

The Arran Bird Report 2015



Compiled by
Dr Jim Cassels for the Arran Natural History Society

Published by



The Arran Natural History Society

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*. This annual report was first published in 1978. These reports provide a unique record of the bird life of this special island over the last thirty plus years. Other publications include *Where can I see...?* a guide to wildlife on the island, *Arran Bird Atlas 2007-2012* and *Arran Flora*.

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:

http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/marsh_award_for_local_ornithology_2013.html

For more information on the Arran Natural History Society visit the website:

<http://www.arranwildlife.co.uk/index.html>

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In addition, permission to access the Arran records submitted to BirdTrack: www.bto.org/birdtrack and to BirdGuides www.birdguides.com was granted.

Records were also received from North Ayrshire RSPB group who have a presence on some of the weekend ferries during the summertime. All bird records given to the National Trust rangers at Brodick Country Park and to the Brodick Tourist Information Centre were forwarded to me.

Introduction

Welcome to the *Arran Bird Report* for 2015. This is the thirty-sixth consecutive annual bird report for the Isle of Arran and the tenth 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, local ringer, 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 BirdTrack: www.bto.org/birdtrack and to BirdGuides: www.birdguides.com. At the writing stage, the advice of the committee and 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: Sue Archer, Carl D. Baggott, Angela Cassels, Brian Couper, Colin Cowley, Finn McArthur, Jackie Newman, Linda Offord, Kate Sampson and Chris Southall. Finally, my thanks to the contributors; there would be no report without their input.

Over the year I have been encouraged by the number of people, locals and visitors, who have contacted me by email, letter and phone. 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 2015, over three hundred contributors submitted over eleven thousand records on one hundred and sixty-two species, one of which had never been recorded before on Arran, namely Spotted Sandpiper. 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 2015.

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 (2006). This is in line with the Clyde Report. For each species, as well as the common name, the (new) official name and its scientific name have been given. 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 2016, please send any bird notes with "what, when, where" to me before Monday 09 January 2017, at Kilpatrick Kennels, Kilpatrick, Blackwaterfoot, KA27 8EY, or telephone 01770 860316, or email me at jim@arranbirding.co.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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

Chronological Summary

2015 was another fascinating birding year on Arran.

The highlight to start the year was a group of six Ptarmigan on the northern hills in January. This is the largest group for many years. This was followed in February by the largest group of White-fronted Geese, sixteen, in thirty-five years. The variable spring weather had a stop-start effect on the arrival of the first waves of summer migrants with some arriving later than last year and some earlier. The April highlight was two Common Crane. The last Arran record of Common Crane was twenty-five years ago. A cool wet May and June had a negative effect on many breeding birds and in comparison to last year it was a poor breeding season. In May a Spotted Sandpiper was photographed, the first Arran record of this North American species. In June a Mediterranean Gull was the first record since 1992. The migration period in autumn was dry and settled and did not disappoint with Osprey and Turtle Dove being particular highlights. The last two months of the year were characterised by regular Atlantic storms. One result was a Grey Phalarope in December, the first Arran record since 1989.

Now read on.

January

The weather in January was characterised by regular, sometimes storm force Atlantic fronts sweeping across the island. It was a little colder and a little drier than January 2014 but unsettled.

This month particular highlights were reports of Snow Bunting, Ptarmigan and Long-tailed Duck. There were two reports of Snow Bunting, two at Clauchlands Point on the 18th January and two at Drumadoon Point on 22nd. There was only one report in the whole of 2014. Six Ptarmigan on Beinn Nuis on 21st was the largest group of this species reported in a number of years and a Long-tailed Duck between Whitefarland and Pirnmill between 19th and 21st was only the second record of this Arctic breeding duck since 1998.

Wintering wildfowl numbers included: two hundred and fifty Greylag Geese in Shiskine on 18th, eight Wigeon on Cleats Shore on 22nd, a Brent Goose in the Rodden on 25th and two male Goldeneye in Loch Ranza from 11th to 27th. Other winter visitors included a Greenshank at Clauchlands on 18th and seven Purple Sandpiper in Kildonan on 28th.

All three divers were reported: two Black-throated Diver and two Great Northern Diver off Pirnmill on 21st and a Red-throated Diver in Sannox Bay on 27th.

Other highlights included: five Little Grebe in Loch Ranza on 10th, a Kingfisher on the Fisherman's Walk on 13th, eighty-seven Lapwing on Cleats Shore on 22nd and three reports of Merlin, one on Kildonan shore on 2nd, one on Bennecarrigan on 8th and one on Machrie Golf Course on 27th.

Interesting garden birds included: two Great Spotted Woodpecker in Lamlash on 12th, five Yellowhammer in Shiskine on 14th, a Goldcrest in Alma Park on 15th, a Blackcap in Corrie, four Bullfinch in Lochranza and eleven Long-tailed Tit in Whiting Bay all on 25th.

There were some signs of approaching spring with Chaffinch singing in Kildonan on 4th, Golden Eagle displaying over An Tunna also on 4th, Mistle Thrush singing in Lamlash on 6th, Red-breasted Merganser displaying off Sandbraes on 18th and Raven nest building in Catacol on 30th.

February

February started with a cold, dry, settled spell and then the unsettled, wet, stormy weather returned. There was less than half of the rainfall of February 2014 and the mean temperature was one degree lower.

Winter visitors to the fore included: a Redwing in Lochranza on 4th, a juvenile Merlin at Southbank on 8th, nine Purple Sandpiper at Kildonan on 14th, thirty Fieldfare in Shiskine on 28th and throughout the month, the long staying Greenshank at Claulchlands.

Wintering wildfowl were present in numbers including: three hundred Greylag Geese in the Shiskine Valley on 5th, three Goldeneye off Blackwaterfoot on 7th, eighty Teal at Kilpatrick Point also on 7th, six Common Scoter off Machriewaterfoot on 8th, thirty-one Wigeon at Kildonan on 12th and with the Greylags in Shiskine, a single Brent Goose and up to sixteen White-fronted Geese on 15th. This is the largest group of White-fronted Geese reported to the bird recorder of the Arran Natural History Society in the last thirty-five years. The next largest group was nine on 2 April 2002.

Other flocks included: seventy-nine Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 7th, twenty-three Curlew at Claulchlands on 8th, seventy-six Lapwing at Kilpatrick on 15th, forty Chaffinch in Shiskine on 16th, twenty-four Turnstone at Silver Sands on 18th, twelve Woodcock at Claulchlands on 21st and nineteen Skylark and up to twenty Yellowhammer in Sliderry on 19th. Some of these flocks may have included birds beginning to migrate north.

The occasional calm days were ideal for sea watching. Reports included: six Black-throated Diver in Loch Ranza on 4th, forty-one displaying Eider at Silver Sands on 8th, ten Great Northern Diver and two Red-throated Diver off Machriewaterfoot also on 8th and ten displaying Red-breasted Merganser at Claulchlands on 15th.

With sources of food for some species of bird becoming scarce, gardens were havens for many species. Among the many garden highlights were: a Great Spotted Woodpecker in Margnaheglis on 1st, a male Blackcap also in Margnaheglis on 2nd, a male Yellowhammer in Shiskine on 9th, twelve Long-tailed Tit in Kildonan on 19th, a Lesser Redpoll in Shiskine on 20th and five Bullfinch in Kingscross on 25th. Siskin on their annual journey north also began to appear at garden feeders. The first report was of four in Lamlash on 14th and later in the month there were widespread reports including Kilpatrick, Lochranza, Cordon, Whiting Bay and Alma Park.

Other sightings included: a Snow Bunting on Machrie Golf Course on 1st, a pair of Goosander at Machriewaterfoot on 8th, a Jack Snipe at the Lakin on 11th, a Kingfisher on Fisherman's Walk on 12th, three Little Grebe in Loch Ranza on 14th, two Moorhen at Port na Lochan on 15th and four Common Crossbill at High Kildonan on 22nd.

Finally, there were some signs of approaching spring. The first report of returning Lesser Black-backed Gull was on 15th and the first report of Gannet was on 19th. Last year both these species were first reported in January. Further signs of approaching spring included: garden birds in song throughout the island towards the end of the month, a pair of Hen Harrier displaying by the Narachan track on 4th, five Black Guillemot in breeding plumage by King's Cave on 8th, two Raven carrying nest building material in Catacol on 14th, two Collared Dove nesting in High Kildonan on 16th and six Fulmar on the cliffs at Catacol on 21st.

March

March 2015 was a little colder and little windier than March 2014 with similar rainfall. It came in like the proverbial lion followed by a settled spell in the middle in the month but went out like a lion with no ferry sailings on the last day. It is an exciting time of year, awaiting the arrival of all of our summer visitors and seeing the last of our winter visitors leaving.

The small numbers of returning Gannet and Lesser Black-backed Gull which had been reported in February built up during March with 70 Gannet in Whiting Bay on 21st and 40 Lesser Black-backed Gull at Kingscross on 27th.

As always the weather impacted on the arrival of the spring migrants. The settled spell towards the middle of the month saw the arrival of Wheatear and Chiffchaff. The first Wheatear was reported at Drumadoon on 17th, eight days earlier than 2014 and only four days later than the earliest date recorded in 2005. The first Chiffchaff was reported in Whiting Bay on 19th, four days earlier than

2014 and only two days later than the earliest date recorded in 2005. But there were only two records of Wheatear and five of Chiffchaff before the weather closed down. By the end of the month the bulk of our migrants was still anticipated.

In March our winter visitors were still to the fore including: thirty Fieldfare in Shiskine on 1st, a Greenshank at Claulchlands on 5th, forty Redwing in Glenree on 8th and four Rook in Kilpatrick on 30th. Wintering wildfowl included: sixteen Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot on 10th, a Brent Goose at Feorline on 17th, three hundred Greylag Geese in the Shiskine Valley on 27th and nineteen White-fronted Geese in the same area on 31st. Wintering sea duck included a Long-tailed Duck off Pirmill on 17th, five Common Scoter in Machrie Bay on 20th and seven Scaup in Whiting Bay on 21st being the largest group reported this century.

In March there were many signs of the ongoing migration including increasing number of diver round the coast, for example, six Great Northern Diver and four Black-throated Diver off Cosyden on 10th, twenty Meadow Pipit at Port na Lochan on 20th, a flock of one hundred and fifty Starling feeding on the kelp on Kilpatrick shore on 22nd and on 24th fifteen Pied Wagtail in a garden in Kingscross. Other signs of migration in gardens were widespread reports of Siskin sometimes accompanied by Lesser Redpoll and five Yellowhammer in Shiskine on 21st. In addition a Bar-tailed Godwit, an uncommon passage migrant for Arran, was reported at Machriewaterfoot on 25th.

Other interesting records this month included: seven Woodcock sitting on the Machrie Moor road in the evening of 4th, a Puffin off the Craw on 7th, a Coot and a Jack Snipe at Sliderry on 18th, (the last record of Coot on Arran was in June 2013.) a Kingfisher on Fisherman's Walk on 19th and two Moorhen in Strabane on 27th.

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, with widespread reports of singing birds establishing breeding territories, Golden Eagle displaying over Lochranza on 1st, sixty-two courting Eider off Machriewaterfoot on 10th, a pair of Stonechat in Glen Rosa on 14th, twenty-nine Black Guillemot in breeding plumage off the King's Cave on 17th, eight pairs of Fulmar on the cliffs at Drumadoon on 20th, a pair of Raven nesting by Brown Head on 23rd and Common Crossbill singing in High Kildonan on 24th.

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 an interesting, almost "four season" month with a wide range of temperatures and other weather conditions. A lovely dry settled spell from 17th to 24th was followed by a wet northerly blast. In comparison to April 2014 there was about half the rain but it was about two degrees cooler. The variable weather had a start-stop effect on the arrival of the first wave of summer migrants with some arriving later than last year and some earlier.

