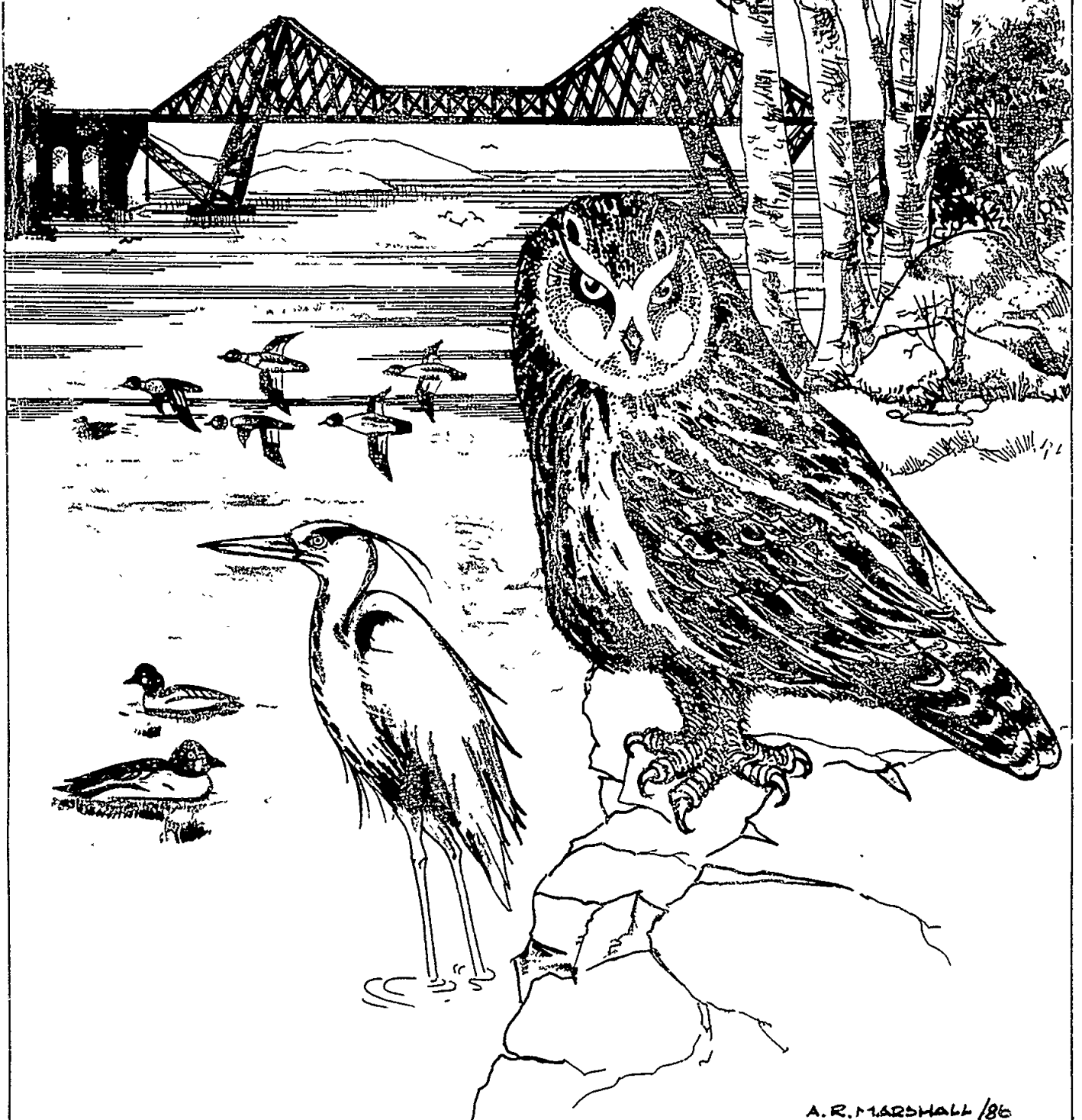
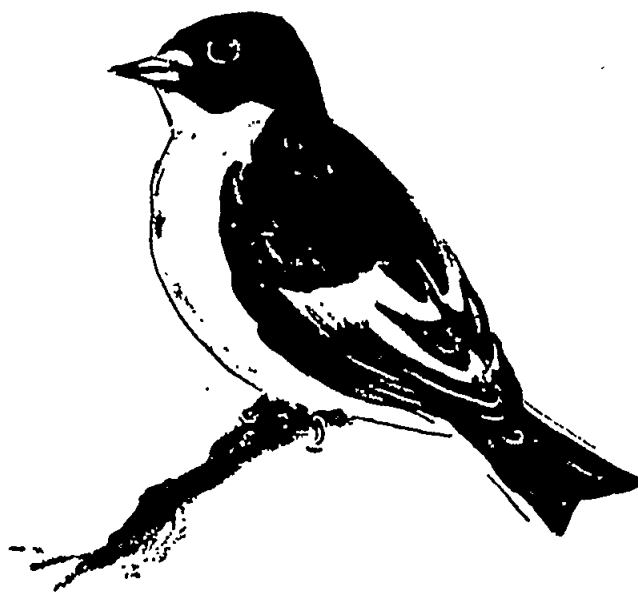


THE THIRD ARGYLL BIRD REPORT



A. R. MARSHALL / 86

THE THIRD ARGYLL BIRD REPORT
(Includes records up to January 1986)



Pied Flycatcher

PUBLISHED BY THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB

Editor : COLIN A GALBRAITH

Assistant Editor : DR A R JENNINGS

THE THIRD ARGYLL BIRD REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

This, the third Argyll Bird Report, covers the period January to December 1985. Records of all species seen are included. As, in previous reports, all bird ringing activities within the area are reported in detail. The number of short papers submitted for inclusion in this years report is larger than previous years - hopefully this represents an increase in scientific surveys and research in Argyll. Papers deal with many different topics - Herons, Corncrakes, Breeding waterfowl and 'rare birds' are but a few of the papers included here. Comments on any aspect of the papers and records reported here would be appreciated to help improve future reports.

1985 saw the formation of the Argyll Bird Club. Since its establishment in the Spring of '85, membership of the Club has increased and presently stands at over 80 people. Anyone wishing to join should fill in the membership form below and return it to the Membership Secretary : Ms Jane Battrick, "Rioneachail", Benderloch, By Oban, Argyll.

1985 was an important year for conservation in Argyll. I am sure the continuing conflict on Islay over conservation of sites and species has saddened many locals, not least because of the inaccurate and exaggerated reports in both local and national press. We can but hope that these in a position to manipulate public opinion will offer a more balanced view of the arguments involved in future. Clearly the importance of a locally based conservation movement such as the Argyll Bird Club cannot be over emphasised should situations like that on Islay develop again.

In my capacity as Editor, I would like to thank the following people who have helped with production of this report: Arthur Jennings (Assistant Editor); Steve Petty; Roger Broad; Stephen Hull who all helped in preparation of manuscripts. Sandra Johnston did much of the typing and Iain MacKinnon helped in overall production. Archie Marshall and Jane Battrick drew the sketches for the Report.

Colin A Galbraith
21st April 1986

The production of this Report was aided by Argyll & Bute District Council.

ARGYLL BIRD CLUB - MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I/WE WISH TO JOIN THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB AND I/WE ENCLOSE THE APPROPRIATE FEE. (£3.00 SINGLE : £4.50 FAMILY).

NAME:

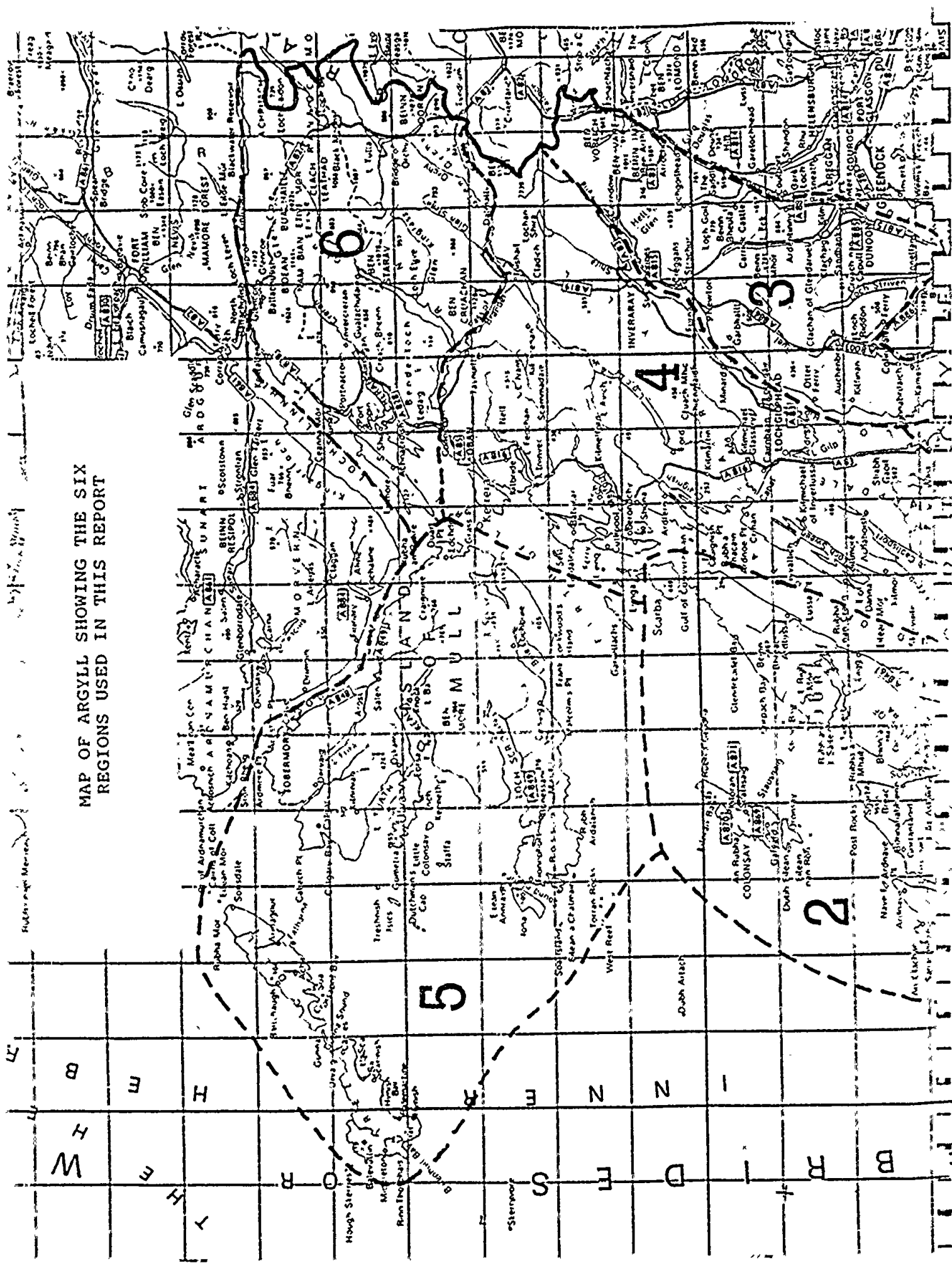
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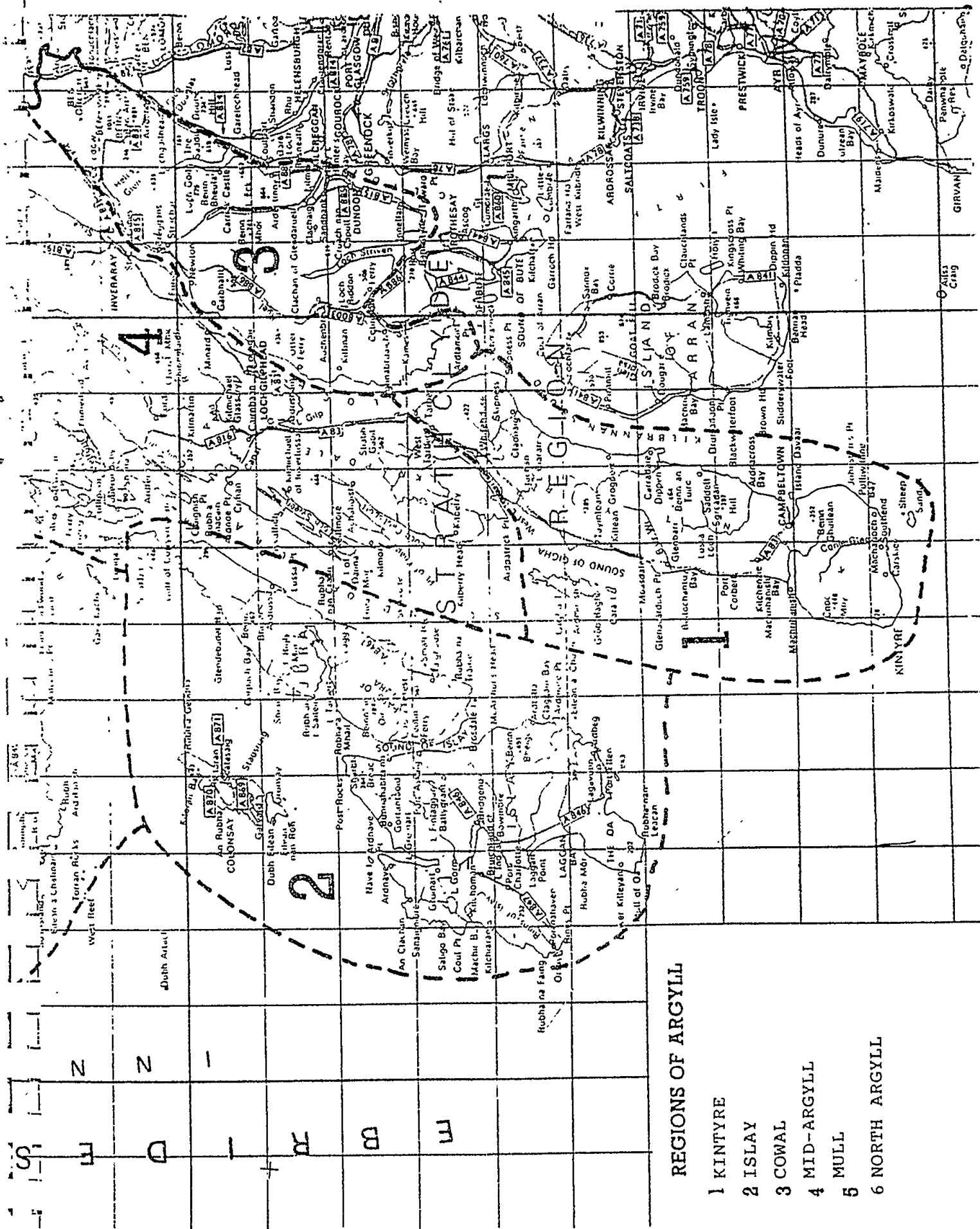
.....

Return to Ms Jane Battrick, Rioneachail, Benderloch, By Oban, Argyll.

Members will receive a newsletter and entry to all talks and meetings at a reduced fee.



MAP OF ARGYLL SHOWING THE SIX
REGIONS USED IN THIS REPORT



REGIONS OF ARGYLL

- 1 KINTYRE
- 2 ISLAY
- 3 COWAL
- 4 MID-ARGYLL
- 5 MULL
- 6 NORTH ARGYLL

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 1985
SYSTEMATIC LIST

David and Judy Stroud

Introduction

The following list follows previous lists for 1980-83 and 1984 in style. The sequence of species follows the Vooous order and the Euring code is given for each species.

Each species entry is preceeded by details of status. These largely duplicate those given in previous reports to aid readers without access to those lists. They are intended to give a generalised picture of the distribution and abundance of each species within Argyll. Where there has been a significant change of status, as in a range extension or continuing decline, this is mentioned.

Abbreviations used are defined as follows:

- R Resident
B Breeding species. Non-migratory but breeding and wintering areas within Argyll may differ.
S Summer visitor. Breeds but does not winter.
W Winter visitor. Winters but does not breed in Argyll.
P Passage. Birds seen on passage at migration times, but does not usually occur in summer or winter months.
Irregular. Refers to birds that are unpredictable in the timing, location or number of occurences.
Scarce. These species are found at only a few sites in Argyll and generally in small numbers.
Rare. These species are annual, but one or two individuals usually occur somewhere in the county.
Vagrant. These species are not seen on an annual basis.

Areas used in introductory comments:

- Kintyre Mainland and inshore islets south of a line between Tarbert and West Loch Tarbert including Gigha and Sanda.
Islay Also including Jura, Colonsay and associated sea areas and smaller islands.
Cowal Mainland from a line up Loch Fyne to the old county boundary, then south down that boundary. Not including Bute.
Mid-Argyll North from the Kintyre area boundary to Oban and around coast eastwards along the southern shore of Loch Etive. From there through the Pass of Brander and around the north end of Loch Awe to Dalmally. Then east along the main road to the old county boundary. South from the boundary to the Cowal area boundary.
Mull Also including Coll, Tiree, Iona, Ulva, Staffa and the Treshnish Islands together with associated sea and smaller islands.
North Argyll Area to the north of Mid-Argyll to the south shore of Loch Leven then east to the old county boundary along the south shore of the Blackwater Reservoir. Also includes Lismore, but not Morvern which is now part of Highland Region.

Maps of each area are given in the 1980-83 Argyll Bird Report. Boundaries for BTO surveyes do not follow the strict county or area boundaries above, being based rather on 10 km squares of the national grid. This avoids the problem of squares overlapping the administrative county border.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ON POORLY RECORDED SPECIES

Compiling this list enables obvious gaps in recorded to be identified. There are some species which whilst common seem rarely recorded, and others which are in the

process of either contracting or expanding their range. We here list those species for which the County Recorder would be grateful for all records during 1986. It aids species conservation and monitoring if as many records of these birds can be obtained as possible.

Whilst not discouraging records of all species, please make these your target list for 1986 bird recording.

Mute Swan (see note elsewhere in report),	Kingfisher
Greylag Goose any breeding records	Green Woodpecker
Ptarmigan	Dipper
Grey Partridge	Ring Ouzel
Corncrake	Grasshopper Warbler
Moorhen	Sedge Warbler
Coot	Reed Warbler
Jack Snipe	Lesser Whitethroat
Stock Dove	Tree Sparrow
Collared Dove	Sand Martin - all breeding sites please
Barn Owl	for an inventory.
Tawny Owl	Yellowhammer
Long-eared Owl	Snow Bunting

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to a large number of people who have submitted records for the 1985 Bire Report. Much of the continuing success of the report can be gauged by the recent increase in numbers of records submitted. In this way, the geographical scope of the systematic list has been improved. There are now fewer areas of the county with no regular records. However, one area which continues to be very poorly recorded (at least as far as submitted records go), is Cowal. It is hoped that the increase in submitted records from Argyll will continue in future years.

Holiday birdwatchers have submitted few records in 1985. In view of the large number of birdwatchers visiting Argyll each year this is disappointing. We would thus make a special plea for visitors to report observations to the county recorder:

Dr A.R. Jennings, 1 Ferryfield Drive, Connel, Argyll PA37 1SP

We are grateful to all those listed below who submitted records during the year. In particular, we would like to express thanks to John and Pamela Clarke (Colonsay & Oronsay), Mike Madders (Mull, Coll & Tiree), Les Street and Peter Moore (Islay). Their compilations of area lists made the production of the final county listing very much easier !

We are also grateful to Roger Broad, Arthur Jennings, Mike Madders and Colin Galbraith for their comments and proof reading of the final list.

A. Abrahams, D. Alexander, M. Andrews, B. Averis, J. & R. Barnes, J. Battrick, A. van Beest, D. Begg, R. & A. Bevan, Dr E.M. Bignal, S. Bignal, M. & R. Bignal, C.R. Bland, J. Blatcher, Mr & Mrs Bolden, J. Bradfield, J. Bridges, R.A. Broad, A. Broad, W. Brewer, C. Brookes, H. Brown, I. Brown, Brathay Exploration Group Coll & Tiree Expedition 1985, Dr C.J. Cadbury, I. Campbell, Dr L. Campbell, D. Carnduff, K.A.H. Cassels, S. Chester, J. & P. Clarke, R. Crawford, A. Clarke, C. Craik, Mr & Mrs Cobham and family, N. Copley, R. Coomber, T. Curtis, T.D. Dick, F. Duncanson, Rev A. & Mrs J. Duncan-Jones, Dr N. Easterbee, H. Embleton, S. Eccles, A., B. & J. Evans, M.J. Everett, D. Ferguson, B.C. Forrester, Dr A.D. Fox, A.E.M. Fox, L.M. Fox, I.S. Francis, C.A. Galbraith, M. Garnett, C. Gomersall, C. Graham, N. Grant, J. & H. Gray, C. & C. Gregory, M.J.P. Gregory, P. Gurney, S. Hackett, M. Hall-Gardiner, J.B. Halliday, C. Harvey, M. Harwood, O. Henry, A. Hilton, D. Hobhouse, D. & P. Hodgkiss, Mr & Mrs Hollis, M. Holmes, I. Hopkins, P. Hughes, M. Hull, C. Hunter, M. Hutcheson, G. Jackson, D.C. Jardine, Dr A.R. Jennings, L. & A. Krawczyk, E.R.G. Kidd, B. Levene, M. Madders, E. Major,

J.P. Martin, I. & V. Martin, J. Matthew, Mr Matthews, P. McAllister, J.T & S. McKHarris, A. McNeill, J. Metcalf, M. Mills, P. Moore, Dr F. de Mornay, Mr & Mrs Morrison, K. Morton, Nature Conservancy Council, A.D. Newson, M. North, Dr M.A. Ogilvie, B. & R. Pain, N. Penford, S. Percival, C. reavey, P. & V. Reynolds, G. Riddle, A.M. Riley, Mr & Mrs Room, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, E.M. Russell, RSPB volunteers at the Gruinart reserve, Islay. Mr & Mrs Rushfort, M. Scott, A.J.E. Seddon, D.B. Sexton, R. & B. Shale, Mr & Mrs Shaw, R. & Z. Skelly, Mr & Mrs Smith, Mr Sneddon, M. & N. Spark, F. & C. Spragge, Mr & Mrs Stevenson, J. Stewer, B.J. Stewart, E. Still, Stirling SOC Argyll Excursion 1985, L. Street, E.J.C. Thomas, B.A. Townsend, J. & S. Tupper, S. Walker, D. Waters, J. Watson, A.M. Welsh, K.E. Williams, P. Wormald, I. Wilkie, D. Wilson, Mr & Mrs Wyld, P. & J. Young.

And of course apologies to anyone whose name may have been omitted through administrative oversight (no-one we hope !).

LOCH GRUINART 1985

TABLE 1. Maximum monthly counts for wildfowl, waders and gulls at Loch Gruinart, Islay. Counts from RSPB, L & S Street, P. Moore, D & J Stroud etc.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Whooper Swan	9	1								72	5	15
Whitefronted G.	271	200	61	82	26					770	470	480
Barnacle Goose	8340	8149	6411	7441	3010					17700	13000	8207
Shelduck	127	202	214	199	109	76	61	16	12	22	10	58
Wigeon	159	160	111	76					50	208	95	389
Teal	214	18	4	30	8	5	3	13	21	220	102	90
Mallard	196	91	25	20	57	90	25	78	91	76	46	112
Eider	11	4	25	36	40	63	85	24	27	8	12	4
Goldeneye	24	6	11	3							7	19
R-b Merganser	25	8	16	29	25	8	28	5	18	30	6	18
Oystercatcher	107	198	292	474	304	263	257	257	131	77	75	38
Ringed Plover	90	52	55	79	525	19	29	15	83	300	21	60
Golden Plover	132	50		90	1		3	70	90	138	240	30
Grey Plover	22	11							1	18	1	
Lapwing	75	282	300	350	250	285	540	614	653	651	9	92
Knot								11	8	3	10	
Sanderling	14	8					12	6	5	4		4
Little Stint										1	5	
Curlew Sandpiper										1		
Purple Sandpiper											1	1
Dunlin	377	168	2	5	327	19	260	115	60	54	180	442
Ruff				1			1	3	3	1		
Jack Snipe	2	1	1							1	1	
Snipe	21	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	30	+	+
Woodcock	3	3	3							1	1	4
Bar-t Godwit	36	70	23		24	14	30	6	62	21	26	47
Black-t Godwit									1			
Whimbrel				9	2					20		
Curlew	369	315	217	158	140	68	840	224	541	274	268	299
Redshank	71	28	119	98	67	64	44	122	19	38	37	37
Greenshank	6	4	1	1			1	2	1	5	2	3
Common Sandpr					+	+	+	17				
Turnstone	50	89	100	76	1		2	6	60	92	92	95
Arctic Skua								1	2		1	
Great Skua									1			
Black-h Gull	14	3	43	221	35	14	98	19	119	368	2	5
Common Gull	270	300	33	112	101	51	135	72	143	134	37	83
Lesser bb Gull	5	1		30	4	30	60	15	1	2		
Greater bb Gull	16	11	11	6	9	5	14	25	32	32	12	25
Kittiwake	1	3					1		2			
Herring Gull	53	122	31	112	25	42	155	248	120	238	61	63
Arctic Tern					30	30	37	5				
Little Tern					8		1					
Sandwich Tern				1			2					
Black Tern							2					
Pintail	2									2		1
Shoveler											1	
Pochard	1											
Long-tailed Duck												2

LOCH INDAAL 1985

TABLE 2. Maximum monthly counts for wildfowl, waders and gulls at Loch Indaal, Islay. Counts from D & J Stroud, L & S Street, S.F. Newton et al.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Red-t Diver								3			40	2
Black-t Diver											7	4
Great N Diver	1	1									1	3
Slavonian Grebe	9	1								6	4	6
Mute Swan	6		3				3	4	10	12	6	2
Whooper Swan										10	54	3
Shelduck	36	35	48						8		22	10
Wigeon	183	285	127						4	84	146	137
Teal	20	83	11					46	157	141	19	29
Mallard	176	185	51				16	467	340	198	271	344
Pintail	4	3	10								1	2
Shoveler	12	6	10								11	6
Scaup	815	850	310					5	c300	417	811	396
Eider	17	17	7				363	184	120	186	125	268
Long-t Duck	8										6	12
Common Scoter										10	26	67
Goldeneye		2	5								45	28
Sniew		1	1								1	1
Red-b Mergsr	3	3					65	18		87	58	18
Oystercatcher	356	560	720				517	488	270	429	417	458
Ringed Plover	6	32	25				83	94	34		35	31
Grey Plover										16	2	16
Lapwing		8	272				220	123		114	5	38
Knot		55						13	1	20	12	
Sanderling							14	3				
Dunlin	49	62	3				23	196	72	4	59	476
Black-t Godwit							1	1				
Bar-t Godwit	4	61	50					3	20	5	20	69
Whimbrel					17				1			
Curlew	144	57	297				488	914	505	395	422	626
Redshank	7	2	23				15	49	5	16	17	15
Common Sandpr							1	3				
Turnstone	19	8	5				17	9	4		14	12
Purple Sandpr	1		2								20	12
Brent Goose										20		
Greylag Goose										8	50	
Gadwall												2
Black-h Gull	3	100	27				94	32	149	22	12	35
Common Gull	31	160	816				395	439	393	413	506	240
Lesser bb Gull			52				5	22	17		1	
Herring Gull	519	13	28				137	687	277	744	273	312
Glaucous Gull												2
Greater bb Gull		4	2				18	17	40	83	52	29
Kittiwake											3	

NB No records for April - June.

TABLE 3. Peak monthly counts of wintering geese on Islay. Counts largely from the Nature Conservancy Councils co-ordinated monthly censuses.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Bean Goose							2		
Pink-footed Goose	2	3	5			1	10	2	6
G. Whitefronted Goose	3468	3730	4198	3346		3	3221	6393	5464
Greylag Goose	25	27	9				c60	65	31
Canada Goose	1	1	1	1			1	15	16
Barnacle Goose	17446	17142	18311	+	3010		19420	17875	19233
L-bellied Brent				50			550	2	1
D-bellied Brent							4		

+ = no meaningful peak count available.

Table 4. Counts of Barnacle Geese on Islay.
The Nature Conservancy Council undertake two complete island counts each month during the winter to monitor the numbers and distribution of geese on Islay. The counts are undertaken on consecutive days to allow the estimation of count error. Count areas are shown in Stroud (1984) and the count methods presented by Stroud, Bignal & Easterbee (in prep).

	Jan 31	Feb 1	Feb 28	March 1	March 28	March 29	Oct 24	Nov 26	Nov 27	Dec 17	Dec 18
RHINNS	11	3	898	605	601	465	0	306	170	600	520
GORM	67	150	657	1125	355	2526	0	222	447	97	6
GRUINART	8729	8409	9505	9473	8761	5946	15750	11549	9991	9993	9355
KILMENY	4555	4812	2982	2323	3352	2192	1117	3515	3821	5074	6426
LAGGAN	3140	2065	2941	3213	5090	4401	328	2282	2685	2883	2387
GLEN	792	950	100	460	0	100	0	0	11	156	350
ARDTALLA	0	0	0	0	0	37	0	0	0	151	174
OA	152	185	59	44	152	83	0	1	4	19	15
ISLAY	17446	16574	17142	17242	18311	15750	17195	17875	17129	18973	19233

Notes: Strong winds on February 1 affected distribution and total count. Heavy showers, drizzle and poor visibility on 1 March undoubtedly led to the low count. For full interpretation of counts see Stroud, Bignal & Easterbee and NCC unpubl.

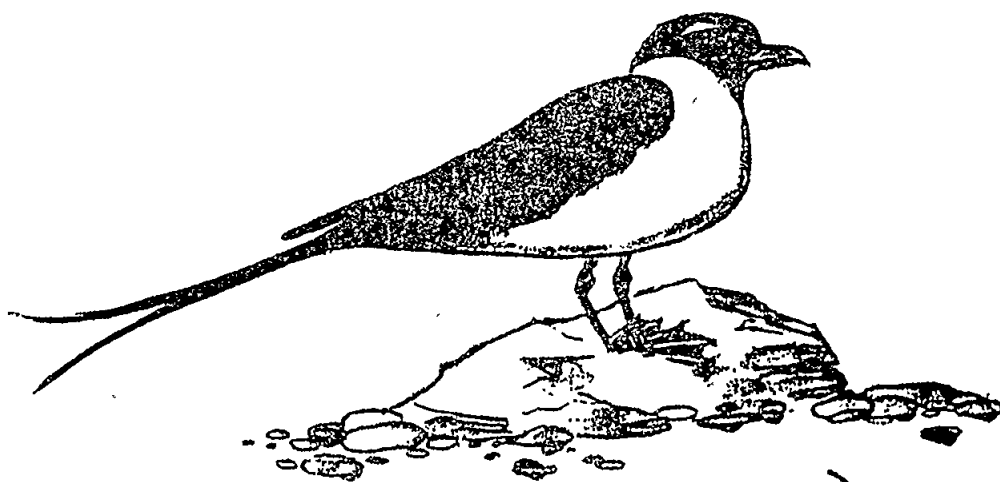
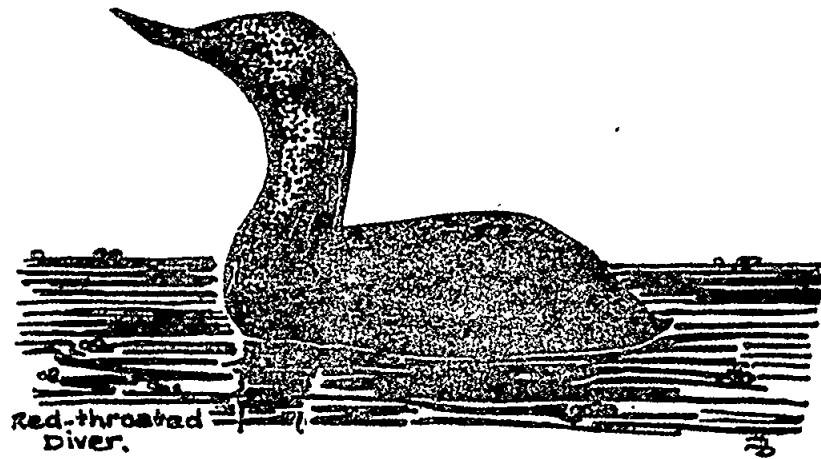


TABLE 5. Summary of relative abundance of woodland bird species seen in 38 broadleaf woods in north and mid-Argyll during summer 1985. Counts (maximum of two visits) are based on spot counts. RSPB data from J.P. Martin and B. Averis.

	TOTAL COUNT	NUMBER OF WOODS IN WHICH SEEN
Chaffinch	1016	38
Willow Warbler	945	38
Tree Pipit	478	38
Great Tit	437	38
Coal Tit	404	38
Wood Warbler	389	38
Wren	347	38
Redstart	321	38
Blue Tit	298	38
Robin	279	38
Siskin*	156	35
Treecreeper	123	35
Song Thrush	121	33
Long-tailed Tit	103	27
Hooded Crow	95	37
Spotted Flycatcher	84	30
Blackbird	84	28
Mistle Thrush	76	29
Great-spotted Woodpkr	74	35
Cuckoo	73	35
Buzzard	65	36
Wood Pigeon	64	27
Redpoll	48	
Crossbill	42	
Jackdaw	33	4
Goldcrest	30	18
Pied Wagtail	20	16
Bullfinch	20	7
Garden Warbler	16	10
Yellowhammer	16	8
Blackcap	15	12
Starling	14	4
Goldfinch	13	5
Jay	13	8
Tawny Owl*	12	9
Pied Flycatcher	12	8
Pheasant	10	9
Dunnoek	10	6
Raven	10	8
Grey Wagtail	9	5
Whitethroat	9	7
Whinchat	9	5
Woodcock*	8	5
Mallard	4	2
Sparrowhawk*	3	3
Black Grouse	3	1
Chiffchaff	3	3
Dipper	3	2
Rook	3	3
Heron	1	
Greenfinch	1	
Goshawk	1	

*= under-recorded, as were quiet species eg Goldcrest. However, numbers give fair indication of relative abundance.

- 0002 **RED-THROATED DIVER** Gavia stellata
 B, W & P in all areas. Particularly vulnerable to disturbance and fluctuations of water levels when nesting. Flooding in summer after a dry winter and spring probably affected success in 1985. Summer status described in waterfowl paper elsewhere in the report.
- Islay 40 November, Loch Indaal (see Table 2).
 Colonsay Up to 4 seen throughout the year. Probably didn't breed.
 Mull Breeding; small numbers offshore through the winter.
 Coll Breeding; evidence of 7 pairs, one with brood of 2.
 North Argyll 24 April 8 in winter plumage, Ardmucknish Bay.
 Jura 183 47% of c389 lochs surveyed early June; 1-2 on each of 10 lochs.
- 0003 **BLACK-THROATED DIVER** Gavia arctica
 B, W & P in all areas. Rare breeder, preferring larger lochs than Red-throated Divers. Also very susceptible to water-level fluctuations and human disturbance during breeding season. Breeding in 1985 was subject to an intensive RSPB survey reported elsewhere in the report.
- Mull Not breeding: single ad on traditional nesting loch in May.
 Coll 24 & 26 June single Loch Ronard. 2 on sea Hagh Bay 17 August.
 Tiree 19 June 1 Gott Bay.
 Islay Loch Indaal (Table 2). Loch Gruinart singles 16 Nov, 15 & 18 December.
 Mid Argyll 21 May 4 Loch Caolisport; 18 February 4 Ballachroy.
 Colonsay 18 January 1 off Scalsraig, 1 flying 2 May, 1 7 October Balnahard Bay.
 Kintyre Sea between Gigha and mouth of W Loch Tarbert remains very important during winter months. No accurate counts though - a priority. None 8 February, 3 on 27 December.
- 0004 **GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** Gavia immer
 W. & P. in all areas. The Argyll coast holds an important wintering population; most birds are seen between September and end of May. Usually there are one or two records of summering birds.
- Kintyre 17 February 27 off W Loch Tarbert: this area of probable national importance as wintering area and accurate counts needed urgently. Single off Tayinloan 30 June. 10 off W.L. Tarbert 8 Feb, 4 on 27 December.
 Coll 21 November 5 Crossapol Bay.
 Mull Commonest diver offshore in winter with up to 50, mostly concentrated in the main sea lochs.
 Islay See Table 2 for Loch Indaal monthly counts.
 Colonsay Up to 12 seen early in the year.
 Mid Argyll 19 seen Loch Coalisport on 21 May is a late date for group this size.
- 0007 **LITTLE GREBE** Tachybaptus ruficollis
 B & W in all areas. Breeds on many of the smaller, more eutrophic lochs especially in Kintyre and Mid Argyll. In winter widespread in small numbers along sheltered coasts of many sealochs. A 1985 breeding survey is reported elsewhere in this report.
- Colonsay At least 3 pairs bred. 1pr with 2 young 14 May 2 others with 4 young each in June. 1pr with 1 young 4 September.
 Mull 14 Lochdon 19 January. Uncommon, possibly 1 breeding attempt. 1 Loch Poit na h-I 12 July.
 Mid/N Argyll Maximum 6 Loch Etive 14 January.
 Islay Dec/Jan up to 4 Loch Gruinart and Loch Gorm.
 Jura None seen on any lochs surveyed early June.



