

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

March 2022
Number 139



The Eider



Brambling at Cairnbaan on 2 January. It's been a good winter for this visitor from the northern forests
©Jim Dickson

Editor: Steve Petty, Cluaran Cottage, Ardentinn, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8TR

E-mail: elder@argyllbirdclub.org

Inside this issue

Editorial	Page 2
Club news	Pages 3-4
Minutes of the 36th AGM of the Argyll Bird Club	Pages 5-6
A great age for a Great TIT <i>David Jardine</i>	Page 6
Report of the ABC field trip to Clachan on 29 January <i>David Jardine</i>	Pages 7-8
Book review <i>Nigel Scriven</i>	Pages 8
Climate change and Argyll's seabirds <i>David Jardine</i>	Page 9-10
Recent recoveries of ringed birds <i>David Jardine</i>	Pages 10-13
BTO update <i>Nigel Scriven</i>	Pages 14-15
Corncrake numbers	Page 16-17
Information about the ABC	Page

Editorial

At long last the club's activities are gradually getting back to pre-covid levels.

Nigel, our chairman, has put together a very interesting and varied programme for the Spring Meeting at the Cairnbaan Hotel on 5 March (see next page). The talks range from Water Voles to moths and, of course, birds. After his recent appearance in Winter Watch, Justin Grant will be enlightening us about White-tailed Eagles. The talk on Taynish NNR and its birds couldn't have come at a better time, as Jim Dickson will be leading a trip there later on in May (see next page). Hopefully by then, memories of the wild and wet winter we are experiencing will be fast fading.

Please note that you have to let our membership secretary know if you want to attend the Spring Meeting (see page 4).

We have now booked the Cairnbaan Hotel for the Autumn Meeting on 5 November, so please put that date in your diary. The programme will be included in the September issue of the *Eider*.

From the planned series of field trips over winter, only one took place, and then only just, as from David's account (pages 7-8) it was a pretty windy experience! Hopefully, the weather will be kinder to us for the four field trips planned for this spring (next page). All are to locations we have visited in the past. If you have any ideas about visiting birding sites that we have not been to in the past, please mention it to our Chairman or secretary, or anyone else on the committee.

It's slowly beginning to feel that spring is just around the corner. The snowdrops are in bloom and the daffodils are just coming into flower. When we do get the occasional spell of decent weather the birds think the same too, as many are now starting to sing, to demarcate their territories and to attract mates. Even in some of the wild weather that we have had recently, it has been a joy to hear Mistle Thrushes in full song. How apt is their old name of Storm Cock.

You will notice that this issue of the *Eider* is quite small. I've said before that the success of the newsletter depends very much on members contributing articles and photos. I'm willing to accept almost anything providing it has a wildlife theme, so please try and put pen to paper for the June issue. The deadline for contribution is 10 May. Thank you!

Acknowledgements

Very many thanks to the following for their contributions to this issue—Alun ap Rhisiart, Malcolm Chattwood, Jim Dickson, Jim Duncan, Ian Fisher, Lynsey Gibson, Peter & Dorothy Hogbin (photocopying & dispatching the newsletter), David Jardine, Linda Petty (proof reading), Andy Robinson, Nigel Scriven and the late Margaret Staley.

Club News

FIELD TRIPS 2022

The number of people on field trips is limited to 20. So, it is essential that you contact the leader of a trip beforehand to make sure a place is available, and to receive up-to-date rendezvous details.

If there is a chance that adverse weather might lead to the cancellation of a field trip, please check the club's website or contact the organiser the night before or prior to setting off. Please wear suitable footwear and bring waterproof clothing if rain is forecast.

There will be a risk assessment and safety briefing at the start of each field trip.

Saturday 26 February. Holy Loch Hides

(Cowal). Led by Alistair McGregor (mobile phone 07754 524240;

e-mail alistairmcgregor16@outlook.com). We plan to visit the new hide on the north shore of Holy Loch (Kilmun), as well as the existing hide on the south shore. Please contact Alistair for rendezvous details. Please bring a packed lunch.

Saturday 26 March. Sound of Gigha. Led by Malcolm Chattwood (phone 07422 718533 e-mail malcolmchattwood@gmail.com). Meet at Ronachan Point Car Park on the A83 (grid ref. NR741548) at 10.00hrs. We will catch the ferry to Gigha if the

weather is suitable. Light lunches will be available at the hotel on the island. The trip will include several short walks (each 300m maximum) on level ground, but a longer walk to Achamore Gardens on Gigha is possible.

Saturday 30 April. Lismore. Led by David Jardine (phone 01546 510200. E-mail dcjardine@btinternet.com) who will confirm rendezvous details to those wishing to take part. Please bring your own lunch. This trip will include walks of around 7km on roads, tracks and paths with mostly gentle gradients.

Saturday 28 May. Taynish NNR, Ulva Lagoon & Loch na Cille. Led by Jim Dickson (e-mail argyllbirder@outlook.com, mobile phone 07985726209). Meet Jim beyond Tayvallich at the Taynish Car Park (just south of Lochan Taynish) at 10.00hrs. The Taynish section involves an 5km walk on relatively level ground. The walk at Keills/Keillmore will be approximately 1km. Please bring your own lunch

INDOOR MEETINGS 2022

Saturday 5 March, Spring Meeting and Extraordinary General Meeting. The meeting will be held at the Cairnbaan Hotel (www.cairnbaan.com), near Lochgilphead (phone

Programme for the ABC's 2022 Spring Meeting Saturday 5 March at the Cairnbaan Hotel, near Lochgilphead

Time	Session
0930	Doors open, coffee and tea
1000-1010	Welcome and introduction— <i>Nigel Scriven</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1010-1030	Birds and dogs— <i>Nigel Scriven</i> , Chairman of the Argyll Bird Club
1030-1100	Taynish NNR and its birds— <i>Heather Watkin</i>
1100-1130	Coffee/tea
1130-1200	Water Voles and their reintroduction— <i>Pete Creech</i>
1200-1230	Moths in Argyll— <i>David Hill</i> , Butterfly Conservation
1230-1345	Lunch (available in the hotel)
1345-1415	Club EGM & SCIO inaugural meeting
1415-1500	Back where they belong: Scotland's White-tailed Eagles— <i>Justin Grant</i>
1500-1530	Tea/coffee
1530-1600	Heronries census and BTO update— <i>Nigel Scriven</i>
1610-1615	Raffle and closing remarks

01546 603668). Lunches will be available in the hotel. **Please e-mail or phone our Membership Secretary (contact details on back page) before 1 March if you would like to attend, stating how many places are required.** Dorothy will then confirm if places are available. In the hotel, sensible social distancing is recommended and masks should be worn when walking around the hotel. Please see the club website for updates.

The programme for the meeting can be found on the previous page, and any updates will be posted on the club's website.

The Extraordinary General Meeting. This is about the club converting to an SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). The programme for the EGM is given below.

Saturday 5 November. Autumn Meeting and AGM. The meeting will 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 included in the September issue of the *Eider*.