Here are April "firsts" with the 2014 arrival date in brackets for comparison: Sand Martin in Sannox on 4th (27 March), Willow Warbler in Glenrickard on 4th (6 April), White Wagtail in Kildonan on 6th (30 March), Swallow in Whiting Bay on 7th (1 April), Sandwich Tern also in Whiting Bay on 7th (6 April), House Martin in Whiting Bay on 9th (31 March), Manx Shearwater off Largymore on 12th (27 March), Cuckoo in Glen Rosa on 12th (15 April), Common Sandpiper in North Sannox on 14th (15 April), Tree Pipit in Gleann Dubh on 20th (27 April), Grasshopper Warbler at the Lakin on 20th (26 April), Sedge Warbler in Sliderry on 22nd (16 April), Whitethroat also in Sliderry on 22nd (9 April), Arctic Tern in Blackwaterfoot on 23rd (16 April) and Whinchat at Rubha Glas on 24th (30 April). By the end of the month there were widespread reports of Cuckoo and the songs of other summer migrants like Willow Warbler, Blackcap and Chiffchaff were beginning to fill the air.

In April some of our wintering birds were still around including: a Brambling in Sannox on 5th, five Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot on 6th, a mixed flock of Redwing and Fieldfare in Kilmory on 12th, five Greylag Geese in the Shiskine Valley on 13th and about three hundred Pink-footed Geese flying over Auchenhew Bay on 16th.

April is an ideal time for watching migration particularly around the coast. Examples included: four Black-throated Diver off Largymore on 2nd, five Common Scoter off Cosyden on 3rd, five Great Northern Diver off Dougarie on 5th, one hundred and eighty Golden Plover and a Knot in breeding plumage at Machriewaterfoot on 23rd, two Dunlin at Blackwaterfoot on 25th, eight Whimbrel at Kilpatrick Point also on 25th and a Greenshank at Loch Ranza on 27th.

The signs of migration were also evident from the garden records in April. There were a number of Lesser Redpoll garden records, the first from Lochranza on 1st. In addition there were many widespread records of Goldfinch, with ten at Kildonan on 5th being the largest group seen at one time. Siskin were similar, with twelve in Lamlash on 12th being the largest group seen at one time. There could be thousands of birds on the move through Arran at this time. The most unusual garden record was a female Black Redstart in Lamlash on 26th. Black Redstart is a scarce passage migrant to Arran. The last Arran record was one first winter female near Brodick pier from 11th to 30th March 2013.

With all this movement there were one hundred and four species of birds recorded on Arran in April. Other highlights included a male Black Grouse from the Arran reintroduction programme by the Goat Fell track on 20th and a Magpie in Mayish on 23rd. Magpie, although common on the adjacent mainland, is a vagrant to Arran. There was one bird on the island last year between March and May. There were no records in 2013 and only one record in 2012. Also reported in April was a species that had last been recorded on Arran over twenty-five years ago, Common Crane. On Wednesday 22 April there was a report of two Common Crane soaring over Dougarie. The observer watched them for about ten minutes before they went higher and headed out to sea towards Sanda Island. The previous day there had been a similar report from near Port Glasgow on the mainland.

May

May was cooler and wetter than recent Mays. In comparison with the previous six Mays, this May was the coolest with a mean temperature of 9 degrees and a highest temperature of 14.9. The mean was two degrees cooler than last May and three degrees cooler than both 2012 and 2013. The highest temperature was five degrees less than last May and in the five years before that the highest temperatures were all in the twenties with 2012 reaching 27.8. Again in comparison with the previous six Mays, it is the wettest. For example it had more than forty percent more rain than May 2014. From the previous six Mays only 2011 was comparable.

Having said that, May was a remarkable birding month with over one hundred and ten species recorded including one which had never been recorded in Arran before, a Spotted Sandpiper. This species breeds in North America. With only two or three UK records each year, it is a rare accidental visitor. It was photographed on the shore at Clauchlands on Tuesday 19th May and was last seen on the evening of Thursday 21st May.

Our more regular summer visitors continued to arrive. Here are May "firsts" with the 2014 arrival date in brackets for comparison: Lesser Whitethroat in Auchenhew Bay on 4th (28 April), Swift in Shiskine on 8th (6 May), Garden Warbler in Merkland on 12th (13 April), Spotted Flycatcher in Glen Rosa on 13th (16 May), Nightjar by the Narachan on 20th and Wood Warbler in Glen Rosa on 23rd. Neither Nightjar nor Wood Warbler had been reported in 2014. In addition, throughout the month the numbers of familiar summer visitors like Swallow, House Martin, Willow Warbler and Cuckoo continued to build up; perhaps more slowly than in recent years because of the cool wet weather.

Species who breed further north continued to pass through including: twenty Dunlin, four Purple Sandpiper and twelve White Wagtail at Drumadoon Point on 3rd, sixteen Whimbrel in Auchenhew Bay on 4th, twenty-one Turnstone in breeding plumage at Drumadoon Point on 6th, a Great Skua in Brodick Bay on 10th, two Black-throated Divers off Cosyden on 14th, six Sandwich Tern at Machriewaterfoot also on 14th, two Great Northern Divers off the Fallen Rocks on 24th and twelve Sanderling at Drumadoon Point on 28th.

Occasionally this northward migration could be seen at the same time as local breeding. For example on 14th on the shore at Blackwaterfoot, groups of up to twenty Ringed Plover were heading north while "local" Ringed Plover were sitting on eggs.

In May, breeding was well underway for many species. Perhaps because of the cooler weather it was a little bit later for birds relying on flying insects but encouraging signs included more reports of Ring Ouzel, Short-eared Owl and Hen Harrier holding breeding territories. In addition, breeding Stonechat were reported from widespread areas including Shannochie, Auchenhew, Machrie, Glen Rosa, Holy Isle, Clauchlands and Newton. Perhaps these delightful birds are beginning to recover after the two consecutive very cold winters. Other breeding records included: recently fledged Starling in Whiting Bay on 15th, Shelduck with seven young in Auchenhew Bay on 20th, twenty Arctic Tern at their colony on Pladda on 27th and ten pairs of Fulmar at Cleiteadh Buidhe on 23rd. Towards the end of the month, there were lots of reports of garden birds carrying food and feeding recently fledged young.

June

While June 2014 was much drier than the three previous Junes and a little warmer as well, providing ideal conditions for raising young, June 2015 was colder and wetter. June 2015 had a mean temperature two degrees lower than last year and had twice the amount of rain. Both May and June were cooler than the same months last year. In some areas of the island, the impact of this cooler, wetter spell on breeding was marked by a shortage of insects, particularly at the beginning of the month, causing some nests to fail and others to be delayed. For example young Blue Tits were reported dead in nest boxes in Kildonan, in some areas Willow Warblers were already moulting preparing to migrate south and, while Swallows had young ready to fly in Brodick, in Kilpatrick eggs were not laid until the end of the month. The colder weather may also have been a factor in the crash of the vole population which in turn influenced the breeding of some raptors.

The impact of the colder, wetter June on breeding was not uniform across Arran. Towards the end of the month, there were many reports in gardens of fledged birds including unfamiliar looking young birds, like Goldfinch without the red face of the adult birds, Robin with spots and no red breast as well as the more familiar Blackbirds, Starlings and House Sparrows. As well as the more regular nesting garden birds there were reports of a family of Long-tailed Tit in Whiting Bay on 4th, a family of Goldcrest in High Kildonan on 14th, eleven occupied House Martin nests in Corriecravie on 22nd, a family of Bullfinch in Sliderry on 23rd, a young Great Spotted Woodpecker with its distinctive red cap in Lamlash on 29th and most unusual of all, for the third year in a row, a pair of Common Sandpiper successfully nested in a garden in Blackwaterfoot.

Away from gardens there were many signs of breeding including: Skylark singing in Drumaghinier on 3rd, Lapwing displaying in the Shiskine valley on 8th, Snipe drumming over Levencorroch also on 8th, a Long-eared Owl chick's distinctive call in Machrie on 15th, Hen Harriers executing food passes on Machrie Moor on 17th, Ring Ouzels carrying food on the northern hills on 26th and Kingfisher and Little Grebe in breeding plumage in Strabane on 27th. There are no confirmed breeding records of Kingfisher on Arran and last year only two confirmed breeding records of Little Grebe.

Around the coast there were further signs of breeding including: Mute Swan with seven young at Clauchlands on 3rd, a Dipper family in Glenashdale on 11th, Shelduck with two young at Dougarie on 12th, Ringed Plover trying to protect their nest from dog walkers on Brodick shore on 13th, six Black Guillemot at the colony in Corrie on 19th, twelve Arctic Tern nesting on Pladda on 22nd and Red-breasted Merganser with seven young in Newton on 25th.

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.

Other June reports included: ten Swifts in Kildonan on 12th, two Black-throated Diver in Whiting Bay also on 12th, three Puffin in Brodick Bay on 17th, three Great Northern Diver off Drumadoun Point on 24th and five male Tufted Duck in Strabane on 26th. None of these species breed on Arran.

July

For the third month in a row the mean temperature was two degrees colder than last year. This July was not only colder than last July it was also wetter with 40% more rain than last July. It is the wettest and coldest May/June/July sequence in recent years.

For some of our avian summer visitors like Willow Warbler, Whitethroat, Swallow and House Martin which rely on insects to raise their young, these are not ideal conditions. There were fewer reports of fledged Willow Warbler and Whitethroat and to date no reports of Swallow or House Martin raising a second brood.

The impact of the weather on familiar garden species seems to have been less marked with widespread reports of multiple broods of House Sparrow, Chaffinch, Robin, Song Thrush and Blackbird. Greenfinch and Great Spotted Woodpecker were two species where there were more reports of young birds than in recent years.

Away from gardens, species like Barn Owl seemed to have had a poorer season with fewer young reported while others like Fulmar have had a better breeding season with more young reported. Other successful July breeding records included: up to fifty Arctic Tern at the colony on Pladda on 9th, eleven Lapwing including fledged young in Kilmory on 13th, a family of Common Sandpiper at Machriewaterfoot on 14th, a family of Moorhen at Mossend Pond on 15th, up to thirty Black Guillemot at the colony by King's Cave on 16th, seventeen occupied Sand Martin nests at Cosyden also on 16th, a crèche of twelve Eider at Drumadoon Point on 19th, four occupied Grey Heron nests in Whitehouse woods on 22nd, a family of Stonechat at the top of the String also on 22nd, two families of Spotted Flycatcher in Sannox on 23rd and a single fully grown young Shelduck on Cleats Shore on 29th.

In total one hundred and eight species were reported in July. Highlights included: a rare Hawfinch photographed in a garden in Brodick on 30 June, two groups of Swift numbering around twenty over the String on 4th, two Arctic Skua off Newton Point on 6th, four Puffin off Pladda on 8th, a Merlin on Beinn a' Chliabhain on 16th, three Twite in Dougarie also on 16th, forty fishing Gannet off Catacol on 17th, a Long-eared Owl at the top of the String on 21st, a pair of Little Grebe on Mossend Pond on 22nd and a first summer Mediterranean Gull in Auchenhew Bay also on 22nd. This may be the same bird that was photographed at Blackwaterfoot on 28 June. At that time, over thirty of these gulls had been recorded on the adjacent mainland on the Ayrshire coast. The June record was the first Arran record of this rare vagrant since one was recorded in Catacol Bay in December 1992.

July marks the end of the breeding season for some birds. These are some of the reports of birds which are already dispersing, flocking or migrating south after breeding: one hundred and ninety Manx Shearwater off Newton Point on 6th, five Common Scoter off Cosyden on 16th, seventeen Linnet in Kilpatrick on 19th, thirty-seven Red-breasted Merganser at Machriewaterfoot also on 19th, thirty-four Curlew at Kilpatrick Point on 23rd, twenty-two Redshank, two Sandwich Tern and nine Turnstone at Sandbraes on 28th, nine Dunlin and three Sanderling at Drumadoon Point on 29th and two Whimbrel in Auchenhew Bay also on 29th.

