward movement past Machrihanish SBO increased through Aug and Sep before declining sharply in Oct. A similar pattern was observed at Frenchman's Rocks, but with much higher hourly rates and absolute numbers, though again less than in 1994 (see Table below). At Frenchman's Rocks, the highest day-count was 2,532 flying south and 56 flying north (6.5 hrs) on 25th Aug.

Single dark-phase birds flew past Machrihanish SBO on 11th Feb and 25th Aug, and Frenchman's Rocks on 2nd Oct.

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Average numbers of Fulmars flying south per hour past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre
and Frenchman's Rocks Islay in 1995

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Machrihanish SBO	7	5	3	6	2	<1	6	7	<<1
Frenchman's Rocks	-	-	47	45	-	50	124	98	7

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Calonectris diomedea* 0036

V Only 3 accepted Argyll records: singles past Frenchman's Rocks (Islay) on 19th Aug 1973 and 20th Sep 1993, and past Machrihanish (Kintyre) on 14th Aug 1975.

1992 Three flew south past Uisaed Point Kintyre on 28th Aug [EJM]. This becomes the third of 4 accepted Argyll records.

1989 Note that the record of one at Frenchman's Rocks Islay on 24th Aug (ABR 6: 11; SBR 1989: 4) was subsequently rejected by SBRC (ABR 11: 89), and should be deleted.

1981 The record of 2 past Coul Point Islay on 30th May (ABR 1: 12) was apparently not submitted to BBRC, and should therefore be deleted.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus* Fachadh dubh 0043

P Large numbers sometimes recorded off western headlands during Aug-Sep; very few records outside the period Jul-Oct.

An early single flew north past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 16th Jul, with a gap of nearly a month until the next record, 2 flying south past Frenchman's Rocks Islay on 13th Aug. A total of 152 flew south past Machrihanish SBO between 27th Aug and 24th Sep, with a peak of 80 (8 hrs) on 11th Sep. A total of 231, nearly all flying south, passed Frenchman's Rocks between 13th Aug and 15th Oct, with a peak of 101 flying south and one flying north (3.5 hrs) on 15th Sep. The only other records were one at Miodar Tìree on 23rd Aug and 8 at the same site on the 25th, and 2 off Scalasaig Colonsay on 20th Sep.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus* Fachadh ban 0046/1

B P Very localised breeding species. Colonies confirmed only on Sanda (Kintyre) and the Treshnish Isles (Mull). Another colony may await discovery on or near the Garvellachs (Mid-Argyll). Large numbers on passage, especially during Aug-Sep.

One flying south past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 24th Mar was the first of the year. No large spring movements were reported.

Breeding. The only colony count was an estimated 200-500 pairs on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) Mull in late Jun; this is roughly comparable to previous estimates, in 1986 and 1994 [Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group].

In autumn, southward movement past Frenchman's Rocks Islay peaked in Aug, with a mean hourly rate of 340 (cf 336 in Aug 1994 and 234 in Aug 1993), remaining fairly high in Sep, at 169 (cf 100 in Sep 1994 and 44 in Sep 1993); the peak day-count of birds flying south was 2,844 (4 hrs) on 20th Aug. At Machrihanish SBO, there was particularly heavy passage in early Sep, with a very large raft of about 8,000 birds seen on 11th Sep, and 4,800 (8 hrs) flying south on 12th Sep. Reflecting the high numbers in Sep, more birds than usual stayed into Oct, with 107 (19 hrs) flying south past Frenchman's Rocks, and 212 (80 hrs) flying south past Machrihanish SBO

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during the month. The last birds of the year were recorded on 17th Oct, when two flew south past Machrihanish SBO and one flew south past Frenchman's Rocks.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus* Paraig 0052
B P Very localised breeding species; large colonies known only on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Breeding birds first come ashore in late May or Jun. Most sightings away from breeding colonies are during Jul-Sep.

Breeding. The only colony count was an estimated 1,000-2,500 pairs on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) Mull, in late Jun; this is comparable to estimates in 1986 and 1994 [Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group].

In autumn, relatively few were reported despite frequent westerlies. A total of 10 flew south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* between 7th Jul and 27th Sep, while one flew north past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 12th Aug and 2 flew south there on 24th Sep.

1994 Breeding. A total of 100-200 pairs was estimated to be on Sanda *Kintyre* [JNCC].

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* Gobhlan mara 0055
P Scarce, but regular in autumn off western headlands following strong westerlies.

There were several records between mid-Aug and early Oct, the highest count being 20 flying south past Ceann a'Mhara *Tiree* on 21st Aug. One flew south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 12th Aug, a further 7 on 24th Sep, and one on the 25th. Two flew south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 25th Aug, a further 3 on 24th Sep, and 3 on 5th Oct.

GANNET *Morus bassanus* Sulaire 0071
S P W Does not breed in Argyll; nearest colonies are Ailsa Craig (40 km east of Mull of Kintyre) and the Shiant Isles (140 km north of Mull). Common inshore from May to Sep, and often seen high up sealochs. Scarce in winter.

In spring, mean rates of southward movement past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* were 103 birds per hour in Apr and 87 in May (cf 66 and 175 respectively in Apr and May 1994, and 127 in May 1993). During Jul-Sep, mean rates were 210-270 birds per hour (cf 300+ each month in 1994 but only 166-191 in 1993). As with Manx Shearwater, southward movement remained relatively strong in Oct, at 123 birds per hour (cf 45 in 1994 and 53 in 1993). The peak day-count was 2,489 flying south and 94 flying north (5.5 hrs) on 13th Aug.

Of a sample of 6,244 birds passing Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* during Feb-Oct, 89% were adults, a percentage similar to the previous 2 years; only 0.4% of 2,657 birds aged during Aug-Oct were juveniles. A presumed adult at this site on 3rd Jun had pure white outerwings (but normal head coloration).

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo* Sgarbh 0072
R W Breeds in Kintyre, Cowal, Mid-Argyll, Mull, Lismore and N Argyll. Less numerous than Shag. Small numbers occur on some inland waters, often moving to the coast in autumn.

Only 2 sites reported counts exceeding 10 birds during the early part of the year: max. 20 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 1st Feb, and max. 15 at West Loch Tarbert

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Kintyre on 19th Mar.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, breeding was noted at 5 sites (one in *Cowal*, 3 in *Mid-Argyll* and one off *Lismore*), holding 34, one, one, 42, and 4 pairs (total 82 pairs); productivity was monitored at 3 colonies, where 77 pairs fledged about 172 young (2.2 young per pair). A former colony at *Corr Eilean* (Sound of *Jura*) *Mid-Argyll* held no *Cormorants* in 1995, possibly as a result of the continuing presence of *mink*.

By far the highest count during the latter part of the year was max. 63 at *Loch Indaal* on 8th Nov. Other counts exceeding 10 birds were max. 26 at *West Loch Tarbert* on 10th Sep, 14 at *Lag na Luinge* (*Loch Awe*) *Mid-Argyll* on 11th Sep, and max. 27 at *Holy Loch Cowal* on 2nd Oct.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* Sgarbh an sgumain 0080
R W Very common coastal species, rare inland. Breeds on rocky slopes and cliffs, singly and in small or large colonies.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, breeding was noted at 10 colonies (2 in *Cowal*, 6 in *Mid-Argyll*, one off *Mull* and one off *Lismore*), ranging in size from 5 to about 240 pairs (total 492 pairs); productivity was monitored at 7 of these colonies, where 207 pairs fledged at least 374 young (1.8 young per pair, cf 1.3 young per pair in 1994).

Other breeding colony counts were 185 AON on *Lunga* (*Treshnish Isles*) *Mull*, and 26 AON at *Ben Feall Coll.* Also, counts at sample census sites on *Colonsay* were similar to 1994, with 28 nests (average clutch size 2.89) at *Port Ban*, and 10 nests at *Uragaig*.

At *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre*, the autumn peak of dispersing juveniles was not as pronounced as in 1994: the proportion of non-adults in aged samples peaked at 59% ($n = 302$) in Sep (cf 74% in Sep 1994).

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta* Corra gheal bheag 0119
P Rare. No Argyll records prior to 1958 but several since, mostly in spring and autumn.

One was seen flying over *Bridgend woods Islay* on 27th May [ACK, SW]. Possibly the same bird was at the head of *Loch Melfort Mid-Argyll* from 30th May to 1st Jun [FL, SMC].

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea* Corra ghritheach 0122
R Widespread, breeding in all areas. Breeding recorded in 7% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Only *Loch Etive N Argyll* produced counts of more than 10 birds during the early part of the year, with max. 23 on 19th Mar.

Breeding. Relatively few records were received. On *Colonsay*, 4 pairs nested at *Garvard* (3 rearing a total of 7 young), and 2 pairs at *Scalasaig* (one with b/2); and 19 pairs nested on *Coll*, 17 at the main heronry and 2 at another site. A pair also reared one young at a new site at *Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve Islay*. On *Mull*, pairs bred at *Fishnish* and *Kilfinichen*, but apparently not at *Tirolan*.

Of 48 passage migrants or dispersing birds recorded at *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre* during Jul-Oct, 16 (33%) were adults. Counts of 10-15 birds were reported

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from several sites during Sep-Dec, the only higher count being max. 21 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 15th Dec.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor* Eala 0152
R Widespread but uncommon breeding species, both inland and at sheltered coastal locations. Scarce breeder in Kintyre; absent from Colonsay. Breeding recorded in 25% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Emigration from some breeding localities in winter.

During the early part of the year, Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* consistently held more than 20 birds, with max. 28 on 10th Feb. No other site reported counts exceeding 10 birds.

Breeding. A total of 41 pairs was reported. In the SAMS study area, 23 pairs (one in Kintyre, 13 in *Mid-Argyll*, 2 on *Mull*, 5 in *N Argyll* and 2 on *Lismore*) were seen; of these, 14 are known to have produced one or more cygnets, but 3 of the 14 are known to have lost all young, 2 of them definitely to mink; 2 pairs were successfully protected by the AFFWAG/SAMS mink-trapping scheme in Lochs Etive and Feochan.

A further 8 pairs were reported from *Mid-Argyll*, of which 7 had broods totalling 24 young and one did not breed; a further 2 pairs (b/5, b/2) were reported from *Mull*. On *Islay*, 5 pairs were reported, 4 of these with broods totalling 12 young and one apparently not breeding. Three pairs were reported from *Cowal* (b/8, b/4, b/?).

The highest counts later in the year were 70 at Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* in mid-Aug, max. 35 in Oban Bay on 29th Nov, and max. 53 at Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* on 11th Dec. No other site had counts exceeding 20 birds.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus columbianus* Eala bheag 0153
W Less than annual, with records in 8 of the last 15 years. Ten of the 12 records during 1980-94 were in Kintyre or *Islay*.

There were two records during the year: a first-year at Portnahaven *Islay* on 4th Apr, and 2 adults at The Laggan *Kintyre* on 29th and 30th Oct.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus* Eala bhan 0154
W P Common passage species, small numbers winter. A few birds summer in most years and breeding has been recorded.

Singles and small groups of up to 8 birds were widely scattered during Jan-Feb, being reported from Kintyre, *Islay*, Colonsay, Cowal, *Mid-Argyll* and *N Argyll*. Spring passage was apparent from mid-Mar, with several flocks in double figures: on *Islay*, 28 at Loch Gorm on 14th Mar, and max. 17 at Loch Gruinart on 2nd Apr; on Colonsay, 11 on Oronsay on 25th Mar; in *Mid-Argyll*, 22 at Kilchurn Castle (near Dalmally) on 25th Mar, and 26 flying northwest over Moine Mhor on 29th Mar; and on *Mull*, 28 flying northwest over the Sound of Mull on 9th Apr. Late records were 12 still at Cornaigmore *Tiree* on 24th May, 2 (one injured) at An Fhaodhail *Tiree* the next day, and the last one (a male ringed as a cygnet in Iceland on 14th Aug 1994) at Loch Bhasapol *Tiree* on 13th Jun.

The first returning birds were 5 flying south over Tiroran *Mull* on 29th Sep, and 2 at Loch Gruinart the next day. Passage continued throughout Oct, by far the highest count being max. 150 at Loch Gruinart on the 28th. Other double-figure counts were max. 24 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 21st Oct, 32 flying south past

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Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 28th Oct, 10 at the River Add estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 28th Oct, and 24 at Loch Nell *Mid-Argyll* on 29th Oct. Numbers during Nov-Dec were much lower, with double-figure counts only from *Islay* (14 at Loch Gorm on 13th Dec; max. 17 at Loch Gruinart on 27th Dec), and *Mull* (14 at Loch Poit na h-I on 15th Nov).

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus* Geadh gorm 0158

P W Variable numbers on passage, with occasional large flocks. Very few winter.

There were few records during the first winter period. Three were on *Coll* on 9th Jan, with 2 on 4th Apr, while one was at The Laggan *Kintyre* on 5th Mar. Up to 8 birds were regular on *Islay* throughout Jan-Apr, with the last 2 at Loch Gorm on 3rd May. The only migrating flock reported was 7 flying north over Lochdon *Mull* on 28th Apr.

The first record of the autumn was a skein of at least 100 flying southeast over Lochdon on 24th Sep; birds were also heard flying over Oban *Mid-Argyll* at night on 27th Sep, with 13 flying south there on 12th Oct. On *Islay*, there were up to 4 in Oct, up to 14 in Nov, and up to 10 in Dec. The only other records were one at The Laggan on 14th Oct, and 8 on *Tiree* on 14th-16th Nov.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons* Geadh bhlar 0159

W I Birds are of the Greenland race *A. a. flavirostris*. Argyll holds about 40% of the world population of this race in winter, mainly on *Islay*. A small introduced population breeds on the Rinns of *Islay*. Birds of the European race *A. a. albifrons* occur as vagrants.

On *Islay*, there were 10,417 birds on 11th Jan, falling to 9,652 on 28th-29th Mar. The only other areas with over a thousand birds during the early part of the year were *Kintyre*, with a total of 2,137 on 24th Mar (1,044 at The Laggan, 944 at Rhunahaorine and 149 at Clachan), and *Coll*, with max. 1,142 on 17th Apr. On 28th Mar, there were 172 at Frackersaig *Lismore* and 50 at Loch Creran *N Argyll*. Other than 148 at Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 8th Apr, counts from other areas did not exceed 100 birds. No counts were received from *Tiree*. Spring departure was quite late, with large numbers still on *Islay* on 19th Apr. The last migrant was at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 16th May.

Breeding. At least 3 pairs of introduced birds bred at Easter Ellister *Islay*, but probably only reared 3 young in total.

The first returning birds were 42 at Loch Gruinart on 22nd Sep, with 400 by 28th Sep. A coordinated count in mid-Nov produced a total of 19,075 in Argyll (cf 17,244 in Nov 1994) (Fig. 1); the *Islay* count was a new record, but 14,495 were then counted there on 28th Nov. The *Kintyre* birds were divided between The Laggan (1,231) and Rhunahaorine (1,115). With the exception of a single at Moine Mhor, all the *Mid-Argyll* birds were on the Tayvallich peninsula. The count did not include *Colonsay*, where 110 were present on 2nd Dec; also, up to 24 (the lowest level in recent years) were at Moine Mhor during Nov-Dec. Of a sample of 5,799 birds on *Islay* during the second winter period, 19.7% were first-winters, indicating above-average breeding success in summer 1995.

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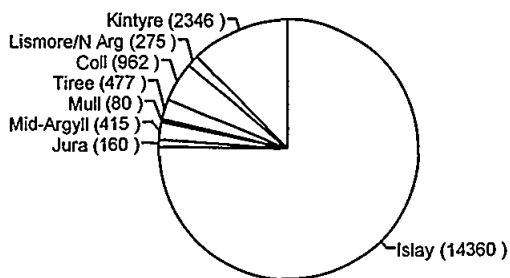


Fig. 1 Numbers of White-fronted Geese in Argyll areas, 12th-16th Nov 1995

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser* Geadh glas 0161
R W P I Increasing breeding population on Colonsay, Mull, Tiree and Coll. These may be native birds that have colonised from the Outer Hebrides, while introduced birds breed in Mid-Argyll. Breeding recorded in 6% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Three locations produced counts exceeding 500 birds during Jan-Apr: 530 at The Laggan Kintyre on 5th Mar, 558 at Ardyne Cowal on 19th Mar, and max. 792 on Coll on 4th Apr. Elsewhere, up to 300 were at Moine Mhor Mid-Argyll in Feb, 68 on Colonsay on 8th Apr, and max. 38 at Fiddien Mull on 10th Jan; also, up to 15 were on Islay during Jan-Apr. No counts were received from Tiree. Spring migration was observed in Mid-Argyll, with 100 flying northwest over Connell on 8th Apr, 200 flying north over Oban on 9th Apr, and 100 over Moine Mhor on 22nd Apr.

Breeding. Records of confirmed breeding came only from Colonsay (25 adults with 3 broods totalling 7 young in Jun), Loch Nell Mid-Argyll (34 adults and 10 young on 15th Jun), Mishnish Lochs Mull (4 broods in Jun), Dervaig Mull (pair and 3 young in late Jun), and Eileanan Glasa (near Salen) Mull (pair and 4 young on 26th Jun).

On Islay, 44 at Kilchoman on 30th Aug and 10 at Portnahaven on 4th Sep probably came from the resident Colonsay population, while a count of at least 200 at Loch an Eilein Tiree in mid-Aug presumably involved local breeders. The first probable migrants of the season were 14 flying south past Frenchman's Rocks Islay on 14th Oct. A coordinated count in mid-Nov produced a total of 2,298 birds in Argyll (cf 2,472 in Nov 1994) (Fig. 2). The Kintyre birds were divided between The Laggan (44) and Rhunahaorine (230), while all the Mid-Argyll birds were at Moine Mhor. The count did not include Colonsay, and no birds were recorded on Mull. Higher numbers were recorded earlier or later during the period at The Laggan (260 on 28th Oct), Moine Mhor (up to 200 in Dec), and Mull (50 at Salen on 10th Dec, and 47 at Ardtun on 14th Dec). Also, 60 (presumably from the wintering population on Bute) were at Kames Cowal on 23rd Dec.

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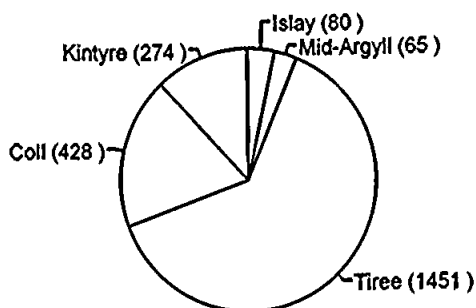


Fig. 2 Numbers of Greylag Geese in Argyll areas, 12th-16th Nov 1995

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens* Geadh ban 0163

I W A small introduced population breeds on Mull, wintering mainly on Coll. Stragglers among wintering Greenland Whitefronts on Islay may have a wild origin.

The white-phase adult from 1994 stayed in the Port Charlotte and Kilchiaran area Islay to 11th Apr. One at Loch Gruinart Islay on 10th Oct, flying in from the north with White-fronted Geese, is believed to have been the same bird; it ultimately moved to the Port Charlotte area, where it remained to the end of the year. Two other white-phase adults, of unknown origin, were briefly at Esknish (near Ballygrant) Islay on 9th Nov.

The introduced flock wintering on Coll totalled 39 during Jan-Apr, 48 in late Aug and 46 on 12th Nov. A single at Kenovay Tieve on 15th Nov may have come from the same flock.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis* Geadh dubh 0166

I W Resident population on Colonsay, introduced in 1934. Regular breeding in Mid-Argyll since 1992, and occasional 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.

Two (possibly 3) small birds on Islay during Jan-Apr may have been genuine vagrants. However, 5 larger birds at Loch Gruinart Islay on 5th Apr, and 15 on 13th May, probably came from the Colonsay population.

Breeding. On Colonsay, 50 adults with 4 broods totalling 9 young were counted in Jun. Breeding occurred at Loch Ederline Mid-Argyll, where 23 (including juveniles) were counted in mid-Aug; 24 on the River Add estuary Mid-Argyll on 5th Aug may have been the same group. Elsewhere in Mid-Argyll, one at Loch an Droighinn (near Loch Nant) and 2 nearby at Loch an Leoid on 15th May could also have been breeding birds.

Reports of single small birds from several sites on Islay between 12th Oct and 12th Dec probably all referred to the same individual. In addition, 2 medium-sized birds were in the Loch Gruinart area on 12th-31st Oct.

1994 The record of 21 at Loch Ederline Mid-Argyll on 7th Jul (ABR 11: 26) almost certainly involved local breeders rather than migrants as stated.

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BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis* Cathan 0167
W I Very large numbers of birds from the Greenland population winter on Islay, with smaller numbers elsewhere. A few birds occasionally summer, and at least some of these are probably injured. A few introduced birds also breed on the Rinns of Islay.

On *Islay*, 27,936 were counted on 10th-11th Jan, and 28,298 on 28th-29th Mar. Flocks were also present on *Coll* (max. 991 on 9th Jan), *Mull* (45 at Fidden on 10th Jan), *Colonsay* (150 on 22nd Feb and 223 on 9th Apr), *Mid-Argyll* (400 on Eilean Mor (off Loch Sween) on 3rd and 8th Mar), and *Tiree* (441 at Balephetrish on 24th Apr). Singles were reported during Jan-Apr from The Laggan *Kintyre*, Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*, Ardyne *Cowal* and Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll*. Spring departure from *Islay* was quite late, with good numbers still present on 18th-19th Apr, and the last 3 at Loch Gruinart on 14th May.

Breeding. About 5 pairs of introduced birds bred at Easter Ellister *Islay*, but few if any young were reared.