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

ARGYLL BIRD REPORT 32 (2020)

Argyll Bird Report 32 can be downloaded (PDF format) from the club's website (under the 'Publications' tab). Previous years' reports can be downloaded from the same place. Jim Dickson is now working on ABR 33, which will be available in spring 2022

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). The club has also helped to fund the provision of nest boxes for Grey Wagtails and Dippers in Kintyre (see article in the June 2021 *Eider*, page 12).

More recently, the club has bought ten Swift nest boxes, all of which have now been given a home. We can have more boxes made if anyone has a site in mind. If you know of a suitable building, please contact David Jardine (contact details on back page). Applications for funding other projects should be submitted to the secretary (contact details on the back page).

MACHRIHANISH SEABIRD OBSERVATORY

If you are planning a visit to the observatory please contact Jo Goudie (jomitzi@yahoo.co.uk) to check if it will be open. MSBO reports (PDF format) can still be downloaded at:

<http://www.machrihanishbirdobservatory.org.uk/reports.htm>

ABC COMMITTEE VACANCY

We are looking for two people to join the club's committee. If you are interested, please contact our secretary (contact details on back page) to find out more about the post. As most of our committee meetings are now via zoom, it would be great to get some volunteers from the Argyll islands.

ARGYLL BIRD RECORDER AND EDITOR OF THE ARGYLL BIRD REPORT

We are still looking for one or two people to fill the above posts. Full details of both were given in the December *Eider* (pages 3-4). Please contact Jim Dickson if either post appeals to you.

Saturday 5 March—Cairnbaan Hotel

Extraordinary General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club

Agenda

1. Introduction by the Chairman
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the 36th AGM on 6 November 2021 (pages 5-6)
4. Proposal: That the Argyll Bird Club be dissolved today and the assets and membership be transferred to the Argyll Bird Club SCIO

Inaugural General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club SCIO

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Proposal: That the Argyll Bird Club SCIO adopt the new constitution (which may be downloaded from the club's website (<https://argyllbirdclub.org/the-club/constitution/>))
3. Proposal: That the former officers and committee of the Argyll Bird Club be selected as the officers and committee of the Argyll Bird Club SCIO
4. Proposal: that the Argyll Bird Club SCIO be renamed the Argyll Bird Club
5. Thanks and closing the meeting

Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Argyll Bird Club on 6 November 2021 at the Cairnbaan Hotel

1. Sederunt

Bill Alexander, Stephen Bowie, Heather Cameron, Malcolm Chattwood, Doug Fontaine, Lynsey Gibson, Neil Hammatt, Robin Harvey, Peter Hogbin, Dorothy Hogbin, David Jardine, Mary John, Andrew John, Rob Lightfoot, Alistair McGregor, Rab Morton, David Palmar, Janet Palmar, Steve Petty, Morag Rea, Norman Rea, Karen Reader, Alun ap Rhisiart, Nigel Scriven, Darren Thomas (25).

2. Apologies

Mary Gregory, Muriel Lindsay, Jane Gibson, Angela Rose, Iain Gibson, Gordon Holm, Mandy Hodgkinson, Jean Maskell, Anne Archer, Anne Harrison, Mike Harrison, Ian Hopkins, John Williams, Ron Forrester, Douglas Menzies, Janet Holm, Annette Anderton, Roger Anderton, Linda Petty, George Newall (20).

3. Minutes of the 35th AGM on 5th March 2021

These had previously been circulated. Proposed by Malcolm Chattwood, Seconded by Neil Hammatt.

4. Matters arising not included below

None.

5. Chairman's Report

This last year follows on from the previous disrupted pattern of 2020. The period covered by this report extends from the delayed AGM of March this year, which took place by Zoom, until this November. The AGM was followed by an excellent Zoom talk by Peter Roberts on the birds of New Zealand. I would normally write the annual report in August for submission to OSCR, and for inclusion in the September *Eider*, and presenting at the AGM in November, but the normal pattern hasn't worked out that way this year.

On a sad note, I would like to acknowledge here the passing away of three stalwart supporters of the club who each contributed greatly to the club in their own ways: Margaret Staley, Ian Brooke, and Eddie Maguire. Obituaries have appeared in the September 2021 *Eider* newsletter.

After the Zoom AGM in March this year, we continued to meet on-line with further Zoom meetings, with the first on 15th April when 28 locations logged on. The first talk was Jim Dickson introducing the 2021 Club Nuthatch Survey, aiming to benchmark the arrival of this recent immigrant. The next talk was David Jardine, giving us an update on his study of Great Northern Diver feeding habits. This was followed by Chris McInerney talking on Honey Buzzards in Scotland and the efforts to determine their occurrence. The second spring Zoom meeting took place on

20th May, with 25 locations logging on. Chris Waltho presented 'Redheads with Eyeshadow', in which he focussed on moulting in males, and the possibility of being able to separate first-year males by a dark eye shadow. This was followed by Nigel Scriven with a request for counts of seabirds to fill gaps in coverage by the Seabird Counts bird survey, and some news from the BTO.

The autumn zoom meeting on 7th October, began with David Wood, talking about raptor migration at Sarimazi in SE Turkey, focussing on the Egyptian Vulture Project. This was followed by John Bowler talking about his home patch, the birds of Tiree.

Outdoor meetings were able to recommence with the easing of Covid restrictions, and the first was at Benmore in Cowal, attended by four local birders on 29 May. The second was on 29 June, to Kerrera, when six members were led round by David Jardine. This was followed by Jim Dickson leading a group of 14 round the Add Estuary on 31 July. The 25th September saw a trip to Toward and Loch Striven, led by Alistair McGregor, and on 30 October David Jardine led a trip to Lismore.

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, continues to receive 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 compiled by bird recorder Jim Dickson, and published digitally, with Volume 32 of the report, covering 2020, published in April 2021 and electronically distributed to members.

The club thanks all who are involved in ornithological recording in Argyll including the Argyll Bird Records Committee, the Recorder and his team, including Morag Rea who spends countless hours preparing records for entry into the database, the observers and organisations which submit records to the database. I note here that Jim Dickson has signalled his intention to stand down as recorder after nine years in post, during which time he has fulfilled his duties above and beyond what might be expected. His contribution has been massive, and the club owes him enormous thanks for all his work. It will not be easy to fill the gap, but find a re-

placement we must somehow or another.

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 for the purchase of Swift nestboxes, following on from last year's Swift survey, and most of these have been deployed. 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.

Steve Petty very dependably edited four editions of the *Eider* newsletter for distribution in December, March, June and September, always on time and packed with news. Thanks to Steve on behalf of all the members. I would like to thank all the committee for their contributions during this unusual period, and especially to David Jardine for pulling together the speakers for the Zoom talks, and Malcolm Chattwood for his technical support.

6. Secretary's Report

No relevant communications

7. Treasurer's Report

We have about the same income as last year. Data fees are up a bit. We charge organisations £400 for data. Bank interest was £100. Expenditure was about same as previous years. We have saved on public meetings, but our zoom subscription was extra. We have £3000 in the current account and £10000 on deposit.

8. Membership Secretary's Report

The club has 225 members, 19 new, 1 junior. Re-

minder to members to make sure they let Dorothy know if their details (e-mail, address, phone number) change.

9. Future Field Trips

This was left for the committee to discuss and make arrangements.

