

# Arran Bird Report 2020



## Birds of Arran

Compiled by  
Dr Jim Cassels for the Arran Natural History Society

Published by



The Arran Natural History Society

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## Arran Natural History Society

The Arran Natural History Society was formed in 1977 for the purpose of encouraging the study of local natural history, geology, meteorology, archaeology and cognate subjects. This is done through publications, talks, guided walks and workshops.

One of the publications of the society is the *Arran Bird Report*. These reports provide a unique record of the bird life of this special island over the last forty years. In 2013 the society won the Marsh Award for Local Ornithology for producing the *Arran Bird Atlas 2007-2012*. This is made to a bird club or group that publishes a book, completes a study or conducts any other exceptional activity that advances knowledge about birds. For more information visit the website.

For more information on the Arran Natural History Society visit FaceBook and Twitter.

Members receive a copy of the annual *Arran Bird Report*.

Annual Subscription is £15 for adults, £25 for couples and £5 for junior members.

Information on payment of subscription is available from [arrannaturalhistorysociety@gmail.com](mailto:arrannaturalhistorysociety@gmail.com)

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In addition, permission to access the Arran records submitted to BirdTrack: [www.bto.org/birdtrack](http://www.bto.org/birdtrack) and to BirdGuides [www.birdguides.com](http://www.birdguides.com) has been granted.

Permission has also been granted to access Arran raptor data held by the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme <http://raptormonitoring.org/about-the-srms>

All bird records given to the National Trust Rangers at Brodick Country Park and to the Brodick Tourist Information Centre were forwarded to me. The North Ayrshire RSPB, who normally provide records from ferry crossings, were unable to do this in 2020 because of Covid-19 restrictions.

## Introduction

Welcome to the *Arran Bird Report* for 2020. This is the forty-first consecutive annual bird report for the Isle of Arran and the fifteenth one compiled by me.

This report would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of a number of individuals whose input I would like to acknowledge publicly: Terry Southall and the team of local ringers, Andy Walker and Malcolm Whitmore for their local knowledge of raptors, Robert Logan for his work on Barn Owls and Bernie Zonfrillo, the bird recorder for the Clyde Islands. The input of the local “volunteers” involved in various surveys including the Wetland Bird Survey, the Breeding Bird Survey and the Garden BirdWatch has been a valuable source of information. It has also been helpful to be given permission to access the Arran records submitted to both BirdTrack and BirdGuides and the Arran data held in the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme. At the writing stage, the editing and proof-reading skills of Angela Cassels and Alan Hollick were invaluable. Having said that, I accept full responsibility for all omissions and errors. My thanks also to the following photographers for giving me permission to use their images to illustrate the report: Michael Burke, Angela Cassels, Tony Church, Charlotte Clough, Brian Couper, Colin Cowley, Peter Curran, Simon Davies, Carol Devine, Arthur Duncan, Nick Giles, Angus Hogg, David Kilpatrick, Fiona Laing, Helen Logan, Janice Morgan, Dennis Morrison, Alex Penn, Christine Robinson, Graham Ross, Dave Russell, Howard Sargeant, Chris Southall, Joan Thompson, Walter Vanderveken and Malcolm Whitmore. The expertise of Sharon Smith and the staff of Ardrossan Printing Company is a key factor in achieving the published report.

Finally, my thanks to the contributors; there would be no report without their input. Some make a substantial contribution to the total number of records received. There is a core of regular contributors, locals, and visitors, submitting regular sightings who provide the bedrock on which this annual report is based. In addition, I have been encouraged by the number of people, locals and visitors, who have contacted me. All contacts have been welcome. I am not interested just in rare or unusual birds, but common birds, where there are significant numbers of common birds, which birds come to the garden at different times of the year, where breeding birds have been seen, when our summer or winter visitors have arrived or departed and what sightings have given individuals particular pleasure. I encourage everyone to share their bird sightings with me, so that the basis of our annual *Arran Bird Report* can be as comprehensive as possible.

In 2020, over two hundred and fifty contributors submitted over sixteen and half thousand records on one hundred and fifty-seven species. All these records have been distilled and I have tried to provide a readable chronological summary and a systematic list that should provide a useful record of the bird life on Arran in 2020.

The chronological summary gives the highlights for each month. The systematic list is in the order of the British list as published by the British Ornithologists' Union (2018). There is information on the number of records received for each species and the number of sites in which the bird was recorded. This is followed by a brief statement giving the status of each bird on Arran, which can be markedly different from the status of the same bird on the adjacent mainland.

For 2021, please send any bird notes with “what, when, where” to me before Monday 03 January 2022, at Kilpatrick Kennels, Kilpatrick, Blackwaterfoot, KA27 8EY, or telephone 01770 860316, or email me at [jim@arranbirding.co.uk](mailto:jim@arranbirding.co.uk).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Jim Cassels,  
Bird Recorder for the Arran Natural History Society.

## Chronological Summary

The Covid-19 pandemic arrived in the UK in late January and had a profound impact on all our lives throughout the whole of 2020. The restrictions to try to control the spread of the disease, to minimise the risk to health and to save lives were unprecedented.

What was the impact on bird recording on Arran? Here are some observations. Visitor numbers to the island were down. There was some interruption to the various regular bird surveys in line with government advice. While some resident birdwatchers had more time to spend birdwatching on Arran, others were made redundant and left the island to find work. Looking at the data received over the course of the year and comparing it broadly to the previous year, there were fewer contributors, 250 compared to 320, fewer records, 16,500 compared to 24,000 and fewer species 157 compared to 160. In this context, 2020 was still a fascinating birding year on Arran.

Arran's first ever Surf Scoter, reported at the end of 2019, lingered into January. In October, the first ever Lapland Bunting was reported. As well as these firsts, in May there was the second record of Garganey and in September the second record of Wood Sandpiper. In addition, several species were recorded after an absence of a number of years, Hoopoe in April after fourteen years, Corncrake in May after twelve years and Curlew Sandpiper in October after fourteen years. As well as these highlights, Rose-coloured Starling turned up for the fourth year in a row and there were increasing reports of these colonising species; Little Egret, Nuthatch and White-tailed Eagle.

The number of species recorded each month in Arran in 2020 is shown in the table below.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
In Month	103	88	96	113	114	97	106	106	110	101	97	95
Year Total	103	109	113	132	141	143	145	148	152	156	157	157

### January

In comparison to last January, January 2020 was milder and wetter. The first fortnight was marked by a prolonged spell of wet and windy weather culminating in Storm Brendan. A short spell of calm but very dull and damp weather followed before a few colder days brought snow on the mountains. The month finished with a return to unsettled wet and windy conditions. The weather was not conducive to being out of doors. Nevertheless, over one hundred species were reported.

Highlights included: a Surf Scoter, an American species first reported on 24 November in Catacol Bay, in the same location on 1 January, three Little Grebe in Loch Ranza also on 1<sup>st</sup>, two Jack Snipe on Sliderry Shore on 4<sup>th</sup>, a Dipper in Porta Buidhe also on 4<sup>th</sup>, a Water Rail on Mossend Pond on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Kingfisher on Rosa Burn on 25<sup>th</sup> and a sub-adult White-tailed Eagle off Machrie from 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. In addition there was a hybrid gull, most likely a cross between a Herring Gull and a Lesser Black-backed Gull, at Whitefarland between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Wintering wildfowl included: twenty-three Canada Geese on Pladda on 10<sup>th</sup>, three Goldeneye at Claulchlands Point on 17<sup>th</sup>, two Whooper Swan over Newton on 19<sup>th</sup>, fifty-three Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot also on 19<sup>th</sup>, forty-eight Teal at Cosyden also on 19<sup>th</sup> and three hundred and fifty Greylag Geese with two Pink-footed Geese in the Shiskine Valley on 25<sup>th</sup>.

Other wintering species included: a Merlin and one hundred Fieldfare on Corrie cravie Moor on 1<sup>st</sup>, forty-seven Rook in Sliderry also on 1<sup>st</sup>, seventeen Yellowhammer in Sliderry on 5<sup>th</sup>, a Greenshank in Loch Ranza on 24<sup>th</sup> and fifty Redwing in Lagg on 26<sup>th</sup>.

Wintering flocks included: six Woodcock in Sliderry on 1<sup>st</sup>, fifteen Bullfinch in Clauchan Glen also on 1<sup>st</sup>, two hundred Jackdaw in Cosyden on 5<sup>th</sup>, eight Goldcrest in Kildonan on 8<sup>th</sup>, one hundred and thirty-two Curlew at Clauchlands on 13<sup>th</sup>, thirty-two Turnstone in Machrie Bay also on 13<sup>th</sup>, eighteen Lapwing in Kilpatrick Farm on 19<sup>th</sup>, one hundred Starling in Dippin also on 19<sup>th</sup>, twenty-one Twite at Machriewaterfoot also on 19<sup>th</sup>, twenty Linnet at Blackwaterfoot also on 19<sup>th</sup>, six Black-throated Diver off Pirnmill on 20<sup>th</sup>, twelve Long-tailed Tit in Torbeg also on 20<sup>th</sup>, one hundred Common Gull in Brodick on 23<sup>rd</sup>, fifteen Skylark at Mossend Pond on 25<sup>th</sup>, twenty Siskin in Torbeg on 26<sup>th</sup> and twenty-five Goldfinch in Shannochie on 27<sup>th</sup>. There was a feeling that some of these wintering flocks were smaller than flocks in recent colder Januarys. There were no January reports of Brambling.

Interesting garden birds in January included: a Waxwing in Shiskine on 3<sup>rd</sup> (last Arran record was January 2017), a Snow Bunting in Pirnmill on 17<sup>th</sup>, a Blackcap in Alma Park on 21<sup>st</sup> and a Great Spotted Woodpecker in Largymore on 27<sup>th</sup>. In addition, there continued to be reports of a Magpie in Kildonan and in Alma Park.

While there were no January records of returning Gannet, Shelduck were on numerous coastal territories including Auchenhew, Carlo, Clauchlands, Cleats Shore, Fisherman's Walk, Kilpatrick, Lenimore, Porta Buidhe, Thunderguy and Whitefarland. Other signs of approaching spring included: two hundred courting Eider at Clauchlands Point on 13<sup>th</sup>, five displaying Black Guillemot at Thunderguy on 22<sup>nd</sup> and four Fulmar visiting nest sites in Catacol on 25<sup>th</sup>.

## February

The unsettled weather in January continued into February. In comparison to last February, February 2020 was milder and wetter. There were three named storms with prolonged spells of wet and windy weather. The resulting rainfall in February was more than double that of February 2019. The weather was not conducive to being out of doors and this may have had an impact on the number of species seen in February which was down from ninety-six in 2019 to eighty this year.

Birding highlights included two reports of Waxwing. Both sightings on 24 February of this normally gregarious winter visitor were of a single bird, one photographed in a garden in Cordon in the morning and the other reported in a garden in Brodick at lunchtime. In addition, there was a report of three Snow Bunting on Sannox shore on 27<sup>th</sup>, as well as reports of a single Snow Bunting in Pirnmill during the month. The Sannox sighting was from a delighted couple who had never seen the species before. On 29<sup>th</sup> another observer was also delighted to see not one but two white-winged gull species at Thunderguy in a flock of more common resting gulls. The Iceland Gull and Glaucous Gull were both first-winter gulls. These Arctic breeding species are not reported every winter on Arran.



Wintering wildfowl continued to be present including: a male Goldeneye on Mossend Pond on 10<sup>th</sup>, seven White-fronted Geese in the Shiskine Valley on 11<sup>th</sup>, three hundred and fifty Greylag Geese also in the Shiskine Valley on 17<sup>th</sup>, twelve Wigeon in Auchenhew Bay on 26<sup>th</sup> and twenty Teal at Carlo also on 26<sup>th</sup>.

Other wintering flocks included: forty-six Goldfinch on Brodick shore on 1<sup>st</sup>, two hundred and fifty Chaffinch with two hundred Linnet and ten Twite in one field in Machrie on 9<sup>th</sup>, fifteen Turnstone in Porta Buidhe on 6<sup>th</sup>, a mixed flock of Redwing and Fieldfare of around eighty birds at Clachaig on 9<sup>th</sup>, forty Curlew at Clauchlands on 16<sup>th</sup>, twelve Lapwing at Shannochie on 20<sup>th</sup>, five Golden Plover at Catacol on 27<sup>th</sup> and eighty Jackdaw at Machrie also on 27<sup>th</sup>. In addition, wintering Blackcap were reported from gardens in Whiting Bay and Alma Park.

Other sightings included: one Dipper in Lochranza on 2<sup>nd</sup>, three Great Northern Diver off Kildonan on 4<sup>th</sup>, one Yellowhammer on Brodick Golf Course also on 4<sup>th</sup>, one Puffin in Brodick Bay on 7<sup>th</sup>, two Moorhen on Mossend Pond on 11<sup>th</sup>, one White-tailed Eagle over Dougarie on 16<sup>th</sup>, one Merlin on Kilpatrick Farm also on 16<sup>th</sup>, four Little Grebe in Loch Ranza on 23<sup>rd</sup>, four Bullfinch in Cordon on 24<sup>th</sup> and a Kingfisher on the Rosa Burn on 27<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the long-staying Magpie in Kildonan first reported on 11 May 2019 may have been last reported on 2 February. In forty years of the *Arran Bird Report* this is by far the longest staying Magpie on Arran.

Gannet seemed slow to return this year with only three records, two Pirmill on 11<sup>th</sup>, one Kildonan on 21<sup>st</sup> and one Lamlash Bay on 22<sup>nd</sup>. A returning Lesser Black-backed Gull was reported from Shannochie on 16<sup>th</sup>. Other signs of approaching spring included: Grey Heron nest building in Stronach Wood on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a pair of Golden Eagle displaying over Lochranza on 3<sup>rd</sup>, four Fulmar exploring nest sites in Catacol on 18<sup>th</sup>, Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming in Brodick Castle Gardens on 19<sup>th</sup>, twenty Eider displaying off Cosyden on 20<sup>th</sup> and Song Thrush and Wren singing in Kilpatrick on 28<sup>th</sup>. By the end of the month there were signs that spring was on its way.

## March

In March the arrangements to control the spread of Covid-19 started to have a major impact on all our lives but in terms of the number of bird species reported in March the arrangements had no impact. Irrespective of Covid-19, spring is an exciting time of year, awaiting the arrival of our summer visitors and seeing the last of our winter visitors leaving. The timing of the northerly spring migration is dependent on the weather, not just locally, but throughout the whole length of the migration route. This March had around half the rainfall of March 2019 and the second half of March this year was particularly dry with latterly the wind coming from a northerly direction. It was during this more settled spell that a few pioneer summer migrants did arrive. The first Chiffchaff was reported from the track from Lamlash to Brodick on 21<sup>st</sup>. By the end of the month Chiffchaff were widespread including seven singing in Auchenhew Bay on 31<sup>st</sup>. The first Wheatear was on Holy Isle on 22<sup>nd</sup> followed by three on Porta Buidhe the following day. On 30<sup>th</sup> a White Wagtail was reported at Kilpatrick Point. These were all the migrant species reported in March.



In March, our winter visitors were still to the fore including: sixty-three Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot on 4<sup>th</sup>, one Iceland Gull by the Fisherman's Walk on 15<sup>th</sup>, five White-fronted Geese in Torbeg on 17<sup>th</sup>, three hundred and seventy Greylag Geese in Feorline on 22<sup>nd</sup>, seventy-five Fieldfare at Cosyden on 23<sup>rd</sup>, twenty Pink-footed Geese and thirty Redwing in Shiskine on 24<sup>th</sup> and thirty-four Teal at Kilpatrick Point on 28<sup>th</sup>.

In March there were many signs of migration including: twenty Whooper Swan flying over Clachaig on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a flock of over two hundred Chaffinch and Linnet at Machrie on 4<sup>th</sup>, thirty Pied Wagtail on Lochranza Golf Course on 17<sup>th</sup>, thirty-six Turnstone at Dougarie on 19<sup>th</sup>, two Common Scoter off Cosyden on 23<sup>rd</sup>, two hundred Starling at Tormore on 25<sup>th</sup>, six Black-throated Diver off Imachar on 28<sup>th</sup> and after the 19<sup>th</sup> there was a huge decline reported from several areas in the number of Goldfinch and Siskin at feeders, as these species began to move north.

Here is a small selection of other interesting March records: one hundred and fifty-two Eider off Cosyden on 4<sup>th</sup>, three Goosander by the mouth of the Black Water on 5<sup>th</sup>, a Little Grebe and two Moorhen at Mossend Pond on 8<sup>th</sup>, seventeen Gannet off Pladda on 13<sup>th</sup>, two Dipper in Machrie Water on 14<sup>th</sup>, fifteen Shelduck at Cosyden on 23<sup>rd</sup>, six Common Crossbill at Cnocan Biorach on 28<sup>th</sup> and a White-tailed Eagle off Pirmill on 31<sup>st</sup> was the fourth record this month.