The first returning migrants were 22 at Loch Gruinart on 24th Sep, with 2,600 by 28th Sep. In *Kintyre*, 16 flew south past Machrihanish SBO on 4th Oct. A coordinated count during 11th-15th Nov produced a total of 29,473 birds in Argyll; of these, all but 811 were on *Islay*. The remaining birds were at The Laggan (2), Danna *Mid-Argyll* (120), *Tiree* (460) and *Coll* (229). On 28th Nov, numbers on *Islay* peaked at 29,332 birds (*cf* 26,237 in Nov 1994). Of a sample of 13,290 birds on *Islay* during the second winter period, 7.2% were first-winters, indicating below-average breeding success in summer 1995.

A hybrid, probably Barnacle Goose x Pink-footed Goose, was in the Bridgend area *Islay* during both winter periods.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla* Geadh got 0168
W P Uncommon passage migrant. Very few winter. Most birds seen in Argyll are of the light-bellied race B b hrota, which breeds in Greenland and arctic Canada, wintering mainly in Ireland.

All records during Jan-Apr came from *Islay*, where there were 5 at Loch Indaal during the entire period, 5 at Port Ellen on 18th Feb, and singles elsewhere, with a flock of 15 passage migrants at Loch Indaal on 11th Apr. The only other record during the first half of the year was a first-summer on Iona *Mull* on 3rd Jun.

The first returning migrants were 3 flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 13th Sep, with a further 78 passing this site to 25th Oct. Heavy passage was witnessed on *Islay*, with high counts (probably involving different birds) of 205 at Loch Gruinart on 18th Sep, 48 on the 19th, 147 on the 21st, 184 on the 23rd, and smaller numbers on other dates. Other high counts on *Islay* were 206 (3 hrs) flying south past Frenchman's Rocks on 28th Sep, and 117 (1.5 hrs) flying south there on 17th Oct. Small numbers were recorded elsewhere on *Islay* and on *Mull*. Departure was almost complete by the end of Oct, the only subsequent record being 5 on *Islay* (whole-island count) on 13th-14th Nov.

There were no confirmed reports of birds of the dark-bellied race *B b bernicla* in 1995.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna* Cra-gheadh 0173
B W Widespread breeding species, especially on sandy coasts. Breeding recorded in

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39% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). The majority are absent from Aug to Nov when they migrate to moulting grounds.

Numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal Islay reached 338 in Jan (Fig. 3), peaking rather earlier than in 1994. The highest counts elsewhere during Jan-Mar were max. 29 in the Loch na Cille area Mid-Argyll on 19th Feb, and max. 26 at Loch Craignish Mid-Argyll on 20th Mar.

Breeding. A total of 27 pairs and 3 singles was counted on Colonsay in Apr, and 3 broods totalling 26 young were seen in Jun. On Islay, 19 pairs were at Loch Gruinart in Apr, but only a single brood was seen subsequently. A few other reports of single broods were received.

From only a single bird in Sep, numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal built up to 200 birds by Dec (Fig. 3). The only other site with counts exceeding 10 birds was Loch Don Mull, with max. 34 on 10th Dec.

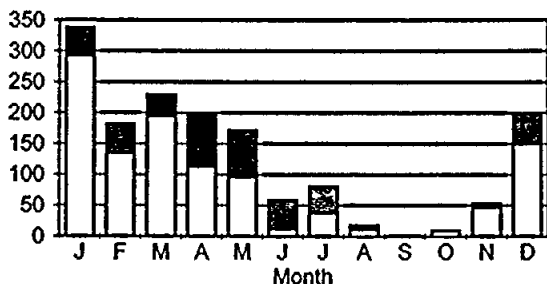


Fig. 3 Maximum monthly counts of Shelduck at two sealochs on Islay in 1995
Black: Loch Indaal White: Loch Gruinart

MANDARIN *Aix galericulata*

0178

I Has bred regularly at Loch Eck (Cowal) in recent years. This species is in Category C of the British list, but it is not known whether the Argyll population is self-sustaining.

Breeding. At Loch Eck Cowal, 5 pairs laid 42 eggs in Tawny Owl nest-boxes (cf one pair each year during 1991-94); 2 of these pairs hatched a total of 17 ducklings. Nearby on the River Cur, groups of up to 9 birds were seen late in the year (Anderson and Petty 1996).

WIGEON *Anas penelope* Glas lach

0179

B W P Scarce and irregular breeding species. Common winter visitor to all areas.

As usual, the highest numbers at the beginning of the year were at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart Islay, peaking in Jan with 825 birds (Fig. 4), rather more than at the beginning of 1993 and 1994; also on Islay, numbers at Ardnave Loch peaked at 46 on 19th Jan. Other counts exceeding 30 birds came from Kintyre (max. 45 at West Loch Tarbert on 22nd Jan, and max. 95 at Westport Marsh on 13th Feb), Cowal (max. 84 at Holy Loch on 22nd Jan), Mid-Argyll (max. 94 at Loch Crinan on 22nd Jan, max. 49 at Loch na Cille on 22nd Jan, and max. 100 at Loch Craignish on 18th Feb), and N Argyll (40 in Ardmucknish Bay on 2nd Jan, and max. 65 at Loch Etive on 19th Mar).

Breeding. No confirmed breeding records were received, but birds were seen

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in suitable habitat in several areas. On *Islay*, up to 3 pairs and 5 additional males were at Loch Gruinart in early May but, as in 1994, there was no evidence of breeding. Elsewhere, 4 males were at Loch Tulla *N Argyll* on 8th May, a male at Loch a' Phuill *Tiree* on 24th May, and a pair at Loch Don *Mull* on 26th Jun. All these sites had breeding season records in 1993 or 1994; more unusual was a male at Cnoc Laoighscan (near Loch Garasdale) *Kintyre* on 16th Jun.

During the second half of the year, numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal peaked at 940 in Nov (Fig. 4); with birds being increasingly attracted by the flooded fields at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, the Loch Gruinart counts in Feb, Oct and Nov were all record highs. Other counts exceeding 40 birds came from *Kintyre* (max. 47 at West Loch Tarbert on 9th Oct), *Cowal* (max. 160 at Holy Loch on 2nd Oct), *Mid-Argyll* (max. 380 at Loch Crinan on 28th Oct, and max. 300 at Loch Craignish on 10th Nov), *Mull* (max. 153 at Loch Don on 12th Nov), and *N Argyll* (50 at Ledaig Point on 12th Oct, and max. 67 at Loch Etive on 12th Nov).

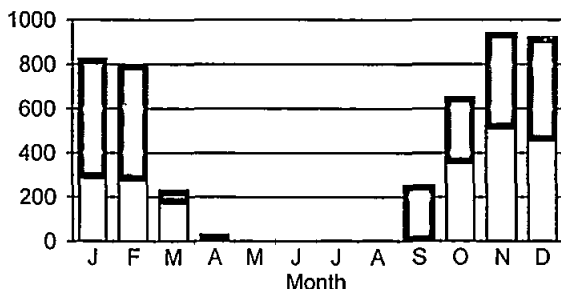


Fig. 4 Maximum monthly counts of Wigeon at two sealochs on Islay in 1995
Black: Loch Indaal White: Loch Gruinart

GADWALL *Anas strepera* Lach glas 0182
B W P Scarce but annual, with most recent records from *Kintyre*, *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Tiree*. Probably bred on *Islay* in 1992, 1993 and 1994.

The only records during the early part of the year came from Loch Gruinart *Islay*, with one on 13th Jan and 2 on 28th Apr; there was no indication of breeding, however.

In autumn, a flock of 12 flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 17th Oct was the largest ever seen at this site. The only other records came from *Islay*, where one or more birds were at Loch Gruinart from 5th Oct to 14th Nov, numbers peaking at 15 on 25th-26th Oct.

TEAL *Anas crecca* Crann lach 0184
B W P Widespread but uncommon breeding species. Common winter visitor. Breeding recorded in 20% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

At Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart *Islay*, numbers peaked at 930 in Jan (Fig. 5), with 130 at Ardnave Loch on 9th Feb. Elsewhere, the highest counts during the early part of the year came from *Coll* RSPB Reserve, where numbers peaked at 180 in Feb.

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The only other flocks larger than 50 birds were at Holy Loch Cowal (max. 86 on 22nd Jan), and Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 87 on 19th Mar).

Breeding. On *Islay*, up to 30 pairs were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve during Apr-May; most or all of these probably attempted to breed. With the exception of 2 dead ducklings found at Ardskenish *Colonsay* on 11th Jun, confirmed breeding records were otherwise confined to northern *Jura*, where 3 females with broods totalling 11 young were recorded in mid-Jul. There were a few other scattered records of pairs in suitable breeding habitat.

As in 1994, numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart exceeded 1,000 birds in Dec, the peak count being 1,166 (Fig. 5); as for Wigeon, some monthly counts at Loch Gruinart (Jan-Mar and Nov) were record highs. Elsewhere, the largest flock was 400 at Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* on 21st Aug; counts exceeding 50 birds also came from Loch Crinan (max. 159 on 12th Nov), Holy Loch (max. 61 on 10th Dec), and Loch Don *Mull* (max. 55 on 10th Dec).

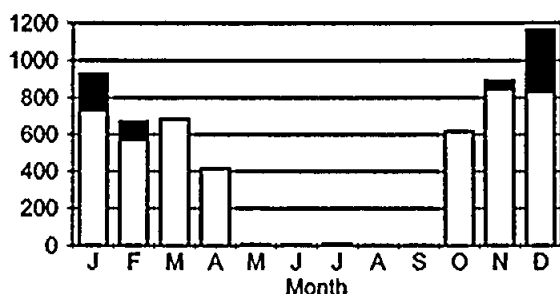


Fig. 5 Maximum monthly counts of Teal at two sealochs on Islay in 1995
Black: Loch Indaal White: Loch Gruinart

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos* Lach 0186
BWP Common breeding and wintering species. Breeding recorded in 67% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart *Islay* peaked at 244 in Jan (Fig. 6) (cf 298 in Jan 1994). The only other sites with counts exceeding 40 birds during the early part of the year were *Coll* RSPB Reserve (max. 150 in Feb) and Holy Loch Cowal (max. 42 on 22nd Jan).

Breeding. At Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve, 9 broods totalling 44 young were counted on 12th-13th May. On *Colonsay*, birds were present at 6 lochs in Jun. No other counts of breeding or potentially breeding birds were received.

In the latter part of the year, numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart peaked at 326 in Dec (Fig. 6) (cf 350 in Nov 1994). Elsewhere, counts exceeding 50 birds came from Holy Loch (max. 164 on 9th Sep), Cairndow Cowal (110 on 16th Nov), Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 59 on 10th Sep), and Loch Etive *N Argyll* (72 on 10th Dec).

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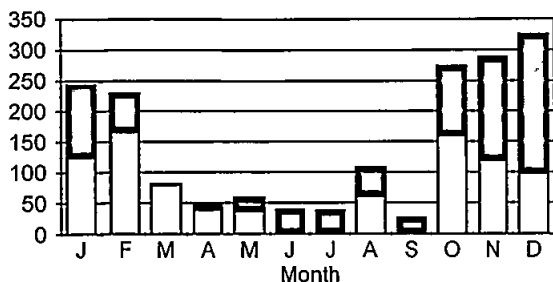


Fig. 6 Maximum monthly counts of Mallard at two sealochs on Islay in 1995
Black: Loch Indaal **White:** Loch Gruinart

PINTAIL *Anas acuta* Lach stiùireach 0189
B W P Very scarce breeding species. Localised in winter, with a regular flock on Islay.

At Loch Indaal Islay, numbers during Jan-Mar were comparable to 1994, peaking at 13 on 1st Feb; at Loch Gruinart Islay, there were up to 9 birds during Jan-Feb.

Breeding. Two females were seen on *Tiree* in May (and one bird there on 21st Aug, at Loch a'Phuill) but no broods were recorded. Elsewhere, single males were at Fiddan Mull on 7th and 11th Apr, and at Loch Gruinart throughout Apr, but there was no suggestion of breeding at either site.

The highest numbers during Oct-Dec were on Islay, with a peak count of 36 at Loch Gruinart on 22nd-25th Oct, and up to 32 in Nov, but only 3 in Dec; some of these birds may have moved to Loch Indaal, where numbers peaked at 36 on 15th Dec. The Jan-Mar and Oct-Nov counts at Loch Gruinart were all record totals for the respective months. The only other reports were 3 flying south past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 29th Sep, and one flying south there on 24th Oct.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula* Lach crann 0191
S Rare. Bred in Kintyre in 1994 and may have bred on Islay in 1993.

The only record of the year was a male at Coll RSPB Reserve on 21st May.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata* Lach a'ghuib leathainn 0194
B W P Uncommon. Most records from Islay and Tiree.

On Islay, there were, unusually, no records from Loch Indaal during Jan-Mar, while numbers at Loch Gruinart peaked at 20 on 13th Jan. The only other record was a male in Salen Bay Mull on 5th Apr, presumably a passage migrant.

Breeding. On Islay, there were 14 pairs at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve during Apr-May, most of which probably bred; 2 males at Carnain (Loch Indaal) on 21st Apr indicated possible breeding there. On Tiree, a pair was at Loch Bhasapol on 24th May, and 2 males were at An Fhaodail on 25th May, but there were no confirmed breeding records. The only other breeding season record came from Westport Marsh Kintyre, where a pair departed on 20th Apr when the marsh was drained.

During the latter part of the year, numbers at Loch Gruinart reached a record

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high of 39 on 1st and 5th Dec; again, there were no reports from Loch Indaal, suggesting — as for Wigeon and Teal — that birds are being increasingly attracted to the flooded fields at Loch Gruinart. The only other reports were 2 flying south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 13th Sep, and 2 on the River Add estuary *Mid-Argyll* on 10th Oct.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina* Lach mhasach 0198
W No confirmed breeding in recent years. Wintering flocks generally small.

By far the highest count during Jan to mid-Apr was 26 at Loch na Druimnean (Kilmelford) *Mid-Argyll* on 14th Feb. Except for 6 at Loch Seil *Mid-Argyll* on 30th Jan, and max. 8 at Loch Leathan (Kilmichael Forest) *Mid-Argyll* on 19th Feb, all other records concerned 1-2 birds at sites in *Kintyre, Islay, Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*. Four males at Loch Nell *Mid-Argyll* on 30th Apr were the last birds of the spring.

The first returning bird was one at Ardnave Loch *Islay* on 15th Aug. No others were reported until mid-Oct when there was apparently a widespread arrival, with 2 at Ardnave Loch on 19th Oct, 10 at Loch Nell the same day, and max. 4 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 24th Oct; singles were also reported during 17th-25th Oct from Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*, Campbeltown Loch *Kintyre* and Oban *Mid-Argyll*. The only records during Nov-Dec were 18 at Loch Skerrols *Islay* on 5th Nov, and 4 at Loch Ederline *Mid-Argyll* on 10th Nov.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula* Lach thopach 0203
B W Scarce breeding species, with about 50 pairs in Argyll. Breeding recorded in 12% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Common winter visitor.

Most high counts during Jan-Apr came from *Islay*, with 27 at Easter Ellister on 15th Jan, max. 19 at Loch Gruinart on 28th Jan, max. 16 at Ardnave Loch on 24th Feb, and 15 at Loch Ballygrant on 25th Feb. The only other count exceeding 10 birds was max. 16 at Loch Leathan (Kilmichael Forest) *Mid-Argyll* on 21st Apr.

Breeding. There were no confirmed records of breeding, but birds were reported during May-Jul from several locations. The highest count came from Loch Nell *Mid-Argyll*, with 8 on 15th Jun increasing to 34 by 18th Jul. Other groups were noted on *Islay* (7 at Ardnave Loch on 14th May, and 16 at Loch Gorm on 4th Jun), *Colonsay* (max. 8 at Loch Sgoltaire on 18th Jun, and max. 4 at East Loch Fada the same day), and *Tiree* (6 at Loch Riaghain on 25th May). Pairs were also recorded at Loch Assapol *Mull* on 17th and 18th May, and Loch Loskin (Dunoon) *Cowal* on 20th May.

The highest count during Aug-Dec was max. 38 at Ardnave Loch on 8th Nov. Except for 20 at Loch an Eilein *Tiree* on 14th Aug, 16 at Loch Nell on 18th Oct, and 15 at Loch Ballygrant on 6th Nov, no other count exceeded 4 birds.

SCAUP *Aythya marila* Lach mhara 0204
W P Large wintering flock at Loch Indaal Islay. Scarce elsewhere. Occasionally summers.

The wintering flock at Loch Indaal *Islay* totalled 830 birds in Jan, but numbers then decreased sharply (Fig. 7). The only other records during Jan-May were one at Loch Gruinart *Islay* from 6th Feb to 2nd Mar, a female flying north past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 5th Apr and 2 flying south there on 18th May, and a late female at Loch Riaghain *Tiree* on 25th May.

Autumn passage was observed at Machrihanish SBO, with a total of 71 flying

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south on 4 dates between 29th Jul and 24th Oct. The Loch Indaal flock built up to a peak of 670 on 26th Nov (Fig. 7), with a few records of 2-4 birds elsewhere on *Islay*.

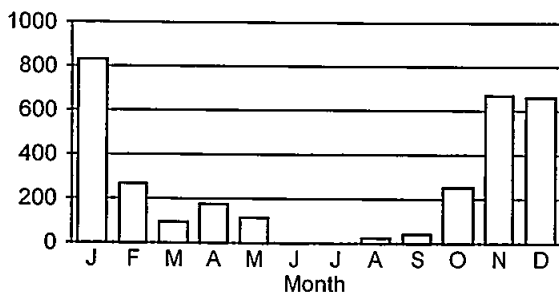


Fig. 7 Maximum monthly counts of Scaup at Loch Indaal (*Islay*) in 1995

EIDER *Somateria mollissima* Lach lochlannach 0206
B W P Common in all areas. Breeding recorded in 66% of 10 km squares (*BTO Atlas*, 1988-91). Large flocks of moulting drakes and first-year birds gather at some sites during Jun to Aug. Many Argyll breeding birds winter in the Firth of Clyde.

The only counts totalling 100 or more birds during the early part of the year were 100 at Loch Scridain Mull on 10th Apr, and max. 186 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 26th Apr.

Breeding. On *Colonsay*, 31 females with a total of 72 young in 27 broods/creches were located in Jun, plus a further 41 females without young. A continued decline was reported from *Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll* with only one pair seen in Linne Mhuirich and no evidence of breeding. The only other breeding records concerned scattered single broods.

Moult flocks with 100 or more birds were recorded during Jun-Aug from *Islay* (max. 180 at Loch Indaal on 14th Jun, and 160 at Kintra (Laggan Bay) on 18th Aug) and *Tiree* (200 in Balephuill Bay on 21st Aug). The Loch Indaal flock grew to max. 234 on 19th Sep, and further large flocks were noted in *Cowal*, with 800 at Otter Ferry on 3rd Nov, and max. 147 at Holy Loch on 9th Nov.

Sexing of samples passing Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* during Feb-Oct showed a continuing predominance of males (72% of 1,742 birds, cf 69% during Mar-Sep 1994).

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis* Eun buchainn 0212
W P Uncommon winter visitor; most numerous in *Kintyre, Islay, Tiree* and *Coll*. Usually marine but occasionally seen on inland lochs. Occasional summer records.

The highest counts during the early part of the year came from *Coll RSPB Reserve*, with peak counts of 29 in Jan, 17 in Feb and 25 in Mar. Other records came from *Kintyre* (8 in the Sound of Gigha on 4th Feb, and 2 at West Loch Tarbert on 18th Feb), *Islay* (max. 8 at Loch Indaal on 25th Feb), *Colonsay* (pair in Kiloran Bay on 8th Apr), and *N Argyll* (one at Loch Etive on 19th Mar).

There was one summer record, a female at Ganavan Bay (near Oban) *Mid-*

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Argyll from 10th Jul to 14th Aug.

The earliest and highest count of the autumn was 8 flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 5th Oct. On *Islay*, up to 5 were at Loch Indaal during Oct-Dec, with one nearby at Kintra (Laggan Bay) on 8th Nov, and 2 at Sanaigmore on 16th Nov. A female was in Ganavan Bay on 9th and 29th Oct, and a male on the 13th. There were no other records.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra* Lach bheag dubh 0213
B W P Very rare breeding species in *Islay* and *Mid-Argyll*. Present throughout the year in the Sound of Gigha (*Kintyre*) and at Loch Indaal (*Islay*). Scarce winter visitor elsewhere, although birds may be present well offshore.

The highest counts during the early part of the year were max. 83 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 27th Apr, and 70 at sea north of Kerrera *Mid-Argyll* the same day. The only other records of birds on the sea were one at West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre* on 22nd Jan, and 15 in the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 4th Feb. Migration was observed in spring at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*, where a total of 96 flew south between Apr and 3rd Jun, and Frenchman's Rocks *Islay*, where a total of 51 flew south and 29 flew north (27.5 hrs) during Apr and May. Also, a flock of 8 flew south past Port Mhor *Colonsay* on 12th Jun.

Breeding. On *Islay*, there was a maximum of 6 pairs and 8 additional males at the usual site on 14th May; 13 males were seen there on 4th Jun, with a pair at a second site the same day. In *Mid-Argyll*, a land-based survey in May at the site occupied in 1993 and 1994 found only one pair and an additional male (cf at least 5 males and 3 females during a boat-based survey in 1994).

At Frenchman's Rocks, monthly totals of southbound birds in Jul, Aug and Sep were 9 (19.5 hrs), 8 (54 hrs) and 31 (38.5 hrs) respectively. Movement past Machrihanish SBO was less, with a total of 16 (296 hrs) flying south during Aug-Sep. The highest count of the year at Loch Indaal was a low 112 on 16th Aug, following which monthly maxima during Sep-Dec varied between 39 and 99. No records were received from any other sites.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca* Lach dubh 0215
W P Scarce but regular on the west coast of *Kintyre* and at Loch Indaal (*Islay*), with occasional summer records from both localities.

A poor year for this species, with only 2 records: a first-winter male at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 25th Feb, and a female there on 27th Apr.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula* Lach bhreac 0218
W Common. Birds regularly present from late Sep or Oct to Apr or early May, with occasional summer records.