10. Election of Officers and Committee Members

The Chair was vacated while the secretary called for nominations for Chairman. Nigel Scriven was proposed by Peter Hogbin, seconded by Dorothy Hogbin, elected nem. con. The Chair resumed his position and the election of the remaining committee conducted. Vice-Chairman: David Jardine, proposed Nigel Scriven, seconded Dorothy Hogbin, elected nem. con. Secretary: Alun ap Rhisiart, proposed Nigel Scriven, seconded Robin Harvey, elected nem. con. Treasurer: Peter Hogbin, proposed Nigel Scriven, seconded Alun ap Rhisiart, elected nem. con. Membership Secretary: Dorothy Hogbin, proposed Nigel Scriven, seconded Norman Rea, elected nem. con. Committee: Steve Petty, Alistair McGregor, Gordon Holm, Malcolm Chattwood, Andy Robinson. Proposed en bloc by Nigel Scriven, seconded David Palmar, elected nem. con. We are looking for two more members. Nigel noted that we do have ability to co-opt. Peter noted that when the SCIO is formed, committee and members will be automatically transferred, but that will go through a formal process at that EGM.

11. AOCB

David Jardine: we should put on record thanks to Steve Petty for his efforts over the years. Proposed vote of thanks for Nigel.

A great age for Great Tit

A number of you will be aware that I am a trained bird ringer. Every so often I catch a bird which surprises me. On 16 January 2022 I caught an adult Great Tit (ring number L877709, photo opposite), which had been ringed as juvenile male on 18 August 2013 (2 days short of 8 years 5 months ago)!

Only 38% of juvenile Great Tits survive their first year and 54% of adults survive from year to year, so the typical lifespan of a Great Tit is 3 years.

So, this bird was something special, although still a bit short of the oldest recorded Great Tit in Britain (10 years 5 months 18 days). (Details from BTO BirdFacts)

To find out more about bird ringing visit:

<https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/ringing>

David Jardine



Great Tit L877709 ©David Jardine

ABC field trip to Clachan, Kintyre on 29 January



Club members walking from Clachan towards West Loch Tarbert ©Lynsey Gibson

It is a number of years since the club has held an outing to Clachan and Dunskeig Bay, a trip normally led by the former club secretary, Katie Pendreigh. These outings were usually held in the summer, so the weather on this occasion was slightly different as it caught the edge of storm 'Malik'. Indeed, the wind was so strong it led to a number of call-offs (because of the cancellation of the ferry from Cowal), but nine brave members (including two on their first outing) met in brightening skies at the car park at the old Clachan Hall.

At the preliminary safety briefing it was explained that the route would be shortened to cope with the challenging conditions. The only sign of the Dipper on the stream by the car park were a few droppings on the rocks in the burn. Other small birds were keeping their heads down, but a few Chaffinches and a House Sparrow were found on some feeders and a Pied Wagtail flew over.

Moving out of the comparative shelter of the village, the group fought their way (into the wind) along the track by the burn. A distant group of Jackdaws and Rooks were feeding in the fields in the lee of the farm up the hill. The latter were surely local birds from the rookery in the village which had 38 well-built-up nests. I suspect some repair work may have been necessary after the weekend!

A few gulls were passing over and a Buzzard battled against the wind as it flew round the hill, quite unlike the Ravens seen later, which were rolling and playing in the wind near Dun Skeig. Five Herons were sheltering in the rocks behind the bay and around 60 Oystercatchers were feeding in a sheltered spot on the machair at the far end of the bay. The high tide and stormy conditions had clearly prevented them from feeding on the shore.

Viewing offshore was difficult, but a Shag was seen battling its way north in the wave troughs

Members 'beating the tide' at Dunskeig Bay © David Jardine



and Martin had a glimpse of a diver, but it was impossible to relocate it in the swell. Turning their backs to the wind the party walked back south along the bay finding a pair of Mallard and a few more Curlew (a total of eight were seen) by the mouth of the burn. A large group of gulls was sheltering by the burn mouth, but despite the arctic blast, no white-wingers could be found amongst the Common and Herring Gulls.

It was time to seek shelter and return to the cars, but tell-tale holes of a Sand Martin colony in the river bank close to the shore were a nice reminder of warmer days to come, as these migrants would be returning in about eight-weeks time.

The walk back by the farm track was occupied by a 'blackbird hunt' which was eventually successful and Darren predicted (on the basis of past experience) that we might find a Reed Bunting in the scrub in a gully by the road—he was right! On returning to the cars, the group drove round to the marginally more sheltered area at Corran on the south side of the mouth of West Loch Tarbert for lunch.

A short walk along to the old ferry jetty added significantly to the struggling list, with Red-breasted Mergansers, Black Guillemot, Red-throated and Great Northern Divers sheltering in the loch, and a Dunnock and Black-headed Gull by the shore. It was not a day for lingering—but to head home and get warmed up. However, everyone agreed it was worth getting out for—but not for too long!

Species list (34 species)

Greylag, Mallard, Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-throated Diver, Great Northern Diver, Grey Heron, Shag, Cormorant, Buzzard, Oystercatcher, Curlew, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Black Guillemot, Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon, Collared Dove, Jackdaw, Rook, Carrion Crow, Hooded Crow, Raven, Blue Tit, Wren, Starling, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Robin, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Pied Wagtail, Chaffinch, Reed Bunting.

David Jardine

Book review

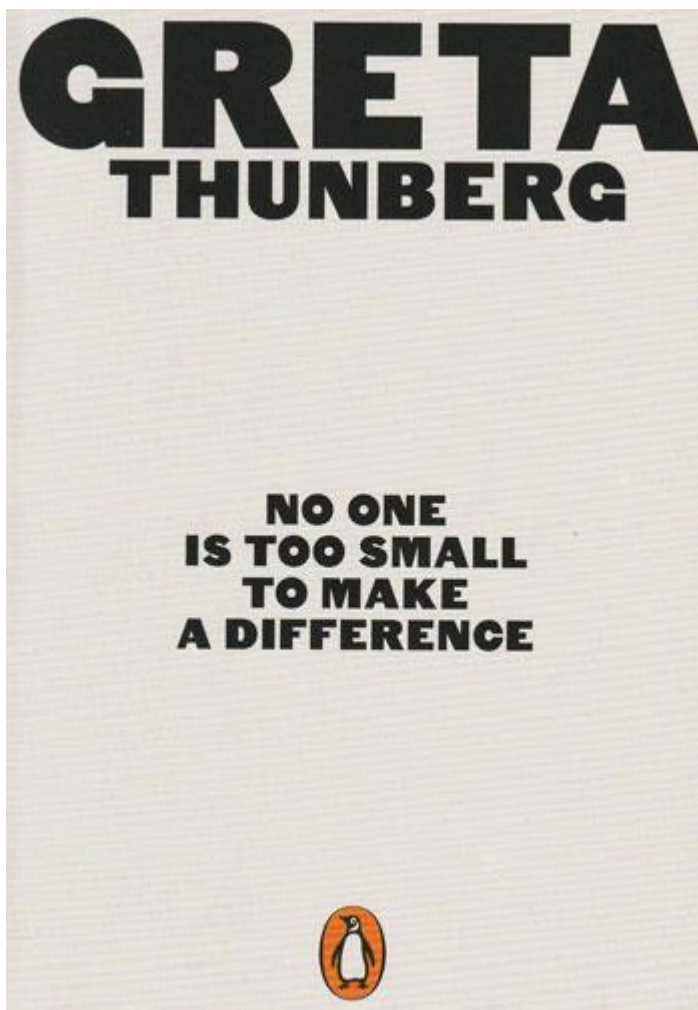
No one is too small to make a difference. Greta Thunberg. 2019. Pbk, 68 pages. ISBN9780141992716. Penguin Books Ltd (There is a new expanded edition available, 115 pages. The price varies between booksellers, but is less than £5.00).

