

ARRAN BIRDS



Report for 1992
with Revised Checklist

Report No. 13

£1.50

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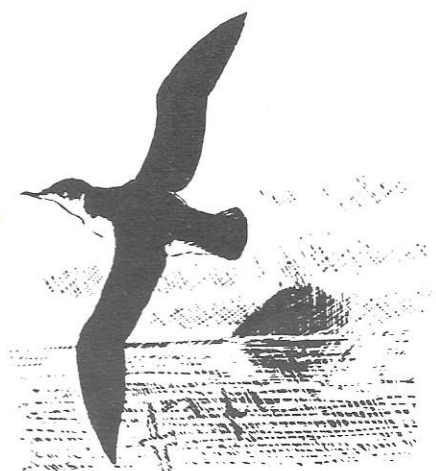
Further information on Arran's birds can be found in THE ARRAN NATURALIST No. 16, currently on sale throughout the island.

Copies of previous Arran Bird Reports can be obtained from: Tony Smith, The Sheeans, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran KA27 8QL

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ARRAN BIRD REPORT 1992

Edited and Compiled

by

Tristan ap Rheinallt

for

Isle of Arran Natural History Society

1993



Water Rail

INTRODUCTION

This edition of the Arran Bird Report contains a completely revised checklist. Further details can be found on the back pages.

1992 saw the potential addition of two new species to the Arran checklist, namely Black Tern and Mediterranean Gull*, both of which are regular (though scarce) visitors to neighbouring Ayrshire, and were thus expected to occur here one day. During the same period in mid-September, a Sabine's Gull* (first record since 1982) was also seen. More interesting for raptor enthusiasts were the Osprey seen in May and the White-tailed Eagle (the first record this century) in November. For those observers interested in rarities though, the significance of these sightings may be totally eclipsed by the strange wheatear viewed by three observers at Kilpatrick, also during the 'purple patch' in mid-September. Mike Madders, who kindly supplied details of this sighting, informs me that the record will be submitted to the British Birds Rarities Committee as a possible Red-rumped Wheatear, a primarily North African species which has never been seen in Britain before. As a potential 'first', lengthy deliberation will no doubt be necessary before we learn whether this species can be added (incongruously, in view of the lack of rarities here) to the Arran checklist.

While rarities are of great interest to many, much of the bird report is built up from records of the commoner species. One consequence of the small number of observers resident on the island is that the absence of just one of them can result in a considerable reduction in the number of these records. This year, I have valiantly attempted to fill the gap left by the departure of Margaret Dunn (a prolific note-taker), and have received detailed notes from several observers. However, I would appeal to all observers to submit as many records as they can, not only of scarcer species and the ever-popular birds of prey, but also of the commoner ones. From the point of view of this report, Greenfinches, Whinchats, and Sedge Warblers are just as interesting as Peregrines and Golden Eagles!

It is very difficult to make sensible quantitative statements about many of the species in the report, in particular where breeding populations are concerned. For only a very few

species (e.g. Tony Church's 1992 survey of Red-throated Divers) do the figures presented in this report give a realistic estimate of Arran's total breeding population, but even incomplete figures allow some assessment of whether populations are increasing or decreasing. There is an obvious need for a comprehensive survey of Arran's breeding birds, and it is to be hoped that a local atlas project will soon get under way.

Finally, the appeal in the last two reports for descriptions to accompany records of scarce species seems to have fallen largely on deaf ears. Whilst occurrences of the rarest species have to be assessed by the Scottish Birds Records Committee or the British Birds Rarities Committee, there remain many others, perhaps common on parts of the mainland, which are rare or of uncertain status in Arran. Records of these have not been accepted without adequate supporting details, although in the case of easily identified species the level of detail required is minimal. It is strongly recommended that visiting observers use the checklist to familiarise themselves with the status of birds here in Arran, and become aware that species such as the Stock Dove and Tree Sparrow are rarities. For more detail on some of these species, see my article in the current edition of the Arran Naturalist (No.16).

Unfortunately, my period of tenure as Editor is to be brief, as I am shortly moving to live elsewhere. Please send all records for 1993 in Voous order (as in the checklist), by mid-January 1994 at the latest, to:

Mrs Audrey Walters, Sula, Margnaeglish, Lamlash, Isle of Arran KA27 8LE
(tel. Lamlash (0770 600) 406).

Tristan ap Rheinallt

(* = records of these 2 species are to be submitted to the SOC Recorder for the Clyde Islands)

Summer Migrant Arrival Dates

Lesser Black-backed Gull	23 Feb	Grasshopper Warbler	28 Apr
Wheatear	22 Mar	Whinchat	7 May
Chiffchaff	6 Apr	Sedge Warbler	9 May
Willow Warbler	9 Apr	Whitethroat	9 May
White Wagtail	19 Apr	Wood Warbler	9 May
Swallow	19 Apr	Spotted Flycatcher	10 May
Sand Martin	22 Apr	Swift	13 May
Common Sandpiper	23 Apr	Redstart	15 May
Cuckoo	24 Apr	Common Tern	18 May
Manx Shearwater	25 Apr	Garden Warbler	19 May
Sandwich Tern	27 Apr	Arctic Tern	20 May
House Martin	27 Apr	Nightjar	26 May
Tree Pipit	28 Apr	(NB Whimbrel and Blackcap recorded in winter)	

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

JANUARY - MARCH

After a wet start, January was a particularly dry and calm month but at the same time relatively mild. February, on the other hand, turned out to be very wet, though again mild. March was an unsettled month, cold, wet and windy for the most part, and with no completely dry days. Sleet, snow, hail, rain and thunder were all experienced during the month.

On 4 January, a single Grey Plover was present at Blackwaterfoot along with 2 Purple Sandpipers. Also in early January, both Water Rail and Moorhen were seen at Brodick. This was a good month for grebes, with a Red-necked at Kerr's Port on the 5th, another (or perhaps the same one?) at Catacol on the 11th, and a scarce Slavonian seen by several observers in Brodick Bay on the 27th. A White-fronted Goose of the Greenland race was found with Grey Lags at Machrie on the 19th, and stayed for the next 3 months.

The first Gannet of the year was not seen until 2 February at Kildonan, a late arrival. Little Grebe numbers reached a maximum of 5 at Lochranza on the 3rd. Little else of note was recorded during February or the first half of March, a reflection perhaps of a lack of observer activity.

Two Tree Sparrows were with their commoner congeners at Auchencairn on 18 March. The first migrant passerine of the spring was as usual the Wheatear, one being seen at Machrie on the 22nd. Other than 2 more Wheatears, no more summer migrants were seen during March owing no doubt to the unfavourable weather. A single Snow Bunting was on Meall nan Damh on the 29th.

APRIL - JUNE

April started off cold and, though the statistics show a much drier month than April 1991, there were few completely dry days. Although temperatures improved later on, winds were frequently from the northern half of the compass and conditions did not appear, on the whole, favourable for the arrival of our summer birds. Things were no better at the beginning of May, which was cool and wet, but then from about the 9th, high pressure brought sunshine and warm conditions with a maximum temperature of 23°C on the 29th. In Britain as a whole, 1992 had the hottest May for 160 years. Similar conditions prevailed through June, which was warm on the whole and turned out to be a very dry month.

A summer-plumaged Red-necked Grebe at Catacol on 5 and 8 April may have been the same as the one observed back in January. A single Greenshank, the first of 2 records in 1992, was present at Whiting Bay on the 6th. The same day, the first Chiffchaff of the year turned up, with the first Willow Warbler 3 days later. However, this did not herald an influx of migrants and it was not until the 19th that Willow Warblers were widespread and the first Swallow and White Wagtail were seen. New species continued to turn up over the next week and a half in spite of the poor weather, with Sand Martin on the 22nd, Common Sandpiper on the 23rd, Cuckoo on the 24th, Manx Shearwater on the 25th, Sandwich Tern and House Martin on the 27th, and Tree Pipit and Grasshopper Warbler on the 28th. Many of these arrival dates are rather late.

The cold wet conditions at the start of May did not encourage migration either, but with the arrival of high pressure, birds began to appear in numbers. The first Whinchat was seen on the 7th, the first Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat and Wood Warbler on the 9th,

Spotted Flycatcher on the 10th, Swift on the 13th, Redstart on the 15th, and Garden Warbler on the 19th. A Nightjar, traditionally the last migrant to arrive, was heard on the 26th. None of these arrival dates are particularly early, but some represent a significant improvement on last May when some migrants such as the Whitethroat and Spotted Flycatcher were not widespread until the very end of the month. During the second half of May, Common and Arctic Terns turned up as expected, but were exceptionally scarce. Amongst the waders, up to 2 Grey Plovers were present at Machrie in late May, accompanied on the 18th by a summer-plumaged Knot. With 2 Bar-tailed Godwits (the only 1992 record) also present at Machrie that day, this represented - by Arran standards - a 'wader bonanza'. Other records of interest during late May included a Tree Sparrow at Lamash, and a group of 8 Crossbills - the largest reported during 1992 - at Machrie. Finally, an Osprey was seen well by several observers at Brodick on the 22nd but soon departed, never to be seen again. On the negative side, no Lesser Whitethroats were found despite much searching.

June is not, as a rule, a month with many records of unusual species. 1992 was no exception, but 3 Scaup close inshore at Dougarie on the 7th and 8th, and a sighting of 2 Snow Buntings near the Witch's Step in the early part of the month, are worthy of mention. During June also, a brood of Teal at a hill lochan represented the first confirmed breeding record for several years, while a Red-legged Partridge covey near Lamash was also a relatively unusual breeding record. Among the normally more widespread species, the number of pairs appeared low in the case of Golden Plover, Lapwing, Sand Martin, Tree Pipit, Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting. No records of possible or actual breeding were received for Common or Arctic Tern. On the other hand, numbers of Swallows, House Martins, Spotted Flycatchers, and perhaps Whitethroats seemed higher than in 1991, no doubt because of the good weather, though it is not known for certain whether this resulted in improved breeding success locally.

