

The *Eider* is the quarterly newsletter of the Argyll Bird Club (<http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>)

September 2020
Number 133



The Eider

Red-throated Diver, photographed at Ardentinnny on 8 August ©Tom Lilley



Rosy Starlings in Argyll, pages 8-10

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Honey Buzzard survey, pages 12-13

To receive the electronic version of *The Eider* in colour, ABC members should send their e-mail address to Dorothy Hogbin (contact details on back page). Past issues (since June 2002) can be downloaded from the club's website.

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FIELD TRIPS 2020

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, there will be no field trips in September. However, we are hoping to resume outdoor meetings in October as a trial, using a Covid-19 friendly format. But, please bear in mind that the situation can change quickly, so please check the club website for updates.

If the October outing (below) proves successful, we hope to hold an outing in the Dunoon area on 28 November. Details will be e-mailed to members.

Saturday 31 October. Loch Gilp and Add Estuary. Led by David Jardine (phone 01546 510200. e-mail dcjardine@btinternet.com). Please contact David to reserve a place. The trip will visit several sites around Loch Gilp and the Add and may involve some short walks. Numbers may be limited to comply with government guidelines, so it is essential to contact David well beforehand to ensure a place is available. Rendezvous locations will be provided to participants by David. If necessary, sub-groups will meet at different locations with other leaders from the club.

INDOOR MEETINGS 2020-2021

Autumn meeting and AGM. Saturday 7 November 2020. This meeting has been cancelled due to Covid-19. The AGM has been moved to the spring meeting.

Spring meeting and AGM. Saturday 6 March 2021. To be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel (www.cairnbaan.com), near Lochgilphead (phone 01546 603668). Lunches will be available in the hotel. The programme will be given in the December *Eider*. Please see the club website for updates.

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

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 31 (2019)

The latest bird report has been produced as a PDF by Jim Dickson (compiler and editor). The e-ABR PDF can be downloaded from the club website (under the 'Recent Reports and also 'Publications' tabs).

ABC FACEBOOK PAGE

The club's Facebook page is gaining in popularity, so do take a look. It is open to anyone with a Facebook account.

ABC SECRETARY WANTED

Anne Archer has given notice that she wishes to resign as secretary at the next AGM. The club wishes to thank Anne for her dedication to the post over the last few years. If you are interested

in taking on the job, please contact Anne. Thank you.

FUNDING FOR BIRD CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN ARGYLL

The ABC is willing to fund or part fund worthwhile bird conservation projects in Argyll. For example, help was given towards the costs of field work for the recent Seabird Monitoring Programme (seabird counts 2015-2019). More recently the club has helped to fund the provision of nest boxes for Grey Wagtails and Dippers in Kintyre. Applications for funding should be submitted to the secretary (contact details on the back page).

AN INVITATION TO REPORT ON THE EFFECTS ON OUR BIRDS AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN PERIOD

In the December 2020 issue of *Scottish Birds* we hope to include an article which will collate the findings and thoughts of as many observers as possible from around Scotland. Although we are primarily inviting all the Local Recorders, feel free to circulate this request more widely. The unprecedented experience of lockdown and its strictures, which we are enduring, will be producing all kinds of corresponding changes to the lives of our avian populations. So, the question is: what can we say about the effects that Covid lockdown has had on birds? These may well differ from area to area and be evident in e.g. food availability, hunting practices, local migration patterns, protected species and variations in human movements. Some effects will be positive, others negative, some short-term, others medium-term. Some will be general impressions, others backed up by surveys (please specify which are fact-based examples). Because of

lockdown, knowledge of how birds have responded is likely to be scarce, so that a gathering of those observations that have been made is especially valuable. We are not specifically looking for changes in the behaviour of birders—just the birds!

There is no set format for your findings, but it would be helpful if your replies consisted of separate bullet points rather than a general account. This will facilitate their integration into a summary article. The deadline is 1st October, so as we gradually come out of lockdown there is plenty of time to monitor any perceived avian changes and forward your responses.

We would greatly appreciate your co-operation in this survey. Collectively your observations will build up to an interesting picture across Scotland and will make for a valuable SB article.

Stuart Rivers birdingofficer@the-soc.org.uk

WATERBIRDS VIRTUAL TRAINING COURSES

This autumn we will be delivering virtual training courses in a modular format, covering:

- ♦ ducks, geese, swans and other waterbirds
- ♦ waders
- ♦ skills and techniques for the Wetland Bird Survey

It would be great to see some of our Scottish supporters in these sessions, which will be delivered by Ben Darvill and Steve Willis from BTO Scotland, along with colleagues from HQ.

The sessions will be running on Mondays and Tuesdays (both daytime and evening slots are available). For further information and to book your place visit the BTO website training pages.

Papers for the AGM of the Argyll Bird Club

To be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel on Saturday 6 March 2021

Scottish Charity Number SC008782

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 15 APRIL 2018-14 APRIL 2019

The Argyll Bird Club is a registered Scottish charity number SC008782. The club can be contacted through the secretary, Mrs Anne Archer, Sealladh Breagha, Gallanach Road, Oban, Argyll PA34 4PD. The club is an unincorporated association managed by a committee of members elected by the membership at the annual general meeting. The members of the committee serve as the Trustees of the charity.

The club's 34th Annual General Meeting was held on 2 November 2019 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, by Lochgilphead, attended by 40 members. The officers were all re-elected; Nigel Scriven as Chairman, David Jardine as Vice-Chairman,

Peter Hogbin as Treasurer, Anne Archer as Secretary and Dorothy Hogbin as membership secretary. Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Gordon Holm, Steve Petty, Andy Robinson and Alun ap Rhisiart remained on the committee. Neil Hammatt was re-elected to the committee.

Management and membership

During the year the committee managed the club in accordance with the amended constitution of the club which was adopted at the Annual General Meeting held on 23 October 1999. During the year the committee met in Inveraray on four occasions. The operational focus of the committee continues to be on the club's meetings, field trips, bird report, newsletter and website while ensuring that these activities are

underpinned by sound finances and that the club's charitable status is maintained.

Our memberships remains at just under 200, which comprises approximately 300 individuals members.

Objectives and activities

The aims of the Argyll Bird Club are to promote interest in and conservation of the birds of Argyll and their habitats. During the year the club held two indoor meetings, at which invited speakers gave talks on subjects of ornithological and/or wider conservation interest. The club thanks the speakers and organisers for their contribution to the success of these meetings, and the members who write up the talks for publication in subsequent editions of the *Eider*.