A small book, from a small person, but with a big message. Not a bird book but, as birders, we are only too well aware of the importance of the climate and biodiversity crisis. The title says it all, so why the need for a book? The book is Greta's first book in English. It is a collection of her speeches, beginning with the climate march in Stockholm in September 2018, through to the Extinction Rebellion declaration in London in December 2018, the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2019, to the Houses of Parliament in April 2019, and points in between.

We have all seen Greta on TV, giving these speeches, and hear the messages. They are inspiring. They have made a difference. How much of a difference is probably too soon to say, and only time will tell. There are only 68 pages, and messages do get repeated, but it's a great read.

We might not be able to stop climate change ourselves, but our contributions together can make some differences, however small they might appear. Similarly with bird conservation and biodiversity loss. We need to take more action for the younger generations. I rest my case.

Nigel Scriven



Climate Change—what is the future for Argyll's seabirds?



Will future generations be able to enjoy such amazing sights? Lunga, Treshnish Islands, 23 July 2021 ©Steve Petty

Recently the CoP26 event in Glasgow brought the west coast of Scotland to the centre of the climate change global stage. Just prior to the event the BTO and RSPB published the results of their studies of how predicted climate change would affect seabirds in our area and how vulnerable different species are to predicted climatic changes. This research came under EU InterReg funding (which applies to cross-border collaboration between Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire), which was used to fund this MarPAMM (Marine Protected Area Management & Monitoring) Project.

The team used new computer modelling to explore how vulnerable 19 species of breeding seabirds found in Argyll and Ireland are to future climate change. Great Skua and Mediterranean Gull were not included in the project. Changes in prey availability and increases in extreme weather events are

projected to affect most seabirds, but variation in their diets, and where and how they feed, makes different species more or less vulnerable to climate change.

Some species may become more common in the future as climate changes, with increases in Common, Black-headed and Lesser black-backed Gulls and Shags predicted. However, of the 19 seabird species studied, 14 are predicted to decline by 2050. Arctic Skuas, which are just hanging on as a breeding species in Argyll, and European Storm Petrel (photo below) may well have disappeared from the area, while Puffin, many tern and fulmar populations are predicted to more than halve (table on next page).

The RSPB researchers looked at changes in at-sea distribution of seven seabird species using models. Of seven seabirds studied Kittiwake, Guillemot, Razorbill, Sandwich* and Arctic Terns were predicted to decline significantly, with only Shag and Common Tern likely to increase. (*does not breed in Argyll).

Dr Ian Cleasby, conservation scientist at the RSPB, explained: 'Climate change is unlikely to have a uniform impact across seabird colonies and this could alter UK-wide seabird distributions as some colonies grow, or remain stable, while others decline. Birds may also have to adjust their foraging behaviour, targeting new areas or ranging further afield, which we should consider carefully when we are designating and managing marine protected areas. Beyond the static MPAs of today we may need to explore a more dynamic protection approach during times of climatic change.'

Professor Pearce-Higgins, Director of Science at the British Trust for Ornithology, summarised the suggested conservation responses:



The European Storm Petrel may well disappear as a breeding bird from Argyll in the future. Photo taken at Machrins, Colonsay on 12 June 2014 ©Ian Fisher

Predicted changes in Argyll seabird populations

Species	Seabird 2000 count	2050 prediction (MarPAMM report)	Change (%)
Storm Petrel	5048	1	-100
Arctic Skua	21	0	-100
Puffin	2333	196	-92
Little Tern	123	14	-89
Arctic Tern	1851	313	-83
Fulmar	7904	3110	-65
Guillemot	39407	17623	-55
Razorbill	6107	2875	-53
Kittiwake	8974	4326	-52
Black Guillemot	2513	1440	-42
Herring Gull	10573	8575	-19
Common Gull	2480	2053	-17
Great Black-backed Gull	1560	1699	+9
Cormorant	138	156	+13
Shag	2800	3570	+27
Common Tern	1313	2034	+55
Black-headed Gull	668	1286	+93
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2390	9632	+303

'To maximise the chances of our seabirds being able to cope with climate change requires a range of measures, including protection of their breeding sites, strategic siting of marine renewable energy developments, the sustainable management of fish stocks, and the management of introduced predators that can cause significant problems at breeding seabird colonies.'

With such a dynamic, if slightly worrying, future predicted for Argyll seabirds, it is clear that the Argyll Bird Club and its members should continue to put our efforts into monitoring our local populations. More can be read about the climate change predictions at:

<https://www.mpa-management.eu/?p=1252>

David Jardine

**Recent recoveries of birds ringed/recovered in Argyll—2020**

This note provides details of the more interesting recoveries of ringed birds found in 2020. These have been extracted from the BTO's online ringing report (Robinson *et al.* 2021), which covers the whole of Britain, but it is possible to filter for different years, species and specifically for Argyll.

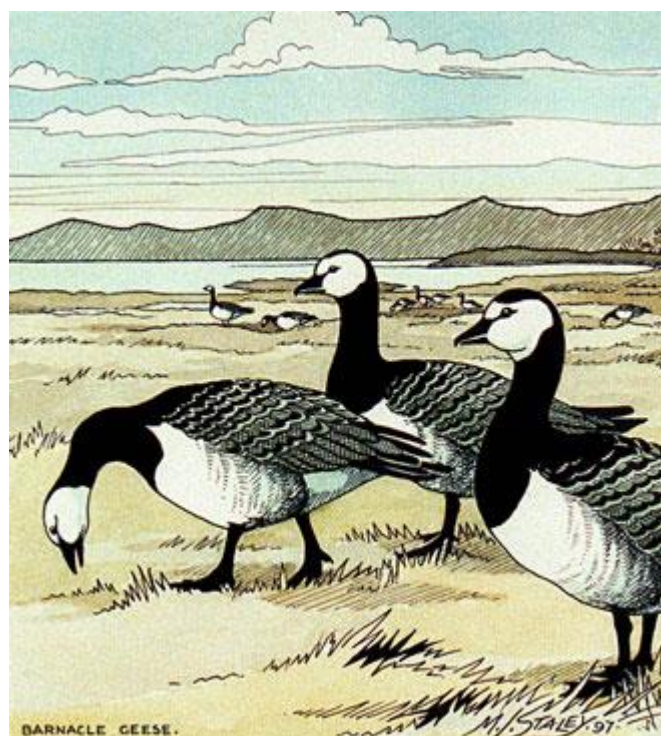
Perhaps because of covid restrictions there was less ringing activity in Argyll in 2020, with only 4199 birds ringed, which is the lowest total ringed since 2016. However, these recoveries provide an insight to the movements and lifespans of some of Argyll birds.