Long-tailed skua (*Stercorarius Longicaudus*)

- 0009 GREAT CRESTED GREBE Podiceps cristatus
W & P in Mull, Islay, Mid-Argyll and Kintyre. Irregular and uncommon.
North Argyll 1 August 1 on Loch Etive at Achnacloich.
Mid Argyll 21 April 1 Crinan Bay in summer plumage.
Islay 13 November, 2 on sea at Kilchoman.
- 0010 RED-NECKED GREBE Podiceps grisegena
V. No records since 1984 when 2 were seen on Loch Awe.
- 0011 SLAVONIAN GREBE Podiceps auritus
W & P in all areas. Regular in winter on some sealochs, especially around Mull and on Loch Indaal, Islay.
North Argyll 22 October 1 Loch Creran.
Mull 25 March a max of 15 Loch na Keal, mostly in summer plumage.
Islay Loch Indaal records see Table 2.
Kintyre 18 February 2 Ballochroy, 15 February 2 W Loch Tarbert.
Mid Argyll 18 February 3 Loch Caolisport.
Cowal 20 January 1 Tighnabruach.
- 0012 BLACK-NECKED GREBE Podiceps nigricollis
W & P in Kintyre, Islay and Mull. Irregular with no records since 1982.
- 0020 FULMAR Fulmarus glacialis
B, W & P in Islay, Mull and Kintyre. Apparently still increasing and extending its breeding range in Argyll.
Colonsay 24 January c100 around seacliffs, Urugaig. Late May: 689^{apparently} occupied sites/^{aos}
Mull Breeding. Over 37 pairs on ledges, S Iona 13 June;
 140 aos on ledges Caliach Point 12 December.
Coll Breeding. 26 aos on ledges Ben Feall, 11 June; 3 aos Grisipol 13 June.
Tiree Breeding. 164 aos.
Kintyre Breeding at Keil Point.
- 0036 CORY'S SHEARWATER Calonectris diomedea
Irregular passage off western islands of Argyll. No records since 1981.
- 0040 GREAT SHEARWATER Puffinus gravis
Irregular passage, mainly off the west coast of Islay and Mull.
Coll 5 August, single seen to north of Coll from ferry.
- 0043 SOOTY SHEARWATER Puffinus griseus
P off the western islands and Kintyre. Regular in late summer in varying numbers as the species heads south to breed in the South Atlantic. Spring records exceptionally occur.
Coll/Tiree 10 August single seen from ferry.
Islay 14 September single near Frenchman's Rocks.
Mull 11 September 5 flying south between Mull and Coll.

- 0046 MANX SHEARWATER Puffinus puffinus
 B & P in all areas except Cowal. Breeds in small numbers, but most records come from the west coast where Rhum breeding birds are probably seen.
- Mull 1 August 300 feeding 1 mile SE of Lismore Is. 15 August 100+ in Sound of Mull.
 Mull/Coll 17 August 696 counted from ferry.
 Coll/Tiree 16 April 255 between islands. 17 Aug 47 between islands. Mainly southerly passage around Coll noted in August.
 Tiree 19 June 86/hr E Gott Bay. 40/hr E Vaul Bay.
 Kintyre 16 May 46/hr off Mull of Kintyre.
- 0052 STORM PETREL Hydrobates pelagicus
 B & P off western Atlantic coasts Kintyre, Islay & Mull. Breeding birds come ashore in late May/June. Passage August - October.
- Coll/Tiree 10 August 15 from Coll-Tiree boat. 19 August 25 Arinagour Pier, Coll.
 Mull/Coll 15 August 1 Sound of Mull, 17 August 5 from boat.
 Cowal 12 August 1 in Kilbrannan Sound.
- 0055 LEACH'S PETREL Oceanodroma leucorhoa
 Passage birds recorded off Kintyre and Atlantic coasts, generally during or after gales. No records since 1984 when two birds seen between Mull and Tiree on 10 September.
- 0071 GANNET Sula bassana
 S & P in all areas. The birds around the coasts during the summer are from the nearest large colony at Ailsa Craig in the Clyde. Passage birds are seen during migration periods. Comparatively few in winter with the majority of birds being adults which do not wander as far as immatures.
- Kintyre 16 May 288 in one hour off the Mull of Kintyre.
 Colonsay 1-8 birds regularly offshore end April - mid October.
 North Argyll 28 June 36 Loch Linnhe.
- 0072 CORMORANT Phalacrocorax carbo
 R & W in all areas. Much less plentiful around coasts of Argyll than the Shag, and also occurs in small numbers on some inland freshwater lochs. Birds move into coastal waters in autumn. Subject to a BTO survey in winter 1985/86 after which distribution in Argyll may be better known.
- Islay Loch Gruinart most months, max 8 Oct. Loch Indaal counts Table 2.
 Colonsay No nests found late May. Few immatures seen - population est 5-10 birds
 North Argyll Resident small numbers Loch Creran & Port Appin. No nests found.
 19 February 6 in Upper Loch Creran.
 Jura June: singles off east and south coasts.
 Mull Uncommon with breeding at only one site (Iona) 12 May. 8ads E. Lochdon.
 5 roosting Loch Ba 3 September.
 Coll 17 August 9 adults at Arinagour.

- 0080 SHAG Phalacrocorax aristotelis
 R & W in all areas. Very common around coasts.
 Tiree c230 on SW Gunna + 60 on sea nearby 25 November.
 Mull Breeding. 5prs Iona with 3 broods of 2: 13 June. 17+ nests Ardalanish
 all with young: 16 June.
 Colonsay 24 January 500 in 2 groups Balnahard. Late May island count 165 nests.
 7 October 230 birds on one rock Balnahard Bay.
 Islay Up to 11 Loch Gruinart October. Loch Indaal counts Table 2.
- 0095 BITTERN Botaurus stellaris
 Vagrant Islay, Mull & Kintyre. No records since single 4 December 1982.
- 0122 GREY HERON Ardea cinerea
 R & W in all areas. Widespread on mainland and islands. BTO census
 of heronries in 1985 summarised elsewhere in this report.
 Colonsay Summer - 14 nests used, with probably 12 pairs breeding.
 Cowal Heronry at Ormsdale Loch Riddon - 4 occupied nests.
 Jura Heronry at Inver subject to high disturbance with recent move in site.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: maximum of 12 seen, July.
 Coll Breeding - 8 occupied nests.
 Tiree Scarce, not breeding. Whole island count of 6 15-19 June.
- 0134 WHITE STORK Ciconia ciconia
 V. No reports since one on Islay 16 May 1981.
- 0152 MUTE SWAN Cygnus olor
 R & W in all areas. Widespread but scarce breeding species. Results
 of a 1985 breeding survey reported elsewhere in this report.
 Tiree 23 November 40 on the 3 largest lochs.
 Islay Loch Indaal counts see Table 2. Loch Gruinart 2 on 7 November.
 North Argyll Year round: 2-8 Loch Etive, Airds Bay.
 Mid Argyll 21 November 30ad + 5juv, Loch Craignish.
 Spring/Autumn:
 Jura June 4 pairs seen, 2 with no young and broods of 7 and 4.
 North Argyll 13 August 18 subadults Airds Bay. 26 April 10 Taymuilt Pier, L. Etive.
 Tiree 20 June Pairs with 5 & 6 young + 42 non-breeders in moult: island count.
- 0153 BEWICK'S SWAN Cygnus columbianus
 P Mid Argyll, Islay and Kintyre. Irregular on passage although
 occurred as a regular winter visitor on Tiree at the turn of the
 century and Islay more recently.
 No records in 1985.
- 0154 WHOOPER SWAN Cygnus cygnus
 W & P September to early May in all areas. Majority of birds are seen
 on passage, although some stop Islay for 2+ months after arrival in
 early October. Smaller numbers winter throughout Argyll and occasional
 non-breeding birds may summer.
 Islay Last 13 February First 8 October. Loch Indaal & Loch Gruinart counts
 see Tables 1 & 2. c90 on stubbles nr Loch Gorm November & December.

- Tiree 3 April 70 flying north. 23 November 99 incl 22 juvs: island count.
 Colonsay Regularly up to 7 until 5 May. Migratory groups from late September.
 Mull Flocks up to 14, January - 2 May. First 10 October were 13 flying south at Ulva Ferry.
- Mid Argyll 2 on 5 May. 10 February 10 at Loch Seil.
 Kintyre 24 November 29 (incl 5j) Killeen; 36 (incl 8j) Machrihanish.
 North Argyll 10 October 6 Ardmucknish Bay.
- 0157 BEAN GOOSE Anser fabalis
 Irregular or vagrant on passage. Most records from Islay.
 Islay 18 October 2 Loch Skerrols with Greenland Whitefronts.
- 0158 PINK-FOOTED GOOSE Anser brachyrhynchus
 P & W in Islay, Mid Argyll and Mull. September to early May. Mainly seen on spring and autumn migration flying over but may stop over for a few hours or even days. Autumn passage noticeably earlier than that for Barnacles and Whitefronts with birds commonly seen late September. Singles wintering with Barnacle Geese on Islay are not unusual.
- North Argyll 22 September 300+ flying E Benderloch; c1100 flying SE between 09.30 and 16.00 hrs, average flock size 150.
 Mull 18-19 April, heavy spring passage over Tobermory. Single w. 2 feral geese present all yr. 62 Lochdon 5 May were last.
 Islay See Table 3.
 Colonsay 28 October, 8 flying over Milbuie were late passage birds.
 Mid Argyll 5 May 1 Loch an Leoid was very late spring record. 21 Sept 1 Loch Fyne.
 Coll 2 at The Lodge 21-23 November with Greenland Whitefronts.
 Tiree 1 Barrapol 24 November with Greenland Whitefronts.
- 0159 GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GEESE Anser albifrons flavirostris
 W in all areas except Cowal. All birds seen in Argyll in 1985 were of the Greenland race for which the county is the most important wintering area in Britain. Some 80% of the British population occur in Argyll, with important flocks on Islay, Coll, Tiree and Kintyre. The British population is subject to annual monitoring by Greenland White-fronted Goose Study (see previous Argyll Bird Report).
- Islay See Tables 1 & 3. Last Major passage 22 April. First 30 September.
 Tiree 750 March. 708 November.
 Coll 306 February. 548 November. First seen over-flying but didn't stop mid Sept
 North Argyll Regular flock Benderloch 62 November; 84 December.
 Mull Flocks Loch Poit na h-I and Loch Assapol. 48 & 11 respectively in spring whilst 49 & 26 respectively in autumn.
 Colonsay Spring peak 66 March, autumn first on 9 October.
 Kintyre 852 Rhunahaorine and 590 Machrihanish November.
 Exceptional breeding success reported 1985 due to very early spring in Greenland. c28-30% young in most flocks over double long-term mean on Islay of c14%. Reports from Greenland confirm exceptional summer weather.

- 0161 GREYLAG GOOSE Anser anser
 B, W & P in all areas. Large numbers are seen on passage in September. Main wintering areas are on Cowal and Kintyre with smaller numbers regular on Islay, Coll and Tiree. Regular breeding Coll and Tiree and occasionally elsewhere.
- Islay See Table 3 for island counts. 65 Eallabus 6 November.
 Colonsay 20 January 36 Fada Fields. Up to 50 in early spring and 2 early May. Very few seen October.
- Coll/Tiree Island counts: Coll 210 22 November. Tiree 710 23/26 November. c27+ summering Tiree.
- Mid Argyll Moine Mhor max 500 5 February, 250 17 November. Cairndow 68 21 Sept.
 Mull 11 Loch Assapol 25 November. 3ad & 4j Quinish 27 June.
 Kintyre Machrihanish 211 24 November.
 North Argyll Loch Etive 5 10 February, 1 15 May. Connel 1 flying over 24 May.
- 0163 SNOW GOOSE Anser caerulescens
 A feral flock of Snow Geese of both blue and white phases was established on Treshnish Estate, Mull in the 1950s and still persists. In autumn 1983 the whole flock flew to Coll and this has since been repeated annually. It is possible that records of single Snow Geese may derive from this flock, but birds seen with arriving geese and swans on Islay in autumn (eg single in 1983), are almost certainly vagrants from Greenland/ Canada.
- Coll 1 feral blue phase goose Loch Cliad 13 & 25 June. Breachacha 51 on 21 November including 6 blue phase and 8 juveniles.
 Mull Small feral population present through the summer.
- 0166 CANADA GOOSE Branta canadensis
 B, W & V on Islay, Kintyre and Mid Argyll. Small breeding population on Colonsay is resident. Vagrant singles in winter of obvious small races on Islay may well be genuine trans-Atlantic vagrants.
- Islay Table 3. One of the hutchinsii race up to the end of April and then again from 21 October.
 Colonsay Max 43 seen in winter. Many pairs attempted to breed but high egg predation. Estimated 40 in October.
 Tiree One Barrapol with Greenland Whitefronts 23 November.
- 0167 BARNACLE GOOSE Branta leucopsis
 W in all areas except Cowal. October - April. Very large numbers of the Greenland race winter on Islay, but rarely in excess of 500 elsewhere. On Islay an increasing proportion now using the RSPB refuge at Loch Gruinart since the farm started to be managed for the geese in 1983.
- Mid Argyll 400-500 Danna 18 February; 250 Danna 13 November.
 Colonsay 270 in January, 325 early March, c180 20 April. First 40 Oransay 27 September. Large October passage of birds en route to Islay.
 Mull 29 on skerries E of Inch Kenneth 4 February. 68 in same area 29 November.
 Islay Tables 3 & 4 summarise NCC counts. c17,200 wintering 1984/85 to max spring influx of 18,311 on 28 March. 1985/86 c17,500 wintering with large jump in numbers to 18,000-19,000 in December possible count error.
 Kintyre 5 Rhunahaorine November. Birds seen here for third consecutive winter may indicate establishment of new flock (EMB).

0168

BRENT GOOSE Branta bernicla

W & P on Islay, Mull and Mid Argyll. The majority of birds seen in Argyll are of the light-bellied race B. b. hrota which breed in NE Greenland and the Queen Elizabeth Islands of arctic Canada. Most birds are reported on passage through Islay (where they used to winter), passing to and from the main wintering areas in Ireland. One seen Islay in May 1979 was ringed Bathurst Island Canada in July 1975. In 1975 and 1976 it had been seen in Ireland. Dark-bellied Brent B. b. bernicla from arctic Russia are less frequently recorded. All records of Brent Geese, past and present, in western Scotland would be welcomed by DAS for incorporation into a review of Scottish status. All 1985 sightings are of Light-bellied race unless otherwise stated.

Islay

See Tables 1 & 2. 21 on Ardnave Pt 21 April then flew N, 20 Uisgeantsuidhe 24/25 April, 57 there 14 October incl at least 4 Dark bellied Brent. Small spring passage (total c50), but larger nos in October totalling at least 550 with peak of 320 on October 8 which included 3 birds ringed this summer in arctic Canada (SP). The largest passage for several years. c300 close to shore south of Arinagour 16 April.

Coll

Colonsay

Mid Argyll

North Argyll

18 Oransay 19/20 April. 1 imm with Canada Geese 7 Oct, 9 on 8 Oct. 45 Loch Gilp 16 April. First sighting here for many years. 10 October: 5 at Ardmucknish Bay.

0173

SHELDUCK Tadorna tadorna

B & W in all areas. Widespread as a breeding species around suitable coasts and sealochs. Most birds have left by late July, and begin to return during November. Occasional singles, usually juveniles, remain through the autumn.

Islay

Mull

Coll

Tiree

Colonsay

Jura

Loch Gruinart Table 1: 1 pair bred. Loch Indaal see Table 2. Lochdon: 31 on 18 Jan rising to 73 by 17 Feb, then falling to 15 by 5 May with influx of 41 on 17 May. None present by 18 Aug until 2 17 November. Minimum of 6 prs bred. Broods: 4 broods of 1, 1 brood of 5. Breeding 4ad & 5j, Caoles 17 June. 4 ads & 12j Balephetrish 16 June. 42 18-25 Jan increasing to c56 by early March. 37 east coast Oransay 4 May. 15 Traigh nan Barc 16 June. 2 Strand 16 October unusually early. Birds seen at several places in small numbers in suitable areas, June.

0179

WIGEON Anas penelope

B & W in all areas. Scarce or irregular breeding species. Common in winter mainly in sheltered coastal areas, sealochs and estuaries.

Islay

Tiree

Mull

Colonsay

North Argyll

Tables 1 & 2. First 16 September at Loch Gruinart. Island total 271 on 23 November, 217 of which were on Loch a'Phuill. Lochdon: 155 on 19 Jan declining to 85 by 3 March then to none by 21 April. 55 present 8 Sept to 263 by 17 Nov and 194 by 13 December. c22 early March. 1 pr 6 May. Strand: 2 on 17 October to 14 by 28th. Loch Creran: present till 21 March, max 61 13 Jan. Returned 22 Sept. Loch Laich : present till 14 April, max 14 17 Feb. Returned 22 Sept. Loch Etive 57 14 January, Benderloch 60 on 15 October.

0182

GADWALL Anas strepera

W, P & ?B Irregular in winter/passage and possibly breeding in some years.

Tiree

Islay

Mid Argyll

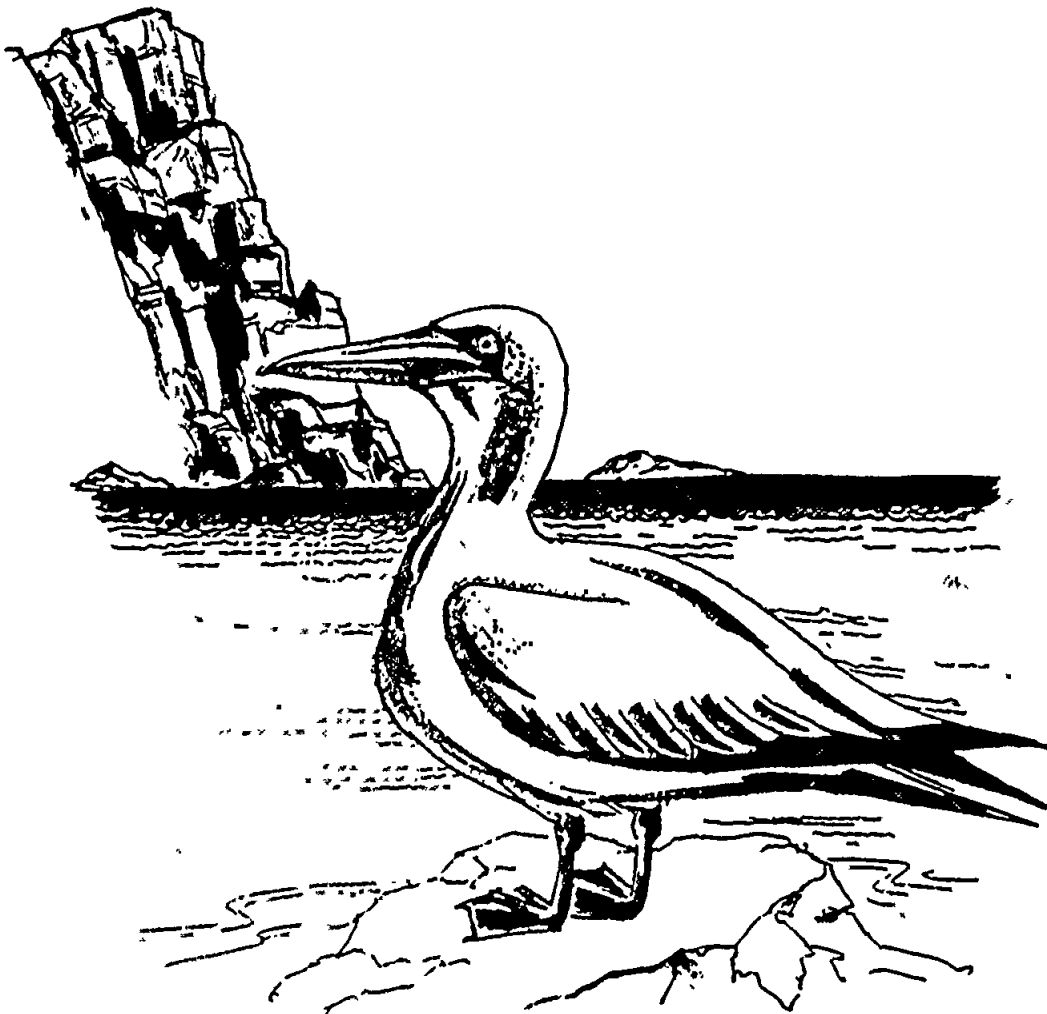
Four males 24 June. Loch Indaal pr 4 December (Table 2). Pair at Taynuilt Pier 28 March.

- 0184 **TEAL** Anas crecca
 B & W in all areas. Widespread breeding species. Plentiful on fresh water and tidal areas in winter. Green-winged race A. c. carolinensis occurs as a vagrant. Summer status of Teal presented separately in this report.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2.
 Colonsay 111 reported 18-25 January, c77 in March. 65 seen 2 October.
 Mull Lochdon: 90 on 19 Jan declining to 33 by 17 Feb with some movement through in mid March. Falling to none by 5 May. First 6 on 18 Aug, to 50 by 8 Sept: 97 13 December.
- Tiree Island count gave 253 on 23 November.
- GREEN WINGED TEAL** Anas crecca carolinensis
- Mull Drake present at Lochdon from the New Year until early April, and a single seen again there 29 December (MM, RAB, RC).
- 0186 **MALLARD** Anas platyrhynchos
 B & W in all areas. Very common as wintering species and the commonest breeding duck in Argyll. Summer status of Mallard presented separately.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2. RSPB Loch Gruinart 9 pairs bred.
 North Argyll Loch Creran: present through year, max 61 on 17 February.
 Colonsay 74 seen 18-25 Jan, c30 early March. c40 Port Lobh 17 October.
 Tiree 22 Loch a'Phuill 20 June. Island count: 98 23 November with 62 L a'Phuill.
 Coll 23 November: none seen on any lochs, but 28 seen along coasts in SW.
 Mull Lochdon: 51 on 19 Jan falling to 20 by 17 Feb with increase to 36 3 March.
 Winter max 52 13 December.
- 0189 **PINTAIL** Anas acuta
 ?B & W in all areas except Kintyre and North Argyll. One or two pairs may breed annually. Few winter records except on Islay.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2 give monthly counts.
 Argyll Breeding proved at two sites where single females with young were recorded.
- 0194 **SHOVELER** Anas clypeata
 ?B, W & P in Islay, Mid Argyll and Mull. Status similar to Pintail with few confirmed breeding records, and most wintering birds seen on Islay.
- Tiree Breeding proved at one site where a single female was seen with brood of 6. June.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2. Perhaps becoming more regular and numerous in winter ?
- 0198 **POCHARD** Aythya ferina
 B & W in all areas. Very scarce breeding species and wintering flocks are usually small and restricted to traditional areas. None were seen in RSPB survey of majority of inland lochs May-June (see separate paper).
- Colonsay Very few sightings: 2 Loch Fada March, 6 on 22 October, 7 on 29 October.
 Islay Table 1. Only regular on Lochs Ballygrant, Skerrols and Finlaggan.
 Tiree 74 on Loch Bhasapoll 23 November.
 Mull Loch Assapol: 28 on 20 Jan, 89 on 15 Dec. 8 Loch Poit 1 February.
 Mid/N Argyll 7 Loch Seil 21 Feb, 6 Loch nan Drimmean 26 Feb, 8 Loch Leathan 1 March.

- 0200 RING-NECKED DUCK Aythya collaris
V. The most regular Nearctic species recorded in Argyll with records in three of the five years since 1981. None recorded in 1985 though.
- 0202 TUFTED DUCK Aythya fuligula
B & W in all areas. Widespread breeding species
Absent from some islands except as non-breeders or in winter. Results of summer breeding survey in 1985 presented elsewhere in this report. In winter, in varying numbers on suitable lochs.
- Colonsay 15 seen 18-25 Jan, 17 early March, 10 end April, none late July - end Oct.
Tiree Breeding proved, nest with eggs and second female with 2 young. Island count on 23 Nov found 221 with 198 on Loch Bhasapoll.
Mid Argyll 25 on Loch Seil 21 Feb. 14 Loch Leathan 3 October.
Mull Loch Assapol: 19 on 1 Feb, 12 on 19 March, 17 on 15 December.
- 0204 SCAUP Aythya marila
W & P in all areas. The largest wintering flock occurs off Bowmore, Islay and elsewhere numbers small by comparison.
- Islay See Table 2. First 5 on 18 Aug, main arrival c400 on 30 Sept. Max 811 Nov.
Colonsay Singles Loch Cholla 9 Jan, Loch Fada 14-18 June.
Mull Single Lochdon 28 September.
Cowal Single flying down East Kyle of Bute 17 May.
Mid Argyll 2 males & 1 female at suitable breeding site, late May. Had gone by June.
- 0206 EIDER Somateria mollissima
B, W & P in all areas.
- Colonsay 229 on 18-25 January. 17 females and 55 young in June.
Mull Peak of 211 at Loch Spelve in April
Cowal 140 males and 85 females at Loch Ridden on 24th March.
Mid Argyll Most lochs showing Spring or Autumn peak. Flock of 1200 at Ottir Ferry in December.
N Argyll Peak of 223 birds at Loch Creran on 21st March. 86 at Loch Etive on 15th September.
- 0212 LONG-TAILED DUCK Clangula hyemalis
W & P in all areas except Cowal. Uncommon winter visitor, with Loch Indaal Islay and possibly Coll, the only regular wintering sites.
- Islay Table 2. Perhaps more on Loch Indaal than in recent years. Also Table 1.
Colonsay Single female Kiloran Bay 24 January.
Coll/Tiree 1 Crossapol Bay 21 November/ male in summer plumage Gott Bay 19 June (MM).
Mull 4 Loch Spelve 25 April.
Kintyre 5 Ballochroy 18 February.
Mid Argyll 2 Ganavan Bay 28 January.



Red-breasted Merganser



Gannet (*Sula bassana*)

- 0213 COMMON SCOTER Melanitta nigra
 B & W in all areas. Very rare breeding species, probably not annually. Scarce winter visitor. Most birds tend to be found off Tayinloan and Islay.
- Islay Table 2. 67 in December a very large flock.
 Kintyre 18 Feb Ballochroy 70, West Loch Tarbert 8 on 19 October.
 Colonsay Female seen on 24 January.
 Argyll Present at two potential breeding sites in May: 9 on Islay and 3 at a loch in Mid Argyll. Female with 2 young 6 August 1984 at same site.
 North Argyll 15 Ardmucknish Bay 30 April.
- 0214 SURF SCOTER Melanitta perspicillata
 V. Previous records from Loch Indaal, Islay and Tiree. No 1985 records.
- 0215 VELVET SCOTER Melanitta fusca
 W in Kintyre, Islay and Mid Argyll.. Very scarce winter visitor.
- Mull 15 Jan - 13 Feb Immature male and female Loch na Keal (RFC, CH).
 Islay Two at Ardnave Pt 5 December (RSPB)
 Kintyre Two males Ballochroy 18 February (BF).
- 0218 GOLDENEYE Bucephala clangula
 W in all areas. Common winter visitor to both sea and freshwater lochs. Possibly increasing in numbers in recent years. Display frequently seen from Feb to departure in April. Some birds stay into May, but most leave March/April. Summering birds now regular as described in breeding wildfowl section of this report. First significant arrivals of wintering birds occur in October. No confirmed breeding yet, but may occur if current spread of Goldeneye into suitable summering areas continues.
- Colonsay 18 seen 18-25 January, cl7 in early March. No reports then until 2 males off Seal Is 15 October, 1 female Loch Fada 20 October.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2.
 Tiree Island counts gave 23 on 23 Nov, with 12 on Loch a'Phuill.
 North Argyll 1 Present through yr but absent 16 June-22 Sept. Max 45 21 March (SE/JB)
 Mull Loch Creran. Loch Etive max 15 14 January.
 23 Loch Uisg 18 Jan. 16 Loch Assapol 1 March. 29 Loch Spelve 17 Feb.
 13 Mishnish Lochs 24 Feb. 19 Loch Uisg 15 Nov. 14 Loch na Keal 17 Nov.
 12 Loch a' Chumhainn 25 Nov and regularly till end of year.
- 0220 SMEW Mergus albellus
 W. Very rare winter visitor with records from most areas.
- Islay Female on Loch Indaal first seen 17 Feb and several times subsequently. One there again from 20 November till end of year.
- 0221 RED-BREASTED MERGANSER Mergus serrator
 B & W in all areas. Common breeding and wintering species. Moulting flocks of up to 200 are sometimes encountered in mid summer. Results of a 1985 breeding survey are presented elsewhere in this report.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2. Present throughout yr.
 Colonsay 60 seen 18-25 Jan, incl 40 E. Strand 19 Jan. 20+ Oronsay October.
 Tiree 62 in Gott Bay 15 June until 18th when all flew SW out to sea.
 Coll Max of 14 Crossapol Bay during survey of island 21 November. 2 pr bred.

- Mull Lochdon max count 32 on 7 April. 102 on Loch na Keal 12 Sept.
 North Argyll Loch Laich max of 7 on 14 April.
 Kintyre Davaar Is 29 on 29 June.
- 0223 GOOSANDER Mergus merganser
 B & W in all areas. A scarce breeding species generally confined to larger rivers on the mainland. Small numbers in winter months are rarely seen away from freshwater. Results of 1985 lochs survey reported elsewhere in this report.
- North Argyll Loch Creran max 6 23 October. Loch Laich max 4 13 May.
 Mull Loch na Keal, mouth of R. Ba 6 15-17 Jan. 10 Mishnish Lochs 18 March.
 Argyll Other scattered records of usually not more than 4 birds through Mid and North Argyll distributed in winter much as in summer (see elsewhere).
- 0225 RUDDY DUCK Oxyura jamaicensis
 Kintyre One female at Loch na Beiste, Clachan on 15 May is apparently first record for Argyll (RAB).
- 0231 HONEY BUZZARD Pernis apivorus
 V. Last record 20 August 1983 at Connel. No 1985 records.
- 0239 RED KITE Milvus milvus
 V.
- Islay One seen Bruichladdich, Eresaid and Loch Gruinart between 30 November and 1 December (GJ, SP, LS & PM).
- 0243 WHITE-TAILED EAGLE Haliaeetus albicilla
 Formerly bred. In 1985, the NCC released on Rhum, a final batch of 10 juveniles imported from Norway. Between 1975-85, a total of 82 have been re-introduced. Records of these birds wandering away from Rhum have become increasingly common in western coastal areas, from Shetland to northern Ireland. These birds are being closely monitored by the NCC and RSPB. Several pairs have become established and in 1985, one pair successfully raised a single chick - the first to fledge from a Scottish eyrie for more than 70 years.
 Since 1982 juveniles released on Rhum have been fitted with coloured wing tags (1982: orange; 1983: yellow; 1984: white & 1985: blue), which are numbered for individual recognition. These numbers can be read at moderate range with a telescope. Records are requested for all sightings, with details of wing tags wherever possible. This will help monitor the re-introduction programme and such sightings will be forwarded to the RSPB and NCC.
- 0260 MARSH HARRIER Circus aeruginosus
 V. Occasional summer records. Last seen 13 May 1980 Islay.
- 0261 HEN HARRIER Circus cyaneus
 B & W in all areas. Widespread, preferring young forestry plantations and moorland. Some autumn movements off islands such as Mull.
- Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart 6 prs bred. Two winter roosts with up to 10 birds between them.
- Colonsay Numerous sightings in autumn during unusually large migration of tits thrushes and finches.
- Mull Roost in S of island max 4 ad males & 6 females 18 March. 5+ prs bred. Leucistic female seen on several dates Glen Forsa.

- 0267 GOSHAWK Accipiter gentilis
 V. in all areas.
 Islay Singles: 30 March, 8-12 April, 13 June & 19 December mainly in NW of island.
 Mid Argyll Single seen June. Other singles 2 May and 30 May.
 Mull Singles: 10 Feb, 22 Feb and 12 September.
- 0269 SPARROWHAWK Accipiter nisus
 B, W & P in all areas. Widespread, but secretive perhaps more
 abundant than sightings suggest.
 Mid Argyll Seen more frequently Kilmartin - Tarbert, possibly increasing.
 Jura One north of Leargybreck early June.
 Islay Singles in all months. Up to 3 at RSPB Loch Gruinart in January.
 Colonsay Numerous sightings especially in autumn.
 Mull Brood of two fledged at Gruline.
- 0287 BUZZARD Buteo buteo
 B & W in all areas. The most abundant raptor in Argyll.
 Islay Now as common as elsewhere in Argyll due to lessening of persecution by
 some estates.
 Colonsay Apparently fewer breeding pairs. Large numbers seen in autumn.
 Mull 12 pairs in Lochdon area.
 Coll Minimum of seven pairs breeding.
 Tiree Uncommon.
- 0290 ROUGH LEGGED BUZZARD Buteo lagopus
 W & P in Mid Argyll, Mull, Coll and Tiree. No records since 1984.
- 0296 GOLDEN EAGLE Aquila chrysaetos
 B & W in all areas. Widespread. Golden Eagles are very susceptible
 to disturbance and should be avoided throughout the breeding season
 (February onwards). Immatures tend to wander during autumn and winter
 and occur in many areas where no breeding occurs.
 Argyll Figures from a long-standing Argyll study area showed that of 19 pairs
 that laid, 10 pairs were successful and reared 15 young (MG). Elsewhere
 in the county a further 24-26 pairs were monitored. 20-22 pairs laid
 eggs and 14 pairs were successful in raising one chick each.
- 0301 OSPREY Pandion haliaetus
 P. in all areas.
 North Argyll Single 12 August Connel.
 Mull Single 31 May at Loch Spelve.
- 0304 KESTREL Falco tinnunculus
 B, W & P in all areas. Widespread with an increase in autumn due to
 migration of birds through Argyll.
 No significant records in 1985.

- 0309 **MERLIN** Falco columbarius
 B, W & P in all areas. Scarce and declining as a breeding species.
 Recorded on passage, especially in coastal areas where some may winter.
- Islay No breeding information, but birds seen in all months at Loch Gruinart.
 Probably 5 different individuals in north of island during June.
- Jura Present in one suitable breeding area in June but breeding not confirmed.
- Colonsay Fewer sightings and probably did not breed.
- Cowal Male seen in May, but no evidence of breeding.
- Mid Argyll Recorded in 3 suitable breeding areas and one site known to be successful.
- Mull Present during the breeding season, but breeding not proven.
- Coll Pair present and breeding but outcome not known.
- North Argyll Three breeding pairs located, one successful. Outcome at other sites
 not known.
- 0310 **HOBBY** Falco subbuteo
 P. rare passage migrant sometimes being seen along west coast.
- Coll Single near Hyne 26-28 June.
- 0318 **GYR FALCON** Falco rusticolus
 V. No records in 1985.
- 0320 **PEREGRINE** Falco peregrinus
 B, W & P in all areas. Widespread, but not common.
- Argyll Information is available for 43 breeding territories monitored during the
 breeding season. 34 territories proved to be occupied (29 by pairs and 6
 by single birds). Only 20 pairs were proved to nest, and of 14 where
 the outcome is positively known, 11 were successful. In contrast to
 1984, brood sizes, especially on the mainland, were small. Singles were
 recorded during the breeding season from several potentially new breeding
 areas and two of this years successful sites were the first confirmed
 breeding attempts for these territories.

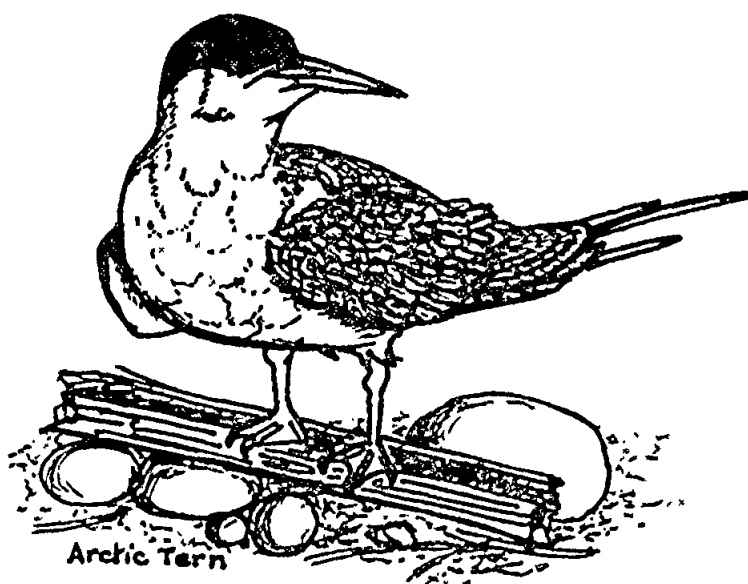
- 0329 RED GROUSE Lagopus lagopus
 R in all areas. Fairly common but locally distributed. Past dramatic declines of populations in many areas eg Islay have still not recovered. Further local decreases in many areas continue due to habitat loss to afforestation.
- Jura Scarce in early June. Singles flushed from moorland in only 2-3 areas during an extensive survey of lochs throughout the island.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: under-recorded but nos. low. Probably only 3 prs bred. Markedly scarce over many other areas of the island.
 Colonsay Only 2 sightings in 1985.
 Mull Breeding but still uncommon.
- 0330 PTARMIGAN Lagopus mutus
 R in Mid and North Argyll, Cowal and on Mull. Local, on mountains, generally above 2,400' asl. Usually under-recorded so present status and distribution uncertain. All records required in future please.
- North Argyll Droppings frequent on Ben Cruachan at 2500 -2750' 20 April. Two flushed by Golden Eagles Ben Sgulaire 25 April.
 Mull Birds seen on two mountains first wk January. Small nos on the main summits throughout the year. 9 at 800m SE Mull on 25 November.
- 0332 BLACK GROUSE Tetrao tetrix
 R in all areas and widespread. In areas where severe decline of Red Grouse (eg parts of Islay) may be the commoner of the two species. However a decline has been noted in Kintyre, Mid and North Argyll.
- Islay Singles seen throughout the year in many areas.
 Cowal 3 males above Colintrave. Lek of 3 males, 2 females Tighnabruaich 29 Apr.
 Mid Argyll 2+ males Kilvaree April-June. 3 males Ardnaskie 18 June.
 Mull No records.
- 0367 GREY PARTRIDGE Perdix perdix
 ?R in some areas. Most records relate to birds released for shooting but these introductions probably do not result in viable populations. Few records in most years and now considered extinct on Coll.
 No records since 1 on Islay April 1984.
- 0370 QUAIL Coturnix coturnix
 V. rare except in irruptive years. No records since 1982.
- 0394 PHEASANT Phasianus colchicus
 R in all areas. Widespread and common, especially in vicinity of estates where reared & released for shooting. Thus, especially common on Islay and even a few on Coll.
- Colonsay Well down in numbers this year, with very few seen.
 Tiree 2 calling Cornaigbeg 16 June. No previous records from island.
- 0396 GOLDEN PHEASANT Chrysolophus pictus
 A small feral population exists in the grounds of ^{Gruline} estate at the head of Loch na Keal, Mull.