During Jan-Apr, counts of 20 or more birds were received from Loch Indaal *Islay* (max. 23 on 20th Jan), Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* (max. 20 on 22nd Jan), and Holy Loch Cowal (max. 27 on 19th Mar). The last birds of the spring were 5 at Loch na Keal Mull on 27th Apr, and one flying north past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* the same day.

The first returning birds were 5 at Loch Indaal on 18th Oct. The highest count during Oct-Dec was max. 75 at Port Ellen *Islay* on 25th Dec. Other counts exceeding

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20 birds came from Loch Poit na h-I Mull (38 on 15th Nov), Loch Indaal (max. 27 on 15th Dec), Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* (max. 27 on 11th Dec), and Loch na Keal (21 on 11th Dec).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator* Siolta dhearg 0221
B W Common. Breeding recorded in 52% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Large moulting flocks gather at some sites during Jul-Aug.

During Jan-Apr, the only counts exceeding 20 birds were max. 26 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd Jan, and max. 44 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 26th Apr.

Breeding. No significant records.

Except for 155 at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 12th Aug, the only counts of 50 or more birds during Jul-Sep came from *Islay*: 152 at Kintra (Laggan Bay) on 1st Jul, max. 61 at Loch Gruinart on 15th Aug, and max. 172 at Loch Indaal on 16th Aug. As usual, flocks were smaller during Oct-Dec, with peak counts at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal being 22 (in Nov) and 99 (in Dec) respectively. The only other sites with counts exceeding 20 birds were Loch Don *Mull* (max. 28 on 10th Dec), and Loch Craignish *Mid-Argyll* (max. 37 on 11th Dec).

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser* Siolta 0223
B W Scarce breeding species, mainly in Mid-Argyll, with an estimated 40-50 pairs. Many (but apparently not all) drakes leave Argyll waters to moult at the end of May, and may gather at Loch Awe (Mid-Argyll) beforehand.

The highest count during Jan-Mar was max. 5 at Loch Leathan (Kilmichael Forest) *Mid-Argyll* on 5th Mar; counts of 1-4 birds were received from 7 other sites in *Mid-Argyll*. Birds were also recorded at Holy Loch *Cowal* (a male on 8th Jan), Loch Scridain *Mull* (2 females on 19th Feb), Machrihanish *Kintyre* (a male on 8th Mar), and Loch Etive *N Argyll* (pair on 19th Mar).

Breeding. There were no confirmed breeding records, but females or pairs were seen during Apr-Jun in *Cowal* (2 sites), *Mid-Argyll* (5 sites), *Mull* (one site) and *N Argyll* (3 sites). There were also a few records of unaccompanied males, the highest count being 5 at the mouth of the River Euchar *Mid-Argyll* on 27th Jun and 11th Jul (cf 13 males there on 29th Jul 1991).

The only Sep record was 2 flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on the 12th. There were very few records during Oct-Dec, by far the highest count being 13 at Cairndow *Cowal* on 16th Dec.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE *Haliaeetus albicilla* Iolair mhara 0243
I Formerly resident breeder in Argyll, but released birds and their offspring currently placed in Category D of the British list. A total of 82 birds imported from Norway was released on Rum between 1974 and 1985 as part of the NCC's re-establishment programme. An additional 26 chicks, also from Norway, were released in northern Scotland by SNH between 1993 and 1995. All records are requested, ideally with details of age, activity and presence/absence of wing tags.

Breeding. In Scotland, 10 localities were occupied by pairs or trios of territory-holding birds, with 9 clutches known to have been laid; 5 successful pairs reared a total of 7 young, equalling the previous best years (1991 and 1992).

A welcome increase in reports of wing-tagged birds indicated that between 11

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and 14 wandering or dispersing immatures were seen in Argyll during the year. There were records, including multiple sightings, in every month, with reports from *Islay*, *Colonsay*, *Mull*, *Tiree* and *Coll*. None were seen on the mainland, however.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus* Clamhan Ioin 0260
P Scarce but now more or less annual, with records in 8 of the 10 years 1985-94. Majority of records in May.

The only record was a female at Loch Tallant *Islay* on 24th May.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus* Breid air toin 0261
B W P Sparse but widespread breeding species. Breeding recorded in forty-eight 10 km squares in Argyll. A total of 471 Argyll chicks was fitted with wing-tags during 1990-93, as part of a national study by RSPB; details of all sightings of these birds are requested, even if the letter/digit on the tag cannot be read.

During the early part of the year, roosting birds were counted at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* (up to 7 in Jan, up to 10 in Feb, and up to 5 in Mar), and Loch Gruinart *Islay* (up to 5 in Jan, and up to 7 in Feb). Away from the usual breeding areas, the only reports came from *Coll*, where up to 2 were present during Jan-Mar.

Breeding. A total of 24 nesting attempts was monitored in *Islay*, *Cowal* and *Mid-Argyll*. Despite cold conditions in spring, laying occurred about a week earlier than in 1994 (median first egg date 7th May, range 23rd Apr to 15th May, $n = 11$). Birds laid similar-sized clutches to 1994 (mean clutch size 4.61, $n = 13$), but hatching success was greater (mean brood size at hatching 3.54, $n = 11$; cf 2.5 in 1994), with more chicks fledged per laying attempt (mean number of young fledged per female laying 2.13, $n = 23$; cf 1.5 in 1994). The mean number of young per successful nest was 2.88 ($n = 17$), a similar value to 1994 [M Madders on behalf of Argyll Raptor Study Group].

Peak monthly counts at the Loch Gruinart roost site were 3, 7 and 6 in Oct, Nov and Dec respectively, lower than the 8-12 birds during Oct-Dec 1994. Only one bird was seen at the regular Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* roost during the same period, but an alternative site used by up to 4 birds was discovered in Dec. The roost at Aros Moss *Kintyre* held 3 birds in Oct. A wandering bird was reported from *Tiree* in mid-Nov.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus* Speireag 0269
B W P Widespread. Breeding recorded in 36% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

As in 1994, a bird was seen on *Coll* (in Mar), outside the known breeding range in recent years (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994. In the Loch Eck area *Cowal*, 41 young (a high total) were fledged by 10 egg-laying pairs; one Sparrowhawk plucking site in this area contained the remains of a Kestrel [DA]. On *Islay*, a pair held territory at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve and probably bred.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo* Clamhan 0287
B W Common in all areas. Breeding recorded in 78% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 7 of 17 BBS squares (cf 8 in 1994). On

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Colonsay, pairs were present at 23-25 of 47 nest sites/territories checked; at least 19 pairs laid and at least 12 hatched young; data from 11 nests gave an average minimum clutch size of 1.91 (similar to 1993 and 1994) and a mean brood size of 1.73 (cf 1.5 in 1994 and 1.83 in 1993) [DCJ, JJ]. In *Cowal*, 24 young fledged from 23 sites in the Loch Eck area; elsewhere, 4 of 5 monitored sites fledged a total of 10 young, the fifth failing (unusually) with large young [DA]. On *Coll*, 18 territorial pairs were located; of these, at least 14 had clutches, and at least 4 reared young to fledging; one of the nests with eggs failed due to disturbance [CS/RSPB]. The only other records of confirmed breeding came from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay*, where a pair fledged 2 young and another pair did not nest, and Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, where a pair with chicks in the nest on 11th Jun surprisingly failed.

GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos* Iolaire 0296
B W Breeding recorded in 39% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Immatures tend to wander in winter and may be recorded in areas where breeding does not occur.

Breeding. Monitoring information was obtained from 59 known home ranges, mainly in mainland Argyll and Mull; no signs of occupation could be found in 7 of these, some of which had apparently been amalgamated with adjacent ranges. Eggs were laid in 32 of the remaining 52 home ranges, and 18-20 chicks fledged from 16-17 nests. Thus 1995 was another unremarkable season, with productivity similar to or a little lower than 1994, and some areas, particularly *Kintyre* and *Knapdale Mid-Argyll*, continuing to perform poorly. One site in *N Argyll* may have been robbed [Argyll Raptor Study Group].

See article in this issue (Gregory 1996) on breeding success of Golden Eagles in Argyll 1964-1995.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus* Iolaire iasgach 0301
S P Very scarce breeding species; recent re-colonist.

Breeding. Three sites in Argyll were occupied in the spring, but only 2 pairs bred, each rearing 2 chicks. At the third site, adults were present for about 5 weeks in spring, but eggs were apparently not laid. Additional breeding season sightings came from 3 localities, 2 in *Mid-Argyll* and one in *N Argyll* [Argyll Raptor Study Group].

The River Add and Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* once again attracted birds at the end of the breeding season, with up to 4 present during Aug and Sep.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus* Clamhan ruadh 0304
B W P Widespread but uncommon. Breeding recorded in 41% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Marked decrease in breeding population reported from Kintyre in recent years. Population in some other areas appears to fluctuate from year to year. Emigration from some areas in autumn (e.g. Mull).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 6 of 17 BBS squares (cf 3 in 1994). A pair raised 2 young on *Colonsay*, the first confirmed breeding record on the island for several years.

Away from known breeding areas, one was at Ben Hough *Tiree* on 22nd Aug. Also, one at Tainish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Nov was the first record for that reserve since 1991.

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MERLIN *Falco columbarius* Meimeal 0309
B W P Scarce breeding species, probably under-recorded.

During Jan-Apr, singles were seen at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre, Westport Marsh Kintyre, Loch Gruinart Islay, Colonsay, and Kilfinichen Mull, with up to 2 birds at Coll RSPB Reserve.

Breeding. In Cowal, pairs were noted displaying or were resident at 4 locations; breeding was confirmed at only one established site, but it failed at the egg stage. Other instances of confirmed breeding came from single sites in Kintyre (female alarming), Islay (failure at egg stage), and Knapdale Mid-Argyll (fledged young). Further breeding season records came from Mull (2 sites), and Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve Islay, where a pair resident during Mar and Apr was not seen subsequently.

As in 1994, the first autumn migrant at Machrihanish SBO was seen on 10th Aug. Other records of singles during Aug-Dec came from Islay, Colonsay, Mid-Argyll, Mull and Tiree.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus* Seabhag 0320
B W P Sparsely distributed but widespread breeding species, found in all areas. Breeding recorded in fifty-two 10 km squares in 1991 survey [RSPB et al.].

Breeding. Of 21 sites checked in Cowal, 5 were unoccupied, 3 held single birds, and the remaining 13 were occupied by pairs; of these, 10 laid eggs and 6 hatched young, fledging a total of 15 chicks. Breeding failures included one suspected robbery, and a pair occupying a quarry site that probably deserted following repeated disturbance [DA, AF]. The only other instances of confirmed breeding were in Kintyre, where a pair fledged 2 or 3 young; Islay, where a pair fledged young; Mid-Argyll, where a pair surprisingly failed late in the season; and Coll, where a pair possibly failed. A pair of non-breeding birds held a territory at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve Islay.

RED GROUSE *Lagopus lagopus* Coileach fraoich 0329
R Sparsely distributed in moorland and young forestry habitats. Breeding recorded in 20% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (cf none in 1994). There were an estimated 8-12 pairs at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve Islay. No other counts were received.

PTARMIGAN *Lagopus mutus* Tarmachan 0330
R Very localised, generally above 800 m. Breeding recorded in 5% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). All records required.

After 3 years with no sightings of birds, there were four records in 1995. In Cowal, singles were on Beinn Bheula on 15th Feb and The Cobbler on 1st Dec. On Mull, one was on Beinn Mheadhon on 13th Apr, and 2 on Ben More on 22nd Sep.

BLACK GROUSE *Tetrao tetrix* Caoileach dubh 0332
R1 Local. Populations in some areas may derive from released birds. Recent increase in numbers as a result of birds colonising forestry plantations. Breeding recorded in 21% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Few records were received and there were no instances of confirmed breeding.

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Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994. On the Rinns of *Islay*, there were 2 females at Ballimony on 13th May, and 3 males at Olistadh the same day; one was seen at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay* on 10th Nov. In *Cowal*, singles were at Stronchullin on 28th Feb and Glen Finart on 9th May, with 6 at Loch Tarsan on 22nd Apr. In *Mid-Argyll*, 3 males were near North Tullich on 25th Mar, and 2 males at Upper Soroba (near Oban) on 10th Oct.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa* Cearc thomain dhearg chasach 0358
I Birds (some hybrids with Chukar A chukar) introduced to several areas. Although this species is in Category C of the British list, populations in Argyll may not be self-sustaining.

The only record received was one at Inverchaolain (Loch Striven) *Cowal* on 29th Jan.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix* Gearradh gort 0370
S Rare and irregular visitor.

The only record was a calling male at Roundhouse *Coll* on 13th Jun.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus* Easag 0394
I Long-established, widespread and common resident. Birds also annually reared and released on many estates. Breeding recorded in 41% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994. On *Colonsay*, 17 calling males were located (*cf* 20 in 1994).

The only high count outside the breeding season was 27 males at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 3rd Nov.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus* Snagan allt 0407
B W P Scarce, but under-recorded.

The only record during the early part of the year was one at Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 22nd Mar.

Breeding. Birds were reported from 3 islands during the breeding season. Singles were heard at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 4th and 5th May, and at Cornaigmore *Tiree* on 24th May, while an estimated 5 pairs were at *Coll* RSPB Reserve. This species was not recorded as breeding on *Coll* in either the 1968-72 Atlas or the 1988-91 Atlas.

In autumn, singles were heard calling at Aros Moss *Kintyre* on 17th Sep and Easter Ellister *Islay* on 21st Sep; also, one was killed by a cat at Portnahaven *Islay* in Sep or Oct. The only other records came from Kilchattan *Colonsay*, with one on 21st Nov, 26th Nov and 21st Dec.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana* Traon breac 0408
S Rare and irregular. First confirmed breeding record for Argyll in 1993.

The only record came from *Coll* RSPB Reserve, where one was seen on 3rd and 14th May.

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CORNCRAKE *Crex crex* Traon 0421

S Localised distribution. Breeding mainly on Islay, Colonsay, Tiree and Coll.

Breeding. Efforts by the RSPB to benefit this species, by management on reserves and agreements with farmers, continue to pay dividends. Numbers in the Argyll islands rose for the third successive year to a level 26% above the 1988 census, with a total of 208 calling males during the main census period (20th May to 10th Jul), which is chosen to minimise effects of movement between sites. This compares with 177 in 1994 (see Table below) [RSPB].

Tentative indications of range expansion came with the first reports since 1988 of calling birds on *Gigha* (one during 8th-10th May), and *Jura* (one at Ardmensish on 4th Aug). The only mainland record was one at Crocken (Southend) *Kintyre* on 5th May.

Numbers of calling Corncrakes in Argyll areas, 20th May to 10th Jul 1995,
with 1994 totals for comparison

Area	1994	1995	Comment
<i>Islay</i>	13	14	7 on RSPB reserve
<i>Colonsay</i>	9	12	2 on Oronsay
<i>Mull</i>	4	5	4 on Iona, one on Treshnish Isles
<i>Tiree</i>	126	140	22 in one square km at Balemartine
<i>Coll</i>	25	37	31 on RSPB reserve
Total	177	208	

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus* Cearc uisge 0424

R Very localised. Breeding recorded in 16% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. On *Islay*, there were at least 6 pairs at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve; breeding also occurred at Carnain, Loch Ballygrant and Easter Ellister. The only other instance of confirmed breeding was at Benderloch GPN *Argyll*, where a brood of 2 was seen on 25th Jun.

During the year, there were also records from 6 sites in *Mid-Argyll*, mainly in the Oban area, and from single sites in *Kintyre*, *Gigha* and *Tiree*.

COOT *Fulica atra* Lach a bhlair 0429

B W Scarce breeder and uncommon winter visitor. Breeding recorded in only 2% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

There were no records during Jan-Mar, but one was at East Loch Fada *Colonsay* on 8th Apr.

Breeding. In Apr, numbers at Westport Marsh *Kintyre* (where breeding occurred in 1993 and 1994) built up to 7 by the 17th, but all had departed by the 25th following draining of the marsh. There were no other records.

Following 2 at Mill Loch *Gigha* on 4th Aug, there were several records during Sep-Nov. In *Mid-Argyll*, singles were at Loch Fhuar Bheinne (near the head of Loch Caolisport) on 2nd Sep, at Loch Nell on 19th Oct, and at Loch Seil on 29th Oct. On *Islay*, one was at Loch Gruinart on 20th-25th Oct, and 2 at Loch nan Cadhan on 6th and 23rd Nov. The only other record was one at East Loch Fada on 20th Sep and 4th Nov.

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CRANE *Grus grus*

0433

V No Argyll records prior to 1958 but 7 since, all but one in late Apr or May.

An immature was near Bowmore Islay from 17th to 20th May [AN, TapRh *et al.*]. This was the third record for the island.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus* Gille brighde

0450

B W P Widespread and common. Breeding recorded in 70% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal Islay peaked at 1,188 in Mar (Fig. 8). Elsewhere, the only counts exceeding 100 birds during the early part of the year came from Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* (max. 150 on 22nd Jan), and Holy Loch Cowal (max. 417 on 5th Feb).

Breeding. The only counts of breeding birds came from RSPB reserves, on Coll (78 pairs) and at Loch Gruinart (9 pairs).

In addition to those present on Islay (Fig. 8), non-breeders were recorded during Jun and early Jul on Colonsay (25 at The Strand on 12th Jun, 39 at Ardskenish on 21st Jun, and 58 on Oronsay on 22nd Jun), and Loch Gilp (70 on 2nd Jul).

As in autumn 1994, numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal peaked early, being higher in Jul (820) than during Aug-Dec (Fig. 8). Numbers at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* also peaked in Jul, reaching 109 on the 17th. Southward passage was apparent at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre and Frenchman's Rocks Islay. A total of 298 (82 hrs) passed the former site in Jul, and 740 (175 hrs) in Aug; the highest day-count was 106 (6 hrs) on 17th Aug. Corresponding figures for Frenchman's Rocks were 281 (19.5 hrs) in Jul and 556 (54 hrs) in Aug, with a maximum day-count of 186 (3 hrs) on 30th Jul. Other counts exceeding 100 birds during Jul-Dec came from Holy Loch (max. 626 on 26th Nov), and Bullwood Cowal (150 on 26th Nov).

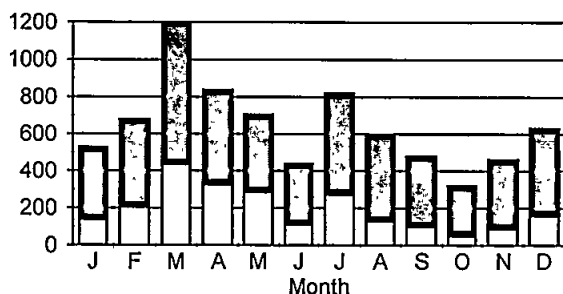


Fig. 8 Maximum monthly counts of Oystercatcher at two sealochs on Islay in 1995

Black: Loch Indaal White: Loch Gruinart

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula* Trilleachan traghad

0470

B W P Widespread and common. Breeding recorded in 55% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The only counts exceeding 30 birds during Jan-Mar were 40 at Ledaig Point *N Argyll* on 2nd Jan, 70 at Traigh nam Barc Colonsay on 11th Mar, and at least 50 each month at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal Islay. Numbers at the last 2 sites increased to a peak of 199 in May, well short of the spring peak of 301 in Apr 1994 (Fig. 9).

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Also in May, 50 were at Camas Cuil an t-Saimh (Iona) *Mull* on the 30th. Dark northern birds (possibly *Ch tundrae*) were reported from Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* between 25th and 31st May, the peak count being 30 on 25th May.

Breeding. The only counts of breeding pairs were 20 on *Colonsay* in Jun (cf 22 in 1994), and 12 at *Coll RSPB Reserve*. Presumed non-breeders were present in mid-Jun on *Islay* (Fig. 9) and *Colonsay* (34 at Traigh nam Barc on the 11th).

By far the highest count of the autumn was an estimated 500 birds on *Tiree* in mid-Aug, including 100 at Gott Bay. There was only light southward passage past Machrihanish SBO and Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* during Jul-Aug (monthly totals less than 60 birds at each site). On *Islay*, numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal built up to 172 by Dec (Fig. 9), with a peak count of 170 at Killinallan, near Loch Gruinart, on 10th Nov. The only other counts exceeding 40 birds during Jul-Dec were 80 on *Iona Mull* on 21st Sep, 100 at Ledaig Point on 20th Oct, and max. 62 at Loch Don *Mull* on 10th Dec.

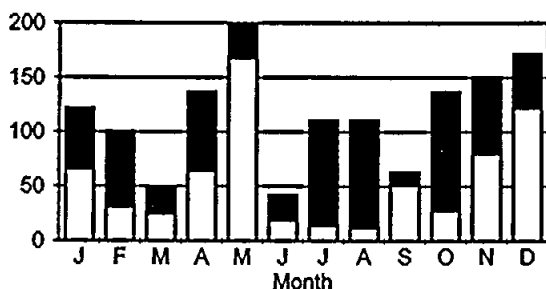


Fig. 9 Maximum monthly counts of Ringed Plover at two sealochs on Islay in 1995
Black: Loch Indaal White: Loch Gruinart

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus* Amadan-mointich 0482
P B? Scarce migrant, mostly in late Apr and May. Has bred in N Argyll in the past and may still do so.

Following 2 successive blank years, there were 3 records in 1995. One of these concerned 2 birds in potential breeding habitat on Beinn Luibhean (near Beinn Ime) *Cowal* on 17th May. The other 2 records were of passage migrants in Golden Plover flocks: 5 at Scoor (near Loch Assapol) *Mull* on 17th May, and 2 at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 10th Oct.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria* Feadag 0485
B W P Sparse but widespread breeding species. Upland afforestation has greatly reduced available breeding habitat in some areas. Breeding recorded in 28% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

During the early part of the year, numbers at 2 sites peaked at over 500 birds: 530 at The Laggan *Kintyre* in Mar, and 550 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 11th Mar. The only other counts exceeding 50 birds were 60 on *Colonsay* golf course on 11th Mar, up to 70 at *Coll RSPB Reserve* in Mar, and 111 on Oronsay *Colonsay* on 7th Apr. No information was received from *Tiree*.