The autumn meeting was on 2nd November 2019 in the Cairnbaan Hotel. The subjects of the talks included Swifts, the food of Great Northern Divers, Birding in Japan, Ospreys on Bute, investigating wildlife crime, and engaging young people in nature.

The March 2020 meeting was on 14th at the Burgh Hall in Dunoon, although the event was in doubt for the previous few days, being under the cloud of the Covid-19 outbreak, and at risk of the impending government regulations on meetings. The subjects covered, the beaver introduction in Knapdale, wildlife in Madagascar, Arctic Skuas, Australian birds, RSPB work in Argyll and biodiversity in Georgia.

The club continued to plan its programme of monthly field trips. These were to Tainish NNR, Ulva Lagoon & Loch na Cille in May, a boat trip from Crinan to count seabirds on nearby islands in June, Toward & Loch Striven in July, Campbeltown & Machrihanish Seabird Observatory in August, Benmore Gardens in September, Loch Laich & Lismore in October, Loch Gilp and the Add Estuary in November, Island of Danna in January, and Bute in February. The trip planned for the Sound of Gigha at the end of March was the first casualty of the Covid-19 clampdown, as was the rest of the field trip programme, for the time being. The club thanks the leaders of these trips for contributing their time and effort and to those members, often the leaders of the trips, who subsequently prepare reports of the trips for publication in the *Eider*.

The club's newsletter, the *Eider*, continues to thrive under the editorship of Steve Petty, and four editions were published during the year. These contained news, views, articles, reports of club activities, recent bird sightings. It is published in both paper and electronic formats; the latter enabling substantial savings in printing and postage costs.

The club website provides a contact point for the club and is one of our principal tools for promoting interest in the birds of Argyll. Details of forthcoming field trips and indoor meet-

ings are published here together with information about the club and its publications. The feature which draws most visitors, however, is the 'sightings' page where the latest reports and images of the bird life of Argyll can be found. The substantial effort put in by Jim Dickson and his helpers to keep the site up to date is much appreciated by users.

The Facebook group, started on 27 November 2018, grew very rapidly from the start and now has approaching 600 members, many who are not club members. It is a useful recruiting ground, and interactive portal to the wider birding community with an interest in Argyll's birds. It complements the recent sightings page on the website, as recent sightings can now be narrowed more to rarities, reducing the workload in keeping it updated.

The club's activities towards promoting the conservation of the birds of Argyll generally fall into three areas—recording the occurrence of the birds, publishing those records, and supporting fieldwork and conservation activities relating to the birds.

The recording team, ably led by Jim Dickson, receives around 30,000 individual records from more than 450 contributors for processing and entry into the database. Most records come through the club's own recording system, but increasingly through the BTO Birdtrack system. Aside from requests for data extracts from commercial organisations and academic researchers, the main vehicle for publishing this data is the *Argyll Bird Report*. This is now compiled by bird recorder Jim Dickson, and is published digitally, with Volume 31 (2019) of the report published in June 2020 and electronically distributed to members. Sales of past paper copies of the report are now a declining source of revenue for the club.

The club thanks all who are involved in ornithological recording in Argyll including the Argyll Bird Records Committee, the Argyll Bird Recorder and his team, especially Morag Rea, Peter and Dorothy Hogbin, and Peter Roberts who spend countless hours preparing records for entry into the database, the observers and organisations that submit records to the database and the writers who assist in the preparation and publication of the *Argyll Bird Report*.

Fieldwork and conservation activities this year also included financial support to Machrihanish Seabird Observatory, which is an important source of information on migrant birds, especially seabirds, waders and finches, along the Argyll coast. A grant was also made to Neil Brown for the purchase of nest boxes suitable for Dippers and Grey Wagtails, enabling him to expand his study of these species. The club has planned an Argyll Swift survey for 2020, organised by David Jardine, to document the distribution of breeding Swifts. The club is also very supportive of similar-minded organisations, especially the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and the British Trust for Ornithology. This includes

promotion of numerous volunteer field surveys.

Nigel Scriven, Chairman

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCE REPORT 2019-2020

The current financial year ends on 30th September. A full report of club's finances will be available at the time of the AGM, which has now been postponed until the spring meeting in March 2021.

Over the past year the club has given financial support to two projects. Firstly, a grant for the provision of nest boxes for Grey Wagtails in South Kintyre, and secondly, support for the Machrihanish Seabird Observatory which continues to provide much data and amazing pictures of the comings and goings of a wide variety of birds passing through or resident in South Kintyre. Have a look on their website for full details of what can be seen from the hide:

www.machrihanishbirdobservatory.org.uk

At the end of the financial year, we will be submitting a claim to HMRC for Gift Aid on subscriptions. It is important for those members who have provided a Gift Aid form that you keep us informed if your taxation status changes.

We continue to receive standing order subscriptions from people who have resigned, moved away or died. If you have moved but wish to be kept informed of club activities, it is important that you let us know of any change to your postal or email address.

We have had 25 new members join this year. This surge of interest has been prompted mainly by the club's Facebook page which now has nearly 600 people following. The increase in membership coupled with a significant reduction in expenses, resulting from the move to digital publishing of the *Argyll Bird Report*, means that there will be no deficit this year and we should have a useful margin of income over costs.

Peter Hogbin, Treasurer

Dorothy Hogbin, Membership Secretary

MINUTES OF THE 34TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ABC HELD AT THE CAIRNBAAN HOTEL ON SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2019

39 members were present

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from John and Helen Anderson, Heather Cameron, Sue Chattwood, Jim Dickson, David Merrie, Katie Pendreigh, Neil Rankine, Callum Satchel, Anne Tully.

2. Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting had been published in the September 2019 *Eider* (page 6). Acceptance of the minutes as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Neil Hammatt and seconded by Ian Hopkins, was unopposed.

3. Matters arising not covered in the following items

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

4. Chairman's report

Nigel Scriven referred members to his report which was published in the September 2019 *Eider* (pages 4-5), particularly highlighting the work of recorders and thanking Morag Rae and Ian Brooke for their work supporting Jim Dickson. He also summarised the activities which had taken place over the year.

5. Treasurer's Report for the Financial Year 2018-19

Peter Hogbin presented his report which had been published in the September 2019 *Eider* (pages 5-6). As usual the main expense was the Argyll Bird Report (ABR). He pointed out that the change to the club's financial year end meant that the costs of two bird reports were included. The change to an electronic report meant that the subscription could be kept at £10. Neil Hammatt picked up on his comment that 'saving is important, but spending is good' to complain that the £10,000 reserve was too high. The Chair and Deputy Chair pointed out that it had been reduced and that the club was always looking for suitable projects.