- 0407 WATER RAIL Rallus aquaticus
 ?B, W & P on Islay, Mull and North Argyll. Rare migrant and winter visitor, although doubtless under-recorded. Some may stay to breed.
 Tiree June: one calling in suitable breeding habitat.
 Islay 26 December single RSPB Loch Gruinart.
 Colonsay 29 October single calling at Fada.
- 0408 SPOTTED CRAKE Porzana porzana
 Very rare summer visitor. No records since 1982.
- 0421 CORNCRAKE Crex crex
 S in all areas except Cowal. Once common in Argyll, the species has declined drastically through changes in farming practice (eg early cutting of silage instead of later hay-making).
 Colonsay Probably two pairs only: Kiloran Farm and Kiloran Meadow.
 Islay 20-29 calling - See separate report of 1985 Islay survey.
 Mull Mull: 1 calling at Torrloch. Iona: one calling.
 Mid Argyll One calling at Tayvallich.
 Tiree 86 calling birds (Dr J. Cadbury).
 Coll 6 calling 10-15 June, 5 calling Broadhills Moor 22 June.
- 0424 MOORHEN Gallinula chloropus
 B & W in all areas. Absent as a breeding species from some islands and generally scarce through much of the mainland.
 Colonsay Few sightings, usually of 1 or 2 birds. 2 young 15 June.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: 7-8 in January and December.
 Mid Argyll No records in Kilmartin area possibly due to high Mink predation.
 Argyll See separate section for results of waterfowl survey during 1985.
- 0429 COOT Fulica atra
 B & W in all areas but uncommon. All records required to determine precise status. See separate section for results of waterfowl survey in 1985.
 Mid Argyll Two 21 February Loch Seil.
 Islay Resident Lochs Ballygrant, Finlaggan and Skerrols.
- 0450 OYSTERCATCHER Haematopus ostralegus
 B, W & P in all areas. Widespread and common around the coasts, although some sections are deserted in winter. Some birds move inland in spring to breed by rivers and larger lochs with gravel and pebble shores.
 Colonsay 18-25 January 249 total count.
 Islay See Tables 1 & 2. Jura: breeding along coasts in early June.
 Mid Argyll Maximum of 300 Loch Riddon in early August.
 Mull Heavy night-time passage 18/19 April. Lochdon: spring mean c70 with max 83 in May. c28 through autumn.
- 0469 LITTLE RINGED FLOVER Charadrius dubius
 No reports since one 1983 on Islay.

- 0470 RINGED PLOVER Charadrius hiaticula
 B, W & P in all areas. Widespread breeding species around all coasts with suitable habitat, however suffers badly from disturbance in many places. Inland nesting around reservoirs, large lochs and gravel pits reported.
- Colonsay 18-25 January total 140. c250 Strand through October.
 Jura Several suitable beaches apparently without birds in early June. Scarce.
 Tiree 14 August maximum count was 85 Gott Bay.
 Coll 16 August maximum count Croid 75. 125 Crossapol 21 November.
 North Argyll 1 Loch Tulla, Blackmount 27 June. 70 Ledaig Point 13 September.
 Islay See Tables 1 & 2.
 Mull Lochdon maxima: 33 on 19 Jan, 20 on 8 Sept, 23 on 17 Nov. Also 33
 Scallastle 1 Jan, 10 ad + 4j Loch Beg 9 Sept and 10 Duart Bay 13 Sept.
- 0474 KILLDEER Charadrius vociferus
 V. from North America. First and only Argyll record was single on Colonsay 7-8 January 1984.
- 0482 DOTTEREL Charadrius morinellus
 B & P. May breed some years on the high tops, but present status uncertain. No records for either 1984 or 1985.
- 0485 GOLDEN PLOVER Pluvialis apricaria
 B, P & W in all areas. Southern race breeds in small numbers on uplands, but possibly decreasing to loss of moorland habitat to widespread afforestation. Passage birds in coastal areas are often of Northern race. Uncommon during mid-winter. Most migrants leave when the first frost and snows arrive in the lowland autumn feeding areas.
- Islay See Tables 1 & 2.
 Jura Scarce in early June. Seen in breeding habitat in 1 or 2 places.
 Coll/Tiree 28 Breachacha 21 November / 411 Tiree 23 November & 462 on 24 November.
 Colonsay 21 on January 24; 41 April 19; 12 Oronsay April 20. 25 on 6 October.
 Mull One of the commonest waders passing over in night of heavy passage.
 16 pairs found breeding in suitable habitat. 20 Carn Mor 24 December.
- 0486 GREY PLOVER Pluvialis squatarola
 P & W in all areas except Cowal and Kintyre. Uncommon passage migrant in autumn but regular on Islay. Rare in winter or on spring passage. Probably under-recorded. All records:
- Islay See Tables 1 & 2. 2 Saligo Bay 15 November.
 Colonsay 5 seen 19-21 January; 5 early May, single in summer plumage early April, 6 during October.
 North Argyll Single at Ledaig Point 24 April.
 Mull Singles at Lochdon: 3 February, 17 February with 3 on 13 December.
 Single Loch Buie 16 February.



Lapwing



Arctic Tern

- 0493 LAPWING Vanellus vanellus
 Widespread breeding and wintering species. Some areas vacated after breeding season and others leave at the onset of hard weather in winter.
- Islay Tables 1&2. 108 pairs bred at RSPB Loch Gruinart.
 Colonsay 164 see 18-25 January, c300 early march, 300 Ardskenish 2 October.
 Jura early June: well distributed breeder mainly on lower ground & grazings.
 Coll Breeding. 9 Breachacha 11 June, 18 Ballyhaugh 13 June.
 Mull Lochdon max 10 3 March. Breeding Lochs Spelve, Ba & Fidden. 17 Fidden
 1 December.
- 0496 KNOT Calidris canutus
 P & W in all areas except Cowal. Occurs mainly as an autumn migrant with fewer records during winter and on spring passage.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2.
 Colonsay 6 Strand 19 January. Single Kiloran Bay 20 September.
 North Argyll 8, Ledaig Point 10 September.
 Coll 20 Gott Bay 15 August. 4S between Coll & Tiree 11 September.
 Mull 2 Fidden 20 January, 7 Lochdon 18 August with 18 on 8 September.
- 0497 SANDERLING Calidris alba
 P & W in all area except Cowal. Mainly passage migrants with some wintering birds and occasional summering (non-breeding) birds. Few large flocks, rarely over 100.
- Islay 1 & 2.
 Coll Croid 25 16 August. 16 Crossapol 21 November.
 Tiree Balephetrish 11 on 16 June. Gott Bay: 95 on 13 August, 7 on 17 June.
- 0501 LITTLE STINT Calidris minuta
 V. Rare on autumn passage with past records from Islay & Mull.
- Islay Table 1. One Loch Gruinart on 4 Sept, 5 on 5 October, 4 on 7 October.
- 0502 TEMMINCK'S STINT Calidris temminckii
 V. Rare autumn passage migrant.
- Mull One juvenile, Fidden 17 September (C. Harvey).
- 0507 PECTORAL SANDPIPER Calidris melanotos
 V. Rare autumn passage migrant.
- Mull Single, probable male, with Ringed Plover 9 September.
- 0509 CURLEW SANDPIPER Calidris ferruginea
 P. Uncommon autumn migrant.
- North Argyll One Benderloch, 21 September.
 Islay One Loch Gruinart 29 September (Table 1).

- 0510 PURPLE SANDPIPER Calidris maritima
W & P in all areas. Almost certainly much more common and widespread than records suggest, although densities may be low. In winter, exclusively confined to rocky shores and skerries.
- Islay See Tables 1 & 2.
Colonsay 8 Ardskenish 19 January, 33 Oronsay 21 Jan, 3 Plaide Mor 17 Oct and 10 there 21 October.
North Argyll Ledaig Point 8 on 11 January, 6 on 5 December.
Mull 20 Caliach Point 16 December.
- 0512 DUNLIN Calidris alpina
B, P & W in all areas. Breeds locally in North Argyll, Mull and Islay, but most birds seen are migrants. Small numbers winter in all areas.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2. Breeds Feur Lochain and Eilean na Muice Dubh, now being drained for commercial peat extraction.
Colonsay 143 Strand 19 Jan, 121 on 8 March, 27 Oronsay 4 May, c50 Tobar Fuar 24 July, c 50 Strand during October.
Mull 18/19 April heavy passage over Tobermory. Lochdon maxima: 37 on 21 April, 25 on 17 May, 35 on 25 July, 24 on 17 Nov, 50 on 13 December.
Tiree Breeding. Gott Bay 75 on 15 August, Crossapol Bay 8 on 21 November.
Mid Argyll 14 Loch Gilp 24 December.
Jura Scarce in early June, recorded only on coast with max 3 at Leargybreck.
- 0516 BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER Tyngites subruficollis
V. Uncommon autumn vagrant. Previous records from Coll & Mull, but none seen since 1983.
- 0517 RUFF Philomachus pugnax
P in all areas. Irregular autumn migrant liable to be seen anywhere in suitable habitat.
- Islay Loch Gruinart Singles: 16 April, 24 April, 24 July, 5 October, 6 October with three 23 August - 4 September (Table 1).
Mull Loch Cuan, Dervaig: Reeve feeding on mud with Redshank 28 April.
- 0518 JACK SNIFE Lymnocyptes minimus
W & P in Islay, Mid Argyll and Mull. Appears to be uncommon, but very probably severely under-recorded. Most records are in mid-winter.
- Coll Breachacha and Broadhills: singles on 21 & 22 November.
Islay Loch Gruinart see Table 1.
Mull Single Lochdon 17 February.
Colonsay Singles 22 & 24 January and on 12 March.
Mid Argyll Singles on shoreline at Seil and Luing 5 January.
- 0519 SNIFE Gallinago gallinago
B, W & P in all areas. Widespread but locally common in suitable habitat throughout. Declining through drainage and other agricultural improvements schemes in many areas.
- Islay Table 1. RSPB Loch Gruinart: 10 pairs bred.
Colonsay 30 seen 18-25 January. Estimated 30 pairs attempted breeding.
Tiree Further decline noted this year and in past few years; thought to reflect extrinsic factors rather than land-use changes (I. Gillies).

- 0529 WOODCOCK Scolpax rusticola
 B, W & P in all areas. Locally in suitable habitat. Large numbers can occur during periods of severe cold weather.
 Colonsay 6 seen 18-25 January, 7 early March. Estimated 5-10 pairs in spring.
 Mull Good numbers in winter 84/85. 1 flushed in 3 km Lochdon 28 January.
 Islay See Table 1.
- 0532 BLACK-TAILED GODWIT Limosa limosa
 P in Islay and Mull. Irregular on spring and autumn passage in small numbers. Possibly goes under-recorded.
 Islay Singles Loch Indaal 21 July, 18 August; Loch Gruinart 4 September.
- 0534 BAR-TAILED GODWIT Limosa lapponica
 P & W in all areas. Regular passage migrant, but only a few winter away from Tiree and Islay. Non-breeding birds remain on Islay throughout the summer.
 Islay See Tables 1 & 2.
 Colonsay 17 Strand 19 Jan, up to 6 early spring, 1 in wint plum 6 June, 19 Strand 29 September.
 Tiree/Coll 6 Gott Bay 11 August/ 8 Crossapol 21 November.
 Mid/N Argyll 7 Loch Gilp 27 Sept, 3 Ledaig 10 April, 4 Benderloch 21 September.
 Mull Lochdon: 3 on 5 May, 1 on 9 June, 5 on 8 Sept, 3 on 9 Sept, 4 on 12 Sept.
- 0538 WHIMBREL Numenius phaeopus
 P in all areas. Passage birds seen throughout Argyll with most occurring in May.
 Islay Tables 1 & 2. Spring records 16 April-12 May. Autumn 5 October.
 Coll One heard Arinagour 16 August, one freshly dead Gallanach 19 August.
 Colonsay Spring records 22 April - 12 May, max 4. Single on 16 October.
 Mull Single heard on passage 18/19 April. Singles 11 June (2 sites) & 26 June.
- 0541 CURLEW Numenius arquata
 B, W & P in all areas. Common around coasts and breeds commonly in suitable habitat. Numbers are continually declining due to improvement of agricultural breeding areas and loss of moorland habitat to new afforestation schemes throughout most of Argyll.
 Islay Tables 1 & 2. 30 pairs bred RSPB Loch Gruinart.
 Colonsay 184 present 18-25 January. c200 early March, c 200 during October.
 Coll Breeding. 21 November. Substantial numbers throughout the island.
 max of c360 near Breachacha Castle.
 Mull Lochdon maxima 51 on 19 Jan, 87 on 8 Sept, 51 on 13 Dec. 35 Balemeanach 4 February.
- 0545 SPOTTED REDSHANK Tringa erythropus
 P. rare migrant. Not seen since single on Islay 13 August 1982.

- 0546 REDSHANK Tringa totanus
 B, W & P in all areas. A widespread breeding species with wintering birds found in small numbers on muddy and rocky shores.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2. RSPB Loch Gruinart 12 prs breed. Perhaps slightly more at Loch Indaal than in recent years when suprisingly scarce.
- Colonsay 28 seen 18-25 Jan, min 22 early March, 38 Strand 20 April. 26 prs bred with a further 26 non-breeding birds counted in early May.
- Mull Lochdon: 15 on 21 April, 20 on 18 Aug, 8 on 13 Nov. One of commonest waders migrating over Tobermory 18/19 April. 34+ Lochdon 23 July.
- 0548 GREENSHANK Tringa nebularia
 B, W & P in all areas. Breeds in very small numbers. Most records of migrants with fewer of wintering birds. Very rare breeder.
- Islay See Tables 1 & 2.
- Mull Birds present at at least 2 sites during summer with breeding proved (brood of 3) at one site for second successive year. Lochdon: 3 on 17 Jan, 6 on 3 Feb, 7 on 21 April, 5 on 9 September, 3 on 29 Sept & 2 on 29 Dec.
- North Argyll Pairs at several sites during breeding season. 5 Benderloch 21-24 August.
- Colonsay Strand: 2 on 19 Jan, 2 in April, 7 in October.
- 0553 GREEN SANDPIPER Tringa ochropus
 P in all areas except Cowal and Mid Argyll. Rare passage migrant. No 1985 records.
- 0554 WOOD SANDPIPER Tringa glareola
 V. Very rare passage migrant. No 1985 records.
- 0556 COMMON SANDPIPER Actitis hypoleucos
 B, P & W in all areas. Common breeding wader throughout Argyll arriving in mid April and leaving August. Occasional winter records.
- Mid Argyll Single Crinan Ferry 24 Dec: rare winter visitor in this area. First 1 May Kilmartin. Possible local extinction as breeder due to Mink predation (JB).
- North Argyll Connel: First 17 April Last 21 August. One Ormsary 18 October.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2. RSPB Loch Gruinart First 7 May Last end August.
- Cowal First 5 May.
- Mull First 8 April Loch Ba. 7 in same area 28 April.
- Colonsay First c 21 April. 27 pairs found in early May.
- 0561 TURNSTONE Arenaria interpres
 W & P in all areas. Widespread along rocky coasts and in areas of tidal flats. Almost certainly under-recorded in most years. Some records of summering birds.
- Islay Tables 1 & 2. RSPB Loch Gruinart: seen all months except July.
- Coll 67 at Crossapol on 21 November.
- Colonsay 209 18-25 Jan with some birds until late May. 6 Ardskenish 20 September 24 Oransay 29 September.
- Mid Argyll First first wk Sept Minard 34.
- Mull Lochdon 13 on 3 February. 11 Scallastle 17 November.

- 0564 RED-NECKED PHALAROPE Phalaropus lobatus
 ?B. Rare and occasional breeder.
 Argyll A pair was present and breeding suspected at one site.
- 0565 GREY PHALAROPE Phalaropus fulicarius
 P. Rare migrant sometimes blown inshore in autumn gales.
 No 1985 records.
- 0566 POMARINE SKUA Stercorarius pomarinus
 P. of western Atlantic coasts of mainland and islands. Uncommon passage migrant in spring and autumn. Possibly under-recorded.
 No 1985 records.
- 0567 ARCTIC SKUA Stercorarius parasiticus
 S & P in all areas except Cowal. Breeds Jura and Coll. Passage birds in spring and autumn along Atlantic coasts and through Firth of Lorne and Sound of Mull.
 Jura No attempt made to census all suitable areas in early June, but at least 10 pairs were reported scattered in several suitable areas.
 Tiree Oban-Tiree ferry 3 3June, 5 5 June.
 Coll 2 pale phase E of Arinagour 17 August. c30 prs breeding.
 Mull Lunga: six 29 June-8 July "mugging" puffins.
 Colonsay Regular sightings from early May - mid October. Up to four birds.
- 0568 LONG TAILED SKUA Stercorarius longicaudus
 P/V. Very scarce migrant, usually well out to sea and therefore probably under-recorded. Past records off Tiree and Mull.
 No 1985 records.
- 0569 GREAT SKUA Stercorarius skua
 P. in all areas. Passage migrant and non-breeding summer visitor to west coast sea lochs, firths and sounds.
 Islay Table 1. Single at Loch Gruinart 16 September.
 Mull Singles: Grass Pt 26 June, Scallastle 9 July, S. of Lismore 1 Aug, Sound of Mull 15 August.
 Tiree Tiree-Mull ferry 2 heading N 16 April, 1 Gott Bay 19 January.
 Coll 3 E of Arinagour 17 August, one on 11 Sept, 2 Coll-Tiree 11 September.
 Cowal Single reported by fish farmer at Tighnabruich 19 January (per IH).
- 0578 LITTLE GULL Larus minutus
 P. Islay, Mid Argyll and Mull. Uncommon passage migrant. Possibly under-recorded.
 Islay Single at Ardtalla on 23 August (RSPB).
- 0579 SABINE'S GULL Larus sabani
 Rare vagrant.
 Mull One adult in winter plumage seen from ferry at north end of Sound of Mull (C. Harvey).

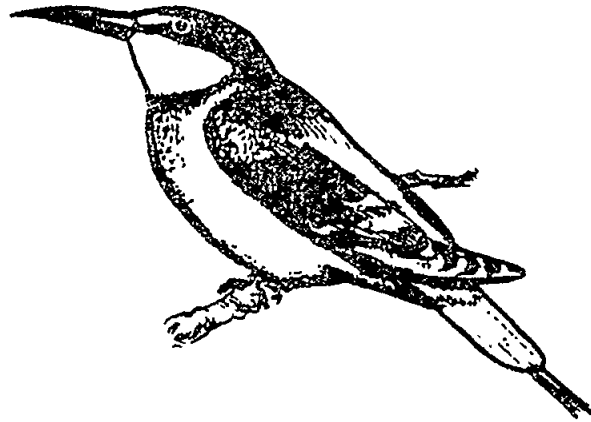
- 0582 BLACK-HEADED GULL Larus ribundus
 B & W in all areas. Common breeding species, although absent from some suitable areas such as Mull. Greater range outside breeding season.
 Islay See Tables 1 & 2.
 Mull Apparently not breeding in 1985 and very few non-breeders seen also.
 Colonsay 72 at breeding sites in late May. c20 immature Strand 19 September
 c15 Balnahard 7 October.
- 0589 RING-BILLED GULL Larus delawarensis
 Vagrant. First and second Argyll records in 1983 and 1984 were not followed by a third consecutive annual record in 1985. Previous records were at Tiree and Lochgilphead.
- 0590 COMMON GULL Larus canus
 B & W in all areas. Widespread and common breeding species with smaller numbers wintering. Results of survey of freshwater lochs in Argyll during 1985 presented separately.
 Colonsay 40 Machrins 18 January, 10 Kiloran meadows 24 June. 96 prs breeding May.
 Islay See Tables 1 & 2. 5 pairs bred RSPB Loch Gruinart.
 Jura Breeding in small numbers at many coastal sites and inland at some lochs.
 Mull Small breeding population. Coll: 10 prs breeding Soa 14 June.
- 0591 LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL Larus fuscus
 B & P in all areas. Common summer visitor, March - October although most present April - September. Uncommon in winter - many recorded resulting from mis-identification.
 Colonsay 1 Kiloran 9 March. 66 Birds at breeding sites late May. None October.
 Islay Tables 1 & 2.
 Mid Argyll First 7 April.
 Scarba Large mixed colony located on Scarba, estimated at c 50prs Lesser Black-backs, c 450 prs Herring Gulls and 3-5 prs Greater Black-backs. This colony appears to have been unrecorded in the past, and there is no mention of it in Operation Seafarer (RAB).
 Jura Large mixed gull colony centred on Shian Bay estimated at 2,600 - 3,900 individuals in early June. Sampling gave species in ratios 7 Herring gull: 2 Lesser BB gull: 1 Greater BB gull. On this basis colony contained 1820 - 2730 HG; 520 - 780 LBBG & 260 - 390 GBEG. This may over-estimate the numbers of GBEG present. Total numbers of individuals is minimum and possibly higher than this crude estimate.
 Coll/Tiree Coll: Breeding over 100 prs/ Tiree 32 Loch Riaghain 16 June.
- 0592 HERRING GULL Larus argentatus
 B & P in all areas. Common breeder with numbers increased by birds from NE England and the Clyde as demonstrated by colour-ringed birds. Colour rings can also be seen on birds at Argyll rubbish dumps, especially Lochgilphead, Oban and Bowmore and reports of these are welcome.
 Jura/Scarba See entry for Lesser Black-backed Gull.
 Colonsay 200 Golf Course 18 Jan. 2,200 birds at breeding sites late May.
 Islay see Tables 1 & 2.
 Mull Loch Poit 61 ads 12 July. 61 ads Loch Assapol same date. One found dead Duart Bay 12 July ringed as adult near Glasgow 1979.

- 0598 ICELAND GULL Larus glaucooides
W in all areas. Regular winter visitor, especially to fishing harbours. After major influxes in January 1983 and January 1984, very few sightings in 1985. All records received:
Colonsay Single first winter at Golf Course 18 January.
- 0599 GLAUCOUS GULL Larus hyperboreus
W in all areas. Regular winter visitor in small numbers, especially to fishing harbours. In most years more plentiful than Iceland Gull, but 1983 and 1984 were exceptions. All records:
Islay Single 9 February, 1 immature 7 Nov at Loch Gruinart. Single ad at Uisgeantsuidhe December. Loch Indaal 2 8-14 December.
Mid Argyll First year bird in harbour at Oban 5 April.
Tiree First winter bird 16 April.
- 0600 GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL Larus marinus
B & W in all areas. Common and widespread.
Jura/Scarba See entry under Lesser Black-backed Gull.
Islay See Tables 1 & 2.
Colonsay 86 birds at breeding sites in late May. Winter max of c10.
Mull Small numbers breeding. 64ads at roost Loch Poit 12 July.
Coll 46 at Loch Breachacha 26 June.
Tiree 65 Loch Riaghain 26 June. 42 Gott Bay 18 June.
- 0602 KITTIWAKE Rissa tridactyla
B & P in all areas except North Argyll. Breeds mainly Islay, Colonsay Tiree and Treshnish Isles. Generally off western coasts and in firths and sounds where large numbers sometime occur.
Colonsay 6,212 occupied nests in late May. 6 off Oronsay 15 October.
Mid Argyll 46 flying S in Loch Fyne nr Furnace, 30 April.
Mull 293 N in 30 mins off Craignure 27 April. 124 on islet off Iona 13 June.
- 0606 CASPIAN TERN Sterna caspia
V. Last recorded 1981 south of Gigha 6 June.
Mid Argyll One flew over mussel farm at Furnace 3 June (C.A. Galbraith).
- 0611 SANDWICH TERN Sterna sandvicensis
P in all areas. Irregular passage migrant, possibly under-recorded.
Islay Table 1. Loch Gruinart singles 3 & 7 April, 24 July three.
Tiree 1 juv Gott Bay 10 August. 5 in Gott Bay 17 June.
Cowal 6 July - first in west Kyle.
- 0614 ROSEATE TERN Sterna dougallii
?B Mull, North Argyll and Kintyre. Annual status uncertain, but may breed some years in mixed tern colonies in Firth of Lorne and Loch Linnhe.
Mull One off Grasspoint 21 June (MM).

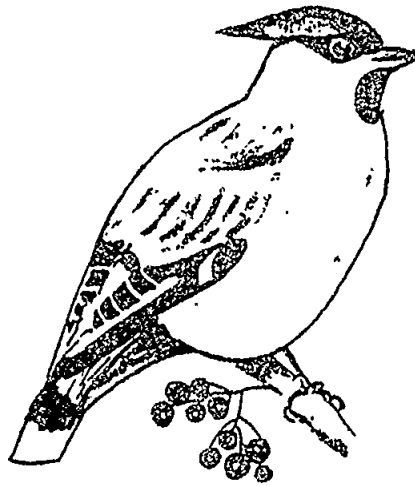
- 0615 COMMON TERN Sterna hirundo
 S & P in all areas. Widespread in fluctuating numbers. Subject to increased tourist disturbance at many once inaccessible areas.
- Colonsay First 11 May. c 200 prs Port Olmsa 18 June.
 Mull First 6 May
 Mid/N Argyll First Last 22 September.
 Cowal First 14 May in Kilbrannan Sound .
- 0616 ARCTIC TERN Sterna paradisaea
 S & P in all areas. Widespread and common, but as with Common terns now subject to increasing disturbance at many colonies.
- Colonsay First 17 May. 16 nesting Ardskenish June, c100 Machrins area 19 June.
 Islay Loch Gruinart Table 1. Loch Indaal 36 on 21 July.
 Coll 6+ pairs breeding 11 June. Also breeding on Tiree.
 Mull First 17 May. 40 Ardalanish 16 June.
- 0624 LITTLE TERN Sterna albifrons
 S in Kintyre, Islay and Mull. Scarce breeding species mainly confined to Islay, Coll and Tiree. Considerable disturbance at some sites threatens their continued survival.
- Coll 15 pairs breeding, late June.
 Islay 17-31 May Loch Gruinart up to 5. Single 24 July. (Table 1).
- 0627 BLACK TERN Chlidonias niger
 V. Few previous Argyll records.
- Islay Two at Loch Gruinart 18 July (RSPB).
- 0634 GUILLEMOT Uria aalge
 B & W in all areas. Breeds on suitable cliffs with main colonies on Colonsay and on the Harp Rock, Lunga, Treshnish Isles. Large numbers were found dead in the Loch Linnhe area in July. Included in the wreck were chicks too young to have fledged naturally. The majority of full grown birds were in very poor condition. A section of the report gives further details.
- Colonsay 13,460 birds counted on breeding ledges in late May. Mostly gone by 25 July. 1 or 2 off east coast in October.
 Mull 70 ads & 1 juv north of Tobermory 17 August.
- 0636 RAZORBILL Alca torda
 B & W in all areas except Cowal. Common breeding species on suitable breeding cliffs. Can be found well into sealochs in winter. For details of wreck in July see 'Guillemot' and section elsewhere in this report.
- Colonsay 1,760 birds on breeding ledges in late May. Mostly gone by 25 July.
- 0638 BLACK GUILLEMOT Cephus grylle
 B & W in all areas. Widespread and frequently seen farther up sealochs than other auks. Breeds in low densities around most coasts. First birds in summer plumage by January and some adults back in winter plumage by late August.
- Colonsay 82 counted around coast in late May. Regular sightings in winter.
 Kintyre 30 in west Loch Tarbert 17 February.

- 0647 LITTLE AUK Alle alle
W in all areas. Irregular winter visitor in varying numbers and generally found after severe winter gales. In contrast to 1984, few records in 1985. All records received:
Colonsay One dead Queens Bay 28 April.
- 0654 PUFFIN Fratercula arctica
B & P in Kintyre, Islay and Mull. Scarce away from main colonies except on passage. Reliable winter records are few. Birds start arriving off colonies in April, but main build-up in numbers begins May. Numbers fall away quickly as breeding season finishes in second half of July. Largest colony in Argyll is on the Treshnish Isles.
Colonsay Three sightings of 2-4 birds off the west coast during June.
Mid Argyll Two off Kerrera 8 January.
Mull 11 from Oban - Tiree ferry 3 June with 11 on 5 June also.
Islay 7 off Mull of Oa 26 June. Single Kilchoman 23 November.
Cowal Counts of up to 50 south side Sanda throughout the season. Gone by 11 Aug.
- 0665 ROCK DOVE Columba livia
R & W in all areas except Cowal. Pure birds are common in the Inner Herbrides and remote coasts on the mainland. Few feral birds occur in these areas. Large post-breeding flocks can be seen in several areas and especially feed on stubble on Islay.
Coll 22 November: throughout Coll, maximum 93 Broadhills. 100+ Cliad 13 June.
Colonsay Still very common and breeds on most cliffs:
Mull Main concentrations in SW Mull and Iona. 55 in 2 flocks Iona 16 August
 160 Fidden 25 November.
Tiree 70 Kirkapol 16 June.
Islay Good numbers breed in old barns and ruined buildings. Max 70 Gruinart Dec.

- 0668 STOCK DOVE Columba oenas
Past records Kintyre, mid-Argyll & Mull. Present status uncertain.
Mid-Argyll One at Kilmartin 21 August
North Argyll Three at Ardchattan Priory 23 November
- 0670 WOOD PIGEON Columba palumbus
B & W in all areas. Common breeding species throughout Argyll, but absent in Coll & Tiree and uncommon on Mull.
Mid-Argyll Present in 27/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
Colonsay 47 Scalasaig Farm 9 October
Mull 21 Ardnadrochit 8 September
- 0684 COLLARED DOVE Streptopelia decaocto
B & P in all areas. Common throughout Argyll, but possibly a slight decline since peak of colonisation in the late 1970s. Especially pronounced dip in breeding numbers on Islay.
Colonsay Fewer birds recorded in 1985. Minimum of 3 pairs bred.
Jura No more than 2 seen together in early June.
- 0687 TURTLE DOVE Streptopelia turtur
B & P. Most records are late spring/ early summer migrants. Perhaps more records than usual in 1985.
Islay Loch Gorm 1 30/31 May; Kindrochid 1 5 July.
Jura Corryhahera 1 3 June.
Mid-Argyll Campbeltown 1 15 June.
Colonsay Mill Wood 1 20 May.
Tiree Ruaig 1 17 June.
- 0724 CUCKOO Cuculus canorus
S & P in all areas. Common throughout Argyll with Meadow Pipit being the main host species.
Kintyre First 22 April.
Islay First 23 April Last Gruinart 6 June
Mid Argyll First Connel 19 April Last 1 August (see Table 5)
Mull First 26 April. Colonsay First 18 April.
- 0735 BARN OWL Tyto alba
B & W in all areas. Possibly under-recorded but nowhere common. More records are usually submitted in winter.
Mull Five pairs known. No confirmation of succesful breeding in 1985.
Islay Two nest sites known.
Other 1985 records from Mid-Argyll.
- 0761 TAWNY OWL Strix aluco
R in all areas. Widespread in suitable habitat, but absent from Coll and Tiree. Not uncommonly seen in daylight. Few records received.
Mull Breeding, common. Pr + 1 juv Croig 18 June.
Mid-Argyll See Table 5.



Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)

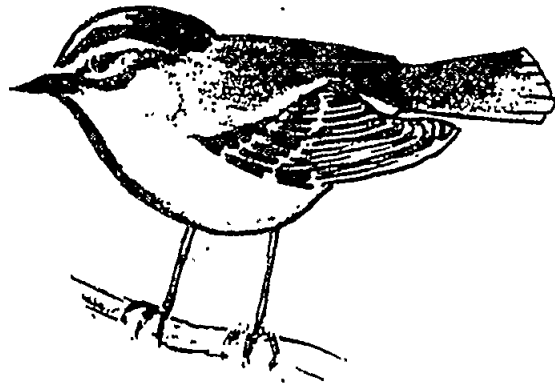


Waxwing (*Bombusilla garrulus*)

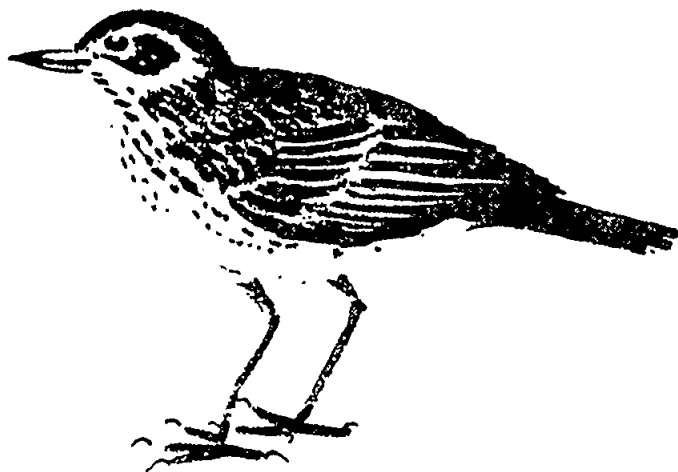
- 0767 LONG-EARED OWL Asio otus
R & W. Very scarce breeding species, but almost certainly under-recorded.
- Colonsay Three young calling Colonsay House Woods 18 June.
Mull Salen 1 29 June - 8 July.
- 0768 SHORT-EARED OWL Asio flammeus
B & W in all areas. Widespread with fluctuating numbers and some emigration out of Argyll after the breeding season. Increase in numbers in the first years following new forestry establishment on moorland has led to increases in many areas of Argyll.
- Mull Associated with young conifer plantations. Five prs known to have bred 1985. Several regular winter roosts suggests more wintering than previously thought.
Other records North Argyll, Islay, Jura, Cowal.. None seen Colonsay.
- 0778 NIGHTJAR Caprimulgus europaeus
Declining species with no records 1982 - 1984. Probably no longer annual.
- Mull Single, intermittently churring near Croig 16 May.
- 0795 SWIFT Apus apus
S & P in all areas. Fairly common in towns with suitable breeding sites. Absent from several of the islands but occurs there on passage. Natural nest sites recorded on Kintyre.
- Mid Argyll Connel: First 5 May, Last 4 Sept. Breeding Loch Awe.
Islay None seen in Kilmartin/ Lochgilphead area in 1985.
Mull Summering birds at Loch Gruinart.
Several singles in June. Also June records from Coll & Tiree.
- 0840 BEE-EATER Merops apiaster
V. Two recorded Islay 1981.
- Islay Portnahaven 1 3-4 July.
- 0841 ROLLER Coracias garrulus
V. One recorded Islay 1983.
No 1985 records.
- 0831 KINGFISHER Alcedo atthis
B?/V? in most areas of Argyll. Most sightings probably of wandering juveniles.
- North Argyll One Loch Etive 12 April and Aug-Sept probably same bird.
Mull One Loch Don from New Year to 3 February.
Islay No records
Mid Argyll One Loch Awe 5 August 1984. One Taynuilt 14 January.
- 0846 HOOPOE Upupa epops
V. Most past records Islay. Irregular, usually late spring overshoot.
- Islay One RSPB Loch Gruinart 9 May

- 0848 WRYNECK Jynx torquilla
Vagrant or very rare migrant. No 1985 records.
- 0856 GREEN WOODPECKER Picus viridis
?B & V in Mid and North Argyll with a few Mull records. There has been a slow northwards expansion in Scotland, but Green Woodpeckers have yet to become permanently established in Argyll. No reliable breeding records from the county.
Mid/North Argyll NOT recorded in RSPB survey of 38 deciduous woods (Table 5).
No 1985 records received.
- 0857 GREAT-SPOTTED WOODPECKER Dendrocopos major
B & W in all areas. Widespread in suitable deciduous woods. A past colonist in Argyll with breeding first recorded from Ardtinny in 1921. Oban was reached by 1945 and Mull the following year. Absent from most of the other islands.
Jura One heard Inverlussa, early June. Past breeding recorded but current Jura status unknown.
Mid/N Argyll Scattered records through most of the mainland (Table 5).
Mull Breeding.
- 0976 SKYLARK Alauda arvensis
B/S & P & W in all areas. Widespread and common but is losing suitable habitat as a result of forestry expansion. Many leave Argyll after breeding. Noticeably scarce in December & January on Colonsay, Oronsay and at Loch Gruinart. Occasional large flocks in winter.
Mull c310 on stubble, Salen 25 November.
Islay 200 pairs bred, RSPB Loch Gruinart.
- 0981 SAND MARTIN Riparia riparia
S & P in all areas. Widespread but becoming increasingly localised. Decreasing locally due to increased disturbance - generally through commercial extraction of sand. There has also been a dramatic population crash due to the central African drought since 1983.
Mid Argyll Connel. First 22 April Last 11 September.
Mull Few seen. Large colony lost in 1985 due to quarry workings.
Islay 3 of 12 holes occupied Kilbeg 3 June. 6 of 17 holes occupied Loch na Meal 28 June.
 Pools of Eilean na Muice Dubh (Duich Moss) an important feeding area.
- 0992 SWALLOW Hirundo rustica
S & P in all areas. Widespread.
Mid Argyll First 15 April Minard.
 First 17 April Connel, Last 25 September.
Islay First 17 April Gruinart, Last 16 October.
Colonsay First 17 April Last 12 October Kiloran.
Mull First 10 April Duart
Coll Scarce, Pair breeding Breachacha Farm. Three breeding 5+ pairs.