Spring is a great time to be birding, as most birds are getting on with the business of breeding. The business of breeding involves attracting a mate by song, courtship display and ritual, defining a territory, nest building, and generally establishing relationships. In March, the signs were there, including: Skylark singing Creag Ghlas Cuithe on 19<sup>th</sup>, Wren displaying in Cordon on 20<sup>th</sup>, Great Spotted Woodpecker drumming at Shedog on 24<sup>th</sup>, Grey Herons nesting in Lagg on 25<sup>th</sup>, fifty Shag many with breeding crests off Kilpatrick Point on 26<sup>th</sup> and a Kestrel chasing a Raven from its territory by Brown Head on 28<sup>th</sup>. In addition, a

fledged Woodpigeon was photographed in a garden in Cordon with its parent on 5 March. The young would have hatched early February. The egg having been laid in mid-January!

## April

April is the month when spring migration gets underway, with arrivals and departures of birds, all seeking their best breeding territories. This April was very dry with no significant rain for over twenty consecutive days. Like the previous two Aprils there was a lot of easterly winds. The impact on migrating birds of the weather here and throughout their route is difficult to know, but even by the end of the month the bulk of the migrants had still to arrive.

By the end of March, the first Chiffchaff, Wheatear and White Wagtail had been reported. Here are April "firsts" with the 2019 arrival date in brackets for comparison: House Martin 4<sup>th</sup>(4<sup>th</sup>), Sand Martin 5<sup>th</sup>(31 March), Swallow 5<sup>th</sup>(6<sup>th</sup>), Willow Warbler 5<sup>th</sup>(10<sup>th</sup>), Sandwich Tern 6<sup>th</sup>(2<sup>nd</sup>), Common Sandpiper 10<sup>th</sup>(14<sup>th</sup>), Cuckoo 14<sup>th</sup>(19<sup>th</sup>), Garden Warbler 15<sup>th</sup>(24 May), Sedge Warbler 16<sup>th</sup>(20<sup>th</sup>), Tree Pipit 18<sup>th</sup>(20<sup>th</sup>), Grasshopper Warbler 19<sup>th</sup>(19<sup>th</sup>), Whinchat 22<sup>nd</sup>(18<sup>th</sup>), Whitethroat 23<sup>rd</sup>(20<sup>th</sup>) and Manx Shearwater 28<sup>th</sup>(4<sup>th</sup>),

In April some of our wintering birds were still around including twenty Whooper Swan at Clachaig on 2<sup>nd</sup>, two Rook in Sliddery on 5<sup>th</sup>, nine Redwing in Sliddery on 7<sup>th</sup>, two Greylag Geese at Cosyden on 17<sup>th</sup>, four Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot on 18<sup>th</sup> and four Fieldfare on Corriecravie Moor on 22<sup>nd</sup>. The last report of Pink-footed Geese was one hundred flying north over Porta Buidhe on 7<sup>th</sup>.

April is an ideal time for watching migration. These are a few examples: eighty Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 1<sup>st</sup>, thirty-eight Common Scoter off Cosyden on 8<sup>th</sup>, five Great Northern Diver off Imachar on 10<sup>th</sup>, one Bar-tailed Godwit at Cosyden on 23<sup>rd</sup>, three Dunlin on Blackwaterfoot shore on 24<sup>th</sup> and twenty Turnstone at Catacol on 26<sup>th</sup>. In addition, there was a much-reported passage of Sandwich Tern, including nine at Porta Buidhe on 11<sup>th</sup>, and Whimbrel, including fourteen at Auchenhew Bay on 27<sup>th</sup>. One Whimbrel which had been ringed on a southern Arran shore three years ago was reported yet again almost on the same shore, for the third year in a row, having again spent the winter in Africa!

Migration was also in evidence from the widespread reports received of Goldfinch and Siskin moving through people's gardens throughout the month. Larger garden numbers reported included ten Siskin in Machrie on 15<sup>th</sup> and eleven Goldfinch in Lagg on 27<sup>th</sup>. Tens of thousands of birds seem to be moving through the island at this time of year.

In April there were one hundred and nine species recorded on Arran. Here is a further small selection from this list: seventeen Shelduck at Cosyden on 3<sup>rd</sup>, eighteen roosting Wren at Sandbraes also on 3<sup>rd</sup>, one Moorhen and one male Scaup at Mossend Pond on 13<sup>th</sup>, one Snipe Fisherman's Walk on 16<sup>th</sup>, thirty Gannet feeding close in shore in Brodick Bay on 19<sup>th</sup>, three Goosander at Iorsa mouth on 20<sup>th</sup> and two Woodcock roding over the Lakin on 21<sup>st</sup>. The highlight in April was the Hoopoe seen at Levencorrach on 8<sup>th</sup>. (See page 24)



## May

In terms of weather, the first half of May was very dry with the little rain that there was, in the second half, including a storm around the weekend of 23 May. In comparison to last May, this May had a similar rainfall but was warmer, with a mean temperature 1.0 degree higher. The temperature range was large, from 24 degrees to negative 1.9 degrees. The lower range reflected the northerly wind direction this May with temperatures gradually rising after the storm. There was a feeling that while spring was arriving it was a little late. Conditions were generally good for birds trying to get on with breeding but Swallow and House Martin seemed to be delaying nesting perhaps because of the dry conditions. In addition, the storm with resulting high tides swamped the nests of a number of breeding shore birds round the coast.

It was a good month with over one hundred and ten species recorded, two of which had not been recorded on Arran for a number of years. Corncrake had not been recorded on the island for twelve years and this year there were reports from two areas. One called in a rashy field in Sannox throughout the first two weeks of the month. It was last heard on 13<sup>th</sup>. The other was heard in the Rodden area of the Shiskine Valley on 14<sup>th</sup>. In addition, there was a report of a pair of Garganey on Sliddey Shore on 3<sup>rd</sup>. The only other record of this summer visitor on Arran was in 2012.



Throughout May the numbers of familiar summer visitors like Swallow, House Martin, Sand Martin, Willow Warbler, Whitethroat, Sedge Warbler and Cuckoo built up. In addition to the "firsts" reported in the April notes, here are some further "firsts" with the 2019 arrival dates in brackets for comparison: Spotted Flycatcher in North Newton on 8<sup>th</sup> (11<sup>th</sup>), Wood Warbler in High Kildonan on 9<sup>th</sup> (17<sup>th</sup>), Arctic Tern on Silver Sands on 15<sup>th</sup> (14<sup>th</sup>) and two Swift over Sliddey on 30<sup>th</sup> (10<sup>th</sup>).

Species who breed further north continued to pass through including; two Great Northern Diver in Whiting Bay on 1<sup>st</sup>, eleven Sandwich Tern at Drumadoon Point also on 1<sup>st</sup>, seven Whimbrel on Sliddey Shore on 3<sup>rd</sup>, three White Wagtail in Blackwaterfoot also on 3<sup>rd</sup>, ten Turnstone and twenty-six Dunlin on Blackwaterfoot shore on 11<sup>th</sup>, ten Sanderling at Drumadoon Point on 19<sup>th</sup>, one Bar-tailed Godwit at Cosyden on 24<sup>th</sup> and two Black-throated Diver in breeding plumage off Claulchlands on 27<sup>th</sup>.

In May, breeding was well underway for many species. Encouraging signs included reports of Golden Eagle, Golden Plover, Hen Harrier, Red-throated Diver and Short-eared Owl all holding breeding territories. Activity was reported from all the monitored heronries on the island and four areas held small numbers of breeding Lapwing. A number of coastal cliffs held single figure numbers of nesting Fulmar which seem to be in serious decline on Arran. No young birds were reported in 2017, 2018 or 2019 from any colony. By contrast the Black Guillemot colonies seem to be thriving. Other breeding records included: ten Skylark singing in Doire Buidhe on 6<sup>th</sup>, two Woodcock roding over Machrie Moor on 15<sup>th</sup>, pair of Shelduck with nine young at Dhunan on 18<sup>th</sup>, pair of Mute Swan with six young at Machrie Bay on 26<sup>th</sup> and three pair of Common Sandpiper holding territories by the Fallen Rocks on 30<sup>th</sup>. In addition, towards the end of the month, there were lots of reports of garden birds carrying food and feeding recently fledged young, including young Goldfinch without the red face colour of the adult birds.

Here are some other highlights: a Little Grebe on Mossend Pond on 2<sup>nd</sup>, forty Gannet by the mouth of Loch Ranza on 16<sup>th</sup>, a leucistic Herring Gull in Blackwaterfoot on 18<sup>th</sup> (This "white" Herring Gull was ringed on Arran in June 2018.), three pair of Goosander on Sliddey Shore 19<sup>th</sup>, a Pale-breasted Brent Goose, an occasional winter visitor, on the shore at Silver Sands on 27<sup>th</sup> and three Moorhen on Mossend Pond on 30<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, there were a number of reports of a single Magpie in May. Magpie, a familiar bird on the mainland, is a vagrant on Arran with no records in some years. The records could all have been the same bird ; Dippen Head on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Glenloig on 7<sup>th</sup>, Sannox on 26<sup>th</sup>, Margnaeglish on 28<sup>th</sup> and Sannox on 29<sup>th</sup>.

## June

June was noticeably warmer than May. The mean temperature was three degrees higher. This June was also warmer and drier than last June. The mean temperature was one degree higher and the rainfall was almost twenty percent less, most of it falling in the last ten days of the month. This weather was generally conducive to birds raising young during the long daylight hours in June. This fine weather combined with less human disturbance, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, meant that many species had a successful breeding period.

Observers reported gardens "awash" with young birds. There were many reports of fledged birds in gardens including unfamiliar looking young birds, like Goldfinch without the red face of the adult birds, and Robin with spots and no red breast. Other familiar young birds were those of Blackbird, Song Thrush, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit and Chaffinch. Most prolific of all seemed to be House Sparrow with twenty in Alma Park on 15<sup>th</sup> being one of the larger numbers. Also, there were many reports of numbers of Siskin and Goldfinch with young around, including eighteen Goldfinch in Whiting Bay on 1<sup>st</sup> and eighteen Siskin in Cordon on 24<sup>th</sup>. Like last year it was again encouraging to get reports of young Greenfinch from widespread locations. This species had been decimated by the parasitic disease, trichomonas.



Away from gardens there were many signs of breeding including; a Sand Martin colony in Glen Catacol with one hundred and fifteen nest holes on 7<sup>th</sup>, Woodcock with young at Leac Gharbh on 10<sup>th</sup>, Curlew holding territory on Machrie Moor on 20<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Hen Harrier with four lively young seen from a forest trail close to one of the main villages on the island on 20<sup>th</sup> and activity at the Grey Heron heronries in Stronach Wood, Brodick, Lagg and Whitehouse Wood, Lamlash by the end of the month. The healthy vole population in many areas was beneficial to some breeding raptors. There was also encouraging reports of young Lapwing from four areas. This once widespread farmland breeder is just hanging on.

Around the coast there were further signs of breeding including: a crèche of twenty-six Eider with eighteen young off Silver Sands on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a pair of Mute Swan with six young in Catacol Bay on 3<sup>rd</sup>, three pair of Oystercatchers, whose nests were washed away in the storm in May, successfully re-nesting in Kildonan on 8<sup>th</sup>, one hundred Starling including many young birds in Blackwaterfoot on 11<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Mallard with ten young at Pirmill on 18<sup>th</sup>, a family of Peregrine on a coastal cliff on 20<sup>th</sup>, Black Guillemot carrying food into the Corrie colony on 25<sup>th</sup> and five pair of Fulmar on nests on Drumadoon Cliffs on 30<sup>th</sup>.

Other highlights in a month with almost one hundred species reported included the following: four Red-throated Diver off Corrie on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Bar-tailed Godwit at Machriewaterfoot also on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Little Grebe and three Moorhen at Mossend Pond on 6<sup>th</sup>, an Osprey being mobbed by gulls in Lamlash Bay on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Water Rail on North Sannox Farm on 23<sup>rd</sup> and a particular highlight for one observer in a lay-by on the String was an aerial dispute involving two Golden Eagle being harassed by two Buzzard and a Peregrine. Another magic birding moment on Arran.

Cuckoos, whose decreasing numbers are a cause for concern nationally, seem to be thriving on Arran. Throughout May and June there have been many widespread reports. Most adult Cuckoos, taking no part in rearing their young, leave around mid to late July. Juveniles leave breeding areas soon after they fledge, quickly becoming independent of their hosts before also migrating south, usually in late July and early August. These young Cuckoos have a white patch on the back of the head.

## July

In comparison to June, July had a lower mean temperature and had over sixty percent more rain. In comparison to July last year, July this year had a mean temperature that was 1.5 degrees lower and this July there were twenty-six days in which it rained compared to twenty last July. It was wet.



The cooler wetter July had an impact on breeding success of some of our visiting summer birds, particularly those that relied on airborne insects to feed young. Looking at the proportion of adult to young birds from information gathered by licensed bird ringers, Willow Warbler had a good breeding season while the similar Chiffchaff which had bred earlier had a poor breeding season. In addition, Whitethroat had a poor season whereas Sedge Warbler and Blackcap, relying less on flying insects, had a good season. Similarly, the early breeding, single brooding Sand Martin had a good season, but in July the jury was still out on the double brooding House Martin and Swallow.

Signs of a successful breeding season included: one hundred and ten Shag and fourteen Arctic Tern at their colonies on Pladda on 2<sup>nd</sup>, young Great Spotted Woodpecker at Machrie on 3<sup>rd</sup>, fifty Black Guillemot between Imachar and Whitefarland on 4<sup>th</sup>, a pair of Mute Swan with five young at Port na Lochan on 5<sup>th</sup>, a crèche of ten Eider

off Levenorrach on 6<sup>th</sup>, a family group of seven Greenfinch at Kilpatrick on 7<sup>th</sup>, three young Kestrel on Maol Donn on 11<sup>th</sup>, four young Spotted Flycatcher in Glenkiln on 18<sup>th</sup>, five young Stonechat on The Ross also on 18<sup>th</sup>, two adult Common Guillemot each with a young bird off Pirmill on 23<sup>rd</sup> and three large young Shelduck at Port na Feannaiche on 25<sup>th</sup>. In addition, healthy vole populations in some areas sustained good breeding numbers of Barn Owl, Hen Harrier and Short-eared Owl.

On the downside, with the easing of some lockdown restrictions, there was increased human activity on shores, with many ignoring notices of breeding birds and allowing their dogs off leads to cause disturbance to breeding shore birds. In addition, there was some concern expressed that increased human activity on the hills near some lochans could adversely affect breeding Red-throated Divers and diminishing records of breeding Curlew and Fulmar is a continuing cause for concern.

July marks the end of the breeding season for some birds. It can be an interesting time looking for northerly breeding species heading south from their breeding grounds, many still in their breeding plumage. Reports included; four Turnstone on Pladda on 2<sup>nd</sup>, two Sandwich Tern at Porta Buidhe on 13<sup>th</sup>, thirty-nine Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 21<sup>st</sup>, four Dunlin on Blackwaterfoot shore on 22<sup>nd</sup>, two Whimbrel on Sliderry Shore on 24<sup>th</sup> and a Greenshank on Cleats Shore on 29<sup>th</sup>.

In addition, after breeding many species begin to flock together. Reports included; one hundred and fifty Woodpigeon at Mossend Pond on 7<sup>th</sup>, forty-two Red-breasted Merganser in Machrie Bay on 8<sup>th</sup>, forty-seven Raven in Clachaig on 16<sup>th</sup>, seventy House Sparrow at Sannox on 23<sup>rd</sup>, four hundred Linnets in Slidderly on 24<sup>th</sup> and forty-one Curlew and sixty Pied Wagtail at Port na Feannaiche on 26<sup>th</sup>.

Over a hundred species were reported in July. The appearance of a Rose-coloured Starling in a Shiskine garden on 20<sup>th</sup> was a particular highlight. This is the fourth year in a row that this rare vagrant has turned up in Arran in July. A few days later, on 24<sup>th</sup>, a Wood Sandpiper was seen and heard flying over Bennecarrigan and Slidderly. This is only the second record for Arran of this rare passage migrant. Other highlights included; a Dipper at the Rodden on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Swift over Slidderly on 15<sup>th</sup>, seven Red Grouse on Mullach Buidhe on 17<sup>th</sup>, two Twites on Slidderly Shore on 24<sup>th</sup>, two Water Rail in Corriecravie on 25<sup>th</sup> and off Whitefarland on 29<sup>th</sup> an estimated sixty Manx Shearwater joined one hundred Gannet in a feeding frenzy.



## August

August was warmer than July but wetter. The mean temperature was 1.6 degrees higher and the rainfall was 16% more. In comparison to last August the mean temperature and rainfall were very similar. Last August there were 24 days of rain whereas this August there were 20 days of rain and on two of those days there were "named" storms. Towards the end of the month there was more than a hint of the approach of autumn.

Having said that, summer visitors were still to the fore including: nine Sand Martin in Glen Catacol on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Willow Warbler on Clachaig Farm on 2<sup>nd</sup>, four Whinchats on Slidderly Shore also on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Swift over Largybeg on 3<sup>rd</sup>, two Sedge Warblers at Clauchlands on 10<sup>th</sup>, three Chiffchaffs at Silver Sands on 18<sup>th</sup>, three Common Sandpipers at Drumadoon Point on 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Spotted Flycatcher at Mossend Pond on 24<sup>th</sup>, two Whitethroats on Cleats Shore on 30<sup>th</sup> and the largest groups of Swallow and House Martin reported were twenty-five Swallows at Kilpatrick on 12<sup>th</sup> and one hundred House Martins at Shannochie on 29<sup>th</sup>.