JULY - SEPTEMBER

The weather in July was changeable, with a fair amount of sunshine but also with some very cool wet weather. Over four times as much rain fell in July as in June. Basically, the summer was to all intents and purposes over by the end of July, and the weather continued to deteriorate in August which was dominated by depressions, rain, and particularly strong winds at the end of the month. September too was cool, wet and very windy.

Like June, July is a month when attention is generally focused on breeding birds. Particularly welcome was the sight of a young Golden Eagle taking flight from its eyrie, where its progress had been discreetly monitored since May. On the other hand, a fairly thorough search for Twite in their usual haunts failed to reveal any potential breeders. Unusually large numbers of Swifts were present at the beginning of the month, with a maximum of 30 at Pirmill on the 1st. The only Ring Ouzel of the year was reported from Sail an Im in late July. Three Rooks at Blackwaterfoot on the 21st were unusual at this time of year. Both Arctic and Great Skuas were seen in July, with further records in August and September.

A Puffin was seen from the Brodick ferry on 1 August. A rarely seen Pied Flycatcher at Glenloig on the 16th was the first autumn record for the island. The first returning Black-throated Diver was seen on 21 August at Machrie, a month ahead of the first Great Northern Divers. By the end of August it had also become apparent that the breeding success of the Red-throated Diver had been extremely low, with at most 1 young fledged. A group of 4 Redstarts, the third record of this species for 1992, was at Fairhaven

(Catacol) on the 27th. The strong winds at the end of August inevitably brought in - along with very large numbers of Manx Shearwaters - some interesting seabirds, with 2 species of skua seen during the last two days of the month and a single Storm Petrel at Pirmill on the 31st.

September, always a rich month, was exceptionally good in 1992. A single Sooty Shearwater was seen at Pirmill on the 1st, with a Sanderling (rare this year) at Whiting Bay. On the 10th, the regular wintering Whimbrel appeared again at Whitefarland. There then followed a period of about two weeks when an unusually high number of individual birds and variety of species appeared to be present. On the 12th, a seawatch at Pirmill in strong winds produced 8 Storm Petrels (but sadly no Leach's) and a single Black Tern in the company of large numbers of Kittiwakes. Two Knot were seen in mid-month, one of these - at Blackwaterfoot on the 12th - being accompanied by 3 Sanderling. Up to 2 Kingfishers were present at Brodick between the 13th and the end of the month. A late Grasshopper Warbler and a late Garden Warbler were present at Torrylinn on the 13th, while Chiffchaffs hung on until the 20th and Willow Warblers until the 22nd. The last Spotted Flycatcher was seen on the 18th. Some of these migrants may have been associated with the influx of passerines which occurred at the same time, with many Robins, Song Thrushes, Goldcrests, and Bullfinches in evidence, as well as the possible Red-rumped Wheatear referred to above, observed at Kilpatrick on the 20th, and an unusually high total of 12 Whinchats in Glen Rosa on the 21st. An early Fieldfare was present at Kilmory on the 20th. Turning our attention back to the sea, the winds of September brought in enormous numbers of Kittiwakes and other gulls, particularly obvious in the Kilbrannan Sound off the west coast. Given this, it is not surprising that some rarities were found. A Sabine's Gull was seen from the Lochranza ferry by two experienced observers on the 19th, while a second-winter Mediterranean Gull was found by scanning the gull flock at Catacol on the 21st, with a first-year bird at the same place 9 days later. The presence of many gulls, auks, Shags and Gannets off the west coast, often forming huge aggregations (presumably to feed on shoals of fish), was a constant feature over the next two months. During the last week of September, things quietened down somewhat, but 2 Greenshanks were found at Whitefarland on the 25th, and a Tufted Duck at Machrie on the 30th.

OCTOBER - DECEMBER

The first half of October was mostly dry and allowed us a brief respite from the miserable weather of August and September. However, low pressure returned later in the month, accompanied by heavy bursts of rain. November was uniformly wet and also quite windy, and this kind of weather continued through the first half of December. Although the end of December was somewhat drier, this did little to erase memories of the last few months. We did not know then what January held in store for us!

With the departure of the last Wheatear on 4 October, our summer passerines bade us farewell. Others replaced them, however: the first Redwing was reported on the 3rd, with large flocks present from the 5th, some days before the main arrival of Fieldfares. A Magpie was present at Shiskine on the 7th and 8th. Another Tufted Duck (or perhaps the same one) was present briefly at Lochan a'Mhill on the 9th, when a single Snow Bunting was reported from Stacach. The first Grey Lag Geese of the autumn were sighted on the 10th. Also that day, the first Brambling of the autumn was reported, and small numbers were seen with Chaffinches over the next 6 weeks or so. Starting with a flock of 24 on the 13th, there were more sightings than usual of Whooper Swans, continuing right through to the end of the year. The first Goldeneye of the autumn was seen on the 16th,

while a male Common Scoter offshore at Pimmill a day later was the only record for 1992. The last Lesser Black-backed Gull of the year was seen on the 30th.

An immature White-tailed Eagle seen in the Clachland Hills and later over Holy Isle on 3 November, was an exciting find. The publication of the record in the Arran Banner led to a spate of reports from all over the island. Some of these might possibly have been genuine but many undoubtedly were not. A particularly large flock of 110 Twite was at Pimmill on the 8th, while the only Long-tailed Duck of the year was found at Brodick on the 9th. Three Snow Buntings at Machrie on the 15th brought the year's total of records for this species to 4. An early returning Shelduck was present at Clachlands on the 21st. During the month, Black-throated Diver numbers built up to a record high at Machrie, with 22 counted on the 22nd and 23 present a month later.

Three Purple Sandpipers at Drumadoon Pt on 9 December represented the second (and last) record for 1992. A Moorhen frequented a back yard adjacent to the Cloy burn at Brodick on two consecutive days in mid-month, while a single Little Auk was seen from the ferry on the 18th. As in October and November, a few Blackcaps were reported, mainly from gardens.

ABBREVIATIONS

C - widespread and fairly common species for which no noteworthy records were submitted

* - all records given for a particular species

sp/spp - species

no - number

m - male

f - female

yng - young

juv - juvenile

imm - immature

max - maximum

terr - territory

N, S, E, W - direction of flight

Jan etc - all months abbreviated

cf - compared with

inc - including

pr - pair

yr - year

hr - hour

nr - near

Fm - farm

CP - Country Park

Initials of observer(s) concerned are generally limited to species with 3 or fewer records during the year.

Note that all place-names adopted have been taken from the 1:50,000 OS map of Arran (even where these names are incorrect or not in common usage). Place-names additional to those on the map are: Altachorvie Wood (Lamlash, NS036323); Machrie Moor (moorland area centred on the Machrie standing stones); Loch a' Mhuilinn (Lochranza, NR939496); and Creag Dhubh (Bennan; NR998208).

ADDITIONS TO 1991 REPORT

Ring Ouzel 2 at the bottom of Gleann Easan Biorach 14 Oct (KW).

ARRAN BIRDS 1992

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Red-throated Diver Breeding: In a systematic survey of potential breeding waters, birds were recorded at 9 separate lochs and lochans. However, it is believed that only 4 or 5 of these represented potential breeding sites, the others being either prospecting visits or even casual visits from birds resident on nearby waters. A total of 2 nests with eggs were found, and the later presence of a yng bird at a third site shows that eggs had been overlooked there. There was, however, little evidence that any yng were successfully reared to fledgling: 1 site had a dead yng and an unhatched egg, another a dead well-grown yng, and at the third a broken egg was found with a fully-formed yng chick inside. It is possible, however, that a second yng was reared successfully at this last site. It is not known whether this very low breeding success is typical, or whether it represents exceptional conditions in 1991 (ARC et al.).

Other records: Coastal records from all months, the majority between Catacol and Blackwaterfoot, with largest nos in Aug and Sep; max 11 Machrie 20 Sep.

Black-throated Diver Winter/spring: Reported from several locations, mostly on the west coast, and most regularly at Machrie. Highest counts 6 Brown Head 9 Jan, 9 Machrie 19 Jan. Last 2 Dougarie 25 May. Unlike the last few yrs, there were no summer records of this sp in 1992.

Autumn/winter: First 1 Machrie 21 Aug. Subsequently a build-up of nos in the Machrie/King's Cave area with 22 on 22 Nov and 23 on 20 Dec. These are the highest nos ever recorded in Arran. Also regular at Whiting Bay with a max of 6 on 20 Oct.

Great Northern Diver Winter/spring: Many records, largely from the west coast as with the preceding two spp. Highest counts 5 Imachar 28 Mar, 6 Machrie 19 Apr. Departure earlier than 1991, with last 1 Dougarie 26 May. No summer records.

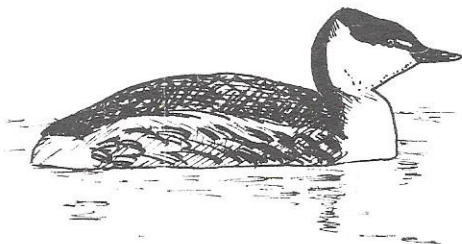
Autumn/winter: First 2 Machrie 20 Sep, but main arrival second half Oct as last yr, with 15 Pirmill - Dougarie 23 Oct. Also 6 Rubha Airigh Dhughaill 15 Nov, and smaller nos at usual locations to end yr.