- 1001 HOUSE MARTIN Delichon urbica
 S & P in all areas. Common breeding species where there are suitable sites and birds undisturbed. Recently constructed 'kit' houses used in places but no reports of natural sites being used.
- North Argyll First 16 May Connel Last 15 September Loch Etive.
 Islay First 27 April Bridgend Last 10 October RSPB Gruinart max 37 June.
 Mid Argyll First 19 April Lochgilphead
 Mull First 5 April single early bird. Last 12 September Ardnadrochit.
 Colonsay First 18 April. Records until early August.
- 1009 TREE PIPIT Anthus trivialis
 S & P in all areas. Common in suitable breeding habitats. Third commonest woodland species in Argyll (Table 5). Benefits from cleared forestry plantations.
- North Argyll First 22 April Last 15 October.
 Jura Present and apparently plentiful in a number of deciduous woods in early June.
- 1011 MEADOW PIPIT Anthus pratensis
 B & P in all areas. Very common breeding species on upland and low-land moors. Flocks in autumn with many birds leaving Argyll.
- Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart - largest numbers April-Aug (max 530 July). Down to 20 birds in winter.
 Jura Widespread but apparently scarce on some tracts of moorland early June
 Mid Argyll Local declines in some areas due to afforestation.
- 1014 ROCK PIPIT Anthus spinoletta petrosus
 B & W in all areas. Common breeding species around all coasts. No significant 1985 records.
- WATER PIPIT Anthus spinoletta spinoletta
 V. No 1985 records.
- 1017 YELLOW WAGTAIL Motacilla flava
 V. Irregular passage migrant. Most records in spring, although not recorded annually.
- Islay One on north coast of Islay at Uanhannan Donna 27 May.
 Mull One of race thunbergi Ulva Ferry 16 May.
- 1019 GREY WAGTAIL Motacilla cinerea
 B, P & W in all areas. Widespread in breeding season especially along upland streams. Most birds leave Argyll in winter, with resident birds particularly vulnerable to severe winters.
- Mull Breeding but scarce. At least three pairs known.
 Mid/N Argyll Recorded 5/38 woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).



Firecrest (Regulus)

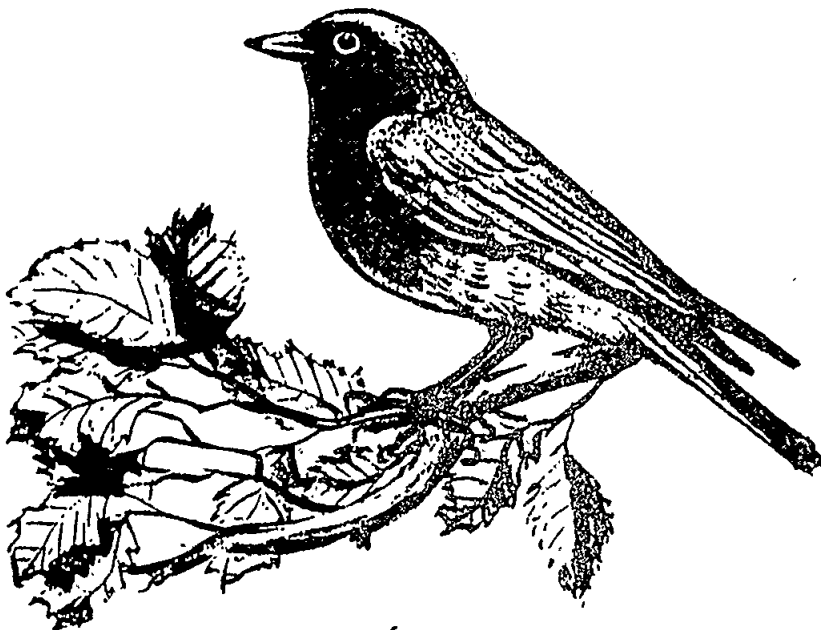
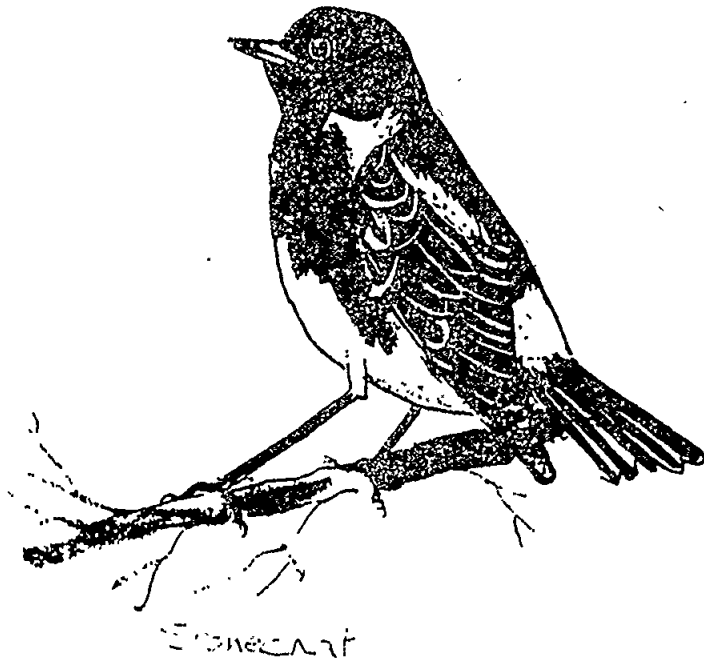


Tree Pipit

- 1020 PIED/ WHITE WAGTAIL Motacilla alba
 B & P in all areas. Common breeding species, although many birds leave Argyll in autumn. White Wagtails pass through in varying numbers in spring and autumn, and probably under-recorded.
PIED
 Mull Breeding, scarce. Tíree 4+ prs breeding.
 Mid Argyll Recorded 16/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
WHITE
 Oronsay Two 20 April, 6 4 May.
 Islay Loch Gruinart 3 20 April.
 Mull Gruline 1 19 April.
- 1048 WAXWING Bombycilla garrulus
 W in all areas. Irregular winter visitor in varying numbers.
 Mid Argyll Ardrishaig 3 10 November; Kilmory 1 15 December (MJP Gregory).
- 1050 DIPPER Cinclus cinclus
 B & W in all areas. Widespread along rivers with many birds moving downstream to tidal river mouths and open coasts in winter. Absent from Coll & Tíree. Rare on Islay and elsewhere perhaps less common than expected.
 Mid Argyll Kilmartin area. Disappeared locally due to probable Mink predation. Recorded from 2 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
 Cowal Probably bred above west bank of Loch Ridden.
 Mull Breeding but scarce. 4 prs known but unknown breeding success. 1 nest.
 Jura Recorded at several upland lochs, but not particularly common, early June.
- 1066 WREN Troglodytes troglodytes
 B & W in all areas. Very common and found in virtually all habitats from near sea-level to 200m+.
 Jura Heard and seen in several places but numbers gave impression of low population in early June.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart, 36 pairs bred.
 Mid Argyll Present in all 38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
- 1084 DUNNOCK Prunella modularis
 B & W in all areas. Common in many habitats especially scrub and woodland.
 Mull Lunga, Treshnish Isles 1-2 birds singing on island 18 January.
 Mid/N Argyll Recorded 6/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
- 1099 ROBIN Erithacus rubecula
 B & P in all areas. Common throughout area with numbers augmented by passage birds in autumn.
 Mull 8 along 2 km of shoreline, Loch Frisa during severe cold 25 January.
 Jura Apparently scarce in early June.
 Mid Argyll Present in all deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).

- 1121 BLACK REDSTART Phoenicurus ochruros
 ?P Irregular passage migrant. Previous records from Islay & Kintyre.
 Kintyre Gigha 1 first week April (Stirling SOC Argyll Excursion).
- 1122 REDSTART Phoenicurus phoenicurus
 S & P in all areas. Common breeding species, especially in Oak
 woods. Passage birds widespread within Argyll.
 Mid/N Argyll First 16 May Connel: apparently later arrival than previous years;
 Last 20 August Airds Bay. Recorded all woods surveyed (Table 5).
 Jura Recorded several deciduous woods incl. Inverlussa & Kinuachdrach.
 Mull First Pennyghael 22 April.
 Tiree Single in "early April" was uncommon for island.
- 1137 WHINCHAT Saxicola rubetra
 S & P in all areas. Common breeding species benefiting from the early
 years of forestry plantations, and in the first years of re-plantings.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: maximum of 15 in July.
 Colonsay First 5 May. Minimum of 6 pairs bred. Last 22 October.
 Mull First 30 April Lochdon. Coll 5+ pairs breeding.
 North Argyll First 11 May Last 10 September. Present 5/38 woods surveyed (Table 5).
- 1139 STONECHAT Saxicola torquata
 B, P & W in all areas. Widespread but numbers can fall dramatically
 after severe winters and take 2-3 good breeding seasons to recover.
 Many birds winter south of Argyll, leaving during the autumn and
 relatively few over-winter.
 1985 seems to have been a year of mixed fortunes with good populations
 in some areas but scarce elsewhere.
 Jura Localised and apparently scarce in early June.
 Colonsay Very common in 1985 with evidence of long breeding season.
 Mid Argyll Abundant and widely distributed, an apparent increase from previous yrs.
 Mull Breeding but numbers low. Coll 3+ pairs breeding.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: maximum of 30 in August. Eight pairs bred.
- 1146 WHEATEAR Oenanthe oenanthe
 S & P in all areas. Common breeding species often using rabbit
 burrow nest sites where rock and wall sites are not available. Birds
 of Greenland race O. o. leucorrhoa frequently seen on spring and
 autumn migration.
 Islay First 3 April followed by mass arrival on 8 April by hundreds of birds.
 Last 29 November.
 Mid Argyll First 2 April Connel. Last 10 October.
 Mull First 27 March, male of Greenland race. Last 13 September.
 Colonsay Significant increase in numbers during 1985. Most first broods
 fledged by 15 June, and by 29 September mostly on females and juvs
 left on island. Last 9 October.

- 1186 RING OUZEL Turdus torquatus
 S & P in all areas. Uncommon even on apparent suitable upland areas. This species will have undoubtedly been adversely affected by the widespread afforestation in upland Argyll. All records required to establish current status in Argyll.
- Colonsay One seen 28 October was first confirmed record for the island.
 Mull Breeding but scarce. Five pairs known.
 North Argyll Earliest record from county was 1 Ben Cruachan 20 April.
 Other 1985 records from Jura and Mid Argyll (four sites).
-
- 1187 BLACKBIRD Turdus merula
 B & P in all areas. Very common breeding species and passage migrant in considerable numbers in November.
- Colonsay 100+ migrants at end October, communal roost c30 Colonsay Ho Woods Jan.
 Mull Noticable passage, especially of males 10-20 November
 Mid/N Argyll Present 28/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
-
- 1198 FIELDFARE Turdus pilaris
 P & W in all areas. Mainly occurring on passage (late September - November) with smaller numbers wintering.
- Islay Last 9 April First 6 Kildalton 15 October. Max 178 RSPB Loch Gruinart
 October. More apparent and in larger numbers than usual in autumn.
 North Argyll First c500 flying SE Connel 14 October.
 Mid Argyll/ Cowal Last 2 6 May First 15 October.
 Mull First one 14 October
 Colonsay Estimated minimum of 500 end October in a variety of habitats.
-
- 1200 SONGTHRUSH Turdus philomelos
 B, P & W in all areas. Widespread and common throughout with passage birds in spring and autumn.
- Argyll No significant change of status in 1985.
 Mid Argyll Present in 33/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
-
- 1201 REDWING Turdus iliacus
 P, W & ?B in all areas. Majority of passage birds are transitory, but sometimes spectacular numbers pass through Argyll. Relatively few overwinter in the county. Spring birds can stay on into late spring and song is sometimes heard. Some may hold territory (eg at Dalmally June 1978) but breeding has yet to be confirmed for Argyll.
- Mid Argyll First 200 Kilmartin 14 October.
 North Argyll First 1 Cuil Bay 29 September Last 1 Kilvaree 24 April.
 Islay Last 19 April First 17 October. Maximum 200 RSPB Loch Gruinart
 October, abundant on Jura 16 October.
 Cowal First 15 October.
 Colonsay c60 January. Last seen 6 May was a pair territorial and singing.
 First 10 October with steady increase until est. min 500+ end October.
 Mull Last 17 April First 15 October.



Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

- 1202 MISTLE THRUSH Turdus viscivorus
 B, P & W in all areas. Can be found breeding throughout Argyll, although absent on Coll and Tiree where only passage birds were seen. Post-breeding flocks of up to 30 birds seen. Few over-winter and the remainder return to Argyll from February onwards.
 Mid/N Argyll Connel 20 28 September. Present 29/38 deciduous woods (see Table 5).
- 1236 GRASSHOPPER WARBLER Locustella naevia
 S & P in all areas. Locally common breeding species. Migrants occur throughout Argyll. Scarce breeder on Mull.
 Jura Knockdrome 2 in song early June.
 Mid Argyll Moine Mhor NNR 3 Males 16 May, 1 male Black Lochs 1 June.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart 4prs bred (30 April - 27 July).
- 1243 SEDGE WARBLER Acrocephalus schoenobaenus
 S & P in all areas. Locally common but migrants occur throughout.
 Mid Argyll First Connel 19 May.
 Colonsay First 5 May. c10 pairs present on island late May.
 Mull Scarce. 3+ pairs breeding. Coll 2+ prs breeding, Tiree 2 sites June.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart 12 May - end August. 12 pairs bred.
- 1251 REED WARBLER Acrocephalus scirpaceus
 V. Rare on passage, possibly under-recorded.
 1980 One Bridgend, Islay 'early August'.
 1981 One Loch Gorm, Islay 26 June.
- 1274 LESSER WHITETHROAT Sylvia risoria
 Rare passage migrant that may be under-recorded.
 North Argyll One in song Achnacairn, Connel 5-11 May but no evidence of breeding.
- 1275 WHITETHROAT Sylvia communis
 S & P in all areas. Widespread and common.
 Mid/N Argyll First 13 May Last 5 August. Present 7/38 deciduous woods (Table 5).
 Islay First 21 May to end August RSPB Loch Gruinart where 2 prs bred.
 Colonsay Well down in numbers with only 3-4 pairs reported.
 Jura early June: widespread in small numbers on eastern coastal strip and on lower hills where associated with bracken and small rocky outcrops with little tangled scrub.
 Mull First 14 May.
- 1276 GARDEN WARBLER Sylvia borin
 S & P in all areas. Scarce breeding species. Can occur throughout migration periods and found eating elder berries in autumn.
 Cowal First 22 May, Colintrave.
 Mid Argyll First 15 May, Inveraray. Recorded 10/38 deciduous woods (Table 5).
 Islay Last 6 October, RSPB Loch Gruinart.

- 1277 **BLACKCAP** Sylvia atricapilla
 S, W & P in all areas. Scarce breeding species. In some years, small numbers overwinter and are attracted to winter bird-tables.
- Mid Argyll First 13 May Connel Last 28 August Taynuilt
 Mull Single nest with calling young, Gruline
 Colonsay First 5 April Balnahard Last 29 October Colonsay House.
 Kintyre 15 August pair feeding young West Loch Tarbert.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: singles 7 April, 18 April, 6 October. Female
 20 November Bruichladdich.
 Mid/N Argyll Recorded 12/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
- 1308 **WOOD WARBLER** Phylloscopus sibilatrix
 S & P in all areas. Widespread and common in oak woods.
- Mull First 5 May Kellan Wood.
 Mid/N Argyll First 16 May Last 22 August. 6th commonest woodland species recorded
 in all deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
 Jura Heard in several deciduous woods in early June.
- 1311 **CHIFFCHAFF** Phylloscopus collybita
 S & P in all areas. Scarce although November records not unusual.
- Mid/N Argyll First 9 April. Recorded only 3/38 deciduous woods (Table 5).
 Cowal Last 25 September: single male Tignabruaich.
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: 25 April - 10 Aug 6 singles. 3 on 27 September.
 Mull 1 calling Knock 9 April. 1 calling Tiroran 18 October.
 Coll 1 Acha Moor 23 June.
 Colonsay Singing at four sites May-June.
- 1312 **WILLOW WARBLER** Phylloscopus trochilus
 S & P in all areas. The commonest warbler in Argyll and second
 commonest woodland bird in North & Mid Argyll (Table 5).
- North Argyll First 17 April Last 22 August
 Mid Argyll First 9 April
 Islay First 5 April RSPB Loch Gruinart: 36 pairs bred.
 Colonsay First 7 April Milbuie Last 14-18 October
 Mull First 6 April Last 10 September Knock.
 Jura Seen and heard in most woods in early June.
- 1314 **GOLDCREST** Regulus regulus
 B, W & P in all areas. Common breeding species and one of the few to
 have benefitted from increased afforestation in Argyll.
- Mid Argyll Present 18/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
 Islay Winter records only. One or two birds with max 6 Dec: RSPB Gruinart.
 Coll October 2 seen are unusual records for the island.
- 1335 **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** Muscicapastriata
 S & P in all areas. Widespread breeding species although at low
 densities. Passage birds seen until about mid-September.
- North Argyll First 21 May Last 22 August. Present 30/38 woods (Table 5).
 Islay First 31 May Last end August. Max 16 on 18 September RSPB.
 Colonsay First 20 May.
 Jura Recorded in several places in early June.

- 1349 **PIED FLYCATCHER** Ficedula hypoleuca
P & B. Rare passage migrant, although 1985 has had a marked increase in both sightings and breeding was proved for the first time. Recorded at 8 of 38 deciduous woods in North, Mid Argyll and Kintyre and breeding proved in four woods. It remains to be seen if this apparent influx will be maintained in 1986 with the species consolidating its hold in Argyll.
- Colonsay One male on Eilean Ghaoideamal 17 May. First record for the island.
Islay One male in woodland fragment on north coast 24 May. Same bird as seen on Colonsay 10km away ??
- North Argyll First 26 May. Pair feeding newly fledged young Loch Etive 1 July.
One, probably two additional pairs elsewhere (Table 5).
- Mid Argyll Present Minard and six other sites.
Kintyre Pair entering hole in dead Alder Kennacraig 11 May.
SUMMARY Present at 12 suitable breeding sites, breeding proved at 4 sites.
- 1437 **LONG-TAILED TIT** Aegithalos caudatus
B & W in all areas. Widespread but suffers badly from hard winters.
- Mid/N Argyll Present in 27/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
Colonsay Several small flocks 16-29 October. As this species has only been seen in one other year (November 1983 since 1973, it will be interesting to see if any stay until the spring.
- 1440/1442 **MARSH/ WILLOW TIT** Parus palustris/ montanus
V? Status uncertain. Few previous records for Argyll.
- Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart: One 22 July.
- 1461 **COAL TIT** Parus ater
B & W in all areas. Common in deciduous and some coniferous plantations. Undoubtedly benefitted from the spread of forestry in Argyll.
- Mid/N Argyll Fifth commonest deciduous woodland species (Table 5).
Coll Several seen at Arinagour in October are significant records for Coll.
- 1462 **BLUE TIT** Parus caeruleus
B & W in all areas. Very common on mainland, but absent from some islands. Birds present Coll 1984 but breeding not proved.
- Mid/N Argyll Recorded in all deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
Jura Uncommon in early June.
Coll/Tiree No records in 1985
Other records from Islay, Mull and Colonsay.
- 1464 **GREAT TIT** Parus major
B & W in all areas. Common throughout Argyll, but less plentiful than the Blue Tit. Absent from Coll and Tiree as a breeding species. Birds present on Coll in 1983 & 1984 but breeding not proved.
- Mid/N Argyll Fourth commonest woodland species recorded in RSPB survey (Table 5).
Colonsay Scarce but breeding: June.
Other records Jura, Mull, Islay and mainland.

- 1486 TREECREEPER Certhia familiaris
 B & W in all areas. Common in suitable habitat, but absent in Coll and Tiree.
- Mid/N Argyll Present in 35/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
 Colonsay Fairly common in most suitable woodland. Seems to join in loose feeding flocks in Colonsay House woods during winter months.
- 1520 GREAT GREY SHRIKE Lanius excubitor
 W & P in all areas. Irregular winter visitor and passage migrant.
 No 1985 records.
- 1539 JAY Garrulus garrulus
 B & W on mainland. Local but common in some places. Absent from the islands.
- Mid/N Argyll Present in 8/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
- 1549 MAGPIE Pica pica
 B. Intermittently in some areas. Not on Islay as recorded in 1984 Argyll Bird report. Rare outside Cowal. Status uncertain.
- 1984 Islay Two Conisby November (D. Ferguson).
 No 1985 records received from anywhere else in Argyll.
- 1559 CHOUGH Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax
 B & W on Islay, Jura and Colonsay. Islay is the Scottish stronghold with smaller numbers on Jura and increasing numbers on Colonsay. Kintyre was apparently deserted as a regular breeding area in c1983. No recent sightings from Mull where there have been past records.
- Islay In continuing monitoring of the Islay Chough population (Argyll Bird Report 1984) a full breeding survey was made. Of 104 known nests, 67 were occupied, 19 unoccupied and 18 unchecked. In 31 nests where full nest data available, a mode of 5 eggs per nest and mean of 4.9 eggs were found. Mean number of young per successful pair (n = 25) was 2.76. (Scottish Chough Study Group).
- Colonsay Probably five pairs attempted nesting this year. Most reached hatching, but autumn flocks indicate low fledging success. Up to 15 birds seen in winter flocks. Total population 15 - 20 birds.
- Jura One seen Craighouse 1 June was only record from island.
- Elsewhere No records.
- 1560 JACKDAW Corvus monedula
 B & W in all areas. Very common throughout Argyll, although noticeably absent as breeding species from Coll, Tiree, Treshnish Isles and most of Mull where it only breeds at the south-west end of the Ross of Mull and on Iona. Increase in numbers during the winter.
- Mid/N Argyll Present in 4/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
 No other significant 1985 records.

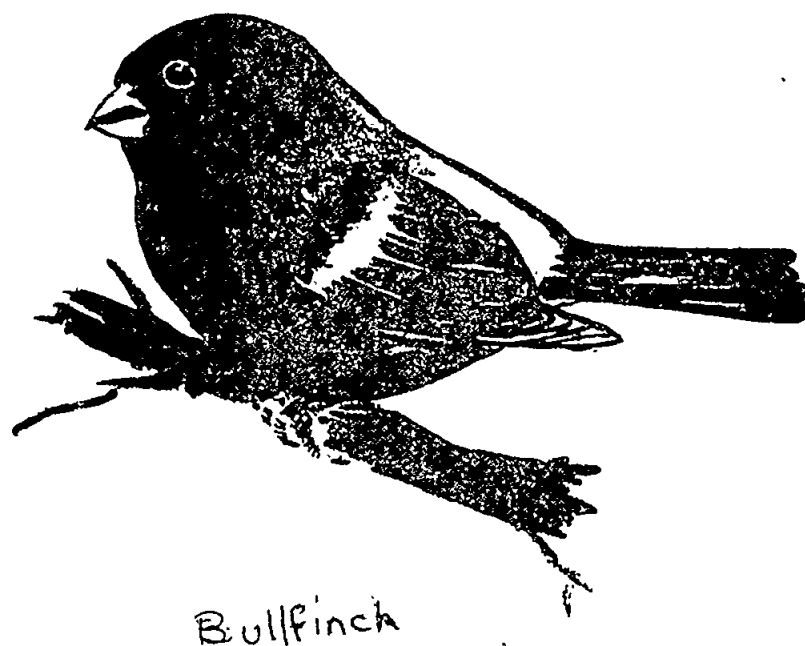
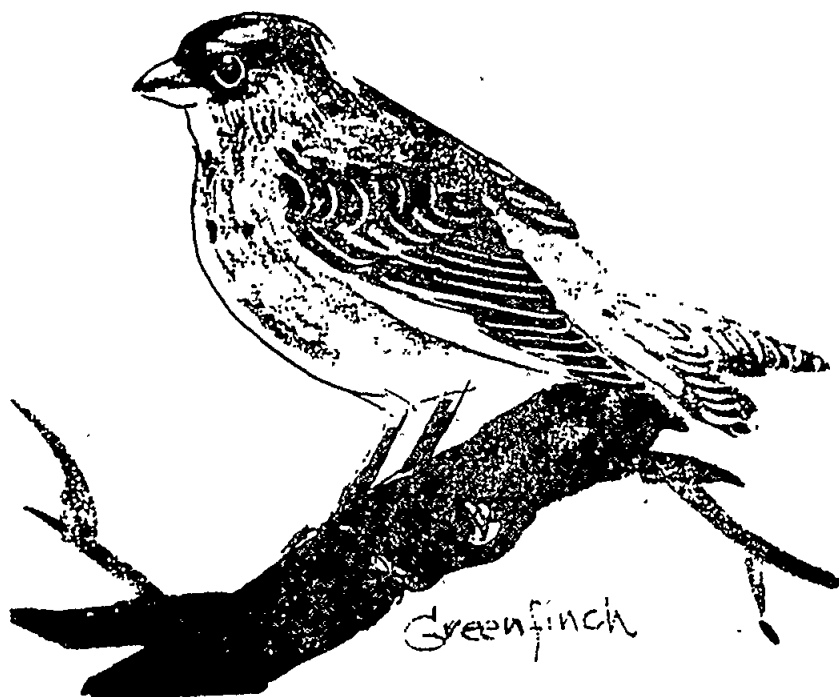


Rose-coloured starling (*Sturnus roseus*)



- 1563 ROOK Corvus frugilegus
 B & W in all areas. Common , though absent as breeding species from Coll & Tiree (where there are few trees), and more suprisingly from most of Mull. There is a winter increase in numbers. In 1975 a national census showed 78 rookeries in Argyll with a total of 3217 nests and mean of 41.2 nests per rookery. Argyll had the third lowest density of breeding Rooks in Scotland at 0.40 per km².
 Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart. Maximum of 130 in February, 44 pairs bred.
 Iona 120 on 16 August.
 Mid/N Argyll RSPB survey of deciduous woods found Rooks in 3/38 (Table 5).
- 1567 CARRION/ HOODED CROW Corvus corone
 B & W in all areas. The Hoodie is the predominant subspecies in the northern part of Argyll and on most islands. Yet Carrion Crows are spreading slowly through Cowal to mid-Argyll and Kintyre and becoming increasing common in areas where the Hoodie has been traditional. Consequently hybrids can turn up in varying numbers almost anywhere. The boundary between the two races is dynamic and has changed in the past. It would thus make an interesting investigation to accurately plot the current position of the Carrion/ Hooded Crow boundary and perhaps one could be undertaken by the Argyll Bird Club.
 Islay CARRION CROW
 Carrion Crows probably still increasing since about 1983, but undoubtedly under-recorded. Other records from Jura and Colonsay.
 HOODED CROW
 Colonsay 149 to roost on 23 January. Numbers not so high as previously, but still very common.
 Mid/N Argyll Recorded from 37/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
 CARRION X HOODED HYBRID
 Reports from Colonsay and marked increase in hybrids on Mull.
- 1572 RAVEN Corvus corax
 B & W in all areas. Very common throughout Argyll with birds often frequenting refuse tips with up to 100 at certain times on Tobermory Tip.
 Colonsay Probably four pairs nested.
 Mull 100 present Tobermory rubbish dump 23 November.
 Jura Conspicuous by their absence in early June with only 8 birds seen (at two sites) during extensive fieldwork throughout the island.
 Mid/N Argyll Recorded in 8/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
 Coll At least three pairs breeding
- 1582 STARLING Sturnus vulgaris
 B, W & P in all areas. Abundant, although not as common during the breeding season on Coll & Tiree. Frequently nests in natural sites such as seacliffs on the Treshnish Isles. Resident population is swollen during the winter with immigrants from northern Europe.
 Islay Maximum of 800 at RSPB Loch Gruinart during July.
 Colonsay Biggest flock was c300 10 March.
 Coll 18 nest holes in a 50m section of wall 10 June.
 Mull Temporary roost on island in Lochdon July/Aug. Max count 150 12 July.
- 1584 ROSE COLOURED STARLING Sturnus roseus
 V. Recorded from Coll, Mull, Islay and Mid Argyll. Almost annual records but none seen in 1985.

- 1591 HOUSE SPARROW Passer domesticus
R in all areas. Generally plentiful and closely associated with habitation. Scarce on some islands, even larger ones such as Islay. No significant records for 1985.
- 1598 TREE SPARROW Passer montanus
W & P, &?B on Islay, mid-Argyll and Mull. Very uncommon, but possibly under-recorded. All records required to determine exact status. No 1985 records submitted. Not recorded during the RSPB survey of 38 deciduous woods in North and Mid Argyll.
- 1636 CHAFFINCH Fringilla coelebs
B, W & P in all areas. Abundant, often foraging in large, mixed sex flocks in winter. The commonest woodland bird in Argyll.
Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart usually less than 150 but 1,800 max in January. 30 pairs bred.
Mull Breeding common. Single flock of 150+ Fidden 15 November.
Coll Proven breeding probably first for island.
- 1638 BRAMBLING Fringilla montifringilla
W & P in all areas. Winter visitor in fluctuating numbers and apparently absent in some winters.
North Argyll First 18 October Connel.
Islay 11 Home Farm, Bridgend 11 December.
Colonsay Single seen with Siskin in Colonsay House woods 29 October was only second island record for this species since the 1930s.
- 1649 GREENFINCH Carduelis chloris
B & W in all areas. Patchily distributed, although plentiful in some areas. An increasing number are being seen in winter.
Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart usually less than 8, but 40 in Jan. 3 pairs bred.
Colonsay Maximum 11 Kiloran 23 October.
Mull Breeding ? Uncommon. Bred on Coll during June.
Mid/N Argyll Recorded from 1/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (Table 5).
- 1653 GOLDFINCH Carduelis carduelis
B & W in all areas. Scarce in north and on some islands. Absent as breeder on Colonsay, Iona, Coll & Tiree. Very local Islay, Jura & Mull.
Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart. Irregular, maximum of 22 in July.
Jura Pair resident Craighouse in early June.
Colonsay 2 singing 10 March, 2 Milbuie 24 June.
Mid/N Argyll 25 Connel 25 October. Recorded 5/38 deciduous woods (see Table 5).
- 1654 SISKIN Carduelis spinus
B, P & W in all areas. Common breeding species in suitable habitat. Absent as breeder on Colonsay, Iona, Coll & Tiree and local on Islay and Jura. Sometimes found in large flocks in autumn feeding on thistles and ground seeds. Few winter, but many records from feeders.
Colonsay First confirmed record of this species on the island was 1 singing in Colonsay House woods 29 June. Est 100 in same woods 29 October.



- Mid Argyll Large flock of c110 feeding in oaks on defoliating caterpillars with Crossbills: Stonefield, S Loch Etive 18 June. Recorded 35/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
- Mull Breeding, common. Small passage noted in July. 38 S over Glen Forsa on 18 July.
- 1660 LINNET Carduelis cannabina
B, P & W in all areas. Locally common but few winter records.
- Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart. Maximum 80 in October.
- 1662 TWITE Carduelis flavirostris
B, P & W in all areas. Locally common, but scarce in Cowal and Mid Argyll. Some decrease on Mull in recent years. A few loose flocks seen in winter.
- Coll Maximum c130 Totronald 22 November.
Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart maximum 75 January.
Colonsay Very common, especially on machair. Breeding on offshore islands. c100 on Oronsay in October.
North Argyll 40 Connel 25 October.
- 1663 REDPOLL Carduelis flammea
B, P & W in all areas. Common, but local breeding species. Absent as breeder from Iona, Coll and Tiree.
- Coll None seen since the cold weather in 1982.
Mid/N Argyll See Table 5.
- 1666 CROSSBILL Loxia curvirostra
B & W in all areas. Population fluctuates dramatically with the cone crop in forestry plantations. Apparently scarce on Islay and Jura due to restricted habitat. Generally 1985 seems to have been a poor year with few reports of large flocks, but
- Mid Argyll Huge flock of c250 feeding on defoliating caterpillars in oaks near Stonefield, S Loch Etive 18 June. High % juveniles. Out of c30 seen well, only 2 ad females and 1 ad male. Possibly from nearby Fearnoch Forest or part of the late summer influx into the UK. Recorded from 8/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
- Mull Erratic population. Very few records 1985, 20+ Lochdon 20 June, 2j 9 July.
Colonsay Juvenile 15 June and male 24 July in Colonsay House woods are the first records since 1963.
- 1710 BULLFINCH Pyrrhula pyrrhula
B & W in all areas. Common breeding species in habitats ranging from forestry plantations to extensive shrubberies. Absent from Coll & Tiree and irregular on Colonsay & Gigha. Flocks in winter but possibly vulnerable to severe winters.
- Colonsay 2 12 March, 3 27 April & 3 15 June all in Colonsay House woods.
North Argyll 6 probable northern birds 24 January Connel. Recorded 7/38 woods (Tab 5).
Mid Argyll Less common than previously in Kilmartin area.
Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart singles 20 February, 6 December & 28 December.

- 1755 AMERICAN REDSTART Setophaga ruticilla
V. Islay. One record 1982 was first for Scotland, 3rd UK record.
- 1717 HAWFINCH Coccothraustes coccothraustes
V? Status uncertain.
North Argyll One Ardanaseig 7 April.
- 1847 LAPLAND BUNTING Calcarius lapponicus
V on passage, probably under-recorded.
Tiree Male Heylipol in summer plumage 18 June was a very late record.
- 1850 SNOW BUNTING Plectrophenax nivalis
P & W & ?B in all areas. Occurs in varying numbers on passage, and in some winters occurs in flocks. Occasionally some birds breed on the high tops but summer status unknown.
Mull 3 Glen More 15 March.
Islay Noticable increase in sightings since 1984. Seen mainly on autumn stubble fields: c70 Portnahaven 6 October, with another c70 Kilchiaran on same day. 25 Ardnave Point 16 November, 40 Kilchoman 23 November, 16 Balulive 29 November.
Colonsay 2 Balnahard 18 October.
Coll 12 flew north-east over airstrip 21 November.
- 1857 YELLOWHAMMER Emberiza citrinella
B & W in all areas. Local but common in places and seen away from breeding habitat in summer.
Mull Breeding but uncommon.
Jura Early June: seen at several places along the eastern coastal fringe in association with farmland. At the northern end occasional prs associated with small crags and low scrubby vegetation. Also amongst bracken/ heather and associated grasslands above Corpach Bay and several similar sites on northern shore of Loch Tarbert.
Colonsay 2 Scalasaig 10 March, sightings 1-2 birds 16 April - 12 July then none.
North Argyll Recorded from 8/38 deciduous woods surveyed by RSPB (see Table 5).
- 1877 REED BUNTING Emberiza schoeniclus
B & W in all areas. Common in suitable habitats. Flocks with finches and Yellowhammers around farms in winter.
Islay RSPB Loch Gruinart maximum of 37 December. 10 pairs bred.
Other records from Coll, Mull, Colonsay and Mid Argyll.
- 1882 CORN BUNTING Miliaria calandra
R & P in Kintyre, Tiree and Coll. Very local breeding species with regular breeding only on Coll, Tiree and sometime Gigha. Elsewhere, birds appear on migration, although these may be only local movements.
Tiree Censused in June recorded 28 singing birds indicating a large population decline from the 95 singing in 1977 (RSPB data).
Islay One Rockside December 18
Colonsay One Kiloran October 3
Coll No records this year.

Results of Bird-Ringing in Argyll in 1985

- Dr J C A Craik,
Scottish Marine Biological Association,
Dunstaffnage Marine Research Laboratory,
Oban, Argyll

Introduction

For most of 1985, four ringers licensed to ring all bird species (A or C licences) were resident in Argyll. During the year they ringed 2621 birds, 85% of the county total. Two Argyll residents with permits restricted to certain species (Golden Eagle and Eider respectively) together ringed 108 birds (3%). The remaining 366 birds (12%) were ringed by visitors to the county.

During the year two resident ringers from Mull, Richard Coomber and Malcolm Keith, departed to take up residence in England. Both will be missed, and we wish them and their families well for the future.

Specialised studies are in progress in Argyll of Golden Eagle, Heron, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Eider, Common Gull, and Common and Arctic Terns. These studies are reflected both in the numbers ringed and the recoveries reported below.

Numbers of Birds Ringed

The numbers and species of birds ringed in Argyll in 1985 are given in Table 1.

It is worth noting that one visiting ringer (J Lewis) was responsible for ringing all the Golden Plover, Woodcock, Curlew, Rock Dove, Barn Owl, Short-eared Owl and Wheatear that were ringed in Argyll during the year, while another visitor (D Trigg) was similarly responsible for the Mute Swans. This indicates the scope for visitors to the county to make valuable contributions to local ornithology by ringing a wide variety of bird species in habitats not covered by the interests of resident ringers.

A plea might also be made for visitors to submit records of birds ringed in Argyll each year. It is known that at least two visiting ringing groups, making regular visits to well known seabird colonies on Treshnish and in the Sound of Jura, decline to do so. This detracts from the value of annual summaries such as this.

Table 1: Numbers of Birds Ringed in Argyll in 1985

	Fully Grown	Chicks	Total
Mute Swan	3	0	3
Eider	100	0	100
Hen Harrier	0	4	4
Golden Eagle	0	14	14
Peregrine	0	6	6
Oystercatcher	0	27	27
Ringed Plover	0	7	7
Golden Plover	0	4	4
Lapwing	0	13	13
Woodcock	0	5	5
Curlew	0	8	8
Redshank	0	4	4
Common Sandpiper	1	3	4
Black-headed Gull	0	121	121
Common Gull	1	562	563
Herring Gull	1	235	236
Great Black-backed Gull	0	11	11

Table 1 (contd)

	Fully Grown	Chicks	Total
Common Tern	82	989	1071
Arctic Tern	80	137	217
Rock Dove	0	2	2
Barn Owl	1	3	4
Tawny Owl	8	30	38
Short-eared Owl	0	16	16
Swallow	3	9	12
Meadow Pipit	0	9	9
Pied Wagtail	6	6	12
Duncock	10	0	10
Robin	24	0	24
Redstart	1	0	1
Whinchat	0	15	15
Wheatear	1	0	1
Blackbird	20	3	23
Song Thrush	1	0	1
Sedge Warbler	1	0	1
Blackcap	4	0	4
Wood Warbler	2	18	20
Willow Warbler	24	13	37
Goldcrest	5	0	5
Spotted Flycatcher	7	0	7
Coal Tit	16	0	16
Great Tit	57	5	62
Blue Tit	58	39	97
Treecreeper	2	0	2
Jay	1	0	1
*Chough	0	93	93
Jackdaw	11	3	14
Rook	3	0	3
House Sparrow	1	0	1
Chaffinch	87	4	91
Greenfinch	24	0	24
Siskin	20	0	20
Twite	0	5	5
Bullfinch	6	0	6
TOTAL	672	2423	3095

*All with colour rings, 82 with BTO rings.