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Breeding. There were no confirmed breeding records; the only record of birds on territory was 2 in Glen Creran *N Argyll* on 8th Jul.

As in 1993 and 1994, the first large autumn flock was reported from *Tiree*, with 200 at Loch a' Phuill on 20th Aug. Other areas did not report their highest numbers until at least Oct, with about 400 at The Laggan from Oct-Dec, max. 237 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 8th Nov, and max. 282 at Loch Gruinart on 21st Nov. The only other counts exceeding 50 birds were 64 on Beinn Bheigeir *Islay* on 14th Sep, 67 at the head of Loch Scridain *Mull* on 18th Sep, and 60 flying south over Portnahaven *Islay* on 11th Oct.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola* Trilleachan 0486
P W Uncommon passage migrant, mostly to islands. A few winter, mainly on Islay.

During the early part of the year, birds were present at Loch Gruinart *Islay* during Jan-Mar, with a peak count of 15 on 28th Jan; at Loch Indaal *Islay*, there were 4 on 1st Feb and one on 17th May. There were no other records.

As in 1994, there was one summer record: one flew south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 28th Jun.

The first autumn migrants were seen in mid-Aug: one flying south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on the 13th, 2 at Loch Gruinart on the 15th, and one at Miodar *Tiree* on the 16th. There were records from several sites in mid-Sep: one at Kintra (Laggan Bay) *Islay* on the 11th, one flying south past Machrihanish SBO on the 12th, 4 flying south past Frenchman's Rocks on the 13th, and 2 on Iona *Mull* on the 21st. Numbers at Loch Gruinart also peaked in mid-Sep, with 15 on the 18th. Fewer birds remained after the end of Sep, though up to 9 were still at Loch Gruinart in Dec. There were records of singles during Oct-Dec at 3 other sites, in *Kintyre*, *Islay* and *Mull*.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus* Carracag 0493
B W P Localised breeder and widespread wintering species associated with rough pasture, arable fields and machair. Breeding recorded in 48% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

During the early part of the year, numbers at Loch Gruinart *Islay* peaked at 718 on 7th Mar. Other than max. 180 at Coll RSPB Reserve in Jan, no other count exceeded 100 birds.

Breeding. Counts of breeding birds came from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve (263 pairs, similar to the 1993 total, but slightly down on 1994), and Coll RSPB Reserve (140 pairs). At Westport Marsh *Kintyre*, 8 pairs failed following drainage of the marsh; this species is now an extremely scarce breeder in south *Kintyre*.

An estimated 1,000 birds were on *Tiree* in mid-Aug. Except for Loch Gruinart, where up to 195 were present in Oct and up to 328 in Dec, other counts exceeding 100 birds were confined to Nov: 620 at The Laggan *Kintyre* on the 2nd, 180 near Ardlamont Point *Cowal* on the 17th, and max. 469 at Loch Gruinart on the 21st.

KNOT *Calidris canutus* Luatharan gainmhich 0496
W P Uncommon passage migrant with main passage Aug-Sep. A few winter.

The only records during Jan-Apr came from *Islay*: max. 20 at Loch Indaal on 2nd Feb, and 12 at Loch Gruinart on 22nd Mar. Seven were still at Loch Indaal on

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17th May, the only other May record being one flying south past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on the 15th.

The first returning bird was one at Loch Indaal on 12th Jul. There was light southward passage past Machrihanish SBO and Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* during Jul-Oct, with a total of 91 (458 hrs) past the former site, and 13 (131 hrs) past the latter. On *Islay*, numbers at Loch Gruinart peaked at 48 on 19th Oct, while monthly maxima at Loch Indaal during Aug-Dec varied between 48 and 74, the latter figure being attained on 15th Dec. The only other records during the latter part of the year were 12 at Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* on 20th Aug, 4 at Ganavan (near Oban) *Mid-Argyll* on 10th Sep, 2 at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on 10th and 11th Sep, and 2 at Ledaig Point *N Argyll* on 28th Dec.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba* Luatharan glas 0497
W P Uncommon passage migrant with main passage in May and Aug. A few winter, mainly on Islay and Tiree. Occasionally recorded in summer.

The only sites with more than 10 birds during Jan-May were Loch Gruinart *Islay* (max. 32 on 9th Feb), and Camas Cuil an t-Saimh (Iona) *Mull* (20 on 30th May).

The first returning birds were 2 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 12th Jul. By far the highest count of the autumn came from *Tiree*, where an estimated 1,500-2,000 birds were present in mid-Aug, including 300 at Gott Bay. Southward passage was observed at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre and Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* during Jul-Sep, with a total of 193 (378 hrs) past the former site (comparable to the 1994 total), and 114 (112 hrs) past the latter (many more than in 1993 and 1994). The only other counts exceeding 10 birds during Aug-Dec came from *Islay*, with 20 at Kintra (Laggan Bay) on 11th Sep, 15 at Killinallan on 31st Oct, and max. 42 at Loch Gruinart on 10th Nov.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* Luatharan beag 0501
P Scarce but annual, with the majority of records in autumn.

The only spring record was a singing bird at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 2nd Jun.

Autumn records were confined to Kintyre (singles at Machrihanish SBO on 21st Aug and 18th Sep) and *Islay* (one flying south past Frenchman's Rocks on 9th Aug, 4 at Kintra (Laggan Bay) on 11th Sep, and one at Machir Bay on 30th Sep).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos* 0507
P Less than annual. Six accepted Argyll records during 1980-94: one in Jun, 4 in Sep and one in Oct.

One was seen and photographed at Fiddien *Mull* on 18th May [BH, RJ, CP, LP, KS, RS].

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima* Luatharan rioghail 0510
W P Widely distributed along rocky coasts from Sep to May.

During Jan-Apr, counts in double figures were received from Loch Indaal *Islay* (max. 15 on 1st Feb), Eilean Mor (off Loch Sween) *Mid-Argyll* (max. 12 on 8th Mar), and Staffa *Mull* (max. 26 on 10th Apr). The only other records came from Machrihanish SBO Kintyre (2 regular during Feb and Mar, and one on 3rd Apr), and

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Oronsay *Colonsay* (2 on 7th Apr). The last spring record was 5 on Staffa on 17th May.

The first returning birds were 4 at Machrihanish SBO on 16th Sep, numbers there reaching a peak of 10 on 24th Oct. On *Islay*, numbers at Loch Indaal peaked at 23 on 19th Oct, with singles reported elsewhere on the island. The only other record was 2 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 9th Oct.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* Graillig 0512
BWP Very localised breeding species. Breeding recorded in 20% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Numbers highest on passage, except on *Islay* where several hundred birds winter.

During Jan-Mar, numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal *Islay* peaked at 953 in Feb (Fig. 10); other than 115 at Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* on 15th Jan, no other counts exceeded 100 birds. As in 1993 (but not 1994) there was a second peak of migrants at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal in May, with up to 775 birds present at the 2 sites (Fig. 10). Northward migration was observed at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* in May, with a total of 107 (82 hrs) during the month, and a further 18 on 1st Jun.

Breeding. The only counts of breeding birds came from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve (6 pairs on moorland), and *Coll* RSPB Reserve (7 pairs). Presumed breeders were also reported from *Jura* (one site), *Colonsay* (2 sites) and *N Argyll* (2 sites), but there were no confirmed breeding records.

During Jul-Oct, southward passage was observed at Machrihanish SBO and Frenchman's Rocks *Islay*, with a total of 428 (458 hrs) past the former site, and 324 (131 hrs) past the latter. Peak day-counts were 110 (4 hrs) at the former site and 215 (3.5 hrs) at the latter, both on 29th Jul. Numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal fluctuated rather irregularly during Jul-Dec, peaking at 513 in Dec, but with a subsidiary peak of migrants in Jul as in 1994 (Fig. 10). The only other count exceeding 100 birds came from *Tiree*, where there were estimated to be 500 in mid-Aug, including 100 at Gott Bay.

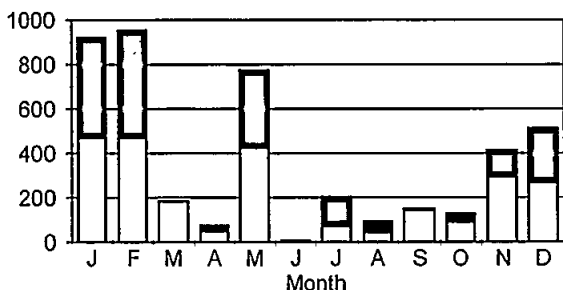


Fig. 10 Maximum monthly counts of Dunlin at two sealochs on *Islay* in 1995
Black: Loch Indaal **White:** Loch Gruinart

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax* Gibeagan 0517
P Scarce but annual passage migrant, more numerous in autumn.

In spring, singles were at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 15th Apr and 10th May.

Except for a juvenile at Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* on 21st Aug, all autumn records

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came from *Islay*: 2 at Loch Gruinart on 7th Aug and again on 17th-20th Oct, rising to 3 on the 18th; one at Carnain (Loch Indaal) on 28th and 30th Aug; and one flying south past Frenchman's Rocks on 10th Sep.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyrtes minimus* Gobhrag bheag 0518
W P Scarce but probably under-recorded.

During the early part of the year, singles were recorded at *Coll RSPB Reserve* in Jan and Mar, *Taynuilt Mid-Argyll* on 19th Mar, and *Moine Mhor Mid-Argyll* on 29th Mar.

The only records during the second winter period were singles at *Wester Ellister Islay* on 22nd Oct, and *Connel Mid-Argyll* on 16th Nov.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago* Naosg 0519
B W P Widespread and locally common. Breeding recorded in 51% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The highest count during the early part of the year was 22 at *Bridgend Islay* on 19th Feb.

Breeding. Counts of drumming males were received from *Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve Islay* (39), *Colonsay* (39, whole-island total), *Iona Mull* (2) and *Coll RSPB Reserve* (164). Breeding was confirmed for the first time at *Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll*.

Southward migration in autumn was observed at *Portnahaven Islay*, with 23 flying south and east on 15th Oct. The only other count exceeding 20 birds was 40 at *The Laggan Kintyre* on 24th Oct.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola* Coileach coille 0529
B W P Widespread but under-recorded. Breeding recorded in 35% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The highest count during the early part of the year was 6 at *Ardentallen Bay Mid-Argyll* on 11th Mar.

Breeding. At least 7 roding birds were reported from *Colonsay*, but this was only a partial count. No other counts were received. Breeding was confirmed at *Tiroran Mull* (nest with c/4 on 16th Apr), *A'Choille Mhor Colonsay* (nest with c/4 on 19th Jun), and *Loch Don Mull* (b/4 on 22nd Jun).

Many observers commented on an apparent increase in numbers during the cold spell in late Dec, for example 6 together at *South Ledaig N Argyll* on 28th Dec, and one in a garden at *Dunoon Cowal* on 29th Dec.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa* Cearra ghob 0532
P Regular in recent years on Islay and Tiree, both in spring and in autumn. Scarce elsewhere.

There were no records during Jan-Mar, and only *Loch Gruinart Islay* held birds during Apr-May, with one on 11th Apr and 2 on 16th and 25th May.

In autumn, 38 adults flew south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 29th Jul, with a further single the next day when one also flew south past *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre*. On *Islay*, one or more birds were at Carnain (Loch Indaal) from 27th Aug to 12th Oct, numbers peaking at 5 on 4th-20th Sep; also, one was at *Loch Gruinart* on

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13th Oct. The only other records came from Loch a'Phuill *Tiree* (2 on 20th Aug, and 4 on the 21st), Hough Bay *Tiree* (5 on 22nd Aug), and Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* (one in Aug, and 3 on 10th Sep).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica* Cearra ghob mhor 0534
WP Uncommon passage migrant, with most records in autumn. Wintering birds on Islay and small numbers elsewhere. Regular on Islay in summer.

Numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal *Islay* varied little during Jan-May, peaking at 136 in Feb (Fig. 11). Other records during the early part of the year came from Loch Gilp *Mid-Argyll* (2 on 7th Jan), Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* (max. 4 on 22nd Jan), and Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* (one flying north on 16th May, and 5 flying south on the 29th).

As usual, birds were still present on *Islay* during Jun-Jul (Fig. 11). Also, there were 4 at The Strand *Colonsay* on 12th Jun, with 2 still present on 22nd Jun, and one at the head of Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* on 9th Jul.

In autumn, southward passage was observed at Machrihanish SBO, with a total of 15 birds on 4 dates between 27th Aug and 1st Oct. On *Tiree*, 10 were at Gott Bay on 16th Aug, and one at Loch a'Phuill on 20th and 21st Aug. Numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal *Islay* built up to a peak of 298 in Dec (Fig. 11). The only other records during Aug-Dec came from Holy Loch *Cowal* (one on 3rd Sep), Loch Gilp (one on 16th Sep), Loch Don *Mull* (max. 19 on 12th Nov), and Loch Crinan (max. 3 on 10th Dec).

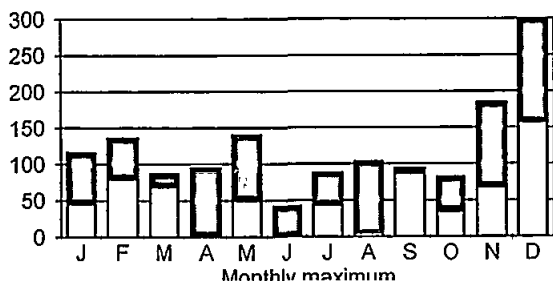


Fig. 11 Maximum monthly counts of Bar-tailed Godwit at two sealochs on Islay in 1995
Black: Loch Indaal **White:** Loch Gruinart

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus* Eun bealltain 0538
P A regular migrant in small numbers, with main passage late Apr to May and late Jul to Aug. Summer records not infrequent.

The first spring bird was at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 15th Apr. Spring passage was apparent at Machrihanish SBO and Frenchman's Rocks *Islay*. At the former site, a total of 37 flew north between 28th Apr and 13th May. At the latter, a total of 105 flew north and 34 flew south between 27th Apr and 4th May, peaking on 27th Apr with 78 flying north and 13 flying south (2 hrs); some repeat counting may have occurred, however. The only other counts exceeding 10 birds were 15 at Traigh an Luig (Loch Indaal) *Islay* on 30th Apr, 24 at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 13th May, and 11 at Fiddien *Mull* on 16th May. The last bird of the spring was on Iona *Mull* on 2nd Jun.

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In autumn, a total of 19 (256 hrs) flew south past Machrihanish SBO during Jul-Aug. There were a few other records involving 1-3 birds on *Gigha*, *Islay* and *Tiree* in late Jul and Aug, the largest group being 4 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 1st Aug. One at Machrihanish SBO on 24th Sep was the last bird of the year.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata* Guilbneach 0541
B W P Common. Breeding recorded in 50% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

On *Islay*, numbers at Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal declined gradually from a peak of 646 in Jan (Fig. 12). The only other site reporting more than 100 birds during the early part of the year was The Laggan Kintyre, with around 400 birds during Jan-Mar.

Breeding. Counts of breeding birds came only from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay* (42 pairs, at least 18 of which reared young), and *Coll* (11 pairs, whole-island total).

During the latter part of the year, numbers at Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart peaked at 755 in Aug (Fig. 12), but were well short of the 1994 totals (which exceeded 1,000 in Aug, Sep and Oct). Elsewhere, only 2 sites reported counts exceeding 100 birds: The Laggan (max. 342 on 18th Oct), and Holy Loch Cowal (max. 157 on 26th Nov).

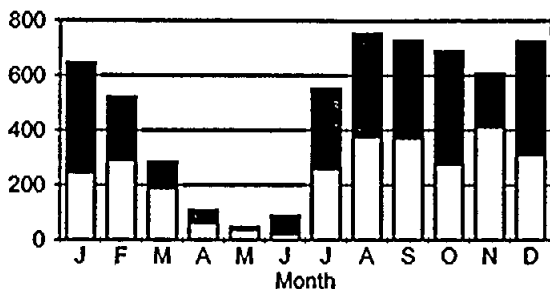


Fig. 12 Maximum monthly counts of Curlew at two sealochs on *Islay* in 1995
 Black: Loch Indaal White: Loch Gruinart

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus* Gearradh bhreac 0545
P Rare, with only 5 Argyll records during 1980-94: one in May, 3 in Aug and one in Oct.

One in breeding plumage at Loch Gruinart *Islay* from 6th to 11th May was the first record for the island since 1982.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus* Cam ghlas 0546
B W P Localised breeder. Breeding recorded in 40% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Widespread passage migrant and wintering species.

The highest count during the early part of the year was 92 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 19th Jan, with 50 there on 9th Feb and 22nd Mar. Three other sites had peak counts exceeding 20 birds: 47 at Holy Loch Cowal on 19th Mar, 26 at West Loch Tarbert Kintyre on 19th Mar, and 25 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 27th Mar.

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Breeding. Counts of breeding birds came from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve (107 pairs), and Coll RSPB Reserve (56 pairs); both totals were similar to the 1994 counts. Also, 17 pairs were located on Colonsay in Jun, including 9 on Oronsay (*cf* a total of 23 pairs in 1994).

By far the highest count of the autumn came from Tiree, where an estimated 300-500 birds were present in mid-Aug. Southward passage past seawatching sites during Jul-Sep was relatively light, with totals of 281 (378 hrs) past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre, and 108 (112 hrs) past Frenchman's Rocks Islay. The highest day-count at the former site was 54 (6 hrs) on 13th Jul, and at the latter 58 (3.5 hrs) on 29th Jul. Numbers at Loch Indaal peaked at 78 on 12th Jul and declined subsequently, while numbers at Loch Gruinart built up to 69 on 11th Dec. The only other sites with counts exceeding 20 birds during Jul-Dec were West Loch Tarbert (max. 21 on 10th Sep), and Holy Loch (max. 31 on 7th Oct).

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia* Deoch bhuidhe 0548
B W P Very scarce breeding species (only in Mull and N Argyll in recent years). Breeding recorded in 4% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Small numbers on passage with a few birds wintering in some localities.

The only records during Jan-Mar were one at Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll on 22nd Jan, and max. 4 at the head of Loch Scridain Mull on 22nd Jan and 19th Mar. There were several records of 1-2 birds during the first half of Apr in Kintyre, Islay, Colonsay, Mid-Argyll and Mull.

Breeding. During the breeding season, singles or pairs were reported from suitable breeding habitat at one site on Mull and 3 sites in N Argyll. Also, there was a record of a presumed non-breeder at The Strand Colonsay on 10th Jun.

Returning birds were apparent from mid-Jul, the first being seen at Loch Gruinart Islay on the 14th. Records of 1-2 birds during Jul-Oct came from Machrihanish SBO Kintyre, Holy Loch Cowal, Ganavan (near Oban) Mid-Argyll, Croig Mull and Miodar Tiree. Three sites had peak counts of 3 or more birds during the same period: 5 at Loch Gruinart Islay on 25th Jul, 6 at the head of Loch Scridain during Aug-Sep, 3 at Loch Crinan Mid-Argyll in Sep, and 6 at Loch Don Mull on 17th Sep and 27th Oct. Other than continued presence at Loch Scridain and Loch Don, the only records during Nov and Dec were 2 at Loch Craignish Mid-Argyll on 10th Nov, and one at Holy Loch on 10th Dec.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus* Luatharan uaine 0553
P Scarce but more or less annual. Majority of records in autumn (mostly mid-Jul to mid-Oct); very rare in spring.

One at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 29th May was only the third spring record in Argyll since 1980. The only other record of the year was one at Port Ban Gigha on 5th Aug.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos* Luatharan 0556
S P Widespread and common breeding visitor. Breeding recorded in 68% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

One at Salen Bay Mull on 3rd Apr was the earliest in Argyll since 1986. Birds did not arrive in most areas until late Apr, though the first in Mid-Argyll was one at

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Loch Feochan on the 12th.

Breeding. On *Colonsay*, numbers had apparently declined, with only 13 pairs located in Jun (cf 25 in 1994). The only other counts of breeding birds came from *Iona Mull* (2 pairs), and *Loch Tulla Mid-Argyll* (8 pairs on 8th May).

In autumn, a total of 82 (257 hrs) flew south past *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre* during Jul and Aug, with a peak of 18 (7 hrs) on 19th Jul, and the last (also the last in *Argyll*) on 24th Aug.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres* *Trilleachan beag* 0561
WP Widespread and common on rocky shorelines and seaweed-covered strandlines, mainly from Aug to May. Summer records not unusual.

Numbers at *Loch Gruinart* and *Loch Indaal Islay* were more or less constant during Jan-Mar, then fell sharply in Apr (Fig. 13). The only other sites with counts exceeding 20 birds during the early part of the year were *Loch Gilp Mid-Argyll* (max. 41 on 15th Jan), *Oban Mid-Argyll* (max. 28 on 8th Mar), and *Oronsay Colonsay* (33 on 7th Apr).

Unlike 1994, there were no records during the second half of Jun; the first returning birds were 4 at *Bruichladdich Islay* on 2nd Jul. The highest count of the autumn was an estimated 200-300 on *Tiree* in mid-Aug. As in 1994, little southward passage was observed at seawatching sites, with totals of 78 (378 hrs) past *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre* during Jul-Sep, and 45 (73.5 hrs) past *Frenchman's Rocks Islay* during Jul-Aug. Numbers at *Loch Gruinart* and *Loch Indaal* reached 127 by the end of the year (Fig. 13). The only other sites with peak counts exceeding 20 birds during Jul-Dec were *Oban* (25 on 29th Sep), *Loch Don Mull* (23 on 12th Nov), and *Loch Gilp* (30 on 13th Nov).