***Little Grebe** Winter/spring: 1 Cordon 17 Jan; pr present Lochranza to 20 Mar, with 5 on 3 Feb and 3 on 13 Mar.

Autumn/winter: 3 Cordon 3 October (H Walker per AW); 2 Lochranza 14 Oct, increasing to 3 on 29 Oct to 12 Nov, with at least 1 to end yr.

***Red-necked Grebe** 1 Kerr's Port 5 Jan (AW); 1 Catacol 11 Jan (TapRh), same or another in summer plumage 5 Apr, 8 Apr (TapRh, TM). This sp has now been recorded during each of the last 4 winters, with all sightings but 1 between Catacol and Pirmill.

***Slavonian Grebe** 1 Brodick Bay 27 Jan (PTu et al.) is the first Arran record since 1988.



Slavonian Grebe (winter)

Fulmar Breeding: A total of approximately 150 apparently occupied sites, and despite the usual problem of early counts producing over-estimates (because of the presence of prospecting birds), there is no evidence for a further reduction in numbers since last yr. However, only 3 yng were reported, all at Machrie.

Autumn/winter: No large counts. Absent as usual in Oct, with first 2 back Pirmill 2 Nov. Present at usual breeding sites Nov/Dec.

***Sooty Shearwater** 1 N Pirmill 1 Sep in a strong westerly wind (TapRh) is the 3rd record in 4 yrs.

Manx Shearwater First 1 North Sannox 25 Apr. Then scarce until late Jun, with 75 Pirmill 26 Jun. With southwesterly winds in late Aug and early Sep, very large nos were present. Highest estimates: 1000 Fallen Rocks 24 Aug, 2000+ S in 45 minutes Dippen 23 Aug; 2000+ Ardrossan-Brodick 30 Aug; 1700 S in 2 hr Pirmill 31 Aug. Last 1 Brodick-Ardrossan 14 Sep.

***Storm Petrel** 1 S Pirmill 31 Aug and 8 S Pirmill 12 Sep in strong westerly winds (TapRh).

Gannet Late arrival this yr, with the first record not until 2 Feb with 1 at Kildonan. No particularly high counts received, though several hundred were certainly present around the coasts during late Aug and early Sep. Last 5 Pirmill 2 Nov.

Cormorant Present all yr, with largest nos from Sep to Dec. Highest counts 33 Clauchlands 22 Sep, 32 Blackwaterfoot 7 Nov, 20 Kildonan 11 Oct. Apparently commoner than during the last few yrs, though still greatly outnumbered by the next sp over the island as a whole.

Shag Breeding: No reports received from Holy Isle. Otherwise present all yr with highest nos in Jan and Sep-Dec. Highest count 80 Hamilton Rock 29 Sep, but much larger nos were present out in the Kilbrannan Sound between Sep and Nov, though as these birds were scattered they could not be counted accurately.

A long-dead bird found at Lochranza on 22 Sep had been ringed as a nestling at Ballantrae on 25 Jun 1989 (E O'Donnelly per ARC).

Grey Heron Breeding: Only 8 or 9 nests reported from 4 sites. No of yng reared unknown.

Other records: Highest count 6 Lamlash 22 Sep. More unusual records included 1 at the top of the String road on 23 Apr, and 1 perched on a bird-table at Lamlash on 19 Aug.

Mute Swan More records than last yr. Winter/spring: regular at Lamlash (max 3 on 18 Feb), Whiting Bay (4 on 17 Jan), and Brodick (max 3 on 1 Mar); total no of birds involved is uncertain because of movement between sites. Pr seen between Brodick and Corrie to 30 Apr, then 1 Sannox and North Sannox to 18 May, and perhaps the same pr Brodick 6 and 8 Jun.

Summer: 5 flying over Lamlash 24 Jun, 4 over on 2 Jul.

Autumn/winter: Pr Brodick from 4 Sep, pr Lamlash from 22 Sep, or Whiting Bay from 25 Sep, but total again uncertain. Also 1 Lochranza 18 Sep.

Whooper Swan Winter/spring: 3 Shiskine 9 Jan; 19 over Brodick CP 18 Mar.

Autumn/winter: Following a flock of 24 SE over Glen Chalmadale on 13 Oct, there followed at least 10 further sightings, involving between 2 and 15 birds, during Oct-Dec. Some but not all were specifically identified as Whoopers. All records were of birds in flight except for 2 offshore at Pimmill and 3 offshore at Machrie on 28 Dec. The best yr since 1987 for this sp.

***White-fronted Goose** A single bird of the Greenland race was present with Grey Lags in the Machrie/Shiskine area from 19 Jan to 26 Apr (TapRh et al.). It was easily recognised by the incomplete primaries on the right wing. The last records prior to this yr were in 1984.

Grey Lag Goose Winter/spring: Usual flock in the Shiskine/Machrie area, with max 190 on 27 Mar; last 4 Machrie 26 Apr. Also 65 NW Sliderry 19 Apr.

Autumn/winter: First 5 South Feorline, 2 Machrie 10 Oct. Nos at the Machrie roost built up to 145 on 15 Nov. No autumn records away from the Machrie and Shiskine Valley area.

Shelduck Winter/spring: 3 Clauchlands 1 Jan present from Dec 1991. Nos building up in Feb, with 4 West Bannan 16 Feb, 9 King's Cave area 19 Feb, and 7 Whitefarland 21 Feb. Max spring count of 14 Clauchlands 12 Mar.

Breeding: Again many prs did not appear to produce any yng. 10 prs were reported to have 66 yng, the earliest being seen at Clauchlands on 18 May. All the Clauchlands brood had been taken by predators before the end of May. At Cleats Shore and Kildonan, yng were reared successfully.

Autumn/winter: No records after 2 Aug, until an early returning bird appeared at Clauchlands on 21 Nov. 1 or 2 regular Clauchlands from 5 Dec.

Wigeon Winter/spring: Reported from Machrie, Clauchlands, Cordon, Kildonan and Whiting Bay. Max counts 60 Machrie and 48 Clauchlands on 19 Jan. Still 14 Kildonan and 7 Whiting Bay on 22 Mar, but no records after the end of the month.

Autumn/winter: First 1 Clauchlands 16 Sep. Also recorded at Machrie and Kildonan, with highest counts 50 Machrie 11 Oct and 15 Nov, and 31 Clauchlands 13 Dec.

Teal Winter/spring: Flock at Machrie reached 60 on 4 Jan, and a flock of 60 was also present at Port na Feannaiche on 9 Jan. Not recorded elsewhere.

Breeding: First confirmed records, with yng seen, since 1983. 3 prs in the Clachan/Sail an Im area had at least 7 yng (ARC).

Autumn/winter: First 2 coastal birds Kilpatrick 10 Aug. Subsequently regular Machrie (max 75 on 11 Oct) and Port na Feannaiche (max 23 on 26 Dec). Also 9 Cleats Shore 11 Oct.

Mallard Winter/spring: Groups of 10 or so recorded from several locations: max 43 Machrie 12 Jan.

Breeding: Yng recorded from only 4 sites, but likely to have bred at many more. Flocks of moulting males noted at Machrie (max 13 on 3 Jun) and Lochranza (11 on 28 May). **Autumn/winter:** Flocks of 20 or more reported from Clauchlands (max 26 on 16 Aug), Machrie (max 48 on 13 Sep), Cleats Shore (20 on 26 Dec), and Port na Feannaiche (22 on 26 Dec). Smaller nos present at Brodick, Whiting Bay and other locations.

***Tufted Duck** A female-type bird was present at Machrie pond 30 Sep (TM) and another (or perhaps the same individual) at Lochan a'Mhill (Glen Catacol) on 9 Oct (ARC).

***Scaup** 4 (3 m 1 f) close inshore at Dougare on 7 and 8 Jun (MHD et al.); an unusual date for this scarce sp.

Eider Winter/spring: a different pattern to that found in 1991, with no apparent build-up on the west coast but an increase to unusually high nos in Lamlash (max 175 on 19 Jan) and Whiting Bay (max 160 on 22 Feb).

Breeding: the first yng were seen at Lamlash on 26 May. Only 37 yng, representing about 11 broods, were noted, but this low figure probably represents a lack of recording effort rather than a real decrease. However, the moulting flock of males at Machrie only attained about 30 birds (cf 70 in 1991).

Autumn/winter: Nos lower than at the beginning of the yr. Only 1 count higher than 50 birds: 90 Sliderrywater Foot - Port na Feannaiche on 26 Dec.

***Long-tailed Duck** 1 f (probably ad) Brodick Bay 9 Nov (ARC).

***Common Scoter** 1 m N Pimmill 17 Oct (TapRh).

Goldeneye Winter/spring: Counts of 10 birds or more from Clauchlands (13 on 11 Jan), Cordon (10 on 17 Jan, 12 on 29 Mar), and Rubha Airigh Dhughail (18 on 12 Jan, 15 on 7 Mar). Singles and small groups present all round the coasts, with an inland record of 1 Urie Loch 3 Feb. Last 3 Lochranza 25 Apr.

Autumn/winter: First 3 Clachlands 16 Oct. Apparently fewer than early in the yr, with a max of 7 Rubha Airigh Dhughaill on 15 Nov and 7 Clachlands on 15 Dec.

Red-breasted Merganser Breeding: 5 or 6 f reared about 33 yng. Moulting flocks smaller than in 1991, with between 30 and 40 at both Machrie and Pirmill during Jul. 1 inland record, of 5 at Loch Iorsa on 19 Aug (cf 4 there on 1 Jun 1991).

Wintering: Largest nos present during Sep-Oct, with 132 counted at 5 sites on 10/11 Oct. A complete coastal count during these months would undoubtedly produce a total of 200+ birds.