Recoveries Reported During 1985

The following is a selection of the more interesting recoveries of which I was notified by the end of January 1986. Ringing details are given on the first line and recovery data on the second line. The age when ringed is given according to the EURING code: note that these numbers do not represent age in years:

- 1 nestling or chick
- 2 fully grown, year of hatching unknown
- 3 hatched during year of ringing
- 3J in juvenile plumage when ringed (age 3)
- 4 hatched before year of ringing, exact year unknown
- 5 hatched previous year
- 6 hatched before previous year, exact year unknown etc

M,F sex
B breeding

The manner of recovery is coded as usual:

v caught or trapped and released

+ Shot or killed by man

x Found dead

Shag Phalacrocorax aristotelis

1163735	1	21.6.84	Treshnish: 56°30'N 6°26'W (Argyll)
	x	Hynish, Tiree: 56°27'N 6°53'W (Argyll)	
		28km	259 deg 378 days

Mute Swan Cygnus olor

Since 1978, Chris Spray (Dept of Zoology, University of Aberdeen) has been marking Mute Swans on the Uists with neck collars bearing numbers visible at a distance. He recently reported (via Roger Broad) that of about 1000 swans fitted with collars, only about 25 were known to have left the Uists, and all of these but one were unpaired immatures in their first or second winters. Several of these went to Ireland (North and South), others as far south as Stranraer and Oban on the mainland. Only one went north; it was found dead on Shetland.

The movements of one of the Uist swans make such fascinating reading that they are described here in full. They also make the important general point that individual marks legible on the living bird from a distance provide very much more information than a conventional numbered leg-ring, which is usually only legible when the bird is in the hand. See also under Greenland White-fronts and Eider (later in this section) for further ample demonstrations of this.

The Life and Wanderings of Mute Swan FJ8

Ringed: 19 Oct 1978 - Daliburgh, South Uist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland (57°10'N 7°22'W). Female Cygnet.

Still present at Daliburgh through November but subsequently not seen in S Uist again.

1 July - November 1979 - West Loch Tarbert, on the Kintyre peninsula, Argyll (55°51'N 5°26'W) present in a sealoch with a group of swans, reported by several observers (210 km SE).

26 April - 9 Sept 1980 - River Bann estuary, N Ireland (55°10'N 6°46'W) near Castlerock (near Londonderry). This is 110 km SW of West Loch Tarbert. Left here between 9 and 19 Sept.

17 Oct - 23 Nov 1980 - Old Mill Bay, Larne Loch (54°50'N 5°46'W) (near Belfast) c. 75 km SE along the coast from the Bann estuary; with a group of swans.

7 Dec 1980 - May 1981 - Bann estuary, again at Castlerock.

29/30 May 1981 - Larne Loch, again with a group of swans.

6 Dec 1981 - 17 Jan 1982 - River Bann, once more on the estuary.

3-22 Feb 1982 - Seen at Portrush harbour with a mate, c. 6 km east from the Bann estuary.

4 April 1982 - Seen on the Bann estuary again.

9 Oct - 17 Oct 1982 - Seen at Ballykelly Marsh, Lough Foyle (55°N 7°W) to the West of the Bann estuary.

27-30 Oct 1982 - Still on Lough Foyle, further along at Carrichue (c. 600228). Probably also FJ8 was the bird seen at Longfield (c 560230) in November.

June 1985 - South end of Gigha, Kintyre, Argyll.

Z47698 4M 16.8.81 Bonawe, L Etive: 56°26'N 5°14'W (Argyll)
 v 9.2.85 Connel Bridge: 56°28'N 5°23'W (Argyll)
 Hit Connel Bridge in flight, was taken home by a passing
 motorist, released at North Connel, having apparently
 recovered uninjured.

Greenland White-fronted Goose Anser albifrons flavirostris (Data
 contributed by David Stroud)

As part of the Greenland White-fronted Goose Study of the Dept of
 Biological Sciences, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth,
 expeditions to western Greenland were made in 1979 and 1984 to catch
 and ring birds of this threatened and declining species on its remote
 arctic breeding grounds. Geese were ringed with Darvic leg rings,
 legible at a distance and reading upwards LETTER-DIGIT-DIGIT (right
 leg in 1979, left leg in 1984).

The remarkable success of this ringing programme and the importance
 of Argyll, particularly Islay, in the life cycle of this species may
 be judged from the following findings. They form an illuminating and
 invaluable set of data against which to view the disturbing TV and
 press reports of the Duich Moss controversy.

In 1979, 96 birds were ringed in Greenland. Of these, 65 have since
 been seen or recovered, almost all on their wintering grounds in the
 British Isles. No fewer than 35 of these were on Islay, six at sites
 in Kintyre and two on Coll. Outside Argyll 12 were in Caithness and
 small numbers at L. Lomond, L. Ken, Ireland and shot on passage to
 Iceland.

Of 88 geese ringed in 1984, 36 have since been seen or shot outside
 Greenland. Twenty were on Islay, three on Coll, five on Orkney, five
 in Ireland and three shot on autumn passage in Iceland.

As part of an extensive research programme on this species in Ireland,
 the Irish Forest and Wildlife Service has been individually marking
 geese on the Wexford Slob with neck collars reading DIGIT-LETTER-LETTER.
 One hundred and sixty four were marked in 1984. Three of these have
 appeared on Islay, and two at Machrihanish, Kintyre.

Anyone seeing geese marked with these numbered leg rings or neck
 collars is requested to report the number, date and place to DAVID
 STROUD, 5 PARKWAY CLOSE, NASSINGTON, PETERBOROUGH, PE8 6QM.

Eider Somateria mollissima (this section contributed by C A Galbraith)

Aberdeen University's study of the feeding ecology and movements of
 Eider, mostly undertaken in Argyll, continued throughout 1985. Ringing
 and tagging form an important part of this research, which is due to
 finish in March 1986.

A total of 100 birds were ringed in 1985. All were breeding females
 caught on the nest.

	<u>L Etive</u>	<u>L Fyne</u>	<u>L Linnhe</u>	<u>Bute</u>
Tag Colour	Red	Yellow	White	Blue
Number Tagges	2	40	16	42

During these ringing operations, it was noticed that several nests
 had been disturbed and the incubating eiders killed by mink Mustela
vision. Individuals of other bird species, Curlew Numenius arquata,
 and Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus, which possibly use these
 small islands as roost sites, had also been killed. It seems likely
 that mink will remain a threat to birds using small islands as nesting
 or roosting areas in the future.

Recoveries: Since this study began in early 1983, 284 eiders have been ringed and wing-tagged. Of these 11 (4%) have now been recovered dead, reported by members of the public. There have been sightings of tagged birds involving 111 individuals (43%) excluding those in which tag colour only was reported. This proportion of 10:1 gives an interesting measure of the superior value of individual marks, visible at a distance on the live bird, over conventional leg-rings which are normally only recovered on the death of the bird.

Conventional rings. Of the 11 recoveries of dead ringed birds, seven involved movements of under 10km. The other four are reported below.

HW77589	4F	25.5.83	Loch Linnhe: 56°50'N 5°08'W (Highland)
	x	9.9.85	Nr Benderloch: 56°30'N 5°24'W (Strathclyde)
			40km 204 deg 473 days
			Possible Peregrine kill
HW77658	4F	4.6.83	Loch Fyne 56°06'N 5°14'W (Strathclyde)
	x	28.6.85	Nr Strachur: 56°09'N 5°05'W (Strathclyde)
			11km 59 deg 755 days
HW77750	6M	17.12.84	Inveraray: 56°13'N 5°05'W (Strathclyde)
	x	11.8.85	Prestwick: 55°30'N 4°37'W (Strathclyde)
			85km 160 deg 237 days
HW77736	4F	7.6.84	Fort William: 56°50'N 5°08'W (Highland)
	x	24.4.85	Ardgour: 56°44'N 5°16'W (Highland)
			14km 216 deg 321 days

Tagged Birds. Patterns of movement observed during 1985 followed those of previous years, with birds moving away from the breeding colonies in sealochs in autumn and winter, and returning in late February or March. Most of the birds from Argyll sealochs moved southwards, with tagged birds being reported from within the Clyde estuary.

Two periods of detailed observations on tagged birds within Loch Fyne were carried out. During winter 1984/85 observations revealed much about social structure within wintering flocks feeding on mussel beds. Observations on the use of space by individuals during the prebreeding period (March and April) revealed that each pair or group of birds use only a very limited length of shoreline to "feed up" for egg-laying and incubation. Both these sets of observations relied heavily on being able to recognise tagged birds individually.

Details of sightings of these wing-tagged Eiders are still most welcome. Please send details, giving date, place, tag colour and tag number to COLIN A GALBRAITH, CULTERTY FIELD STATION, NEWBURGH, ELLON, ABERDEENSHIRE, AB4 0AA.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

FV62290	8	13.12.80	Dawlish Warren, Exmouth: 50°37'N 3°26'W
			(Devon)
	x	26.5.85	Glen Orchy: 56°25'N 4°53'W (Argyll)
			651km 352 deg 1625 days

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Seven recoveries, all of birds ringed as chicks near Oban, were reported during 1985. Three of these involved movements of less than 50km. The other four were of follows.

EK23976	1	13.6.84	Connel: 56°28'N 5°21'W (Argyll)
	x	3.6.85	Joppa, Edinburgh: 55°57'N 3°13'W (Lothian)
			144km 114 deg 355 days
EK72813	1	26.6.84	L Craignish: 56°11'N 5°13'W (Argyll)
	x	15.6.85	Salcoats: 55°38'N 4°47'W (Strathclyde)
			76km 143 deg 354 days
EK72728	1	25.6.84	Connel: 56°28'N 5°21'W (Argyll)
	x	17.7.85	Kilmalcolm: 55°54'N 4°38'W (Strathclyde)
			77km 145 deg 387 days
EN24719	1	20.6.85	Dunstaffnage: 56°28'N 5°25'W (Argyll)
	x	13.9.85	Gourock: 55°58'N 4°49'W (Strathclyde)
			67km 146 deg 85 days

Herring Gull Larus argentatus

Eighteen recoveries affecting Argyll were reported for 1985, most of them involving birds ringed by the Dept of Zoology, Glasgow University (Dr P Monaghan). Only those with movements exceeding 100km are given below.

GG06393		4.10.82	Bowmore, Islay: 55°45'N 6°17'W (Argyll)
		29.1.85	Amsterdam: 52°24'N 4°54'E <u>HOLLAND</u>
			818km 117 deg 848 days
GG06361		4.10.82	Bowmore, Islay
		30.5.85	Moray Firth: 57°27'N 4°15'W (Highland)
			226km 33 deg 969 days
GH09091		5.7.83	Gigha: 55°41'N 5°45'W (Argyll)
		11.7.85	Antrim: 54°41'N 6°27'W <u>N IRELAND</u>
			120km 202 deg 737 days
YY04995		31.1.79	Bishopbriggs: 55°54'N 4°14'W (Strathclyde)
		12.7.85	Isle of Mull: 56°27'N 5°39'W (Argyll)
			107km 305 deg 2354 days
GH09768		20.10.83	Moodiesburn: 55°54'N 4°02'W (Strathclyde)
		4.8.85	Tiree: 56°30'N 6°50'W (Argyll)
			185km 291 deg 654 days
GJ71419	1	21.6.83	E nan Gamhn, Lismore: 56°29'N 5°32'W (Argyll)
	v	17.4.85	Moodiesburn
			113 km 125 deg 666 days
GJ99270	1	6.7.84	L Caolisport: 55°53'N 5°40'W (Argyll)
	x	2.1.85	Musselburgh: 55°57'N 3°04'W (Lothian)
			162km 87 deg 180 days
GJ71250	1	28.7.82	Dunstaffnage: 56°28'N 5°25'W (Strathclyde)
	v	12.12.85	Off Turnberry: 55°20'N 4°55'W (Strathclyde)
			130km 166 deg 1233 days
			Alive and released on a trawler.

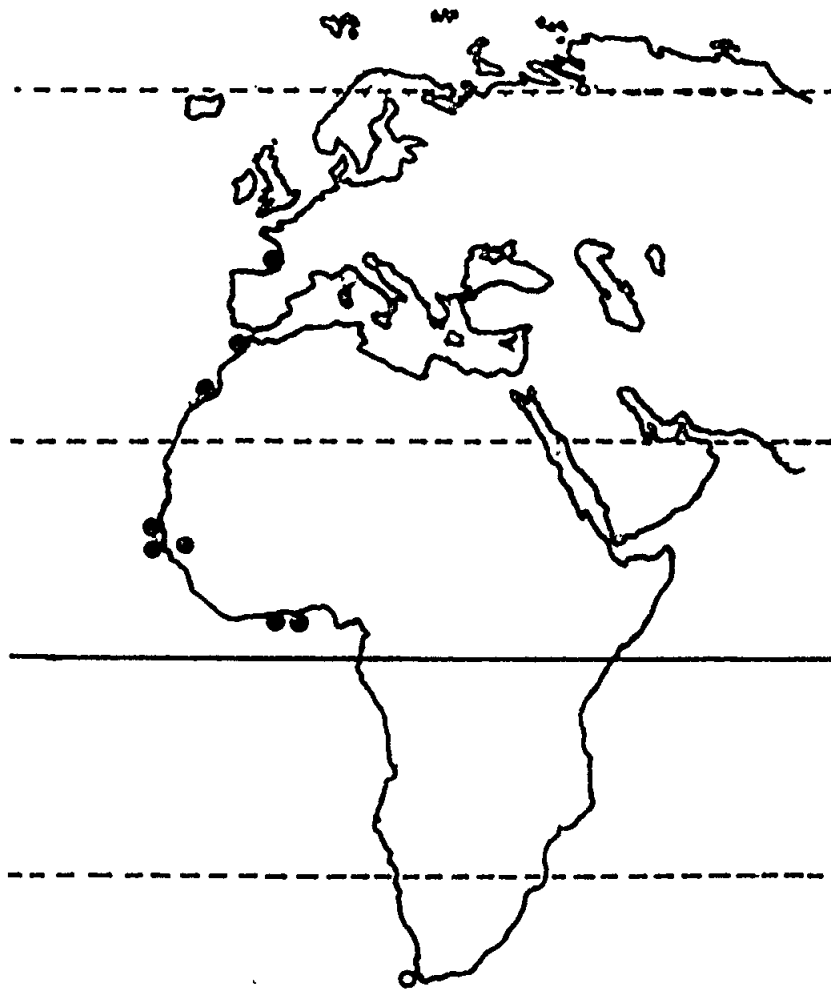
Great Black-backed Gull Larus marinus

HW94918	1	5.7.84	Loch Sunart: 56°40'N 5°59'W (Highland)
	x	23.2.85	Loch Creran: 56°32'N 5°23'W (Argyll)
			40km 112 deg 233 days

Common Tern Sterna hirundo

Arctic Tern Sterna paradisaea

RECOVERIES of TERNS ringed as chicks in Argyll



- 8 Common Tern ringed 1984/5
- 1 Arctic Tern ringed 1983

Fig. 1

In mid-July 1985, chicks of both these species suffered very high, near total mortality from starvation at all the colonies within 80km of Oban. 384 dead chicks were collected in this area, most of them Common Tern, and it is estimated that well over 500 chicks died. North and south of this zone, mortality was much less marked and the chicks were better nourished. This tern mortality coincided strikingly in time and place with a substantial starvation wreck of guillemots, razorbills and kittiwakes. Both episodes are described elsewhere in this report.

In 1984, a much more successful year for breeding of both tern species, but especially Common Tern, 554 chicks were ringed at one Common Tern colony in Argyll. Seven of these have now been recovered, six of them in Africa, and there have been recoveries in Africa from other colonies in Argyll (Fig 1: see below and in Argyll Bird Report 1984 for full details).

In 1985 permission was obtained from the Ringing and Migration Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology to trap adult Common and Arctic Terns at the nest. 160 adults were trapped (82 Common and 80 Arctic). One of the Common Terns was marked with a French ring (GD53877 below). This ring, believed to be made from aluminium, was almost as thin as paper after 12 years on the bird and was easily removed with a fingernail. It is interesting to note that an aluminium ring was reported as being "not excessively worn" after 29 years on an Arctic Tern (Coulson & Horobin 1976), and it seems likely that the warm tropical waters in which Common Terns spend the winter are responsible for this difference. Apparently an extensive programme of ringing and study of Common Terns in the USA uses aluminium rings (LeCroy & LeCroy 1974; Hays 1978; DiConstanzo 1980); this must inevitably introduce bias through ring loss into studies of longevity and mortality of long-lived seabirds. Since the early nineteen-sixties, British rings for use on seabirds have been made from more resistant alloys such as Monel and, more recently, Incoloy.

Recoveries in 1985 affecting the Argyll area were as follows (Common Tern) (see also Fig 1).

PARIS			
GD53877	4	23.10.73	Cap Timiris: 19°23'N 16°32'W <u>MAURETANIA</u>
	vB	18.6.85	Near Oban: ca. 56°N 5°W (Argyll)
			4211km 13 deg 4256 days
			Re-ringed XR15064
XS77687	1	10.7.84	Near Oban
	v	14.5.85	Accra: 5°33'N 0°15'W <u>GHANA</u>
			5682km 175 deg 308 days
XS77879	1	17.7.84	Near Oban
	v	29.9.85	Cap Roxo: 12°20'N 16°43'W <u>SENEGAL</u>
			4999km 191 deg 439 days
XR07304	1	7.8.84	Near Oban
	x	15.6.85	Basse: 13°19'N 14°13'W <u>GAMBIA</u>
			4854km 189 deg 312 days
XR20132	1	14.7.85	Near Arisaig ca. 57°N 6°W (Highland)
	?	11.12.85	Near El Marchoush: 33°32'N 6°36'W <u>MOROCCO</u>

Guillemot Uria aalge

Razorbill Alca torda

A substantial starvation wreck of auks, primarily guillemots (2616 dead counted), kittiwakes (110) and razorbills (97) occurred in the

Loch Linnhe area in July 1985. Of 2720 dead auks counted at that time only eight were ringed. A further three ringed dead guillemots (last three below) found in the same area later in the year suggested that the food shortage which killed the birds persisted into the autumn and winter (see separate section on the Loch Linnhe wreck in the Bird Report). The low percentage of ringed birds suggested very strongly that most of the birds in the primary wreck came from Colonsay, since the two other large auk colonies in this area, Treshnish and Canna, are regularly ringed and believed to carry a much higher percentage of ringed birds. The belief that Colonsay was the source of the dead guillemots was supported by the fact that (a) there were almost no puffins in the wreck, since there are almost no puffins on Colonsay, and (b) the prevailing winds at the time were from the southwest for a considerable period of time; this would have driven weak birds directly from Colonsay into Loch Linnhe and concentrated them at its north end, just as observed.

Razorbill:

M55054	4	25.6.84	Treshnish: 56°29'N 6°25'W (Argyll)
	x	29.7.85	Ardgour: 56°43'N 5°14'W (Argyll)
			77km 70 deg 399 days

Guillemot

T03310	1	30.6.84	Canna: 57°3'N 6°35'W (Highland)
	x	21.7.85	Sallachan: 56°43'N 5°18'W (Highland)
			69km 143 deg 386 days
T09436	1	30.6.84	Fair Isle: 59°32'N 1°37'W
	x	21.7.85	Sallachan: 56°43'N 5°18'W (Highland)
			416km 217 deg 386 days
GJ70971	1	24.6.84	North Sutor, Nigg: 57°42'N 4°0'W (Highland)
	x	20.7.85	Tralee, Oban: 56°29'N 5°25'W (Argyll)
			175km 212 deg 391 days
T14207	1	4.7.84	Canna: 57°3'N 6°35'W (Highland)
	x	13.7.85	Corpach: 56°50'N 5°8'W (Highland)
			91km 105 deg 385 days
T06654	1	3.7.84	Canna
	x	23.7.85	Corpach
			91km 105 deg 385 days
T07032	1	23.6.84	Isle of May: 56°11'N 2°33'W (Fife)
	x	15.7.85	Easdale: 56°18'N 5°39'W (Argyll)
			192km 274 deg 387 days
T12030	1	27.6.84	Ceann Ousedale: 58°9'N 3°34'W (Highland)
	x	1.8.85	Corpach: 56°50'N 5°8'W (Highland)
			174km 213 deg 400 days
T14096	1	1.7.85	Canna
	x	15.8.85	Tralee, Oban
			95km 132 deg 45 days
T05446	1	29.6.84	Foula: 60°8'N 2°5'W (Shetland)
	x	18.10.85	Ormsary: 55°53'N 5°38'W (Argyll)
			516km 204 deg 476 days
T25121	1	27.6.85	An Dun: 58°13'N 3°28'W (Caithness)
	x	3.11.85	Oban: 56°25'N 5°28'W (Argyll)
			233km 211 deg 129 days

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

B572470	3J	18.6.83	North Connel: 56°28'N 5°23'W (Argyll)
	x	25.1.85	Dalton-in-Furness: 54°09'N 3°11'W (Cumbria)
			293km 152 deg 587 days
C010325	3	4.8.84	North Connel
	x	7.2.85	Banwell: 51°20'N 2°52'W (Avon)
			594km 164 deg 187 days

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

B572248	5F	24.4.83	Barcaldine: 56°31'N 5°19'W (Argyll)
	x	2.4.85	Fort William: 56°49'N 5°07'W (Highland)
			35km 20 deg 709 days
C009865	5M	22.1.84	Barcaldine
	x	22.10.85	Onich: 56°43'N 5°14'W (Highland)
			23km 13 deg 639 days

As noted earlier (Craik, 1984), of well over 2,000 chaffinches ringed at Barcaldine, there had hitherto been six recoveries, none over 4km distant. The above two birds had apparently therefore moved an unusually long distance for this population.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

B422940	5M	19.3.83	Wellington: 52°42'N 2°31'W (Shropshire)
	x	8.5.85	Barcaldine: 56°31'N 5°19'W (Argyll)
			461km 337 deg 781 days
C101277	5M	16.4.84	Ardentinny: 56°03'N 4°55'W (Argyll)
	v	15.6.85	Hawick: 55°25'N 2°57'W (Borders)
			142km 120 deg 425 days

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Grey Herons in Argyll 1985

- Mike Madders, Lochdon, Isle of Mull

During 1985, heronries throughout Argyll were surveyed as part of a national census organised by the BTO. The aims of this census in Scotland were to estimate the total number of Herons nesting, determine their relative abundance in various parts of the Country and detect any changes in population that may have occurred since the last national census in 1954. The methods of the 1985 survey were simply to locate and count as many colonies as possible.

Coverage of the remoter parts of Argyll inevitably presented problems and there is consequently a paucity of data for regions 1, 3 and 6. It is estimated that for Scotland as a whole some 66% of colonies were visited (M Marquiss pers. comm.) and this figure would seem to be a reasonable reflection of coverage within Argyll. It is apparent therefore that repeated surveys of this kind can only be expected to show fairly large changes in population, probably in the order of 20% or more.

Analysis of the survey cards reveals a minimum total of 203 occupied nests at 44 heronries visited in Argyll. It is likely that a further 15 to 25 nests were also occupied. Marquiss (1985) estimates that single visit counts at colonies tend to under-record actual breeding pairs by 22% as some pairs fail early or breed late and so remain undetected. If these two factors are taken into account then the population of Grey Heron in Argyll can be put at about 285 pairs, although this probably underestimates the actual population by about one third due to uncounted or undetected colonies. The average number of occupied nests per heronry was 5.97. This compares with an average of 6.9 for Scotland as a whole. The distribution of heronries tended to be concentrated in the western mainland and on the larger islands of Islay, Jura and Mull, although it is not clear to what extent this trend reflects coverage. Colonies were smallest in region 2 with only 3.88 nests occupied per heronry and larger in regions 4 and 5 with averages of 5.7 and 8.45 nests respectively.

All nests located were in trees, with 40% of active colonies situated in conifers in excess of 8 metres, 27% in deciduous trees of less than 8 metres and 33% in mature deciduous trees of over 8 metres in height. Half of those colonies in the latter group were wholly within Beech trees. The larger colonies tended to be in sealochs, with those inland or on open coasts mostly comprising single or scattered nests (see table 2).

Clutch sizes were recorded for only 13 nests, and gave a mean clutch size of 2.61. This compares with a mean of 3.95 obtained from a sample of 222 clutches in England. An average brood size of 1.88 was calculated from data from 16 nests in Argyll, but since the brood size at hatching is unknown for these nests, no meaningful comparisons with other available data is possible.

Comparison of heronries surveyed in both 1954 and 1985 is only possible at 13 sites. Herons frequently move their nesting locality so that known colonies decline and yet there may be a number of undiscovered nests in the vicinity. For this reason comparisons between years at the same site must be treated with caution. Taking sites 1 to 10 detailed in table 3 it can be seen that with the exception of sites 1, 6 and 9 the overall number of occupied nests is in fact identical. However, the total loss of birds from sites 1 and 6, together with a decrease of over 73% at site 9 means that there is an overall decline of nearly 31%. At neither of the 'extinct' colonies was there any human development, forestry operations or obvious disturbance factor during the period between the two surveys. Nearby alternative colonies

were not located despite fairly intensive searching. At site 9, the whole colony is known to have moved in recent years and it is suggested that this is due to relatively high levels of disturbance. In addition to these 13 sites, 11 other heronries identified in 1954 were vacant in 1985. Unfortunately, no data exists for the number of nests occupied in 1954 for these sites. Two colonies were found to have moved locally and another had probably done so. The remainder comprised six sites at which there were still intact nests and two where the site had been at least partially clear-felled. The most recently deserted was that at Eilean Buidhe in Loch Craignish, where the development of a water-sports facility at Craobh Haven has resulted in the construction of a causeway to the island and the felling of several nest trees. No alternative colony has yet been located.

Further information on heronries within Argyll would be welcomed. The BTO wishes to maintain the survey in Scotland and will require a large number of colony counts each Spring. A number of Herons now carry wing-tags and sightings of these birds would be especially useful. I would like to thank all those who took part in the 1985 survey, a full report of which will appear shortly in Bird Study.

Table 1: Occupancy of Surveyed Nests

Region*	No of Heronries Surveyed	Deserted	A Occupancy	B	C (see Key)	D	E
1	2	1	7		1	3	
2	11	2	32	2	1		1
3	3	1	16				
4	13	3	49	5	3		17
5	14	3	80	8	5	9	39
6	1		19				3
TOTAL	44	10	203	15	10	12	60

*Regions correspond to those used throughout the report.

Key A = Nest certainly occupied
 B = Nest probably occupied
 C = Changes of nest occupancy more or less equal
 D = Nest probably not occupied
 E = Nest definitely not occupied

Table 2 : Size and Location of Argyll Heronries

No of Nests	Inland*	Open Coast	Sealoch**
Single	4	1	
2 - 5	3	3	6
6 - 10	1	2	4
11 - 15			6
16 - 20		1	2
21+			1

*Includes freshwater loch sites

**Includes island sites within sealochs

Table 3 : Comparison of Heronries Surveyed in both 1954 and 1985

Site	No of Occupied Nests		% Change
	1954	1985	
1	22	0	Extinct
2	19	21	+9.5%
3	10	7	-30%
4	6	3	-50%
5	4	7	+42.8%
6	8	0	Extinct
7	0	2	
8	8	13	+38.5%
9	19	5	-73.7%
10	20	14	-30%
11	4?	3	
12	12?	8	
13	1?	2	
<hr/>			
TOTAL	123	85	An overall decrease of 30.9%

Note : Sites 11 to 13 were estimated in the 1954 survey.

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Cramp, S and Simons KEL (Eds) : "The birds of the Western Palearctic, Vol. 1" Published 1977

1985 Argyll Mute Swan Census - Preliminary results

- David A Stroud and S F Newton

During the RSPB Black-throated Diver survey in Argyll (May and June 1985), the opportunity was taken to undertake a survey of breeding Mute Swans. The distribution of the Mute Swan in Argyll has previously been investigated by BTO surveys in 1955 and 1978. A more thorough survey of the county was organised for the BTO by Steve Newton in 1983, whilst areas in North Argyll and Mull were surveyed by Richard Coomber in 1982.

All these surveys were limited in their scope and none covered the whole county thoroughly. However, as the distribution of favoured nesting areas remains fairly constant over the years, recent surveys have undoubtedly been more thorough than in the 1955 survey. It was hoped that the 1985 survey, by visiting all lochs systematically, would identify any areas holding breeding swans which had not previously been located.

Comparison between the 1983 and 1985 surveys indicate a broad measure of similarity. However, a full comparison has yet to be made. This note therefore presents preliminary counts and is a plea for information. We would welcome any information on Swans in Argyll during 1985 since this will add to the data we already possess and make any comparison more accurate.

Further, it is hoped to compile a full inventory of all known nest sites, past and present. This will be available to the next organiser of the country-wide Swan survey as well as conservation bodies such as the RSPB and NCC. It is hoped, in this way to collate records which may otherwise be scattered and thus less useful on their own.

All information received will be fully acknowledged and it is hoped to publish a summary of this inventory in the 1986 Argyll Bird Report.

Any information on Mute Swan nesting sites as well as summer sites regularly used by non-breeding birds, would thus be gratefully received by: DAVID A STROUD, 5 PARKWAY CLOSE, NASSINGTON, PETERBOROUGH PE8 6QF.

Summary results of 1985 Mute Swan census undertaken by the RSPB:

Area	Sum Indivs	Territ pairs	Nests def pos	Broods	Deserted /failed nests	Not Foll -owed	Non- Breeder (Indivs)	Total Young of yr
Islay	6	3	1			3		0
Jura	8	2	2	2			4	12
Gigha	0							
Colonsay	?							
Coll	1							
Tiree	52	6	3	3	3		40	16
Mull	19	8	4	4	4		3	15
Loch Creran								
Lismore	?							
Loch Etive	?							
Oban Area	6	3	3		1	2	4	
Seil Isle								
Area	6	3	3	3				11
Knapdale								
Area	22	5	4	4	1		12	22
Loch Fyne	8	4	4	4				11
Cowal & Bute	2	1	1	1				4

Whooper Swans in Islay & Kintyre - Autumn 1985

- Steve Percival, Eric Bignal and Pete Moore

Introduction

The Whooper Swan is primarily an Autumn passage migrant in Islay and Kintyre. In the Autumn of 1985 the area seemed to support particularly high numbers for a long time. The aim of this paper is to identify the main sites in the area, and to show how the swans are using them.

There was thorough coverage of Islay through the whole of October and November by Steve Percival and Pete Moore. On the mainland, the main sites were counted by Eric Bignal during the Greenland White-Front census at the end of November. Together, this gives an idea of the total population in Islay and Kintyre at the end of November, and an indication of the habitats that the birds were using.

Numbers on Islay

There were two distinct periods on Islay: firstly, an early Autumn passage in October, during which almost all the swans flew straight through, stopping only briefly for a few hours, if at all. In mid-late November under 100 were present on the island for about two weeks (see figure 1). The numbers and proportion of juveniles were both stable during this time, suggesting that the same birds were resident. There is further evidence for this from two neck-collared birds, which were present in the Rockside area throughout this period.

Habitat Use

During the November period, when a substantial number were resident on the island, the swans were feeding almost exclusively on barley stubbles. There were a few records of flocks on pastures, but these were usually just resting. Large lochs were used for roosting, both freshwater (Loch Gorm) and salt (Loch Indaal). Birds were occasionally seen upending to feed on submerged vegetation on both these lochs. The choice of roost site seemed to be simply the nearest large expanse of open water to the feeding site.

Numbers in Kintyre

A more or less complete count was made by Eric Bignal during 19-24 November. Two main flocks were found, at Machrihanish and at Killean (see table 1). This gives a total of 151 Whooper Swans in the area at this time. As on Islay, almost all of the mainland birds were seen feeding on stubbles.

Table 1. Main Whooper Swan flocks in Islay & Kintyre, late November 1985

	No Adults	No Juvs	% Juvs	Total
1. Islay : Rockside	31	9	22.5	40
2. Islay : Mulindry/Duich	41	5	10.9	46
3. Machrihanish	28	8	22.2	36
4. Killean	24	5	17.2	29
TOTAL	124	27	17.9	151

Discussion

With a total British and Irish Winter population of c.4500 (Cramp et al, 1977), the numbers recorded in Islay and Kintyre during the Autumn of 1985 represented at least 6.5% of that total. Most of these birds are likely to be on their way to spend the Winter in Ireland. Hopefully the two neck-collared birds that were on Islay in November may be seen elsewhere.

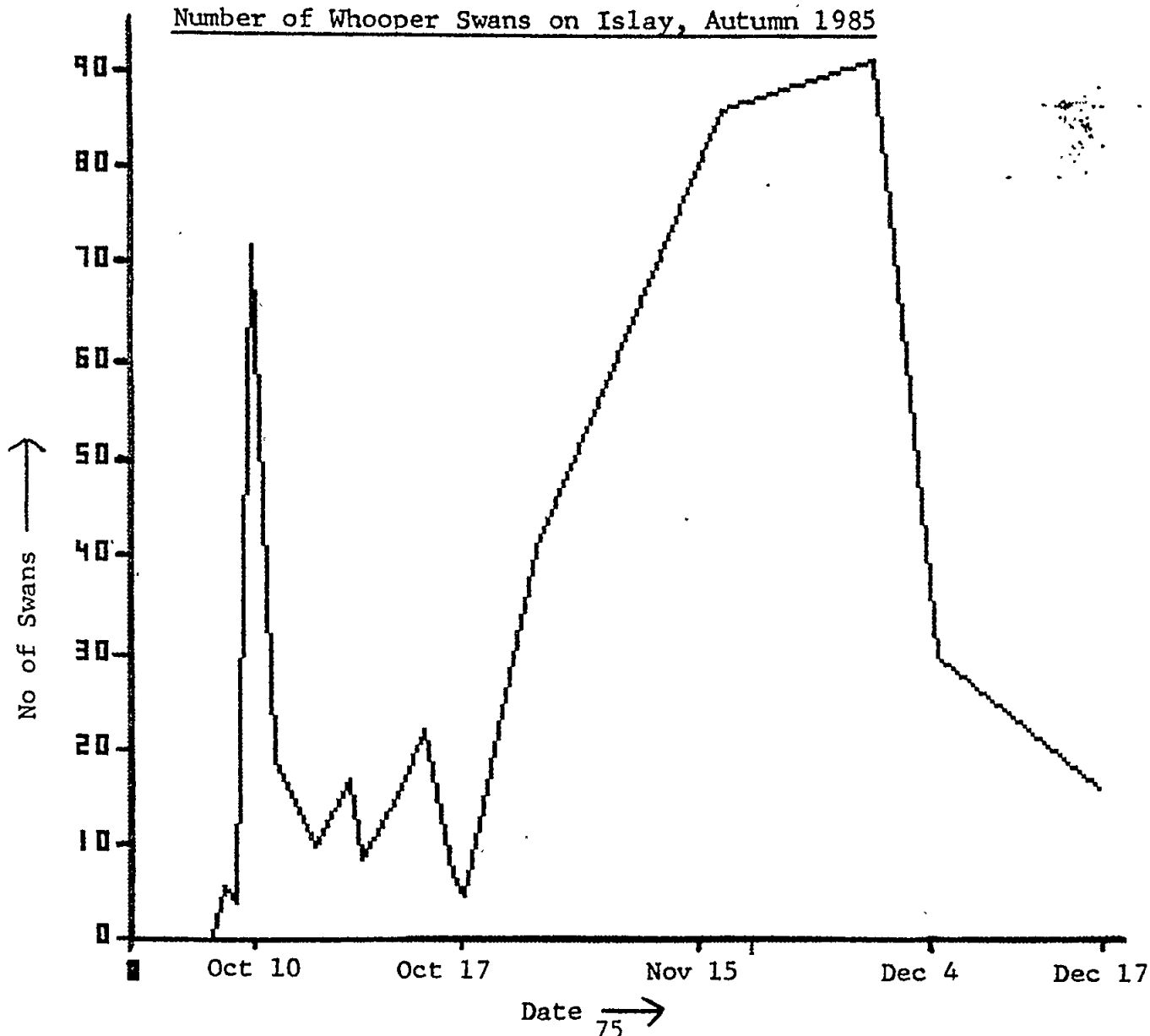
How do this Autumn's counts compare with other years? Approximately the same numbers were recorded in the October passage period on Islay in both 1983 and 1984, but large numbers did not stay for so long through November. Perhaps more swans stayed around longer this year because the dirty harvest provided them with more spilt grain. It makes good sense for birds to take advantage of this abundant high-energy food source, at a time when they need to build up body reserves after migration from Iceland and in preparation for the rigours of Winter.

Reference

Cramp, S and Simons KEL (Eds) 1977 : "Birds of the Western Palearctic, Vol 1". Oxford University Press

Figure 1

Number of Whooper Swans on Islay, Autumn 1985



Barnacle Geese on Islay

- Steve Percival, Zoology Department,
Glasgow University

Islay is the single most important site for the Greenland Barnacle Goose, supporting over 60% of the entire population through the Winter and even greater numbers during the Autumn and Spring. The dramatic increase in numbers using the island during the last 25 years has brought the species into direct conflict with agriculture. The geese face the accusation of causing serious damage to the island's farming, reducing food availability to stock through the Winter and Spring, causing a reduction in silage yield and increasing the rate of degradation of the pasture.

Up till 1981 this goose damage was tackled solely by intensive heavy shooting, but, with the passing of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, the NCC has been able to set up management agreements with several farmers in the more heavily used areas. These farmers are now paid an amount per hectare of improved pasture, to provide the geese with sanctuary areas where they can feed undisturbed. As well as this, the RSPB have purchased a 1200 hectare reserve at Loch Gruinart, which is being managed to attract as many geese as possible from the neighbouring farms. It is hoped that in the near future the large majority of the geese will be accommodated in these refuge areas.

The main aim of my project is to investigate the interaction of the geese with the island's agriculture. I am looking particularly at how much the geese are eating, the significance of the damage that they cause, and how such damage might be alleviated. This involves direct observation of feeding rates in the field, and the comparison of the quality and quantity of grazed and ungrazed experimental areas right through the Winter and up to the first silage cut in June.