In relation to the move towards an electronic ABR and Facebook page, Roger Broad asked if the club would check whether sending reports of non-rarities to Facebook was OK for everyone. He is not on social media and cannot submit in the way that he used to, since the club's website is now only for rarer birds. Steve Petty agreed. Malcolm Chattwood explained the huge amount of work and time that had been involved (he would sub for Jim Dickson when he was on holiday) when all submissions had to be filed. He himself was not a Facebook user but has joined. He has no 'friends', only uses it for information and is very happy with that. Nigel said that the club was about to embark on a 'where do we want to be in 10 years' time' review and that all thoughts, including Roger's, would be useful.

6. Election of office bearers and committee members

All members of the committee were prepared to stand for re-election. There was a vacancy on the committee or anyone else who was interested.

For the post of Chairman, Nigel Scriven was proposed by Neil Hammatt, seconded by Peter Hogbin and elected unopposed.

For the post of Vice-Chairman, David Jardine was proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by Ian Hopkins and elected unopposed*.

For the post of Secretary, Anne Archer was proposed by Malcolm Chattwood, seconded by Dorothy Hogbin and elected unopposed.

For the post of Treasurer, Peter Hogbin was proposed by Anne Archer, seconded by Gordon Holm and elected unopposed.

For the post of Membership Secretary, Dorothy Hogbin was proposed by Nigel Scriven, seconded by Malcolm Chattwood and elected unopposed.

Retiring committee members Malcolm Chattwood, Gordon Holm, Alistair McGregor, Steve Petty, Alun ap Rhisiart and Andy Robinson were proposed *en bloc* for re-election to the committee by Nigel Scriven and seconded by

Ian Gibson. Neil Hammatt was proposed by Nigel Scriven and seconded by Gordon Holm. No other nominations were made and, as the number of nominations did not exceed the maximum number of committee members, the seven nominees were confirmed as committee members.

7. Any Other Committee Business

There was no other business.

8. Date of next meeting

7th November 2020

AGENDA FOR THE 35TH AGM OF THE ARGYLL BIRD CLUB

The AGM will be held on Saturday 6th March 2021 at the Cairnbaan Hotel, Lochgilphead.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM
3. Matters arising not covered in the following items
4. Annual report and accounts
5. Election of office bearers and committee members

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

6. A.O.C.B.

Looking to the future

There have been discussions around whether the club, at some stage in the future, could own property such as a nature reserve. The club currently is an unincorporated association and therefore does not technically exist as a separate legal entity. This means that the club cannot enter into contracts, own property, and sue or be sued in its own name. There is also the risk that the trustees or members of the management committee (and sometimes even the members themselves) can become personally liable for the debts and liabilities incurred by the club. That said, committee members are mindful of the obligation for them always to act in the club's best interests and the committee does not propose a conversion simply to minimise its own potential personal liability.

The way forward would be to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) as opposed to an unincorporated association.

There are three key advantages:

- ♦ SCIOs benefit from having separate legal personality which means a SCIO can undertake transactions directly and can enter into contracts, leases, employ staff and own property in its own name.
- ♦ The liability of the trustees of a SCIO is in most cases limited.
- ♦ Unlike charitable companies which are regulat-

ed by the Registrar of Companies and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), SCIOs are regulated only by OSCR and must comply with Scottish charity law.

Converting to a SCIO as a legal form can provide greater clarity (and indeed protection) for those running (and becoming members of) the organisation in relation to responsibility for the debts and liabilities of the charity. In terms of succession, using a SCIO means title to heritable property can run in the name of the SCIO as opposed to the names of individual trustees which will change over time.

As a first step in the process, the committee is looking at making an application to OSCR to become a SCIO. The Committee is proposing that the membership vote at the next AGM to change the club to a SCIO, at which point it would adopt a new constitution. It is normal practice to adopt a model constitution with any changes that are necessary to suit the peculiar needs of the organisation. We have prepared a draft constitution which is now on the club website alongside the current constitution. Nigel Scriven, the Chairman, would welcome your comments if you think changes are needed before it is adopted by the membership.

Peter Hogbin, Treasurer

BTO Update—August 2020

New BTO Chief Executive

Professor Juliet Vickery has been appointed to take over as CE from Andy Clements in November. She has a 35-year career working in conservation science, academia and the NGO sector, including an earlier 11-year spell at BTO, leading work on the conservation and ecology of farmland birds.

Juliet is an active member of the wider scientific community, and is currently President of the British Ornithologists' Union and part of the Government's Darwin Expert Committee. She chaired the British Ecological Society's (BES) Policy Committee for nine years and holds an Honorary Professorship at the University of East Anglia, an Honorary Research Fellowship at the University of Cambridge, and has been a past recipient of the BTO Marsh Award for Ornithology and the British Ornithologists' Union Ibis award.

On-line ringing and nest recording report 2019

While this covers the whole of the UK, it can be searched for ringing recoveries in Argyll for any specified year, with 2019 now available. This on-

line resource can be accessed here: https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/ringing/publications/online-ringing-reports?dm_i=2I9K1MEVW.38QCNU.5I330.1

BTO and Covid19—latest guidance

While most breeding birds survey work has not been able to take place this spring, restrictions have now eased and you may carry out survey work for the following surveys within Scotland, so long as you follow government advice, consult the latest SOAC guidance and follow any additional survey-specific guidance provided by BTO: Breeding Bird Survey, Waterways Breeding Bird Survey, Wetland Bird Survey, Heronries Census, Woodcock Survey, Garden Bird-Watch, Nesting Neighbours, BirdTrack remains open.

The lifting of public travel restrictions on 3 July means that BirdTrack participants are now permitted to travel to record birds throughout Scotland, except in areas where travel restrictions have been reinstated due to public health concerns about local outbreaks.

Nigel Scriven

RSPB Update—August 2020

Things are better now with lockdown easing. Some reserves are reopening visitor centres (Loch Leven) and others are planning to i.e. Loch Gruinart in September.

Our in-hand farming operations have continued in the Argyll island reserves as normal throughout lockdown, just as they did with our neighbours in the farming community. Some special measures were needed to make sure it was Covid safe and following ScotGov guidance. Staff at most reserves haven't suffered the issues of littering/mistreatment to the same degree as at wider visitor hotspots, although I have heard that visitor numbers and behaviour at some reserves (not Argyll) have caused issues—usually around people not adhering to covid guidance. More staff are back from furlough, but not all. Some management works have started e.g. pool creation on Tiree.