Fig. 13 Maximum monthly counts of Turnstone at two sealochs on Islay in 1995
 Black: Loch Indaal White: Loch Gruinart

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius* *Liathag allt* 0565
P Irregular, associated with autumn gales. All but 3 of 18 records during 1980-94 were in the period mid-Sep to mid-Oct.

Strong westerlies during late Sep and early Oct resulted in a very good autumn for this species. Two flew south past *Machrihanish SBO Kintyre* on 24th Sep, with a further 7 on 5th Oct and one on the 17th. On *Islay*, two flew south past *Orsay* on 7th Oct, while at nearby *Frenchman's Rocks*, 2 flew south on 8th Oct, followed by 2 on the 11th and singles on the 12th and 15th.

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POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus* Fasgadair donn 0566
P Scarce but annual, with several records most years. Majority seen in autumn.

All records were in autumn. In *Kintyre*, single adults flew south past Machrihanish SBO on 2nd, 7th and 27th Aug, and a juvenile was in a field nearby at The Laggan on 16th Oct. On *Islay*, singles (in various plumages) flew south past Frenchman's Rocks on 10th and 14th Aug, 27th Sep, and 5th, 8th and 17th Oct, with the last 2 on 18th Oct. The only other record was one at Miodar Tìree on 23rd Aug.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus* Fasgadair 0567
SP The commonest skua in Argyll, regularly seen in small numbers near large seabird colonies. Small breeding colonies on Jura and Coll. Passage birds regular and widespread in spring and especially autumn.

The first record of the year was 10 (2 hrs) flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 7th Apr; a further 3 flew south past this site during Apr and May. The only other spring records, other than in the immediate vicinity of breeding colonies, were one flying south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 27th Apr, 2 at Sorobaidh Bay Tìree on 24th May, and singles on *Iona Mull* on 1st and 4th Jun.

Breeding. On *Coll*, 27 pairs were located (*cf* 33 in 1994). No counts were received from *Jura*, but numbers visiting *Colonsay* in mid-Jun (thought to be from the *Jura* population) were well down on previous years, with only a single sighting.

In autumn, passage was recorded at seawatching sites, with a total of 63 flying south and 7 flying north (131 hrs) past Frenchman's Rocks during Jul-Oct, and 26 (296 hrs) flying south past Machrihanish SBO during Aug-Sep (including 8 juveniles). The only other records came from *Tìree* and *Coll* in Aug, and may have involved locally breeding birds. The last two birds of the year flew north past Frenchman's Rocks on 17th Oct.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua* Fasgadair mor 0569
SP Uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor. Bred unsuccessfully on Coll in 1989.

There was an unusually early record of one on *Iona Mull* on 8th Feb. The only spring record was one flying north past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 19th May.

Breeding. At least one bird summered on *Coll*, but there was no evidence of nesting.

In autumn, a total of 14 flew south and one flew north (376 hrs) past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* during Aug-Oct, while 35 (131 hrs) flew south past Frenchman's Rocks during Jul-Oct. The highest day-count at the latter site was 12 (6.5 hours) on 25th Aug. The only other records were one flying south along the Sound of Gigha *Kintyre* on 31st Jul, and 2 at Miodar Tìree on 23rd Aug, with singles there on 24th and 25th.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus* Crann fhaoileag 0578
SWP Irregular, with several records most years but none in others. Typically seen Aug or Sep, but summer records (usually involving first-year birds) and winter records not infrequent.

In spring, an adult was at Rhunahaorine Point *Kintyre* on 14th Apr, and a first-summer at Loch Gruinart *Islay* from 7th to 24th May.

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In autumn, a juvenile flew south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* on 22nd Aug, and an adult and a first-winter flew south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 5th Oct.

SABINE'S GULL *Larus sabini* 0579

P Mainly autumn. Formerly irregular but, with recent increased interest in seawatching, recorded annually since 1989.

On *Islay*, juveniles flew south past Frenchman's Rocks on 9th [TapRh] and 24th Sep [TapRh], with 2 on 5th Oct [TapRh, CRMck].

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus* Faoileag a'chinn duibh 0582

B W P Common except on outer islands. Breeding mostly coastal, usually on small islands. Breeding recorded in 16% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The only counts exceeding 100 during Jan-May came from Loch Indaal *Islay*, with monthly maxima of 150 on 26th Apr and 111 on 17th May.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, 7 colonies were noted (all in *Mid-Argyll*), ranging in size from 3 to 128 pairs (total 289 pairs); a total of 50-85 young were fledged (0.17-0.29 young/pair); 4 of the 7 colonies (total 90 pairs) fledged no young, 2 of these (total 79 pairs) definitely failing because of mink.

Other colony counts came from *Colonsay* (13 pairs in 2 colonies at Ardskenish), *Linne Mhuirich Mid-Argyll* (2 pairs), and *Coll RSPB Reserve* (23 pairs).

In the second half of the year, only 2 sites had peak counts exceeding 100 birds: Loch Gruinart *Islay* (180 on 15th Aug), and Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* (190 on 12th Nov).

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis* 0589

W P Scarce. First recorded on *Tiree* in Jan 1983; now more or less annual.

The only record was the presumed returning adult at Port Charlotte *Islay* from 22nd Feb to 16th Mar [MAO, TapRh *et al.*].

1994 A first-summer/second-winter was at North Ledaig (near Benderloch) *N Argyll* on 5th Jul [FW].

COMMON GULL *Larus canus* Faoileag 0590

B W P Widespread and common breeding species. Colonies both coastal, where mostly on small islands, and by inland waters. Breeding recorded in 45% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

During Jan-Apr, numbers at Loch Indaal *Islay* peaked at 525 on 1st Feb. No other site produced counts exceeding 250 birds.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, 25 colonies (14 in *Mid-Argyll*, 3 in *Mull*, 5 in *N Argyll* and 3 in *Lismore*) with a total of 982 pairs fledged 384-508 young (0.39-0.52 young/pair); mink definitely caused whole-colony failures at 2 sites and were suspected as the cause of whole-colony failures at another 5 sites. Birds were breeding at a further 19 colonies where productivity was not measured.

Other counts of breeding birds came from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay* (11 pairs in 2 colonies), *Linne Mhuirich Mid-Argyll* (6 pairs), and *Coll RSPB Reserve* (45 pairs).

There were no counts exceeding 250 birds during the latter part of the year.

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LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* Faoileag bheag 0591
S P Common breeding species, generally present from Mar to Sep. Breeds coastally, almost always on small islands in association with Herring Gull. Breeding recorded in 20% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). A few remain in winter.

The only Jan records were one adult at Barcaldine *N Argyll* on the 8th, and 5 adults at Bowmore *Islay* on the 23rd. In Feb, a total of 2 adults were recorded at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre*, 9 birds were at West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre* on the 19th, and one was at Loch Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on the 21st.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, 13 colonies (one in *Kintyre*, one in *Cowal*, 9 in *Mid-Argyll* and 2 in *Lismore*) were noted, varying in size from one to about 300 pairs (total 900-1,100 pairs); of these, 7 monitored colonies, with a total of 800-1,000 pairs, fledged about 320-375 young.

The only other counts of breeding birds came from *Coll* (179 pairs at 6 colonies, partial count), and *Lunga* (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* (2 nests).

In autumn, southward migration past Machrihanish SBO peaked in Aug, with a total of 1,074 (296 hrs) during Aug-Sep; 86% of these were juveniles or first-winters (*cf* 73% during Aug-Sep 1994). The highest day-count was 186 (6 hrs) on 10th Aug; the highest day-count at Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* was 155 (6.5 hrs) flying south on 25th Aug. There were a few records in Oct, but none subsequently.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus* Faoileag an sgadain 0592
B W P Widespread and abundant breeding species. Breeds coastally, almost always on small islands. Breeding recorded in 33% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Some evidence for immigration into Argyll in winter; colour-ringing studies have shown that these birds are probably from the Clyde and NE England.

During the early part of the year, the only count exceeding 250 birds was 374 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 18th Feb.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, 42 colonies (one in *Kintyre*, 3 in *Cowal*, 25 in *Mid-Argyll*, 3 in *Mull*, 2 in *N Argyll* and 8 in *Lismore*) were noted, with a total of 4,000-4,500 pairs; most colonies were successful. Of the larger colonies, 9 were monitored; they contained a total of about 1,750 - 2,000 pairs and fledged about 840-990 young. Mink predation was detected at 4 of these colonies; at one of them (Eilean Fraoich, Sound of Jura *Mid-Argyll*), 120-200 pairs fledged no young as a result.

The only other counts of breeding birds came from *Coll* (339 pairs at 8 colonies, partial count), and *Lunga* (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* (83 nests).

The highest count of the second winter period was 363 at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 15th Dec.

Of 7,360 aged at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* during Feb-Oct, 32% were adults. Seasonal variation in the proportion of adults was roughly similar to that shown by other gull species (see Maguire 1996), being lowest (21-23%) in summer when the breeding colonies are occupied. The age composition of the Oct sample (36% adults, *n* = 977) contrasted with birds on grassland at The Laggan nearby (96% adults, *n* = 1,548) [EJM].

YELLOW-LEGGED (HERRING) GULL *L a michahellis*
Deletion from Argyll list

1992 The record of one at Balanahard *Colonsay* on 22nd Jul should be deleted.

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Following a recent review, only 3 Scottish records of this race (none in Argyll) are now considered acceptable by SBRC (*Scottish Birds* 18: 95-100).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides* Faoileag liath 0598

W Scarce but normally at least 5 records annually, and sometimes many more.

After only 2 records in the second half of 1994, there was apparently an influx in early 1995; at least 9 birds were probably involved, though the total number cannot be determined accurately. On *Islay*, sightings of a first-winter in the Portnahaven area on 2nd Jan, 21st Feb and (first- or second-winter) on 22nd Apr could all have related to the same bird. At Machrihanish SBO and nearby at The Laggan Kintyre, sightings of a first-winter on 15th Feb, 6th and 9th Apr, and a second-winter on 7th Mar and 1st Apr, could all have been accounted for by 2 birds. In *Mid-Argyll*, at least one first-winter was in the Oban area from Jan to Apr, with a maximum of 3 on several dates in Mar; there was also an adult there on 5th Feb and a second-winter on 24th Apr. The only other record was a second-winter at Holy Loch Cowal on 5th Feb.

There were only 2 records during the second half of the year: a first-summer at Machrihanish SBO on 27th Aug, and a second-winter in the Bowmore area *Islay* from 12th Oct to the end of the year.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus* Faoileag mhor 0599

W Scarce but normally at least 5 records annually, and sometimes many more.

There were 4 records (perhaps involving only 2 birds) during Jan-Apr. In Kintyre, a first-winter was at Machrihanish SBO on 12th Feb, and perhaps the same on 22nd Apr. On *Islay*, a first- or second-winter was at Loch Gruinart on 22nd Mar, and the same or another at Port Wemyss on 10th Apr.

The only records during the second half of the year were an adult at Moleigh (near Oban) *Mid-Argyll* on 13th Aug, and one (age unknown) at Loch Gruinart on 8th Oct.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus* Farspag 0600

B W Common and widespread. Breeds coastally, usually on small islands, often as single pairs, usually associated with Herring Gull. Breeding recorded in 22% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Counts exceeding 100 birds during the early part of the year were received from Holy Loch Cowal (max. 192 on 22nd Jan), and Loch Feochan *Mid-Argyll* (164 on 12th Apr).

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, 8 monitored colonies (5 in *Mid-Argyll* and 3 in *Lismore*) between one and 44 pairs in size (total 87-89 pairs) fledged a total of 123 young (1.4 young/pair). Birds were present at a further 28 colonies, of which 19 held 1-5 pairs, 2 held 6-10 pairs, 4 held 11-20 pairs, and 3 held 30-50 pairs.

Other counts of breeding birds came from Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* (44 nests), *Tiree* (about 40 pairs at Loch a' Chapuill on 25th May), and *Coll* (108 pairs at 6 colonies, partial count).

No count during the latter part of the year exceeded 100 birds.

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KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla* Ruideag 0602
B P Strictly marine, breeding on cliffs. Main colonies are on Islay, Colonsay, Treshnish Isles (Mull) and Tiree.

Mean hourly rates of southward movement past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* in Apr and May were 60 and 168 birds respectively; the May value was much higher than the equivalent in 1994 (66) and 1993 (63).

Breeding. There were 730 AON on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late Jun; this colony has increased slightly in size over the past 25 years [Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group]. The only other count came from a sample ledge at Port Ban *Colonsay*, where there were 13 nests, average c/1.77 (*cf* 14 nests, average c/1.29 in 1994, and 16 nests in 1993).

The first fledged juveniles were seen off Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 2nd Aug and Frenchman's Rocks on 6th Aug. Hourly rates of southward movement past the latter site were highest in Aug (187) and Oct (181), dipping to 64 in Sep, a pattern similar to 1994 but not 1993. The highest day-count was 2,424 (3 hrs) flying south on 9th Aug; substantial northward movement (though still much less than southward movement) was observed in Apr and Jul. The proportion of juveniles in aged samples at Machrihanish SBO peaked at 64% (*n* = 583) in Sep, the same proportion as in Sep 1994.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* Stearnag mhor 0611
B P Very rare and irregular breeding species. Uncommon passage migrant.

The first singles (perhaps the same bird) were at West Loch Tarbert *Kintyre* and Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 1st Apr; a further 23 were seen at the latter site to 18th Jun. The only other spring record was one at Port Wemyss *Islay* on 23rd May.

In autumn, a total of 35 passed Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* between 12th Jul and 14th Sep. In *Cowal*, birds were regular at Kames from late Jul to mid-Aug, with max. 6 on 14th Aug, and 3 were at Blairmore (Loch Long) on 19th Aug. On *Islay*, there were 8 records involving a total of 14 birds between 5th Aug and 11th Oct, when the last 2 of the year flew south past Kintra (Laggan Bay).

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo* Stearnag 0615
S P Locally common breeding species, considerably more numerous than Arctic Tern, at least on small islands close to the mainland. Breeding recorded in 14% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record of the year was 20 at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 3rd May. A total of 145 (82 hrs) flew south past this site in May, the majority (about 100) on the 20th and 21st.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, 11 colonies (7 in *Mid-Argyll*, one in *Mull* and 3 in *Lismore*) between 7 and 530 pairs in size (total 1,063 pairs) fledged 379-506 young (0.36-0.48 young/pair, *cf* 0.80-0.92 young/pair at 12 colonies in 1994). At the largest colony, 530 pairs fledged no young, apparently because of heavy predation of adults and young by otter *Lutra lutra*. Elsewhere, weights of large chicks were unusually high in 1995 because of good weather and abundant food; the period over which broods fledged was longer than normal, the latest recorded fledging date being 9th Sep.

Other counts of breeding birds included over 200 pairs in 5 colonies on *Coll*

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(partial count), and 50 nests on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull*. On *Islay*, there were 11 pairs at Blackrock (Loch Indaal) and 7 pairs at Loch Gruinart, the nests of the latter being washed out by a high tide. In *Kintyre*, only about 5 pairs attempted to breed at Machrihanish, many fewer than in 1994.

The total recorded flying south past Machrihanish SBO during Jul-Aug was only 34 (257 hrs); this is many fewer than in 1994 (1,897 on 25th-30th Jul alone) and 1993 (1,040 in Aug), but the reason for the large year-to-year variation is unknown. The last record of the autumn was one at Kilnaughton Bay *Islay* on 18th Oct.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea* Stearmal 0616
S P Locally numerous breeding species. Breeding recorded in 25% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Confusion with the last species has tended to lead to over-recording of Arctic Tern and under-recording of Common Tern at colonies.

The first 3 were at Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 3rd May. A total of 68 (82 hrs) flew south past this site in May.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, 12 colonies (7 in *Mid-Argyll*, 2 in *Mull* and 3 in *Lismore*) between one and 101 pairs in size (total 290-293 pairs) fledged 252-274 young (0.86-0.94 young/pair, cf 0.58-0.73 young/pair at 12 colonies in 1994). At a further 6 colonies (total about 44 pairs), productivity was not measured. As with Common Tern, weights of large chicks were high and there was an extended fledging period, up to mid-Aug in this case.

On *Islay*, there were at least 80 nests at the head of Loch Indaal and 2 pairs in Laggan Bay; 2 nests at Loch Gruinart were washed out by a high tide. On *Mull*, there were 79 nests on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) in late Jun. On *Tiree*, 22 colonies contained a minimum of 671 birds, while on *Coll*, there were 8 pairs at Cliad, 8 pairs at Traigh Halum, and 62 birds nesting on Gunna. Numbers at Machrihanish were much lower than in 1994, only 1-2 pairs attempting to breed.

As with Common Tern, southward passage at Machrihanish SBO in autumn was very light, with only 45 (257 hrs) during Jul and Aug (cf 1,153 in 1994 and 269 in 1993). In both *Kintyre* and *Islay*, many more birds than usual stayed into Oct, with a total of 9 (80 hrs) flying south past Machrihanish SBO, and 8 (19 hrs) flying south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* during the month. No fewer than 18 were at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 2nd Oct, with 5 still present on the 17th and a last single on the 18th.

BRIDLED TERN *Sterna anaethetus* 0622
V No previous Argyll records.

1994 One frequented a stretch of rocky coastline on *Tiree* from 30th Jun to 7th Jul [GE *et al.*]. This is only the third record for Scotland, following singles in Orkney on 6th-7th Aug 1979 and on Eigg on 21st Jul 1993.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons* Stearnag bheag 0624
S P Scarce breeding species confined to Islay, Tiree and Coll. Scarce elsewhere on migration.

The first two were at Loch Indaal *Islay* on 30th Apr.

Breeding. On *Islay*, 21 adults and 6 fledged juveniles were noted at one colony on 9th Jul. On *Tiree*, 22 pairs nested at 2 colonies and a total of 24 birds at 4 other

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locations. On *Coll*, 7 birds were seen in a colony on Gunna and a total of 14 pairs at another 2 colonies.

One flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 26th Sep was the only record of an autumn migrant.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge* Eun dubh an sgadain 0634
B W P Highly colonial, locally abundant breeding species. Adults with small young appear on the sea far from colonies in late summer; regularly seen in sealochs in winter.

Of birds flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* in spring, 84% (n = 63) were in breeding plumage in Mar, rising to 96% (n = 224) in Apr; this compares with 65% and 73% respectively in Mar and Apr 1994, suggesting either that moulting took place earlier in 1995, or that different populations with different moulting times pass this site, the relative proportions varying from year to year.

Breeding. A total of 6,400-6,800 birds was ashore on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late Jun. There has been a large increase at this site since the early 1970s; the 1971 count, for example, was 1,530 birds [Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group].

See below for movements of auks (Guillemot/Razorbill) past seawatching sites.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda* Falc 0636
B W P Locally common breeding species, although less numerous and with smaller colonies than Guillemot. Regularly seen in sealochs in winter.

Of birds flying south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* in spring, 92% (n = 322) were in breeding plumage in Mar, rising to 95% (n = 977) in Apr. As with Guillemot, these values were higher than in 1994 (70% and 93% in Mar and Apr respectively).

Breeding. A total of about 640 birds was ashore on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late Jun. Unlike Guillemot, numbers at this site have increased only slightly, if at all, since the 1970s [Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group].

See below for movements of auks (Guillemot/Razorbill) past seawatching sites.

AUK sp. (GUILLEMOT/RAZORBILL)

Mean hourly rates of southward movement past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* (including birds identified to species) were 148 in Apr and 552 in May, rather higher than in Apr and May 1994 and May 1993. The highest day-count was 5,220 flying south and 62 flying north (2 hrs) on 30th May; an estimated 84% of these were Guillemots. Mean hourly rates of movement past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* in spring were much lower, peaking at 42 in Apr.

In autumn, hourly rates of southward movement past Frenchman's Rocks fell from 352 in Jul to almost nil in Aug, then rose to 647 in Oct. The Oct value, in particular, was considerably higher than in 1993 and 1994, probably because of the preponderance of westerly winds. Again, there was much less movement past Machrihanish SBO.

Taking the year's data as a whole, 64% of identified auks (Guillemots/Razorbills) passing Machrihanish SBO were Razorbills (*cf* 60% in 1994). At Frenchman's Rocks, however, the majority (59%) were Guillemots (*cf* 60% in 1994).

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BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle* Gearra-breac 0638
B W Common breeding species on rocky coasts. Breeding recorded in 38% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The highest count during the early part of the year was 30 at Loch Sween *Mid-Argyll* on 26th Feb.

Breeding. In the SAMS study area, birds were noted in the breeding season at 21 sites (one in *Kintyre*, one in *Cowal*, 12 in *Mid-Argyll*, 3 in *Mull* and 4 in *Lismore*). Breeding is known to have been successful at 5 sites (where 7 pairs fledged a total of 10 young); at one of these sites, 4 pairs deserted eggs, apparently because of heavy predation of adults by otters.

Movement past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* peaked at the end of Jul and beginning of Aug as in 1993 and 1994, though it is likely that the birds were involved only in short-range movements. The highest day-count was 128 flying south and 2 flying north (2 hrs) on 30th Jul. Unlike 1994, movement past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* did not show a similar peak.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle* Colcach bheag 0647
W Irregular, usually seen during seawatches or after severe gales.

The only records of the year came from *Islay*, where one was found dead at Laggan Bay on 17th Jan, and one flew south past Frenchman's Rocks on 7th Oct.

PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica* Buthaid 0654
B P Very localised breeding species with main colonies on Sanda (Kintyre) and Treshnish Isles (Mull). Occasionally recorded in winter.

One dead in Oban Bay *Mid-Argyll* on 24th Feb was the only record during Jan-Mar. A total of 27 flew south past Frenchman's Rocks *Islay* between 30th Apr and 30th May, while 2 flew south past Machrihanish SBO *Kintyre* on 25th May. There were no other spring records.