The reduction of the agricultural impact of the geese requires both the scaring of birds away from non-sanctuary areas, and the attraction of them to the refuges. Improvement of pastureland on the RSPB reserve by reseedling and application of fertilizers has already brought about a considerable increase in the number of geese using this area. I am carrying out trials to find out the best way in which this management work can be carried out to maximise the benefit to the geese.

I am also looking at the movements of individually darvic-ringed geese, to see how they are using the island. This is particularly important for the planning of an effective scaring programme. If birds were very site-faithfull, scaring would be unlikely to move them to new areas.

THE WATERFOWL OF FRESHWATER LOCHS IN ARGYLL: MAY - JUNE 1985

R.A. Broad, A.J.E. Seddon & D.A. Stroud

INTRODUCTION

There is little published information on the waterfowl of Argyll during the breeding season. The BTO Atlas of Breeding Birds (Sharrock 1976) mapped the distribution of wildfowl using 10 km squares, whilst the distribution of species such as the Mute Swan is better known from specific surveys. The distribution of rarer wildfowl has been briefly summarised in previous Argyll Bird Reports, but there is little other comprehensive or quantitative information. During a complete survey of breeding Black-throated Divers in Scotland, virtually every major loch in the county was visited during May and June 1985. The numbers and distribution of all other waterfowl encountered are reported here.

METHODS

Lochs were identified from 1: 50,000 OS maps and surveyed between the beginning of May and the end of June. Whenever possible, adjacent waters were visited systematically on the same day and in good weather conditions. Many lochs were visited on two occasions, approximately one month apart, but on Jura, Kintyre, Mid Argyll east of the A819, North Argyll (except Rannoch and Black Mount) and Cowal, most lochs received only a single visit. Additionally, a small number of lochs judged to be quite unsuitable for Divers were not visited for other wildfowl either.

No attempt was made to survey all other suitable habitats known to be frequented by waterfowl, eg coastal areas, rivers, burns, marshes and tiny dubh lochans. The physical characters of each loch, the numbers and, where known, the sexes of birds present together with any information on breeding were recorded on record cards. Breeding was assessed as possible, probable or proven after Sharrock (1976).

For convenience, the data for Loch Awe which falls into 6 separate 10 km squares, is divided into its constituent squares.

COVERAGE

Most of mainland Argyll was surveyed with the exception of Kintyre south of Campbeltown, and Cowal south-west of the Strachur to Ardtinny road. Neither of these excluded mainland areas or unsurveyed 10 km squares in North Argyll are known to hold important loch systems with significant numbers of wildfowl (Figure 1).

The island of Jura was systematically surveyed only once in June, and Islay was selectively surveyed in May and June. The other main islands were not comprehensively surveyed for all species of wildfowl, but where counts are available from other observers, these are used to estimate full county populations. Such extra information mainly relates to Mull, Colonsay and Tiree.

RESULTS

A total of 493 lochs were visited and, of 326 visited in May 168 (51.5%) held waterfowl. Only 154 (50.1%) out of 307 were apparently occupied in June. Lochs surveyed varied in size from the huge Loch Awe (39,000 ha) to tiny dubh lochans less than 1 ha in extent. Altitudinally they ranged from about sea-level to 630 m above sea level. The distribution of the surveyed lochs by area and altitude is shown in Figure 1.

In terms of physical characteristics the majority were at mid-altitude (150 - 350 m above sea level) and of small size (up to 20 ha). Ecologically they were generally oligo-mesotrophic in nature with low productivity and with generally little emergent vegetation. The few lowland lochs, such as Lochs Nell, Seil and the Black Lochs, tended to be large, appeared more productive in terms of vegetation and held more waterfowl.

The bird data is summarised in Table 1. Where more than one visit was made to a loch, the number of birds shown in Table 1 is the maximum figure for each species, based on all available visits. Where appropriate, the numbers of birds recorded have been converted to indicate the number of pairs that these figures are estimated to represent. These figures should be read in conjunction with the individual species accounts below.

Despite obvious shortfalls, the survey indicates the order of magnitude of wildfowl populations using open water habitats in Argyll. Estimates are likely to be minimum figures, but from Table 1 and from the figures, it can be seen that many of Argyll's breeding waterfowl are localised. Large areas of the county hold few favoured water bodies and consequently the breeding populations are small.

RED-THROATED DIVER Gavia stellata

This species nests even on small dubh lochans and feeds mainly on the sea. It was beyond the scope of this survey to visit all suitable nesting areas, and where the survey was restricted mainly to larger waters, such as on Islay, some pairs will undoubtedly have been missed. A total of 55 pairs were located, the majority within easy reach of the sea. Their distribution appears to have changed little since the BTO Atlas survey of 1968-71 (Sharrock 1976), except perhaps for an apparent extension into the area between Loch Awe and Loch Fyne. The results indicate that this species shows a strong preference for small oligotrophic lochs (less than 8 ha in extent) at higher altitudes. In suitable habitat up to 7 pairs per 10 km square were located, with an average density of 2.0 pairs per occupied 10 km square. After making allowance for dubh lochans that were incompletely surveyed, the total population for the survey area could be in the region of 68 - 88 pairs. Red-throated Divers are late nesters and consequently there were very few confirmed breeding records during the survey.

Additional to this survey some 7 pairs were found breeding on Coll in 1985 and a further 5 pairs were seen on Mull.

LITTLE GREBE Tachybaptus ruficollis

A total of 27 pairs were located during the survey, but some birds were undoubtedly missed. The most favoured habitat appeared to be small, lowland and eutrophic waters rich in emergent vegetation and with high invertebrate productivity. Such habitat was incompletely surveyed and, on Islay where the species is known to breed, none were recorded during the survey. Although other pairs may have been missed elsewhere, the distribution does appear to be rather different to that previously documented in the BTO Atlas (1968-71) and in previous Argyll Bird Reports. It is more widespread in Mid Argyll where there were few found in the Atlas period, and there was only a single record from Kintyre where it was said to be particularly plentiful (Argyll Bird Reports 1983 and 1984). The actual population of the survey area is unlikely to be less than 40 - 50 pairs.

During 1985 one pair was known to breed on Mull, and three pairs were found breeding on Colonsay.

CORMORANT Phalacrocorax carbo

Up to three birds were recorded from each of 5 of the 10 km squares searched in Mid and North Argyll. There was no suggestion that any birds were breeding inland and all birds seen closely were in immature plumage.

MUTE SWAN Cygnus olor

Information from this survey, supplemented by additional observations from other habitats, are reported elsewhere in this report. Mute Swans in Argyll are exclusively lowland in their distribution and the highest recorded was at 70 m above sea level. Moderate sized lochs are preferred as nest sites.

WHOOPEE SWAN Cygnus cygnus

A pair was seen in suitable habitat in early May but had left the loch before June without attempting to nest.

WIGEON Anas penelope

In May the majority of Scottish breeding Wigeon should have dispersed and settled on their breeding areas. Thus a mixed sex flock of 17 on Loch Awe on 9 May were considered unlikely to have been local birds and were probably late migrants. This flock is excluded from the following total which records 18 pairs on Islay, Kintyre, Mid Argyll in the Loch Awe area and North Argyll in the Rannoch and Black Mount area.

TEAL Anas crecca

It was noticeable that while there were few records in May, Teal became more obvious in June. By this time, females were feeding with newly hatched young, and pairs, possibly failed breeders, were also more evident on upland lochs. A total of 76 pairs were located but the real total could be considerably more as Teal often associate with small dubh lochans and peaty pools which were incompletely surveyed. Teal were as widely distributed as Mallard, but occurred in smaller numbers and generally appeared to select smaller lochs at higher altitudes. Sharrock (1976) refers to average densities of 3-5 pairs per occupied 10 km square when all habitats are surveyed. The figure for open water habitats in Argyll approximates to these figures, with 1 - 10 pairs (mean 3.2 pairs) per occupied 10 km square. The first females with young were seen on 1 June and the mean size of 7 broods was 4.7 (range 1-8; sd 2.7).

Additional to this survey 3 pairs were found breeding on Colonsay and at least one pair on Tiree.

MALLARD Anas platyrhynchos

The Mallard is the most numerous and widespread of breeding waterfowl in Britain and Argyll. It was found in all but 25 of the 67 10 km squares surveyed. Distribution was similar to that found in the BTO Atlas period of 1968-1972, although as with other species, small numbers on Islay reflect the brief selective coverage given to the island rather than indicating the true picture. The absence from the extreme south of Kintyre is also due to lack of coverage.

A total of 357 pairs were found, but the true figure for all habitats is undoubtedly considerably higher. A mean of 8.5 pairs per occupied 10 km square was found, but apparent densities ranged widely from 1 - 33 pairs per square. Mallard were recorded on the whole range of lochs, from the smallest to the largest, but, while young were found on a tiny lochan at 503 m above sea level, most appeared to select lochs of medium size (4-20 ha) and at low to moderate altitude (less than 300 m above sea level).

Females with young were seen from 11 May onwards and the mean brood size of 39 broods was 4.0 (range 1-11; sd 2.2). There was no significant fall in mean brood size during the period 11 May - 31 June as might have been expected.

Additional to this survey at least 6 pairs were seen on Colonsay whilst 4 pairs were seen on Coll. Birds bred on Tiree although no counts are available. Mallard were recorded from 12 of 20 10 km squares on Mull. If densities were similar to the mainland, this suggests a population of at least 100 further pairs on Mull.

PINTAIL Anas acuta

Breeding was proved at two sites where single females with young were recorded.

SHOVELER Anas clypeata

Breeding was proved at one site where a single female was seen with a brood of 6.

POCHARD Aythya ferina

Suprisingly there were no records of Pochard from any of the waters surveyed in May and June. In previous years, small numbers have been reported on the mainland in the summer and it is said to be a very scarce breeder in the county (Argyll Bird Report 1983 and 1984).

TUFTED DUCK Aythya fuligula

In terms of abundance this species was, after Mallard and Teal, the third commonest duck recorded. It was widely but thinly distributed during the breeding season, mainly on the lower and large lochs. Tufted Duck were found on 21 water bodies in 20 different 10 km squares. On most, numbers rarely exceeded 1-4 birds with the exceptions of Loch Awe in Mid Argyll (11), Tangy Loch in Kintyre (7) and Loch Gorm on Islay (6). The overall distribution was broadly similar to that found during the BTO Atlas period, perhaps with more records in Mid Argyll. Some birds were undoubtedly non-breeders, but it is possible that breeding occurs regularly at a number of sites. Since the Tufted Duck is a relatively late nester, the present survey was completed before many successful broods would have become obvious.

In the future it would be useful if observers would submit any records of positive breeding to clarify the exact status of this species in Argyll.

Further to this survey three pairs were found breeding on Colonsay, whilst two pairs were seen on Mull.

SCAUP Aythya marila

Two males and a female were located on a suitable upland loch in Mid Argyll during late May. There was no evidence of any serious breeding attempt and the birds had departed by a second visit in late June.

COMMON SCOTER Melanitta nigra

Birds were recorded at two sites. On Islay, where young were seen in 1982, 9 birds were present on 14 May, whilst on the mainland, three (1 male and 2 females) were recorded at a site in Mid Argyll on 9 & 20 May. There was no further evidence of breeding on Islay, but on 6 August a female was seen with two young on the mainland.

GOLDENEYE Bucephala clangula

Eleven birds, all females, were recorded in six 10 km squares in May and at one additional square in late June. Most were on Loch Awe where there were 5 in May, but nowhere was there any positive evidence of breeding. It is somewhat difficult to compare distribution with that shown during the BTO Atlas period. At that time, Goldeneyes were being regularly recorded in many areas of Scotland during the summer but went unrecorded, having been assessed as non-breeding individuals. In 1971 breeding was proven in Inverness-shire and the species is now well-established and expanding (Dennis & Dow 1984). This leads us to hope that colonisation of Argyll in the future is a real possibility. In anticipation of this, 1986 will see the extension into Argyll of the nest box scheme which has successfully encouraged breeding in Inverness-shire. Funding for this optimistic project has been kindly provided by the Forestry Commission.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER Mergus serrator

This species is known to be widespread in Argyll. During the present survey birds were recorded from 23 lochs in 19 10 km squares. The most favoured sites selected were of moderate size and the smallest lochs were generally avoided. With the exception of the very largest lochs, eg Loch Awe, which extends over several squares, the number rarely exceeded 1-2 pairs per loch. In areas where the majority of standing water bodies were thoroughly covered, in the order of 1-3 pairs were found per 10 km square. It is anticipated that survey of other suitable habitats, particularly in coastal areas, would increase these figures. Surprisingly, the highest density found was on Rannoch Moor, remote from the sea, where 7 pairs were located in NN34. Broods of 1, 7 and 11 were recorded.

Additional to this survey at least 2 pairs were found on each of Coll and Tiree, whilst Mull held at least 4 pairs.

GOOSANDER Mergus merganser

This survey of open waters confirms the general distribution of Goosanders recorded during the BTO Atlas period for all habitats. All 1985 records were from Mid and North Argyll, with the main concentration of records on Loch Awe and a lesser number in the Rannoch Moor area. The rapid decline in the number of males between May and June (Table 2), conforms to the pattern identified elsewhere in the British breeding range. There is growing evidence that males undergo an extensive moult migration, leaving breeding areas in late May and early June to moult in northern Norway (Little & Furness 1985). Females generally stay to moult on their breeding grounds.

Table 2. Numbers of Goosanders recorded in Argyll during May and June.

	MAY		JUNE	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Mid Argyll	18	22	1	21
North Argyll	3	5	0	6
TOTAL	21	27	1	27

The birds recorded during the survey on open waters probably includes non-breeding birds and by June could also include failed breeding females. Without counts from the main river systems it is difficult to be certain of the size of the Argyll breeding population. There is an urgent need for this basic information at a time when DAFS are issuing licences to some Scottish fishing interests to kill Goosanders.

COMMON GULL Larus canus

This species is widely distributed as a breeding species in Argyll, and many of the numerous lochs, particularly those with islands, have breeding colonies. Generally, these colonies contain few pairs, typically about five, but 675 pairs were recorded in total from the area surveyed.

MOORHEN Gallinula chloropus

Surprisingly, no Moorhen were recorded during the survey. The BTO Atlas suggests that Moorhen had a localised distribution within Argyll in 1968-71. The absence of records is probably due to the type of survey undertaken, but any records of confirmed breeding in Argyll in future years would be welcomed to determine the status of the species within Argyll.

COOT Fulica atra

Argyll lies at the limit of the breeding range of Coot in SW Scotland, although the historical absence of records in the county may also reflect shortage of suitable habitat: eutrophic lowland lochs. Coot were only recorded from two sites in 1985, at Loch Leathan and Loch Nell. Both these productive lowland lochs had a rich waterfowl community.

CONCLUSIONS

The figures presented here are put forward to indicate the orders of magnitude of wildfowl populations on open water habitats in Argyll during the breeding season. They should not be taken as precise figures. The data cards for the individual sites provide a useful inventory from which it is a simple matter to identify the water bodies most favoured, both in range of species and in numbers of birds. It is hoped that this baseline information will form the basis for more accurate assessments in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to a number of people who supplied additional information on the status of wildfowl in Argyll and to others who helped with the field survey work. These include: Dr E. M. Signal, S. Signal, Dr L. Campbell, T.D. Dick, C.A. Galbraith, I. Hopkins, M. Garnett, Dr A.R. Jennings, J. Matthew, K. Morton, S. Payne, N. Penford, L. Street, H. Embelton and Dr J. Stroud. Dr A.D. Fox kindly commented on the paper. Mike Madders and J & P Clarke kindly supplied additional information for the islands of Mull, Coll, Tiree and Colonsay. Many landowners kindly gave permission for access, and the Forestry Commission in particular gave considerable help and advice.

The survey was funded by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

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Figure 1. Distribution of lochs in Argyll by size and altitude.

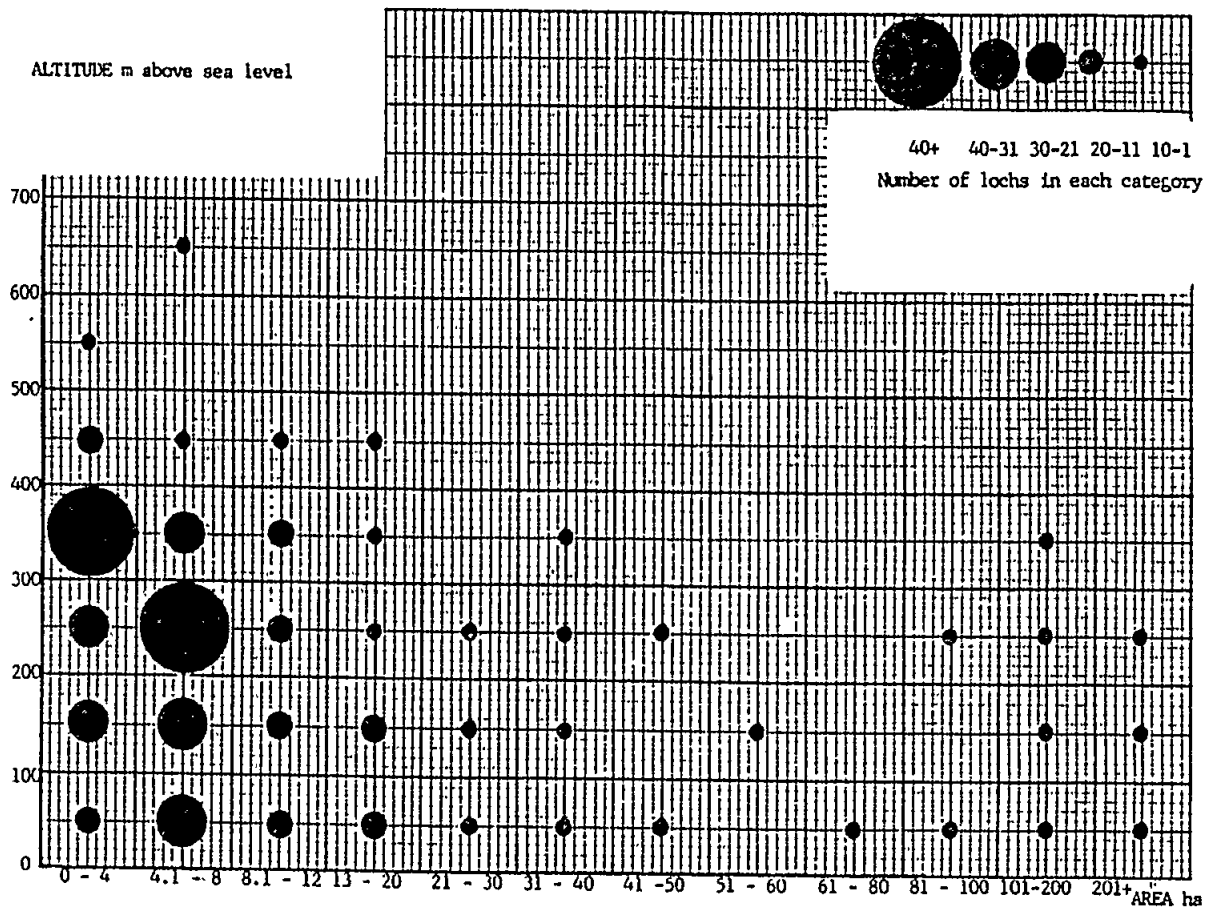


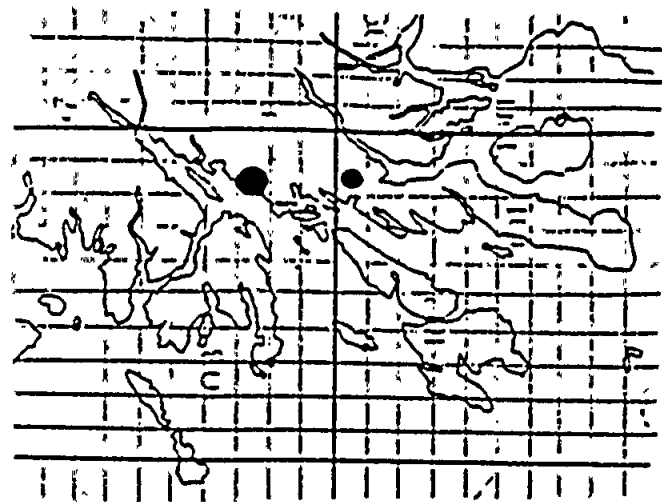
Table 1. Numbers of waterfowl on Argyll freshwater lochs in May and June 1985 summarised by 10 km squares.
a = total number of birds recorded b = estimated numbers of pairs.

10 Km square	Red-T Diver	Little Grebe	Mute Swan	Wigeon	Teal	Mallard	Tufted Duck	Golden-eye	Red-b Merganser	Goosander	Common Gull
NN00	a b	a b	a b	a b	a b	a b	a b	a	a b	a	b
NN01	6 4	1 1			1 1	2 2	2 1				20
NN02	3 2	2 1		17*	2 1	33 26	6 5		2 1	3	34
NN03										10	5
NN04											
NN10											
NN11		2 1			3 2	4 3	1 1			1	22
NN12					22 19		3 2	4	6 3	8	12
NN13											
NN14											
NN20						2 2			2 0-2		12
NN21					3 2	8 6					2
NN22					2 2	3 3					
NN23											
NN24				6 4	6 5	5 5					
NN33											
NN34	2 1			7 4	5 4	22 21	3 2	1	14 7	6	7
NN35					4 3					2	
NN41											
NN60	1 1										
NN70						1 1					
NN71		1 1					6 3				
NN80		1 1	3 2	2 2		13 12	6 5	1	3 1	1	21
NN81	4 2	3 3	2 1			15 14		2	1 1	1	11
NN82	2 1		4 2			1 1	1 1		2 1	1	75
NN83		2 2	2 1			11 9	1 1				
NN90	1 1				6 5	24 20	3 2		3 2	4	190
NN91	1 1	5 5		3 3	6 6	34 33	9 9		3 1	8	7
NN92		2 2			2 2	10 8		1	10 4-9		7
NN93		4 4	3 2		10 6	12 12	4 3	1		3	3
NN94	2 1	1 1		3 2		4 2			1 1		
NN95	4 2										
NS19											
NR16						1 1					2
NR24											

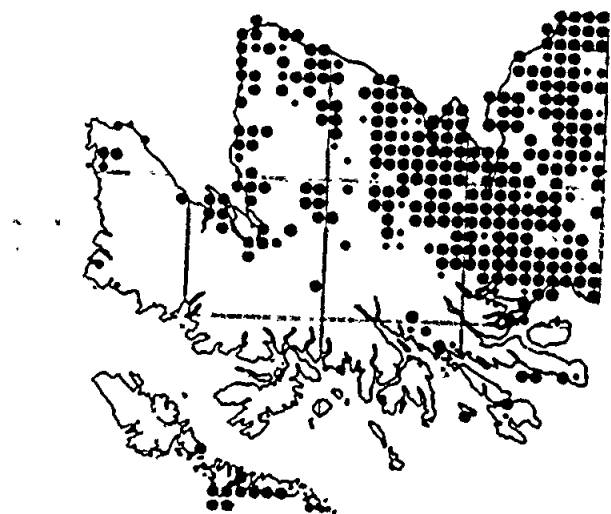
*Party of 17 thought to be late migrants (see text).

Table 1 cont.

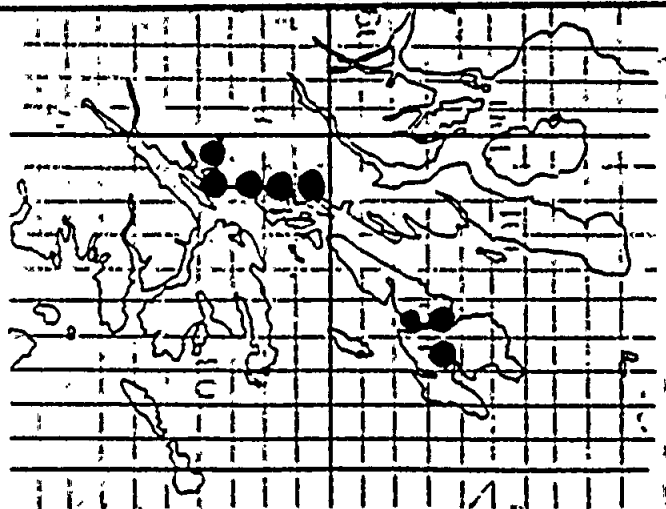
10 km	Red-t Diver	Little Grebe	Mute Swan	Wigeon	Teal	Mallard	Tufted Duck	Golden -eye	Red-b Mergnsr	Goosander	Common Gull										
	a b	a b	a a b	a b a b	a a b	a a b	a b	a	a b a	a	a										
NR26	2	2							5												
NR27				1	1	1			0-5		25										
NR34	2	2		1							21										
NR35																					
NR36	2	1	2	1		7	3		2	1											
NR44					2	1															
NR45	1	1			3	2	9				8										
NR46	2	1	2	1	3	2	2				1										
NR47	5	3	2	1	3	3															
NR56						2	1														
NR57	2	1			3	16	12				6										
NR58	7	5			6	5	7														
NR59						1	1														
NR62							14	7													
NR63																					
NR68					3	2	4	3													
NR69	6	3			2	2	5	4													
NR72						2	2														
NR73	1	1	1	1		4	3				16										
NR74	4	3				1	1				23										
NR75	4	2			3	3	8		5	3	50										
NR76	2	1							4	2											
NR77																					
NR78		3	2			10	8		1	1	7										
NR79		1	1			10	9		2	1											
NR85	6	4			4	3	5				6										
NR86																					
NR87	3	2							2	1											
NR88	12	7	2	1	3	11	10				48										
NR89		1	1			19	13				26										
NR95																					
NR97	2	1																			
NR99	2	1																			
TOTALS	89	55	35	27	20	11	24	8	102	76	427	357	81	60	11	5	3	34-46	48	8	675
Additional information from other sources:																					
Colonsay		6	3						6	3	9	6	4	3							
Coll	7																				
Mull	3	1										see text						2+	4	1	
Tiree									1	1			4	2				2+			



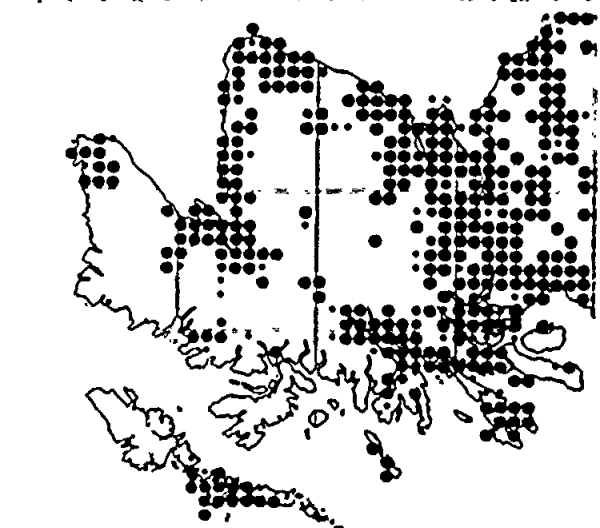
COOT 1985



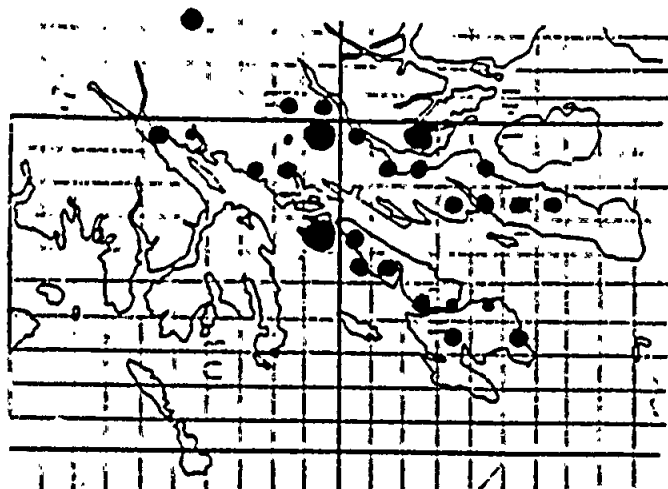
COOT
1968-71



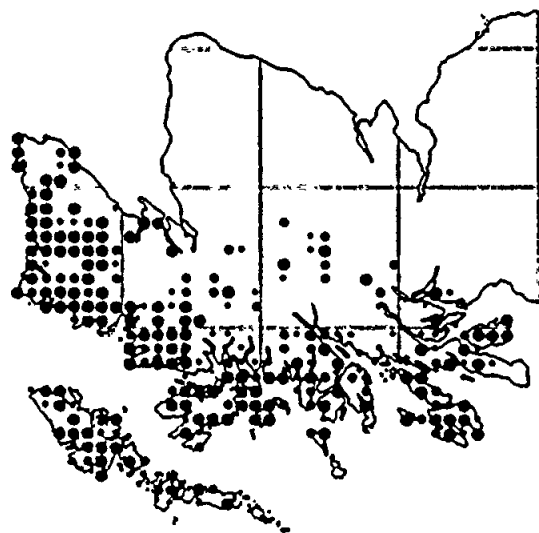
MUTE SWAN 1985



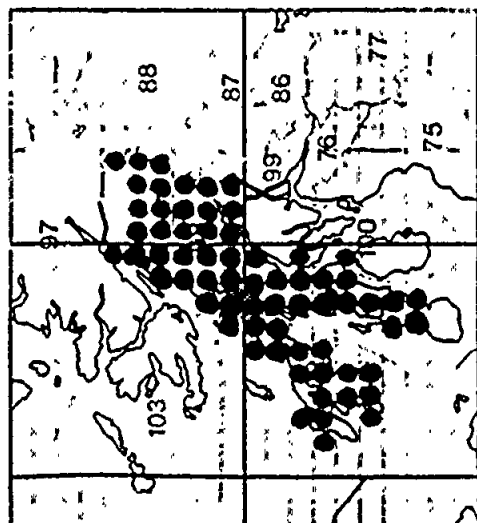
MUTE SWAN
1968-71



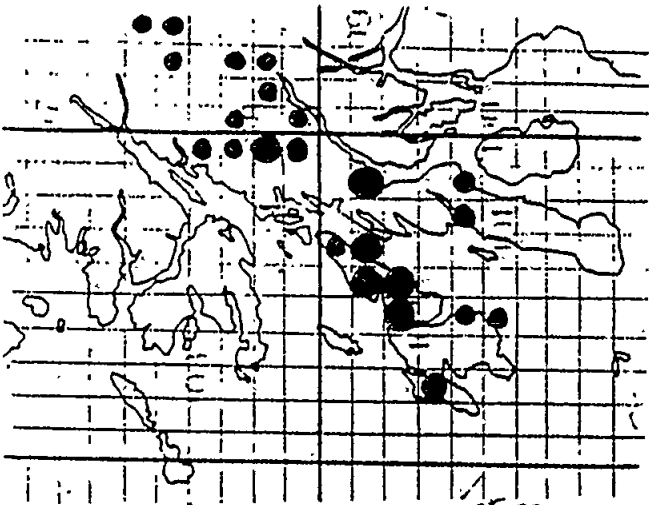
RED-THROATED DIVER
1985



RED-THROATED DIVER
1968-71



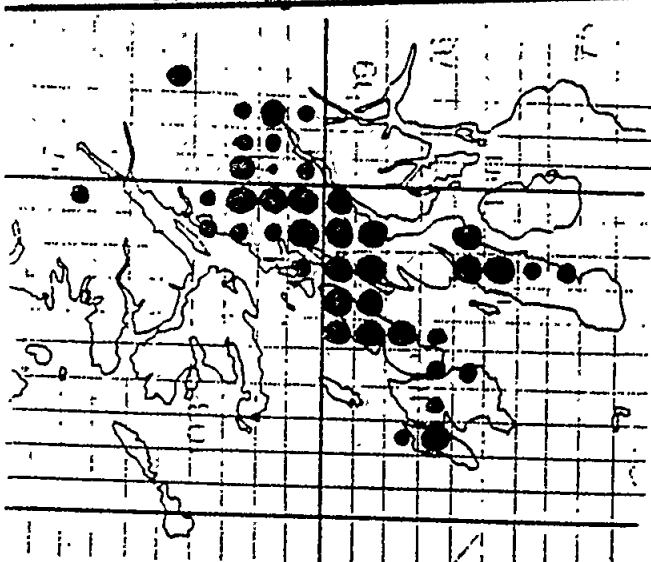
COVERAGE OF THE 1985 SURVEY
Each dot represents a 10 km
square surveyed.