***Goosander** 9 f/juv Machrie 21 Aug; 2 f/juv Catacol 3 Oct; 1 f Lochranza 25 Oct to 10 Nov, then (probably same bird) at mouth of Cloy Burn (Brodict) 11 Nov. This sp seems to be occurring here more regularly, with Machrie a favoured location.

***White-tailed Eagle** An imm seen at close range in the Clachland Hills 3 Nov (ARC,IC), is the first Arran record this century. It was later seen over Holy Isle and Lamlash Bay, but it may not have stayed for more than 1 day.

Hen Harrier Breeding: Despite birds being present at many of the usual nesting sites, only 1 definite nest was reported, and no yng were seen. 1 observer reported a decline in nos of this species cf 1991.

Other records: A wing-tagged bird at Bennan Head on 16 Feb had probably come from Ayrshire. 1 produced an unusual 'garden tick' at Alma Park Brodict on 22 Nov.

Sparrowhawk Elusive in breeding season and only recorded from about 5 locations during Apr-Jul; no nests or yng reported. Usual peak of records in Aug and Sep, many being first-year birds.

Buzzard No evidence of any change in breeding nos. Successful breeding reported from 6 locations, with 9 juvs, but many more must have nested.

Golden Eagle Breeding: 1 pr successfully reared 1 yng, chick seen 18 May, flying by 21 Jul. Another pr failed after laying 2 eggs.

Other records: Some evidence for the presence of at least 7 birds on the island during Sep. Away from usual haunts, 1 ad Benneccarrigan 18 Sep. During Aug, 1 was reported to have killed a yng Buzzard at Narachan.

***Osprey** 1 Brodict CP 22 May (JB et al.,) is the first record of this sp on Arran for a decade or more. The bird was seen well and heard calling as it circled; it then flew off in the direction of Glen Rosa.

Kestrel Breeding noted at about 10 sites. Highest count 9 Cock of Arran area 19 Jul.

***Merlin** Only 6 records this yr, all but 1 of single birds: Corriecravie 15 Mar; Ross road 20 May; Cleats Shore 9 Aug; 2 attacking Raven nr the Saddle 20 Aug; Porta Leacach 18 Sep, prob same Kildonan Fm 20 Sep; Machrie Moor 25 Sep. Only the Ross record could

suggest breeding.

Peregrine Breeding: About 9 prs reported at known breeding sites. 4 prs reared 4 yng, no information on breeding success elsewhere.

Other records: As with the last sp, most records in Aug and Sep. 1 seen from the ferry about 20 minutes out from Brodick on 4 Nov, was flying west and seemed to arrive at Clauchlands Point.

Red Grouse Very few records received, and no high counts. At least 10 prs thought to have bred on the National Trust for Scotland's Goatfell property.

***Ptarmigan** 1 E of Stacach, 1 dead Goatfell 27 Mar; 1 between Beinn Tarsuinn and Beinn Nuis 22 Apr; 1 Am Binnein 14 May. In the western hills, 2 Meall Donn 16 May. 4 Beinn Tarsuinn (above Loch Tanna) 14 Sep (J Harrison per ARC) were at an unusually low altitude.

Grey Partridge 18 Machrie 19 Sep, probably released (BMcF, CMcF).

Red-legged Partridge Usual large nos of released birds in the Machrie/Dougarie area. Successful breeding reported from the Clauchland Hills, where a brood of 4 or 5 yng was seen on 27 Jun (J Gordon per AW).

Pheasant C

***Water Rail** 1 mouth of Cloy Burn (Brodick) Jan (DL). The sixth consecutive winter in which this sp has been seen, but it has not been reported previously from this location.

***Moorhen** 1 nr Strabane (Brodick) Jan (DL); 1 in garden adjacent to Cloy Burn (Brodick) 18 Dec (NC). 1 was also seen in this general area in Dec 1990.

Oystercatcher Breeding: only 11 nests noted, a fraction of the probable total.

Other records: Highest nos seemingly during Feb to Apr, with counts of 150+ at Machrie (150 on 23 Feb, 155 on 22 Mar) and Whiting Bay (160 on 22 Feb). Less numerous in autumn, with no counts above 100. Very roughly, the wintering population probably numbers about 1000 birds. Also a fair no of non-breeders present in summer, e.g. 55 at Blackwaterfoot on 15 Jun.

Ringed Plover Breeding: only 17 reported terrs, similar to last yr but many more must nest. First yng seen 15 Jun; 1 late egg hatched after 6 Aug.

Other records: As last yr, most numerous in Aug/Sep, but seemingly fewer present than in 1991 with no counts over 70. Highest counts: 64 Machrie 17 Aug; 64 Whiting Bay 16 Aug; 60 Cleats Shore 9 Sep.

Golden Plover Breeding: Only reported from 2 sites, perhaps involving 3 prs. No indication of breeding success.

Other records: A poor year. Only recorded at Machrie, with 6 on 5 Oct, 4 on 15 Nov.

***Grey Plover** 1 Blackwaterfoot 4 Jan (TapRh); 2 Machrie 18 May, 1 on 19 May, 24 May (TapRh et al.). This scarce sp has occurred at Machrie in each of the last 3 yrs.

Lapwing Winter/spring: Regularly present at Machrie, with a max of 50 on 27 Jan. Smaller nos reported, mostly in Jan, from Imachar, Shiskine, Drumadoon Point, Clauchlands, Kilmory.

Breeding: Reported only from Machrie, Imachar, and Shannochie. This compares with 20 prs in 1990 and may reflect a genuine decrease even though the true total no of prs for the island is unknown. In Britain as a whole, this sp has declined markedly in recent yrs.

Autumn/winter: Regularly reported from the Machrie/Dougarie area with a max of 40 on 15 Nov. Also noted at Slidderlywater Foot, Whitefarland, Lagg, Kildonan, and Port na Feannaiche.

***Knot** 1 Machrie 18 May (TapRh); 1 Blackwaterfoot 12 Sep (AS); 1 Whitefarland 18 Sep (TapRh). The Machrie bird appears to be the first spring record since 1974 or earlier; the overwhelming majority of recent records have been in Aug and Sep.

***Sanderling** 1 Whiting Bay 1 Sep (MW,JD); 3 Blackwaterfoot 12 Sep (AS). A poor yr for this sp.

***Purple Sandpiper** 2 Blackwaterfoot 4 Jan (TapRh); 3 Drumadoon Point 9 Dec (VI).

Dunlin Spring: Not recorded until May, with several records between 4th and 26th; max 4 Machrie 26 May.

Autumn/winter: First 8 Torrylinnwater Foot 31 Jul, then several records to mid-Sep with a max of 20 (a high total for Arran) Whiting Bay 17 Sep. Also 1 Machrie 14 Nov and 2 Clauchlands 15 Dec.

Snipe Breeding: 5 terrs noted. A few records outside the breeding season, with up to 7 present at Clauchlands (where regular).

Woodcock Breeding: At least 12 terrs located, at Machrie (3), Glenloig (1), Glen Shurig (1), Cladach (1), Merkland (4 or 5), and Altachorvie Wood (2).

Other records: Only a small number of specific records outside the breeding season, but common according to some observers.

***Bar-tailed Godwit** 2 Machrie 18 May (TapRh). After 9 records in 1991, a return to low nos for this sp.

***Whimbrel** The wintering individual at Whitefarland, present since 22 August 1991, spent over 8 months at this location, not departing until at least 29 Apr.

Spring migrants: 2 Machrie, 1 Blackwaterfoot 26 Apr; 2 Slidderlywater Foot 10 May; 1 Cleats Shore 20 May; 1 Clauchlands 26 May.

Autumn: A bird was present at Whitefarland from 10 Sep to the end of the yr once again, probably representing the same individual wintering for at least its 3rd successive yr. A record from Whitefarland on 27 Mar 1989 - unusually early for a spring migrant - suggests it may have been wintering for even longer. No other autumn records.

Curlew Breeding: 11 terrs noted but no records of eggs or yng.

Other records: Highest nos seen in Jan and Dec, with the largest flock at Machrie. Here there were 100+ birds in Jan and again from Aug to Dec, with a max of 140 on 13 Dec. Other flocks of 50+ birds at Port na Feannaiche (75 on 9 Jan, 100 on 4 Oct) and Kilpatrick (80 on 21 Jul). Winter population perhaps of the order of 500 birds.

Redshank Counts of more than 10 birds received only from Lamlash, Whiting Bay, and Kildonan, with a max of 17 at Lamlash on 15 Nov and 15 Dec. Otherwise scattered around the island, but very scarce in May and Jun, nos building up again from mid-Jul. Total wintering population perhaps about 100 birds.

***Greenshank** 1 Whiting Bay 6 Apr (MHD); 2 Whitefarland 25 Sep (TM).

Common Sandpiper First 1 Pirmill 23 Apr is rather late. Breeding: About 28 terrs reported, inc 4 inland at Loch Tanna. First yng seen 14 Jun.

Autumn: Few seen after mid-Aug, but following 1 North Sannox 17 Sep, 3 Slidderwater Foot 4 Oct became the latest on record.

Turnstone Winter/spring: Highest count 20 Blackwaterfoot 4 Jan. Mostly gone by end Apr, with May records only from Machrie, where present to 3 Jun, and also a mid-summer record of 2 on 28 Jun.

Autumn/winter: 2 Machrie on 19 Jul had perhaps summered. Nos building up from early Aug, with max 30 Machrie 27 Oct. Blackwaterfoot was the only other location having more than 10 birds, with 17 on 22 Nov.

***Arctic Skua** 1 Pirmill 3 Jul; 3 Ardrossan-Brodick 18 Jul; 1 Ardrossan-Brodick 30 Aug; 2 Pirmill 31 Aug; 1 North Sannox 6 Sep.