From information received, Swallow had an average breeding season while House Martin had a good one. Other signs of successful breeding this month included: young Black Guillemot off Imchar on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a pair of Mute Swans with five large young at Blackwaterfoot on 7<sup>th</sup>, family groups of Red-throated Diver off Drumadoon on 18<sup>th</sup>, young Guillemot off Pimmill on 23<sup>rd</sup>, young Little Grebe on Mossend Pond on 24<sup>th</sup> and on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> on Cleats Shore large flocks of finches including two hundred Linnets, thirty Lesser Redpolls and two hundred and fifty Goldfinches, all with many young birds. As well as this, there were widespread reports of young birds at garden feeders. The success of these small birds may have influenced the success of predator species like Sparrowhawk. There were widespread reports of young Sparrowhawk in August. Unfortunately, a number of these had to be taken into care following window strikes.

In August, breeding is coming to an end, and after breeding a number of species begin to flock together, some in preparation for migration. These included: three hundred Starlings at Porta Buidhe on 5<sup>th</sup>, sixty Golden Plovers at Machriewaterfoot on 11<sup>th</sup>, thirty-five Red-breasted Mergansers in Machrie Bay on 12<sup>th</sup>, two hundred Common Gulls on Slidderly Shore on 21<sup>st</sup>, one hundred and forty Ringed Plovers at Dougarie on 22<sup>nd</sup>, forty-four Redshanks at Sandbraes on 26<sup>th</sup>, thirty-five Kittiwakes in Whiting Bay also on 26<sup>th</sup> and thirty-five Curlews at Clauchlands on 27<sup>th</sup>.

All around the island, but particularly on the coast, there were signs of birds on migration, including: twenty Manx Shearwater off King's Cave on 9<sup>th</sup>, a Bar-tailed Godwit at Machriewaterfoot on 12<sup>th</sup>, five Wheatear in Auchenhew Bay on 14<sup>th</sup>, four Sandwich Tern in Blackwaterfoot on 15<sup>th</sup>, sixteen Dunlin at Porta Buidhe on 19<sup>th</sup>, two Sanderling at Torrylinnwaterfoot on 21<sup>st</sup>, forty-four Turnstone at Dougarie on 22<sup>nd</sup>, three Knot by Fisherman's Walk also on 22<sup>nd</sup> and twenty White Wagtail on Cleats Shore on 30<sup>th</sup>.



Among the one hundred plus species reported in August there were a number of other noteworthy ones including; two Long-eared Owl in Glenree on 2<sup>nd</sup>, four Red Grouse on Beinn Bhreac on 8<sup>th</sup>, a Magpie at Sannox on 9<sup>th</sup>, seventy Gannet off Drumadoon Point on 18<sup>th</sup>, a Goosander by Fisherman's Walk on 20<sup>th</sup>, a Kingfisher on the pier at the Wine Port on 24<sup>th</sup>, two Moorhen at Mossend Pond also on 24<sup>th</sup> and eight Twite in Machrie on 27<sup>th</sup>.

### September

September was cooler than August. There were no "named storms" and the second half of the month was particularly dry and settled. September is the start of the peak migration season when many birds are on the move. The weather was conducive for watching this migration.

There were several first records for the year; a Slavonian Grebe at Machriewaterfoot on 17<sup>th</sup>, a Curlew Sandpiper at Drumadoon Point on 18<sup>th</sup>, a Ring Ouzel on the Narachan on 24<sup>th</sup> and a Little Egret in

Lochranza on 28<sup>th</sup>. Curlew Sandpiper was last recorded on Arran in 2006.

Other birds on migration included: six White Wagtail at Porta Buidhe on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Greenshank on Silver Sands on 5<sup>th</sup>, two Sanderling at Drumadoon Point on 9<sup>th</sup>, four Knot also at Drumadoon Point on 15<sup>th</sup>, two Sandwich Tern at Blackwaterfoot also on 15<sup>th</sup>, a Merlin on Meall Bhreac on 17<sup>th</sup>, twelve Dunlin on Silver Sands on 20<sup>th</sup> and six Wheatear on Shiskine Golf Course on 21<sup>st</sup>.

Birds preparing for migration by flocking together included: fifty Pied Wagtail at Corrie cravie on 1<sup>st</sup>, thirty-two Robin on Silver Sands on 6<sup>th</sup>, three hundred Starling also Silver Sands on 15<sup>th</sup>, forty Kittiwake at Sandbraes on 17<sup>th</sup>, one hundred and fifty-eight Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 18<sup>th</sup>, also on 18<sup>th</sup> three hundred Skylark and three hundred Goldfinch on Cleats Shore, forty Redshank at Sandbraes on 20<sup>th</sup>, fifty Turnstone at Machriewaterfoot on 22<sup>nd</sup>, seventy Long-tailed Tit at Sannox on 23<sup>rd</sup> and two hundred and fifty Linnets on Cleats Shore also on 23<sup>rd</sup>. This gives an indication of the numbers of birds that are on the move at this time of year.

In September there were reports of returning winter visitors including forty-eight Rook in Slidderly on 1<sup>st</sup>, eighteen Wigeon in Cosyden on 21<sup>st</sup>, fifty Pink-footed Geese over Kildonan on 23<sup>rd</sup>, twenty-five Whooper Swan over Coire Fhionn Lochan on 25<sup>th</sup> and three Redwing over Slidderly Shore on 27<sup>th</sup>. A few summer visitors were still around in September including: forty-six Lesser Black-backed Gull at Lochranza on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Willow Warbler at Pirmill on 5<sup>th</sup>, a Spotted Flycatcher on High Corrie on 6<sup>th</sup> and six Chiffchaff at Slidderly on 20<sup>th</sup>. The last September hirundine records are one Sand Martin at Machrie on 1<sup>st</sup>, two Swallow at Porta Buidhe on 26<sup>th</sup> and one House Martin at Machrie on 28<sup>th</sup>.

One hundred and ten species were recorded on Arran in September, ten more than last September. Other interesting sightings this month included: four Water Rail at Corriecravie on 1<sup>st</sup>, four Moorhen on Mossend Pond also on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Kingfisher at Port na Lochan on 10<sup>th</sup>, three Goosander at Dougarie on 12<sup>th</sup>, a Shelduck, returning after the autumn moult, at Cosyden on 14<sup>th</sup>, two Dipper by Brodick Golf Course on 18<sup>th</sup> and fifteen Gannet off Loch Ranza pier on 21<sup>st</sup>. Gannet will soon also be heading south for the winter.

The other widely reported event was the number of dead auks washed up on Arran's shores, mainly on the west coast. Around thirty bodies were reported. The majority were Razorbills with some Guillemots. One of the Razorbills had been ringed on the Shiantas as a fledgling in 2018. The event was also reported from other shores in the Firth of Clyde and was monitored by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. It was thought to be related to the two named storms in August which had disrupted the birds' feeding.

## October

October was cooler and more unsettled than September. In comparison to October 2019, it was milder, with mean temperature one degree higher, and wetter with twenty percent more rain. There was a brief settled spell in the middle of the month, but October ended with the first named storm of the winter. It was the wettest month of the year so far. October is arguably the busiest birding month, as summer breeders depart, migrants pass through, winter visitors arrive and there is always a strong chance of something unusual. This October did not disappoint.

A particular highlight was Arran's first ever Lapland Bunting which was caught and ringed on Cleats Shore on 11 October. (See page 25) Moreover, there was the first ever photograph of a Nuthatch on Arran. This bird was reported from gardens in Pirmill throughout the month. (See page 26) This is a species that it is anticipated will colonise Arran in the near future. In addition, for the fourth year in a row another colonising species, the Little Egret, was reported in the Shiskine Valley and on the shore of Lamash Bay. On the 20 October there were three birds, two at the Rodden and one at Cordon.



The build-up of the number of winter thrushes, Fieldfare and Redwing, was a feature of the month. The first Fieldfare were reported on 2<sup>nd</sup> and the first Redwing on 3<sup>rd</sup>. Soon there were widespread reports of the birds feasting on the autumn berries, with flocks in the hundreds being reported from the north to the south of the island including three hundred Redwing at Narachan on 20<sup>th</sup> and two hundred and fifty Fieldfare at Clachaig on 22<sup>nd</sup>. Other winter visitors included: twenty-five Wigeon at Kilpatrick Point on 10<sup>th</sup>, one hundred and seventy-four Rook at Slidderly on 12<sup>th</sup>, nineteen Pink-footed Geese on Cleats Shore on 13<sup>th</sup>, two hundred Greylag Geese at Clachaig Farm also on 13<sup>th</sup>, twenty Whooper Swan flying over Shiskine on 17<sup>th</sup>, six Yellowhammer in Slidderly on 18<sup>th</sup>, seventy-six Teal at Kilpatrick Point on 23<sup>rd</sup> and two Brambling at Slidderly on 29<sup>th</sup>.

Migration was in full flow in October as birds were moving out of colder northern Europe to milder climates. These included: a Bar-tailed Godwit on Cleats Shore on 1<sup>st</sup>, thirty Twite also on Cleats Shore on 11<sup>th</sup>, twenty-three Redshank in Whiting Bay on 12<sup>th</sup>, ninety Skylark at Clachaig Farm also on 12<sup>th</sup>, a Sanderling at Drumadoon Point on 16<sup>th</sup>, a male Ring Ouzel at North Newton on 17<sup>th</sup>, thirty-three Golden Plover and thirty Turnstone at Catacol Bay on 18<sup>th</sup>, four Lapwing at Kilpatrick Point on 23<sup>rd</sup>, one male Merlin photographed in a Sliddery garden on 24<sup>th</sup>, three hundred Starling at Kilpatrick on 27<sup>th</sup> and three hundred and eighty Kittiwake in Whiting Bay on 28<sup>th</sup>.

There were some "last sightings" of summer visitors also moving south including: a Chiffchaff in Sliddery on 2<sup>nd</sup>, a Spotted Flycatcher at Bailemargaigh on 8<sup>th</sup>, four House Martin at Porta Buidhe on 14<sup>th</sup>, a Swallow at Clachaig Farm on 15<sup>th</sup> and two Lesser Black-backed Gull on Cleats Shore on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Also on 23<sup>rd</sup>, there were two reports of Gannet, one in Lamlash Bay and one off Cleats Shore. Earlier in the month on 14<sup>th</sup>, one hundred had been reported off Imachar.

Other interesting records from a month with over one hundred species reported included: four Moorhen on Mossend Pond on 5<sup>th</sup>, six Little Grebe on Loch Ranza on 12<sup>th</sup>, three Goosander at Dougarie on 20<sup>th</sup> and ten Black-throated Diver in Whiting Bay on 31<sup>st</sup>. In addition here were two reports of Red Kite on October, one at Sliddery on 18<sup>th</sup> and one North Sannox on 20<sup>th</sup>.

## November

November in terms of weather was almost a re-run of October. November was also mild and wet. In comparison to last November, it was milder and wetter. The mean temperature was three degrees higher. The rainfall this November was more than double that of last November.

October highlights continued to delight in November with reports of Little Egret between 7<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> mainly from the south end of Lamlash Bay but also in the Rodden in the Shiskine Valley. All records were of a single bird. In addition, the Nuthatch reported in Pirmill in October continued to visit a range of gardens throughout November.

Not surprisingly in November, winter visitors were to the fore. Throughout the month there were widespread reports of foraging Fieldfare and Redwing, sometimes in mixed flocks. The largest groups were one hundred Fieldfare at Lochranza on 10<sup>th</sup> and sixty Redwing in Sliddery on 21<sup>st</sup>. Last November there were fourteen reports of Snow Bunting but none so far this winter. A single Brambling was in Whiting Bay on 2<sup>nd</sup> and six Yellowhammer in Sliddery on 9<sup>th</sup>.

Other records of wintering birds included: sixteen Turnstone in Whiting Bay on 2<sup>nd</sup>, thirty-six Rook in Sliddery on 7<sup>th</sup>, seven Lapwing, Kilpatrick also on 7<sup>th</sup>, a Merlin at Sliddery on 9<sup>th</sup>, fifty-two Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 12<sup>th</sup>, three Purple Sandpipers at Silver Sands on 25<sup>th</sup> and a Jack Snipe on Sliddery Shore on 28<sup>th</sup>.



Reports of wintering wildfowl included: twenty-seven Whooper Swan at Clachaig Farm on 2<sup>nd</sup>, seventy Teal and fifty-two Wigeon at Kilpatrick Point on 17<sup>th</sup> and two hundred and thirty-nine Greylag Geese and seventy Pink-footed Geese in the Shiskine Valley on 28<sup>th</sup>.



Gardens are safe refuges during the winter months with many people providing regular food and water for their feathered friends. These are a small selection from the many reports from gardens round the island in November: six Goldcrest in Kildonan on 5<sup>th</sup>, twelve Coal Tit in Whiting Bay on 18<sup>th</sup>, five Great Tit in Brodick on 22<sup>nd</sup>, five Greenfinch in Kilpatrick on 27<sup>th</sup>, twenty-two Long-tailed Tit in Shiskine on 28<sup>th</sup> and perhaps not so welcome, a Magpie in Lamlash on 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition, there were reports of wintering Blackcap in gardens in Brodick, Pirmill and Slidery often attracted by cut up apple.

Finally, here is a further selection of highlights from what has been another exceptional month for bird-watching on Arran. After the dearth of Eider round Arran in September for the annual Clyde Eider census, in November there were widespread reports including two hundred and fifty in Lamlash Bay on 16<sup>th</sup>, one hundred off Cosyden on 26<sup>th</sup> and one hundred and fifty in Whiting Bay on 28<sup>th</sup>. At Kildonan there was a returning Shelduck on 9<sup>th</sup> and a lingering Gannet on 13<sup>th</sup>. All three divers were recorded throughout the month including two Red-throated Diver in Whiting Bay on 2<sup>nd</sup>, four Great Northern Diver in Machrie Bay on 10<sup>th</sup> and twenty-five Black-throated Diver off Cosyden on 20<sup>th</sup>. Among the almost one hundred species recorded in November there was a Long-eared Owl on Corriecravie Moor on 7<sup>th</sup> and a Kingfisher by the Fisherman's Walk on 10<sup>th</sup>. Last but by no means least was the appearance of two White-tailed Eagles. First seen in Machrie Bay on 22<sup>nd</sup>, they were later that day photographed north of Dougarie and for the rest of the month there were records of these majestic birds from that stretch of coast (see note page 27).

## December

The mild weather of November did not continue into December. The mean temperature in December was three degrees colder than the mean temperature in November. December also had around twenty-five percent less rain than November.

Highlights from November continued throughout December with further reports of Little Egret from around Lamlash Bay, a single Nuthatch at garden feeders in Pirmill throughout the month and a pair of White-tailed Eagle on the west coast.

Other visitors in December included: forty Twite on Cleats Shore on 6<sup>th</sup>, twenty Fieldfare at Strathwillan on 11<sup>th</sup>, fifty Rook in Kildonan on 17<sup>th</sup>, five Purple Sandpiper on Silver Sands on 29<sup>th</sup> and five Redwing at Clachaig on 30<sup>th</sup>.

Wintering wildfowl were to the fore including: two Whooper Swan on Silver Sands on 2<sup>nd</sup>, twenty-four Wigeon at Cleiteadh Buidhe on 6<sup>th</sup>, a male Goldeneye on Mossend Pond also on 6<sup>th</sup>, fifty Teal at Carlo on 14<sup>th</sup>, three hundred Greylag Geese on the Rodden on 24<sup>th</sup> and sixty-three Pink-footed Geese in Slidery on 30<sup>th</sup>. In addition, there were reports of Shelduck returning after their autumn moult from Auchenhew Bay, Cleats Shore, Sannox Bay, Silver Sands and Whiting Bay.

Groups of wintering birds included: one hundred Common Gull at Porta Buidhe on 1<sup>st</sup>, nine Snipe and two Jack Snipe in Slidery on 5<sup>th</sup>, twenty-three Woodcock in Bennan on 15<sup>th</sup>, thirty Curlew at Clauchlands on 24<sup>th</sup>, forty Turnstone in Catacol Bay on 30<sup>th</sup> and eight Black-throated Diver in Whiting Bay on 31<sup>st</sup>.

Gardens provide a safe refuge for some birds in winter. Among the more unusual records received were: twenty Long-tailed Tit in Lamlash on 4<sup>th</sup>, five Yellowhammer in Slidery on 11<sup>th</sup>, four Goldcrest in Brodick on 16<sup>th</sup>, a Great Spotted Woodpecker in Lagg on 27<sup>th</sup>, a Treecreeper in Pirmill also on 27<sup>th</sup> and a male Blackcap in Whiting Bay on 31<sup>st</sup>.

A major influence on the chronological summary is the weather, which on Arran can be very localised. For the most comprehensive and up to date information on the weather on Arran refer to this excellent website run by Glen Sloss of Sannox <http://www.arranweather.com/>

From the above summary it has been another outstanding year on Arran.