TEAL
1985



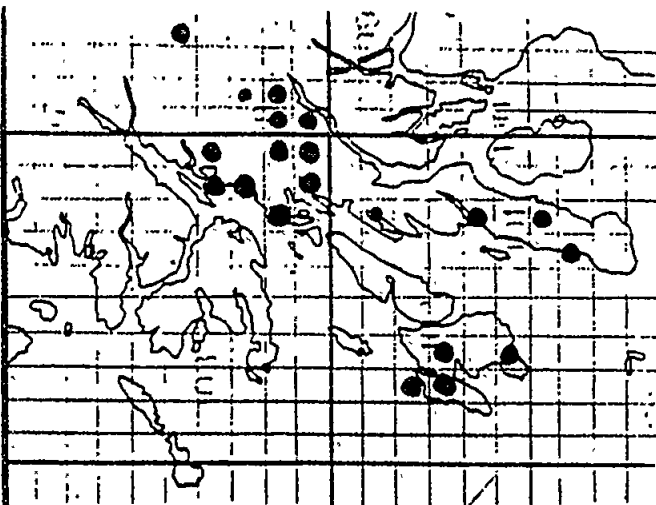
TEAL
1968-71



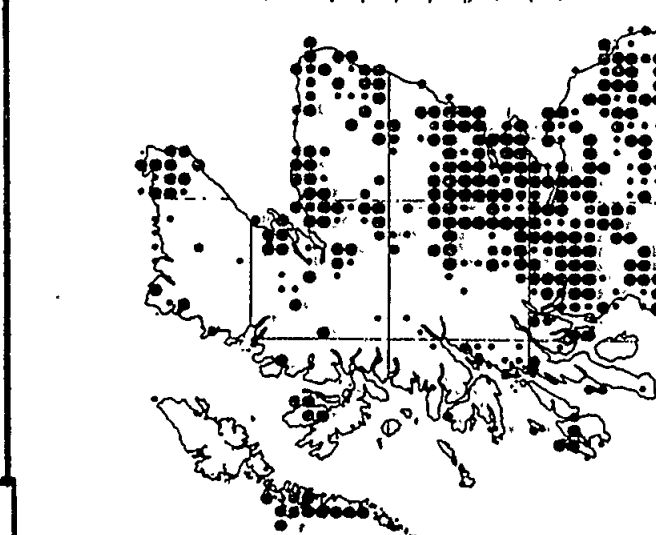
MALLARD
1985



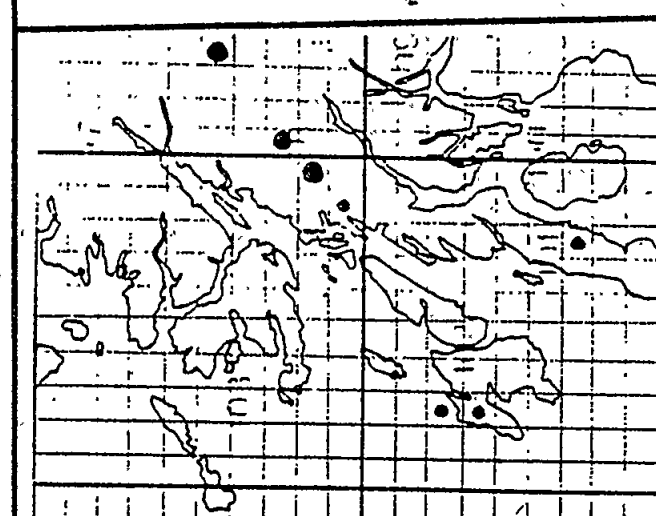
MALLARD
1968-71



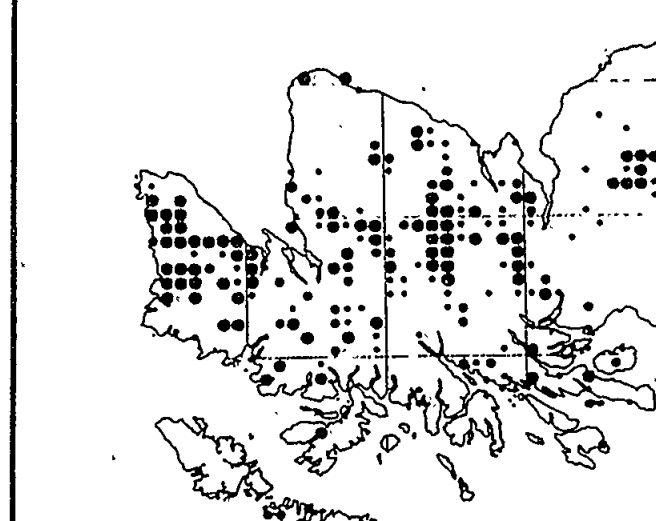
TUFTED DUCK
1985



TUFTED DUCK
1968-71



WIGEON
1985

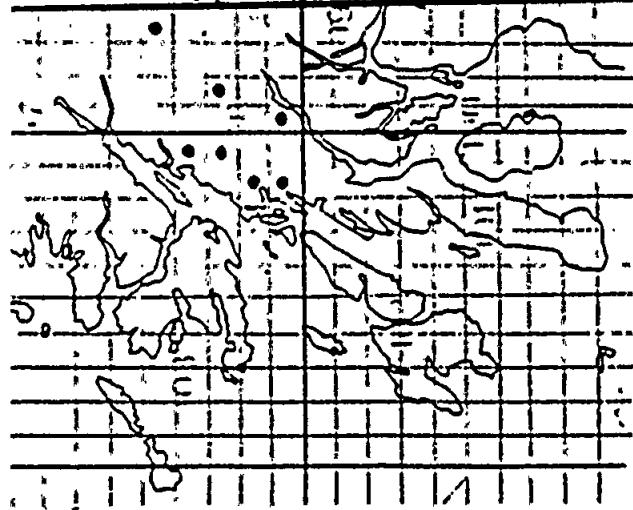


WIGEON
1968-71



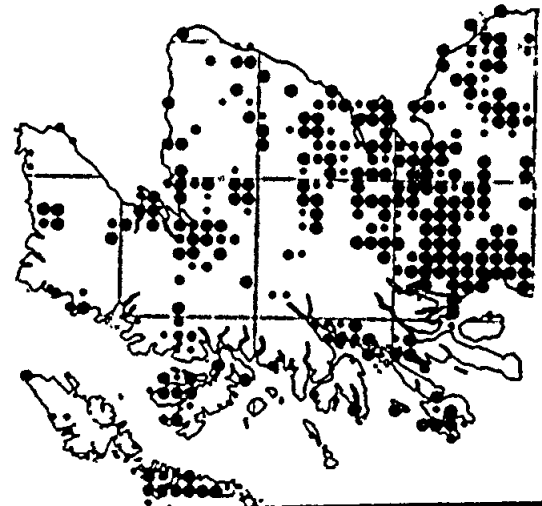
GOLDENEYE

1968-71



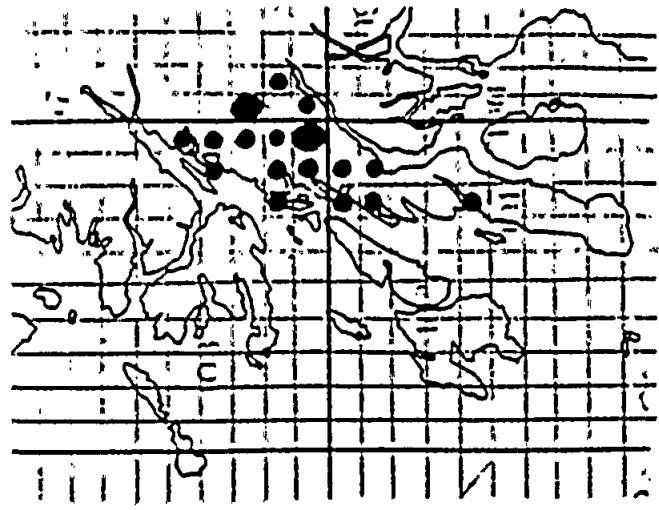
GOLDENEYE

1985



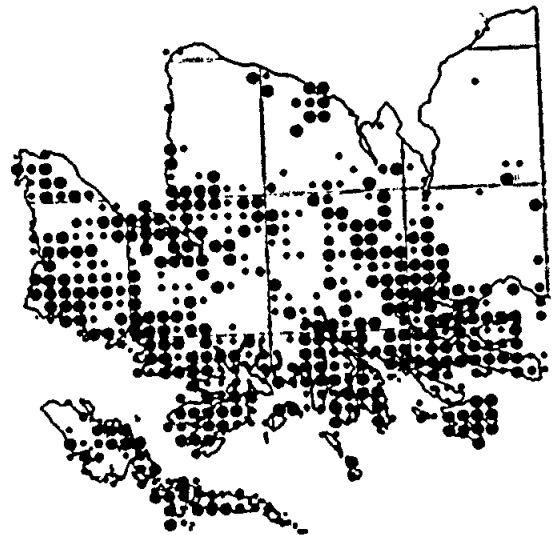
LITTLE GREBE

1968-71



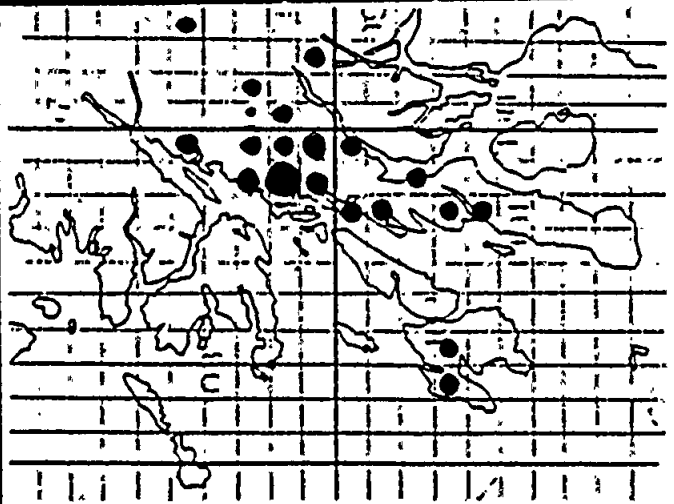
LITTLE GREBE

1985



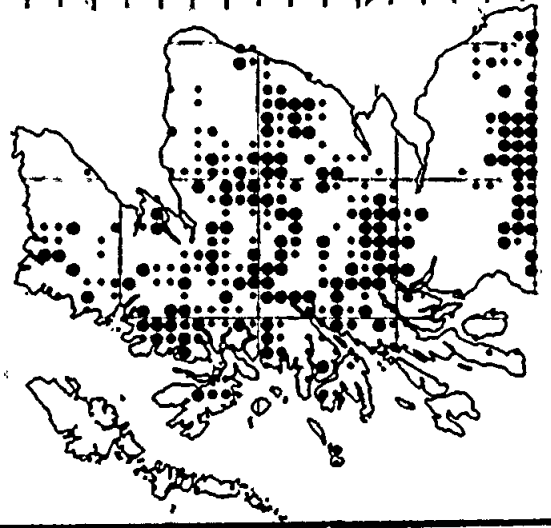
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

1968-71



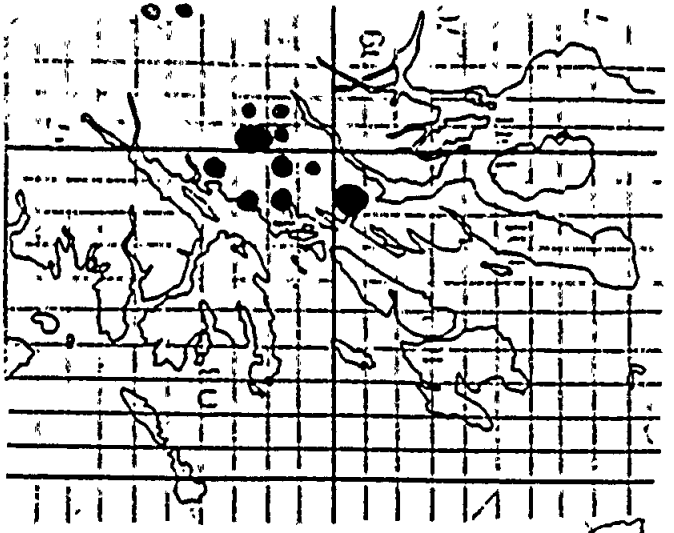
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

1985



GOOSANDER

1968-71



GOOSANDER

1985

The Status of the Corncrake on Islay 1985

- Dr Judy Stroud

The Corncrake 'Crex crex' is now one of the rarest British birds and is increasingly threatened in Western Europe as a whole. A drastic decline over the past 40 years from its widespread distribution now means that, in Britain, it is almost entirely confined to the north and West of Scotland. The decline was first seen in the second half of the 19th Century in SE England, in the areas of greatest cultivation, and is largely attributed to the mechanisation of farming operations.

A national survey in 1978-9 organised by the British Trust for Ornithology and the Scottish Ornithologists Club (Cadbury 1980) found that out of 700-712 calling birds recorded all but 12 were in Scotland. The Outer and Inner Hebrides accounted for 37% and 34% respectively of calling birds with the highest densities on Tiree and on the Uists and Benbecula. The number of 10km squares in which Corncrakes were probably breeding was only 30% of the total occupied in the 1963-72 'Atlas' survey (Sharrock 1976). On Islay 22-24 calling birds were recorded in 1978. The decline on Islay, on the Rhinns, was rapid between 1968 and the mid-1970's as more farmers began cutting grass for silage instead of hay (J. Dawson pers. comm.). Since then agricultural grants for drainage and reseedling have continued apace and silage has replaced hay over most of the island. It is not only the earlier cutting time of grass for silage which affects the breeding of Corncrakes but the low variety of plant species and consequent low diversity of invertebrates on which the young feed which also contributes (Cadbury 1980).

A repeat survey was carried out on Islay in June 1985 in an attempt to assess the current status of the Corncrake against the background of rapid agricultural changes since the last survey in 1978.

Methods

The methods adopted in the 1985 survey of Corncrakes on Islay were similar to those used in the 1978-9 survey (Cadbury 1980). Suitable areas of habitat were visited between 2100 and 0100 hrs (BST) in June and calling birds were recorded and plotted on an 1:50 000 OS map. Where possible, weather conditions, habitat details and the precise timing of the calls were also recorded. A complete survey of all suitable habitat was not possible and a request for information on past and present locations of Corncrakes was also made on the island to which there was an enthusiastic response. From all the information gathered it has been possible to draw up a fairly comprehensive site inventory of calling birds which will provide a basis for further survey work, in particular the projected national survey in 1987.

Results

1985 Survey

A total of 20-29 calling Corncrakes were recorded on Islay in June 1985 the density per 10km square is shown in Figure 1. Of these the majority (12-18 calling birds) were located on the Rhinns and in NW Islay (NR 26, 25 & 15) with a further 3-5 in the Bridgend area (NR 36). No calling birds were recorded from NR 27, 37, 47, 44 or 45.

Recent Changes in Status

A total of 82 known Corncrake calling sites from which birds have been recorded at least once in the last 25 years have been collected and more sites may yet be added to this list. Of these 82 sites a maximum

of 35% were thought to be occupied by a calling bird in 1985. A comparison between the distribution and density of all known sites 1960-1985 with those located only in 1985 (Figure 2) gives a general impression of the areas in which the decline has been most severe. In the Portnahaven area (NR 15) where traditional farming and crofting methods have been maintained there appears to have been no decline. This contrasts markedly with the rest of the island. Out of 22 known sites around Bridgend (NR 36) only a maximum of 5 were occupied in 1985 and, similarly, out of 30 sites in NR 25 and 26 only a maximum of 11 sites held calling birds in 1985. A significant decline was also noted in the Port Ellen area (NR 34).

Habitat

Habitat details were recorded from 18 sites in 1985. Of these, 9 calling birds were located in grass to be cut for silage or hay, 4 in wet pasture with tall vegetation or boggy ground with yellow flags Iris pseudacorus, 2 in barley fields and 3 in rough vegetation - one from butterbus Petasites hybridus, one from nettles Urtica dioica and one from an old market garden.

Discussion

The method of surveying Corncrakes in which roads and tracks are patrolled at night and calling birds mapped has many disadvantages but the time available usually precludes more detailed survey techniques. During the day birds can travel quite widely and peak calling is between midnight and 0200 (T. Stowe pers. comm.) so it is extremely difficult to interpret records of calling birds on successive site visits. Occasionally two nests have been found in areas assumed to be occupied by a single pair (Pickup 1985) and added to this a female bird at Edinburgh Zoo in 1972 called just as clearly and persistently as her mate. From local knowledge it appears that, on Islay, some calling birds are only heard early in the breeding season and others call only after midnight. Furthermore, some birds have been reported as calling persistently almost every night whilst others are silent for several nights at a time. The bird heard at Upper Killeyan (NR 24) in 1985 has only been heard in a few years in the last 12 (Mrs V. Turner pers. comm.).

In the light of these problems it is hardly surprising that it has not been possible to compare directly the surveys of 1978 and 1985, neither of which were fully comprehensive. Only ten occupied sites were identical between the two years despite the similar overall totals. There is no indication of the total number of sites visited or the number of negative records in 1978 but it seems likely that many sites were missed and the total for the island was higher than the 22-24 reported. It is similarly probable that sites were undetected in 1985 although most areas were checked or local residents approached for information.

By combining information gathered from local residents with those of the two surveys the present status of 20-29 calling birds in 1985 with an overall decrease of 65% over the last 25 years is believed to be reasonably accurate with much of the decline occurring since the introduction of silage making in preference to hay. Added to this is the drought in Ethiopia which has undoubtedly affected the birds in their Wintering range.

From the results of the national Corncrake survey of 1978-79 Cadbury (1980) considered that "The future of the Corncrake, even in its present strongholds in Western Europe appears bleak. The bird shows no signs of being able to adapt to the environment created by more intensive farming methods". From the information available in 1985 it appears that the

situation on Islay is no better, with a continuing decline in most areas. Under the Bern Convention, to which Britain is a Contracting Party, the Corncrake in Britain, including its habitat should be protected. However, in spite of the United Kingdom obligations under the Bern Convention to protect Corncrake breeding sites the Government, aided by the EEC, which is also a party to the Convention, is actively contributing to site destruction by financing, through agricultural improvement grants, the changing agricultural practices which are the cause of the problem (S. Lister 1985). Coupled with the drought conditions on the wintering areas of the Corncrake it seems that the future of the Corncrake is bleak. Only the establishment of Environmentally Sensitive Areas and the maintenance of traditional farming practices within these areas can safeguard the remaining breeding sites in Britain.

Acknowledgements:

I am very grateful to all who helped with this survey, in particular E M Bignal; M Birtwell; C G Booth; J Cadbury; A Davidson; R E Elliott; R Hodgkinson; P Moore; L Street & RSPB Summer Wardens. I would also like to thank - S Bignal; D Boardman; R Broad; Mrs Cunningham; S Duncan; M Douglas; I Frost; H R Gorfin; C Howie & Family; G Jackson; M Johnson; D Jones; J D McClure; Mrs McCalman; D McFadyen; A McKay-Forbes; J Matthews; P Pearce; N Penford; Mrs Smith; J & A Sinclair; D Skelton; T Stowe; D Stroud; Dr A & Mrs J Stroud; Mrs V Turner; G Yates.

The survey was carried out with the assistance of a Scottish Ornithologists' Club Endowment Fund Grant for which I am most grateful.

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Figure 1. Islay, showing total number
of calling Corncrakes in
1985. 10km square totals.

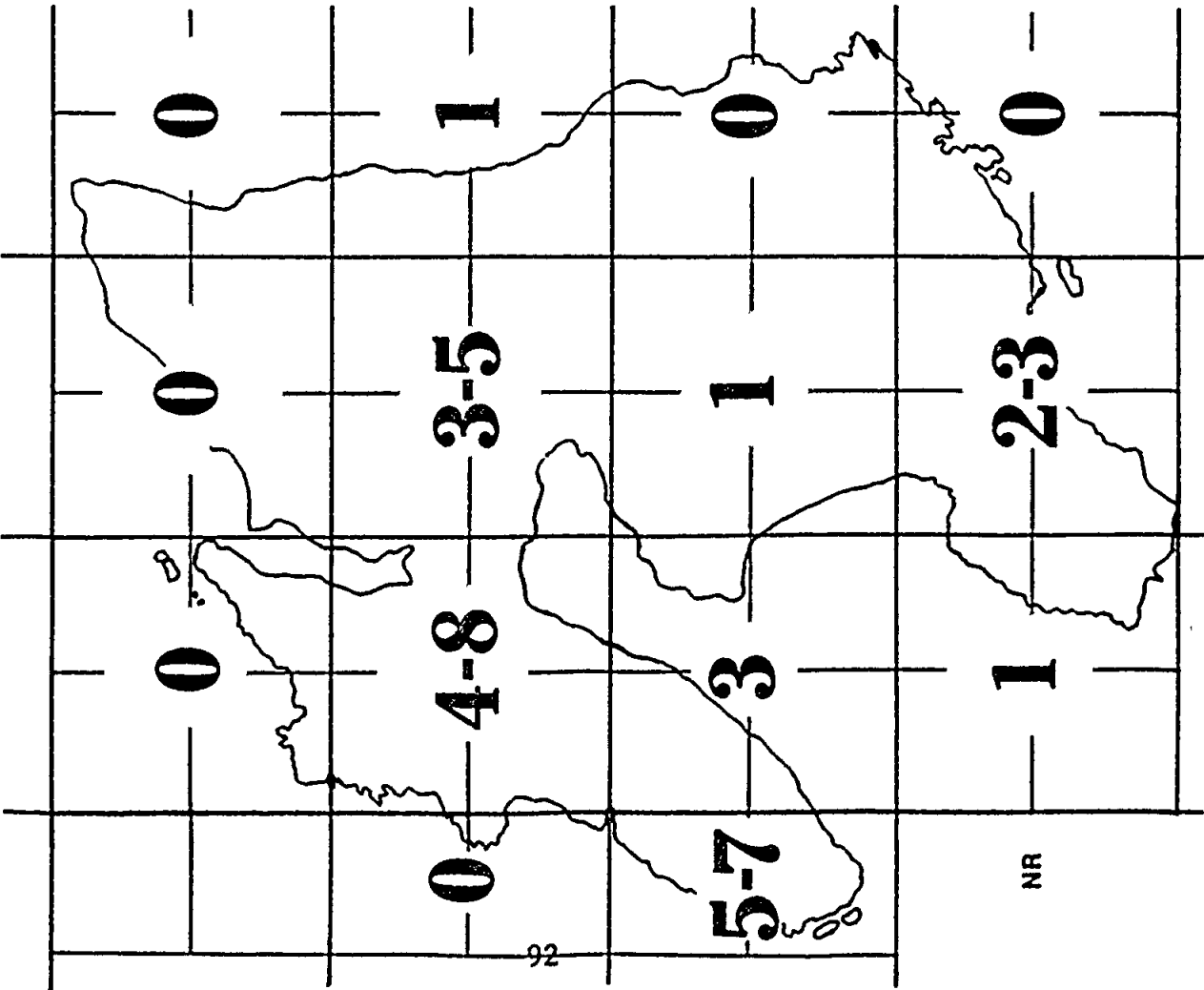
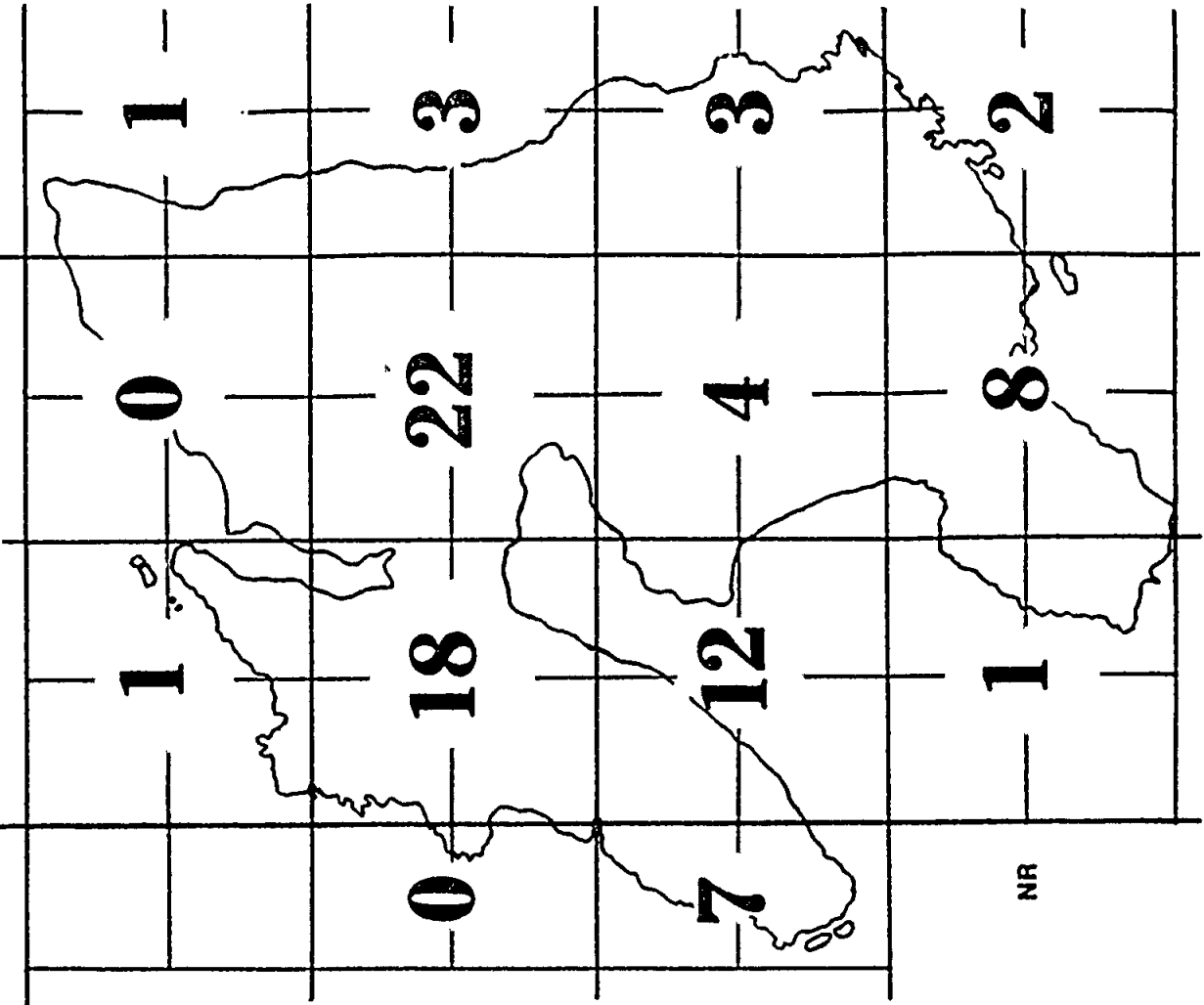


Figure 2. Islay, showing all collected
site records of calling
Corncrakes 1960 - 1985.
10km square totals.

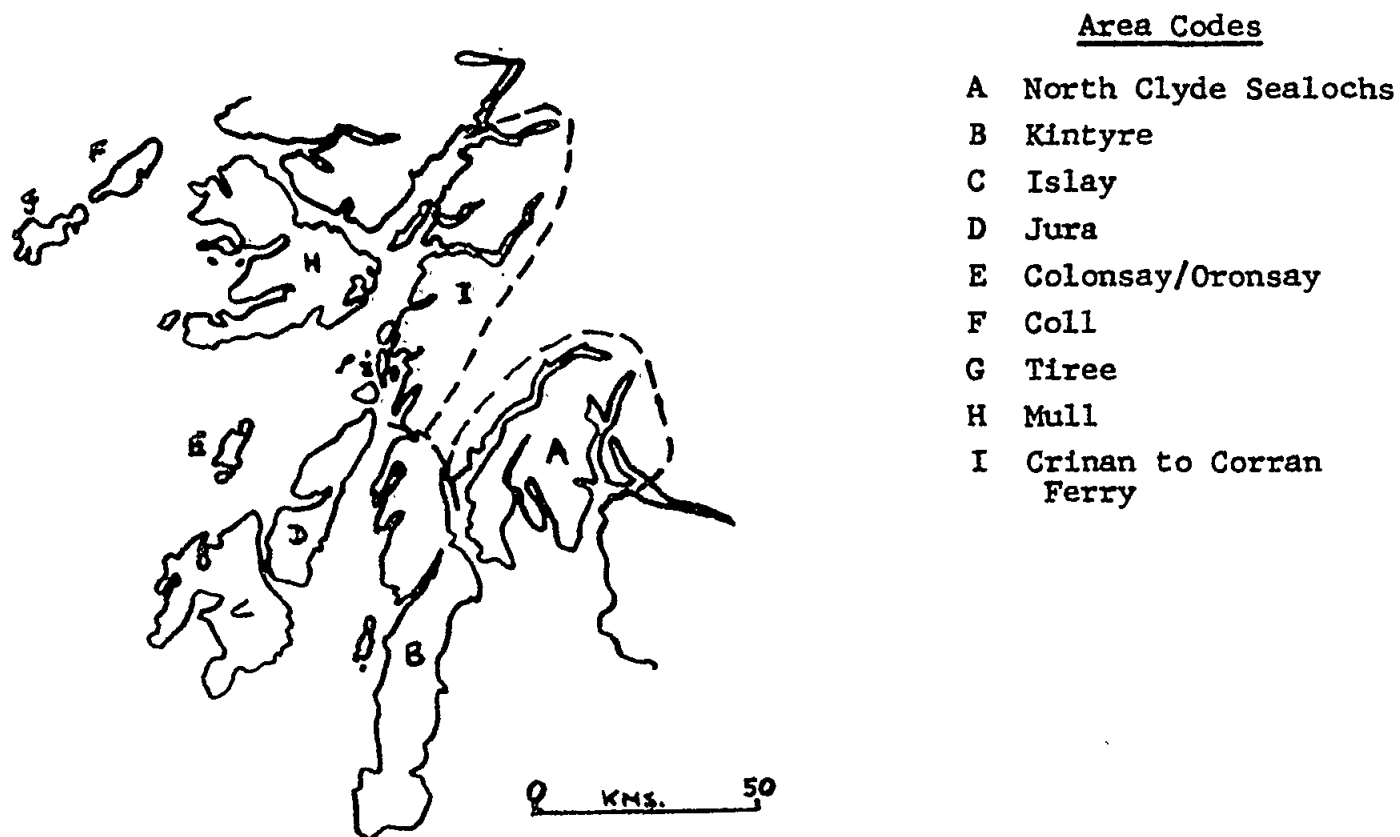


Winter Wader Populations In Argyll

- Mike Madders, Lochdon, Isle of Mull
- Mike Moser, BTO, Beech Grove, Tring, Herts

The 1984/85 Winter Shorebird Count, a national survey of the wintering wader populations of the non-estuarine coasts of Britain and Ireland, was undertaken in most of Argyll by visiting expeditions. Observers on these expeditions divided the shoreline into sections on the basis of substrate-type and recorded numbers and species of wader present for each section. Further habitat data was collected in the form of subjective assessment of the angle of shoreline slope and amount of weed cover. No significant lengths of coastline were omitted in Argyll, with 84.4% of the county's 2352km shore surveyed. Most of the non-surveyed shoreline comprised steep cliff with few or no waders thought to be present.

Survey Period : 8th December 1984/11th January 1985



Map of Argyll showing division of coastline into areas referred to in table.

ResultsTable 1

AREA CODES	A*	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	TOTAL
Oystercatcher	3049	2327	746	98	306	120	369	944	841	8800
Ringed Plover	155	402	202	10	221	230	943	267	243	2673
Golden Plover	0	0	96	0	0	0	59	0	0	155
Grey Plover	1	0	17	0	3	7	8	2	8	46
Lapwing	112	203	4	0	0	139	691	30	19	1198
Knot	22	0	180	0	0	0	0	0	0	202
Sanderling	0	0	13	0	0	51	392	1	1	458
Purple Sandpiper	42	34	21	0	21	0	119	65	16	318
Dunlin	29	134	275	0	120	1	350	7	80	966
Snipe	14	22	3	2	0	47	73	35	19	215
Bar-t. Godwit	0	7	18	0	23	3	60	0	1	112
Curlew	537	2028	1179	140	176	420	496	603	451	6030
Redshank	230	245	69	44	77	59	503	77	61	1365
Greenshank	0	1	0	0	8	0	0	5	2	16
Turnstone	237	236	129	47	74	44	966	280	77	2090
TOTALS	4428	5639	2952	341	1029	1121	5029	2316	1819	<u>24674</u>

*Note that Area A includes Gare Loch

The table shows that the coastline of Argyll holds about 25000 waders. Oystercatcher and Curlew are clearly the most numerous, followed by Ringed Plover, Turnstone and Redshank. Lapwing and Dunlin occur in moderate numbers. Generally the waders were dispersed along the shoreline, although concentrations were found at the head of many sealochs and on small estuaries. The main exceptions to the generally low densities of wader were the Inner Clyde and on Tiree. Nationally important wintering populations of Lapwing and Sanderling were found on the latter, whilst Ringed Plover and Turnstone numbers were of international significance.

Acknowledgements

The Winter Shorebird Count was funded by the BTO, NCC and RSPB. The survey was undertaken in association with the Wader Study Group. Fieldwork in Argyll was also supported by the Center for Field Research (Earthwatch) USA and a generous grant from Strathclyde Regional Council. A full list of the many individuals who contributed invaluable assistance with fieldwork will be published in Scottish Birds when the results for the whole of NW Scotland are published (Moser et al).

Exceptional Mortality of Auks, Terns and Kittiwakes In L. Linnhe Area
Of Argyll in July 1985

- Dr J C A Craik,
Scottish Marine Biological Association,
Dunstaffnage Marine Research Laboratory,
P O Box 3, Oban, Argyll.

The vital but tenuous nature of the links which bind seabirds to marine food chains was dramatically emphasised in mid-July 1985, when thousands of guillemots, razorbills and kittiwakes were washed ashore dead and dying on the holiday beaches around Oban (see, for example "The Glasgow Herald" of 19th July, and "The Oban Times" of 19th and 26th July 1985). Clive Craik, together with staff of the Nature Conservancy Council (Fort William Office) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Highland Office and Strathclyde Office), organised the recording of these mortalities and investigated their cause. 2891 corpses, mainly guillemot, were counted and it is certain that many escaped detection. All had died of starvation.

NB Dr Craik has been studying the local populations of common and arctic terns since 1980. After a very successful breeding season in 1984, tern chicks died in very large numbers in July 1985, the chick mortality at fifteen tern colonies within 80km of Oban approaching 100%. Investigation of 420 dead chicks showed that they had all died of starvation. The coincidence in time and place of these quite separate incidents of starvation and mortality was most striking, as was the fact that, immediately north and south of the affected area, no abnormal mortality of seabirds was observed.

July 1985 was the wettest July ever recorded by the Dunstaffnage weather station. However, most of Britain received exceptionally high rainfall at that time, so the weather alone cannot have caused the localised bird deaths.

There were numerous reports that the frequently abundant shoals of small fish, principally young sandeels and herrings, were very reduced or absent in the Oban area in Summer 1985. All such reports were anecdotal, and it was frustrating initially not to be able to find sound scientific data showing that the seabird deaths were due to a shortage of small fish. It was rewarding to find that Dr R N Gibson's seine-net catch records were able to meet this need. In 1984, SMBA seine-net hauls caught many hundreds of both herring and sandeels; in 1985, a similar number of hauls caught no herring and only seventeen sandeels.

The exceptionally high seabird mortalities, although exacerbated by high rainfall, were thus primarily due to a local shortage of the small fish species on which the seabirds are entirely dependent during the breeding season. The reasons for such fluctuations in the fish populations are unknown, but one factor which must be considered is the Hebridean sandeel fishery which began in 1980 and has increased considerably each year (Figure 2).

The numbers of dead birds washed ashore on the beaches are shown in Table 1. The distribution of the guillemot corpses is shown in Figure 1, and the tern mortalities in Table 2. Note the localised nature of these mortalities.

In late January and early February 1986, a heavy mortality of auks (2000 +) occurred on the east coast of Scotland, primarily in the Moray Firth area, repeating the pattern seen there in several successive previous winters. By late February auks were dying on the west coast, and the mortality continued steadily until early April. Birds were cleared off Tralee Beach (Oban) at weekly intervals in March and April, and reports of dead auks were received from Caol (Fort William), Kinlochleven (see letter in "Oban Times" of 4th April 1986), Dunstaffnage, Oban, Luing and Loch Fyne (3 sites). This winter mortality, involving probably a few hundred birds in Argyll as a whole, was less acute than in July 1985 but lasted longer. R Scott, the only local recorder with experience since 1979, reports that she has not seen a winter mortality of anything like this magnitude in that time.

The details of the 1985 mortality of auks and terns are the subject of a paper now nearing completion.

Table 1. NUMBERS OF DEAD BIRDS FOUND ON BEACHES IN L. LINNHE AREA, JULY 1985

85 km of shore checked

Guillemot	2616 incl. 211 chicks
Kittiwake	110
Razorbill	97 incl. 49 chicks
Common Gull	16
Manx Shearwater	12
Herring Gull	12
Shag	9
Puffin	7
Gannet	6
C/A Tern	<u>6</u>
	2891

Table 2. SUMMARY OF TERN CHICK MORTALITY, JULY 1985 (W. SCOTLAND)

Approx. latitude (N)	Species	Number of chicks or clutches	Body weights (if examined)	Approx. % mortality
56° 55'	Common	83	Normal	8
56° 45'	Common	26	Reduced	90
56° 40'	Common	40 clutches	(Failed)	100
56° 30'	Common	589	Reduced	92
56° 30'	Arctic	40 pairs	(Failed)	100
56° 28'	Common	26	Reduced	100
56° 28'	C & A	25	(Failed)	100
56° 28'	Arctic	15 clutches	(Failed)	100
56° 20'	Common	153	Reduced	94
56° 15'	Arctic	50 clutches	(Failed)	100
56° 15'	Common	121	Reduced	60-80
56° 10'	C & A	20-30 clutches	Heavy mink losses	?
55° 55'N	C & A	146	Normal but heavy mink losses	?
55° 50'N	Common	86	Normal	10-20

(Failed) denotes that eggs were present early in June, but in early July when the chicks should have been present, the colony was almost or wholly deserted and no chicks were found.

The upper and lower lines represent the latitudes of Fort William and Lochgilphead respectively.

Four small colonies (< 10 pairs each) are omitted.