Barnacle Goose

1098005—adult ringed at Gruinart Farm, Islay, on 5 November 1996, shot at Efri-Ey, Medalland, Vestur-Skaftafellssysla, Iceland on 28 September 2020 (NNW, 1082km, 23 years 10 months 23 days).

Greylag

5258837—First-year female ringed at Loch an Eilean, Tiree on 2 July 2016, found dead at Eile-



an Aird nan Uan, Isle of Muck on 20 September 2020 (NE, 56km, 4 years 2 months 18 days).

5271926—adult female ringed at Crubenmore, Port Ellen on 18 November 2017, shot at Lissanoure Castle, Loughguile, Antrim on 28 January 2020 (S, 65km, 2 years 2 months 10 days)

White-fronted Goose

372535—first-year female ringed on Islay on 26 February 2020, shot at Sydr-Ulfsstadir, Rangarvalla, Iceland on 15 October 2020 (NW, 1165km, 7 months 19 days).

Storm Petrel

2725925—adult ringed on Lunga, Treshnish Isles on 29 June 2019, recaptured at Copeland Bird Observatory, Down on 10 July 2020 (SSE, 207km, 1 year 11 days).

Manx Shearwater

R57956—nestling ringed on Sanda, Kintyre on 9 August 2005, recaptured by ringer on Sanda on 3 August 2020 (Okm, 14 years 11 months 25 days).

Shag

1407909—nestling ringed on Sanda on 27 June 2005, found dead as Rhosneigr, Anglesey on 24 February 2020 (SSE, 238km, 14 years 7 months 28 days).

Cormorant

5260124—nestling ringed on Eilean Mor, Loch Fyne on 14 June 2020, found dead Lough Neagh, Ballinderry, Tyrone (SSW, 164km, 2 months 20 days)

242475—nestling ringed Pladda, Arran on 22 May 2016, seen (colour-rings) at Port Banatyne, Bute on 2 September, found dead Ardyne on 12 April 2020 (N, 50km, 3 years 10 months 21 days).

Osprey (note details of two colour-ringed siblings)

1700001—nestling ringed in Cowal on 10 July 2018, seen (colour rings) Kartong, Gambia on 31 October 2018 and 19 January 2020 (SSW, 4872km, 1 year 6 months 9 days).

1700002—nestling ringed in Cowal on 10 July 2018, found dead at Wiveton, Norfolk on 25 May 2020 (SE, 527km, 1 year 10 months 15 days).

1385831—nestling ringed Loch Awe on 21 July 2014, seen (colour ring) at Loch Tay on 24 April 2020 (ENE, 89km, 5 years 9 months 3 days).

Sparrowhawk

DA39171—nestling male ringed at Glenbranter Forest on 2 July 2020, found dead (hit glass) at Skelmorlie, Ayrshire on 5 August 2020 (S, 96km, 1 month 3 days).

Oystercatcher

FH67860—adult ringed Bangor, Gwynedd on 19 January 2014, seen (colour rings) Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 20 February 2017, then seen Bangor, Gwynedd on 17 October 2018 and seen again at Loch a' Phuill, Tiree on 8 April and 24 July 2019, and 5 February 2020 (NNW, 403km, 6 years 17 days).

FA71966—adult ringed Dawlish Warren, Devon on 4 February 2018, seen (colour rings) at Port Charlotte, Islay on 13 May 2019, then seen at Dawlish Warren on 4 July 2019, then back at Port Charlotte on 30 March 2020 before returning to Dawlish Warren on 5 July 2020 (NNW, 603km, 2 years 1 month 26 days).

Knot

SR23817—second-year bird ringed at Ainsdale, Mersyside on 24 July 2020, seen (colour rings) at Gartmain, Islay on 20 November 2020 (NW, 316km, 3 months 27 days).

Woodcock

DEW5529480—adult ringed at Helgoland, Germany on 25 March 2018, shot at Buessan, Mull on 15 January 2020 (WNW, 926km, 1 year 9 months 21 days).

Kittiwake

EW67778—nestling ringed at Rockabil, Dublin on



Kittiwakes ©Margaret Staley

16 July 2020, found dead (leg only) at Machir Bay, Islay on 23 October 2020 (N, 245km, 3 months 7 days).

Black-headed Gull

EW39319—nestling ringed at the Black Rock, Sound of Jura on 13 June 2009, seen (ring read) at Antrim on 24 December 2017, 18 February and 25 November 2019, and 17 February 2020 (SSW, 158km, 10 years 8 months 4 days).

EZ33139—nestling ringed at Elvanfoot, South Lanarkshire on 20 June 2017, seen (colour rings) Strathclyde Country Park on 27 December 2018, and seen Dunoon on 27 November 2020 (NW, 98km, 3 years 4 months 18 days).

Common Gull

EG87835—nestling ringed on Kilmaraonaig Islands, Loch Etive on 22 June 2004, found long dead at Benderloch on 23 July 2020 (N, 6km, 16 years 1 month 1 day).

Great Black-backed Gull

MA15884—nestling ringed at the Treshnish Isles on 27 June 2019, found long dead at Raghly, Sligo on 11 June 2020 (SSW, 280km, 11 months 15 days).

Herring Gull

GN91438—nestling ringed on Sanda on 28 June 2019, seen (ring read) at Portavogie, Down on 17 June 2020 (S, 91km, 11 months 18 days).

Great Skua

NOS 3065430—nestling ringed at Kluftvatna, Bear Island on 26 July 2020, found dead on Iona on 12 October 2020 (SW, 2290km, 2 months 16 days).

Guillemot

R60784—nestling ringed on Sanda on 3 July 2010, recaptured by ringer near Helmsdale, Highland on 2 July 2020 (NNE, 341km, 9 years 11 months 29 days).

R73251—adult ringed on Lunga, Treshnish Isles on 27 June 2017, shot 7 nautical miles east of Fugloy, Faroe Isles on 16 October 2020 (N, 650km, 3 years 3 months 19 days).