## Summer Migrant Arrival Dates

	<b>"Earliest" Recorded Date</b>	<b>Arrival Date 2020</b>
Chiffchaff	11-Mar-17	21 March
Wheatear	13-Mar-05	22 March
Sand Martin	18-Mar-09	05 April
Willow Warbler	14-Mar-19	05 April
Swallow	18-Mar-19	05 April
White Wagtail	24-Mar-08	30 March
Manx Shearwater	26-Mar-18	28 March
House Martin	12-Mar-17	04 April
Common Sandpiper	22-Mar-19	10 April
Sandwich Tern	23-Mar-19	06 April
Whinchat	01-Apr-88	22 April
Tree Pipit	07-Apr-90	18 April
Redstart	08-Apr-11	None recorded in 2020
Cuckoo	08-Apr-17	14 April
Grasshopper Warbler	12-Apr-11	19 April
Garden Warbler	12-Apr-95	15 April
Whitethroat	13-Apr-16	16 April
Sedge Warbler	14-Apr-11	18 April
Arctic Tern	14-Apr-13	15 May
Corncrake	20-Apr-90	13 May
Common Tern	21-Apr-93	None recorded in 2020
Spotted Flycatcher	21-Apr-11	08 May
Wood Warbler	25-Apr-09	09 May
Lesser Whitethroat	27-Apr-10	None recorded in 2020
Pied Flycatcher	28-Apr-98	None recorded in 2020
Swift	01-May-09	30 May
Nightjar	17-May-13	None recorded in 2020

## Regular Winter Migrant Arrival and Departure Dates

	<b>"earliest" Arrival date</b>	<b>"latest" Departure date</b>	<b>2020 Arrival date</b>	<b>2020 Departure date</b>
Whooper Swan	18-Sep-11	21-May-14	24 September	04 April
Pink-footed Goose	16-Sep-20	30-Apr-18	16 September	07 April
Greylag Goose	31-Aug-18	12-May-18	15 September	02 April
Wigeon	11-Jul-11	16-May-17	21 September	18 April
Goldeneye	12-Oct-09	04-May-06	21 October	10 February
Purple Sandpiper	07-Nov-16	20-May-16	25 November	None recorded
Waxwing	21-Oct-10	15-Apr-09	None recorded	24 February
Fieldfare	02-Sep-13	24-Apr-18	14 October	22 April
Redwing	18-Sep-20	13-Apr-16	18 September	07 April
Rook	03-Jul-07	28-Apr-19	30 August	05 April
Brambling	09-Oct-07	25-Apr-08	14 October	None Recorded

The above table only includes regular winter visitors to Arran and does not include species like Bewick's Swan, White-fronted Goose, Barnacle Goose, Brent Goose and white-winged gulls which do appear on Arran in winter from time to time. In addition it does not include Turnstone which can be seen in most months of the year and Yellowhammer which has become a winter visitor.

**Note: there is also a naturalised population of Greylag Geese which is frequently seen in the summer in Clachlands.**

## Bird Ringing

Bird ringing in Britain and Ireland is organised and co-ordinated by the British Trust for Ornithology. A network of over 2,400 trained and licensed volunteers currently ring over 800,000 birds every year. On average only one in every 50 birds ringed are subsequently found and reported, so **every report of a ringed bird is of value.**

**Why ring birds?** The main focus of the ringing scheme today is monitoring bird populations. Ringing allows us to study how many young birds leave the nest and survive to become adults, as well as how many adults survive the stresses of breeding, migration and severe weather. Changes in survival rates and other aspects of birds' biology help us to understand the causes of population declines. Each bird ring also has an address, so that anyone finding a ringed bird can help by reporting where and when it was found and what happened to it. Some ringing projects also use colour rings to allow individual birds to be identified without being caught. Please report all sightings of ringed birds to <http://www.bto.org/ringing>

**Does ringing affect the birds?** The simple answer is no. Ringing is carried out by skilled ringers with the utmost consideration for the birds' welfare.

**How are birds caught for ringing?** Birds are caught for ringing in a variety of ways including in the nest and using a mist net.

**Learning to ring** The skills necessary to become a ringer can only be learnt by practice under the close supervision of experienced ringers; effectively an apprenticeship. For more information on how to become a ringer use this link. <http://www.bto.org/ringing/ringinfo/become-a-ringer.htm>

**Codes for Age and Sex** This table gives the codes used in the following bird ringing report.

Code	Explanation
M, F, J	Male, female and juvenile
1	Pulli - young bird in nest
3J	Bird in juvenile plumage hatched in current calendar year
3	Bird in full-grown plumage hatched in current calendar year.
4	Hatched before current calendar year.
5	Hatched in previous calendar year.
6	Hatched before last calendar year - exact year unknown.
8	Hatched 3 or more years ago – exact year unknown.
10	Hatched 4 or more years ago – exact year unknown.
12	Hatched 5 or more years ago – exact year unknown.

### Some interesting facts discovered from ringing data....

Oldest bird – Manx shearwater, 50 yrs 11 months

Furthest travelled – Arctic Tern from Wales to Australia 18,000 km

Strangest recovery – Osprey ring found in stomach of a crocodile in The Gambia!

If you come across any birds with rings, please pass on the information.

In particular, groups of gulls are worth an extra look to see if you can spot and read a colour ringed bird. All sightings of colour ringed gulls are welcome even of birds that seem to be resident in an area.

Terry Southall.

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# Bird ringing on Arran in 2020

## Report by Terry Southall

With the situation during this year of the Coronavirus outbreak causing lockdown and travel restrictions, a much more reduced number of birds ringed would be expected, however it was the complete opposite! A total of just over three and a half thousand is our best ever total. "Lockdown" did impact on several colour ringing and ringing projects earlier in the year notably those for Whimbrel, Short-eared Owl and Raven. Fortunately, with the large number of voles available on the south end of the island, the Short-eared Owls had a protracted breeding season, so some chicks were ringed eventually.

Several adult Short-eared Owls were caught, and satellite tags fitted during the winter and summer. The information from these birds revealed more about their nocturnal habits and wanderings. For example, one bird was tracked crossing the Kilbrannan Sound no less than 47 times to hunt on the Mull of Kintyre returning each morning to roost on Arran, a return trip of a minimum 16kms over the sea. Barn Owls also had a good breeding season with some fifty chicks being ringed. Some of these chicks were caught later in the year as free flying first year birds indicating a good breeding success rate.

The large cone crop in the conifer forests on Arran during the winter of 2019/20, which lasted well into the summer, allowed a lot of our Goldfinch, Siskin and Lesser Redpolls to over winter here, thus avoiding their normal migration south to England and the Low Countries for the winter. A very successful breeding season followed because of the abundant food and good weather during the spring and summer. The successful breeding of these birds was repeated through much of Scotland. Bird ringers in England reported large numbers of Lesser Redpolls being caught as the birds from the north moved down into more traditional wintering areas. The large numbers of other finches caught as shown in the ringing totals indicate how successful a breeding season these birds had also.

The tits fared differently having a poor breeding season. We caught very few juvenile Great Tit and Blue Tit during the summer and autumn and can only speculate that the caterpillars these birds require to feed their young with were not available!

Trans-Saharan migrants also had a relatively good breeding season particularly Sedge Warblers and Willow Warbler with over 80% of the Willow Warblers caught being juveniles.

## Selected list of recoveries of birds ringed on Arran

Species	Age & Sex	Date ringed	Date recovered	Lapsed days	Where recovered	Distance moved
Teal	6 M	04/02/19	20/08/20	563	Hankasalm, Vaasa, Finland	1961km
Oystercatcher	6	09/03/18	07/09/20	929	Wirral, Merseyside	264Km
LBB Gull	1	02/07/20	27/08/20	57	La Coruna, Spain	1369km
LBB Gull	1	30/06/14	08/01/20	2023	Agadir, Morocco	2810km
LBB Gull	8	24/06/14	06/01/20	2810	Madrid, Spain	1679km
Sedge Warbler	3J	30/06/20	08/08/20	39	Land's End, Cornwall	600km
Lesser Redpoll	3J	08/08/20	03/11/20	87	Hatfield Moor, S Yorks	352km
Lesser Redpoll	3J	09/07/20	11/10/20	94	Hatfield Moor, S Yorks	352km
Lesser Redpoll	3J	21/07/20	07/10/20	78	Sandwich Bay, Kent	692km
Goldfinch	6 M	02/02/20	04/11/20	276	Stanford Res, Northants	455km
Goldfinch	3J	30/08/20	07/11/20	69	Light Oaks, Staffs	334km
Goldfinch	5 F	03/05/16	02/10/20	1613	Carlisle, Cumbria	152km

Codes for age and sex are given on page 19.

From the table, the Teal is our second overseas recovery of this small duck. The first was shot in Northern Ireland. This bird was found dead in central Finland possibly on its breeding grounds. Although Teal breed on Arran this recovery shows how far some of the birds that winter here travel.

The Oystercatcher was a colour ring sighting on the Wirral. This bird was probably returning north to breed when originally caught and ringed on Arran.

Two of the Lesser Black-backed Gulls have been featured before in this journal and are included here to show their faithfulness to their wintering grounds. The adult bird was recorded back at the La Pinta land fill site near Madrid for the third time. The Morocco bird ringed as a chick on Pladda was back at the fish processing plant near Agadir in Morocco having been seen there on ten occasions. The Lesser Black-backed Gull ringed as a chick this year on Pladda demonstrates how quickly these birds move south to their wintering areas in their first year.

The Sedge Warbler, being the second bird to get to Land's End was caught there by bird ringers at the same site as the previous bird. It's surprising how some juvenile Sedge Warblers take a direct movement south during their first autumn while others prefer a more south easterly route.

### Selected list of birds recovered on Arran but ringed elsewhere

Species	Age & Sex	Date ringed	Where ringed	Date recovered	Lapse days	Distance moved
Barn Owl	1	06/07/19	Mull of Kintyre	26/01/20	204	24km
Sedge Warbler	3	23/08/19	Zandveort, Netherlands	06/08/20	249	731km
Lesser Redpoll	3 F	22/10/16	Kessingland, Suffolk	02/05/20	1288	560km
Lesser Redpoll	6 M	03/03/19	Stocksfield, Northumberland	24/07/20	481	224km
Lesser Redpoll	3	09/11/17	St Nicholas-at-Wade, Kent	08/08/20	1003	629km
Goldfinch	3	17/11/17	Wigan, Lancs	22/07/20	978	274km
Goldfinch	5 F	19/04/18	Calf of Man	08/02/20	660	159km
Siskin	6 M	17/04/19	Nr Buckie, Moray	10/03/20	328	276km



The Barn Owl is the second in recent years from the Mull of Kintyre, ringed as a chick and caught in its first winter having crossed the Kilbrannan sound to Arran. Also an Arran chick which made the journey the other way was caught while breeding on Kintyre.

A Sedge Warbler ringed in Holland on its way south as a young bird the previous autumn was caught again the following autumn on the south of Arran while again migrating south.

Both the Lesser Redpolls and Goldfinch demonstrate the more typical wintering areas for these finches.

The Siskin was caught in the spring as it headed north to breed having been ringed in the previous spring in Morayshire.

The Skylark in the photograph was one of 3,842 birds ringed on Arran in 2020. See following page for the ringing totals for the year.

## Ringling Totals for 2020

This table gives the ringling totals for the year.

Species	FG	Pulli	Retraps	Total	Species	FG	Pulli	Retraps	Total
Gannet	1	0	0	1	Long-tailed Tit	12	0	0	12
Mute Swan	2	0	0	2	Coal Tit	25	0	2	27
Eurasian Teal	5	0	3	8	Blue Tit	64	0	4	68
Sparrowhawk	3	5	1	9	Great Tit	72	0	11	83
Buzzard	1	4	0	5	Treecreeper	4	0	0	4
Kestrel	1	0	0	1	Raven	0	3	0	3
Oystercatcher	1	0	1	2	Starling	8	16	0	24
Ringed Plover	10	0	0	10	House Sparrow	27	0	2	29
Golden Plover	8	0	1	9	Chaffinch	420	0	13	433
Jack Snipe	2	0	0	2	Greenfinch	12	0	0	12
Snipe	6	0	0	6	Goldfinch	532	0	81	613
Woodcock	33	0	6	39	Siskin	260	0	52	312
Curlew	2	1	1	4	Linnet	243	0	2	245
Common Gull	0	1	0	1	Twite	7	0	0	7
Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	2	0	2	Lesser Redpoll	315	0	5	320
Herring Gull	0	1	0	1	Bullfinch	7	0	1	8
Great Black-backed Gull	0	1	0	1	Lapland Bunting	1	0	0	1
Rock Dove	5	1	0	6	Yellowhammer	1	0	0	1
Collard Dove	1	0	0	1	Reed Bunting	13	0	0	13
Cuckoo	3	0	0	3					
Barn Owl	33	50	7	90					
Long-eared Owl	9	0	0	9					
Short-eared Owl	12	17	0	29					
Skylark	91	3	0	94					
Sand Martin	1	0	0	1					
Swallow	25	19	0	44					
House Martin	5	15	0	20					
Tree Pipit	1	0	0	1					
Meadow Pipit	117	0	0	117					
Rock Pipit	46	0	3	49					
Pied/White Wagtail	9	5	0	14					
Wren	53	0	2	55					
Dunnoek	71	0	10	81					
Robin	69	0	15	84					
Whinchat	1	11	0	12					
Stonechat	34	0	6	40					
Wheatear	13	0	0	13					
Blackbird	24	0	0	24					
Song Thrush	18	0	1	19					
Redwing	3	0	0	3					
Sedge Warbler	108	0	17	125					
Whitethroat	26	0	1	27					
Blackcap	35	0	2	37					
Chiffchaff	23	0	0	23					
Willow Warbler	382	0	15	397					
Goldcrest	106	0	1	107					
Spotted Flycatcher	1	4	0	5					
					<b>Total</b>	<b>3422</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>3842</b>

FG – Full grown, Pulli - young birds in nest.

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## Species Notes

### Fulmar in Decline

Gliding very low over the open sea or along cliff tops on straight wings, the Fulmar used to be a familiar species around the coast of Arran. Superficially gull like, it has a “tube nose” and is more closely related to albatrosses. On the cliffs around the coast of Arran there used to be many small breeding colonies.



In the *Arran Bird Report the First 40 Years*, Fulmar is one of the species reported to be in serious decline. In the 1987 report, 284 pairs were reported and in 1992 approximately 150 pairs were present on the breeding cliffs around the island. Ten years later numbers were a fraction of these and in 2017 the highest total count was less than fifty birds about a 90% reduction in just over thirty years!

Fulmar is a long-lived species with some individuals living for more than forty years. They normally start breeding at around ten to twelve years old.

Many Fulmars return during the day to their breeding cliffs as early as November and most birds have claimed their nesting ledge by January. A single egg is laid in early to mid-May. Males and females share the long incubation of around fifty days, taking it in turns of around five days. Chicks hatch in late June but it takes almost another fifty days before they are fledged and depart the cliffs in late August or September.

Fulmar chicks have at least one adult with them for the first ten to fifteen days after hatching. After that both parents forage for food leaving the chick alone. Although with this technique, the chicks can grow rapidly, they are vulnerable to mammal predators like rats and that may be a problem on Arran.

In 2020, Arran had a small number of occupied colonies with a small number of birds but there were no reports of fledged young from any of these colonies. This has been the case for most of the last ten years.

This decline is not confined to Arran. There may be multiple reasons for the decline around Scotland including changes in commercial fishing and increasing amounts of plastic in the sea. To investigate the latter, the Scottish government has an on-going study in which Marine Scotland is



supporting the monitoring of plastic particles in Fulmars stomachs. There is more information at [http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/files/What-to-do-if-you-find-a-dead-fulmar\\_Marine-Scotland-Science.pdf](http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/files/What-to-do-if-you-find-a-dead-fulmar_Marine-Scotland-Science.pdf) . This contains detailed advice on what to do if you find a dead Fulmar on the shore. The investigating staff at Marine Scotland would be delighted to hear from you.

## Hoopoe: April 2020

On Wednesday 8 April, Fiona Laing was on her regular early morning round island delivery route when she saw a bird that she instantly recognised as a Hoopoe. She wrote "I'll admit I think I yelled Hoopoe when I saw it fly in front of the van." And no wonder. The Hoopoe is an exotic looking bird that is about the size of a mistle thrush. It has a pinkish-brown body, striking black and white wings, a long black downcurved bill, and a long pinkish-brown crest which it raises when excited. With broad, rounded wings, it has a characteristic undulating flight which is like that of a giant butterfly as the wings half close at the end of each beat.



Fiona explained that she saw it below Levencorrach, stopped and managed to get a photograph as it landed in the hedgerow trees. The image was more than good enough to confirm identification. It then headed off towards the houses.

At around the same time Pauline Nicolson was heading in the opposite direction from her home in Shannochie to her workplace in Cooriedoon, Whiting Bay. She also saw the bird but did not know what it was. However, Maggie Dunn, the resident bird expert in Cooriedoon, was able to help with identification.