August

August 2015 was the warmest month of a cool summer but with several days of prolonged heavy rain it was also the wettest. Towards the end of the month, with lower temperatures some nights, there was more than a hint of the approach of autumn.

Having said that, summer visitors were still to the fore including family groups of the following: Spotted Flycatcher in Brodick Country Park on 6th, Chiffchaff in Pirnmill on 9th and Willow Warbler in Kildonan on 19th. In addition, there were forty-four Swallow at Kilpatrick Farm on 13th and ten broods of House Martin at Corriecravie on 18th. On 27th there was a Whitethroat in a Shiskine garden and three late Swifts were flying over High Kildonan on 30th. Swift do not breed on Arran. The last Swift record in 2014 was 27 July.

Other signs of successful breeding this month included: up to fifty Black Guillemot including young off Pladda on 1st, a pair of Mute Swan at Clauchlands with five large young on 3rd, a family group of Buzzard over Catacol on 7th, at least two family groups of Kestrel mobbing a Golden Eagle as it moved through Glen Rosa on 24th, and widespread groups of House Sparrow including up to thirty in Shannochie on 30th.

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: sixty Pied Wagtail at Silver Sands on 3rd, two hundred Manx Shearwater off Imachar on 9th, twenty Redshank at Sandbraes on 15th, fifteen Mistle Thrush on Whiting Bay Golf Course on 21st, one hundred and fifty Linnet and two hundred Meadow Pipit on Cleats Shore on 22nd, eighty-three Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 23rd and forty Red-breasted Merganser off Cosyden on 24th.

All around the coast were signs of birds on migration, including a Great Skua in Brodick Bay on 4th, a Bar-tailed Godwit at Drumadoon Point on 9th, twenty Turnstone at Sandbraes on 15th, three Knot and two Sandwich Tern at Sandbraes on 16th, two Sanderling and two Wheatear at Drumadoon Point also 16th, twenty-one Black-tailed Godwit at Cleats Shore on 17th, twenty Dunlin at Drumadoon Point also on 17th, a White Wagtail at Auchenhew Bay on 21st, a Whimbrel on Silver Sands on 24th and two reports of Osprey one at Lamlash Bay on 26th and the second from Bennicarrigan on 28th. The bird was heading south.

Other birding highlights this month included: a Kingfisher on Fisherman's Walk on 1st, a Dipper at Glenashdalewaterfoot on 3rd and a Common Crossbill by Brodick Golf Course on 12th. A Twite on Cleats Shore on 17th was only the second record of this species this year and on 28th there was a Black-throated Diver in summer plumage in Whiting Bay.

September

September was the driest month of the year with less than a third of the rain of both July and August. This settled spell was ideal for many species preparing for migration. September is the start of the peak migration season, when many birds are on the move. There was a wide range of species recorded.

The highlight was the first record this year of Turtle Dove. This was seen by the track to Cleats Shore on 30 September. It is an occasional passage migrant not recorded every year. Other unusual records included: five Black-tailed Godwit on Cleats Shore on 5th and a Tufted Duck off Blackwaterfoot on 10th.

Other birds on migration included: four Dunlin on Silver Sands on 2nd, a Knot, two Sanderling and four Bar-tailed Godwit at Drumadoon Point on 3rd, four Sandwich Tern at Sandbraes also on 3rd, fourteen White Wagtail on Cleats Shore on 5th, thirteen Black-throated Diver in Machrie Bay on 26th, twenty-two Turnstone at Blackwaterfoot also on 26th, a Merlin on Cleats Shore on 28th, thirty-six Redshank at Sandbraes on 29th and a Wheatear in High Kildonan on 30th.

At this time of year birds begin to flock together, often in preparation for migration. Reports included: one hundred House Martin at Dippin on 4th, one hundred and twenty Kittiwake at Sandbraes on 10th, one hundred and twenty Gannet off Pladda on 18th, one hundred Goldfinch, two hundred Linnet and three hundred Meadow Pipit on Cleats Shore also on 18th, one hundred and three Golden Plover and eighty-six Ringed Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 26th, eighty Starling at Kilpatrick Point on 27th and over five hundred Skylark passed through Cleats Shore in three hours on 29th. This gives a clear indication of the numbers of birds that are on the move at this time of year

Some of our winter visitors began to be reported including: a Wigeon at Cosyden on 9th and five Rook on Cleats Shore on 18th.

Having said that, some summer visitors were still around including: a Grasshopper Warbler in Shiskine on 3rd, a Whitethroat at Silver Sands on 5th and ten Lesser Black-backed Gull in Lochranza on 28th. The following are the last September reports of the hirundines: ten Sand Martin in Sannox on 3rd, one House Martin in Auchencar on 28th and eighteen Swallow in Kilpatrick on 30th. October should see the last of the House Martins and Swallows departing south.

Other sightings this month included: eight Common Scoter at Cosyden on 26th, two Moorhen at Port na Lochan on 27th, two Little Grebe in Loch Ranza on 28th, twelve Long-tailed Tit on Whiting Bay Golf Course on 29th and ten Twite on Cleats Shore on 30th. In addition, the Arran Black Grouse Group released twenty pairs of Black Grouse on 16 September above Corrie. To try to monitor these birds twenty-five have radio tags but fifteen have no tag. Kate Sampson, Head Ranger Brodick Country Park, would be delighted to have a note of any sightings of Black Grouse. To date some have been reported as far as the main Goatfell path.

October

October, while not as dry as September, was 30% drier than last October. With temperatures at least as high as September, it felt as if the settled spell of September continued through October. During the month there were plenty of interesting birds to enjoy. Over one hundred species were recorded. 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.

The build up of the number of winter thrushes, Fieldfare and Redwing, was a feature of the month. There were widespread reports of the birds feasting on the autumn berries, with flocks in the thousands being reported in the south and west of the island including 2,500 Fieldfare and 1,200 Redwing in Sliderry on 31 October. In contrast, perhaps because of the mild weather, the migratory geese were later than usual in arriving, with the first Greylag Geese in the Shiskine Valley on 31st and one hundred and sixty Pink-footed Geese flying over Auchenhew Bay on the same day.

There were some "last sightings" of summer visitors including: a Lesser Black-backed Gull in Lochranza on 9th, a Whitethroat in Sliderry on 10th, one hundred Gannet in Brodick Bay on 14th, two Swallow in Blackwaterfoot on 17th, a Wheatear at Drumadoon Point on 18th and two House Martin in Brodick on 21st.

There were widespread reports of our winter visitors arriving including: fifteen Whooper Swan on Cleats Shore on 4th, a Blackcap in Corrie also on 4th, a Brambling in Sliderry on 17th, fourteen Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot also on 17th, ninety Rook in Sliderry on 23rd and a Yellowhammer also in Sliderry on 29th.

Other sightings that indicated that migration was in full flow included: fifty-two Goldfinch in High Kildonan on 4th, sixty Starling in Kilpatrick on 9th, a Merlin in North Sannox on 11th, one hundred and twenty-two Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 14th, one hundred and thirty-two Teal at Cosyden on 17th, thirty-five Skylark at Sliderry on 26th, thirty Lapwing on Cleats Shore on 29th and seven Twite on Silver Sands on 29th.

Other interesting records from a month with a plethora of birds included: all three divers - three Great Northern at Kilpatrick on 1st, two Red-throated at Pirnmill on 2nd, four Black-throated at Cosyden on 7th, a male Tufted Duck at Sliderry on 2nd, seven Common Crossbill at Cnoc na Dail on 8th, eleven Long-tailed Tit in High Kildonan on 11th and a Moorhen at Mossend Pond on 21st.

Two species were recorded for the first time this year. A Nuthatch by the Auchrannie Hotel on 8th is the first report since May 2014. The species is spreading north and west across Scotland and like the Great Spotted Woodpecker may eventually colonise Arran. The second species was the secretive Water Rail. A recently fledged bird was found dead by the roadside close to the Red Church in Shiskine on 17th.

Finally, also on 17 October there was a report of a possible Dark-eyed Junco by the Sannox burn. This is a North American species. There are forty-one accepted UK and Ireland records of this bird, ten of which are in Scotland. The observer's report including photographs has been submitted to the British Birds Rarities Committee. The BBRC is the official adjudicator of rare bird records in Britain. If accepted it would be a first for Arran and after the Spotted Sandpiper record in May it would be the second American bird recorded on Arran this year.

November

The weather in November was characterised by regular, sometimes storm force Atlantic fronts sweeping across the island. In comparison to October it was windier, colder and wetter. There was more than twice as much rain as there had been in October. Winter had arrived. In these conditions there were only two records of lingering summer visitors, two Lesser Black-backed Gull in Whiting Bay on 5th and two Gannet off Kildonan on 20th.

Despite the weather there were lots of interesting bird sightings this month. For example there was the first report this year of Slavonian Grebe, an occasional winter and passage migrant. There was one on the sea between Catacol and Lochranza on 15th and, later in the month, two in Brodick Bay on 22nd.

Throughout the month there were widespread reports of foraging Fieldfare and Redwing, sometimes in mixed flocks. The largest group reported was at Sliderry on 1st with over eight hundred Fieldfare and over three hundred Redwing. Other records of wintering birds included: two Yellowhammer at Sliderry on 3rd, three Purple Sandpiper at Kildonan on 4th, a Brambling at Cordon on 9th, twenty Turnstone at Blackwaterfoot on 10th, ten Twite at Blackwaterfoot on 19th, ten Rook at Pirnmill on 20th and eight Woodcock at Clauchlands on 23rd. Large groups of gull were also reported including at Machriewaterfoot on 5th: three hundred Herring Gull, two hundred Kittiwake, one hundred Common Gull and ten Great Black-backed Gull.

Groups of wintering wildfowl included: Barnacle Geese heard flying over Sliderry in the dark on 3rd, two Goldeneye on Mossend Pond on 10th, eleven Whooper Swan in Shiskine on 11th, ten Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot on 17th and three Pink-footed Geese and three White-fronted Geese with Greylag Geese in Shiskine on 18th. The largest group of Greylag Geese reported in November was two hundred and sixty-two on 30th.

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: a male Bullfinch in Lochranza on 4th, two Siskin in Shiskine on 8th, six Blackbird in Balmichael on 9th, twenty Chaffinch in Lamlash on 10th, a Great Spotted Woodpecker in Whiting Bay on 15th, a female Blackcap in Kilpatrick also on 15th, six Long-tailed Tit in Whiting Bay on 20th, seven Goldfinch in Dippin on 21st and eight Coal Tit in Lochranza on 29th.

Other November highlights included: two Jack Snipe at Hazelburn on 1st, a juvenile Merlin at Sliderry on 3rd, three Common Crossbill at High Kildonan on 5th, three Moorhen at Port na Lochan on 13th, two Great Northern Diver off Fairy Dell on 14th, three Black-throated Diver off Dougárie on 21st, one Short-eared Owl at the top of the String also on 21st and a Red-throated Diver in Whiting Bay on 25th. The first reports of Shelduck returning after their moult were on 24th at Kildonan and on 25th at Carlo.

Finally, there were widespread records of Dippers feeding on the coast. With many burns in spate, feeding is often easier in winter at river mouths than further inland. Records included: two at Glenashdalewaterfoot on 5th, two at Merkland on 7th, one at Newton on 14th, one at Kildonan on 15th and two at Machrie on 19th.

December

The weather in December was also characterised by regular, sometimes storm force Atlantic fronts sweeping across the island. It was wet and unsettled with only an occasional dry frosty day. The rainfall was similar to December last year but this year the mean temperature was some two degrees warmer than last year.