NUMBERS OF DEAD GUILLEMOTS FOUND IN SEABIRD WRECK OF JULY 1985

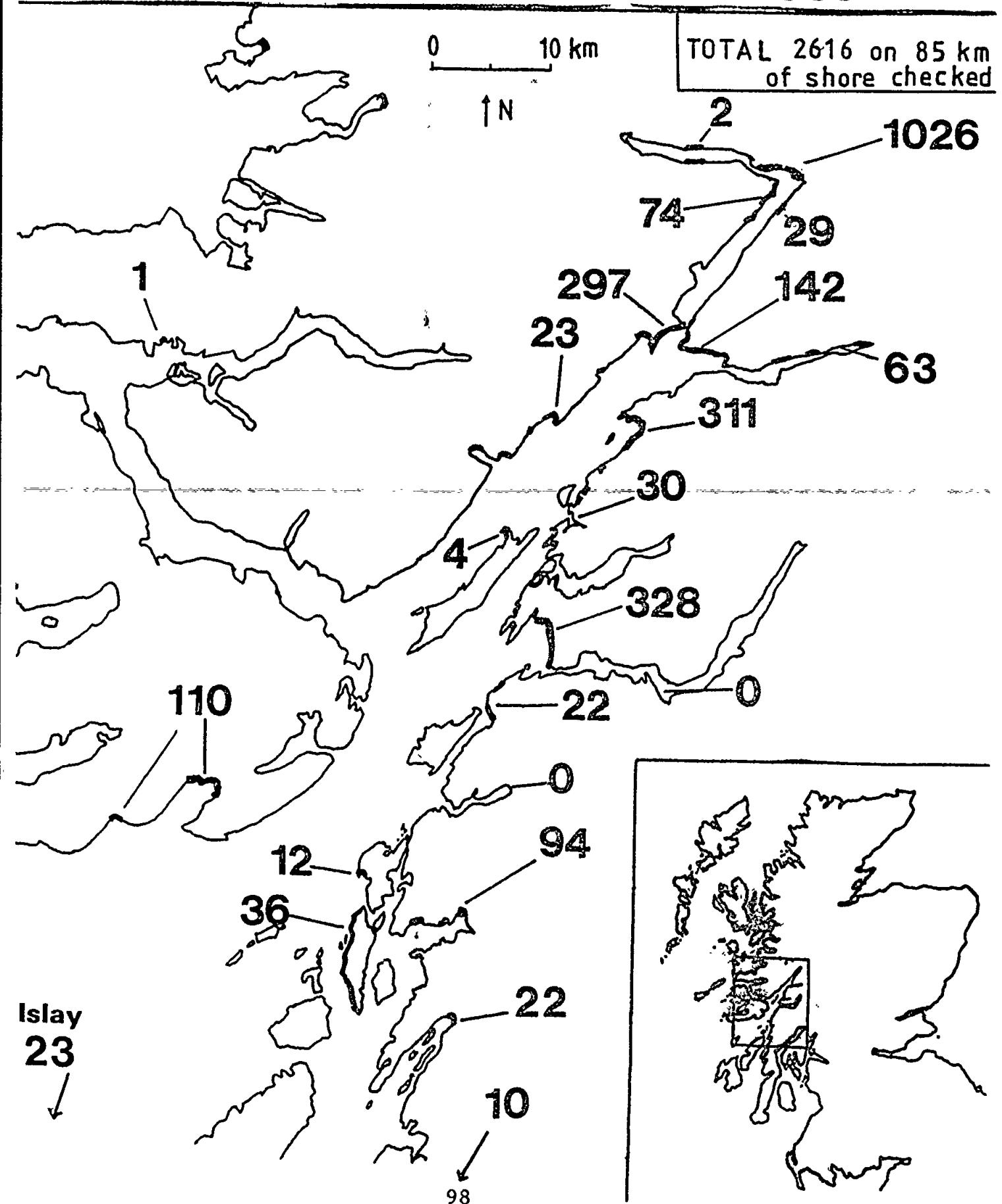
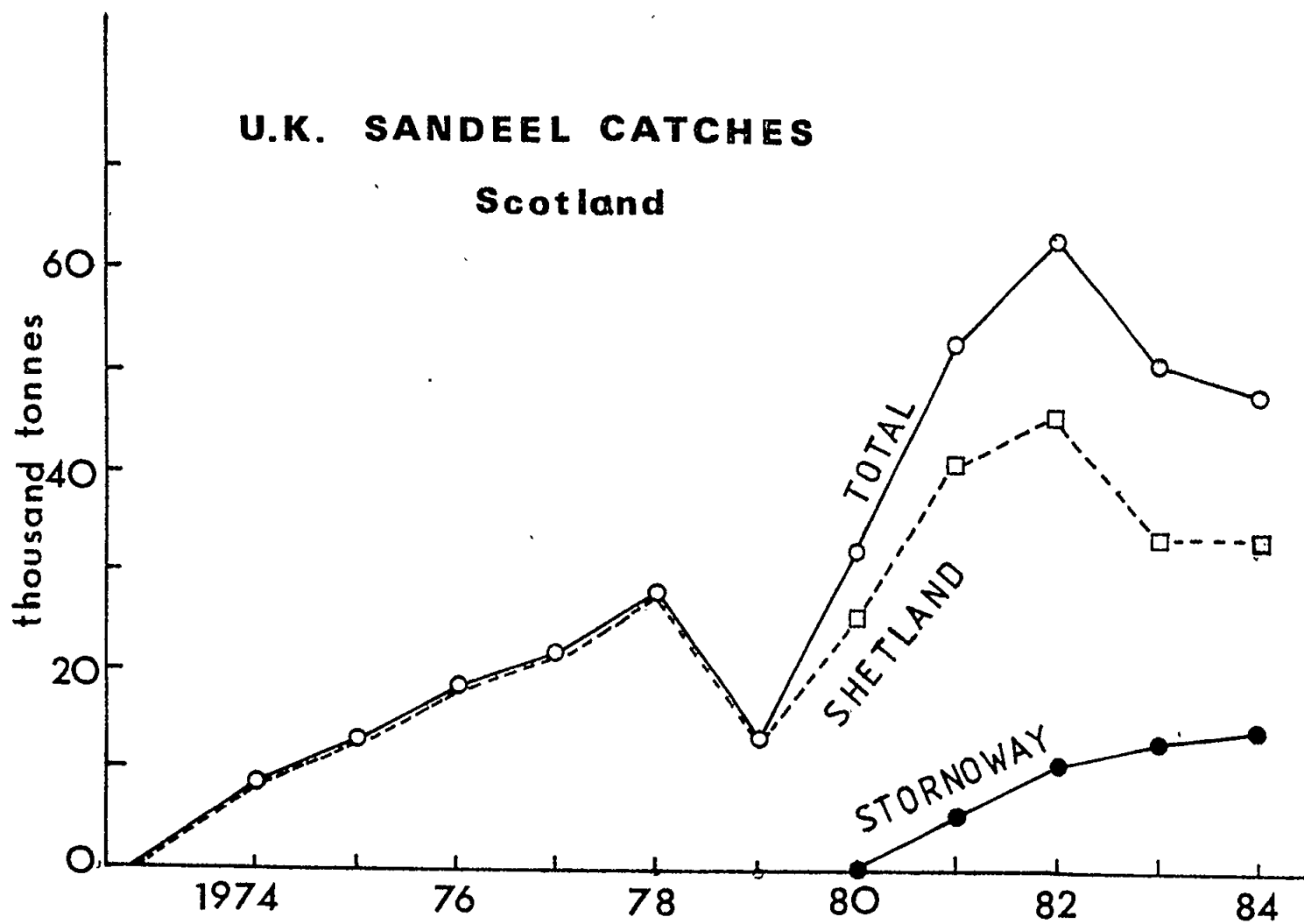
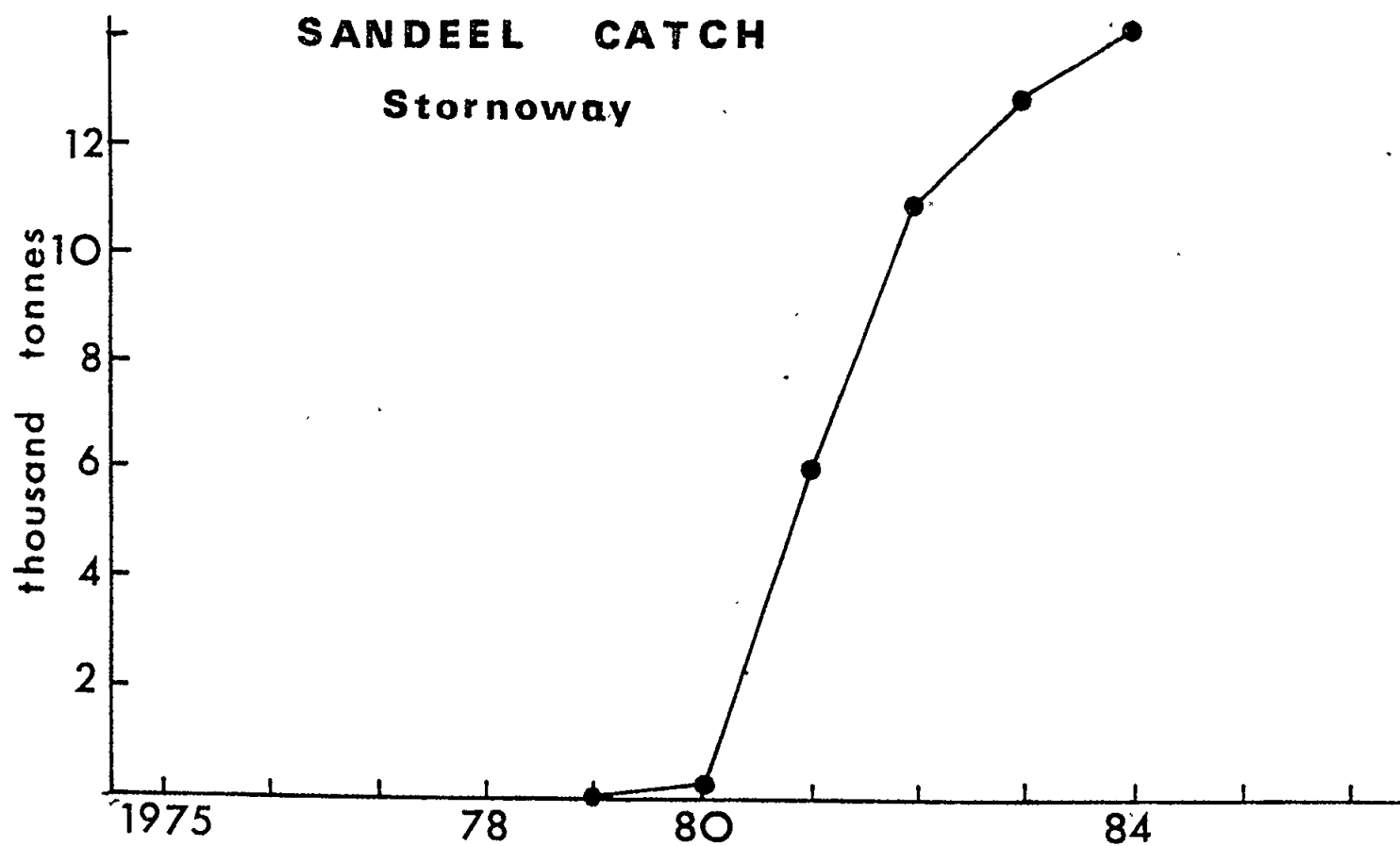


Fig. 2.



The Barn Owl : Its Current Status in Argyll

- Martin Holmes, Taynuilt, Argyll

The Barn Owl (*Tyto alba alba*) is one of the best known, most easily recognised and least commonly seen of our native species. At close quarters the bird reveals its true colours - pure white underparts with a delicate golden back and upper wing surfaces with tiny 'tear-drop' speckled blue-grey feathering. It is often silent but has a wide repertoire of calls including a long, drawn out scream.

Unfortunately the numbers of this beautiful bird are declining. In 1932 the national population was put at 12,000 pairs (Blaker 1934). By the late 1960's and early 1970's the numbers had fallen to between 4,500 and 9,000 pairs according to Sharrock, 1976. This drop in numbers lead to the species being placed on the first schedule of the Protection of Birds Acts (1954-67) and subsequently on 'Schedule 1' of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).

Under sponsorship from the World Wildlife Fund and the Country Land-owners' Association, a pilot survey of the Barn Owl population was carried out in 1982, followed by a full National survey running from the beginning of 1983 up to the end of 1985. The three main aims of this work are to determine the current status of the species, assess the reasons for its decline and to formulate a sound management policy for its future conservation. Preliminary results put the current national population somewhere between 6,000 and 8,000 pairs (Hawk Trust 1985).

In the past it has probably been the case that the Barn Owl has been under recorded, particularly in areas such as Argyll due to the large area involved, a scarcity of observers and the generally nocturnal nature of the bird itself. Historical data on distribution tends to be descriptive rather than quantative. For example, the Barn Owl was described as 'not common' in Bute (McWilliams 1928) and 'not uncommon' in Kintyre (McInnes & Colville 1944). More recent data shows 4 pairs breeding on Islay in 1972, 2 pairs at the south end of Kintyre, 2 pairs on Seil Island and 1 pair on Scarba (Shawyer 1985). Entries in the Argyll Bird Report for 1980-84 inclusive show continued breeding on Islay and single birds observed in areas ranging from Kintyre to mid-Argyll, including Mull. Map 1 shows the breeding range of Barn Owls based on BTO Atlas information (Sharrock 1976).

The data collected in the present survey, covering the period 1983-85 in Argyll, consists of 14 separate sightings of individual birds and eleven nest sites. Of the nest sites reported, 75% were in Kintyre with the other 25% in North and mid-Argyll. Rather unexpectedly only 8% of the individual sightings were from Kintyre - the majority (50%) were recorded in mid-Argyll.

Individual sightings were reported from a variety of habitats. The majority were from farmland interspersed with broadleaved woodland. The next commonest was the coastal habitat, again not surprising considering Argyll's extensive coastline. Sightings were also reported from forestry plantations in North Argyll - these areas offer good hunting grounds but may offer few nest sites. One sighting was also notified from the outskirts of Oban.

The majority of nest sites were found in old, disused farm buildings, steadings and hollows in trees. Two unusual nest sites were reported - one on a rockfall inside a cave and one in the mouth of an old rabbit burrow. The areas where both individual birds and nest sites were recorded are shown in Map 2 along with breeding range data for 1983.

The apparent increase in reports is almost certainly due to an increased awareness of the species in response to the recent survey with numbers in Argyll being under recorded in previous years. Results indicate that Argyll supports a thinly scattered Barn Owl population with the southern part of the region holding most pairs.

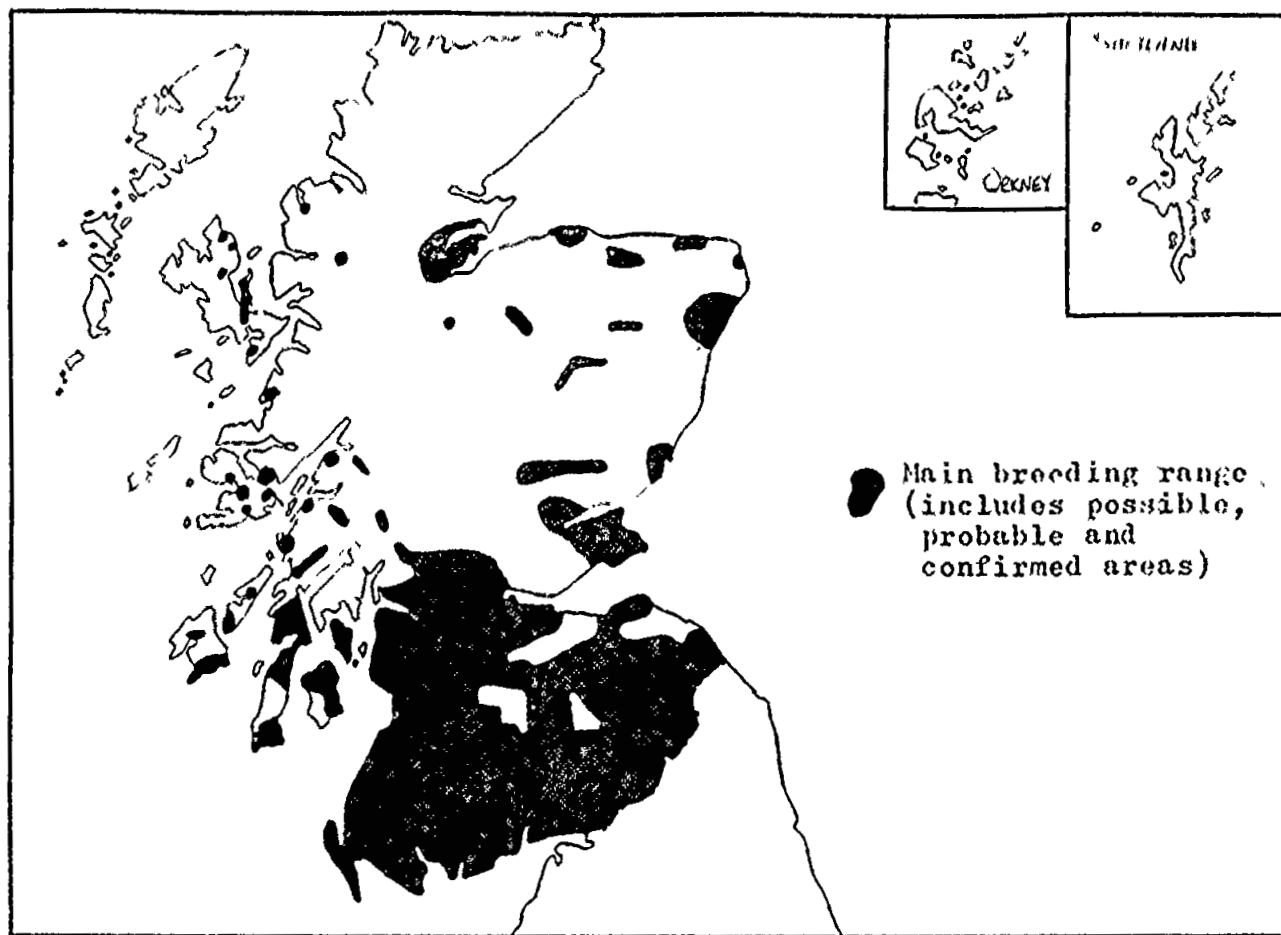
Given the results of the present survey it is difficult to assess accurately the state of the Barn Owl population in Argyll. The national decline in numbers appears to be caused by several complex and possibly linked factors. The main one is probably habitat loss through drainage of wetlands, conversion of permanent pastures to intensively grazed or arable land and afforestation. It seems possible that factors such as these may well be acting on the population within Argyll. Further research is needed before accurate conclusions can be reached.

To help further in this study, the author would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has either seen a Barn Owl or knows of a nest site in Argyll or any other area of Scotland. If possible the information should include date (at least month and year), location of the sighting/nest site with sufficient detail to elicit an accurate grid reference, habitat in the area and behaviour of bird(s). Additional details might include breeding success (where appropriate), land/farm use in the vicinity, location of nearby wetland areas etc. Because of the Barn Owl's status, all information will be treated with the strictest confidence.

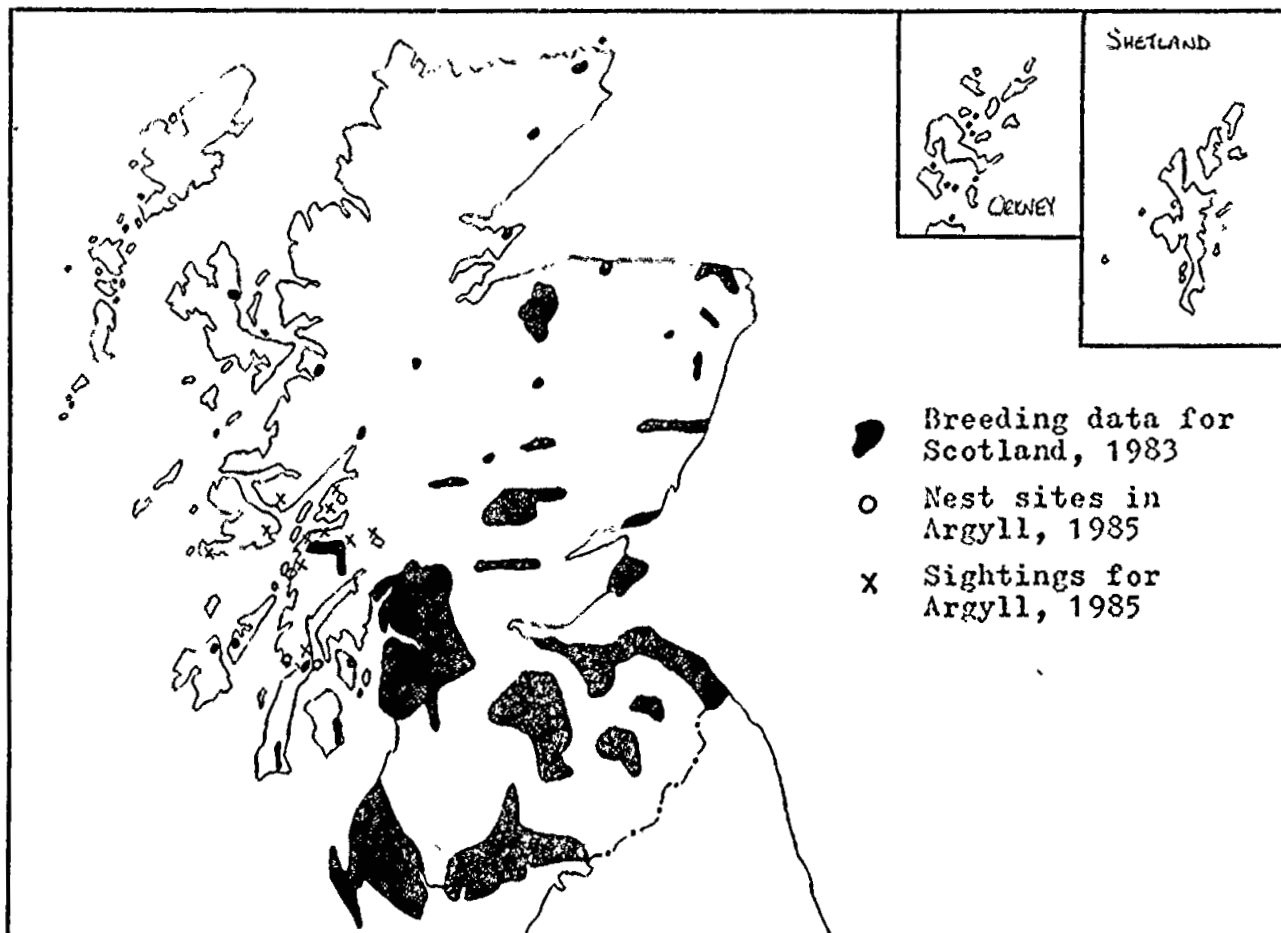
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MAP 1: Breeding range of Barn Owls in Scotland (Sharrock, 1976)



MAP 2: Breeding data for Scotland, 1983 (Hawk Trust, 1985) and Argyll Sightings and nest sites 1983-85



Rare and Vagrant Birds in Argyll 1976-1984

- Dr A R Jennings

Unusual birds in an area often have a particular attraction for bird watchers. This interest in rare birds varies, it may only be a slightly exciting event for the average individual whereas to others it becomes an all consuming passion. Such rarity seekers or twitchers are usually willing to travel great distances and go to extraordinary lengths to see a rare bird. News of rare birds is communicated or "grapevined" and, in the South, it is not unusual for rare birds to be surrounded in a matter of hours after their discovery, by many hundreds of twitchers. Rarity and vagrancy in birds are relative terms, species which are abundant in one geographic area may be absent from another area. Many factors limit and control the occurrence of birds within geographic zones but because of their essential mobility, their migratory movement, their tendency to wander and as a result of the vagaries of wind and weather birds are often to be found well away from their normal areas.

In this paper rare birds are defined as birds which occur annually as one or two individuals only and vagrant species are those which are rarely seen more frequently than about once in every three years. Many of the birds discussed here are common as residents or migrants elsewhere in the UK but some are to be regarded nationally as rarities and vagrants. It must always be borne in mind that a single record by itself is of little significance but if a number of records become available it is sometimes possible to detect a pattern so that trends towards changes in status/and or changes in distribution of a particular species can be detected. It can be confidentially predicted that, with the growing number of reliable observers in Argyll, several of the species here classified as rare will be found to be of more regular occurrence.

Records of rare birds anywhere in Britain, ie records of those species which are national rarities, are assessed by a panel of experts, originally set up by "British Birds" in 1959. ("British Birds" is a monthly journal dealing with original observations on birds of the Western Palearctic). Records which are accepted by this committee are published annually. More recently a Scottish Birds Records Committee has been set up to consider another tier of unusual records - those species which are rarely seen in Scotland but whose annual occurrences elsewhere in the UK put them outside the scope of the 'BB' committee.

Some local breeding species could be classified as rarities in Argyll. While people fortunate enough to discover these 'unusual' species are encouraged to send in full documentary notes to the Recorder, it may be considered in the best interests of the birds to omit details eg of breeding sites from the Annual Bird Report. In the case of extremely rare species total confidentiality would be observed. It should always be borne in mind that in the case of several of the rarer species breeding in Argyll and which are widespread but local in distribution eg Peregrine and Golden Eagle they are specially protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. Under the provisions of this Act, it is illegal to willfully disturb them at their nest sites without the appropriate licenses.

The number of rare birds reported in Britain has risen steadily over the last 30 years. The reasons for this increase are complex but perhaps the most important single factor has been the increased number of competent bird watchers. It is clear that the distribution of bird watchers influences the numbers and distribution of records submitted. Scotland, for example, has many fewer observers than England. Within Scotland, according to the Scottish Bird Reports

1976-1984, the Northern Isles, the North Sea Coast, Central Scotland and the Clyde-Solway areas are better covered than elsewhere.

The Eastern seaboard is much favoured by migration watchers because of the proximity of Scandinavian and NW European flyways and the frequent displacement of migratory birds across the North Sea. There is also the greater chance of landfall of migrants of Eastern (Siberian) origin. Passage on the West coast of Scotland has been much less investigated.

The isolated records presently available eg Greenish Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*) indicate that regular studies at Western headlands could produce very interesting results. Extreme areas of Western Argyll would almost certainly repay careful watching because of the possibility of New World migrants making landfall here. It seems unlikely that the Scillies and SW England are the only places where regular avian vagrants from America find themselves.

Adverse weather conditions are responsible for many cases of vagrancy. During migratory movements birds may be shifted from their normal routes by adverse winds and bad weather. Strong winds are known to displace birds, heavy and persistent rain, dull and overcast skies may all interfere with birds' navigational systems. Birds which are displaced may become disorientated and especially young and inexperienced birds may be unable to compensate for "drift" from their usual routes. Various experiments have been performed in which birds have been artificially shifted from their normal routes and the ways in which they attempt to compensate for this have been investigated. Strong westerly gales are well known for displacing sea birds and for causing large scale wrecks of species such as Little Auk. American birds migrating North to South may be caught up in cyclones and hurricanes racing across the N Atlantic. In this way American waders and warblers may be swept across to make landfall on the western seaboard of Britain. Some Scandinavian and Asian migrants which would normally be moving SE may be swept across Europe and the North Sea by strong Easterly winds and birds moving from Scandinavia and NW Europe towards the South or SW may run into severe weather in the North Sea and be swept across to Britain.

The effects of weather systems on bird movements are fully discussed by Elkins (1983). He concluded that "vagrants occur as a result of weather situations which act either on dispersing or wandering birds with perhaps poor migrational ability or in an extreme manner on migrants on normal passage".

Dispersal of birds, ie movements that result in dispersal of members of a population, often result in appearance of unusual birds in a particular area. There is a tendency for juveniles to disperse more widely than adults. Irruptions and large scale emigrations of populations of birds due to factors such as over population and food shortages also give rise to vagrancy.

The rather obscure phenomenon of "reverse migration", ie flight South in Spring and North in Autumn, is responsible for some cases of vagrancy as is the condition of "overshooting" in Spring and early Summer. In this case migrants such as Bee Eaters and Hoopoes arriving from the South in warm anti-cyclonic conditions overshoot their destination and appear much further North than usual.

The information on the rare and vagrant birds presented in this paper has been derived from British Birds Annual Reports of Rare Birds in Great Britain 1976-1983, Scottish Bird Reports 1976-1983, the First (1983) and the Second (1984) Argyll Bird Reports and "Birds in Islay" (1981).

The species regarded as rare or vagrant in Argyll which have been recorded may be seen in Table 1. Any amendments or additions to this list would be gratefully received by either the Recorder or the author. Table 1 shows that of the 61 species considered here as rare or vagrant during the period under review, 20 have been recorded only on a single occasion and 12 have been recorded in only 2 of the 9 years. Thus a total of 32 species can fairly be regarded as vagrants to the County. The remaining 29 have been recorded between 3 and 10 times and can be regarded as rare birds for this part of Scotland.

In national context of the 61 species reviewed here 16 of them are listed as vagrants by the British Birds Rarities Committee. These species may be seen in Table 2.

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| " " " " " " (1978) | " " (1979) | 72 | 503-549 |
| " " " " " " (1979) | " " (1980) | 73 | 491-535 |
| " " " " " " (1980) | " " (1981) | 74 | 453-495 |
| " " " " " " (1981) | " " (1982) | 75 | 482-533 |
| " " " " " " (1982) | " " (1983) | 76 | 476-530 |
| " " " " " " (1983) | " " (1984) | 77 | 506-562 |
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| Scottish Bird Reports (1976-1977) | SOC Edinburgh |
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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Roger Broad and Colin Galbraith for helpful suggestions in the preparation of this paper. The majority of the records used in this paper occurred during Richard Coomers tenure as Recorder for Argyll.

Table 1

SPECIES	YEAR										BEST MONTH
	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	T	
Great Crested Grebe: <u>Podiceps cristatus</u>					3	2	1	1	2	9	Oct
Red-necked Grebe: <u>Podiceps grisegena</u>	1			1		1		1	1	5	Feb/Nov
Black-necked Grebe: <u>Podiceps nigricollis</u>	2			1		1		3		7	Mar/Oct
Bittern: <u>Botaurus stellaris</u>							2			2	Jan/Dec
White Stork: <u>Ciconia ciconia</u>	1	2	2	1		1				7	Apr/May
Spoonbill: <u>Platalea leucorodia</u>			2							2	Oct/Sept
Lesser Whitefront: <u>Anser erythropus</u>					1					1	Feb
Garganey: <u>Anas querquedula</u>	1									1	Jan
Ring-necked Duck: <u>Aythya collaris</u>						1	2		1	4	Feb
Green-winged Teal: <u>Anas crecca carolinensis</u>			1	1		1				3	May/Sept
King Eider: <u>Somateria spectabilis</u>				1						1	June
Surf Scoter: <u>Melanitta perspicillata</u>		1					1	1		3	Oct/Mar/May
Smew: <u>Merganser albellus</u>			1			1	1	2		5	Dec/Nov Jan/Feb
Honey Buzzard: <u>Pernis apivorus</u>				1			1			2	Apr/Aug
Red Kite: <u>Milvus milvus</u>				1					1	2	Jan/Mar
Marsh Harrier: <u>Circus aeruginosus</u>				1	1					2	Aug/May
Rough-Legged Buzzard: <u>Buteo lagopus</u>	1						3	1	1	6	Oct
Hobby: <u>Falco subbuteo</u>	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1		9	Sept
Gyr Falcon: <u>Falco rusticolus</u>		1	1			1				3	Same bird present
Quail: <u>Coturnix coturnix</u>	1	1	1							3	Aug/June
Spotted Crake: <u>Porzana porzana</u>	1							1		2	June/Dec
Killdeer: <u>Charadrius vociferus</u>									1	1	Jan
Little Stint: <u>Calidris minuta</u>	2		1		1	2		4		10	Sept

Table 1 (contd)

SPECIES	YEAR										BEST MONTH	
	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	T		
Temminck's Stint: <u>Calidris temminckii</u>									1	1	Aug	
Baird's Sandpiper: <u>Calidris bairdii</u>				1						1	June	
Pectoral Sandpiper: <u>Calidris melanotos</u>				1		1		2	1	4	Oct	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper: <u>Tryngites subruficollis</u>								2		2	May/Sept	
Black-tailed Godwit: <u>Limosa limosa</u>				1		2	3	1	2	9	Aug	
Wood Sandpiper: <u>Tringa glareola</u>	1	2							2	5	June	
Grey Phalarope: <u>Phalaropus fulicarius</u>		4	1		1	1	1	1		9	Sept	
Long-tailed Skua: <u>Stercorarius longicaudus</u>		1				1		1		3	Aug/Sept	
Sabine's Gull: <u>Larus sabini</u>		2	1						1	4	Sept	
Ring-billed Gull: <u>Larus delawarensis</u>								1	1	2	Jan/Mar	
Ross's Gull: <u>Rhodestethia rosea</u>	1									1	Aug	
Caspian Tern: <u>Sterna caspia</u>						1				1	June	
Black Tern: <u>Chlidonias niger</u>						1				1	Sept	
Kingfisher: <u>Alcedo atthis</u>				1	1	1	2		2	3	10	Oct/Nov
Bee-Eater: <u>Merops apiaster</u>						1				1	June	
Roller: <u>Coracias garrulus</u>								1		1	Sept	
Hoopoe: <u>Upupa epops</u>		1	1	1		2		1	1	7	May	
Wryneck: <u>Jynx torquilla</u>				1					1	2	May/Oct	
Shore Lark: <u>Eremophila alpestris</u>	1									1	Oct	
Water Pipit: <u>Anthus spinoletta spinoletta</u>									1	1	July	
Yellow Wagtail: <u>Motacilla flava</u>		1	1			3		1		6	May	
Waxwing: <u>Bombycilla garrulus</u>					1	1		1	1	1	5	Dec
Black Redstart: <u>Phoenicurus ochruros</u>		1				1	2	1		5	Mar/Oct/ Nov	
Reed Warbler: <u>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</u>						1	1			2	June/Aug	

Table 1. (contd)

SPECIES	YEAR										BEST MONTH
	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	T	
Icterine Warbler: <u>Hippolais icterina</u>			1						1	2	June/Aug
Barred Warbler: <u>Sylvia nisoria</u>								1		1	Aug
Lesser Whitethroat: <u>Sylvia curruca</u>			1		1			1		3	May
Greenish Warbler: <u>Phylloscopus trochiloides</u>								1		1	May
Bonelli's Warbler: <u>Phylloscopus bonelli</u>		1								1	May
Firecrest: <u>Regulus ignicapillus</u>					2	1	1			4	May
Nuthatch: <u>Sitta europaea</u>		1								1	Jan
Rose coloured Starling: <u>Sturnus roseus</u>			1		1	1		1	1	5	Oct/Sept
Golden Oriole: <u>Oriolus oriolus</u>				1				1		2	May
Hawfinch: <u>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</u>			1							1	Sept
American Redstart: <u>Setophagia ruticilla</u>								1		1	Nov
Lapland Bunting: <u>Calcarius lapponicus</u>		1		1	1					3	Mar/Apr/Oct
Rustic Bunting: <u>Emberiza rustica</u>					1					1	May
Red-headed Bunting*: <u>Emberiza bruniceps</u>		1		1						2	July

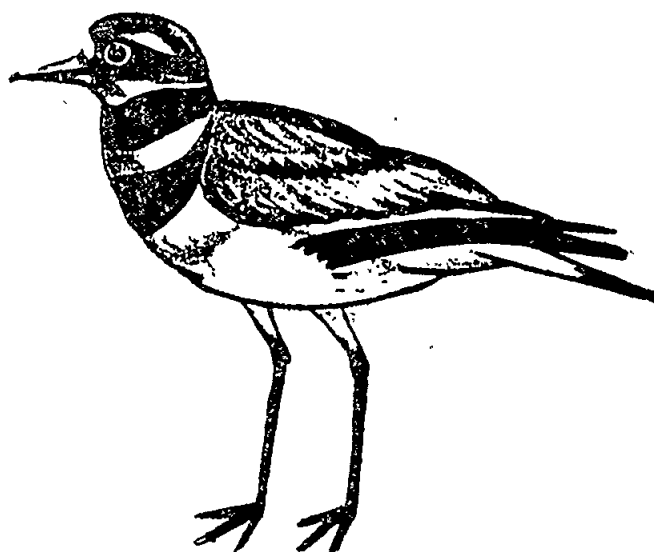
* Commonly kept as a cage bird and possibility of "escapes" should always be borne in mind.

Table 2.

SPECIES	WORLD BREEDING RANGE	NUMBER OF ARGYLL RECORDS
Ring-necked Duck: <u>Aythya collaris</u>	North America	4
King Eider: <u>Somateria spectabilis</u>	Circumpolar Arctic	1
Surf Scoter: <u>Melanitta perspicillata</u>	North America	3
Gyr Falcon: <u>Falco rusticolus</u>	Circumpolar Arctic	2
Killdeer: <u>Charadrius vociferus</u>	North America, West Indies, Peru to Chile	1

Table 2. (contd)

SPECIES	WORLD BREEDING RANGE	NUMBER OF ARGYLL RECORDS
Baird's Sandpiper: <u>Calidris bairdii</u>	North America and North East Siberia	1
Ring-billed Gull: <u>Larus delawarensis</u>	North America	2
Ross's Gull: <u>Rhodesthia rosea</u>	North East Siberia, Greenland and Canada	1
Caspian Tern: <u>Sterna caspia</u>	Cosmopolitan except South America	1
Bee-eater: <u>Merops apiaster</u>	South Europe, West Asia and North West Africa	1
Roller: <u>Coracias garrulus</u>	South and East Europe, West Asia and North West Africa	1
Greenish Warbler: <u>Phylloscopus trochiloides</u>	Eurasia East from North Germany	1
Bonelli's Warbler: <u>Phylloscopus bonelli</u>	Central, West and South Europe, Levant and North West Africa	1
Rose-coloured Starling: <u>Sturnus roseus</u>	South East Europe and South West Asia	5
American Redstart: <u>Setophaga ruticilla</u>	North America	1
Rustic Bunting: <u>Emberiza rustica</u>	North East Europe across to North Asia	1

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Common Gull

Preliminary work on the breeding biology of Common Gull was undertaken by Clive Craik in 1985 and is continuing.

Common and Arctic Tern

The small, scattered tern colonies of Western Scotland appear to have received little attention from ornithologists. Clive Craik has been studying these two species since 1981. Early work developed methods for distinguishing between the very similar chicks of Common and Arctic Terns, allowing determinations to be made of the proportions of each species breeding at a particular site. Such determinations are much more reliable and precise than, for example, visual inspection of a flock of disturbed adults, or even of settled adults, at a colony. These methods are now being used to compare the breeding biology of these two species in this area. Results have shown marked variations between years in breeding success and differences between species in breeding success, patterns of failure and breeding habitat.

Ecology of the Tawny Owl in Upland Conifer Forests

- Steve Petty

This study investigates how tawny owls have adapted to the extensive spruce forests in the uplands. Tawny Owl performance is being assessed in relation to various environmental factors, such as food supply, habitat structure and weather. There are two study areas, each of about 8000ha, one of which is situated in Cowal Forest District. Food supply is likely to be a major factor which will effect the density, reproduction and mortality of tawny owls. Therefore, fluctuations in prey populations are assessed. Small mammal population structure is determined three times a year from about 1700 trap nights on sites that have been recently felled and replanted. Variations in song-bird numbers are assessed by using the point-count method. In 1985 this has shown that large populations of crossbills and siskins have bred in Cowal in response to a massive cone crop.

Dead tawny owls from Argyll are of particular value for this study. Anyone finding a carcass which is reasonably fresh and intact should contact Steve Petty, Oakenshaw, Ardentinny, Argyll (tel Ardentinny 215), who will arrange prompt collection.

Distribution of Kingfishers in Argyll

As part of a preliminary survey of Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis) distribution and numbers in areas north of the Forth-Clyde valley, I would be very interested to hear from anyone who has seen this bird in the last 10 years. (It is hoped that support for this survey will be forthcoming from the BTO and/or the RSPB).

The information I am looking for would ideally include time of sighting (at least month and year), location with sufficient detail to allow the allocation of an accurate grid reference, name of the river, stream etc. with a brief description of the water's characteristics (eg fast flowing rocky stream) and the surrounding habitat, whether the bird was an individual or one of a pair, whether the bird is breeding or nesting in the area and any other details the observer thinks pertinent.

Please send the information to: Martin Holmes, Zootech Surveys, Birchwood Flat, Airds Bay, Taynuilt, Argyll.

Thank you for your help.

RAERA FOREST

The Scottish Wildlife Trust Lorn Members' Group is engaged in a long-term study of the wildlife (in the broadest sense) of Raera Forest between Lochs Feochan and Melfort. This area of 2500 ha was established by the Forestry Commission in the late 1960's and subsequently disposed of to the private sector in 1980. Management is now carried out by Scottish Woodland Owners Association (Commercial) (Lochgilphead).

It is the purpose of the Lorn Members' Group to investigate why this area of conifer plantation has proved more attractive to birds and other wildlife than the average upland plantation and to seek for ways in which the attraction can be maintained as the plantation matures. Permission has been granted by the owner and his managers for small plantings of deciduous species to be carried out on "spare" ground and for other small-scale trials of appropriate management techniques to be made. The Lorn Members' Group regard an important feature of the study to be the fostering of interest by the foresters involved at all management levels in this wider view of commercial forest as wildlife habitat (with subsidiary sporting interest).

ARGYLL BIRD CLUB : GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

The Argyll Bird Club survey of garden birds runs from November 1985 through 1986 to February 1987. You are welcome to join at any time throughout. The aim is to gather information about the birds visiting and nesting in our gardens and public places throughout one year, so that we not only learn which species are present in the county but how factors such as wind and rain affect their distribution and breeding.

We are fortunate in having gardens situated in a wide range of locations in Argyll from seashore through urban drying greens, town and country gardens, landscaped estates, crofts and hill farms bordering mountain terrain. So, whether your 'garden' is large or small, neat flowerbeds or wild seeds, school yard or public park, we'd like to know about it and what birds you see there. Don't worry if you're not sure about being able to identify all the birds; a column is provided on each survey sheet for you to 'grade' the accuracy of each sighting, and we would rather have a county-wide record of blackbird and sparrow distribution rather than miss out on some gardens.

The survey takes place on or as near as possible to a specified date each month. One survey form should be completed for each date (and each location, if more than one site is being observed) and these should be returned every two months. Please complete the 'Site Description' form and return it with your first survey sheet. Further forms are available on request.

If you require any further help or information, please contact the organiser : STEVE ECCLES, "RIONEACHAIL", BENDERLOCH, BY OBAN, ARGYLL.

Thank you very much for your help.

OWN SPECIES LIST

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>NUMBER SEEN</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
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Return 1986 records to: Dr A R Jennings, 1 Ferryfield Drive, Connel,
by Oban, Argyll by 31st January 1987.