The Eurasian Hoopoe is widespread in the warmer parts of Europe, Asia, and North Africa and northern Sub-Saharan Africa. Most European and north Asian birds migrate to the tropics in winter. It does not breed in the UK, but does turn up from time to time mainly in the spring, when birds heading north overshoot their usual destinations and finish up much further north.

From the Arran Natural History Society records, there have been three previous reports of Hoopoe on Arran. The last occasion was in July 2006 when a single bird turned up in a garden in Thunderguy.

I will leave the last word to Fiona who wrote after her encounter "A stunning bird and in these sad times has really cheered me up."

## Lapland Bunting: October 2020

In October, the birding highlight was the first ever record of Lapland Bunting on Arran,

On Sunday 11 October 2020, a small group of local bird ringers under the direction of Terry Southall set out their nets to capture and ring a selection of the many birds migrating through Arran in October.



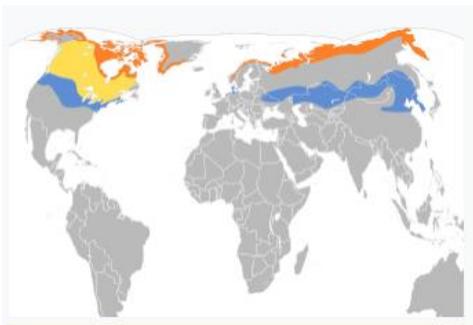
On that Sunday morning the ringers were by Cleats Shore from just before first light. Flocks of small birds were passing overhead with some stopping to feed.

These included Skylark, Linnet, Twite and Chaffinch. Some were being caught in the nets and, when these were taken from the nets for ringing, one was a Lapland Bunting.

This caused some excitement as it was a "first" for Arran. When it was examined in the hand it was a young male that had hatched earlier in the year in one of its northern breeding areas.

Lapland Buntings are robust birds, slightly larger than the more familiar Reed Bunting. Lapland Bunting has a well-marked head pattern, chestnut nape and chestnut wing panel as shown in the photo taken by the ringers.

Lapland Bunting breed across Alaska, northern most Canada, Greenland, Arctic Europe and the Palearctic. The red area in the map indicates these areas. At this time of year, they are migrating south to their wintering areas, the blue area in the world map. During this migration a few turn up each year in the UK where it is a scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Most reports are from the east coast. In Scotland from the data on the Scottish Ornithologists Club (SOC) Online Scottish Bird Report (oSBR), it is annually reported on Lothian coasts, the Western Isles and Argyll. On the Clyde Islands there has only been one previous record and that was in Bute in 2011.



The bird on Cleats Shore on 11 October was the first ever report of Lapland Bunting on Arran

# Nuthatch on Arran

In October 2020 David Kilpatrick took this photograph of this colourful, active, striking bird in his garden. It is a Nuthatch and the first photograph taken of this species on Arran.



Nuthatch is a woodland species. Well established south of the border this species has been spreading north through the UK.

This is clearly shown in the map from *Bird Atlas 2007-11: the breeding and wintering birds of Britain and Ireland*. BTO Books. Nuthatch first bred in the Borders of Scotland in 1989 rapidly moving into a large area of southern Scotland in the 1990s. Now the nearest well-established breeding area is in South Ayrshire including Ayr itself.

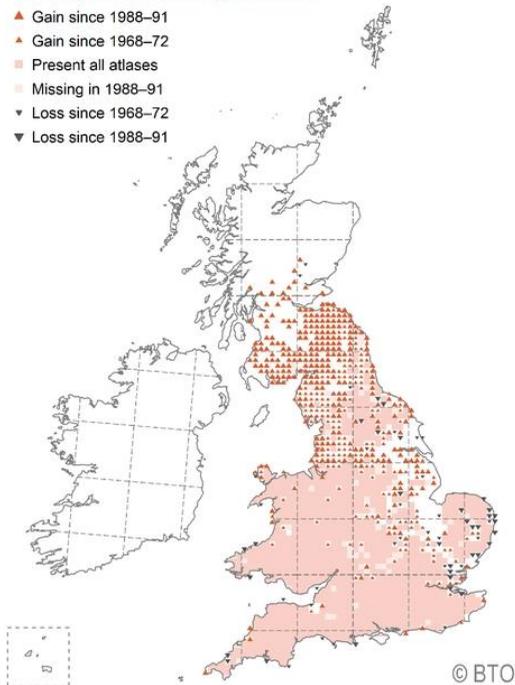
The first Arran record was in 2001. In 2002 there were two records but there were no further records until 2012 when there was one. While there was none the following year, there were records in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 with seven records in 2016 followed by one in 2017. All the records have been of a single bird. After that there was another gap until this year.

This year the first report was from a garden in Pirnmill on 1 October. The report was again of a single bird. Throughout October, November and December there were further reports of a single bird from four different gardens in Pirnmill. These gardens were spread over a distance of about 1.5 kilometres. In two of these gardens, it was photographed at bird feeders.

This is by far the longest continuous spell of Nuthatch records on Arran. Surely it can only be a matter of time before this species becomes established on Arran.

### Breeding Distribution Changes all atlases

- ▲ Gain since 1988–91
- ▲ Gain since 1968–72
- Present all atlases
- Missing in 1988–91
- ▼ Loss since 1968–72
- ▼ Loss since 1988–91



© BTO

## White-tailed Eagle on Arran

White-tailed Eagle were persecuted to extinction in the UK in the nineteenth century but have been part of a successful re-introduction programme based on releasing birds from Scandinavia. Numbers of this species were released under license on Rhum between 1975 and 1985 and further releases were made in Wester Ross between 1993 and 1998. The first successful breeding was on Mull in 1985. On 3 November 1992, after an absence of over one hundred years, the first White-tailed Eagle was seen at close range in the Clachlands Hills. This juvenile bird was later seen over Holy Isle and Lamlash Bay. Its appearance made the front page of the local paper the "Arran Banner" on Saturday 21 November 1992. The following is an extract from the original front page story.

**The Eagle has Landed** from "Arran Banner" 21 November 1992

The White-tailed Eagle is even bigger than the Golden Eagle but, being persecuted last century, has ceased to be seen in Scotland until recently. And last week a White-tailed Eagle was seen off Clachlands Point. It was seen flying around by Tony and Irmgard Church from Lochranza. Both bird lovers they thought it was a sea eagle but were not sure so drove down to Kilmory to tell birdman John Rhead who dropped what he was doing and came to look. An hour later it was still there and it was a sea eagle, a White-tailed Eagle.

The next White-tailed Eagle record on Arran was in 2004 on 23 February at Catacol. It was a "tagged" juvenile bird that had been tagged in Mull in 2003. In the following years there were small numbers of records; 2006 one, 2008 two, 2009 two, 2010 three, 2011 two, 2012 two, 2014 three, 2016 one and in 2017 there were two records and for the first time, one of the records was of two juvenile birds together. In 2019 there were four records.

In 2020 there have been over twenty reports. Two White-tailed Eagles were seen in Machrie Bay on 22 November. Later that day they were photographed north of Dougarie and for the rest of November and the whole of December there were records of these majestic birds from that stretch of coast. The last record was on 30 December. Whether or not this is a pair looking to establish a territory remains to be seen. This is by far the longest continuous spell of White-tailed Eagle on Arran for over one hundred years.



## Systematic List 2020 BOU/IOC ORDER

The systematic list is in the order of the British List as published by the British Ornithologists' Union (2018). For each species, as well as the common name, the (new) official name and its scientific name have been given. In addition, for each species reported, in there are two numbers, both taken from the annual data. The first is the number of records received for that species and the second is the number of sites in which the bird was recorded. A site is a one-kilometre square. There are over four hundred on Arran. This is followed by a brief statement giving the status of each bird on Arran, which can be markedly different from the status of the same bird on the adjacent mainland.

To help people making use of this annual report, a gazetteer of Arran place names, linking names to the Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 361 "Isle of Arran", has been produced and is available as a PDF download. <http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/files/gazetteerarran.pdf>

**Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla* 1,1

**Occasional winter visitor.**

One record for 2020. One bird feeding Silver Sands on evening of 25 May. (DaSma)

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis* 32,16

**Localised breeding and occasional visitor numbers increasing.**

No confirmed breeding this year. Groups included 23 Pladda on 10 January, 30 Catacol Bay on 8 August, 28 Slidderly Shore on 19 August and 28 Clachaig on 2 December.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

**Occasional winter visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record 20 Slidderly Shore on 26 October 2018

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser* 103,44

**Regular winter visitor; small naturalised population mainly around Lamlash Bay.**

In Shiskine Valley up to 400 between January and April and up to 300 between November and end of year. In the Slidderly area taking in Clachaig and Cleats Shore up to 200 between January and April and up to 300 between November and end of year.

There is also a naturalised population of Greylag which is found mainly around Lamlash Bay throughout the year. Largest count of 345 at Clauchlands on 13 January may have included some wintering birds.

**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*  
24,15

**Regular winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Numbers increasing. Groups included 35 Slidderly on 5 April, 100 Porta Buidhe on 7 April, 200 flying over Newton on 9 September, 70 Shiskine on 28 November and 63 Slidderly on 12 December.

**White-fronted Goose** (Greater White-fronted Goose) *Anser albifrons* 8,5

**Occasional winter visitor.**

Sightings included 7 Torbeg on 11 February, 5 Shiskine on 22 March and 5 Feorline on 28 March.



**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor* 237,93

**Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Breeding included pairs with young; 6 young Machrie Bay on 21 May, one young Clauchlands on 2 June, 2 young Cordon on 3 June, 6 young Catacol on 6 June, 3 young Glenashdalewaterfoot on 10 June and 5 young Port na Lochan on 17 June. Groups included 14 Clauchlands on 13 January, 11 Porta Buidhe on 3 July and 13 Whiting Bay on 12 October.

**Bewick's Swan** (Tundra Swan) *Cygnus columbianus*

**Rare winter visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one at Lagg 6 January 1991.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus* 50,28

**Regular winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Groups included 14 Porta Buidhe on 3 March, 25 Coire Fhionn Lochan on 25 September, 20 Shiskine on 17 October, 27 Clachaig on 2 November, 19 Kilpatrick on 3 November and 16 West Mayish on 26 November. In addition, there was a solitary Whooper Swan present on Arran throughout the year. More information on website <http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/whooper-swan--left-behind.html>



**Shelduck** (Common Shelduck) *Tadorna tadorna* 162,55

**Breeding. Common round coast from January to August and November to December.**

Breeding included 9 young Dhunan pn 18 May, 5 young Kilpatrick Point on 30 May, 3 young Cleats Shore on 14 June and 3 young Port na Feannaiche on 25 July. Groups included 17 Cosyden on 3 March, 11 Slidery Shore on 19 March, 8 Pirmill on 23 March and 10 Kilpatrick Point on 11 April.

**Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata*

**Irregular visitor. Introduced species. Nearest breeding group is in Cowal, Argyll.**

No records for 2020. Last record Rosa and Cloy Burns in Brodick on 27 March 2009.

**Garganey** *Anas querquedula* 1,1

**Rare summer visitor.**

One record for 2020. Pair Slidery Shore on 3 May. (CSDS) Only the second Arran record. The first one was a pair on pond at Torr Righ on 9 May 2012.

**Shoveler** (Northern Shoveler) *Anas clypeata*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one male by the Fisherman's Walk on 24 May 2015.

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope* 56,25

**Regular winter visitor and passage migrant with records from January to April and August to December.**

Groups included 30 Merkland Point on 1 January, 53 Machriewaterfoot on 19 January, 63 Cosyden on 4 March, 52 Kilpatrick Point on 17 November and 24 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 6 December.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos* 278,105

**Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Breeding included 13 young Blackwaterfoot on 28 April, 10 young Cnocan Biorach on 13 May and 10 young Fisherman's Walk on 30 May. Groups included 52 Fisherman's Walk on 25 January, 28 Kilpatrick Point on 10 June, 42 Mossend Pond on 1 September, 29 Cosyden on 21 September and 30 Port na Lochan on 7 October.

**Pintail** (Northern Pintail) *Anas acuta*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one male Machriewaterfoot on 19 May 2014.

**Teal** (Common Teal) *Anas crecca* 109,24

**Breeding and regular winter visitor. Common round coast from January to April and August to December.**

No confirmed breeding. Groups included 48 Cosyden on 19 January, 56 Torbeg on 21 October, 76 Kilpatrick Point on 23 October, 51 Sliderry Shore on 1 November and 60 Merkland Point on 4 December.

**Pochard** (Common Pochard) *Aythya ferina*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was a male at Port na Lochan from 15 to 18 September 2011.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

**Occasional visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record was a male on Mossend Pond from 24 June to 26 June 2019.

**Scaup** (Greater Scaup) *Aythya marila* 4, 1

**Occasional winter visitor.**

A male was on Mossend Pond from 12 April to 14 April.

**King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was a long staying drake in Lochranza in April 1980.



**Eider** (Common Eider) *Somateria mollissima* 131,59

**Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Breeding included 4 young Blackwaterfoot on 19 May, 2 young Lamlash Bay on 28 May, 18 young Silver Sands on 2 June, 8 young Auchenhew Bay also on 2 June and 6 young Blackwaterfoot on 19 June. Groups included 200 Clauchlands on 13 January, 152 Cosyden on 3 March, 130 Cordon on 9 November, 250

Lamlash Bay on 16 November and 150 Sandbraes on 29 November. For information on the annual September Clyde Eider Survey visit the website <http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/files/Firth-of-Clyde-Eider-News-No.18-Aug-2020.pdf>

**Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata* 1, 1

**North American Species. Rare**

One record for 2020. One immature/female type in Catacol Bay on 1 January.(AP&GP) This bird had been in the area since 24 November 2019. This was the first Arran record of this species.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one male Cosyden on 14 October 2019.

**Common Scoter** (Black Scoter) *Melanitta nigra* 5, 1

**Occasional visitor.**

All records from Cosyden including 11 on 1 April, 38 on 8 April and 17 on 11 April.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was a male off Kingscross between 7 and 9 December 2018.

**Goldeneye** (Common Goldeneye) *Bucephala clangula* 8,4

**Winter visitor with records from January to March and October to December.**

In 2017 there were 28 records. In 2019 there were 17 records. This year fewer and all except two were of single birds. Sightings included 2 Clauchlands Point on 13 January, 3 same location on 17 January and one male Mossend Pond on 23 December.

**Smew** *Mergellus albellus*

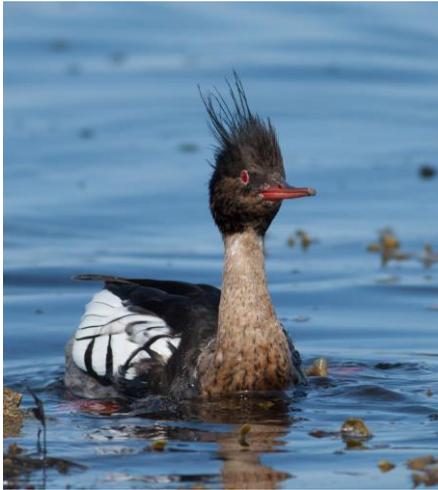
**Occasional winter visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record a male with four redheads off the Fallen Rocks car park on 25 April 2016.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser* 48,28

**Breeding. Localised.**

No confirmed breeding in 2020. Sightings included 3 Pirnmill on 28 March, 3 pair Imachar on 5 May, 3 pair Slidderly Shore on 19 May, 3 Dougarie on 12 September and 3 Cosyden on 10 October.



**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator* 218,77  
**Breeding. Common round coast all year. Arran is a site of national importance.**

Breeding included 3 young Dougarie on 18 June, 3 young Gortonallister also on 18 June, 3 young Cosyden on 20 June and 6 young Cleiteadh Buidhe 24 June. Groups included 42 Machrie on 8 July, 15 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 17 July, 60 Cosyden on 9 August, 35 Machriewaterfoot on 12 August and 12 Imachar on 14 September.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*

**Introduced species which first bred in Ayrshire in 2001.**

No records for 2020. Male on Port na Lochan on 21 April 2007 is the only Arran record of this species.

**Black Grouse** *Tetrao tetrix* 1,1

**Previously bred. Reintroduction programme. (See arranbirding website).**

One record for 2020. Two Auchenhew Hill on 22 May. (DaSma)

**Ptarmigan** *Lagopus mutus*

**Very localised.**

No records for 2020. Last record 6 Coire a' Bhradain on 21 January 2015.

**Red Grouse** (Willow Ptarmigan) *Lagopus scoticus* 6,6

**Resident. Breeding. Underreported.**

Sightings included 7 Mullach Buidhe on 17 July, 4 Beinn Bhreac on 8 August, 6 Loch Cnoc an Loch on 10 September and 5 Beinn Tarsuinnin 15 September.

**Red-legged Partridge** *Alectoris rufa* 2,2

**Local introduced resident. Around 500 released in 2020.**

10 Machrie Water on 1 January and three Machrie also on 1 January are all the records for 2020.

**Grey Partridge** *Perdix perdix*

**Previously bred.**

No records for 2020. Last record, excluding released birds in the 1990s, was 4 at Clauchlands on 15 November 1989.