***Great Skua** 1 Brodick-Ardrossan 22 Jul; 2 Ardrossan-Brodick 30 Aug; 1 Pirmill 2 Sep (all TapRh).

***Mediterranean Gull** A second-winter bird in a large gull flock at Catacol on 21 Sep (TapRh et al.) was the **first record for Arran** (cf 22 published Ayrshire records). It was watched at close range for over an hr, but was gone the next day.

A different individual - a first-winter bird - was present at the same location on 30 Sep (TapRh), but flew off northwards after a few minutes and was not seen again. (Both records to be ratified by County Recorder.)

***Sabine's Gull** A juv seen from the ferry near Lochranza on 19 Sep (MM, PS) is the first Arran record since 1982. This individual was 1 of 2 seen on this crossing, the other - an

adult - being nearer to Kintyre than to Arran. (Record to be ratified by County Recorder.)

Black-headed Gull Winter/spring: Highest count 50 Whitefarland 3 Jan, with no other counts of more than 10 birds. Scarce by end May as last yr, with only 1 record in Jun. No suggestion of breeding.

Autumn/winter: Returning birds from early Jul, with counts of 50 Whiting Bay 22 Sep, 96 Pirmill 5 Nov. Also large nos in Kilbrannan Sound mid-Sep to mid-Nov: impossible to count but probably several hundred.

Common Gull Winter/spring: Highest counts 100 Machrie 23 Feb, 220 in fields Shiskine 27 Mar.

Breeding: Nested Catacol, Pirmill, Dougarie and Machrie but prs not counted.

Autumn/winter: Present in large nos (several thousand) in Kilbrannan Sound mid-Sep to mid-Nov. Up to 1000 on shore and in fields behind at Catacol during this period, also 350 Blackwaterfoot 7 Nov.

Lesser Black-backed Gull First 12 Machrie 23 Feb, with 600 present by 22 Mar. Breeding: Large colony of several hundred prs Beinn Choarach (above Glen Iorsa).

Autumn: More than usual present Oct with large nos of other gulls. Last records 1 Catacol 16 Oct and 21 Oct, 1 Whitefarland 30 Oct.

Herring Gull Breeding: only 1 report, of several hundred prs Beinn Choarach. Other colonies apparently not visited.

Other records: Counts of 400+ birds in Jan-Mar at Blackwaterfoot, Machrie, Brodick and Lamblash, with max 525 Machrie 23 Feb. Nos lower from Apr through to Aug, but from mid-Sep to Nov present in vast nos (probably tens of thousands) out in Kilbrannan Sound. Up to 2000 sometimes onshore at Catacol.

Great Black-backed Gull Breeding: a few prs in mixed gull colony Beinn Choarach.

Other records: Counts of up to 30 frequent, with 100 Brodick Coup 28 Mar, 100+ regular Catacol Sep-Nov, 60 Machrie 15 Nov, 60 Brodick 13 Dec.

Kittiwake Seemingly less common than last yr during Jan-Mar. Many records of small nos Apr and May, max 30/hr W North Sannox 25 Apr. Scarcest in Jun, with nos building up from Jul through Aug and Sep. Highest counts 1000+ Pirmill 12 Sep, 500 Whiting Bay 25 Sep, then many thousands in Kilbrannan Sound mid-Sep to mid-Nov, and still frequent Dec. 1800 S in 1 hr Pirmill 25 Dec.

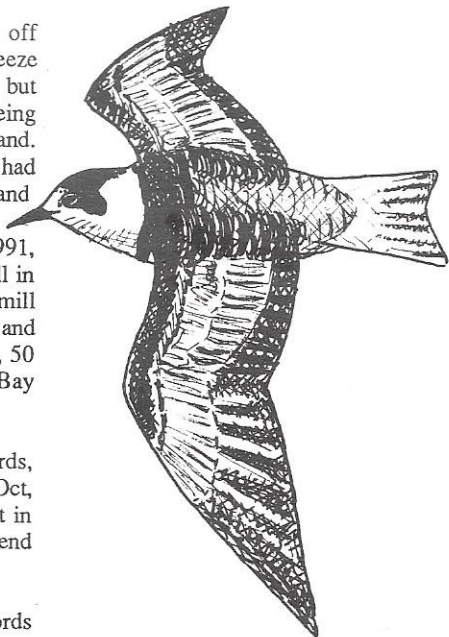
Sandwich Tern Spring: First 3 Whiting Bay 27 Apr. Several records in early May, with last 1 Brodick-Ardrossan 19 May.

Autumn: First 4 Machrie 1 Jul. A few records Jul, then more frequent from mid-Aug, with last 2 Whiting Bay 25 Sep. Max 4 Whiting Bay 13 Sep.

***Common Tern** 2 Machrie 18 May; 1 Pirmill 18 May; 2 Cleats Shore 9 Aug; 1 Sannox 6 Sep; 3 Machrie 19 Sep. A dismal yr for this sp and the next, many observers commenting on the apparent absence of any terns other than Sandwich. No evidence of any breeding attempts.

***Arctic Tern** 1 Machrie 20 May; 4 Kildonan 24 May; 2 Brodick Bay 20 Aug; 1 juv Pirmill 31 Aug. No reports received from the usual breeding colony on Pladda.

***Black Tern** A juv with Kittiwakes off Pirmill on 12 Sep, in a strong westerly breeze (TapRh) is the first record for Arran, but occurred at a time when this sp was being recorded on sea-watches all over Scotland. Only a few days earlier, record numbers had been observed along the south coast of England



Black Tern (juv)

Guillemot Winter/spring: Unlike 1991, seemed to be more common than Razorbill in Jan and Feb. Most of 500 mixed auks Pirmill 23 Feb were this sp. Still many around Apr and May, with 90/hr W North Sannox 25 Apr, 50 Ardrossan-Brodick 9 May and 20 Brodick Bay 22 May.

Autumn/winter: Nos increasing Oct onwards, with 3000 mixed auks N in 1 hr Pirmill 17 Oct, 2000+ N in 1 hr Pirmill 14 Nov. Present in moderate nos in the Kilbrannan Sound to end Dec.

Razorbill Winter/spring: Frequent records Jan-Apr though perhaps less numerous than Guillemot. Still 6 Brodick Bay 22 May, then absent until Sep unlike last sp.

Autumn/winter: Large nos in Oct and Nov as Guillemot, and many still present in the Kilbrannan Sound to end Dec.

Black Guillemot Breeding: About 7 probable prs but yng reported only from 1 site. Highest count 8 Catacol 15 Aug.

***Little Auk** 1 swimming close to the ferry, about 20 minutes out from Brodick 18 Dec (TapRh).

***Puffin** 1 dead Drumadoon Point 18 May (PTa); 1 Brodick-Ardrossan 1 Aug (JH).

Rock Dove Highest count 24 Brown Head 10 Aug.

Woodpigeon Seemingly an increase, with largest flock since 1983: 140 Brodick CP 21 Sep. Also 63 Sliderry 26 Dec.

Collared Dove Recorded Pirmill 16 Apr and 31 May where apparently previously unknown (records from the north of the island infrequent). Otherwise present in usual locations from Tormore and Brodick southwards.

Cuckoo First 1 nr Lakin Fm 24 Apr. Widespread in May. Departure went unnoticed.

Barn Owl Reported from 13 separate locations and regular at several of these, suggesting breeding. Confirmed breeding only at 2 locations, however (Dougarie and Glenloig). At Dougarie, 3 yng were reared.

***Tawny Owl** 1 heard regularly Brodick CP during the summer was probably a released bird. 1 heard Dereneneach (N of Shiskine) 8 and 10 Sep (AS). There has only been 1 other record from the west side of the island in the last 5 years.

Short-eared Owl Winter/spring: up to 9 birds present during Jan at the roost discovered last yr (see 1991 Bird Report).

Breeding: About 9 terts reported, in usual locations, but yng only noted at 1 of these.

Autumn/winter: Seemingly scarce from mid-Oct onwards, with no significant nos at last winter's roost.

***Nightjar** First 1 heard at the traditional site on 26 May, also heard 29 Jun. No records received from any other site.

Swift First 1 Gortonallister, 1 Boguille 13 May. A good year for this sp, which is not known to breed on the island. Following 1 at Whiting Bay on 29 Jun, there were several sightings - mainly of singles and prs - all over the island during the following week. Highest counts 30 Pirmill 1 Jul, 10 Lochranza 3 Jul. After 7 Jul they were no longer present, with the exception of 1 Kingscross 30 Jul, and a late bird at Whitefarland 5 Sep.

***Kingfisher** 1 Cloy Burn (Brodick) 13 Sep (GS); 2 Rosa Burn (Brodick) 23 Sep (BT); 1 Glen Rosa 1 Oct (DD). Probably only 2 birds involved.

Skylark Few records received. Only 1 flock reported: 25 Blackwaterfoot 22 Nov.

Sand Martin First 1 Torbeg, 1 Tormore 22 Apr, which is late. Possible breeding by 1 or 2 prs at Whitefarland, but only 1 other record (2 Sliderrywater Foot 10 May). Apparently an all-time low for this sp.

Swallow First 2 Clauchlands 19 Apr, also 1 Blackwaterfoot 21 Apr, 1 Lakin Fm 22 Apr. Widespread by May and apparently more frequent than in 1991, which was a poor yr. Few breeding records received. In autumn, still frequent to mid-Sep, with 9 South Kiscadale 23 Sep, and 1 or 2 Brodick to 27 Sep. No Oct/Nov records.

House Martin First 1 Clauchlands 27 Apr, which is late. As with the Swallow, seemingly more numerous than last yr, though no quantitative estimate of breeding is

possible. Last 2 Catacol 24 Sep.