For me it's easier with schools starting again, so I can now work normal hours. However, without the usual field work it leaves the more standard planning casework of windfarm and forestry as a fallback. It seems many consultants have been busy surveying and producing reports during lockdown.

More positive is the proactive involvement in

projects such as Corncrake Calling which started in August after a delay due to covid. We plan to have an advisory post within the Argyll Islands and to fund management works. In regards to current campaigns, there is much focus on Hen Harriers <https://wildjustice.eaction.org.uk/saveourskydancers> and beavers <https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/beaver>. We are also heavily involved in green recovery tasks of the Scotgov <https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/nature-recovery-plan-scotland/>.

It's obviously been a period when our reserve income has been reduced, but we have had great support from our members, which we really appreciate.

Finally, I would like to mention that much hard work goes into planning cases, particularly those which go to inquiry. The Conservation Coalition is up for an award for the work undertaken to save Coul Links. You can find out more and how to vote here <https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/scotland/posts/we-need-your-votes-save-coul-links-campaign-shortlisted-for-scottish-charity-awards>.

Andy Robinson

2020—a vintage Rosy year?



Adult Rosy Starling, Mull, June 2014 ©Bryan Raines

Introduction

In this article I look at the occurrence, past and present, of the Rosy Starling (*Pastor roseus*) in Argyll, looking for any trends in their numbers and distribution, and how numbers in Argyll this year compare with 'vintage' years of high occurrence. Most readers will likely be aware that this species occurs sporadically in our region. However, many of those lucky enough to find one in their gardens are often oblivious as to what they are or where they come from. Looking at Argyll data over the last 30yrs we can perhaps see where and when you are most likely to encounter 'your own Rosy' in the future.

Background

The Rosy Starling in full adult breeding plumage is a beautiful and striking bird (header photo). When seen at close range it will capture the attention of most folk, not just birdwatchers. Until recently it was known as the Rose-coloured Starling. However, the species has now been assigned to a (monotypic) genus of its own (*Pastor*). Previously it was placed in with *Sturnus* (starlings) and the name *Pastor* refers back to its older name of the Rose-coloured *Pastor* meaning 'shepherd'.

Their principal breeding range, where large colonies of this highly gregarious bird occur, covers the areas of steppe and semi-deserts from the Balkans eastwards to Iran, Kazakhstan and across Asia to west Mongolia. They are highly migratory, wintering in Arabia and the Indian sub-continent. In the summer months of some

years they can be rather nomadic with impressively large flocks irrupting westwards across to central and western Europe. These notable irruptions tend to happen every 8-10yrs when numbers reaching Great Britain and Ireland can amount to more than a hundred birds. These irruptions are known to occur in years when grasshoppers and locusts are in abundance with flocks of Rosy Starlings following these swarms.

There has been a noticeable range expansion of breeding birds westwards into Europe over the last 20yrs with large colonies appearing in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. This year a small colony of birds bred in (south-east) France for the first time, following an influx of over 1,500 birds across that country. Birds reaching the UK and Scotland have increased significantly over the past 30yrs and irruptions are becoming more frequent.

Rosy identification

As mentioned earlier, the species in breeding plumage is very distinctive, being similar in size and shape to a Common Starling, but with bright pink upperparts, scapulars and central part of the underparts, with the remaining plumage glossy black often with a purple gloss (header photo). Adult males are usually recognisable by their brighter pink plumage, longer crest feathers and glossier black plumage, whereas females and first-summer birds are less pink and less glossy, with little in the way of a crest. The winter plumage is rarely seen in the UK. It is more of a dull pied appearance with little or no pink. Later in the autumn juveniles can occur here, and are more difficult to identify, as they look

like a pale tawny version of a young Common Starling, but with orange-yellow bills with a dark tip (photo opposite). Juveniles turning up here can be easily overlooked by inexperienced birders and are certainly not noteworthy to non-birdwatchers, and are probably under reported. This species often occurs within flocks of Common Starling. In the UK they will quite happily visit gardens to feed on fat balls, where available. They usually turn up when trees and shrubs have dense foliage and, for such a bright and distinctive bird, can easily disappear for long spells in such cover.

Past records in Argyll

The first Argyll record was noted at Eredine, Loch Awe in 1852, after which there were long gaps between only a handful of records. In the sixty-year period covering the 1930's to the 1980's there were only nine records of single birds. Over the next 30yrs, covering the 1990's up to 2019, the *Argyll Bird Reports* list a total of 45 birds, of which only five (11%) were autumn juveniles.

1990-1999. Two adults and one juvenile. No records in seven years

2000-2009. 18 adults and two juveniles. No records in four years

2010-2019. 20 adults and two juveniles. No records in three years

The occurrence of these 45 birds by Argyll reporting regions are given below.

Islay	13	Jura	2
Mid-Argyll	10	Cowal	1
Tiree	8	Kintyre	1
Mull	6	Colonsay	0
Coll	6	North Argyll	0

In Argyll, as elsewhere in western Europe, adult birds are principally recorded in the summer months. Juveniles can appear in the autumn in much smaller numbers as does the occasional adult. In the recent 30yr period (1990-2019), the earliest arrival was a bird on 11 May. However, they rarely appear before the last week of May and the peak arrival in Argyll is during June, decreasing through July and tailing off in August. The earliest juvenile was exceptionally early on 28 August, but late September or October is more typical. The table below gives months in which birds were first noted, although a bird first noted in August for example could have arrived much earlier—possibly during the peak influx time around mid-June.



Juvenile Rosy Starling, Tiree, October 2014 ©John Bowler

How does 2020 compare?

Some years are very much 'Rosy' years when much higher numbers are recorded in the UK and western Europe, with Scotland and Argyll also following this trend. Since 1990 the number of reports in the UK has dramatically increased and has been even more notable this century. Irruption years of note have been 2002 with 182 birds in the UK of which 81 were in Scotland and 11 in Argyll (2002 & 2003) and 2018 with 115 in the UK, of which at least nine were in Argyll. From data gathered by Birdguides and Rare Bird Alert it looks like 2020 will have broken all UK records, with well over 200 birds reported so far!