This unsettled weather was almost certainly responsible for the Grey Phalarope feeding in a sheltered inlet on Kildonan shore on 6th. This Arctic breeding species, which spends the winter off the coast of South America, had been driven into the Firth of Clyde by the storms. This is the first Arran record of this species since 1989. The weather may also have been responsible for the eight Fulmar on Drumadoon cliff on 12th. These are oceanic birds in the winter time, returning to the cliffs to breed in the spring. Also this month there were reports of hundreds of gulls along the west coast. For example the mixed flock of Herring Gull, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull and Kittiwake at Kilpatrick on 2nd was estimated at over three hundred.

Wintering wildfowl were to the fore including: a long staying White-fronted Goose in Sliddery, sixty-five Wigeon on Cleats Shore on 2nd, eighty Teal at Kilpatrick Point on 12th, two hundred and eighty-six Greylag Geese in Shiskine on 13th, twenty-five Pink-footed Geese in Shiskine on 20th, thirteen Whooper Swan at Sandbraes on 25th and two Goldeneye at Merkland Point on 27th.

Other reports of winter visitors included: on the 2nd seven Twite on Cleats Shore, five Yellowhammer in Sliddery and nine Fieldfare in Kildonan, a Brambling in Sliddery on 4th, five Purple Sandpipers in Kildonan on 15th and a Greenshank at Clauchlands on 22nd. Groups of wintering birds included: twenty-eight Turnstone in Kildonan on 6th, twelve Great Northern Diver and sixteen Black-throated Diver at Cosyden on 13th, eighty-two Oystercatcher and thirty-seven Curlew at Clauchlands on 22nd, fourteen Redshank in Whiting Bay on 27th and seventy-one Lapwing on Cleats Shore on 29th.

Gardens provided a safe refuge for some birds and among the more unusual records received were: a stunning male Yellowhammer in Shiskine on 9th, six Long-tailed Tit in Lamlash on 10th, a male Blackcap in Marnaheglish on 21st and two Great Spotted Woodpecker in Lamlash on 30th.

Other interesting records this month included: a Moorhen at Corriecravie on 1st, a Dunlin at Kildonan on 13th, a Jack Snipe at Hazelburn on 14th, a Merlin at Kildonan on 23rd, two Goosander at Machriewaterfoot on 27th, two Lesser Black-backed Gull at Kildonan also on 27th and a Gannet in Whiting Bay on 31st. Both these last two species are normally far to the south at this time of year.

Despite the unsettled weather there were signs of normal bird activity. After their autumn absence for their post-breeding moult, Shelduck returned to the island, first to Cleats Shore on 2nd, to Kildonan on 12th and to Clauchlands on 29th. In addition, there were reports of courting Red-breasted Merganser including at Cosyden on 13th.

From the above summary it has again been an interesting birding year on Arran.

Later in this annual report there are notes on a number of projects on Arran which are contributing to increasing our understanding of birds on Arran.

The Weather 2015

The weather influences the timing of bird migration.

The variable spring weather this year had a stop start effect on the arrival of the first waves of summer migrants with some arriving later than last year and some earlier.

The weather influences the timing of breeding.

The cool spring may have delayed the timing of the breeding of some of our summer visitors.

The weather influences the success of breeding.

May and June 2015 were cooler and wetter than recent years. These are far from ideal conditions for raising young. For many species it was a poor breeding season.

The weather influences survival.

The cold winters of 2009-10 and 2010-11 resulted in a decline in some species like Stonechat and Grey Wagtail. After some milder winters there was some signs of recovery.

It is because weather has such a marked impact on the lives of birds that data on weather is included in the annual bird report.

Here is a summary of weather data for 2015 from our weather station at Kilpatrick on the west of the island.

	Temperature (degrees C)			Rainfall (mm)	Wind Speed (mph) and Direction		
	Mean	High	Low		Average	High	Dom. Dir.
January	4.8	12.9	- 4.1	129.0	10	57	W
February	4.9	10.5	- 3.2	64.6	6.7	52	SSE
March	5.9	11.7	- 1.1	87.4	7.6	49	W
April	7.5	16.2	- 2.4	38.8	5.0	36	SE
May	9.0	14.9	2.5	107.5	6.1	33	W
June	11.6	19.9	3.7	70.0	4.7	42	W
July	12.9	25.1	5.5	97.8	3.8	30	S
August	13.4	24.4	6.7	108.8	3.9	34	S
September	12.0	19.3	5.9	30.7	3.2	28	SE
October	10.6	19.7	1.9	84.1	5.5	39	E
November	8.4	14.9	- 1.5	165.9	8.5	49	SSW
December	7.9	12.6	-2.3	120.9	11.2	46	SSW

Dom.Dir. – dominant direction

The topography of the island results in a variation in weather. For example here are the 2015 annual rainfall figures from various areas: Lamlash 2315mm, Pirmill 1967mm, Sannox 1952mm, Whiting Bay 1865mm, Dougarie 1569mm, Newton 1194mm, Shiskine 1110mm and Kilpatrick 1105mm.

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/>

Summer Migrant Arrival Dates

	"Earliest" Recorded Date	Arrival Date 2015
Wheatear	13-Mar-05	17 March
Chiffchaff	17-Mar-05	19 March
Sand Martin	18-Mar-09	04 April
Willow Warbler	20-Mar-94	04 April
Swallow	23-Mar-05	07 April
White Wagtail	24-Mar-08	06 April
Manx Shearwater	27-Mar-14	12 April
House Martin	28-Mar-05	09 April
Common Sandpiper	29-Mar-98	14 April
Whinchat	01-Apr-88	24 April
Sandwich Tern	03-Apr-09	07 April
Tree Pipit	07-Apr-90	20 April
Redstart	08-April-11	None recorded in 2015
Cuckoo	10-Apr-01	12 April
Grasshopper Warbler	12-Apr-11	20 April
Garden Warbler	12-Apr-95	12 May
Sedge Warbler	14-Apr-11	21 April
Arctic Tern	14-Apr-13	23 April
Whitethroat	17-Apr-06	21 April
Corncrake	20-Apr-90	None recorded in 2015
Common Tern	21-Apr-93	None recorded in 2015
Spotted Flycatcher	21-Apr-11	13 May
Wood Warbler	25-Apr-09	29 April
Lesser Whitethroat	27-Apr-10	04 May
Pied Flycatcher	28-Apr-98	None recorded in 2015
Swift	01-May-09	08 May
Nightjar	17-May-13	20 May

Regular Winter Migrant Arrival and Departure Dates

	"earliest" Arrival date	"latest" Departure date	2015 Arrival date	2015 Departure date
Whooper Swan	18-Sep-11	21-May-14	04 October	21 May
Pink-footed Goose	11-Oct-10	20-Apr-14	28 October	16 April
Greylag Goose	01-Oct-14	14-Apr-14	06 October	13 April
Wigeon	11-Jul-11	14-Apr-13	09 September	25 March
Goldeneye	12-Oct-09	04-May-06	10 November	27 March
Purple Sandpiper	09-Nov-06	11-May-10	04 November	06 May
Kingfisher	13-Jul-07	27-Mar-08	27 June	19 March
Waxwing	21-Oct-10	15-Apr-09	None recorded	
Fieldfare	02-Sep-13	18-Apr-08	11 October	11 April
Redwing	30-Sep-07	10-Apr-13	06 October	10 April
Rook	03-Jul-07	23-Apr-14	01 July	30 March
Brambling	09-Oct-07	25-Apr-08	17 October	05 April

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.

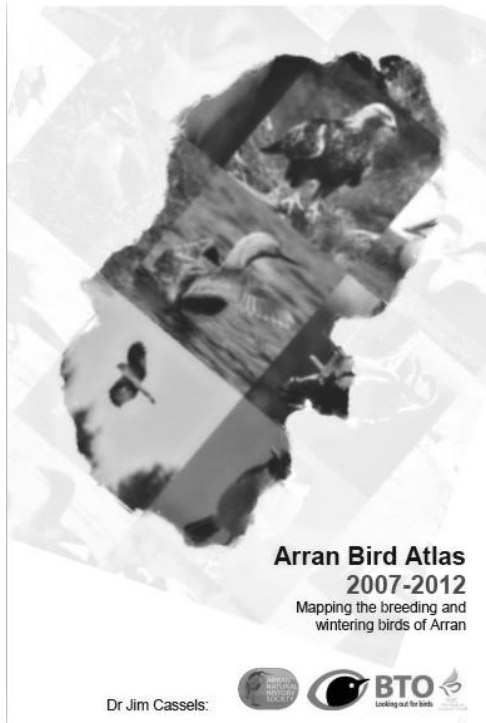
Note: there is also a naturalised population of Greylag Geese which is frequently seen in the summer in Clachlands.

Bird Surveys and Projects on Arran

Bird Atlas

For the first time, the partnership of the British Trust for Ornithology, BirdWatch Ireland and the Scottish Ornithologists Club have combined the results of breeding season and winter fieldwork into one national atlas. Winter fieldwork started in the winter of 2007/2008 and lasted for four winters. Breeding season fieldwork took place in the summers of 2008 to 2011. The work was published in November 2013. Balmer, D.E., Gillings, S., Caffrey, B.J., Swann, R.L., Downie, I.S. & Fuller, R.J. (2013). *Bird Atlas 2007–11: the breeding and wintering birds of Britain and Ireland*. BTO Books, Thetford.

On Arran, alongside the fieldwork for the national atlas, the Arran Natural History undertook to do a local atlas of the distribution and abundance of birds on Arran. The published book, *Arran Bird Atlas 2007-2012* describes the mapping of the birds of Arran for the first time. Over 36,000 records on 177 species were collected over five breeding seasons and five winters. Almost 700 people contributed to this work which was published in July 2014.



The book has 168 pages, more than 400 maps and more than 200 photographs. It is a “must” for anyone interested in the birds of Arran. For more information, including how to get a copy, visit this website. http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/arran_bird_atlas.html

Breeding Bird Survey

This survey was launched in 1994 by the BTO/JNCC/RSPB, and involves thousands of volunteer birdwatchers carrying out standardised annual bird counts on randomly-located 1-km sites. Comparing these annual counts enables the population changes of over 100 bird species to be monitored. There are four areas on Arran covered by four volunteers. For more information visit this website <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/about>

Garden BirdWatch

In the last weekend in January 2015 thirty households on Arran took part in the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch and share their results with me. A report on the Arran results is available here http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/top_ten_garden_birds.html

Garden BirdWatch is a national survey run by the BTO that monitors the changing fortunes of birds and other garden wildlife through its network of volunteers. There were nine volunteers on Arran in 2015. Observations collected by BTO Garden BirdWatchers from each week during the year are analysed by BTO researchers.

Arran seems to be different from the national picture. For example while nationally there has been a decline in House Sparrows, here on Arran it is still the second most numerous bird visiting gardens.

To find out how to take part in this worthwhile and enjoyable survey, visit the website <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/gbw>

House Martin Survey

We know surprisingly little about House Martins despite the fact that they breed alongside us, using our houses on which to build a nest made of hundreds of beakfuls of mud. This BTO survey is an attempt to find out why they are declining and provide scientific evidence to help inform policy decisions that could reverse the declines.

The House Martin survey over two years will collect more information on population size, breeding ecology and habitat preferences, so we can begin to tackle some key questions about this eagerly awaited summer visitor.