Breeding. A count on Lunga (Treshnish Isles) *Mull* in late Jun produced 1,631 AON; numbers at this site have shown a substantial increase since the early 1970s: in 1971, for example, there were only 774 AON [Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group]. Jun sightings of 1-2 birds on the sea at Eilean Dubh (Balnahard) *Colonsay*, Dubh Fheith (west of Seil) *Mid-Argyll* and Grass Point *Mull* might indicate breeding or prospecting.

In the second half of the year, a total of 53 flew south and 15 flew north (73.5 hrs) past Frenchman's Rocks during Jul-Aug, with 10 north and 2 south past nearby Orsay on 8th Jul. A total of 5 flew south and 4 flew north (82 hrs) past Machrihanish SBO in Jul. The only other records were one near *Coll* on 12th Aug, and one flying south past Frenchman's Rocks on 12th Sep.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia* Calman creige 0665
R I Resident breeder except in Cowal, most numerous in the islands. Breeding recorded in 33% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Large flocks often gather on arable fields outwith breeding season. Feral Pigeons recorded from most areas, but no information on population size.

The largest reported flocks were all on *Islay*, with 100 at Loch Gruinart on 17th Jan, 154 at Sunderland on 6th Nov, and 75 near Laggan Bridge on 12th Dec. No

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other count exceeded 50 birds.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas* Calman gorm 0668
R P? Recorded in Kintyre, Gigha, Colonsay, Cowal, Mid-Argyll and N Argyll during 1980-94. Regular during 1991-94 in a small area centred on Kilmartin (Mid-Argyll), where breeding was confirmed in 1993. All records required.

The only record was one at Mid Loch Fada Colonsay on 9th Apr; this is only the second record for the island since the 1930s.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus* Calman fiadhaich 0670
B W Common resident breeding species except on some islands, such as Mull, where more numerous in winter. Breeding recorded in 48% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 4 of 17 BBS squares (cf 2 in 1994).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto* Calman a chrìos 0684
B P Sparse but widespread distribution throughout Argyll. Evidence of continued immigration involving small numbers of birds each spring. Breeding recorded in 23% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Up to 35 were at a regular feeding site at Bruichladdich Islay during Jan-Mar. As in 1993 and 1994, there was a spring influx into the Portnahaven area Islay, with 1-2 birds present from 29th Apr to 21st Jun, and 3 apparently in off the sea at Rubha na Faing on 5th May. Six on Iona Mull in late May (cf 13 in Jun 1993) were well outside the known breeding range (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (cf none in 1994).

Possible migrants were recorded in autumn from Tiree (2 at Crossapol on 20th Aug), and Iona Mull (7 on 20th Sep). Numbers at Bruichladdich Islay during Oct-Dec were similar to those at the beginning of the year, but there were no other high counts.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur* Calman tuchan 0687
P Scarce, but several records annually. Majority recorded during May-Jun.

There were three records of singles, all in the second half of the year: near Loch Assapol Mull on 16th Jul; in Gleann Sheileach (near Oban) Mid-Argyll on 2nd and 9th Sep; and on Iona Mull on 18th-20th Sep.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus* Cuthag 0724
S P Common. Main host species is Meadow Pipit. Breeding recorded in 41% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record came from Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll on 25th Apr. Birds were also reported from Islay and Mull in Apr.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 7 of 17 BBS squares (cf 6 in 1994).

The last bird of the year was at Soroba (Oban) Mid-Argyll on 19th Aug.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba* Cornhachag 0735
B W Scarce breeding species, but probably under-recorded. Nests in both natural sites and buildings. Breeding recorded in 11% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-

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91). *Collision with vehicles appears to be a major cause of mortality. All records required.*

Breeding. The available data indicated that 1995 was a poor year. In the Kintyre and Knapdale Mid-Argyll nestbox scheme, 11 nest barrels were occupied but only 6 by pairs; a total of 14 eggs was laid and 9 young fledged (*cf* 28 young in 1994) [Forest Enterprise]. On Islay, all 12 monitored pairs laid but only 11 hatched eggs, these each rearing at least one young. Mean clutch size was 3.08, the third lowest in 10 years of study; 30 young were thought to have fledged, giving a mean brood size at fledging of 2.7 per successful nest, similar to 1993 and 1994 and one of the lowest values recorded [MAO, MAP/RSPB].

Outside the breeding season, birds were also reported from Cowal (one site), Mid-Argyll (2 sites), Mull (one site) and N Argyll (one site); most of these records were in Jan and Dec.

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco* Comhachag dhonn 0761
R Widespread and common in suitable broadleaved or coniferous woodland. Absent from Tiree and Coll. Breeding recorded in 43% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

There were no records of confirmed breeding, but birds were reported during the year from Islay (3 sites), Cowal (3 sites) and Mull (5 sites). Singles at Ardfenaig (near Fionnphort) Mull on 18th May and Bruichladdich Islay on 8th Nov were outside the known breeding range in recent years (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus* Comhachag adharcaiche 0767
R P W Very scarce, but almost certainly under-recorded. All records required.

A pair bred at the 1994 nest-site on Colonsay, with at least 2 young in the nest on 13th Jun. In Kilmichael Glen Mid-Argyll, on the other hand, breeding did not occur at the 1994 nest-site, though a pair was seen nearby on 14th Feb. There were no other records.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus* Comhachag chluassach 0768
B W P Widespread in suitable habitat. Numbers fluctuate and distribution varies with abundance of small rodents, especially field voles *Microtus agrestis*. Breeding recorded in 30% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Some emigration in autumn.

The only records during Jan-Mar were 3 at Pennyghael Mull on 12th Jan, and one at Achavaich (near Oban) Mid-Argyll on 14th Mar.

Breeding. The majority of breeding season records came from Mull, where singles or pairs were recorded at 8 sites. On Islay, there were 3-4 pairs in forestry plantations between Port Charlotte and Portnahaven, indicating a fourth successive poor vole year; in 1991, the last good vole year, at least 10 pairs bred there. The only other breeding season records came from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve Islay (one pair), Cowal (singles noted at 3 sites), and Mid-Argyll (a pair at one site).

No records were received for the period Sep-Dec.

SWIFT *Apus apus* Gobhlan mor 0795
S P Localised breeding species, mainland only; natural nest sites have been used in Kintyre. Breeding recorded in 4% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Regular

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passage migrant in all areas.

One at Bowmore and at least 4 nearby at Laggan Bay *Islay* on 10th Apr were the earliest ever recorded in Argyll, beating the previous record by 6 days. There were no further records until early May, with the first singles at Loch Gruinart *Islay* and Connel *Mid-Argyll* on the 3rd.

Breeding. In *Cowal*, up to 6 were regular at Blairmore (Loch Long) and may have bred, as may one or more pairs at Dunoon. Also, at least one pair probably bred at Lochgilphead *Mid-Argyll*.

As in 1994, there was a pronounced peak of records at the end of Jun and the beginning of Jul. The only double-figure counts came from *Islay*, where on 9th Jul, 10 were at Nerabus in the morning and 73 flew southeast over Port Wemyss and Orsay in the evening. The latter is the highest count in Argyll since at least 1968, and perhaps the highest ever. There were few records after mid-Jul, the highest count being 11 at Lochgilphead on 28th Jul, which may have been local breeders. The last record was 2 at Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 17th Aug.

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis* Biorra cruidein 0831
W P Most records are in autumn and winter, and may represent dispersing juveniles.

The only record during the early part of the year was one at Musdale (above Glen Feochan) *Mid-Argyll* on 8th Mar.

As usual, there were more records later in the year, with the first one on the River Laggan *Islay* on 3rd Jul. A single was seen on several occasions at Holy Loch *Cowal* from 26th Aug to 26th Nov, with 2 on 5th Oct. Other records of singles came from the River Sorn *Islay* on 29th Sep, the head of Loch Striven *Cowal* on 5th Oct, and Chiscan Burn (The Laggan) *Kintyre* during Nov-Dec.

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster* 0840
V Apparently no Argyll records prior to 1958, but 3 since: 2 near Ballygrant (*Islay*) in Jun 1981; one at Lochgoilhead (*Cowal*) in Jun 1986; and one at Lochdon (*Mull*) in Jul 1993.

One was seen briefly in flight near Fidden *Mull* on 15th May [BH, RJ].

HOOPOE *Upupa epops* Calman cathaidh 0846
P Scarce. Recorded in 9 of the 15 years 1980-94, with a total of 17 records: 11 in spring (29th Mar to 1st Jun), and 6 in autumn (7th Sep to 20th Oct).

There were records of singles in 2 localities in late Oct, all possibly referring to the same bird: at Ardnadrochit (Loch Don) *Mull* on or around the 21st, and at Oban *Mid-Argyll* on the 25th and 29th.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major* Snagan daraich 0876
B W Widespread in suitable deciduous and coniferous woodland on the mainland and *Mull*. Breeding recorded in 31% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares (cf one in 1994). At Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, there were 3 territories in the woodland CBC plot, as in 1994.

Only 5 other records were received during the year: one from *Cowal*, one from *Mid-Argyll* and 3 from *Mull*.

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SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis* Uiseág 0976
B W P Widespread and common breeding species. Breeding recorded in 79% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Emigration of many birds in winter, with remaining birds mainly in coastal and low-lying localities.

During the early part of the year, flocks of 50 or more were reported from *Islay*, with max. 250 at Loch Gruinart on 2nd Jan and 15th Feb, and 90 at Port Wemyss on 3rd Mar.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 16 of 17 BBS sites (cf 11 in 1994).

In autumn, 65 flew south over Portnahaven *Islay* on 7th Oct. The only other count exceeding 50 birds was 100 at Sunderland *Islay* on 5th Oct.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia* Gobhlan gainmhiche 0981
S P Uncommon and localised breeding species. Breeding recorded in 24% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). All breeding records required.

The first bird of the year was at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 23rd Mar. Arrival in other areas was not until Apr, with one at Loch Tulla *N Argyll* on the 4th, and 10 at Loch Gleann a'Bhearraidh (near Oban) *Mid-Argyll* on the 8th.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (cf none in 1994). In *Mid-Argyll*, numbers at 2 colonies continued to increase, with 80 occupied holes at Kilmartin Quarry (cf 75 in 1994 and 35 in 1993), and 58 occupied holes at Kilmichael Glen woodyard (cf 56 in 1994 and 24 in 1993). The only other colony count was at least 5 occupied holes at Kilchiaran *Islay* (cf 10 in 1994). Breeding also took place at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* and Stronchullin Cowal, and probably at Glen Aros *Mull*, Glen Bellart *Mull* and Loch Tulla *N Argyll*.

The last record of the year was 5 at Loch Lossit *Islay* on 27th Aug.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica* Gobhlan gaoithe 0992
S P Widespread and common. Breeding recorded in 76% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record was one at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 24th Mar, then one at Port Charlotte *Islay* on the 26th. With the exception of two flying south past Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 6th Apr, birds were not reported from any other areas until mid-Apr.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 4 of 17 BBS squares (cf 5 in 1994). No counts exceeding 3 breeding pairs were received. On *Mull*, 2 pairs probably each reared 3 broods at Tiroran, where the last young fledged on 12th Sep. The highest count of the summer was 100 at a pre-roost gathering at Dervaig *Mull* on 28th Jun.

Birds had departed from most areas by the end of Sep, but 4 flew south over Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 7th Oct, and a late single was at Ardtalla *Islay* on 8th Nov.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica* Gobhlan taighe 1001
S P Common breeding species on mainland where suitable sites exist; less numerous on the islands and no recent breeding records from Colonsay, Tiree and Coll. Breeding recorded in 48% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first birds of the year were at Kilchattan *Colonsay* on 7th Apr, and Southend Kintyre on the 13th. Arrival in other areas was not until late Apr or early May. In spring, wandering birds were seen in late May on *Tiree* (4 at Hynish on the 24th), *Coll* (one at Arinagour on the 26th-27th), and the *Tiree-Coll* crossing (one on the

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26th).

No counts of breeding pairs or records of confirmed breeding were received. The last bird or birds noted were at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 29th Aug.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis* Riabhag 1009
S P Common breeding species in open deciduous woodland and conifer restock sites on the mainland. Also widespread on Jura and Mull, but very scarce on Islay. Breeding recorded in 54% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Apart from one at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 12th Apr, there were no records until May.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 5 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 6 in 1994). At Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, there were 9 territories in the woodland CBC plot (*cf* 10 in 1994). No other counts of breeding pairs were received. On *Islay*, singing birds were reported from Claggain Bay and Dunlossit woods.

Departure seemingly went unnoticed.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis* Snathag 1011
B W P Abundant breeding species. Breeding recorded in 94% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Emigration of many birds in winter, with remaining birds mainly in coastal and low-lying localities.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in all 17 BBS squares (*cf* 15 in 1994). At Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, there was an increase to 7 territories in the coastal CBC plot, but there was also much evidence of nest failure due to predation.

No flocks of more than 100 birds were reported during the year.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta* Gabhagan 1014/2
R P W Common resident breeding species around coast. Breeding recorded in 67% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Scarce passage and winter visitor elsewhere.
 No significant records.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea* Breacan bain tighearna 1019
B W P Widespread breeding species. Breeding recorded in 61% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Some emigration in winter.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 2 in 1994). Pairs were reported during the breeding season from *Islay* (7 pairs), *Cowal* (one pair) and *Mull* (2 pairs, both with young).

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii* Breach an t-sil 1020
B W P Widespread and common breeder. Breeding recorded in 87% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Emigration from most areas in winter. Returning birds generally arrive late Feb to early Mar; departure Aug-Oct.

In spring, a large arrival was noted on *Mull* in mid-Mar, with 23 at Tiroran on the 13th. The highest count of the first winter period was 43 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 17th Mar.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 7 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 6 in 1994).

No count during the latter part of the year exceeded 20 birds.

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WHITE WAGTAIL *M a alba*

P Usually recorded in spring. Extent of autumn passage obscured by identification difficulties.

The first bird of the spring was at Traigh nam Barc Colonsay on 9th Apr. All other spring records came from Kintyre and Islay. In Kintyre, 6 were at Westport Marsh on 21st Apr and 7 on 29th Apr, when 5 were also at Machrihanish SBO; one or more birds were regularly seen at the latter site in May, with max. 6 on the 2nd and the last 2 on the 12th. On Islay, 5 were at Loch Gruinart on 15th Apr, one at Port Wemyss on 25th Apr, 2 at Kilchiaran on 30th Apr, up to 5 at Rubha na Faing from 30th Apr to 6th May, and the last 2 at Ardnave Loch on 14th May.

In autumn, singles were seen regularly at Machrihanish SBO from 12th Aug to the end of the month, then 2 on 4th Sep and 5 on the 14th. The only other record came from Islay, where 4 were at Carnain (Loch Indaal) on 4th Sep.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus* Gobha uisge 1050

B W Widespread, though scarce on Islay and Colonsay; absent from Tiree and Coll. Breeding recorded in 34% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Birds were reported during the year from Islay (2 sites), Jura (2 sites), Cowal (2 sites), Mid-Argyll (4 sites) and Mull (7 sites). Breeding was confirmed only at Kilmartin Mid-Argyll, where a pair and 2 young were seen on 31st May.

Downstream movement in autumn was noted at Tioran Mull, the first bird being seen on the shore on 8th Aug, and coastal sightings being regular in late Nov and Dec.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes* Dreathann donn 1066

B W P Very common, although numbers fluctuate. Breeding recorded in 84% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 12 of 17 BBS squares (cf 10 in 1994). At Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll, there were 32 territories in the woodland CBC plot and 12 in the coastal plot (cf 36 and 4 respectively in 1994).

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis* Gealbhoonn nam preas 1084

B W P Widespread and common, except some islands. Breeding recorded in 55% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula* Bru dhearg 1099

B P Common. Breeding recorded in 79% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Heavy autumn passage in some years.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 10 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994. At Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll, there were 12 territories in the woodland CBC plot and 5 in the coastal plot (cf 14 and 8 respectively in 1994).

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica* 1106

V One Argyll record, a female at Ugadale (near Saddell) Kintyre on 29th May 1975.

1994 A male of the red-spotted race *L s svecica* was observed at close range at Arinagour Coll on 16th May [JC et al.].

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BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros* Ceann dubhan 1121
P Less than annual. All but 2 of 16 records in Argyll during 1980-94 were in spring (late Mar to May) or late autumn (Oct to mid-Nov).

The only record was a male at Machrihanish SBO Kintyre on 1st Apr.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Ceann dearg 1122
S P Common breeding species in relatively open woodland, except Islay where scarce; absent from Colonsay, Tiree and Coll. In Argyll occurs more frequently in oak than in birch, but also recorded in conifers. Breeding recorded in 37% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first male of the spring was at Loch Nell Mid-Argyll on 15th Apr; there was a widespread arrival in the Oban area Mid-Argyll during 18th-24th Apr, with males reported at 5 sites.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (*cf* none in 1994). In Mid-Argyll, there was an increase to 6 territories in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR (*cf* 3 in 1994); 2 singing males were recorded at Moine Mhor NNR, with young being fed at a third site in Jun. Most other records came from Mull, where birds were recorded at 7 sites and breeding confirmed at Portfield. The only other records were 3 males in Doine Darrach pinewood (Loch Tulla) N Argyll on 8th May, and one at Blairmore (Loch Long) Cowal on 22nd May.

There were no records after Jul.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra* Gocan 1137
S P Widespread and common breeding species. Breeding recorded in 74% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record was one at Kames Cowal on 18th Apr; there were no further reports until 28th-30th Apr, when birds were noted in Islay, Mid-Argyll and Mull.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* one in 1994). On Islay, there were at least 8 pairs at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve. On Colonsay, 3 pairs were located in Jun (*cf* 4 in 1994).

The last bird of the year was on Iona Mull on 19th Sep.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata* Clacharan 1139
R P W Widespread, but resident population can decline dramatically as a consequence of severe winter conditions. Breeding recorded in 70% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Some emigration may take place in winter.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 7 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 6 in 1994). On Islay, there were at least 10 pairs at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve. On Colonsay, 22 pairs were located in suitable habitat, a return to normal levels following a low count of 14 pairs by the same observer in 1994.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe* Bru gheal 1146
S P Common breeding species in open grassland areas. Breeding recorded in 83% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Greenland race *O. o. leucorhoa* sometimes recorded on passage.

The first record of the year was one at Ardfert Mid-Argyll on 12th Mar, followed by one at Dunstaffnage Mid-Argyll on the 19th. Birds were also recorded in Colonsay

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and *N Argyll* in Mar.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 8 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 6 in 1994).

Departure from most areas apparently occurred in Sep, but there were Oct records from *Islay*, with the last one at Portnahaven on the 25th.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula* Lon dubh 1187
BWP Widespread and very common breeding species. Breeding recorded in 77% of 10 km squares (*BTO Atlas*, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 9 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 8 in 1994).

There was a "large immigration" into the Connel area *Mid-Argyll* on 12th-13th Nov.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris* Liath thruisg 1198
WP Abundant on autumn passage, but relatively few winter.

Few flocks appeared to be present during Jan-Mar, the highest count being 200 at *Coll RSPB Reserve* in Mar. The only other counts exceeding 20 birds were 50 in *Kilmichael Glen Mid-Argyll* on 28th Jan, and 30 at *Inverlussa Mid-Argyll* on 19th Mar. There were 3 records during the latter half of Apr, and then 2 in May, both from *Islay*: one at *Lossit* on the 1st, and one at *Portnahaven* on the 20th.

The first returning birds were a few with *Redwings* at *Ru Stafnish Kintyre* on 7th Oct. Unlike 1994 and many previous years, no large-scale autumn movement was witnessed, and few large flocks were apparently seen. The highest count was 200 at *Gartbreck* (near *Laggan Point*) *Islay* on 26th Oct, with uncounted flocks also reported from *Mid-Argyll* in late Oct and early Nov. There were very few records subsequently, but the cold weather at the end of the year was apparently accompanied by an increase in the number of sightings, though no count exceeded 20 birds.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos* Smeorach 1200
BWP Widespread and common. Breeding recorded in 72% of 10 km squares (*BTO Atlas*, 1988-91).

Small groups of spring migrants were reported from the *Rinn*s of *Islay*, the highest count being 16 at *Portnahaven* on 3rd Mar.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 8 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 9 in 1994).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus* Sgiath dhearg 1201
WP Abundant on autumn passage, but relatively few winter. Occasional individuals recorded in late spring. Bred on *Mull* in 1991.

The highest count during the early part of the year was 500 at *Coll RSPB Reserve* in Mar. However, on *Colonsay* a large movement was reported at *Machrins* on 31st Mar, with many birds around the island on 5th Apr, while in *Mid-Argyll*, several hundred birds were at *Loch Scridain* on 2nd Apr. There were a few other records of up to 60 birds in *Islay*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull* in early Apr, but many fewer after the middle of the month. The last bird of the spring was at *Portnahaven Islay* on 7th May.

As with *Fieldfare*, autumn passage was much lighter than usual. The first record was 70 at *Ru Stafnish Kintyre* on 7th Oct. Birds were reported widely from 15th Oct to 6th Nov, the highest count being 400 on *Colonsay* on 1st Nov, though flocks of

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"several hundred" were also reported from Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 1st Nov and Ballygrant *Islay* on the 6th. As usual, few remained after mid-Nov, though there was an apparent resurgence during cold weather at the end of the year, the highest counts being in *Cowal*, with 41 at Holy Loch and 20 at Blairmore (Loch Long) on 31st Dec.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus* Smeorach mhor 1202
B W P Widespread but thinly distributed breeding species. Breeding recorded in 43% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Many birds emigrate in autumn.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares (cf one in 1994). The only count of breeding birds came from Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay*, where there were 3 pairs.

The highest count of the year was 18 at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 16th Oct.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia* Ceileiriche leumnach 1236
S P Localised breeding species in all areas, good densities occurring in many young conifer plantations. Breeding recorded in 26% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record was one at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Apr; birds were not recorded elsewhere until early May.