During this current year, between June and mid-August, eight individuals have been reported in Argyll from: Coll (1), Colonsay (1, first record for there), Islay (1), Kintyre (2), Mid-Argyll (2) and Mull (1, plus another plausible report unlikely to be submitted by the finder and not included here). All the other records have been submitted to the Argyll Bird Records Committee. It remains to be seen if other adults and any juveniles are reported during the remainder of this year, to become a new record year..

Discussion and conclusions

From the Argyll data it is clear there has been a substantial increase in records for each of the two decades since 2000, with each of these being more than six times the numbers during the 1990s. This mirrors what has been observed in other parts of the UK and western Europe. It is noted in *'The Birds of Scotland'* that the majority of Scottish records came from the Northern Isles (41%) and a high proportion of records from the west of Scotland, of which Argyll contributes a good proportion (7%). A far higher proportion of juveniles are being recorded in the Northern Isles (68%) than the rest of Scotland, and only (11%) in Argyll. It can be

Months in which Rosy Starlings were first noted in Argyll 1990-2019

	May	June	July	August	September	October
Adult	5	18	11	5	3	0
Juvenile	0	0	0	1	1	3

speculated that this is due to a high number of birders visiting these northern isles in autumn looking for rare birds, and who are skilled in juvenile Rosy identification. This ties in with my thoughts that proportionately more juveniles (versus adults) are being overlooked in Argyll in autumn relative to regions in Scotland with more birders.

It should perhaps be noted that some individual birds are being reported more than once as they move around sites across Argyll, as is often the case with Little Egrets. As such, the Argyll Bird Records Committee carefully examines submitted reports to compare age, sex and plumage characteristics when these are submitted with photographs to see if the same birds are popping up at different sites. As such the committee always encourages finders to take photographs, as indeed is the case with any rare bird submission, whenever possible.

Irruptions of birds into western Europe tend to occur when there is a notable increase in temperatures causing heat waves during May to early June. This appears to have a consequential influence on locusts and grasshoppers numbers which has been the case during 2020. One can perhaps speculate that this earlier and more frequent continental air warming is a result of climate change and may lead to Rosy irruptions becoming ever more frequent and involving more birds. With birds breeding in France this year for the first time, it is perhaps not beyond reason that this species may yet breed in the UK in

the near future.

For anyone in Argyll keen to find their own "Rosy" my best tips are:

- ♦ Be aware of dates and numbers of birds arriving in the south of the UK (late May onwards) from sources such as Birdguides, as these birds will inevitably move north.
- ♦ Keep a close eye on and check Common Starling flocks in your neighbourhood, and in particular in gardens where fat balls are provided!
- ♦ Chances of finding one appears to be higher on the Argyll islands of Islay and Tiree where a high proportion of birders also work and live.

A high proportion of adult Rosy Starlings are actually reported by non-birdwatchers, for instance in Mid-Argyll, as opposed to other less noticeable rare bird species. It will be interesting to see how numbers in the coming decade and beyond compare.

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Jim Dickson

Greater Butterfly-orchid in south Kintyre

The Greater butterfly-orchid is a medium height orchid of hay meadows, grasslands and ancient woodlands. It has whitish-green flowers that have spreading petals and sepals—a bit like the wings of a butterfly.

One example of this beautiful orchid was found on the MACC Airfield 25th June 2020.

Photographs were sent off for confirmation to Dave Batty of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland as we were unsure if it was a Greater or Lesser Butterfly-orchid.

The difference is down to the pollinae in the hood. In the Lesser, they run parallel to each other, but in the Greater they are angled into one another. The flowers produce a strong scent at night, attracting night-flying moths that pollinate it.

Our photographs showed our example to be a Greater Butterfly-orchid which grows throughout Europe but is scarce in southern regions. This species has suffered declines in the UK. In the lowlands it has been lost through drainage, woodland disturbance and agricultural intensi-



Greater Butterfly-orchid, south Kintyre, 25 June 2020
©David J. Millward

fication, while upland populations have been lost to intensive grazing. The plant is now classified as 'near threatened' and is uncommon in the UK.

Jo Goudie

Book Review

Uplands and Birds by Ian Newton, HarperCollins, 2020, 598 pages. ISBN (hardback) 978-0-00-829850-0 ISBN (paperback) 978-0-00-829852-4.

The Collins New Naturalists series is a remarkable collection of books on the natural history of the British Isles. Following the publication of the first (*Butterflies*) in 1945 almost one hundred and fifty have been published on all plant and animal groups, and a series of regional guides, the first of which, *Natural History in the Highlands and Islands*, is still a classic.

Ian Newton has made a major contribution to the series writing *Finches*, *Bird Migration* and *Bird Populations*. More recently he produced *Farming and Birds* which is a masterful description of the changes which agriculture (mainly arable) in the lowlands of Britain and their role in the decline of farmland birds. *Uplands and Birds* is a complementary volume.

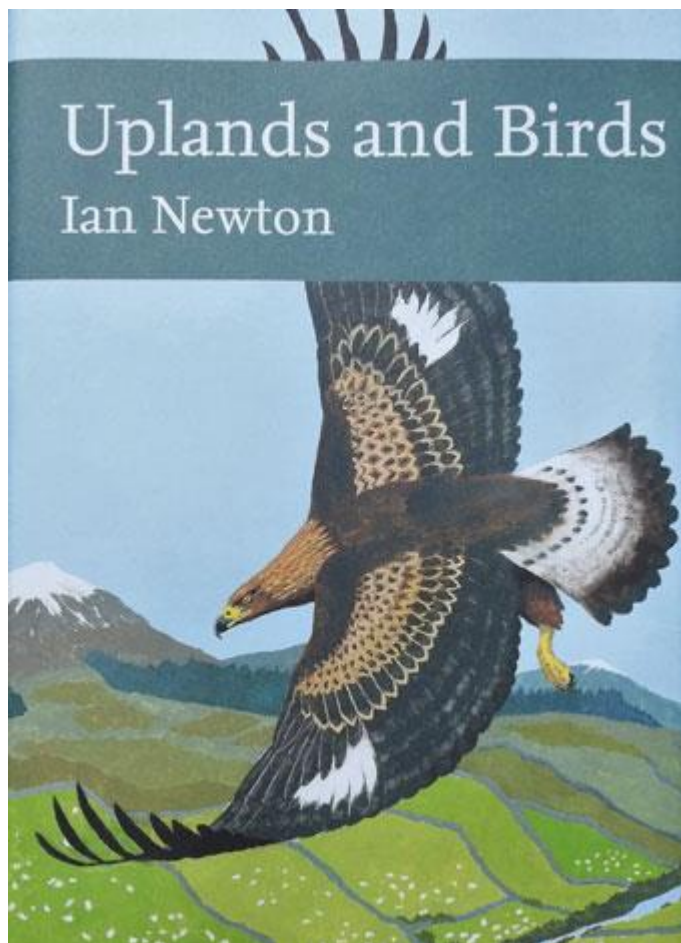
Its early chapters cover uplands and people, the making of the uplands, upland birds, sward-makers (which covers the impacts of over-grazing), and hill farming (with separate chapters on the lower fields and the open hills). These are not all about birds, but cover thoroughly the underlying ecology of the uplands and how it impacts on their birds.