Tree Pipit First 1 Whitefarland 28 Apr. Breeding: Only 6 terrs, a low total which appears to represent a genuine decrease as many of the usual areas were searched. Autumn: 1 South Feorline 8 Aug, 1 Glenloig 15 Aug.

Meadow Pipit C

Rock Pipit C

Grey Wagtail Only 3 confirmed records of breeding. Highest counts 5 Torrylinwater Foot 16 Feb, 5 Clauchlands 16 Sep. Unlike more northern localities in Scotland, this sp is still common in Arran in mid-winter.

Pied Wagtail Nos highest during Aug and Sep, particularly at the south end of the island. Highest count 94 Kildonan 24 Sep.

***White Wagtail** Spring: 2 Kildonan 19 Apr; 3 Machrie 19 Apr; 7 Blackwaterfoot 26 Apr; 1 Whitefarland 29 Apr; 3 Kildonan 4 May; 2 Blackwaterfoot 7 May; 8 Sliderywater Foot 10 May; 1 Glen Shurig 25 May. Unusually, there were no autumn records this yr.

Dipper Reported from about 13 localities, with no confirmed breeding records. Coastal records frequent in Jan-Feb and Sep-Dec. Outside usual areas, 1 Cock of Arran 23 Aug.

Wren C

Dunnock C

Robin An influx of migrants mid-Sep.

***Redstart** 1 f Lamlash golf course 15 May (DH,SH); 1 singing Glen Chalmadale 18 May (AMcl); 4 Catacol 27 Aug, feeding in a small group of passerines (PTR).

Whinchat First 1 nr Lakin Fm 7 May is late. Only about 18 terrs reported but no records from some areas e.g. Glen Iorsa. Autumn: 2 Glenree 9 Sep, 2 Clauchlands 17 Sep, and an unusually high count of 12 Glen Rosa 21 Sep.

Stonechat Winter/spring: Records from Brown Head, Machrie Moor, Clauchlands, and King's Cave.

Breeding: 28 prs noted. Fledged yng widespread by 11 May.

Autumn/winter: Many records Sep and early Oct, but Nov/Dec records only from Laggan, Loch a'Mhuilinn, Lochranza, North Glen Sannox, Kerr's Port, Machrie, and Machrie Moor.

Wheatear First 1 Machrie golf course 22 Mar. Other Mar records: 1 Pirnmill 30th, 1 Machrie 31st. Common and widespread by mid-Apr. First yng seen Cleats Shore 22 May.

Autumn: Departure fairly early, with 2 Corriecravie 4 Oct being the only record after end Sep.

***Ring Ouzel** 1 m Sail an Im late Jul (PL, LL).

Blackbird Usual leucistic f at Margnaheglish (Lamlash) bred successfully as in 1990. Highest count 20 feeding on haws Sliderry 26 Dec.

Fieldfare Winter/spring: Small flocks present Jan, max 60 Machrie 19 Jan. Very scarce Feb onwards, with no records after end Mar.

Autumn/winter: Early single present Kilmory 20 Sep. Main arrival mid-Oct, with max 100 Pimmill 9 Nov. Declined from mid-Nov as last yr, with only small groups reported Dec.

Song Thrush Possible influx mid-Sep, with 10 Machrie Fm 19 Sep, 10 nr Lakin Fm 20 Sep.

Redwing Winter/spring: Only 4 records, all in Jan. 13 Corriecravie 9 Jan, 10 Tormore 12 Jan, 5 Machrie 19 Jan, 2 Machrie 26 Jan.

Autumn/winter: First 1 Machrie Fm 3 Oct (road casualty). Large flocks Lochranza and Pirmill from 5 Oct, max 600 Pirmill 16 Oct. As with Fieldfare, nos declined Nov and Dec, with only 4 records in Dec, each involving 1-3 birds.

Mistle Thrush No breeding records received for this common sp. Largest nos autumn as usual: 16 Corrie 17 Sep, 15 Machrie Fm 19 Sep.

Grasshopper Warbler First 1 Machrie Moor 28 Apr. Singing birds at: Machrie Moor (4 sites), Kingscross Point, Glenloig, Glen Shurig, Goatfell path, Porta Leacach. Total 9 sites, but some early singers may have moved on. Last 1 Torrylinn 13 Sep.

Sedge Warbler First 1 Clauchlands 9 May is late. 28 singing m is the same as last yr's high total, but this includes 8 along the shore between Cooks' Stores (Kildonan) and Creag Dhubh (Bennan) on 11 May. Some of these, and some others, were only heard on 1 day and probably moved on.

Autumn: 1 juv Whitefarland Point 30 Jul. No Aug/Sep records.



Sedge Warbler

Whitethroat First 1 Clauchlands 9 May is late but still 5 days earlier than 1991. Widespread by 11 May. 40 singing m noted but these must represent only a small proportion of the island's population. Some observers noted an increase cf 1991, which was a poor yr nationwide for this sp.

Autumn: 2 Glenloig 18 Aug; last 1 Machrie 21 Aug.

***Garden Warbler** 1 Brodick CP 19 May; 1 Brodick Primary School 26 May; 1 Corriecravie 10 Jun; 1 Cleats Shore 14 Jun. Total 4 singing m. Last 1 Torrylinn 13 Sep.

Blackcap 1 at bird table Whiting Bay 6 Jan was only record during Jan-Mar. First singing m Pirmill (where unusual) 23 Apr only. More widespread 8 May onwards. Total of 14 singing m reported, all in east and south of island between Brodick and Lagg with the exception of the Pirmill bird and 1 Lochranza 11 Jun.

Autumn/winter: Single immigrants reported Oct-Dec at Sliderry, Kingscross, Auchencaim, Shiskine, and Pirmill, with 2 feeding on plums Porta Leacach 4 Nov.

Wood Warbler First 1 Monamore 9 May. The total of about 17 singing m is similar to last yr, with birds at Lochranza, Whitefarland (2), Imachar, Rubha Airigh Dhughaill (3), North Sannox, Glen Shurig (2), Glen Rosa, Brodick CP, Merkland, Altachorvie Wood, and Monamore (3). No records after Jul.

Chiffchaff First 1 Lochranza 6 Apr. Several records by mid-Apr. Total 19 singing m is similar to that for the Wood Warbler, and the two spp may be comparable in abundance on the island. Last 2 Rosa Burn (Brodick) 20 Sep.

Willow Warbler First 1 Newton 9 Apr is 4 days earlier than 1991's late arrival. However, singing males of this, our commonest warbler sp, were not widespread until about 19 Apr, slightly later than last yr. A total of 27 singing birds were counted between North Sannox and Fallen Rocks on 28 May.

Autumn: Late birds at Tormore (1 on 18 Sep) and Brodick CP (2 on 21 Sep, 22 Sep).

Goldcrest About 20 singing birds were noted in spring at locations all over the island. Autumn: An influx mid-Sep, with calling birds widespread. Autumn 1992 saw a nationwide recovery in nos of migrating Goldcrests cf 1991. Counts: 11 Tormore 18 Sep, 10 Machrie forestry 19 Sep, 10 nr Lakin Fm 20 Sep, 10 Whitefarland 29 Sep, and a max of 12 Brodick CP 31 Oct.

Spotted Flycatcher First 1 Lagg wood 10 May is fully 2 weeks earlier than 1991, which was a record low for this sp in Britain. Widespread by the third week in May. Breeding noted at several localities, with birds present to mid-Sep. Last 1 Lochranza 18 Sep.

***Pied Flycatcher** 1 Glenloig 16 Aug, feeding with a mixed flock of chats and Spotted Flycatchers (PTr), probably an autumn migrant. This sp has been recorded in 3 of the last 4 years after a run of 5 blank years. All but 1 of the previous records have been in May, the other record being in Jun.

Long-tailed Tit Common but only 1 instance of confirmed breeding: 1 carrying food Kingscross Point 9 May. Very elusive in Jul (moult period), but parties of up to 30 present Sep-Dec at several locations.

Coal Tit C

Blue Tit C

Great Tit C

Treecreeper Recorded from about 16 different localities, but no confirmed breeding this yr.

***Magpie** 1 Ballymichael 7 Oct, 8 Oct (TM et al). This is the first record since 1986. Apparently also seen Brodick, but no details received.

Jackdaw Flocks end yr at Blackwaterfoot (300 on 22 Nov), Machrie (60 on 22 Nov), Pirmill (200 on 23 Nov), and Catacol (130 on 24 Nov)

Rook Winter/spring: Up to 70 present Shiskine/Blackwaterfoot Jan-Apr, last record 5 on 26 Apr.

Summer: As in 1991 a single record, of 3 birds Blackwaterfoot 21 Jul with crows and Jackdaws (AC, JRTC).

Autumn/winter: 1 Lakin Fm 20 Sep; 2 Catacol 6 Oct; 3 over Blackwaterfoot beach 13 Nov. Apparently not recorded in usual location at Shiskine.

Carrion/Hooded Crow No counts above 40 received this yr.

Raven Breeding: 7 prs reared 17 yng; a further 3 or 4 prs perhaps bred successfully. In the case of another pr at Imachar, yng were found shot dead in the nest on 4 May; the RSPB Investigations Officer was called in, but no evidence was found to lead to a conviction.

Autumn/winter: Largest groups recorded in the Goatfell area, with 15 on 14 Aug, 9 on 16 Aug, and 11 over Beinn a'Chliabhain on 9 Oct.

Starling The only large flock recorded was one of 160 at Kildonan 24 Sep.

House Sparrow A flock of 91 in a Whiting Bay garden on 20 Jul was considered unusually large. Also 65 Corriecravie 23 Sep.