**Quail** (Common Quail) *Coturnix coturnix*  
**Occasional summer visitor. Previously bred.**

No records for 2019. Last record 2 calling birds in Glenscorrodale on 6 June 2012.

**Pheasant** (Common Pheasant) *Phasianus colchicus* 240,62  
**Common introduced resident. Around 3,000 released in 2020.**

Reports from all areas.

**Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata* 89,42  
**Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Good breeding season. Less human activity near lochans may be a factor. Population remains healthy. Groups on sea included 4 Clauchlands on 14 August, 6 Drumadoon Point on 18 August, 4 Corrie on 30 August and 13 Thunderguy on 14 October.

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica* 89,32  
**Regular passage migrant with records in every month of the year in 2020. Arran is a site of national importance for birds in autumn.**

Groups included 8 Pirnmill on 20 January, 6 Imachar on 28 March, 12 Whiting Bay on 1 November and 25 Cosyden on 26 November.

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer* 84,44  
**Regular passage migrant with records in every month of the year in 2020 except June and July.**

Groups included 5 Imachar on 10 April, 6 Slidderly Shore on 23 April, 4 Machrie Bay on 10 November, 5 Cleats Shore on 6 December and 9 Whitefarland also on 6 December.



**Storm Petrel** (European Storm Petrel) *Hydrobates pelagicus*  
**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record two Brodick Bay on 12 July 2013

**Leach's Petrel** (Leach's Storm Petrel) *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*  
**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one off Pirnmill 24 September 1991.

**Fulmar** (Northern Fulmar) *Fulmarus glacialis* 34,18  
**Breeding. Round coast all year. In decline.**

No young were reported from any nesting area in 2020. See Species Note on page 23. Largest groups at some nest areas; 4 Catacol on 12 March, 4 Dippen on 2 May, 4 King's Cave on 9 June, 4 Bennan Head on 26 June and 10 Drumadoon Cliff on 30 June.

**Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea*  
**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one off Largymore on 22 July 2012.

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*  
**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was 7 in Machrie Bay on 6 September 2009.

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus* 17,15  
**Regular passage migrant with records from 28 April to 3 September.**

Groups included 25 Imachar on 28 April, 60 Whitefarland on 29 July and 20 Kildonan on 16 August.

**Mediterranean Shearwater** (Balearic Shearwater) *Puffinus mauretanicus*  
**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one off Corriecravie 14 October 1990.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 38,15

**Regular passage migrant and winter visitor. One breeding record in 2020.**

Pair with young at Mossend Pond. Sightings included 8 Holy Isle on 28 January, 4 Mossend Pond on 24 August, 3 Newton on 11 October and 6 Loch Ranza on 12 October.

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*

**Occasional winter and passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one Catacol Bay on 6 March 2016.

**Great Crested Grebe** *Podiceps cristatus*

**Occasional winter and passage migrant.**

No records in 2020. Last record one off Laggan on 1 April 2018.

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus* 1,1

**Occasional winter and passage migrant.**

One record for 2020. One Machriewaterfoot on 17 September. (JoFe)

**Black-necked Grebe** *Podiceps nigricollis*

**Occasional winter and passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one Whiting Bay on 14 February 2014.

**Spoonbill** (Eurasian Spoonbill) *Platalea leucorodia*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one at Corrie on 13 October 1978.

**Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was a dead one found in Shiskine on 10 March 1996.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea* 256,103

**Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Reports of activity at all known heronries namely Stronach Wood, Lagg, Lochranza, Whitehouse Woods and Whiting Bay. Groups included 5 Loch Ranza on 1 January, 6 Fisherman's Walk on 6 March, 3 Cleats Shore on 20 May, 12 Lagg on 25 May, 3 Sandbraes on 19 August and 5 Whiting Bay on 2 December.



**Little Egret** *Egretta gargetta* 20,10

**Rare vagrant. Records increasing.**

Sightings included 2 in the Rodden on 20 October. All other records were of single birds between 28 September and 24 December. Most frequently seen in coastal areas on the east of the island particularly around Lamlash Bay but also reports from the Shiskine Valley and Lochranza. This is the fifth year in which this species has been recorded. The first record was in 2013.

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula*

**One record of this American species.**

It was recorded over the winter of 2001-02 mainly in the Cloy/Rosa Burn area. Last record was on 28 March 2002 at Carlo/Corrie.

**Gannet** (Northern Gannet) *Morus bassanus* 268,94

**Nearest breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Records every month except January in 2020.**

Groups included 40 Loch Ranza pier on 16 May, 100 Whitefarland on 29 July, 73 Cleats Shore on 14 August, 70 Drumadoon Point on 18 August, 52 Pladda on 3 October and 100 Imachar on 14 October.

**Shag** (European Shag) *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* 247,91

**Common round coast all year. Breeding Pladda.**

Around thirty nests on Pladda. Groups included 50 Kilpatrick Point on 26 March, 50 Cosyden on 27 March, 110 Pladda on 2 July, 72 Clauchlands Point on 21 August, 60 Porta Buidhe on 3 October and 91 Drumadoon Point on 16 October.



**Cormorant** (Great Cormorant) *Phalacrocorax carbo* 132,54

**Common round coast all year but less common than Shag. Breeding Pladda.**

Around twenty nests on Pladda. Groups included 31 Silver Sands on 28 January, 28 Clauchlands Point on 28 July, 15 Blackwaterfoot on 29 July, 14 Cleats Shore on 31 August and 7 Machrie Bay on 18 September.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* 1,1

**Occasional passage migrant.**

One record in 2020. One Lamlash Bay 7 June. (PaCh)

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos* 61,19

**Resident. Breeding. Arran is a nationally important area with one percent of UK breeding population.**

Most territories occupied. Good breeding season. There is a healthy breeding population and at least three young fledged. Numerous sightings throughout the year mainly to the north of the String.

**Sparrowhawk** (Eurasian Sparrowhawk) *Accipiter nisus* 159,78

**Resident. Breeding widespread.**

Fourteen nest sites were checked and active nests were found in 6 of them. A minimum of 9 young were fledged from 5 of these sites. This is a good breeding outcome. There is a healthy population with numerous widespread sightings throughout the year.

**Goshawk** (Northern Goshawk) *Accipiter gentilis* 1,1

**Irregular sightings. No confirmed breeding.**

One record for 2020. One Glenloig on 30 December. (AP)

**Marsh Harrier** (Eurasian Marsh Harrier) *Circus aeruginosus*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one female type/juvenile Machrie farm on 15 May 2019.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus* 107,69

**Resident. Breeding widespread. Arran is an internationally important area with five percent of UK breeding population.**

A very good season. Vole numbers continued to recover from the low of 2015 and the weather was benign at crucial times. In recent years, the number of young fledged has varied depending on factors like food availability and weather. In 2018 a minimum of fifty-two young fledged. This is the most recent data available from the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme. Numerous widespread sightings mainly within the Arran Moors Special Protection Area.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus* 2,2

**Occasional visitor from British reintroduction projects.**

One Slidery on 18 October and one North Sannox Farm on 20 October are all the records for 2020. In 2018 there were twelve records. In 2019 there were two.

**White-tailed eagle** *Haliaeetus albicilla* 29,17

**Vagrant.**

Large increase in sightings in 2020. See Species Note on page 27.

**Rough-legged buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one at Cleats Shore on 10 November 1974.

**Buzzard (Common Buzzard)** *Buteo buteo* 277,143

**Resident. Breeding widespread.**

From the seven nest sites that were checked a minimum of 4 young were fledged from 3 successful nests. This is a good breeding outcome. There were numerous widespread sightings throughout the year including 7 Glenscorrodale on 6 February, 5 the String summit on 24 July, 5 Glen Sannox on 31 July, 5 Blackwaterfoot on 6 August and 10 the Ross cairn on 8 August.



**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus* 6,5

**Localised breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Reports of this secretive bird included one Mossend Pond on 7 January, one North Sannox Farm on 23 June, 4 Corrie cravie on 1 September and one Lakin Farm on 19 December.

**Corncrake** *Crex crex* 2,2

**Rare summer visitor. Previously bred.**

One calling North Sannox Farm around 13 May and one calling the Rodden on 14 May are all the records for 2020. The last previous record was one calling at Port na Lochan from 7 to 9 May 2008.

**Spotted Crane** *Porzana Porzana*

**One historical record.** One found dead by Pladda lighthouse on 24 October 1895.

**Moorhen (Common Moorhen)** *Gallinula chloropus* 30,2

**Scarce localised breeding resident.**

Only two locations in 2020 compared with nine in 2019. Sightings included 3 Mossend Pond on 25 January, One Machriewaterfoot on 10 April and 4 Mossend Pond on 5 October.

**Coot (Common Coot)** *Fulica atra*

**Occasional visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one Mossend Pond on 4 June 2019.

**Crane** (*Grus grus*)

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record two over Dougarie on Wednesday 22 April 2015.

**Oystercatcher** (*Eurasian Oystercatcher*) *Haematopus ostralegus* 493,156

**Resident. Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Nests recorded included Clauchlands, Cleats Shore, Dougarie, Machrie, Kilpatrick, Sandbraes, Shannochie, Thurguey and Kildonan. Groups included 80 Clauchlands on 13 January, 53 Catacol Bay on 23 February, 39 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 4 March and 40 Whiting Bay on 21 November.

**Lapwing** (Northern Lapwing) *Vanellus vanellus* 60,25

**Increasingly localised breeding and regular winter visitor.**

Five areas of confirmed breeding in Kilmory and in the Shiskine Valley. Winter groups included 18 Kilpatrick Farm on 19 January, 12 Shannochie on 20 February, 22 Cleats Shore on 26 March and 7 Kilpatrick Point on 7 November.



**Golden Plover** (*European Golden Plover*) *Pluvialis apricaria* 61,19

**Breeding and winter visitor. Common Machrie shore from January to April and August to December.**

Around twenty successful territories in north western moorland. Groups included 30 Slidery on 6 April, 80 Machriewaterfoot on 8 April, 158 Machriewaterfoot on 18 September, 12 Clachaig on 25 September and 33 Catacol Bay on 18 October.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records in 2020. Last record was one Cleats Shore 26-27 April 2019.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula* 266,83

**Resident. Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Nests recorded Clauchlands, Cleats Shore, Dougarie, Kilmory, Kilpatrick, Machrie, Sandbraes and Kildonan. Groups included 60 Slidery Shore on 8 January, 58 Sandbraes on 25 January, 140 Dougarie on 22 August, 60 Machrie Bay on 27 August, 72 Machriewaterfoot on 18 October and 55 Whiting Bay on 22 December.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records in 2020. Last record was two Caisteal Abhail on 4&5 May 2019.



**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* 43,22

**Regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.**

Groups included 11 Slidery Shore on 21 April, 7 Blackwaterfoot on 24 April, 14 Auchenew Bay on 27 April and 16 Porta Buidhe on 29 April. One Whimbrel, A2, was on a Kildonan shore from 21 to 29 April feeding before heading north. Having been ringed in 2017 on Arran, this was the third year in a row, that the bird had passed through after spending the winter in Africa!

**Curlew** (Eurasian Curlew) *Numenius arquata* 305,120

**Resident but underreported breeder.**

Signs of breeding were reported from Balnacool, Bennecarrigan, Burrigan, Kilbride Hill, Machrie Moor and Penrioch. Groups included 132 Clauchlands on 13 January, 27 Silver Sands on 7 February, 41 Port na Feannaiche on 26 July, 65 Corriecravie on 30 August and 24 Tormore on 28 November.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one Porta Buidhe on 13 August 2018.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* 8,5

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

Sightings this year, all single birds, included Cosyden on 23 April, Cosyden on 24 May, Machriewaterfoot on 12 August and Cleats Shore on 1 October.

**Turnstone** (Ruddy Turnstone) *Arenaria interpres* 132,50

**Regular passage migrant and winter visitor with records from most months.**

Groups included 32 Machrie Bay on 13 January, 36 Dougarie on 19 March, 44 Silver Sands on 20 September, 50 Machriewaterfoot on 22 September and 40 Catacol Bay on 30 December.

**Knot** (Red Knot) *Calidris canutus* 11,8

**Regular passage migrant.**

Sightings included one Porta Buidhe on 19 August, 2 Drumadoon Point on 20 August, 3 Fisherman's Walk on 22 August, 4 Shiskine Golf Course shore on 15 September and one Blackwaterfoot on 19 September.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was 2 at Kildonan on 26 August 1987.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* 1,1

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

One record for 2020. One Drumadoon Point on 18 September.(ReBe)

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* 14,10

**Regular passage migrant.**

Sightings included 10 Drumadoon Point on 19 May, 8 Blackwaterfoot on 24 May, 5 Torrylinn on 21 August and five Drumadoon Point on 12 September.



**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* 49,28

**Regular passage migrant with records from most months. No breeding records.**

Groups included 14 Silver Sands on 6 May, 26 Blackwaterfoot on 11 May, 16 Porta Buidhe on 19 August, 13 Blackwaterfoot on 12 September and 10 Silver Sands on 21 September.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima* 5,3

**Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.**

All records were from Kildonan area, Silver Sands and Porta Buidhe in November/December. Largest group 5 Kildonan on 29 December.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was 3 at Machriewaterfoot on 8 September 2002.

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaeceus*

**One record of this American species.**

No records for 2020. One juvenile Slidderywaterfoot from 15 to 17 September 1990.

**Woodcock** (Eurasian Woodcock) *Scolopax rusticola* 17,15

**Resident but underreported breeder. Numbers increase in winter.**

Pairs flying at dusk included Lakin Farm on 21 April, Machrie Moor on 6 May, Glenscorrodale on 11 May, the Knowe on 1 June, Corriecravie Moor on 9 July. Winter groups included 6 Sliddery on 1 January, 17 Sliddery on 5 December and 23 East Bennan on 15 December.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus* 3,2

**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Two Sliddery Shore on 4 January, one Sliddery Shore on 28 November and 2 Sliddery on 5 December are all the records for 2020.



**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* 23,17

**Passage migrant with records from most months of the year. Localised breeding.**

Confirmed breeding on central high ground by the String. Groups included 4 Sliddery on 1 January, 3 Glenshurig on 2 April, 2 Coire Chatan on 25 September, 2 Clauchlands on 7 November and 9 Sliddery on 5 December.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was a juvenile at Sliddery on 1 August 2016.

**Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one Silver Sands on 6 December 2015.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos* 132,57

**Regular summer visitor with records from 10 April to 28 August. Breeding.**

Nests recorded Clauchlands, Cleats Shore, Dougarie, Kilmory, Kilpatrick, Machrie, Pirnmill, Sandbraes, Sannox and Sliddery. Largest group 8 Torrylinwaterfoot on 8 July.

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*

**North American Species. Rare.**

No records for 2020. One Clauchlands from 19 May to 21 May 2015 only Arran record.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one Blackwaterfoot on 11 May 2019.

**Redshank** (Common Redshank) *Tringa totanus* 159,78

**Passage migrant with records from every month of the year. Previously bred.**

Groups included 44 Whiting Bay on 26 August, 45 Sandbraes on 20 September, 10 Glenashdalewaterfoot on 6 October, 13 Cordon on 6 November and 14 Kildonan on 29 December.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola* 2,2

**Rare passage migrant.**

One flying and calling over Bennecarrigan on 24 July and later that same day one flying and calling over Sliddery. There are all the records for 2020.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one at South Feorline shore on 5 August 2010.

**Greenshank** (Common Greenshank) *Tringa nebularia* 4,4

**Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.**

One Lochranza on 24 January, one Port na Feannaiche on 25 July, one Cleats Shore on 29 July and one Silver Sands on 5 September.

**Kittiwake** (Black-legged Kittiwake) *Rissa tridactyla* 21,11

**Nearest breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year.**

Numbers considerably less than recent years with few young reported. Groups reported included 30 Cladach on 31 August, 50 Sandbraes on 17 September, 35 Dougarie on 22 October, 380 Whiting Bay on 28 October and 80 Whiting Bay on 2 November.

**Ivory Gull** *Pagophila eburnea*

**One historical record.** One shot in Lamlash Bay in 1895.

**Sabine's Gull** *Larus sabini*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one adult Brodick Bay on 3 September 2009.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* 63,42

**Nonbreeding. Present round coast every month except June in 2020.**

Groups included 6 Merkland Point on 23 February, 3 Lamlash Bay on 31 July, 12 Dougarie on 16 September, 4 Glenashdalewaterfoot on 17 September and 10 Porta Buidhe on 2 November.

**Little Gull** *Larus minutus*

**Uncommon irregular visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record 2 Whiting Bay on 2 September 2013.

**Ross's Gull** *Rhodostethia rosea*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one at Kildonan on 21 November 1995.

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records 2020. Last record one Sliddery on 5 November 2018.



**Common Gull (Mew Gull)** *Larus canus* 321,104

**Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Better breeding season. Fledged young at coastal nesting areas including Machriewaterfoot, Dougarie, Holy Isle, Pladda, Sannox and Thunderguy. Groups included 100 Brodick on 23 January, 200 Sliddery Shore on 21 August, 100 Cleats Shore on 21 September, 150 Clachaig on 14 October and 127 Whiting Bay on 2 December.