The next section of the book looks at Red Grouse and the development of heather moors and their management, with a chapter on raptors, grouse and gamekeepers, and another on waders. This is an excellent summary of the science of this complex and controversial area and the conundrums which are faced.

The following chapter covers Red Deer and Deer Forests, another area with deep seated views. This leads nicely into four chapters on woodlands and birds. The first two cover native woodlands and the latter two conifer forests, setting out their impacts both negative and positive. This section draws on work done on Golden Eagle and Hen Harrier in Argyll.

Finally, there is a helpful chapter on re-wilding, bringing out the different forms which this takes and how it can help restore our overworked uplands.

This book is highly relevant to Argyll and if you want a summary of all the main issues which terrestrial birds face in the county, then I recommend it highly. Ian Newton has a very clear writing style and he covers all the main issues well and provides a help-



ful summary at the end of each chapter. There are over thirty pages of references which allow for detailed follow-up as necessary.

The uplands are important to Argyll and one paragraph in Ian Newton's final thoughts seems to summarise the dilemmas which we as a society face for these areas:

As yet, we lack a unified vision for the uplands as a whole, and for where different forms of land use would be most appropriately concentrated. Some want to see hill country producing more marketable goods, contributing to the national economy. Others want the uplands to supply mainly other needs, such as wilderness and wildlife, recreation and other ecosystem services, assets which cannot easily be valued in cash terms. They envisage, under appropriate management, a restoration and build-up of soils, improved regulation of air and water quality, flood amelioration on lower ground, and thriving populations of wildlife.

This book will help us all as we seek to find the compromises which will be required to achieve that common vision which the uplands require.

David C. Jardine



Honey Buzzard ©Steve Petty

Looking for 'Funny' Buzzards in Argyll

In recent years, Honey Buzzards have received a greater profile in Scotland following the discovery of more breeding pairs than were previously known (Shaw *et al.* 2017, McInerny *et al.* 2018). In order to know how well established the Honey Buzzard has become a national survey was organised for 2020. However, this was disrupted by the coronavirus restrictions on travel in May, and will be repeated in 2021. The Covid-19 restrictions were eased during the period when the secretive Honey Buzzard is most visible, from mid-July to late August, and this allowed us to get out and look for them in Argyll.

Since 1980, a total of 20 Honey Buzzard records in Argyll have been accepted by the ABC Records Committee. In addition, during the last 20yrs there were a further nine 'not-proven' sightings of this difficult to confirm raptor. Most of these records are from the islands during the autumn migration. However, there were a small number of sightings from forest areas in May and June, but none in July and August. A recent record involved a sick bird that was found by the roadside, near Dalavich in mid-June 2018, after severe weather. Fortunately, it was picked up by a passing motorist (see photo opposite).

While there are large differences in plumage pattern and colouration within both species, the main differences between species are in structure and flight style. Honey Buzzards have longer tails and necks than Common Buzzards (see header photo) and usually fly with 'flat' wings, rather than raised in a dihedral, and their display involves stalling in mid-air and conducting wing-claps above their back.

With an average of less than one sighting a year it might seem optimistic to believe that Honey Buzzards are present in Argyll. However, they are remarkably secre-

tive and often live under the radar of most birdwatchers and raptor workers. Changes in forest age and structure, including clearfelling, are one of the reasons thought to be behind the establishment of a population in central Scotland. Observations in 2020 suggest that there are at least 30 territories in that area. As similar changes have taken place in the forests in Argyll, along with the occasional sighting, it is not impossible that they occur here too.

The national survey requires dedicated watches over forested landscapes during mid-July and August, noting details of plumage of any Honey Buzzards (colour, sex, presence of moult and age) and their behaviour (display, carrying food etc). From mid-July we have been carrying out vantage point (VP) watches for Honey Buzzards in Mid-Argyll and Kintyre. This involves watching with binoculars and telescopes for at least two hours, usually in a deck-chair and hopefully in the sun with a light breeze to keep the midges at bay.

A dark-morph female Honey Buzzard found exhausted near Dalavich on 15 June 2018 ©Paul Finnigan



Raptors seen from the 12 vantage point (VP) counts in Argyll in 2020

VP	Osprey	Golden Eagle	Sparrowhawk	Hen Harrier	White-tailed Eagle	Common Buzzard	Kestrel	Peregrine	Unidentified raptor
1	*	*	*		*	*		*	* ¹
2	*		*			*			* ²
3	*		*			*			* ²
4	*			*	*	*			* ²
5		*	*			*	*		* ³
6			*			*			
7			*			*	*		
8		*		*	*	*			
9	*	*		*	*	*			
10	*					*			
11			*	*		*	*		
12						*			

Unidentified raptors ¹ = falcon, ² = medium-sized raptor, ³ = accipiter

Other observers, from the central Scotland Honey Buzzard team have been watching in part of Cowal.

At the time of writing this article we have spent just over 40hrs watching at 12 different view-points. While we have yet to see a Honey Buzzard, we have seen a lot of other raptors, and plenty of other interesting birds at most sites. On some watches we were seeing a raptor on average every four minutes. We saw around five different Common Buzzards from each VP. The next most common raptor was Osprey with eleven different individuals, then White-tailed Eagle, with ten sighted in total, followed by Sparrowhawk and Hen Harrier. The scarcity of Kestrels was a surprise to us. Only a single bird was seen, until our last day, when we found a family party of four at one site and another bird at another site. What was once a common bird in Argyll is now becoming remarkably scarce.

It has not just been raptors though. A total of 61 different species were seen during our watches with some interesting sightings; a Golden Plover flying south in late July at Fernoch, Loch Awe and Red-throated and Black-throated Divers at a number of sites.

While sitting on Loch Awe we were serenaded by a Nuthatch, demonstrating that they are now spreading throughout the county. Many Crossbills that were present earlier in the year have mostly departed, with birds being seen or heard only during some watches.