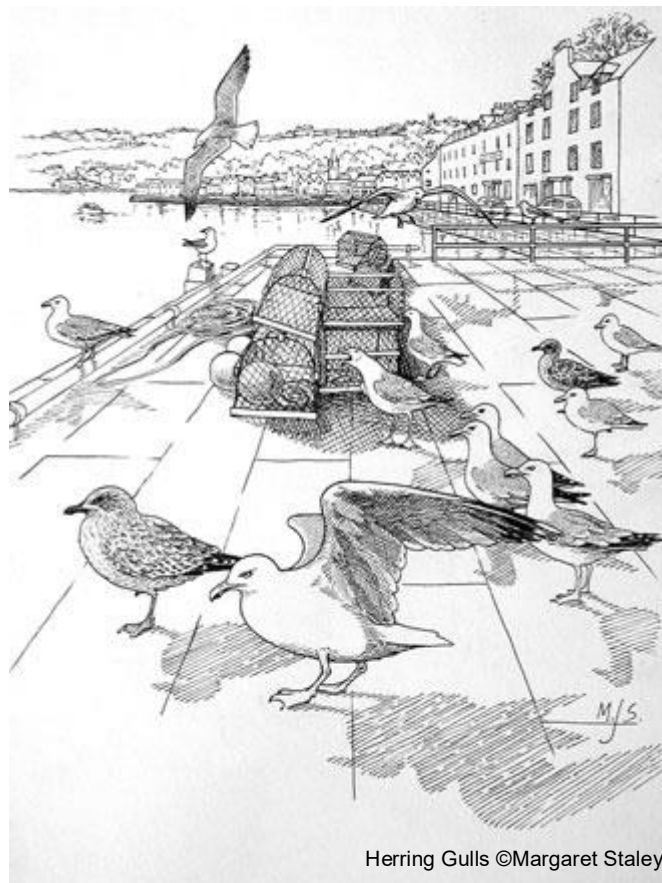
R87737—nestling ringed on Sanda on 26 June 2019, shot 1 nautical mile south east of Nolsoy, Faroe Isles on 22 October 2020 (N, 745 km, 1 year 3 months 26 days).

Razorbill

M97552—nestling ringed on Sanda on 23 June 1999, recaptured by ringer on the Calf of Man, Isle of Man on 21 June 2018 and 15 June 2020 (SSE, 145km, 20 years 11 months 13 days).

Peregrine

GJ51464—nestling female tagged in Cowal on 15 June 2008, recorded (transponder) near Roslin, Midlothian on 28 April 2016, 28 April 2017, 18 April 2018, 30 May 2019 and 21 June 2020 (E, 130km, 12 years 6 days).



Herring Gulls ©Margaret Staley

Chough

ES06993—nestling female ringed at Balnahard, Colonsay on 16 May 2002, seen (colour rings) on Colonsay on 14 June 2020 (WSW, 6km, 18 years 29 days).

Blue Tit

D967173—first-year bird ringed in Kilmartin on 8 November 2014, retrapped in Kilmartin on 16 January 2020 (0km, 5 years 2 months 8 days).

Sand Martin

DKC 9AH8224—adult ringed at Thisted, Denmark on 4 June 2016, recaptured by ringer at Langa quarry, Kintyre on 7 July 2019 and 1 July 2020 (W, 907km, 5 years 27 days).

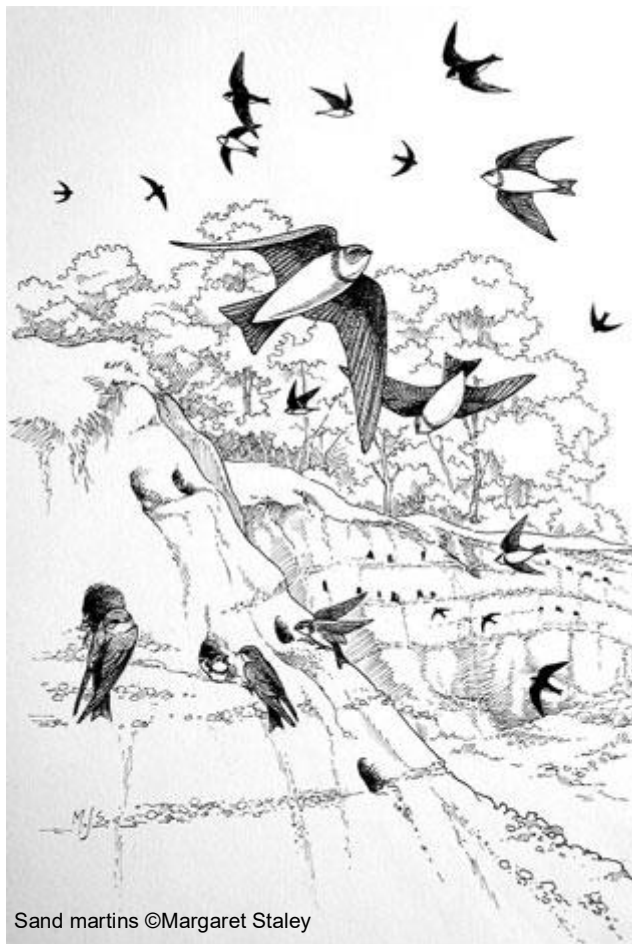
ARF1665—juvenile ringed at Borth, Ceredigion on 24 July 2019, recaptured by ringer at Langa quarry, Kintyre on 19 June 2020 (NNW, 347km, 10 months 26 days).

FRP 8737791—first-year bird ringed at Chenc Saint Seurin D'uzet, Charente Maritime, France on 28 July 2019, recaptured at Langa quarry, Kintyre on 1 July 2020 (NNW, 1159km, 11 months 3 days).

ESA 3Z01604—first-year bird ringed at Las Canas, Viana, Spain on 11 August 2019, recaptured by ringer at Langa quarry, Kintyre on 19 June and 2 July 2020 (N, 1463km, 10 months 21 days).

Willow Warbler

JKN984—full-grown bird ringed at Kilnsea, Yorkshire on 24 April 2020, recaptured by ringer on 9 May 2020 at Fanmore on 9 May 2020 (NW, 516km,



Sand martins ©Margaret Staley

15 days).

Sedge Warbler

APJ2745—first-year bird ringed at Nanjizal, Cornwall on 8 August 2019, killed by cat at Keil Crofts, Benderloch on 23 June 2020 (N, 717km, 10 months 15 days).

Blackbird

NOS 7592738—second-year male ringed at Far-sund, Norway on 3 May 2017, killed by car at Bunessan, Mull on 14 November 2020 (W, 795km, 3 years 6 months 11 days).

Twite

AYJ9406—full-grown bird ringed at the Oa, Islay on 4 December 2019, recaptured by ringer at Portree, Skye on 11 April 2020 (N, 202km, 4 months 7 days).

Lesser Redpoll

AYK6140—first-year bird ringed at Durris Forest, Aberdeenshire on 6 November 2019, recaptured by ringer at Glen Euchar on 11 April 2020 (WSW, 208km, 5 months 5 days).

Goldfinch

S843356—first-year male ringed at Naas, Kildare on 28 December 2018, recaptured by ringer at Calliburn Croft, Kintyre on 14 April 2020 (NNE, 258km, 1 year 3 months 17 days).

ATH4018—first-year male ringed at Peebles,

Borders on 23 November 2019, recaptured by ringer at Calliburn Croft, Kintyre on 8 April 2020 (W, 154km, 4 months 16 days).

AYK5124—first-year male ringed at Kilmartin on 27 January 2020, recaptured by ringer at Stranraer, Dumfries & Galloway on 28 October 2020 (S, 134km, 9 months 1 day).

AYK5121—adult female ringed at Kilmartin on 26 January 2020, recaptured by ringer at Fort Augustus, Highland on 30 April 2020 (NNE, 122km, 3 months 4 days).

Siskin

AHF5656—adult female ringed at Chilworth, Surrey on 12 February 2019, recaptured by ringer at Kilmartin on 26 January 2020 (NNW, 636km, 11 months 14 days).

ARB1770—adult female ringed at Ball Hill, Devon on 13 March 2018, killed by cat at Inverinan, Loch Awe on 22 May 2020 (NNW, 631km, 2 years 9 days).