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus* 248,99

**Breeding. Common round coast all year.**

Colony on Pladda had about 20 pairs in June. Other groups included 21 Dougarie on 7 June, 11 Blackwaterfoot on 9 June, 35 High Clachaig on 15 July, 11 Cosyden on 14 September and 15 Sannox Bay on 13 October.

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* 2,2

**Uncommon winter visitor.**

A first winter gull at Pirnmill on 11 February and a first winter Thunderguy on 29 February are all the records for 2020.



**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides* 1,1

**Uncommon winter visitor.**

One record for 2020. A first winter Whitefarland on 1 January. (EwU)

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus* 388,129  
**Breeding colonies on Holy Isle and Pladda. Common all year.**

At least 75 pairs on Holy Isle. Groups away from colonies included 100 Cleats Shore on 1 January, 110 Thunderguy on 10 April, 100 Dougarie on 31 May, 100 the Crow on 7 June and 187 High Clachaig on 21 July. . The leucistic gull first reported and ringed in Sliderry on 24 June 2018 continued to be reported including Blackwaterfoot on 11 May.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* 97,49

**Breeding colonies on Holy Isle and Pladda. Common from February to October.**

Groups away from colonies included 21 Sandbraes on 25 May, 52 Silver Sands on 12 June, 17 Glenashdalewaterfoot on 8 July and 46 Lochranza on 1 September. In addition, an adult hybrid considered most likely to be a hybrid with Herring Gull was at Whitefarland between 1 and 3 January.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicencis* 116,62

**Summer visitor. Nonbreeding. Records from 6 April to 21 September.**

Groups included 9 Porta Buidhe on 11 April, 4 Cordon on 17 April, 11 Drumadoon Point on 1 May, 8 Blackwaterfoot on 3 May and 5 Dougarie on 24 June.

**Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons*

**Uncommon summer visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record one in Brodick Bay on 11 August in 2007.

**Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii*

**Rare summer visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record was 2 at Dougarie on 5 May 1984.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*

**Uncommon summer visitor.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one Machriewaterfoot on 19 April 2013.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* 5,3

**Regular summer visitor. Breeding colony Pladda.**

All records from Pladda and Kildonan. Fourteen breeding adults monitored on Pladda in July.

**Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger*  
**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one at Pirnmill on 12 September 1992.

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*  
**Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one off Pirnmill on 3 November 2018

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*  
**Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.**

No records for 2020. Last record was 2 off Kildonan on 16 May 2009.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*  
**Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.**

No records for 2020. Last record one dark phase off Blackwaterfoot on 11 May 2019.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*  
**Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.**

No records 2020. Two off Kildonan on 19 May 2011 is the only Arran record of this species.

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*  
**Scarce and irregular winter visitor, usually seen after severe gales.**

No records for 2020. Last record one Holy Isle on 8 January in 2016.

**Guillemot** (Common Guillemot) *Uria aalge* 49,25  
**Breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year. Most sightings in summer.**

Groups included 18 Corrie on 6 May, 28 Imachar on 7 June, 30 off Loch Ranza pier on 18 August, 30 Cosyden on 18 October and 20 Whiting Bay on 1 November.

**Razorbill** *Alca torda* 41,27  
**Breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year. Most sightings in summer.**

Groups included 20 off Loch Ranza pier on 18 August, 5 Fisherman's Walk on 22 August, 4 Brodick Bay on 19 September and 9 Whiting Bay on 2 December.

**Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle* 88,39  
**Breeding. Round coast all year.**

Breeding included Brodick Pier, Catacol, Corrie, Imachar, Kilpatrick, King's Cave, Thunderguy and Pladda. Numbers are increasing. Groups included 9 Corrie on 13 April, 20 King's Cave on 26 June, 18 Pladda on 2 July, 20 Whitefarland on 4 July and 12 Imachar on 31 July.



**Puffin** (Atlantic Puffin) *Fratercula arctica* 1,1  
**Breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year. Most sightings in summer.**

One record for 2020. One Brodick Bay on 7 February. (MW) In 2018 there were ten records.

**Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrnhartes paradoxus*  
**One historical record.**

One mention in one source of being present in Arran during the irruption from Asia to Western Europe in 1888. No further details.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia* 78,41

**Resident. Breeding. Localised round the coast.**

Groups included 30 Clachaig Farm on 26 March, 12 Kilpatrick Point on 13 May, 9 Corrie cravie on 5 July, 10 Imachar on 2 August and 45 Cleats Shore on 15 September.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

**Rare.**

No records for 2020. Last record one on footpath to Fallen Rocks on 14 June 1989.

**Woodpigeon** (Common Woodpigeon) *Columba palumbus* 228,79

**Resident. Breeding. Common.**

Groups included 171 Mossend Pond on 18 July, 30 Clachaig on 31 July, 300 Lagg on 16 September, 46 Slidderly on 20 September and 15 Silver Sands on 21 December.

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

**Occasional passage migrant.**

No records in 2020. Last record one Clachaig Farm on 30 September 2015.



**Collared Dove** (Eurasian Collared Dove)

*Streptopelia decaocto* 196,52

**Resident. Breeding. Common.**

Present around all villages. Groups included 37 Slidderly on 20 September, 17 Strathwillan on 17 October, 15 Whiting Bay on 18 November and 12 Lamdash on 27 December.

**Cuckoo** (Common Cuckoo) *Cuculus canorus*

176,115

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.**

First report 14 April in North Sannox. Healthy population. The last report juvenile by Loch Ranza pier on 17 July.

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* 42,26

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread.**

In thirty years of monitoring Barn Owl nest boxes on Forestry Land, this was the best year on record. This was the result of a high density of voles and benign weather at crucial times. Out of the 18 boxes that were in use a total of 83 chicks were produced with some of those boxes containing 7 chicks. Fifty of these young have been ringed. Numerous sightings throughout year.

**Tawny Owl** *Strix aluco*

**Only recent records are from one long lived introduced bird in Brodick Country Park.**

No records for 2020.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus* 6,5

**Resident. Underreported. Breeding.**

Sightings included two Glenree on 8 August, one Corrie cravie Moor on 7 November, one East Bannan on 20 November and one Glenscorrodale on 5 December.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* 28,22

**Resident. Underreported. Breeding.**

Good breeding season. The result of a high density of voles and benign weather at crucial times. See Ringing Report in 2019 annual report as well as Ringing Report on pages 20 to 22.

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

**Summer visitor. Previously bred.**

No records for 2020. Last record one churring Dhunan from 16 June to 7 July 2017.

**Swift** (Common Swift) *Apus apus* 15,9

**Summer visitor and passage migrant. No breeding records. Reports from 30 May to 18 August.**

Sightings included 2 Sliderry on 30 May, 20 Cleats Shore on 25 June, 5 Sliderry on 25 June and one Largybeg on 3 August.

**Kingfisher** (Common Kingfisher) *Alcedo atthis* 10,3

**Resident. No confirmed breeding. Most records dispersing birds in winter.**

Most records were from the Fisherman's Walk area with one Port na Lochan on 9 September.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops* 1,1

**Vagrant.**

One record for 2020. One Levenorrach on 8 April.(FL) See Species Report page 24.

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one in Sannox on 25 September 1997.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major* 54,38

**Resident. Breeding. Localised but spreading.**

Regularly heard drumming in Brodick Country Park and Merkland Wood from January to April. As well as breeding records from this area, fledged young were reported from other sites including Clauchlands Hills on 8 June, Glenloig on 9 June, Cnoc na Dail on 14 June, Lagg on 29 June and Machrie on 3 July.



**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. One in a garden in Lamlash on 28 December 2014 is the first Arran record of this species.

**Kestrel** (Common Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus* 116,71

**Resident. Breeding widespread.**

Good breeding season. Reports of fledged young included Dippen Head on 2 July, Kilpatrick Point on 3 July, Maol Donn on 11 July, Cleats Shore on 18 July and Clauchlands Cliffs on 20 July.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius* 21,17

**No confirmed breeding. Possibly underreported. Regular passage migrant more widely distributed in winter.**

Sightings included male Kilpatrick on 2 February, male Holy Isle on 23 March, female Meall Breac on 17 September, male Sliderry on 24 October and female the Knowe on 29 December.

**Hobby** (Eurasian Hobby) *Falco subbuteo*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was an adult bird by the Ross Road on 22 June 2011.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus* 34,29

**Resident. Breeding widespread at inland and coastal sites.**

Pairs present at six sites checked. A minimum of six young fledged. There is a healthy breeding population. Numerous sightings throughout the year.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record one Port na Lochan on 13 June 2018

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubiter*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one in Fairy Glen, Lochranza on 24 October 2007.

**Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record a female in Lochranza on 7 June 1979.

**Jay** ( Eurasian Jay) *Garrulus glandarius*

**Rare vagrant. Before 2011 the last record was 1985.**

No records for 2020. Last record one on road to Glen Rosa on 9 April 2012.

**Magpie** (Black-billed Magpie ) *Pica pica* 19,9

**Vagrant.**

All records in 2020 were of a single bird. Four of these records were from Alma Park in January, three from Kildonan in February, five from Sannox in May and four from Lamblash in November. It is not clear how many birds were involved. Some years there are no Magpie records on Arran.

**Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

**Rare vagrant. Previously bred.**

No records for 2020. Last record one by Narachan track from 5 to 29 September 2011.

**Jackdaw** (Eurasian Jackdaw) *Corvus monedula* 209,83

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.**

Groups included 200 Machriewaterfoot on 1 January, 100 Feorline on 8 February, 200 Cosyden on 5 May, 100 Drumadoon on 6 November, 200 Cleats Shore on 3 December and 150 Clachaig Farm on 21 December.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus* 22,9

**Regular winter visitor.**

Most records from Corriecravie/Sliderry/Clachaig area between January and April and between August and December, including 47 on 1 January, 174 on 12 October, 117 on 16 October and 50 on 17 December.



**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone* **Hooded Crow**

*Corvus cornix* 215,101 282,122

**Both species including intermediates are common residents. Breeding. Widespread.**

Groups included 53 Cleats Shore on 20 May, 60 Kilpatrick Point on 4 June, 49 Sliderry on 1 September, 350 Glenkiln on 24 October and 43 Silver Sands on 29 October.

**Raven** (Common Raven) *Corvus corax* 190,94

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.**

Breeding pairs included Beinn a Chliabhain, Bannan Head, Brown Head, Catacol and Imachar. Groups included 47 Clachaig on 16 July, 14 Bennecarrigan on 30 July, 44 Cleats Shore on 30 August, 110 Clachaig Farm on 1 September and 12 Sliderry on 2 October.

**Waxwing** (Bohemian Waxwing) *Bombycilla garrulus* 2,2

**Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor.**

One in a garden in Shiskine on 3 January and one in a garden in Cordon on 24 February are all the records for 2020.

**Coal Tit** *Parus ater* 219,60

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.**

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Confirmed breeding included reports from Shiskine on 21 May, Lamlash on 23 May, Porta Leacach on 20 June, Whiting Bay on 24 June and Lagg on 28 June. Largest group was 15 Lagg on 27 December.

**Willow Tit** *Parus montanus*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one in Lamlash from 16 to 18 May 2009.

**Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus* 310,97

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.**

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Widespread confirmed breeding included reports from Alma Park on 9 May, Margnaeghlish on 24 May, Blackwaterfoot on 25 May, Glenloig on 9 June and Kilpatrick on 16 June. Largest group was 10 Lagg on 27 December.

**Great Tit** *Parus major* 295,96

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.**

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Widespread confirmed breeding included reports from Alma Park on 9 May, Clachaig on 3 June, Kilpatrick on 5 June, Lamlash on 10 June, and Kilpatrick on 15 June. Largest group was 8 Kilpatrick on 6 July.

**Skylark** (Sky Lark) *Alauda arvensis* 58,25

**Breeding resident, Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Breeding territories occupied in Ard Bheinn, Clachaig, Corrie, Corriecravie Moor, Drumadoon, Drumaghinier, Glen Cloy, Kilbride Hill, Kilpatrick, Leac a'Ghille, Machrie, Penrioch and Shiskine. Groups included 15 Mossend Pond on 25 January, 60 Sliderry on 18 September, 300 Cleats Shore also on 18 September, 15 Braehead Farm on 25 September, 120 Cleats Shore on 27 September and 90 Clachaig Farm on 12 October.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* 110,53

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised.**

First report Monyquil 4 April. Relatively good breeding season. Breeding colonies occupied in Auchencar, Claulands, Glen Catacol, Glen Rosa, Kilpatrick, Machrie Golf Course, Sannox and Whitefarland. Groups included 40 Machrie Golf Course on 3 May, 30 Sannox on 17 May, 100 Fuar Achadh on 7 June and 13 Mossend Pond on 17 August. Last record Machriewaterfoot on 1 September.

**Swallow** (Barn Swallow) *Hirundo rustica* 308,128

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.**

First report Lamlash on 5 April. Widespread breeding with some failures and some double broods raised. Relatively poor breeding season. Groups included 36 Machrie on 24 April, 70 Port na Feannaiche on 26 July, 30 Brodick on 12 August and 62 Corriecravie on 1 September. Last record was Lamlash on 15 October.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica* 237,97

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.**

First report Kildonan on 4 April. Widespread breeding with some failures and few double broods. Relatively poor breeding season. Groups included 24 Auchenhew Bay on 17 May, 30 Silver Sands on 28 May, 40 Corriecravie Pond on 25 July, 100 Shannochie on 28 August and 40 Corriecravie on 1 September. Last record Porta Buidhe on 14 October.



**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus* 99,60

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread.**

Groups included 26 Dougarie on 5 August, 70 Fallen Rocks car park picnic area on 23 September, 25 Newton on 8 October, 22 Tormore on 28 October, 15 Pirmill on 15 November and 20 Cordon on 4 December.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* 232,103

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread. Records from March to September.**

First report was Clauchan Glen on 4 April. Early records included males singing at Corrie, Kingscross, Kiscadale, Pirmill and Sannox all on 10 April. Good breeding season. Last record was Lochranza on 1 September.

**Chiffchaff** (Common Chiffchaff) *Phylloscopus collybita* 78,47

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised. Most records from March to September.**

First report was from Strathwillan on 21 March. Early records included males singing Fisherman's Walk on 31 March, Kildonan on 1 April, Sandbraes and High Corrie on 2 April, Dougarie and Corriecravie on 3 April. A better breeding season than Willow Warbler. Last record was from Sliderry on 2 October.



**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* 1,1

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised Records from May to June.**

One record for 2020. One High Kildonan singing on 9 May.(TS) In 2019 there were 7 records. After a number of years when there had been none, the 2019 result had been encouraging.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

**Very rare and irregular passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one in Whiting Bay from 4 to 6 December 2007.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* 49,22

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread. Records from April to August.**

First report was from Porta Buidhe on 16 April. Records included singing males Sliderry on 24 April, Lagg on 28 April, Cleats Shore on 6 May, Rodden and Torr Righ Beag on 8 May and Silver Sands on 16 May. Good breeding season. Last record was from the Doon on 13 August.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

**Rare vagrant**

No records in 2020. Male Dereneeach 19 June to 5 July 2014 is the only Arran record.

**Grasshopper Warbler** (Common Grasshopper Warbler) *Locustella naevia* 20,9

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised. Records from April to August.**

Reports of reeling birds included Lakin Farm on 21 April, South Feorline on 23 April, Cnocan Biorach on 25 April, Porta Buidhe on 27 April and Clachaig Farm on 31 April.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* 70,46

**Summer and winter visitor. Breeding. Widespread. Summer population mainly April to September. Smaller wintering population mainly from November to February.**

Records included singing males North Kiscadale on 4 April, Corrie on 9 April, High Corrie also on 9 April, Brodick on 12 April, Machriewaterfoot on 13 April and Silver Sands on 14 April. Good breeding season. Winter garden records included Pirmill on 15 November, Sliderry on 21 November, Alma Park on 22 November and Whiting Bay on 31 December.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* 2,1

**Scarce summer visitor. Breeding. Possibly underreported.**

Seen and heard in woodland by centre on Holy Isle on 15 April and on 12 May. These are all the records for 2020.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

**Scarce summer visitor. Breeding.**

No records in 2020. Last records male singing Fairhaven on 1 May and male singing Glenscorrodale on 10 May 2019.

**Whitethroat** (Common Whitethroat) *Sylvia communis* 64,43

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread. Records from April to September.**

First report was from Kildonan on 16 April. Records included singing males Machriewaterfoot on 23 April, Porta Buidhe on 24 April, Cnocan Biorach on 25 April, Machrie Moor on 5 May and High Kildonan on 9 May. Good breeding season. Last record was from Cleats Shore on 30 August.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

**Very rare and irregular passage migrant.**

One Whiting Bay 17 November 2007 is the only accepted record.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus* 66,49

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.**

Records included 8 Kildonan on 8 January, 6 Clauchan Glen on 16 April, 5 Brodick on 10 June, 4 Clauchlands on 27 June, 4 High Corrie on 6 September and 18 Auchenhew on 15 October.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes* 245,122

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Records from varied habitats throughout the island from high tops to shore. Groups included 6 Holy Isle on 23 January, 18 Sandbraes on 22 February ( winter roost), 6 High Kildonan on 17 June, 9 Corrie on 7 July, 6 Glenkiln on 18 July and 6 Shannochie on 20 July.