Jays, often elusive and poorly recorded, have been seen or heard at many of our VPs, particularly those in Mid-Argyll (86% of sites) and at one site in upland Kintyre, demonstrating how widespread and numerous they have become in Argyll. Indeed, a party of nine was watched at

Barnluasgan in Knapdale Forest on 3 August. Interestingly, Great Spotted Woodpeckers were found at all the VPs where Jays were recorded, including one towards the top of a hill in the forest (around 250m asl) in Kintyre.

Proving a negative is difficult, often taking more effort than finding an active site. Nevertheless, while we have not found Honey Buzzards during our observations, we have found a late forest-nesting Hen Harrier and re-located a breeding pair of Ospreys that had moved site.

We'll keep looking because as a good friend explained "the best way to find Honey Buzzards is to keep looking at every Buzzard". The full survey will be repeated next year and if anybody is interested in taking part please let us know.

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David Jardine & Jim Dickson



Honey Buzzard photographed in Kintyre in 2014 ©Alan Lauder



Swift ©Jim Dickson

Argyll Bird Club, Swift Survey 2020

2020 has been a year quite unlike any we have known. Last autumn, following the excellent talk given by Annette Anderton at the indoor meeting, the ABC agreed that it should try to find out more about Swifts in Argyll. Subsequently, it was decided to undertake a survey of them in Argyll in 2020. Little did we know how suitable a choice this would be during the lockdown brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

BTO Surveys have found that Swift numbers have dropped by around 50% since 1995, and ringing has shown that some can live for 18yrs or more. They are a remarkable species, flying for nine months or more without ever landing from when they depart in late July and August until they return in the first half of May. They even mate on the wing and can make long-distance foraging trips during the breeding season of over 150km. Factors that are known to influence their breeding success are those which impact on insect availability and the birds' foraging, such as wet weather. Very hot weather, which can cause young to expire, has also been noted as a problem, although this may be less of an issue in Argyll!

As virtually all Swifts nest in buildings (a few nest in woodpecker holes in ancient trees in the native pinewoods), they are one of very few species which are closely connected with human habitation. Therefore, the club decided to go ahead with the survey while asking everybody to respect the government lockdown guidelines, but to report what they found in their local patch during exercise, or in their own homes.

The project was advertised to members through e-mails and to the wider Argyll public through social media and the printed press. Following the initial information, updates were provided regularly. The effect of each update was to generate further reports, so overall good cover-

age was achieved for Argyll, and for some areas just outside the boundary of our recording area. A very good response was received with over 40 people taking part.

The first birds were seen back on 5 May in four locations (Campbeltown, Connel, Kilmichael Glassary and Oban). They were seen in Taynuilt the following day. However, the weather turned much colder immediately after their arrival, with severe night frosts in some locations, and fewer were seen for a while, with the main arrival occurring in mid-May.

With Swifts having departed for their wintering quarters it is possible to provide a summary of the findings. The total breeding population in Argyll appears to be around 45-50 pairs in at least 20 locations. Breeding (numbers of pairs) was noted at:

Benderloch (1+), Connel (1), Taynuilt (3+), Oban (north (3) & south(4/5), Lerags (3), Kilmelford (1+), Portsonachan (6), Kilmartin (1), Slockavullin (2), Poltalloch (1), Kilmichael (3+), Lochgilphead (4), Ardrishaig (1), Campbeltown (5+), Carrick Castle (3), Strone (1), Sandbank (3), Dunoon (1-3) and Tighnabruaich (1).

Notably, no breeding was reported from Inveraray or Tarbert. Any details of breeding from these locations or other sites would be welcome. One pair at Annette Anderton's study site was a non-breeding pair (see box, next page). Additionally, birds were seen, but breeding was not confirmed in Dervaig and Salen on Mull, Scammadale Glen, Inverneil and Innellan.

Nationally it has been found most houses built after around 1965 don't have breeding Swifts and, in Britain at least, the availability of nest sites can be a limiting factor. Where nest sites were reported in Argyll they were found to be breeding in old buildings or in nest boxes (such

as those provided by Annette Anderton in Kilmichael Glassary, and in Taynuilt).

Swifts readily take to boxes, and the Argyll Bird Club has agreed to fund up to ten boxes, which will be available to members who are able to find a suitable site. Please contact David Jardine (dcjardine@btinternet.com) if you wish to install one of these boxes. Provision will be prioritised to the most suitable sites

At the end of July, as birds started to fledge, flocks reported were 20+ over Taynuilt on 22 July, 35 in Oban on 21 July, 14+ over Moine Mhor on 23 July, 12 over Loch Awe on 31 July and 20 over Campbeltown on 12 August.

It is not too late to provide further details of late season counts to Jim Dickson (argyllbirder@outlook.com), or details of any additional nesting sites which you have found. Full survey results will be published shortly on the club website.

Thanks to everybody who has taken part (with apologies to anybody who may have been missed): M Adams, M Anderson, O Armstrong Hemmings, B Baillie, D Brooks, L Brice, M Chattwood, A Dykes, A Elsby, L Gibson, D Gilmour, R Grove, N Hammatt, R Harvey, H Lear, J Lehmann, K Lowrie, C Maddox, E Maguire, A McFarlane, A McGregor, J McInally, E McNab, R Morley, M Murphy, J Parker, L Paul, D Pearson, G Penman, D Rutherford, D & K Thomas, F Thornton, B Urquhart, J Waldie, R Walker, J Witts and G E Yuill.

David Jardine and Jim Dickson

Swift boxes at Annette's house. The Swifts seemed to be little concerned with the scaffolding ©Annette Anderton

Swifts in Kilmichael Glassary

Annette Anderton has been studying the Swifts in Kilmichael Glassary for a number of years, ever since the birds started breeding in her house when they were excluded from a nearby building. In 2020, the first birds arrived back on 5 May. Two pairs bred at her house, and another young pair were 'prospecting'. Younger Swifts occupy nest sites, but don't actually breed until they are older, at 3-4 years of age. There was also a further pair nesting in the village.

With the added details from nest cameras Annette reports that two eggs were laid (the normal clutch size in Swifts) and that one of the juvenile Swifts fledged in the first week of August and the other in the following week of the month. Annette reports that on very wet days the birds just remain in their boxes, thus influencing the growth rate of the young.