ACA9711—adult male ringed at Peebles, Borders on 3 September 2019, found dead (hit window) in Oban on 5 June 2020 (WNW, 165km, 9 months 2 days).

Reference

Robinson, R.A., Leech, D.I. & Clark, J.A. (2021) The Online Demography Report: Bird ringing and nest recording in Britain & Ireland in 2020. BTO, Thetford. (<http://www.bto.org/ringing-report>)

David Jardine



Goldfinches ©Margaret Staley

BTO update—March 2022

Covid restrictions

The good news; it appears that, barring the emergence of a new dangerous variant, restrictions will not prevent any survey fieldwork this year.

Covid's impact on BBS surveys in 2020

In a normal year some 2700 volunteers survey around 4000 squares, but in 2020 only 51% of the 2019 total were visited. Lockdown restrictions coincided with the early part of the survey season, when only 10% of sites were visited. Reductions were greatest in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, where restrictions lasted longer. In Scotland urban habitats were surveyed better than montane habitats because people had to stay nearer home. As a result it was only possible to produce population trends

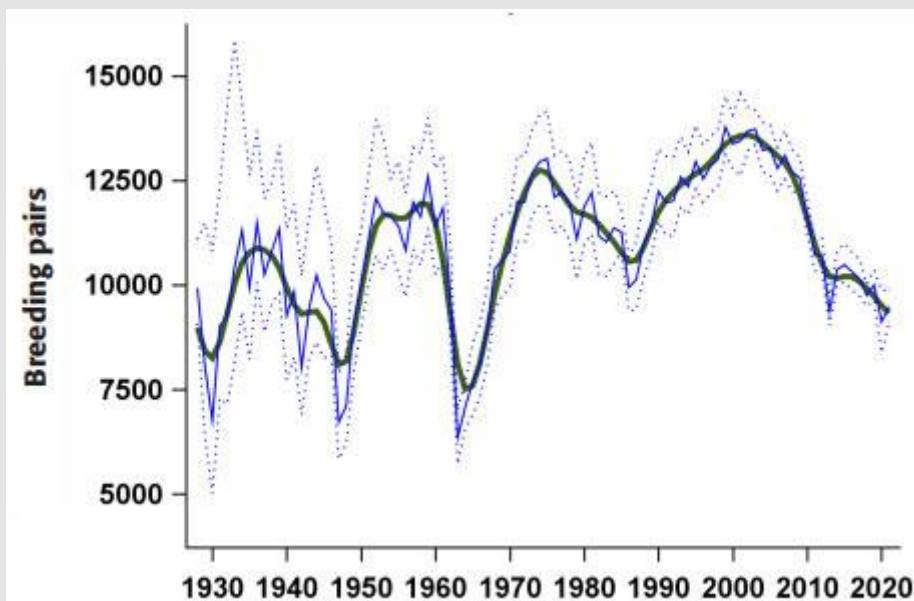
for England and only for a subset of 40 species.

BTO Training courses 2022

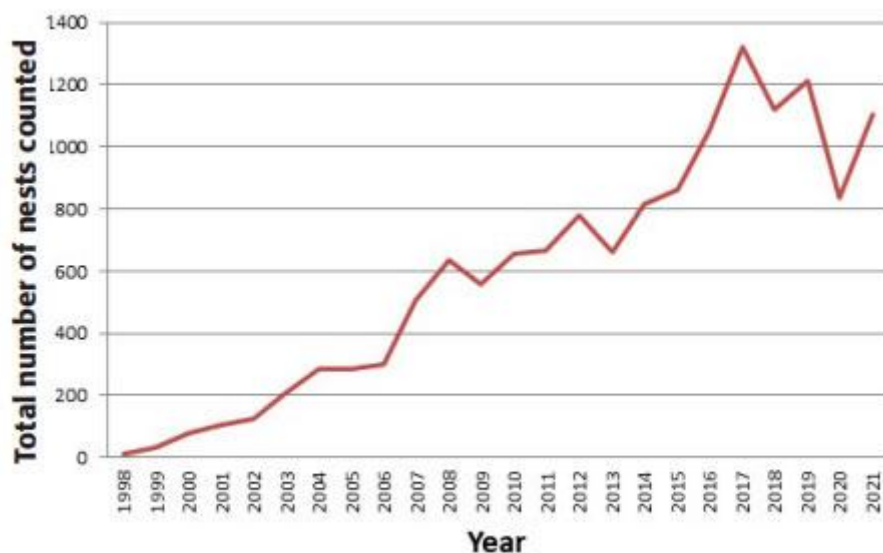
One of the positive legacies of the pandemic is that the BTO have greatly increased their online training courses, which have proved to be very much in demand, and have been further developed. While in-person courses will be resumed, the online offering is continuing. For further info go to: <https://www.bto.org/develop-your-skills/training-courses>

Heronries Census Report 2021

Latest UK population estimate for Grey Heron for 2021 is 9,479 apparent occupied nests, up from 9,121 in 2020, although the 2020 estimate is not very good because of the poorer coverage that year, and the recent trend is for a de-



Population trend of the Grey Heron 1928-2021



Population growth of Little Egrets 1998-2021

Heronries Census—survey timetable and tasks



crease (see figure on previous page).

For UK Little Egrets there were 1,102 AONs from 122 sites, which is down from the 1,215 nests at 126 sites in 2019, and below the peak of 1,312 in 2017 (see figure on previous page).

It is thought that stormy weather in late winter 2021 increased mortality for both species in spite of warmer than average temperatures.

The Heronries Census also covers Cormorants, and other colonial species that nest within heronries including Great White Egrets, Cattle Egrets and Spoonbills.

There is plenty of scope to take part in the Heronries Census in Argyll, as there are plenty of gaps in coverage and changes in status that haven't been documented or confirmed (known unknowns!). To see for yourself, there is a vacant sites map on the Heronries Census webpages: <https://app.bto.org/colonies/public/vacant-sites.jsp>

You can also express an interest to the local organiser through the web pages.

Woodcock Survey 2022

Woodcock is the only species of wading bird in Britain and Ireland that is adapted to breed in woodland, both broadleaved and coniferous. Its plumage is superbly camouflaged to blend in with dead leaf litter and ground vegetation, where it may roost or make its nest, remaining motionless unless approached at very close quarters. During winter, it is estimated that up to 1.5 million individuals may be present in Britain and Ireland; mostly originating from northern Europe and western Russia.

The last national breeding survey was in 2013, which showed a decline of 29% from 78,000 males in the 2003 survey to 55,000, and in 2015 it was moved from the amber to the red list in the Birds of Conservation Concern classification.

The nocturnal habits and cryptic nature of this species makes it difficult to monitor the breeding population using traditional survey methods, so a special method for Woodcock has been devised, which uses the counts of the territorial roding flights, undertaken by males at dusk and

down, to estimate the number of individual males present.

A total of 1500 survey sites (1-km squares) have been randomly selected from within the known breeding range, which will provide the basis for calculating a robust population estimate. There will be 805 High Priority sites, which were surveyed in 2003, and 775 Low Priority sites.