In 2015 the nationwide random square survey involved volunteers visiting 2,000 – 3,000 'random' (i.e. pre-selected) 1-km squares throughout the UK. Find out more at <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey/house-martin-survey-2015>

In 2016 the Nest Monitoring Study will involve volunteers making regular observations at individual nests to collect information about nesting activity. This study will be ideal for observers who have nests on their home or place of work including those who contributed to the 2009-13 survey. Find out more at <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/house-martin-survey/house-martin-nest-study-2016>

Wetland Bird Survey - Arran Summary for 2015

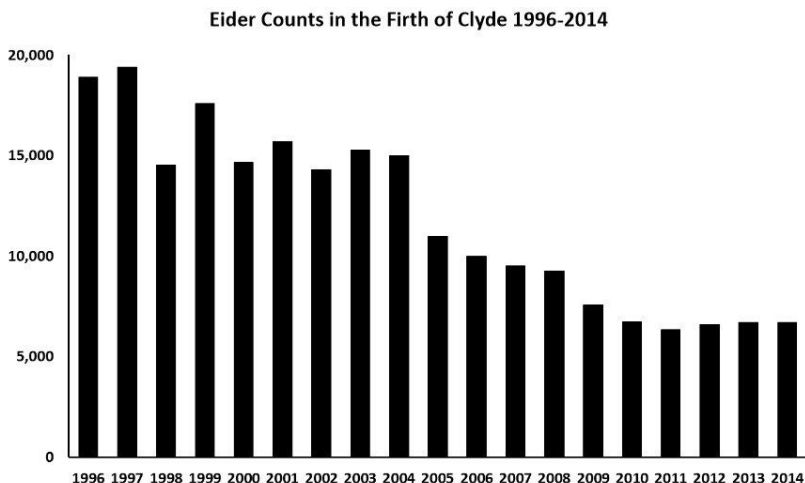
This is a joint scheme involving the British Trust for Ornithology, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee which monitors non-breeding waterbirds in the UK. The survey is dependent on volunteers. Eight of the survey sites are on Arran, the coastlines at Brodick, Lamlash, Whiting Bay, Kildonan, Blackwaterfoot, Machrie, Pirmill and Lochranza. These are counted one Sunday each month with total results on Arran as below. The national survey provides information on the size of waterbird populations, the trends in numbers and the importance of individual sites. For example, Arran is a site of national importance for Red-breasted Merganser.

Species	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mute Swan	38	29	32	34	43	39	37	27	37	39	28	37
Pink-footed Goose				300								
Greylag Goose	115	144	104	9	59		22					
Shelduck	7	20	22	21	13	18						
Wigeon	33	45	38						6	14		45
Teal	102	126	80		3				54	170	150	104
Mallard	123	161	130	80	56	75	62	91	162	156	99	210
Tufted Duck									1			
Eider	53	88	112	78	37	18	39	27	10	51	102	96
Long-tailed Duck	1											
Common Scoter							5	8				
Goldeneye	2	4	2									
Red-breasted Merganser	34	32	35	29	15	30	51	57	51	40	25	68
Goosander	1			1								
Red-throated Diver		2	2	1	2	4	2	5				
Black-throated Diver		6	5	3						2	10	22
Great Northern Diver	2	8	8	2	1						6	16
Little Grebe	7	5	4				1	1		1	4	1
Cormorant	3	5			6	7			5	19	6	6
Shag	51	50	49	35	34	16	28	20	78	210	61	113
Grey Heron	19	14	8	14	5	11	14	13	13	25	11	12
Oystercatcher	207	296	322	201	151	143	176	186	185	225	111	228
Ringed Plover	56	93	43	27	40	24	42	83	114	227	85	50
Golden Plover	55	40	40	180				96	104	112	70	2
Lapwing		76	47					1	1			
Knot				1				2				
Sanderling					1			12				
Purple Sandpiper	5	3										
Dunlin				2	12			22	3			
Snipe										2		
Bar-tailed Godwit								1	4			
Whimbrel				9	4			1	1			
Curlew	50	125	128	42	14	6	50	74	134	88	72	94
Redshank	34	27	34	7	2	5	15	19	22	25	18	36
Greenshank	1	1										1
Common Sandpiper				5	4	17	7		5			
Turnstone	26	34	8	12	9		2	13	28	26	34	17

If you would like to find out more the Wetland Bird Survey visit <http://www.bto.org/survey/webs>

Eider Survey

Eiders are familiar birds around the Arran coast but their numbers are declining not only around Arran but in the Firth of Clyde as a whole.



Chris Waltho, a past president of the Scottish Ornithologists Club, has organised September surveys in the Clyde for about twenty years. Chris's data above shows that the post breeding population of Eiders in the Firth of Clyde is in decline. While there appears to be some stabilisation in overall numbers since 2010, numbers have declined by more than 67% since 1997.

In the Victorian era, there was a major expansion of Eiders in western Scotland and this led to the colonisation of the Firth of Clyde, which began at the beginning of the twentieth century. With an annual population growth of around ten percent by the late 1990s, the Firth of Clyde held around 25-30% of the Scottish population.

The reason for the marked decline in recent years is not clear. The Clyde Ringing Group and Glasgow University have ringed approximately 1500 females over the last decade. These results suggest some decline in annual survival rate, but there is little evidence of mass mortality events or of any major displacement within or without of the Clyde. Mussels, crabs, starfish and other seabed creatures are the main food sources and with many different pressures and influences operating in different parts of the Firth, there is no single cause for the decline. This decline is likely to be the cumulative effect of multiple causes that have an overall chronic impact on the population. It is important to continue to monitor the situation.

One of the ways that this is done is through Chris's annual survey. While the trend on Arran reflects the overall figures, there has been considerable variation in the Arran figures from over six hundred in 1999 to six in 2008. In 2013 the total figure from the census in September was one hundred and forty-four, in 2014 it was one hundred and sixteen and in 2015 one hundred and seventeen.

As mentioned above, the Clyde Ringing Group has been colour ringing females for several years. All Clyde colour ringed birds have a white ring on the right leg. On the left leg is a bigger colour ring, which indicates its nesting colony. If you see any of these ringed Eiders around Arran, please take a note of the colours plus where and when you saw the bird and forward the details to me. All the information will be forwarded to Chris Waltho.

Report from Forestry Commission Barn Owl Nest Box Project

For twenty-six years, Barn Owl nest boxes have been put up and monitored on Arran by Rab Logan, Wildlife Ranger of the Forestry Commission (Scotland).



2015 breeding success was very poor due to the crash in vole numbers and the cold wet spring and summer. Most nest boxes had no breeding recorded, in a few there was an attempt to breed but with little success, eggs were either abandoned or chicks did not survive to fledge. This has been the worst year on record. This is in marked contrast to 2014 when there were sixty-seven young raised from the thirty-six nests checked. In 2013 there were thirty-nine young raised from the twenty-eight nest boxes checked on Forestry Commission (Scotland) land on Arran,

Young in the nest have been ringed by Terry Southall and in recent years Barn Owls ringed on Arran have turned up in Skye, the Black Isle and Campbeltown. This dispersal reflects the ongoing success of the project in helping to maintain a high density of this Schedule 1 Species on Arran.

Report from the Arran Black Grouse Group

In 2011, after an absence of over thirty years, there were Arran bred Black Grouse on the moors of Arran again. This was a result of the work of this group.



To keep in touch with this project and find out how the release programme is going, the Arran Black Grouse Group has established a free newsletter service.

Subscribers automatically receive an email whenever anything is added to the website.

To find out how to join visit the website <http://www.arranblackgrouse.com/blog/>

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 nest.

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	Pullie - 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!

Bird ringing on Arran in 2015

Report by Terry Southall

The wet weather throughout the year was reflected in the low numbers of juvenile birds that were ringed during late summer and the autumn. Most of the passerine species had a poor breeding season particularly the warblers and tits who are dependent on small caterpillars and insects in early summer to feed their broods. Where some birds produced low numbers of young because of the wet weather, others thrived, namely Song Thrush and Blackbird which produced good numbers of young. Only one brood of Barn Owls was ringed; most pairs failed, their young starving because adults were unable to hunt because of the rain.

The study on Herring Gulls continues with the researchers from Glasgow University and enters its final year in 2016. Alongside this project the Lesser Black-back Gull, Common Gull and Cormorant colour ringing studies continue and some of the results from these projects can be seen in the recoveries and movement sections of this report.

The Herring Gull in the first photograph in the coloured section of photographs is 5Z2:C. It is the most seen and reported bird of all the colour ringed gulls. It seems it loves to dine on scraps put out on bird tables in Lamlash. Ringed at Monamore Bridge on the outskirts of Lamlash on the 07 July 2014 it has been reported over twelve times since then from various locations in the village, mostly in gardens. Even though this bird is not moving far, it is still very important to keep sending in any sightings of any gulls including this bird.

A new two year study on the moult patterns and strategies of the Rock Pipit was undertaken during the year and this is reflected in the large number of these birds caught in the ringing totals. The Meadow Pipit, a close relation to the Rock Pipit, was also caught in large numbers, with over 97% of the birds ringed being juveniles. Perhaps being double brooded allowed this species to raise broods later in the summer when the weather was not so inclement.

Little is understood about the movements of our Skylarks. To try to gain a greater knowledge of their wintering areas a good number were caught and ringed during the autumn migration.

The table on the following page gives the ringing totals for the year.

Ringling Totals for 2015

Species	FG	Pull	Retraps	Total	Species	FG	Pull	Retraps	Total
Fulmar	1	0	0	1	Robin	37	6	3	46
Cormorant	0	8	0	8	Whinchat	0	3	0	3
Shag	1	5	0	6	Stonechat	1	0	0	1
Eurasian Teal	2	0	0	2	Wheatear	7	0	0	7
Eider	1	0	0	1	Blackbird	54	2	6	62
Merlin	1	0	0	1	Fieldfare	2	0	0	2
Oystercatcher	0	1	0	1	Song Thrush	17	0	0	17
Jack Snipe	3	0	1	4	Redwing	2	0	0	2
Snipe	7	0	0	7	Sedge Warbler	28	0	16	44
Woodcock	7	0	0	7	Whitethroat	2	0	0	2
Redshank	1	0	0	1	Blackcap	15	0	3	18
Common Gull	5	4	4	13	Chiffchaff	20	0	1	21
Lesser Black-backed Gull	0	63	0	63	Willow Warbler	95	0	7	102
Great Black-backed Gull	0	12	0	12	Goldcrest	63	0	1	64
Herring Gull	3	49	3	55	Long-tailed Tit	22	0	1	23
Great Black-backed Gull	0	12	0	12	Coal Tit	16	0	1	17
Black Guillemot	12	4	0	16	Blue Tit	29	0	2	31
Rock Dove	2	2	0	4	Great Tit	28	6	0	34
Barn Owl	0	3	0	3	Treecreeper	8	0	0	8
Skylark	79	0	0	79	Starling	9	5	0	14
Sand Martin	37	0	3	40	House Sparrow	17	0	2	19
Swallow	3	7	0	10	Chaffinch	76	0	4	80
House Martin	1	0	0	1	Greenfinch	5	0	1	6
Meadow Pipit	244	0	0	244	Goldfinch	64	0	26	90
Rock Pipit	166	0	0	166	Siskin	109	0	49	158
Pied/White Wagtail	3	5	0	8	Linnet	70	0	0	70
Grey Wagtail	1	0	0	1	Lesser Redpoll	10	0	7	17
Wren	32	0	3	35	Bullfinch	6	0	0	6
Dunnock	18	0	7	25	Reed Bunting	3	0	0	3
					Total	1445	185	151	1781

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

Selected list of recoveries

Species	Age & Sex	Date ringed	Date recovered	Lapsed days	Where recovered	Distance moved
Cormorant	1	19/06/2015	04/11/2015	138	Belfast Lough NI	160km
Willow Warbler	3	07/08/2015	06/09/2015	30	Isla de Ons, Pentrevedra, Spain	1476km
Robin	3J	15/07/2014	10/08/2014	57	Kendal, Cumbria	195km
LBB Gull	1	30/06/2014	06/03/2015	249	Agadir, Morocco	3885km
GBB Gull	1	13/06/2014	20/05/2015	339	Grogport, Dumfries & Galloway	34km

Codes for age and sex are given on page 23.

Notes

Our second ever Cormorant recovery was from Northern Ireland where it was photographed. This was a first from Northern Ireland.

The Willow Warbler was trapped by Spanish bird ringers on a small island off the coast of northern Spain.

Some Scottish Robins are known to move south into England for the winter, this bird was killed by a cat.