***Tree Sparrow** 2 in garden with House Sparrows Auchencairn 18 Mar (EA); 1 Shore Road Lamlash 20 May approx (DQ,PQ). Of 6 records in the past 6 yrs, 3 have been in more or less the same location in Lamlash, while another 2 have been in the Kingscross/Auchencairn area.

Chaffinch C

***Brambling** No winter/spring records. Autumn/winter: 1 Kingscross 10 Oct; 3

Lochranza 16 Oct, 2 on 8 Nov, 5 on 10 Nov, 1 on 23 Nov. Similar to 1991 with records in Oct and Nov only.

Greenfinch An attempt at systematically recording this sp produced 28 breeding terrs, more than in recent yrs but still, no doubt, far from a complete total. Most of these were along or near the coast between Brodick and Lagg, but birds were also found at Sannox, Lochranza, Pirmill, and Torbeg.

Autumn/winter: Largest flock 25 Blackwaterfoot 22 Nov.

Goldfinch Very scarce at the beginning of the yr as in 1991, with only 1 record Jan-Mar. Widespread from end Apr, with about 20 probable breeding terrs. As with the last sp, these were concentrated in the east and south of the island.

Autumn/winter: An exceptionally large flock of 75 Torrylinn 13 Sep. Also 23 Whiting Bay 10 Oct. Few records after mid-Oct, but still 15 Port na Feannaiche 26 Dec.

Siskin Present in small nos Jan-Mar with a max of 20 Lochranza 31 Jan. Breeding: Recorded from about 20 localities during summer, but yng seen only at 2 of these.

Autumn/winter: Unlike last yr, nos apparently undiminished through to Dec. Several flocks of 10+ birds, with highest counts 70 Lamlash Nov/Dec, 40 Lochranza Nov.

Linnet Winter/spring: Only 1 record Jan - Mar, of a single bird at Machrie 19 Jan.

Breeding: About 17 prs reported in the south of the island, yng first seen 11 Jun. 1 Pirmill 16 May was unusual at this location.

Autumn/winter: Flocks Aug-early Oct at Lamlash, Cleats Shore, Blackwaterfoot and Machrie. Max 100 Cleats Shore 9 Aug. Not recorded after 11 Oct. May be under-recorded in winter, but even so is comparatively very scarce.

Twite Winter/spring: Normally frequent in winter, but seemed scarce at the start of 1992.

Breeding: Prs were noted at Kilpatrick Point (2) and Corriecravie (1) in late May, but a thorough search of the coast between Kilpatrick and Tormore at the start of Jul revealed no birds at all.

Autumn/winter: Small flocks noted from Sep onwards, most being on the coast between Pirmill and Sliderrywater Foot. More unusual were 25 Clauchlands 25 Oct (with 2 still present 4 Nov, 28 Nov), and 2 mouth of Cloy Burn (Brodick) 9 Nov. A particularly large flock of 110 was present (and probably newly arrived) at Pirmill on 8 Nov. 70 birds were still present here 9 Nov, but otherwise no counts higher than 30 were received.

Redpoll Scarce as usual Jan-Apr and Oct-Dec, with 3 records in total. 10 reports of singles and prs mid- to late May, but no confirmed breeding. Highest count 9 Monamore 17 Nov.

***Crossbill** 2 Brodick CP 28 May; 8 Machrie Fm last week in May (photographed); heard Lagg Wood 10 May, 2 Jul.

Bullfinch Singles, prs and family groups recorded from over 20 locations, with juvs at 4 of these. Many records in Sep-Nov, suggesting immigration. A group of at least 15 at Machrie Fm on 19 Sep, with another 4 nearby, is exceptionally large but not unprecedented (cf 20 Brodick CP 9 Feb 1987). 2 N Pimmill 17 Oct were unusual for the locality.

***Snow Bunting** Winter/spring: 1 Meall nan Damh 29 Mar. Also an unusual record of 2 birds seen well near the Witch's Step in early Jun (FMCD).

Autumn/winter: 1 Stacach 9 Oct; 3 Machrie 15 Nov.

Yellowhammer Winter/spring: 1 in finch flock Kildonan Mar was the only record received.

Breeding: A poor yr, with several observers noting that the sp seemed unusually scarce. The decrease in singing birds is likely to be genuine, as most of the usual locations were visited. Only 4 singing m were noted: at Kildonan, Corriecravie (2), and Blackwaterfoot.

Autumn/winter: 1 Catacol 6 Oct (unusual at the north end of the island); 2 Clauchlands 16 Nov, 3 on 28 Nov.

Reed Bunting Breeding: Only 6 probable terrs recorded, cf 11 in 1990 and 1991.

Other records: Recorded outside the breeding season at Machrie, nr Lakin Fm, Corriecravie, Whitefarland and Carlo. No counts higher than 3.

Revision of the Arran Checklist

This new checklist is a completely revised version of the previous one, and has been compiled mainly from the following sources:

1. Previous Arran Bird Reports edited by M H Dunn, starting in 1978.
2. The following publications by J A Gibson:
 - The Birds of the Island of Arran (1956).
 - Further notes on the birds of the island of Arran. *Western Naturalist* 4: 120-126 (1975).
 - A Regional Check-list of Clyde Birds (Second Edition). Scottish Wildlife Trust (1981).

Additional information was gleaned from past Scottish Bird Reports and a few other sources, while Dr J A Gibson kindly replied to my requests for information on particular species. I am grateful to Margaret Dunn for allowing me access to her notebooks.

Compared to the previous checklist, 2 new species have been added (see Introduction), while 3 have been removed. These 3 are: Cory's Shearwater (record not accepted by the Scottish Birds Records Committee); Chilean Flamingo (escape, not on the British list); and Lady Amherst's Pheasant (record referred to a single released bird, thus no chance of a feral population becoming established).

While it is hoped that the new checklist will be found useful, it should be emphasised that it suffers from at least two important shortcomings. Firstly, the brief summary of each species' status in the checklist is an oversimplification, and in cases where changes in status have recently occurred, or are still taking place, some notes are given to amplify the symbols in the list.

Secondly, for many species the information on which to base a considered decision as to their status - especially their breeding status - is not available. Particularly problematic are those species which have been seen consistently in suitable habitat during the breeding season but which have not been proven to breed. With some exceptions, it was decided to adopt a non-conservative approach and count these species as breeders for the purposes of the checklist.

Finally, the inclusion of any rare species on the list does not imply that the present editor has had the opportunity of examining details of the original record(s).

Explanation of symbols used in the checklist

1. Categories A-D (first column)

A - Species which have been recorded in an apparently wild state in Arran at least once since 1955.

B - Species which have been recorded in the past, but with no records more recent than those reviewed by Gibson (1956).

C - Species which, although originally introduced to Arran by man, have now established a regular feral breeding stock.

D - Species which would otherwise appear in Category A or C except that there is reasonable doubt (a) that they have occurred in a wild state in Arran, or (b) that the Arran population would be self-sustaining without further introductions by man.

2. Abundance and seasonal status (second column)

These categories have been worked out largely using information covering the last 10 years (1983-1992). This was necessary in order to have a run of data of reasonable length, but in some cases subjective judgement has been exercised when categorising species whose apparent increase in abundance over the decade is probably a result of increased observer effort.

Patterns of seasonal occurrence of the species on the checklist are indicated by the following letters, which may be in bold upper case, italics, or lower case:

R - Breeding or probably breeding resident.

S - Breeding or probably breeding summer visitor or partial migrant.

N - Non-breeding summer visitor.

W - Winter visitor.

P - Passage migrant.

The different typefaces represent different categories of abundance, as follows:

- Bold upper case (e.g. **S**) - Common species with at least 5 records annually (in the case of **N, W, P**) or thought to have at least 5 breeding pairs on the island (**R, S**).

- Italics (e.g. *S*) - Uncommon species, with on average fewer than 5 records annually (*N, W, P*) or fewer than 5 breeding pairs (*R, S*), but of more or less annual occurrence, i.e. recorded in at least 8 out of the last 10 years.

- Lower case (e.g. *s*) - Occasional species, occurring (or recorded as possibly breeding) in fewer than 8 of the last 10 years but with more than 2 records in total over the same period. This category does not apply to the more sedentary residents (e.g. Black Grouse, Long-eared Owl), which are assumed to be present even when not actually recorded in a given year.

For rarer species whose occurrences cannot be said to show any seasonal pattern, the following symbols have been used:

o - Occasional species as defined above.

v - Vagrants, with only 1 or 2 records over the last 10 years.

v* - Vagrants in Category A for which there are no records later than 1982.

Notes:

- (1) The status of species in Category B has not been further elaborated in terms of seasonal occurrence or of abundance.
- (2) Species whose breeding status has declined markedly over the past decade are shown as S>S, S>s, or S>s, the last two of these three sets of symbols being used when the species apparently no longer breeds (but may perhaps do so again in the future).
- (3) Species shown as S, N or W are also likely to be present during the relevant migration periods. Thus a species shown as W may - at the limit - only be absent mid-June to mid-July (e.g. some waders) while one shown as S may only be absent mid-Nov to mid-Feb (e.g. Lesser Black-backed Gull).
- (4) Species are only shown as P (or P) when their category of abundance during migration is higher than their category of abundance in both summer and winter.
- (5) In the case of occasional passage migrants (p), there may exist one or two records for summer or winter as well.