Breeding. In *Mid-Argyll*, singing males were recorded at 6 sites in Taynish NNR and 5 sites in Moine Mhor NNR. On *Islay*, 5 singing males were in the Portnahaven area. Few other records were received, and all concerned single birds.

There were no records after early Jul.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Glas eun 1243
S P Locally common. Breeding recorded in 41% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record was one at Oban *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Apr; birds were not recorded elsewhere until May.

Breeding. It seems that 1995 was a particularly good year for this species. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares (cf one in 1994). On *Colonsay*, 34 singing males were located in Jun, the highest-ever total. In *Mid-Argyll*, there was a record total of 11 territories in the coastal CBC plot at Taynish NNR (cf 7 in 1994). At least 17 pairs were at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay*; though apparently representing a decrease from 25 pairs in 1994, the 1995 figure was considered to be a conservative estimate. There were no other counts of males or breeding pairs, but a pair on *Iona Mull* in late May was outside the known breeding range in recent years (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

There were no records after mid-Aug.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis* Gealan coille 1275
S P Widespread but thinly distributed breeding species in scrub and woodland edge habitats. Marked improvement in numbers during the 1980s, with good breeding densities in many young conifer plantations. Breeding recorded in 59% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first bird of the spring was at Port Wemyss *Islay* on 3rd May; there was a widespread arrival in *Mid-Argyll* the following day, with records from Connel, Oban,

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and Taynish NNR.

Breeding. There was a slight indication of a decrease in numbers. On *Colonsay*, only 6 singing males were located (cf 12 in 1994), while at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, there were 5 territories in CBC plots (cf 7 in 1994). However, birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994. The only other count was 11 pairs at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay*.

The last record was one at Easter Ellister *Islay* on 6th Sep.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin* Ceileiriche garaidh 1276
S P Scarce breeding species. Breeding recorded in 14% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record came from Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd May.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares (cf none in 1994). At Taynish NNR, there were singing males at 4 sites, as in 1994. The only other records came from Loch Assapol *Mull* (one on 19th May), Loch Melfort *Mid-Argyll* (2 on 31st May), and Loch Tuath *Mull* (a singing male on 27th Jun). After 2 consecutive years with singing birds, no reports were received from *Islay*.

There were no records after the end of Jun.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* Ceann dubh 1277
S W P Scarce breeding species. Established in policy woodland of many estates, where Rhododendron and other scrub often provide good understorey. Breeding recorded in 23% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Increasingly numerous in winter.

Wintering birds were reported during Jan and Feb from Oban *Mid-Argyll* (a male and a female in Jan), Ardrishaig *Mid-Argyll* (a female on 28th Jan), Benderloch *N Argyll* (a male during Jan-Feb), Bridgend woods *Islay* (a male on 4th Feb), and Port Ellen *Islay* (a male on 16th Feb). There were no further records until one at Taynish House *Mid-Argyll* on 3rd May. A singing male at Portnahaven *Islay* on 19th May was a passage migrant, as were several birds at Taynish NNR during May.

Breeding. As in 1993 and 1994, there were very few breeding season records. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (cf none in 1994). A male summered at Taynish NNR for the first time. The only other records, perhaps involving passage migrants, were singles at Tiroran *Mull* on 12th May, Loch Assapol *Mull* on 13th May, and Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 25th-26th May.

About 14 birds were recorded during Oct-Dec, a similar total to 1993 and double the number in 1994. Following the first male at Portnahaven on 15th Oct, a further 6 birds were recorded on *Islay* to 8th Dec. There were no further Oct records, but one was found dead on the Ederline estate (Loch Awe) *Mid-Argyll* on 8th Nov (and had apparently been ringed in France), and a male was at Crinan *Mid-Argyll* on 13th Nov. The remaining records were in Dec, with max. 3 in a garden at Minard *Mid-Argyll* on the 10th, a male at Blairmore (Loch Long) *Cowal* on 24th-31st, and a female at Kirm (Dunoon) *Cowal* on the 27th.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* Ceileiriche cille 1308
S P Common breeding species in oakwoods with sparse ground cover. Breeding recorded in 49% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

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The first record was one at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Apr. With the exception of one at Gruline *Mull* on 29th Apr, arrival in other areas was not until May.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 4 in 1994). With the exception of singing males at 4 sites on *Islay*, and a family group at Lealt *Jura* on 16th Jul, all records came from *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*. In *Mid-Argyll*, there were 8 territories in the woodland CBC plot at Taynish NNR (*cf* 10 in 1994), and 3 at Moine Mhor NNR; also, 5 singing males were reported from the Oban area. On *Mull*, birds were reported from 8 sites, the highest count being 18 in the Croggan area on 18th May.

There were no records after mid-Jul.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita* Cailean 1311
S P Uncommon breeding species, scarce on islands. Breeding recorded in 25% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Winter records not infrequent.

A wintering bird was reported from Port Charlotte *Islay* on 22nd Feb. The first singing birds were 2 at Port Askaig *Islay* on 31st Mar. Passage migrants were noted in the Portnahaven area *Islay* on 7th Apr (one) and 6th May (2).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994. The few breeding season records came from *Islay*, *Colonsay*, *Cowal*, *Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*.

There were 2 late records from *Islay*: one at Port Charlotte on 22nd Oct, and one at Loch Gruinart on 10th Nov.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus* Crionag ghiuthais 1312
S P Widespread and very common breeding species. Breeding recorded in 81% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record was one near Portnahaven *Islay* on 8th Apr; there was a more widespread arrival on 12th and 13th Apr, with birds reported from 4 sites in *Mid-Argyll* and one on *Mull*. A presumed passage migrant was at Heylipol *Tiree* on 24th May.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 12 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 13 in 1994). The only count of breeding birds came from Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, where there were 42 territories in the woodland CBC plot and 23 in the coastal plot (*cf* 53 and 18 respectively in 1994).

The last bird of the year was on Iona *Mull* on 20th Sep.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus* Crionag bhuidhe 1314
R W P Common breeding species and passage migrant. Breeding recorded in 53% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 4 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 3 in 1994).

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata* Breacan glas sgiobalta 1335
S P Widespread but thinly distributed breeding species. Breeding recorded in 53% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record was one at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* on 9th May, but arrival elsewhere was not until the second half of May.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 2 in 1994). There

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were breeding season records from *Gigha, Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Cowal, Mid-Argyll* and *Mull*, but the only instances of confirmed successful breeding came from *Kilnaughton Islay, Inverlussa Jura, Scalasaig Colonsay*, and *Dunstaffnage Mid-Argyll*, where family parties were seen later in the season. At *Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll*, there were 3 territories in the woodland CBC plot (cf 2 in 1994), but none in the coastal plot (cf 2 in 1994). The only other count came from *Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve Islay*, where there were at least 2 pairs.

The last record was one at *Easter Ellister Islay* on 16th Sep.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca* Breacan glas 1349
S P Very localised breeder in oakwoods. Increase in breeding population in recent years is attributable to the Argyll Bird Club nest-box scheme. Breeding recorded in 6% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The first record was a male at *Bridge of Awe Mid-Argyll* on 5th May.

Breeding. At *Bonawe N Argyll*, 7 nests fledged a total of 44 young (6.3 young per nest), with 2 females mated to a bigamous male rearing a total of 12 young, 6 in each nest; a male (ringed in 1989 as a chick at *Loch Katrine, Central Region*) failed to reappear in 1995, after fledging large broods at *Bonawe* every year from 1991 to 1994 [JAC]. The only other confirmed breeding record came from *Ardgenavan* at the head of *Loch Fyne Mid-Argyll*, where 2 pairs nested; one failed and the other fledged 6 young. The nest-boxes at *Blairmore (Loch Long) Cowal* were not used, though a male was seen; this site held 2 pairs in 1994 and one in 1993.

The only record of an autumn migrant was one at *Braigo Islay* on 18th Aug, the first record for the island since 1989.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus* Ciochan 1437
B W P Widespread and common on mainland, local on some islands and rare on *Colonsay, Tiree and Coll*. Breeding recorded in 48% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Parties of wandering birds widespread in autumn.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares (cf none in 1994).

The only autumn flock exceeding 20 birds was max. 23 at *Tiroran Mull* on 24th and 27th Oct.

COAL TIT *Parus ater* Smutag 1461
B W P Widespread and common except on *Tiree and Coll*. Breeding recorded in 62% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Some dispersal noted in autumn.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 6 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus* Cailleachag ceann ghorm 1462
R P Widespread and very common breeder in broad-leaved and mixed woodland, but rare on *Tiree and Coll*. Breeding recorded in 65% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 5 of 17 BBS squares (cf 3 in 1994). At *Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll*, there were 16 territories in the woodland CBC plot and 2 in the coastal plot (cf 14 and 3 in 1994).

In autumn, 3 on *Iona Mull* on 19th-21st Sep, and one at *Portnahaven Islay* on 17th Oct, were probably passage migrants or dispersing birds.

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GREAT TIT *Parus major* Currac bhain tighearna 1464
R P Widespread and very common breeder in broad-leaved and mixed woodland and occasionally in coniferous woodland. Absent from Tiree and Coll. Breeding recorded in 61% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 5 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 4 in 1994). At Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll*, there were 6 territories in the woodland CBC plot (*cf* 7 in 1994).

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris* Snaigear 1486
B W Widespread and common except on Tiree and Coll. Breeding recorded in 37% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* none in 1994).

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus* Buidheag eorpach 1508
P Rare and irregular. All 11 Argyll records during 1980-94 were in spring (15th Apr to 11th Jun).

A female or first-year male at Easter Ellister Islay on 30th May was the fourth record for the island.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio* 1515
V Only 2 Argyll records during 1980-93: a first-winter at Lagg (Jura) from 19th to 25th Sep 1986; and a male seen at 3 different sites on Mull between 29th May and 12th Jun 1992.

1994 A male was at Dalrannoch (Loch Creran) *N Argyll* on 5th Jul [SB, RP, PC].

1987 No details were ever submitted of the bird at Port Ellen Islay on 31st Oct (ABR 5: 11; SBR 1987: 43). This record should therefore be deleted.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor* Feoladair glas 1520
W P Increasingly rare and irregular; only 2 Argyll records during 1985-94.

One was at Machrihanish *Kintyre* on 2nd Nov. This is the first Argyll record since one on *Mull* on 25th Apr 1993.

JAY *Garrulus glandarius* Sgraicheap 1539
R Locally distributed, mainland only. Breeding recorded in 6% of 10 km squares, mostly in Cowal (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). All records required.

Birds were reported from only 6 locations during the year: Dunoon, Cairndow and Blairmore (Loch Long) in *Cowal*; and Taynish NNR, Caol Scotnish and Glen Cruitten (near Oban) in *Mid-Argyll*. There were no breeding records.

MAGPIE *Pica pica* Cadhag 1549
R Local in Cowal, rare elsewhere. Breeding recorded in 2% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). All records required.

In *Cowal*, there were regular sightings at Blairmore (Loch Long) all year; singles were also reported from Ardyne (19th Mar) and Strachur (10th Nov and 6th Dec), while a family group of 5 was seen at Dunoon for about a week in summer.

Extra-limital records of singles came from Machrihanish *Kintyre* (2nd-10th

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Apr), Benderloch *N Argyll* (9th Apr), and Kilmichael *Mid-Argyll* (29th Nov).

CHOUGH *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Cathag dhearg chasach 1559
R W Islay is the Scottish stronghold, with smaller numbers on Jura and Colonsay and a recent toehold on Mull. All records away from Islay required.

Breeding. Of 48 sites visited on *Islay*, 28 had pairs present; all of these 28 pairs produced eggs but only 18 produced young to fledging. The 18 successful nests fledged a total of 50 young (*cf* 40 young from 31 sites in 1994, and 54 young from 32 sites in 1993). Thus 1995 was a better year than the previous 2 years in terms of productivity, although the actual number of occupied nest sites was still far lower than it was in the mid-1980s. This reflects the current small size of the potential breeding population on *Islay* [Scottish Chough Study Group].

On *Colonsay*, at least 10 breeding pairs were located, as well as some non-breeding birds; 4 fledged broods were located, totalling 10 young [DCJ, JJ]. The only other breeding record came from *Mull*, where a pair nested and again failed to produce any young.

A colour-ringed bird at *Loch Don Mull* in late Oct was a wanderer, presumably from *Islay* or *Colonsay*. The largest flock reported during the year was 30 at *Ardnave Islay* on 3rd Jul.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula* Cathag 1560
B W Common throughout much of Argyll, but scarce on Mull and does not breed on Tiree or Coll. Breeding recorded in 40% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Immigration into some areas in winter, e.g. Tiree.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 2 in 1994).

The largest flock reported during the year was 100 at *Kiloran Bay Colonsay* on 1st Dec.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus* Rocas 1563
B W Common throughout much of Argyll, but scarce on Mull and does not breed on Colonsay, Tiree or Coll. Breeding recorded in 25% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Post-breeding influx of juveniles to some islands, e.g. Mull and Tiree.

Breeding. On *Islay*, rookery counts were similar to 1993 and 1994, with 65 nests at *Gruinart*, 55 at *Tigh Cargaman* (Port Ellen), 21 at *Port Ellen distillery*, 15 at *Ballygrant quarry*, 8 at *Cornabus*, and 4 at *Port Charlotte*. The only other counts came from *Connel Mid-Argyll* (11 nests, *cf* 16 in 1994), *Oban County Hospital Mid-Argyll* (6 nests), *Kilbowie* (near *Oban*) *Mid-Argyll* (3 nests), and *North Connel N Argyll* (23 nests, as in 1994).

No flocks exceeding 100 birds were reported.

HOODED CROW *Corvus corone cornix* Feannag 1567
B W Widespread and common. Breeding recorded in 87% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

A major cull was carried out on *Colonsay* in spring.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 13 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 12 in 1994). Two mixed pairs with *Carrion Crow* were noted in the *Oban area Mid-Argyll* in Mar, but there were no reports of *Hooded x Carrion Crow* hybrids during the year.

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CARRION CROW *C. c. corone*

B W Birds are spreading gradually through Cowal into Kintyre and Mid-Argyll. Breeding recorded in 13% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994.

Away from the main breeding areas, birds were reported from *Islay*, where one flew north over Rubha na Faing on 4th Apr; one was at Loch Gruinart from 21st Jun to 6th Jul, with 4 there on 17th Oct; and one was at Kinnabus (The Oa) on 18th Aug.

RAVEN *Corvus corax* Fitheach

1572

B W Common. Breeding recorded in 75% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The largest flocks early in the year were 30 at Bridgend *Islay* on 20th Jan, and 26 at Killean (near Tayinloan) *Kintyre* on 19th Apr.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 9 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 7 in 1994). The only detailed investigation of breeding came from Coll, where 12 pairs were located; 9 or 10 of these were successful, 6 of them fledging a total of at least 16 young. Successful breeding was also noted on *Colonsay* (2 pairs, total 3 young, though many more pairs probably bred), *Mid-Argyll* (2 pairs, total 5 young), and *Mull* (5 pairs, total 15 young).

The largest counts during the latter part of the year came from *Mid-Argyll*, with max. 190 at one site on 22nd Sep (*cf* 245 at the same site on 31st Aug 1994); also, there were several large counts in the Oban area between Jul and Oct, with max. 81 at Upper Soroba on 12th Sep. The only other count exceeding 15 birds was 17 at Craigmad (near Port Charlotte) *Islay* on 7th Dec.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris* Druid

1582

B W P Common except on *Mull*, where a localised post-breeding influx of juveniles occurs. Breeding recorded in 65% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

The highest counts during the early part of the year were 250 at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 24th Jan, 300 at Rhunahaorine Point *Kintyre* on 4th Feb, and 300 at Port Charlotte *Islay* on 24th Feb.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 4 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 3 in 1994).

Numbers roosting under Bruichladdich Pier *Islay* peaked at a low 550 in Jul. No other flocks exceeding 200 birds were reported during the latter part of the year.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus* Gealbhonn

1591

R Commonly associated with human habitation, and distribution therefore rather localised in remote areas. Breeding recorded in 57% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus* Gealbhonn nan craobh

1598

P? Current status uncertain. Although clearly a scarce bird, it may be under-recorded. All records required.

The only record of the year was one with House Sparrows at Strathcoil *Mull* on 5th and 6th Apr.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs* Breacan beithe

1636

B W P Abundant except on *Tiree* and *Coll*. Breeding recorded in 80% of 10 km

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squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Birds commonly forage in cut hay and silage fields outwith breeding season.

The only count exceeding 100 birds early in the year was max. 510 at Loch Gruinart Islay on 9th Mar.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 9 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994. Numbers at Taynish NNR *Mid-Argyll* were similar to 1994, with 20 territories in the woodland CBC plot and 5 in the coastal plot.

The only counts exceeding 100 birds during the latter part of the year were 150 at Lossit Lodge (Loch Ballygrant) Islay on 12th Dec, and 600, in a mixed flock with Greenfinch and Twite, at Mulindry (River Laggan) Islay on 20th Dec.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla* Bricein caorainn 1638
W P Varying numbers occur between Oct and Apr each year.

The only records during Jan-Apr were 2 at Loch Gruinart Islay on 3rd Mar, and 16 there on the 9th.

Breeding. An adult male in song at Moine Mhor NNR *Mid-Argyll* from 15th to 27th Jun was quite unexpected, and almost certainly the first summer record for Argyll.

There were 2 records at the end of the year: 2 at Sunderland Islay on 8th Nov, and a flock of at least 100, with about 80 Chaffinches, at Slockavullin *Mid-Argyll* on 25th Dec.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris* Glaisean daraich 1649
R W Locally common. Breeding recorded in 31% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

No count during the early part of the year exceeded 20 birds.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in one of 17 BBS squares (*cf* none in 1994). Singles at Kenovay Tree on 25th May and Arinagour Coll on the 26th were perhaps breeders.

A large group of 100, in a mixed flock with Chaffinch and Twite, was in seed-filled stubble at Mulindry (River Laggan) Islay on 20th Dec.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis* Lasair choille 1653
B W P Localised distribution. Absent as a breeding species from Colonsay, Tieve and Coll. Breeding recorded in 32% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Some emigration in autumn.

No count during the early part of the year exceeded 20 birds.

Breeding. No significant records.

There were 2 counts exceeding 20 birds during the latter part of the year: 50 at Kames Cowal on 1st Oct, and 40 at Loch Seil *Mid-Argyll* on 29th Oct.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus* Gealag bhuidhe 1654
B W P Numbers fluctuate from year to year, but the breeding population has clearly increased as a consequence of coniferous afforestation. Absent as a breeding species from Tieve and Coll. Breeding recorded in 54% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

No flocks reported during the early part of the year exceeded 20 birds, and

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several observers commented on the scarcity of Siskins in gardens. This scarcity was probably related to the existence of a plentiful natural food supply in the form of high cone crops.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 6 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 3 in 1994).

Birds were still relatively scarce in the second winter period, the highest count being 25 at Gruline Mull on 26th Oct.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina* Gealan lin 1660
B W P Localised distribution. Breeding recorded in 37% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Flocking in autumn and winter.

No flocks exceeding 50 birds were reported during the early part of the year.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares, as in 1994.

Two large flocks were reported from *Islay* during the latter part of the year: 200 at Upper Killean (The Oa) on 5th Oct, and 300 at Gortantaid (near Killinallan) on 3rd Nov.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris* Gealan beinne 1662
B W P Localised breeding species on hill ground and coastal moorland, especially on the islands. Breeding recorded in 36% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Flocking in low-lying arable and coastal areas, Aug onwards. Some evidence to suggest emigration from Argyll in autumn, although there may also be an influx of wintering birds to some areas.

During the early part of the year, flocks of 50 or more birds were reported from Loch Gruinart *Islay* (120 on 2nd Jan and 15th Feb), and Ardnave *Islay* (50 on 31st Mar).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in only one of 17 BBS squares (*cf* 5 in 1994). On *Colonsay*, 39 pairs were located (*cf* 28 in 1994).

During the second winter period, there was an exceptionally high count of 800, in a mixed flock with Chaffinch and Greenfinch, in seed-filled stubble at Mulindry (River Laggan) *Islay* on 20th Dec; this is the largest flock reported in Argyll since 1978. Several other flocks of 50 or more birds were reported from *Islay*: 80 at Upper Killean (The Oa) on 1st Oct, 100 at Portnahaven on 7th Oct, 60 at Laggan Point on 2nd Nov, and 120 at Killinallan on 10th Nov. The only flocks of comparable size elsewhere were 60 on Ben More Mull on 22nd Sep, and 50 at Moine Mhor *Mid-Argyll* on 21st Nov.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea* Dearcan seilich 1663
B W P Localised distribution, mainly associated with birchwoods and young conifer plantations. Numbers fluctuate from year to year, but breeding population has probably increased as a consequence of coniferous afforestation. Breeding recorded in 41% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Flocking occurs in autumn and winter.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* one in 1994). Away from the mainland, breeding season records were received from *Islay* (several sites in the southern Rinns and 3 other locations), *Colonsay* (1-2 birds at 4 sites in Jun, more than usual), and *Coll* (2 at Arinagour on 26th May).

The only flock larger than 20 birds reported during the year was 60 at Connel *Mid-Argyll* on 16th Nov.

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COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra* Cam ghob 1666
B W Numbers and distribution vary depending on abundance of conifer cone crops. Highly irruptive species with large flocks sometimes moving to locate a new seed area, usually in summer. Breeding recorded in 16% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

There were only 4 records, all in Jun or Jul. In *Mid-Argyll*, a family party of 6 birds was at *Taynish NNR* on 11th Jun (the third reserve record), feeding on oak-defoliating caterpillars; also, 2 or 3 were near *Kilmory Castle (Lochgilphead)* on 2nd Jul. A family party of 6 was at *Dervaig Mull* on 15th Jun, and 4 were at *Barcaldine N Argyll* on 11th Jul.