A Swift entering one of the nestboxes
©AnnetteAnderton



A trio of new moths

Moth trapping in one's garden is an activity little affected by the lockdown. As a result, most birdwatchers with moth traps have probably been using them more this year than in previous years. This increase in moth activity may be one reason why some particularly interesting moths have been caught in Argyll and Bute during the last two months, including a first for Scotland and two firsts for Argyll. Accounts of these three macro moths are given below, **Editor**.

Sharp-angled Carpet—a new Scottish macro moth species

On the morning of Friday 24th July 2020 Dougie Menzies, Bill Stein and I were in Glen More on the Isle of Bute where the previous evening we had set four 6W actinic battery powered moth traps. We had a pretty varied catch, but when opening the trap, which we had set at 'the ford', c.400m north of Glenmore farmhouse, at NS024701 we found a very interesting looking carpet. I immediately took a couple of photos of it sitting on an egg box, before attempting to pot it, which, luckily, I accomplished successfully.

We then started to consult the two moth books we had with us and a quick search soon drew our attention to Sharp-angled Carpet (*Euphyia unangulata*). Yes, it seemed a very good fit, but both had maps which excluded Scotland from its distribution! Being birders and knowing that 'rare birds' are called that for the very reason that they rarely occur, and that the same reasoning applies fully to moths, we went back carefully through the photos and text for other possible candidates, however, we were continually drawn back to Sharp-angled Carpet.

I took the moth with me and once home went back through the books and was fully convinced that our identification was correct. When indoors I managed to take a couple of additional photos. I then sent two photographs to Roy Leverton, probably Scotland's leading moth ID expert, and I asked him for his opinion. Roy replied very quickly, saying 'Yes, this is a Sharp-angled Carpet, no doubt at all'. Roy then went on to say that 'as far as we know, it is new for Scotland. The few previous claims have been unsupported or proved to be misidentifications of Common Carpet.'

Roy then suggested that 'the nearest population to Bute is in Northern Ireland, where it seems to be widespread and numerous'. It is a local species in southern England, north to the south Midlands and East Anglia, but there are very few post-1970 records north of the Wash. It is also local in Wales, occurring predominantly in the south. It is widespread, but local throughout most of Ireland, but there is a notable concentration in Northern Ireland. Bute would seem a very unlikely landing



Sharp-angled Carpet, Bute, 24 July 2020 ©Ron Forrester

place for a moth blown north from England, or west from the continent, but a number of migrant birds passing through Scotland on their way to and from Ireland make landfall on Bute and for instance several birds ringed in Ireland have subsequently been recorded on Bute. In fact Bute is no more than 100km north-east of the Northern Ireland mainland. Winds on Bute during the week leading up to the sighting had been predominantly from the west, so I fully agree with Roy that Northern Ireland was the most likely origin for this usually sedentary moth.

Bute is not a place in the habit of turning up rare vagrant moths, but one year earlier four, Four-spotted Footmen were recorded during a four-day period, in a garden at Ascog, from 31st July to 3rd August (D Col-lis pers. comm.). This is also a very rare moth in Scotland, with only two previous records known. Whilst there appears to be a small resident population in south Cumbria and north Lancashire, there is a slightly nearer population to Bute in Northern Ireland. It is possible they also emanated in Northern Ireland. So perhaps vagrant moths from Northern Ireland may turn up more frequently on Bute and possibly also Argyll than I previously realised.

Unfortunately the Sharp-angled Carpet died in the early evening following capture. The fact that the moth died so quickly after capture might indicate a likelihood that it had been captured shortly after completing its journey from Northern Ireland. However, whilst there remains no indication that the species has bred locally, this possibility has yet to be fully ruled out. The specimen is now set and will be sent to the collection at NMS, Edinburgh.

Ron Forrester

Discovery of Devon Carpet in Argyll

In Argyll we have been seeing that birds are adjusting to climate change, with species such as Nuthatch now established breeders, and Little Egrets, which were rarities, but are now becoming everyday sightings in some areas. The same is happening in the insect world.

The Devon Carpet (*Lampropteryx otregiata*) is a 'Nationally Scarce B' moth, which as its name suggests occurs locally in south-western and southern England from Devon and Cornwall to Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Sussex, Berkshire and Gloucestershire, and in southern and western Wales, from Monmouthshire westwards to Pembrokeshire and northwards to Caernarvonshire and Anglesey. There is a scattering of other records in southern England. It was reported on the Isle of Man in 2006 and more recently in Cumbria. It reached Dumfries and Galloway in 2013.

On 10 August 2020 we caught a Devon Carpet on the shores of West Loch Tarbert in an actinic trap set close to an area of damp grassland on the edge of an oakwood. This is the first record for Argyll. Its food plant is Marsh Bedstraw (*Galium palustre*), which is widespread in Argyll, so there is a possibility it will become an established member of our moth community. So, like birds, other taxa that are less obvious in the landscape are also on the move.

David C. Jardine and Ian Fisher



Devon Carpet, West Loch Tarbet, 10 August 2020 ©David Jardine & Ian Fisher

The first record of a Nutmeg in Argyll

A friend once said to me that moth trapping is like having Christmas every day—you just never know what's going to turn up! After a week or two of trapping in early August, with pretty disappointing moth numbers, I'd convinced myself that the catch on 15 August would be no better. In fact, numbers of moths caught were slightly lower than on previous nights. However, my attention was quickly drawn to a grey/brown moth, which I instantly thought might be a Nutmeg (*Anarta trifolii*). I'd caught the same species in Spain on a number of occasions, but didn't expect to find it in Argyll. It did in fact turn out to be this species.

The Nutmeg is widely distributed in England north to Lancashire and Yorkshire, but is scarce in Scotland, where most records are considered to be immigrants. Unlike the Devon Carpet above, the Nutmeg has decreased significantly in both distribution and abundance since 2020. Most Scottish records are of immigrants on Orkney and Shetland, with less than five records from mainland Scotland this century.

Steve Petty



Nutmeg, Ardentinn, 15 August 2020 ©Steve Petty

Articles for the December *Eider* should be sent to the editor before the 20 November 2020

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

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

The *Eider* is published during the first week of March, June, September and December. Articles for each issue must be with the editor **before** the 20th day of the month prior to publication. However, it greatly helps if material can be submitted well before these deadline dates. Contributions are accepted in the order they are received, which may result in some late submissions being held over until the next issue. Ideally, contributions should be less than 1500 words

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

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

More about the Argyll Bird Club

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

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

Ordinary	£10
Age 25 and under	free
Family	£15
Corporate	£25

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