The Lesser Black-backed Gull, the second photograph in the colour section, was photographed by a British bird-watcher on holiday in Morocco. There have been fifteen other sightings of Lesser Black-back Gulls from the colour ringing project on Arran in the past year. These are as follows; eight in Portugal, three others in Morocco, two in Spain, one in France and one in England. The bird sighted in England was on a Leicestershire land-fill site in early January and seems to be wintering there!

The Great Black-backed Gull is one of three birds now sighted away from Arran. It seems that youngsters do not move far in their first year.

Birds ringed elsewhere and recovered on Arran

Species	Age& Sex	Date ringed	Date recovered	Lapsed days	Where ringed	Distance moved
Goldfinch	5 M	29/01/2011	29/03/2015	1520	Crosby, Merseyside	254km
Goldfinch	6 M	22/02/2015	30/03/2015	36	Rochester, Kent	580km
Lesser Redpoll	5	28/01/2015	26/05/2015	122	Rufford, Notts.	366km
Siskin	5 M	27/04/2013	18/06/2015	782	Stocksfield. Northumberland	212km
Manx Shearwater	35	18/09/1980	15/10/2015	12,810	Copeland B.O. County Down	86km

Codes for age and sex are given on page 23.

Notes

The first four examples all fall in the known pattern of small finch movements from Arran (see *Arran Bird Report 2014* for a more detailed analysis).

The Manx Shearwater had been ringed by Copeland Bird Observatory, County Down, Northern Ireland, as a nestling on 18 September 1980. It had been found dead on an Arran shore more than thirty-five years after it had been ringed. Although it was found only 86km from the ringing site, Manx Shearwaters are ocean travellers, breeding on offshore islands in the UK and wintering off the coast of South America. Circling the Atlantic each year how many tens of thousands of kilometres had this bird flown in its lifetime?

Finally

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.

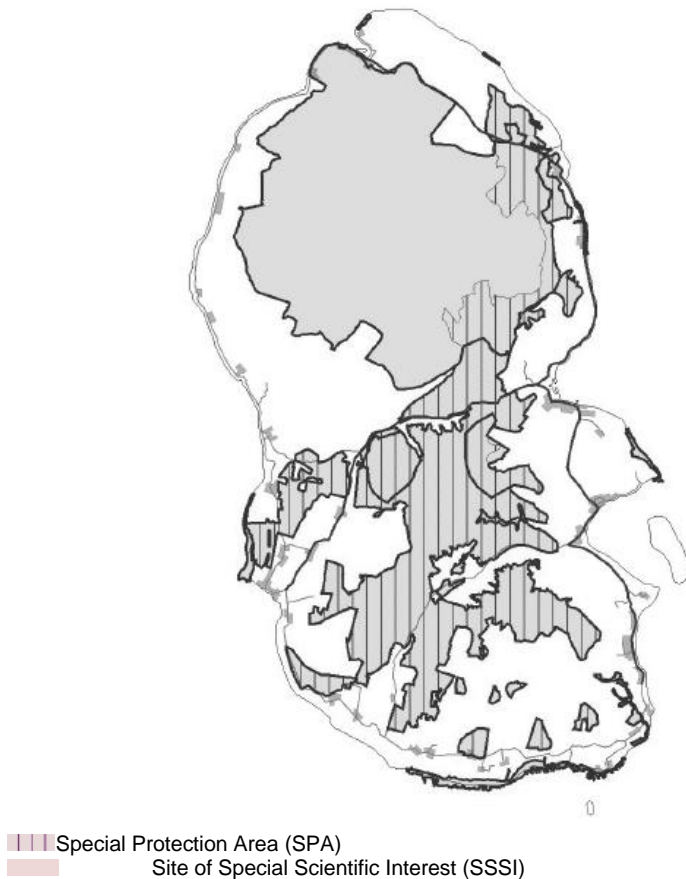
Email address terrysouthall789@btinternet.com

The Arran Moors Special Protection Area

The Arran Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as shown in the map below, cover an extensive area of Arran.

This area is of outstanding interest for the variety of upland habitats and breeding birds. There are large tracts of blanket bog, wet and dry heath and upland grassland. With small areas of broad-leaved woodland and several small lochs, this diversity of habitats supports a rich variety of moorland breeding birds.

The area is internationally important for its breeding Hen Harriers. Around five percent of the UK breeding population of Hen Harriers are found in Arran. In addition the area is nationally important for Red-throated Diver, Golden Eagle, Peregrine and Short-eared Owl.



The knowledge of the Hen Harrier population on the island is due to the many years of effort put in by the resident member of the South Strathclyde Raptor Study Group, John Rhead. The SPA status was eventually granted in 2003.

A Well Watched Island?

In the summer of 2015 on the ferry I met an experienced birdwatcher who was about to visit Arran for the first time. With his copy of the *Arran Bird Atlas 2007-2012* as well as the *Arran Bird Report 2014*, he was well prepared for his visit. He was greatly impressed by these publications and expressed the view that the island must be well watched. My view was that the island was not well watched and indeed was under-reported and under-recorded. He expressed surprise. This prompted me to look in more detail at the Arran bird records.

The first annual report that I wrote was for 2006 and it was based on around 2,000 records. This total has increased each year. In 2015, I received over 11,000 records. So the island is certainly being better recorded.

In recent years all the Arran data that I have received has been loaded onto Bird Track. This is an excellent system for storing and sharing bird records. If you are not already familiar with Bird Track, I would encourage you to have a look at their website. About BirdTrack | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/about> I used Bird Track to interrogate the 2014 data.

Looking at the number of records for each of the 160 birds reported in 2014, 96 of them had fewer than 50 records and only 5 had more than 200 records, namely Oystercatcher, Swallow, Robin, Chaffinch and Blackbird. Some species are better recorded than others. In addition some birds that would be considered to be common can be over-looked and consequently under-recorded like Carrion Crow with only 54 records in 2014.

In addition some areas are better watched than others. Of the 160 birds reported in 2014, 84 were reported from more than 20 sites. Of these, 34 were reported from more than 50 sites and one was reported from more than 100 sites, namely Chaffinch. Site can be an imprecise word so I looked at the data and related it to measured areas on ordinance survey maps. Arran can be divided into squares of 10kilometre and further subdivided into squares of 1kilometre. Looking at the Arran one kilometre squares (there are over four hundred of these) 45% of them had no bird records at all and a further 30% had less than 10 records. So one quarter of the squares on Arran is accounting for the vast majority of the Arran records, with 7% of these squares each having more than 100 records.

Why is this? I think there are a number of reasons. Some areas do have more birds. Areas like Machrie that have a range of habitats have a wider variety of birds than areas with a more uniform habitat like Glen Iorsa. It is not only about areas having different habitats. There is the human factor as well. It is not just that some areas closer to settlements are watched by more people than remoter areas. It is more than that. It is to do with the influence of a very small number of keen birdwatchers. Where they are watching and regularly recording, that's where most of the species are recorded. Other areas that have equally good habitats but are not being watched as regularly are being under-recorded.

Birding on Arran is interesting at any time of the year but if there is to be an improvement on the coverage of the island, we need more people not just enjoying the birds around their garden but getting out there and enjoying all of Arran with its special places and special birds. If you decide to get out there and enjoy Arran's birds please share your sightings with me by email, letter, a scrap of paper..... you can even put them on Bird Track using your smart phone and I can get them. By sharing, you are contributing to the information on changing bird distribution, increasing our knowledge on the arrival and departure of migrating birds and helping to improve our understanding of environmental change....as well as having fun.

As for the experienced visiting birdwatcher, he got back to me after his first Arran visit. Over the long weekend he had recorded over eighty species. He shared "what, when and where" with me. He had had a number of memorable moments, thoroughly enjoyed his time on Arran, vowed he would be back....and he had only met one other person bird watching. A well watched island?

Systematic List 2015

The systematic list is in the order of the British list as published by the British Ornithologists' Union (2006). This is in line with the Clyde Report. 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 2015 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.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* 213,77

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Breeding included pair with 7 young Clauchlands on 30 May, pair with 5 young Whiting Bay on 5 June, single bird with one young Port na Lochan on 14 June and a pair with 4 young Cordon on 19 June. Winter groups included 10 Blackwaterfoot on 18 October, 12 Lamlash on 14 December and 23 Whiting Bay on 20 December.

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

Rare winter visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record was one at Lagg 6 January 1991.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* 12,8

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

This year there was no regular wintering group at Sandbraes. Passage groups included 15 Cleats Shore on 4 October, 11 in Shiskine Valley on 11 November, 9 Clachaig on 15 November and 13 Sandbraes on 25 December.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* 5,2

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant.

Two reports of passage groups 300 in Auchenhew Bay on 16 March and 160 in the same area on 26 October. In the Shiskine Valley wintering numbers increased from 3 on 18 November to 25 on 20 December.

White-fronted Goose (Greater White-fronted Goose) *Anser albifrons* 14,6

Occasional winter visitor.

Group wintering in Shiskine Valley from 14 February to 31 March with 19 being the largest group recorded. Smaller numbers wintering in Sliderry from 3 November to 14 December with 3 being the largest group recorded.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* 70,25

Regular winter visitor with small naturalised population around Lamlash Bay.

Up to 300 in Shiskine Valley between 1 January and 13 April and up to 350 in Shiskine Valley between 11 November and end of year. Other groups included 84 in Sliderry on 24 October, 200 in High Clachaig on 12 March and 9 on Loch Cnoc an Loch on 8 June. There is a naturalised population which is found mainly at Clauchlands. Largest count at Clauchlands of 130 on 8 February may have included some of the wintering birds.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* 23,16

Localised breeding and occasional visitor.

This is the fifth year that this species has bred with breeding reports from Corrie cravie area and Pladda. Increasing reports included 12 Kildonan on 15 February, 7 on Pladda on 6 May, 27 in Sliderry on 12 August and 24 at Sliderrywaterfoot on 24 October.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* 1,1

Occasional winter visitor.

Only one record in 2015, a flock flying over Sliderry in the dark on 3 November (DSO).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* 6,2

Occasional winter visitor.

One in the Shiskine Valley from 25 January to 17 March. These are all the records for 2015.

Shelduck (Common Shelduck) *Tadorna tadorna* 107,42

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

Breeding included 7 young Auchenhew Bay on 20 May, 2 young Dougachie on 12 June, 6 young Cosyden on 15 June, 4 young Whitefarland on 17 June and four young Clauchlands on 19 June. Groups included 10 Kilpatrick Point on 3 March, 7 Machriewaterfoot on 23 April, 7 Clauchlands on 19 June and 6 Carlo on 22 June.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

Irregular visitor. Introduced species. Nearest breeding group is at Loch Eck, Cowal, Argyll.

No records for 2015. Last record Rosa and Cloy Burns in Brodick on 27 March 2009.

Wigeon *Anas penelope* 41,16

Regular winter visitor and passage migrant with records from January to March and September to December.

Groups included 25 Kildonan on 2 February, 25 Shannochie on 5 February, 4 Clauchlands on 8 February, 31 Porta Buidhe on 12 February, 5 Cordon on 16 September, 65 Cleats Shore on 6 December, 9 Auchenhew Bay 6 December and 27 Cosyden on 13 December.

Teal (Common Teal) *Anas crecca* 43,14

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

No confirmed breeding. Groups included 40 Cleats Shore on 15 February, 23 Merkland Point on 17 February, 50 Cosyden on 19 September, 132 Machriewaterfoot on 17 October, 4 Carlo on 9 December and 80 at Kilpatrick Point on 12 December.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* 202,86

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Breeding included 6 young Auchenhew Bay on 18 May, 5 young Port na Lochan on 28 May and 5 young Corrie cravie on 26 June. Groups included 22 Blackwaterfoot on 7 February, 28 Cosyden on 10 March, 30 Cleats Shore on 2 December and 60 Kilpatrick Point on 12 December.