SCOTTISH CROSSBILL *Loxia scotica* 1667
Deletion from Argyll list

A recent ABRC review concluded that no previous record of this species in *Argyll* is fully acceptable. A paper explaining the background to this decision is in preparation.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* Corcan-coille 1710
B W Locally common. Absent from Tiree and Coll and irregular on Gigha and Colonsay. Breeding recorded in 35% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91).

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 2 of 17 BBS squares (cf one in 1994). A pair bred successfully at *Taynish NNR Mid-Argyll*, the first confirmed breeding record for the reserve.

The highest count of the year was 13 at *Oban Mid-Argyll* on 28th Aug.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* Gealag an t-sneachda 1850
B? W P Has bred N Argyll in recent years. Varying numbers on passage and in winter.

The only records during the early part of the year came from *Islay*, with one at *Machir Bay* on 19th Jan, and one at *Upper Killelan (The Oa)* on 21st Mar.

An early returning bird was at *Moine Mhor Mid-Argyll* on 15th Sep. In Oct, singles were at *Rubha na Faing Islay* on the 7th and *Cruach nan Capull Cowal* on the 17th, with 15 at *Ardnave Point Islay* on the 26th, and 8 there on the 29th. The only other record during the second winter period was 2 at *Beinn Ime Cowal* on 12th Dec.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella* Buidheag bhealaidh 1857
B W Localised breeding species found in dry open ground, arable areas and moorland edges. Breeding recorded in 46% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Birds forage in cut hay and silage fields outwith breeding season. Population may be in decline and all records are welcome.

A flock of 15 at *Slockavullin Mid-Argyll* on 13th Jan was the highest count early in the year. Other records during Jan-Apr came from *Ardrishaig Mid-Argyll* (one on 29th Jan), *Ardfert Mid-Argyll* (4 on 4th Mar), *Port Wemyss Islay* (one on 4th Apr), and *Tiroran Mull* (one on 18th Apr, and 4 on the 21st).

Breeding. As in 1994, most breeding season (May-Aug) records came from *Islay, Jura* and *Mull*. On *Jura*, one or more birds were located at 11 different sites (with a total of 8 singing males) along 6 km of coast between *Glengarrisdale* and

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Glentrosdale on 14th-15th Jul; singles were also recorded at 4 other sites north of Inverlussa during Jun-Aug. Taken together with the 1994 data from the Loch Tarbert area, this suggests the continued presence of a healthy population in the northern part of the island. On *Islay*, 6 were at Bunnahabhainn on 6th May, with singles near Claggain Bay and at Loch Gruinart on 21st Jul. On *Mull*, one was at Loch Buie on 7th Jun, 2 males were at Croig on 25th Jun, and a pair was at Burg on 30th Jul. The only record outside these areas was a report of "several" in the northern half of *Gigha* in early Aug.

By far the largest flock reported during Sep-Dec was 20 at Upper Soroba (near Oban) *Mid-Argyll* on 4th Nov. Other records were one at Portnahaven *Islay* on 15th Oct, 6 at Kilbride Bay *Cowal* on 17th Nov, and 2 at Loch Gruinart on 15th Dec.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus* Gealag Ioin 1877
B W Locally common in farmland, scrub and young conifer plantations. Breeding recorded in 56% of 10 km squares (BTO Atlas, 1988-91). Small flocks sometimes gather outwith the breeding season.

A large flock of 100 was at Loch Gruinart *Islay* on 23rd Jan. No other site produced counts exceeding 10 birds during the first winter period.

Breeding. Birds were recorded in 3 of 17 BBS squares (*cf* one in 1994). On *Colonsay*, 10 pairs were located (*cf* 9 in 1994 and 7 in 1993). The only other count of breeding birds was 9 pairs at Loch Gruinart RSPB Reserve *Islay* (*cf* 5 pairs in 1994).

The highest count during the latter part of the year was 12 at Portnahaven *Islay* on 7th Oct.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra* Gealag bhuathair 1882
R Declining resident species which is facing extinction in Argyll. Recent breeding on Tiree only.

Breeding. The only records came from *Tiree*, where 6-10 territories were located during a comprehensive survey on 17th-24th Jun (Donald *et al.* 1996). This represents a continuation of the decline witnessed between the 1970s (*e.g.* 85 singing males in 1977) and the 1980s (*e.g.* 34 singing males in 1987).

There were no reports from other areas.

CATEGORY D SPECIES AND ESCAPES

This section includes only species which are not on the British list or whose occurrence in the UK is EXCLUSIVELY within Category D. 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, Red Kite, White-tailed Eagle, Red-legged Partridge, Grey Partridge, Golden Pheasant and Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon). They are dealt with in the main systematic list.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus*
Escape (range Australia, with introduced population New Zealand).

One was with Mute Swans at Balvicar Bay (Seil) *Mid-Argyll* on 6th Jun; it was probably the same bird as the one reported from *Mid-Argyll* and *N Argyll* in 1994.

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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 since the publication of *ABR* 11.

Little Shearwater	Islay	22/08/89	(BBRC)
Little Shearwater (3)	Islay	25/08/89	(BBRC)
Wilson's Petrel	Islay	21/08/89	(BBRC)
Wilson's Petrel	Islay	26/08/89	(BBRC)
Bean Goose	N Argyll	09/04/95	(ABRC)
Goshawk	Mull	30/06/95	(ABRC)
Bee-eater	Islay	03/07/85	(BBRC)

It should be noted that the majority of 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 fully establish the identification.

The following records of species on the BBRC, SBRC or ABRC lists are currently in circulation around the relevant committees. In some instances, circulation may have been delayed pending the receipt of additional details.

Great Shearwater (2)	Kintyre	21/09/93	(SBRC)
Great Shearwater (5)	Kintyre	09/09/94	(SBRC)
Med. Shearwater (8)	Kintyre	19/08-11/09/94	(SBRC)
Med. Shearwater (19)	Islay	13/08-05/10/95	(SBRC)
Med. Shearwater (2)	Mid-Argyll	10/09/95	(SBRC)
Med. Shearwater	Gigha	19/10/95	(SBRC)
Rough-legged Buzzard	Mid-Argyll	03&18/02/95	(SBRC)
Long-tailed Skua (7)	Kintyre	28/08-29/09/94	(ABRC)
Sabine's Gull	Islay	10/08/95	(ABRC)
Kumlien's (Iceland) Gull	Islay	18-23/02/95	(BBRC)
Lesser Sp. Woodpecker	N Argyll	06/08/94	(SBRC)
Arctic Redpoll (16)	Mid-Argyll	18/12/95	(BBRC)

Details of the following 1995 records of species on the BBRC, SBRC and ABRC lists have not been received.

Med. Shearwater (11)	Kintyre	25/08-01/10
Med. Shearwater	Islay	12/10
King Eider	Kintyre	26/03-01/04
Red-necked Phalarope	Kintyre	09/09
Mediterranean Gull	Kintyre	17-19/09
Sabine's Gull	Islay	27/09

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Sabine's Gull	Kintyre	29/09
Sabine's Gull (3)	Kintyre	05/10
Sabine's Gull	Islay	15/10
Yellow-legged Gull	Kintyre	16/08
Roseate Tern	Kintyre	22/07
Black Tern	Islay	09/10
Common Rosefinch	Iona	02/06

Anyone who saw any of these birds is encouraged to send in details. The records will not be referred to again in future reports unless details have by then been forwarded to ABRC, BBRC or SBRC.

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Population growth and breeding of Mandarin *Aix galericulata* in Cowal, Argyll

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The Mandarin *Aix galericulata* is native to northeast Asia and Japan (Cramp and Simmons 1977). The British population originates mainly from introductions earlier this century (Lever 1977). Since then, its breeding range has expanded but is largely concentrated in southeast England, although it appears recently to have spread to the Midlands and Wales (Lever 1993). Davies (1988) estimated the British population at just under 7000 birds.

Historically, the main breeding population in Scotland has been centred on the River Tay (Thom 1986), but this population now appears to be in decline (Murray 1995). More recently, Mandarins have established on the Eye Water in Berwickshire, with sporadic records elsewhere in Scotland (Lever 1993, Murray 1995). Petty and Anderson (1994) gave details of successful breeding during 1991-1993 by one pair around Loch Eck in Cowal, Argyll.

The purpose of this note is to record the continuing expansion of this population in Cowal. One pair of Mandarins bred successfully each year during 1991-1994 (Table 1). These breeding attempts resulted in 25 ducklings hatching during 1992-1994 plus an unknown number in 1991. The first indication of a population increase occurred in 1995, when five pairs laid 42 eggs from which 17 ducklings hatched. In 1996, four pairs laid 55 eggs and hatched 47 ducklings. All these pairs bred in Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* nest boxes situated around the shores of Loch Eck (Petty 1992).

Davies (1988) points out that Mandarins are shy and secretive and can easily be under recorded. Many other nest boxes suitable for Mandarins had been available in this area since 1983. However, we believe the breeding attempt in 1991 was the first in our study area, although by 1996 Mandarins were confirmed as breeding in natural nest sites. Evidence for this came from two females with newly-hatched ducklings. One brood was seen at Glenbranter when all pairs in nest boxes were still incubating, while the other brood was in the grounds of Strachur House, well away from the nest box population on Loch Eck.

In 1992, the only breeding female was caught towards the end of incubation and ringed. There were no other marks on the duck to indicate her origin. Nor have we been able to locate wildfowl collections in south and mid Argyll that admit to losing Mandarins, thus the origin of the founder pair is unknown. The same female was subsequently caught each year during incubation. In the five years 1992-1996, she

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Table 1. Breeding performance of Mandarins using Tawny Owl nest boxes in Cowal, Argyll during 1991-1996.

Year	Nest box	Clutch size	Unhatched eggs	Ducklings hatching	Goosander eggs
1991	T261B	-	4	-	-
1992	T261A	14	4	10	0
1993	T261A	13	8	5	1
1994	T293B	13	3	10	0
1995	T293C	8	1	7	4
1995	T294B	7	7	0	0
1995	T294C	10	10	0	0
1995	T261C	9	3	6	0
1995	T193A	9	5	4*	8
1996	T194A	14	1	13	0
1996	T194B	8	0	8	0
1996	T193B	11	1	10	0
1996	T261C	22	6	16	0
Total (n)		138 (12)	53 (13)	89 (12)	13 (13)
Mean		11.5	4.1	7.4	

* incubated and hatched by a Goosander.

In addition to the above records, two females reared ducklings from natural sites in 1996 (see text).

hatched broods of 10, 5, 10, 7 and 16 ducklings respectively. In 1996, she incubated a clutch of 22 eggs which probably involved two females, as it was well outside the range of 9-12 (rarely 14) eggs given by Cramp and Simmons (1977) and other clutches (7-14 eggs) recorded in Cowal (Table 1).

Two clutches in 1995 failed to produce any ducklings, although eggs were fertile. Both were deserted early in incubation, and probably involved females breeding for the first time.

Goosanders *Mergus merganser* also breed in nest boxes within our study area and appear to compete with Mandarins for some nest sites. At times, both species can lay in the same box (Petty and Anderson 1994) (Table 1). In 1995, one clutch comprised eight Goosander and 9 Mandarin eggs. These were incubated by a Goosander, and all but five of the Mandarin eggs hatched. In the same year, another clutch had eight Mandarin and four Goosander eggs. These were incubated by a Mandarin who hatched two of the Goosander eggs and all but one of her own eggs. In 1996, a Mandarin laid one egg in a Goosander clutch, the Goosander incubated and hatched all eggs. The

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fate of these mixed-species broods is unknown.

Mandarins are now seen more frequently outside the breeding season. Late in 1995, birds were regularly seen flying along the River Curr in groups of 4-9. In addition, two ducks died after collisions with overhead wire near the River Curr in 1995 and a third was shot at a flight pond in Glen Lean. Thus, the population in Cowal seems primed for further expansion.

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Golden Eagles in South Argyll 1964-1995

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Since 1964 a study has been made of the population of Golden Eagles which inhabit mainland Argyll south of Oban and Tyndrum. The aims of the study have been to determine the number of pairs breeding in the area, to monitor annually the breeding performance of those birds, and to determine if possible what factors influence long-term trends in occupancy and productivity.

By 1964 several historic Golden Eagle territories west of Arrochar and Loch Long had already been vacated, almost certainly as a result of the extensive afforestation which took place there in the nineteen-fifties. During the early years of the study, something similar was apparent in Knapdale, where three separate territories had become consolidated into a single one by the end of the nineteen-sixties.

During the 32 years of the study, a total of 28 different territories were identified, although some of these produced only one or two attempts at nesting. (A nesting attempt is defined here as a nest in which one or more eggs were laid.) Altogether, some 446 attempts at nesting were recorded of which 58% (259) produced fledged young. In 34% the eggs failed to hatch, and in 8% chicks hatched but failed to fledge. The 259 successful nestings produced a total of 320 fledged young, giving a mean of 1.24 chicks fledged per successful nest and 0.72 chicks fledged per nesting attempt.

These mean figures mask considerable year-to-year variation in breeding success, which was as high as 76% (nests with fledged young / all nesting attempts) for the whole area in 1971 and as low as 37% in 1977. There was also considerable variation in the breeding performance of individual pairs, possibly caused by differences in the quality of their territories. While some birds successfully reared one or two young year after year, others produced only one or two fledged young during the whole 32-year period. Some notable findings of the study were as follows. Of the 28 pairs that made nesting attempts, 26 pairs fledged at least one young; of these 26, 13 pairs (50%) produced 257 of the 320 fledged young (80%); and the best six pairs produced 159 (50% of all young fledged in the 32 years).

Over the last ten years or so there has been a steady deterioration in the productivity of the Golden Eagles in Kintyre and Knapdale. Out of five pairs in Kintyre, only one pair now (mid-nineties) produces any young, while in Knapdale there has been no record of a chick in a nest since 1984. Some territories seem to have been vacated by breeding birds and now hold only wandering immatures. Others hold paired birds but one or both are immature and nesting attempts are infrequent and unsuccessful. The most likely cause of this change is extensive coniferous afforestation which often

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extends right over the hilltops, all of which are comparatively low in that part of Argyll; thus few areas remain there for eagles to hunt over. During the period of this study, eight territories have been lost in addition to the four lost in the Arrochar area during the nineteen-fifties. Thus out of 32 historic territories, only 20 seem now to be viable.

While afforestation of open hill ground has been the most obvious change in land use, there may well be other factors that have affected the Golden Eagle population. Fortunately, there is no indication that egg collectors have been active in this area, although there have been several instances of young eagles disappearing from certain well-known sites; it is suspected that falconers or bird-traders may have been involved. A minority of sheep farmers are not prepared to tolerate the loss of any lambs to eagles and will regularly destroy eggs or chicks. In some cases, a persistent run of breeding failures can turn into regular breeding success after a change of land owner or manager; equally, the reverse can occur. In the early nineteen-sixties, pesticides were implicated in reducing breeding success, but more recently the analysis of unhatched eggs removed under licence has shown very low or background levels of the more common pollutants.

Over 200 eagle chicks have been ringed since 1972 and about 10% of these have been recovered. Most of the recoveries were young birds, many of which were killed on power lines, usually still within Argyll. The oldest ringed bird recovered was five years old. No birds ringed in this study have yet been found breeding. One of the most interesting records was of a bird just under a year old which had travelled 160 km from its nest site and was released alive from a crow trap on the Balmoral Estate in April 1983.

Detailed results from this study are supplied each year to the RSPB and to the former NCC and SNH. The results have been used in the production of several papers in scientific journals (see list of References at end).

The RSPB and Forest Enterprise recently funded a four-year study into the ranging behaviour of Golden Eagles. The study utilised radio-tracking techniques and placed particular emphasis on the interaction of eagles with forestry. The work was carried out by Mike McGrady within this South Argyll study area and is now being written up. It is anticipated that detailed analysis of long-term trends and of land use changes will also emerge from this work.

It is difficult to predict what the future holds for the Golden Eagles of South Argyll. There is likely to be more afforestation. Moreover, the hilltops are now threatened with the construction of wind-farms and their associated power lines and access roads, all in the remote country required by eagles for nesting and hunting. It is likely that there will be further reductions in the number of breeding pairs and in the number of young produced, so that this population may not be self-sustaining. This is all the more reason to safeguard those areas where the birds are presently thriving.

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Breeding Success of Golden Eagles in Argyll Study Area 1964-95									
Year	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
Pairs Nesting	6	5	5	6	9	12	14	17	15
Broods Reared	4	1	2	4	6	7	10	13	9
Young Fledged	4	1	2	4	6	8	10	16	10
Year	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81
Pairs Nesting	15	16	18	13	16	16	18	14	19
Broods Reared	7	10	9	9	6	9	10	8	13
Young Fledged	10	12	11	9	6	12	13	13	17
Year	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
Pairs Nesting	15	19	19	19	11	13	14	13	15
Broods Reared	10	9	11	10	5	8	9	10	7
Young Fledged	13	13	13	15	5	9	12	13	9
Year	91	92	93	94	95	Totals			
Pairs Nesting	13	15	15	16	15	446			
Broods Reared	9	8	11	7	8	259			
Young Fledged	13	9	14	8	10	320			

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Birds of Western Scotland - over 100 years ago.

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The book "Birds of the West of Scotland including the Outer Hebrides" by Robert Gray was first published in 1871 by Thomas Murray & Son, Glasgow. In his preface the author stated "No part of Great Britain, indeed, is more inviting to the ornithologist than the western mainland of Scotland and its island dependencies", a view many of us would share. The book gives a fascinating picture of the avifauna of the area during the last century. Throughout the book there are many references to the bird life of Argyll and it is extracts from some of these which form the basis of this brief article, since these will be of most interest to members of the Argyll Bird Club.

Many of the species described by Gray have had fluctuating fortunes over the last hundred years. Some were lost completely but have since made a welcome return. Gray laments the "relentless and continual persecution" of the Golden Eagle and hopes that "it may not yet be too late to bring it back from the verge of extinction". He goes on to describe the Sea Eagle as "a much commoner bird in Scotland than the Golden Eagle, never at any time in the same danger of extinction". If only he had been able to see what *really* happened in the next few decades.

It was with interest that I read that "far from being a comparatively common bird, the Osprey is now, with the exception of the Kite and the Goshawk, the rarest of our native species". About the middle of the last century, Peregrines were still common birds in many districts of western Scotland but the effects of persecution were already being commented upon. In Gray's words, "the ravages of keepers and collectors have of late years greatly thinned its numbers". Amongst the deserted eyries, Gray mentions one on Dumbarton Rock, but there were still many breeding pairs in the vicinity of Loch Long and Ben Lomond and in various areas of Argyll. He went on to say "considerable numbers of Peregrines are sent in to the Glasgow bird stuffers". No doubt this was in response to the demand for stuffed birds to decorate the Victorian parlours of the Glasgow merchants!

Merlins were commonly distributed throughout the Western Highlands; many of these birds left the high moorlands in the autumn and winter and, to my surprise, their wintering areas then included cities and large towns. Gray remarks that they take up quarters in church towers and other tall buildings and pass the winter amongst the housetops. Merlins were present in the heart of Glasgow, preying upon the city's pigeons. Two males captured in the city in the winter of 1869/70 were said to be as black as chimney sweeps!

In 1858 several pairs of Red Kite nested in Argyll, one long-standing site being at Bonawe, near Oban. The nest of one pair on the banks of Loch Lomond suggested

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that the birds had robbed "some wandering gaberlunzie (a tramp) of the contents of his wardrobe". The nest structure included parts of trousers, stockings and shirt.

Flocks of Chough were present in Appin early in 1800, but the bird was already absent from Lismore and many of the smaller offshore islands. Islay was then, as now, one of its strongholds. It was said to have come originally to Islay from Colonsay "where they are very numerous", but their numbers were decreasing even then.

The "goatsucker" or Nightjar, according to Gray, was a common bird in almost every Scottish county as well as the Inner Isles. It was not uncommon in Islay, Iona and Mull. Its habit of perching lengthwise along a branch was discussed by Gray, together with anatomical details of the bird's foot. The structure of the foot, he thought, was an adaptation designed to enable the bird to perch in this fashion. When lengthwise along a branch the bird is much less conspicuous.

In his account of the Lapwing, Gray makes an interesting reference to an Act passed by an old Scottish parliament which ordered "Peeseeweeps" eggs to be destroyed, the reason given in the Act being "that these birds might not go south and become a delicious repast to our unnatural enemies the English". The Lapwing was also much disliked and persecuted because of the behaviour of the bird when disturbed on its breeding grounds, as this was likely to give away the position of hiding Covenanters fleeing from Government forces. Gray quotes a poem in support of this belief. Here are two lines of it.

*'Tween herds and you there's deadly feud
He breaks your eggs and skails your brood.*

Like many Victorian naturalists, Gray had little compunction in collecting eggs and shooting birds. However he did, from time to time, have some regard for his victims. Once, after watching a pair of Redshank, one of which remained stationary while the other constantly ran about, he pondered on the matter and, to resolve it, he shot them both. He found "to his sorrow" that the stationary bird, the female, had a missing lower mandible. He assumed that the healthy male had cared for the injured female and was so impressed by this that he resolved never to shoot another Redshank. He was able to say "I have never shot a Redshank since".

Gray remarks upon the very large numbers of Eider to be found around Colonsay. There were so many that the bird was known as Lach Cholansa, a name that was used over a large area of the west coast. Quantities of the eggs of this species were sent to the Glasgow poulterers and similar consignments were sent to the same destination from Tiree and Coll.

Long-tailed Duck were known as "Coal an' Can'le Licht", the name being similar to the call of the bird. Gray was struck by the aptness of this name when he saw a flock of these birds move out of shooting range and give their derisive shout. He said that he appreciated the origin of the name, for it "speaks with a good Scotch accent and

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resemblance of the cry to these words when heard within a short distance is quite remarkable”.

These few excerpts may have given something of the flavour of Gray's book. Reading it may give Club members the opportunity of some armchair birdwatching when the weather outdoors inhibits any fieldwork.

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