The survey requires four visits at dusk between April and the end of June each year. To choose a survey square or enter data, please sign-up for the survey at:

<https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/woodcock-survey>

Nigel Scriven

Woodcock breeding atlas change map 1988/91 to 2008/11 for Argyll (Pink triangle = no change, Red triangle = increase, Black triangle = decrease)



2021 Corncrake numbers continue worrying downward trend



Corncrake numbers in Scotland are continuing to decline, the latest RSPB Scotland survey has revealed, adding to concerns about their precarious future here. In 2021 only 850 calling males were recorded across the 16 areas in the country where these elusive birds are found, down from 870 in 2019 (Argyll figures on next page). Corncrakes are usually surveyed annually but the COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2020 meant that it was not possible to complete the count across all areas.

Whilst the decline from the 2019 survey is relatively modest, especially compared to other years where numbers have seen sharp reductions, it continues the overall worrying downward trend since the record high of 1289 calling males in 2014 and highlights how vulnerable these birds are.

Within the survey there are regional differences in how corncrakes are faring. In the Inner Hebrides the population has plummeted by 12.2 percent from 2019 but in the Outer Hebrides numbers are up by 9.9 percent. The reasons for these regional differences are unclear. In order to safeguard the species, and try to provide a more certain future for them in Scotland, targeted measures are needed.

The Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) has been crucial in supporting corncrake friendly farming methods for many years but its fu-

ture has looked uncertain in recent times. The Scottish Government's announcement at the end of October, that AECS will continue for the next three years, was therefore welcome news.

RSPB Scotland will work with farmers, crofters and Scottish Government to ensure as much corncrake and high value nature-friendly management is delivered through AECS whilst it continues. From 2025, the Scottish Government has signalled that it intends to introduce new farming policy and changes to farm payments. RSPB Scotland is calling for payments for nature and climate friendly farming and crofting to be at the heart of this new policy.

Commenting on the results, Jane Shadforth, Project Manager for Corncrake Calling, an RSPB Scotland project to improve these birds' fortunes over the next few years, says: "RSPB Scotland would like to thank everyone who supported this year's survey. The results highlight how vulnerable this species remains with numbers declining by more than 30% since 2014.

"RSPB Scotland will use these results to help target management for corncrakes in the right places, working with farmers and crofters through Corncrake Calling and to make best use of the Agri-Environment-Climate scheme. The importance of island communities in protecting this magical species cannot be underestimated.

"The continuation of AECS over the next few years is welcome news to many. As we look ahead though, developing new farming policy and payments that better support farming and crofting communities everywhere to farm in nature positive ways is vital."

Corncrake Calling is led by RSPB Scotland and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is delivering land management advice, practical support and funding to crofters and farmers, advocacy for agri-environment policies which support farming in corncrake and wildlife friendly ways, and education activities to encourage both local communities and people across the country to connect with these rare birds and take action to help them.

The project builds on the work RSPB Scotland has been doing with farmers and crofters on corncrake friendly mowing for many years. It also links up with local communities and schools to inspire them to help corncrakes and asks

members of the public to submit corncrake sightings. Work has started recently on a touring exhibition which plans to inform more people about these birds, which were once well known and a common sight across the UK.

Corncrakes are the land-dwelling relatives of coots and moorhens and one of Scotland's rarest breeding birds. Due to their shy character they are surveyed by counting the number of males making the distinctive "crex crex" call during breeding season. The birds migrate here every summer from Africa and used to be found across the UK before the changes in agricultural practices in the 19th and 20th century saw their range and numbers contract to just a few isolated pockets in Scotland.

For further information, please contact:

Jess Barrett, Communications Manager, on jess.barrett@rspb.org.uk and 07713 711 235

RSPB Press Release (December 2021)

Corncrake survey results for Argyll during 2017-2021. It was not possible to conduct the survey in 2020 due to covid restrictions.

Location	Number of calling males in 2021	Number of calling males in 2019	Number of calling males in 2018	Number of calling males in 2017
Isle of Coll	30	47	53	49
Isle of Tiree	285	300	322	315
Isle of Mull	0	0	2	3
Iona	19	15	13	15
Colonsay & Oronsay	23	20	41	36
Islay	26	54	60	75
Total Argyll	383	436	491	493



Contributions for the June *Eider* should be sent to the editor before the 10 May 2022

Officials and Committee of the Argyll Bird Club (2021/2022)

Chairman: Nigel Scriven, 14 Taylor Avenue, Kilbarchan, Johnstone PA10 2LS

e-mail chairman@argyllbirdclub.org

Vice Chairman: David Jardine, Hazel Cottage, 7 Barrmor View, Kilmartin, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8UN

E-mail vicechair@argyllbirdclub.org

Secretary: Alun ap Rhisiart, Braeside, Clynder, Argyll G84 0QL

e-mail secretary@argyllbirdclub.org

Treasurer: Peter Hogbin, South Craleckan, Furnace, Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8XN

e-mail treasurer@argyllbirdclub.org

Membership Secretary: Dorothy Hogbin, South Craleckan, Furnace, Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8XN

e-mail membership@argyllbirdclub.org

Committee: Malcolm Chattwood (Lochgilphead), Gordon Holm (Strone), Alistair McGregor (Dunoon), Steve Petty (Ardentinny), and Andy Robinson (Stirling).

Editor of the Argyll Bird Report: Position vacant

Editor of the Eider: Steve Petty, Cluaran Cottage, Ardentinny, Dunoon, Argyll PA23 8TR

e-mail eider@argyllbirdclub.org

ABC Website: <http://www.argyllbirdclub.org>

Argyll Bird Records Committee

Jim Dickson (Secretary, contact details below), John Bowler, Stuart Crutchfield, David Jardine, Malcolm Ogilvie & Andy Robinson

Argyll Bird Recorder

Jim Dickson, 11 Pipers Road, Cairnbaan, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8UF.

e-mail argyllbirder@outlook.com

Assistant Bird Recorder

Malcolm Chattwood, 1 The Stances, Kilmichael Glassary, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8QA

e-mail abcrecorder@outlook.com

BTO Regional Representatives in Argyll

Argyll Mainland, Bute & Gigha: Nigel Scriven

phone 01505 706652 mobile 07901 636353

e-mail chairman@argyllbirdclub.org

Argyll North (Mull, Coll, Tiree & Morvern): Ewan Miles

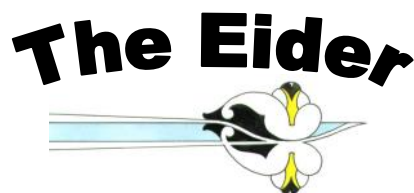
e-mail emb.gww@gmail.com

Islay, Jura & Colonsay: David Wood. Phone 01496 300118

e-mail david.wood@rspb.org.uk

WeBs Count Organiser, Mainland Argyll & Mull

Nigel Scriven, 14 Taylor Avenue, Kilbarchan, Johnstone PA10 2LS (phone numbers and e-mail above)



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 currently has 313 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. Your annual subscription entitles you to one copy of the *Argyll Bird Report* (PDF file), four issues of the *Eider* (PDF files) 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

A surcharge of £5 will be added to the above rates, if printed copies of the *Eider* are requested. 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).