Pintail (Northern Pintail) *Anas acuta*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record one male Machriewaterfoot on 19 May 2014.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Rare summer visitor.

No records for 2015. A pair on the pond at Torr Righ on 9 May 2012 is the only Arran record of this species.

Shoveler (Northern Shoveler) *Anas clypeata* 1,1

Rare vagrant.

One male by the Fisherman's Walk on 24 May (GDC).

Pochard (Common Pochard) *Aythya ferina*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was a male at Port na Lochan from 15 to 18 September 2011.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* 12,7

Occasional visitor.

Five males at Mossend Pond on 26 June is the largest group. Still two present on 10 July. Other records included: a male Torr Righ Mor on 9 June, a male Port na Lochan on 5 July and a male Sliderry on 2 October.

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

Occasional winter visitor.

Seven Whiting Bay on 23 March (MHD).

Eider (Common Eider) *Somateria mollissima* 159,72

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Breeding included 4 young Clachlands on 3 June, 10 young Silver Sands on 12 June, 6 young Cleats Shore on 27 June and 8 young Drumadoon Point on 25 July. Groups included 41 Silver Sands on 8 February, 62 Machriewaterfoot on 10 March, 34 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 17 March, 20 Largymore on 7 April and 64 Cosyden on 13 December.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was a long staying drake in Lochranza in April 1980.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* 3,2

Rare vagrant.

One Whitefarland on 19 June, one Pirnmill on 21 June and two Pirnmill on 17 March are all the records for 2015.

Common Scoter (Black Scoter) *Melanitta nigra* 6,3

Occasional visitor.

Groups included 6 Machriewaterfoot on 8 February, 4 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 17 March, 5 Machrie Bay on 20 March, 5 Cosyden on 16 July and 8 Cosyden on 26 September.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record 2 off Catacol on 5 April 1998.

Goldeneye (Common Goldeneye) *Bucephala clangula* 26,15

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

Groups included 4 Port na Lochan on 17 January, 3 Clauchlands on 6 February, 2 Lochranza on 25 February and 2 Merkland Point on 27 December.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Occasional winter visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record a male off Pirnmill on 28 November 2004.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* 243,103

Breeding. Common round coast all year. Arran is a site of national importance.

Breeding included 7 young Newton on 27 June, 4 young Fisherman's Walk on 29 June, 5 young Catacol on 30 June, 8 young Loch Ranza on 3 July and 6 young Lamlash Bay on 6 July. Groups included 37 Machrie Bay on 14 July, 40 Cosyden on 24 August, 25 Pirnmill on 30 August and 20 Dougarie on 21 November.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* 17,11

Breeding. Localised.

No confirmed breeding in 2015. Sightings included a pair Machriewaterfoot on 8 February, a pair Loch Ranza on 26 January, a pair Cleiteadh Buidhe on 19 November and a male at Dougarie on 26 December.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Introduced species which first bred in Ayrshire in 2001.

No records for 2015. Male on Port na Lochan on 21 April 2007 is the only Arran record of this species.

Red Grouse (Willow Ptarmigan) *Lagopus scoticus* 8,8

Resident. Breeding. Underreported.

Sightings included 7 Crogan on 4 January, 2 Garbh Coire on 16 March, 16 Meall Biorach on 6 August and two the Ross on 25 November.

Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus* 1,1

Very localised.

Six Coire a' Bhradain on 21 January is the largest group in at least ten years (RB) .

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix* 5,3

Previously bred.

Reintroduction breeding programme. Twenty pairs released in 2015

All records from Arran Black Grouse Group reintroduction programme. See page 22.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* 16,12

Local introduced resident. Around 700 released in 2015.

Sightings included 2 Dyemill on 27 February, 2 Kilmory on 29 April, 3 Strathwillan on 9 September, 15 Dougarie on 12 October and again on 2 December.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Previously bred.

No records for 2015. 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 2015. Last record 2 calling birds in Glenscorrodale on 6 June 2012.

Pheasant (Common Pheasant) *Phasianus colchicus* 79,42

Common introduced resident. Around 3,000 released in 2015.

Reports from all areas including a leucistic bird in Shiskine valley.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata* 62,40

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

A good breeding season. Groups on sea included 3 Loch Ranza on 27 April, 4 Cosyden on 16 July, 5 Brodick Bay on 10 August, 3 King's Cave on 17 August, 10 Whiting Bay on 25 September and 4 Blackwaterfoot on 30 September.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* 53,22

Regular passage migrant with records in every month of the year in 2015. Arran is a site of national importance for birds in autumn.

Groups included 6 Loch Ranza on 4 February, 6 Cosyden on 8 February, 4 Largymore on 2 April, 11 Drumadoon on 16 September, 16 Machriewaterfoot on 13 December and 5 Whiting Bay on 29 December.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer* 57,33

Regular passage migrant with records in every month of the year in 2015 except July and August.

Groups included 10 Macriewaterfoot on 8 February, 6 Cosyden on 10 March, 5 Dougarie on 5 April, 3 Kilpatrick on 1 October, 2 Whiting Bay on 14 November and 12 Cosyden on 13 December.

Fulmar (Northern Fulmar) *Fulmarus glacialis* 34,19

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Largest groups at nest areas included 6 Catacol on 21 February, 14 Cnoc Buidhe on 28 February, 4 Bennan Head on 16 April, 12 Drumadoon on 21 May, 6 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 31 May and 4 Clauchlands Point on 14 June. Young reported at Cnoc Buidhe, King's Cave and Imachar nesting areas.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one off Largymore on 22 July 2012.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was 7 in Machrie Bay on 6 September 2009.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* 32,19

Regular passage migrant with records from 12 April to 25 October.

Large groups included 100 Pladda on 6 May, 200 Newton on 6 July, 300 Cosyden on 19 July, 2,000 Imachar on 9 August and 400 Brodick Bay on 13 August.

Mediterranean Shearwater (Balearic Shearwater) *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one off Corriecravie 14 October 1990.

Leach's Petrel (Leach's Storm Petrel) *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one off Pirnmill 24 September 1991.

Storm Petrel (European Storm Petrel) *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record two Brodick Bay on 12 July 2013.

Gannet (Northern Gannet) *Morus bassanus* 166,87

Nearest breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year, but much more common in summer than winter. Records from all months in 2015 except January.

Groups included 70 Whiting Bay on 21 March, 30 Lamash Bay on 26 April, 20 Catacol Bay on 4 May, 50 Cnoc Buidhe on 17 July, 40 Largymore on 25 July, 120 Kildonan on 18 September and 100 Brodick Bay on 14 October.

Cormorant (Great Cormorant) *Phalacrocorax carbo* 87,49

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

Nest area on Pladda in June had 12 pairs. This breeding colony is increasing. Groups included 10 Pladda on 27 May, 5 Cosyden on 17 October, 8 Clauchlands on 17 October, 4 Drumadoon Point on 18 October and 9 Cleats Shore on 2 December.

Shag (European Shag) *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* 173,70

Common round coast all year. Breeding Pladda.

Nest area on Pladda in June had 14 pairs. Groups included 29 Clauchlands on 3 January, 100 Pladda on 13 June, 170 Kildonan on 19 September, 31 Loch Ranza on 22 November, 18 Cordon on 28 November and 47 Clauchlands on 22 December.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was a dead one found in Shiskine on 10 March 1996.

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.

Little Egret *Egretta gargetta*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. One on Sliderry Shore on 1 July 2013 is the first Arran record of this species. More records are anticipated.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* 260,98

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

At nest areas in 2015 reports included 5 at Stronach Wood on 19 July, 2 Lagg on 20 July, 15 Whitehouse Woods on 22 July and 2 Lochranza on 24 July. Groups included 4 Cosyden on 28 July, 4 Claunchlands on 1 August, 14 Glenkiln on 23 August, 8 Lochranza on 9 October and 5 Pirnmill on 30 October.

Spoonbill (Eurasian Spoonbill) *Platalea leucorodia*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one at Corrie on 13 October 1978.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* 59,21

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor. Two breeding records in 2015.

Pairs with fledged young at Strabane gravel pit on 17 July and in High Clachaig on 19 July. Other sightings included 5 Lochranza on 10 January, 4 Newton on 15 February, one Cordon on 13 September, 2 Brodick Bay on 7 October and 3 Invercloy on 13 September.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one Sannox on 11 October 2014.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one in Whiting Bay on 9 March 2009.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus* 2,2

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

One Cnoc Buidhe on 15 November and 2 Brodick Bay on 22 November are all the records for 2015.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record one Whiting Bay on 14 February 2014.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Occasional visitor from British reintroduction projects.

No records for 2015. Last record was one on Sail an Im on 13 October 2014.

Marsh Harrier (Eurasian Marsh Harrier) *Circus aeruginosus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was a juvenile in Lamlash 19 August 2004.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* 167,96

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

A poor breeding season. Poor vole year. Poor weather. A very small number of reports of fledged young. In recent years the number of young fledged has varied from around twenty to over forty depending on factors like food availability and weather. There were over seventy fledged in 2014. The contrast with this year is marked. Numerous widespread sightings mainly within the Special Protection Area. See page 27.

Goshawk (Northern Goshawk) *Accipiter gentilis* 4,4

Irregular sightings. No confirmed breeding.

Four records all from the south end of the island. On 5 February a female killed a Woodcock. A sub-adult male seen in the same area on 6 March.

Sparrowhawk (Eurasian Sparrowhawk) *Accipiter nisus* 83,48

Resident. Breeding widespread.

From the ten sample nest sites that were checked, occupied nests were found in nine of them. A minimum of 6 young were fledged from 4 successful nests. This is similar to 2014. Numerous sightings throughout the year.

Buzzard (Common Buzzard) *Buteo buteo* 219,141

Resident. Breeding widespread.

From the four nest sites that were checked a single chick was fledged from each of three successful nests. This is poorer than 2014. Numerous widespread sightings throughout the year including 3 Kildonan on 4 January, 3 Glen Rosa on 15 March, 3 Lochranza on 27 April, 3 Glaister on 26 May, 4 Shannochie on 9 July, 5 Torr Mhoila on 30 July and 4 Pirmill on 20 November. Reports received of Buzzards predating crows' nests.

Rough-legged buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one at Cleats Shore on 10 November 1974.

White-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* 1,1

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was an adult photographed by the King's Cave on 10 October 2014. An adult, presumably the same bird, was seen at Kildonan later that day heading south.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* 97,55

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

All territories occupied and some strong evidence that other territories are being established. There is a healthy breeding population. More than three young fledged. Numerous sightings throughout the year mainly to the north of the String.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 4,4

Occasional passage migrant.

One Lamlash Bay on 26 August, one Bennecarrigan on 28 August and one Glen Rosa on 25 September are all the records for 2015.

Kestrel (Common Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus* 145,98

Resident. Breeding widespread.

Poorer breeding season than 2014. Numerous widespread sightings throughout the year including with fledged young at Clachlands Point on 14 July, Creag Shocach on 21 July, Holy Isle on 23 July, Drumadoon on 25 July, Creag Rosa and Torr Dubh both on 24 August.

Merlin *Falco columbarius* 30,23

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

Singles recorded including female Machrie Golf Course on 27 January, juvenile Shannochie on 2 February, male Balmichael on 19 February, female Cir Mhor on 21 April, female Cleats Shore on 3 October, juvenile male Sliderry on 3 November and juvenile Kildonan on 23 December.

Hobby (Eurasian Hobby) *Falco subbuteo*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was an adult bird by the Ross Road on 22 June 2011.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* 40,33

Resident. Breeding widespread at inland and coastal sites.

Pairs successfully reared young at four sites and a pair present at a further site. A minimum of six young fledged from the sites checked but brood sizes down on previous year - possibly explained by poor weather during the critical breeding period. Numerous sightings throughout the year.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* 1,1

Localised breeding resident and passage migrant.