**Nuthatch** (Wood Nuthatch) *Sitta europea* 29,2

**Vagrant but records increasing as species spreads north across the UK.**

See Species Note on page 26.

**Treecreeper** (Eurasian Treecreeper) *Certhia familiaris* 25,20

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread but underreported.**

Sightings included 2 Holy Isle on 29 January, 2 Lamlash on 16 July, 2 Brodick Country Park on 21 July, 2 Merkland Wood also on 21 July, 3 Torr Righ Beag on 10 October and three Auchenhew on 15 October.



**Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus* 1,1

**Rare vagrant.**

One record for 2020. One adult at a garden feeder in Shiskine on 20 July. (CR)

**Starling** (Common Starling) *Sturnus vulgaris* 288,95

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Confirmed breeding included reports Feorline on 10 April, Shiskine on 21 May, Lamlash on 22 May, Lagg on 25 May, Kildonan also on 25 May and Sliderry on 27 May. Larger groups 300 Porta Buidhe on 5 August, 300 Silver Sands on 15 September, 180 Clachaig Farm on 14 October, 300 Kilpatrick on 27 October and 250 Sliderry on 25 November.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* 2,2

**Scarce summer visitor, possibly underreported.**

One male the Narachan on 24 September and one male North Newton on 17 October are all the records for 2020.

**Blackbird** (Common Blackbird) *Turdus merula* 432,133

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Pairs reported from all villages. Good breeding season with reports of double and triple broods. Groups included 8 Holy Isle on 23 January, 6 Dippin on 12 February, 12 Machrie on 8 July, 9 Silver Sands on 1 December and 12 Brodick on 15 December.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris* 54,36

**Regular winter visitor. Records from January to April and October to December.**

Groups, sometimes with Redwings, 100 Corriecravie Moor on 1 January, 100 Corriecravie on 8 January, 80 Clachaig on 9 February, 250 Clachaig on 21 October, 100 Strathwillan on 30 October and 100 Lochranza on 10 November.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus* 75,50

**Regular winter visitor. Records from January to April and October to December.**

Groups, sometimes with Fieldfares, 50 Lagg on 26 January, 50 Glenscorrodale on 27 January, 500 Clachaig Farm on 12 October and 100 Newton on 14 October.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos* 307,103

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Pairs reported from all villages. Good breeding season. Groups included 9 Newton on 20 March, 7 Shannochie on 18 May, 8 Kildonan on 4 June, 16 Machrie on 6 July and 14 Clachaig on 8 October.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus* 85,47

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Confirmed breeding included High Kildonan on 7 April, Machrie Moor on 17 April, Dougarie on 25 May and Shiskine Golf Course on 8 June. Groups included 24 Machrie Moor on 17 August, 20 Aird nan Ron on 17 September, 12 south of Brodick on 18 September and 17 Sliderry on 2 October.



**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata* 47,29

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised. Records from May to August.**

Confirmed breeding included Holy Isle on 16 May, Glenkiln on 5 June, High Kildonan also on 5 June, Torbeg on 14 June, Kildonan on 2 July and Clachan Glen on 15 July.

**Robin** (European Robin) *Erithacus rubecula* 487,165

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Confirmed breeding included Margnaheglis on 26 May, Glenkiln on 31 May, Largybeg on 17 July, Clachaig on 21 July, Alma Park on 25 July, Sandbraes on 31 July plus all villages. Other groups included 12 Dougarie on 19 August, 32 Silver Sands on 6 September, 10 Lagg on 17 September, 15 Cleats Shore on 18 September and 10 Sliderry on 20 September.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Irregular summer visitor.**

No records for 2020. The last record was a male North Sannox on 21 August 2019.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochrurus*

**Scarce passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was a male in Porta Buidhe from 21 to 23 November 2019.

**Redstart** (Common Redstart) *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

**Scarce summer visitor. Possibly underreported. Previously bred.**

No records for 2020. The last record was a juvenile in Sliderry on 7 July 2017.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* 28,22

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised.**

**Passage migrant.**

Breeding territories included Boguille, Garbh Allt, Glen Catacol, Glen Chalmadale, Glen Iorsa, Glen Rosa, Machrie Moor, North Sannox and Ross Road. The breeding Whinchat study continued (see page 20, *Arran Bird Report 2011*) with birds now being colour ringed so that they can be more easily identified in the future. Please report all colour ringed birds to Terry Southall, bird ringer, [terrysouthall789@btinternet.com](mailto:terrysouthall789@btinternet.com).



**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata* 165,96

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread.**

**Passage migrant.**

Continuing signs of recovery after the two cold winters 2009-2011 with more records and more sites. Good breeding season. Fledged young reports included

Clauchlands Cliffs on 12 May, Glen Catacol on 15 May, West Bennan on 8 June, Machrie on 12 June, Auchenhew Bay on 26 June, Imachar on 2 July and King's Cave on 5 July.

**Wheatear** (Northern Wheatear) *Oenanthe oenanthe* 114,54

**Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

First report was from Holy Isle on 22 March. Confirmed breeding included Cleats Shore 26 June, Narachan on 7 July, Kilpatrick on 14 July, and Sliderry Shore on 22 July. Groups included 14 Sliderry on 23 April, 5 Dougarie on 1 May, 12 Cleats Shore on 25 June, 5 Auchenhew Bay on 14 August and 6 Shiskine Golf Course on 21 September. Last record was one Imachar on 17 October.

**Dipper** (White-throated Dipper) *Cinclus cinclus* 44,24

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread.**

Pairs recorded included Benlister, Bennecarrigan, Blackwater, Brodick Golf Course, Cladach, Corrie, Dyemill, Fisherman's Walk, Gleann Easan Biorach, Glenashdale, Glen Chalmadale, Lochranza, Sliderrywater, Strabane and Torrylinnwater. Birds move towards coast in winter.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* 349,92

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.**

Pairs reported from all villages. Reports of double and triple broods. Larger groups included 40 Silver Sands on 27 January, 50 Machrie on 4 July, 60 Porta Buidhe on 13 July, 70 Sannox on 23 July, 50 Clachaig on 23 August and 150 Sliderry on 30 August.

**Tree Sparrow** (Eurasian Tree Sparrow) *Passer montanus*

**Rare vagrant. Previously bred.**

No records for 2020. Last record was 2 in Brodick on 17 June 1997.

**Dunnock** (Hedge Accentor) *Prunella modularis* 300,114

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Reports of fledged young, included Dyemill on 8 April, Alma Park on 9 May, Corrie on 15 May, and Porta Buidhe on 24 May. Other groups included 6 Cordon on 16 June, 12 Blackwaterfoot on 13 August, 8 Balmichael on 15 September, 20 Cleats Shore on 11 October, 8 Drumadoon Farm on 6 November and 10 Kildonan on 29 December.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*

**Scarce passage migrant.**

No records for 2020. Last record was one on shore by Lenamhor Farm on 31 May 2019.



**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* 93,54

**Resident. Breeding. Localised.**

Breeding records included adults with fledged young Machrie on 9 May, Kilpatrick Forest on 23 May, Cordon on 30 May, Kildonan on 5 June, Dougarie on 14 June, Blackwaterfoot on 20 June, Dippen on 28 June, Brodick Country Park on 13 July and Glenashdalewaterfoot on 16 July.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii* 356,122

**Breeding resident. Widespread. Passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Breeding records included adults with fledged young Shannochie on 24 May, Blackwaterfoot on 25 May, Clauchlands on 31 May, Alma Park on 2 June, Glenkiln on 5 June, Sliderry on 6 June and Drumadoon on 8 June. Other groups included 30 Lochranza on 17 March, 23 Porta Buidhe on 23 July, 25 Sliderry Shore on 14 July, 60 Port na Feannaiche on 26 July and 50 Corrie cravie on 30 July.

**White Wagtail** *Montacilla alba* 29,12

**Regular passage migrant.**

First report was from Kilpatrick Point on 30 March. Other sightings included 7 Porta Buidhe on 17 April, 3 Kilpatrick Point on 18 April, 20 Cleats Shore on 20 August and 4 Drumadoon Point on 23 September. Last report was from Blackwaterfoot on 20 October.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis* 159,81

**Breeding resident. Widespread. Passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Numerous breeding records. Groups included 250 Sliderry on 5 April, 70 Machrie Golf Course on 9 April, 120 Fuar Achadh on 3 September, 250 Sliderry on 18 September and 300 Cleats Shore on 23 September.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* 10,6

**Scarce summer visitor. Possibly underreported.**

Sightings included one Corrie cravie Moor on 20 April, one Glen Rosa on 2 May, one Creag Rosa on 4 May, one Imachar on 12 May and one Sliderry on 20 August.

**Water Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*

**Rare Vagrant.**

No records in 2020. Last record was in 2019 when there was one in Machrie Bay from 23 February to 5 April. This was the first Arran record. There is a note on page 74 of the Arran Bird Report 2019.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus petrosus* 263,95

**Breeding resident, Widespread on the coast, Passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Numerous breeding records including pairs carrying food at Porta Buidhe on 24 May, Kilpatrick Point on 30 May, Cosyden on 4 June, Silver Sands on 18 June, Shiskine Golf Course on 21 June, Sannox Bay on 23 June, Blackwaterfoot on 24 June and Imachar on 2 July. Groups included 33 Porta Buidhe on 13 February, 15 Imachar on 14 September, 13 Shiskine Golf Course on 15 September, 20 Silver Sands on 20 September and 20 Cleats Shore on 15 October.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs* 402,132

**Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Confirmed breeding included reports from all the settlements on the island including some double broods. Good breeding year. Groups included 250 Machrie on 5 February, 40 North Newton on 30 July, 200 Balmichael on 19 August, 150 Glenkiln on 24 October, 50 Whiting Bay on 3 December and 90 Sliderry on 30 December.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla* 7,2

**Irruptive winter visitor in varying numbers.**

**Not seen every year.**

Records from two locations in 2020. In 2019 there were records from six locations. In Whiting Bay there was a single bird between 15 October and 2 November and in Sliderry a single bird on 14 October and 2 on 29 October.



**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records in 2020. Last record one Pirmill on 21 April and one Lochranza on 22 April, possibly the same bird, in 2016.

**Bullfinch** (Common Bullfinch) *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* 80,54

**Resident. Breeding. Localised.**

Confirmed breeding included reports Newton on 18 May, Clachaig Farm on 24 June, Fisherman's Walk on 26 June and Glen Cloy on 23 July. Groups included 15 Clachan Glen on 1 January, 9 Strathwillan on 6 January, 16 Clachan Glen on 6 December and 10 Holy Isle on 24 December.

**Scarlet Rosefinch** (Common Rosefinch) *Carpodacus erythrinus*

**Rare vagrant.**

No records in 2020. The last record was a juvenile caught and ringed at High Kildonan on 24 October 2011.

**Greenfinch** (European Greenfinch) *Carduelis chloris* 201,69

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

In 2020 there was a further increase in the number of locations reflecting a good breeding season and continuing recovery from the impact of trichomonas. Confirmed breeding included reports from Margnaehlish on 21 May, Kilpatrick on 25 May, Blackwaterfoot on 30 May, Lagg on 1 June, Shiskine on 8 June and Porta Buidhe on 9 June. Groups included 13 Kilpatrick on 1 June, 10 Clachlands on 21 August and 12 Blackwaterfoot on 29 December.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris* 25,13

**Resident. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant.**

No confirmed breeding. Groups included 21 Machriewaterfoot on 19 January, 10 Machrie on 5 February, 8 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 31 August, 12 Shiskine Golf Course on 14 March, 30 Cleats Shore on 11 October and 40 Cleats Shore on 6 December.

**Linnet** (Common Linnet) *Carduelis cannabina* 131,58

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

**Most records between April and November.**

Confirmed breeding included reports from Porta Buidhe on 17 May, Drumadoon on 9 June, Kildonan on 18 June, Kilpatrick on 23 June, Slidderly on 29 June and Imachar on 2 July. Groups included 200 Machrie on 5 February, 400 Slidderly on 24 July, 40 Corriecravie on 25 July, 35 Clachaig on 6 August and 250 Cleats Shore on 23 September.



**Redpoll** (Lesser Redpoll)

*Carduelis cabaret* 54,36

**Resident. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant. Most records in spring.**

Confirmed breeding included reports from Cordon on 5 May, Dyemill on 28 May, and Lochranza on 7 June. Groups 8 Holy Isle on 21 March, 45 the Ross on 14 July, 50 Corriecravie Pond on 25 July, 30 Cleats Shore on 29 August, 18 Auchenhew on 15 October and 35 Clachaig on 16 October.

**Crossbill** (Common Crossbill)

*Loxia curvirostra* 21,18

**Resident. Breeding. Localised. Possibly underreported.**

Groups included 9 High Kildonan on 28 February, 2 Clauchlands Forest on 13 March, 5 Merkland Wood on 20 March, 2 Cnocan Biorach on 28 March, 2 Clachan Glen on 11 April, 9 Machrie Forest on 18 May and 6 Tighvein on 27 May.

**Goldfinch** (European Goldfinch) *Carduelis carduelis* 413,128

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

Good breeding season. Reports of young included Sannox Bay on 23 June, Alma Park on 26 June, Feorline on 27 June, Lagg on 28 June and Auchenhew Bay on 30 June. Groups 80 Clauchlands on 27 August, 100 Cleats Shore on 29 August, 300 Cleats Shore on 15 September, 80 Clachaig on 1 October, 70 Slidderly on 3 October and 100 Newton North on 22 October.

**Siskin** (Eurasian Siskin) *Carduelis spinus* 184,62

**Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.**

**Most records between January and June.**

Good Breeding season. Confirmed breeding included reports from Porta Leacach on 20 June, Kilpatrick on 23 June, Sannox also on 23 June, Kildonan on 26 June, Feorline on 27 June and Lagg on 28 June. Groups included 50 Silver Sands on 8 March, 30 Shiskine on 14 March, 28 Cnocan Biorach on 28 March, 40 Whiting Bay on 1 July and 30 Newton North on 24 July.

**Corn bunting** *Miliaria calandra*

**Rare vagrant. Previously bred.**

No records for 2020. Last record was 2 in Brodick area on 7 October 1984.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella* 13,4

**Once common resident, currently in decline. Most records in winter.**

No records between 2 February and 11 October. Most records from Slidery including 17 on 5 January, 9 on 9 November and 12 on 30 December. Records from other areas were one Brodick Golf Course on 4 February, one Newton North on 17 October and 3 Clachaig Farm on 3 November.

**Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*

**Rare Vagrant**

No records in 2020. Last record was in 2019 when there was one in Strathwillan on 6 June. This was the first Arran record. There is a note on page 75 of the Arran Bird Report 2019.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*  
41,19

**Resident. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant.**

Confirmed breeding included Holy Isle on 9 May, North Newton on 14 June, Machrie Moor on 24 June and Corriecravie Moor on 28 June. Groups included 4 Holy Isle on 23 January, 4 North Newton on 3 March, 4 Cleats Shore on 29 April, 7 Coire Chatan on 5 September, 6 Slidery on 15 September, 11 Clachaig Farm on 8 October and 22 Slidery on 8 December



**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus* 1,1

One record for 2020. A young male Cleats Shore on 11 October.(TS) This was the first Arran record. See note on page 25.

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* 4,2

**Varying numbers on passage and in winter.**

One Pirrmill between 17 January and 19 February and 3 on shore at Sannox Bay on 27 February. These are all the records for 2020. There were twenty records in 2019, following no records in 2018.



## More Information on Arran Birds



The Arran Birding Website has been developed as a resource for local and visiting birders. It is intended to be comprehensive, up to date and easy to use.

### Previous Annual Reports

There is a facility to download all previous annual reports except the two most recent ones. The data from all these annual reports is also incorporated into the Online Scottish Bird Report (oSBR) of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC).

### Arran Bird Atlas

The award-winning local atlas, *Arran Bird Atlas 2007-2012* mapping the breeding and wintering birds of Arran is also available from the website as a free download.

### Recent Sightings and Monthly News

These sections on the website provide regularly updated information including a selection of highlights from each month as well as recent bird sightings on Arran.

### Bird Notes

These regular articles which have been published in the "*Arran Banner*" provide a wide range of background information on the birds and birding on Arran.

### Photo Gallery

There is an extensive photo gallery with a section for each of the major habitats on Arran.

*If you would like to send your bird photographs for consideration for inclusion, please send these to [info@arranbirding.co.uk](mailto:info@arranbirding.co.uk).*

### Finding Birds

There is information on where to find birds with some suggested walks.

### Reporting Sightings

Use of the excellent BirdTrack system is welcomed. Alternatively, on the website there are suggestions on how to report your sightings directly to me.

In addition, on the website there is information on the Arran Moors Special Protection Area, the Arran Black Grouse Group, the annual Clyde Eider Survey, the Raven Survey, the Birdwatchers Code, and how to report rarities including a list of species that require a written report to the local rarities committee before acceptance.

Also, on the website there is accommodation information and links to local and national websites.

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