Check List

1	Red-throated Diver	A	R	38	Scaup	A	o
2	Black-throated Diver	A	NW	39	Eider	A	v*
3	Great Northern Diver	A	nW	40	King Eider	A	R
4	Little Grebe	A	W	41	Long-tailed Duck	A	p
5	Great Crested Grebe	A	v*	42	Common Scoter	A	p
6	Red-necked Grebe	A	w	43	Velvet Scoter	A	v
7	Slavonian Grebe	A	w	44	Goldeneye	A	W
8	Black-necked Grebe	A	p	45	Smew	A	v*
9	Fulmar	A	R	46	Red-breasted Merganser	A	R
10	Sooty Shearwater	A	p	47	Goosander	A	o
11	Manx Shearwater	A	Nw	48	Red Kite	B	
12	Mediterranean Shearwater	A	v	49	White-tailed Eagle	A	v
13	Storm Petrel	A	N	50	Marsh Harrier	A	v
14	Leach's Petrel	A	p	51	Hen Harrier	A	R
15	Gannet	A	NW	52	Goshawk	A	v
16	Cormorant	A	NW	53	Sparrowhawk	A	R
17	Shag	A	R	54	Buzzard	A	R
18	Bittern	B		55	Rough-legged Buzzard	A	v*
19	Grey Heron	A	R	56	Golden Eagle	A	R
20	Spoonbill	A	v*	57	Osprey	A	v
21	Mute Swan	A	NW	58	Hobby	B	
22	Bewick's Swan	A	v	59	Kestrel	A	R
23	Whooper Swan	A	W	60	Merlin	A	sW
24	Pink-footed Goose	A	p	61	Peregrine	A	R
25	White-fronted Goose	A	w	62	Red Grouse	A	R
26	Grey Lag Goose	A	W	63	Ptarmigan	A	R
27	Canada Goose	A	v	64	Black Grouse	A	R?
28	Barnacle Goose	A	v	65	Capercaillie	B	
29	Brent Goose	A	w	66	Red-legged Partridge	D	R
30	Shelduck	A	R	67	Grey Partridge	D	?
31	Wigeon	A	W	68	Quail	A	v
32	Teal	A	sW	69	Pheasant	C	R
33	Mallard	A	R	70	Water Rail	A	w
34	Pintail	A	p	71	Spotted Crake	B	
35	Shoveler	A	v	72	Corncrake	A	s
36	Pochar	A	v	73	Moorhen	A	sW
37	Tufted Duck	A	o	74	Coot	A	w

75 Crane	A	v	138 Barn Owl	A	R
76 Oystercatcher	A	R	139 Tawny Owl	A	R
77 Ringed Plover	A	R	140 Long-eared Owl	A	R
78 Dottrel	A	v	141 Short-eared Owl	A	SW
79 Golden Plover	A	Sw	142 Nightjar	A	S>S
80 Grey Plover	A	w	143 Swift	A	N
81 Lapwing	A	R	144 Kingfisher	A	NW
82 Knot	A	Pw	145 Hoopoe	A	v
83 Sanderling	A	P	146 Great Spotted Woodpecker	A	v
84 Curlew Sandpiper	A	v	147 Skylark	A	R
85 Purple Sandpiper	A	W	148 Sand Martin	A	S>S
86 Little Stint	A	v	149 Swallow	A	S
87 Dunlin	A	sPW	150 House Martin	A	S
88. Ruff	A	v	151 Tree Pipit	A	S
89 Jack Snipe	A	w	152 Meadow Pipit	A	S
90 Snipe	A	R	153 Rock Pipit	A	R
91 Long-billed Dowitcher	A	v	154 Yellow Wagtail	A	R
92 Woodcock	A	R	155 Grey Wagtail	A	v
93 Black-tailed Godwit	A	p	156 Pied Wagtail	A	R
94 Bar-tailed Godwit	A	Pw	156a White Wagtail	A	P
95 Whimbrel	A	Pw	157 Waxwing	A	w
96 Curlew	A	R	158 Dipper	A	R
97 Spotted Redshank	A	v	159 Wren	A	R
98 Redshank	A	S>sW	160 Dunnock	A	R
99 Greenshank	A	W	161 Robin	A	R
100 Green Sandpiper	A	v	162 Black Redstart	A	R
101 Common Sandpiper	A	S	163 Redstart	A	w
102 Turnstone	A	nW	164 Whinchat	A	S
103 Grey Phalarope	B		165 Stonechat	A	S
104 Red-necked Phalarope	A	v	166 Wheatear	A	R
105 Pomarine Skua	A	v	167 Ring Ouzel	A	S
106 Arctic Skua	A	nP	168 Blackbird	A	S
107 Great Skua	A	nP	169 Fieldfare	A	R
108 Mediterranean Gull	A	v	170 Song Thrush	A	W
109 Little Gull	A	w	171 Redwing	A	R
110 Sabine's Gull	A	v	172 Mistle Thrush	A	W
111 Black-headed Gull	A	S>sW	173 Grasshopper Warbler	A	R
112 Common Gull	A	R	174 Sedge Warbler	A	S
113 Lesser Black-backed Gull	A	Sw	175 Lesser Whitethroat	A	p
114 Herring Gull	A	R	176 Whitethroat	A	S
115 Iceland Gull	A	v	177 Garden Warbler	A	S
116 Glaucous Gull	A	p	178 Blackcap	A	SW
117 Great Black-backed Gull	A	R	179 Wood Warbler	A	S
118 Kittiwake	A	NW	180 Chiffchaff	A	Sw
119 Ivory Gull	B		181 Willow Warbler	A	S
120 Sandwich Tern	A	NP	182 Goldcrest	A	S
121 Roseate Tern	A	v	183 Spotted Flycatcher	A	S
122 Common Tern	A	S>sP	184 Pied Flycatcher	A	p
123 Arctic Tern	A	S	185 Long-tailed Tit	A	R
124 Little Tern	A	p	186 Willow Tit	A	v
125 Black Tern	A	v	187 Coal Tit	A	R
126 Guillemot	A	NW	188 Blue Tit	A	R
127 Razorbill	A	NW	189 Great Tit	A	R
128 Black Guillemot	A	R	190 Treecreeper	A	R
129 Little Auk	A	w	191 Golden Oriole	A	v*
130 Puffin	A	N	192 Red-backed Shrike	A	v
131 Pallas's Sandgrouse	B		193 Great Grey Shrike	A	o
132 Rock Dove	A	R	194 Jay	A	o
133 Stock Dove	A	o	195 Magpie	A	
134 Woodpigeon	A	R	196 Chough	B	
135 Collared Dove	A	R	197 Jackdaw	A	R
136 Turtle Dove	A	v	198 Rook	A	nW
137 Cuckoo	A	S	199 Carrion Crow	A	R

199a Hooded Crow	A	R	210 Twite	A	SW
200 Raven	A	R	211 Redpoll	A	Sw
201 Starling	A	R	212 Crossbill	A	R
202 House Sparrow	A	R	213 Bullfinch	A	R
203 Tree Sparrow	A	w	214 Hawfinch	A	v
204 Chaffinch	A	R	215 Snow Bunting	A	W
205 Brambling	A	w	216 Yellowhammer	A	R
206 Greenfinch	A	R	217 Reed Bunting	A	R
207 Goldfinch	A	SW	218 Corn Bunting	A	v
208 Siskin	A	R	219 Red-headed Bunting	D	v*
209 Linnet	A	SW			

Notes

Great Crested Grebe: 1987 record not considered fully substantiated.

Fulmar: More or less absent Oct.

Manx Shearwater: nested Pladda 1981.

Gannet: More or less absent Nov-Dec.

Comorant: Last breeding record 1982.

Mute Swan: Unsuccessful breeding attempts Lochranza to 1985.

Shelduck: More or less absent Sep-Nov.

Teal: Few summer records over the last 10 years, but may nest more or less annually in out-of-the-way locations.

Goosander: Several records over past 3 years indicate that it may be increasing in abundance.

Merlin: Because of doubt over the authenticity of some records, this species cannot be claimed as a regular breeder, even though individuals are frequently reported from suitable habitat during summer.

Red-legged Partridge: Some breeding records but uncertain whether a self-sustaining feral population exists. Often released (some past releases no doubt hybrids with Chukar) and commonly seen all year round.

Grey Partridge: Originally introduced and bred widely in the past. Recently released birds may explain most (if not all) of the records since 1983, and this species may no longer even merit inclusion in Category D.

Black Grouse: Only 2 records in the last 7 years; apparently no releases. On the verge of extinction?

Water Rail: Last breeding record 1979.

Comcrake: Probably now extinct as a breeder.

Redshank: Formerly a regular breeder but no records since 1989. Now largely absent end May - early Jul.

Black-headed Gull: Formerly a regular breeder but no records since 1988. Now scarce end May - early Jul.

Great Black-backed Gull: Although few possible breeding records have been submitted over the last 10 years, it is likely that several pairs of this species occur every year in large gull colonies.

Common Tern: Formerly a regular breeder, but no definite records since 1989.

Arctic Tern: Although no records received for 1992, Pladda colony assumed still to number 5+ pairs. Breeding success very low in recent years.

Rock Dove: Both Feral Pigeons and cliff-nesting wild type Rock Doves are common on the island.

Tawny Owl: Some of birds present are releases.

Short-eared Owl: Apparently virtually absent some winters.

Nightjar: Has declined greatly as a breeding species over the last 10 years.

Sand Martin: Has declined greatly as a breeding species over the last 10 years.

Lesser Whitethroat: May have bred (see article in 1991 Arran Bird Report).

Tree Sparrow: Recorded most winter months but no Jun, Jul records. Cannot be assumed to breed.

Redpoll: May be regular winter but very few records available.

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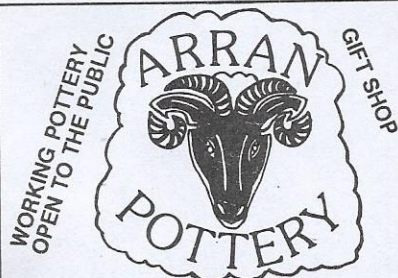
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