One recently fledged road kill in Shiskine on 17 October.(DMcQ).

Spotted Crake *Porzana Porzana*

One historical record.

One found dead by Pladda lighthouse on 24 October 1895.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Rare summer visitor. Previously bred.

No records for 2015. Last record one calling at Port na Lochan from 7 to 9 May 2008.

Moorhen (Common Moorhen) *Gallinula chloropus* 26,7

Scarce localised breeding resident.

Sightings from Port na Lochan throughout the year, including young in May, with up to seven birds on 13 November. Other sightings included pair with young Mossend Pond on 15 July, one Machrie Pond on 11 October, 2 Fisherman's Walk on 17 November and one Corriecravie Pond on 1 December.

Coot (Common Coot) *Fulica atra* 1,1

Occasional visitor.

One flying north over Sliderry on 18 March (DSO).

Crane (*Grus grus*) 2,2

Rare vagrant.

Last recorded on Arran over twenty five years ago, two were soaring over An Torr, Dougarie, on Wednesday 22 April (DaGr). The observer watched them for about ten minutes before they went higher and headed out to sea towards Sanda Island. The previous day there had been a similar report from near Port Glasgow on the mainland.

Oystercatcher (*Eurasian Oystercatcher*) *Haematopus ostralegus* 392,133

Resident. Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Nests recorded Kilpatrick, Dougarie, Machrie, Clachlands, Sandbraes, Cleats Shore, Kildonan, Shannochie and Thunderguy. Groups included 42 Cleats Shore on 22 January, 28 Blackwaterfoot on 7 February, 40 Catacol Bay on 21 February, 29 Whiting Bay on 21 July, 56 Kildonan on 21 August, 112 Clachlands on 12 November and 40 Machriewaterfoot on 23 December.

Golden Plover (*European Golden Plover*) *Pluvialis apricaria* 28,12

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 180 Machriewaterfoot on 23 April, 13 Pirnmill on 17 August, 12 Cleats Shore on 26 September, 103 Machriewaterfoot on 26 September, 16 Kilpatrick Point on 8 October, 122 Machriewaterfoot on 14 October and 3 Slidderly on 19 October.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records 2015. Last record was one on Torrylinn Shore on 5 April 2012.

Lapwing (*Northern Lapwing*) *Vanellus vanellus* 38,18

Increasingly localised breeding and regular winter visitor.

One area of confirmed breeding in Kilmory and one other possible breeding area in the Shiskine Valley. Groups included 87 Cleats Shore on 22 January, 70 Shannochie on 2 February, 76 Kilpatrick on 15 February, 23 Clachaig on 18 March, 24 Slidderly on 14 December and 71 Torrylinnwater Foot on 29 December.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* 145,60

Resident. Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Nests recorded Kilpatrick, Dougarie, Machrie, Kilmory, Clachlands, Sandbraes, Cleats Shore and Kildonan. Groups included 27 Silver Sands on 16 January, 38 Clachlands on 8 February, 32 Drumadoon Point on 9 August, 46 Blackwaterfoot on 13 August, 55 Lamdash on 25 August, 52 Sandbraes on 9 September, 95 Machriewaterfoot on 17 October, 42 Cordon on 18 November and 35 Whiting Bay on 25 November.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records 2015. Last record was one calling summit of Beinn Tarsuinn 4 June 2012.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* 33,15

Regular passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.

Groups included 4 Blackwaterfoot on 25 April, 4 Silver Sands on 2 May, 16 Auchenhew Bay on 4 May, 15 Drumadoon Point on 5 May, 15 Kildonan on 5 May, 16 Auchenhew Bay on 13 May, 2 Cleats Shore on 29 July and 2 Slidderly on 25 August.

Curlew (*Eurasian Curlew*) *Numenius arquata* 228,103

Resident but underreported breeder.

Signs of breeding were reported from Machrie Moor, Balnacoolie, Kilbride Hill, Penrioch and Torr Beag. Groups included 31 Silver Sands on 11 January, 36 Cosyden on 10 March, 34 Blackwaterfoot on 16 July, 38 Kilpatrick Point on 1 September, 52 Clachlands on 16 September and 30 Machrie Bay on 16 November.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* 5,3

Uncommon passage migrant.

Twenty-one Cleats Shore on 17 August, 5 Cleats Shore on 5 September, one Cleats Shore on 7 September and one Torrylinnwater Foot on 12 September are all the records for 2015.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* 9,5

Uncommon passage migrant.

Groups included 2 Auchenheugh Bay on 31 August, 4 Drumadoon Point on 3 September, 4 Blackwaterfoot on 4 September and 3 Cosyden on 9 September.

Turnstone (Ruddy Turnstone) *Arenaria interpres* 82,30

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor with records from most months of the year.

Groups included 18 Cleats Shore on 22 January, 21 Drumadoon Point on 6 May, 20 Sandbraes on 15 August, 22 Blackwaterfoot on 26 September and 28 Silver Sands on 6 December.

Knot (Red Knot) *Calidris canutus* 17,7

Regular passage migrant.

Groups included 2 Drumadoon Point on 9 August, 3 Sandbraes on 16 August, 2 Blackwaterfoot on 17 August and 2 Whiting Bay on 28 August.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was 2 at Kildonan on 26 August 1987.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one on Kildonan shore on 27 August 2006.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* 12,1

Regular passage migrant.

All records were from Drumadoon Point between 29 April and 29 May and between 29 July and 3 September. Largest group 12 on 28 May.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* 35,12

Regular passage migrant with records from most months of the year. No breeding records.

Groups included 15 Blackwaterfoot on 15 April, 20 Drumadoon Point on 3 May, 12 Brodick Bay on 6 May, 3 Kilpatrick Point on 3 August, 2 Sandbraes on 14 August and 9 Silver Sands on 19 August.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* 13,5

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

Most records from Kildonan and Auchenheugh Bay between the start of the year and 14 February and between 4 November and end of the year including 7 on 19 January and 5 on 15 December. Records from outwith this area included 2 Blackwaterfoot on 7 February, 4 Drumadoon Point on 3 May and 2 Drumadoon Point on 21 May.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was 3 at Machriewaterfoot on 8 September 2002.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*
Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was 2 in Wineport area of Brodick Bay on 28 August 1983.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* 1,1
Rare vagrant.

One Silver Sands on 6 December (DSm).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* 105,54
Regular summer visitor with records from 15 April to 13 September. Breeding.

Pairs each with young included Auchenhew on 3 June, Clauchlands on 3 June, Blackwaterfoot on 7 June, Cosyden on 12 June, Lochranza on 17 June, Catacol on 19 June, Fallen Rocks on 27 June and Rubha Glas on 12 July.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* 2,1

One Clauchlands from 19 May to 21 May (CC). This is the first Arran record of this North American species.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was at High Thunderguy on 1 August 2008.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*
Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one at South Feorline shore on 5 August 2010.

Greenshank (Common Greenshank) *Tringa nebularia* 12,5
Uncommon passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.

One wintering bird at Clauchlands from start of year to 5 March returning 30 July to end of year. Other sightings away from Clauchlands included one Merkland Point on 17 February and Lochranza on 27 April.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Rare passage migrant.

No records 2015. One at Drumadoon Point on 22 May 2011 is the only Arran record of this species.

Redshank (Common Redshank) *Tringa totanus* 121,48
Passage migrant with records from every month of the year. Previously bred.

Groups included 8 Lochranza on 12 January, 20 Fisherman's Walk on 27 January, 12 Kilpatrick Point on 9 March, 24 Whiting Bay on 6 April, 36 Sandbraes on 12 September and 12 Auchenhew Bay on 28 October.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtes minimus* 4,3

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Sightings included one Lakin Farm on 11 February, one Sliddery on 18 March, 2 Sliddery on 1 November and one Sliddery on 14 December.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

One record of this American species.

One juvenile was at Slidderywaterfoot from 15 to 17 September 1990.

Woodcock (Eurasian Woodcock) *Scolopax rusticola* 19,14

Resident but underreported breeder. Numbers increase in winter.

Pairs flying at dusk over Clachlands on 28 April, Catacol on 29 April, Sliddery on 1 May, Machrie Moor on 18 May, Cnoc na Dail on 22 May, Brodick Country Park on 9 June and Lochranza on 22 June. Other sightings included 8 Sliddery on 8 January, 12 Clachlands on 21 February, 7 Machrie Moor on 4 March and 8 Clachlands on 23 November.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* 27,14

Passage migrant with records from most months of the year. Previously bred.

No confirmed breeding records. One drumming Lakin Farm on 17 April and one drumming Levenacoroch on 8 June. Groups included 2 Laggantuin on 4 January, 3 Cleats Shore on 22 January, 2 Imachar on 20 May, 8 Sliddery on 6 October, 2 Machriewaterfoot on 17 October, 12 Sliddery on 1 November and 2 Cleats Shore on 2 December.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.

No records for 2015. Last record was 2 off Kildonan on 16 May 2009.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* 1,1

Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.

Two off Newton Point on 6 July (AFo).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.

No records 2015. Two off Kildonan on 19 May 2011 is the only Arran record of this species.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* 3,2

Uncommon passage migrant. Underreported.

One Blackwaterfoot on 7 May, one Brodick Bay on 10 May, one Brodick Bay on 4 August and one Largybeg on 9 August are all the records for 2015.

Puffin (Atlantic Puffin) *Fratercula arctica* 10,3

Breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year. Most sightings in summer.

Sightings included one the Crow on 7 March, 2 Brodick Bay on 25 April, 4 Pladda on 8 July and 4 Brodick Bay on 27 September.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle* 93,48

Breeding. Round coast all year.

Breeding included Brodick pier, Catacol, Corrie, Imachar, Kilpatrick, King's Cave, Thunderguy and Pladda. Numbers and sightings are increasing. Groups included 29 King's Cave on 23 March, 10 Kilpatrick Point on 23 March, 10 Brodick pier on 6 April, 6 Pirmill on 3 May, 7 Corrie on 2 July and 50 Pladda on 1 August.

Razorbill *Alca torda* 8,8

Breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year. Most sightings in summer.

Groups included 100 Whitefarland on 21 January, 120 Whiting Bay on 21 March and 100 Cosyden on 26 September.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor, usually seen after severe gales.

No records 2015. Last record one found on the road in Catacol on 12 December 2014.

Guillemot (Common Guillemot) *Uria aalge* 26,20

Breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year. Most sightings in summer.

Groups included 100 Whiting Bay on 28 January, 20 Kilpatrick Point on 23 March, 20 including young birds Brodick Bay on 13 August and 300 Machrie Bay on 28 September.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Uncommon summer visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record one in Brodick Bay on 11 August in 2007.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record one at Pirmill on 12 September 1992.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* 55,27

Summer visitor. Non breeding. Records from 7 April to 16 September.

Groups included 6 Silver Sands on 14 April, 6 Clachlands on 14 April, 6 Whiting Bay on 22 April, 8 Machriewaterfoot on 23 April, 4 Auchenhew Bay on 27 April and 4 Blackwaterfoot on 14 May.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Uncommon summer visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record was one Machriewaterfoot on 19 April 2013.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Rare summer visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record 2 at Dougarie on 5 May 1984.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* 10,5

Regular summer visitor. Breeding colony Pladda.

Most sightings were from on or around Pladda between May and August with the maximum number reported 24 on Pladda on 27 May. Breeding was late this year. Sightings away from Pladda included one Blackwaterfoot on 23 April, one Whiting Bay on 19 May, one Whiting Bay on 31 May and 2 Silver Sands on 11 July.

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 2015. Last record one adult Brodick Bay on 3 September 2009.

Kittiwake (Black-legged Kittiwake) *Rissa tridactyla* 28,14

Nearest breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year.

Groups included 400 Whiting Bay on 18 January, 100 Machrie Bay on 9 September, 50 Catacol on 9 September, 500 Whiting Bay on 13 September, less than ten percent of which were juveniles, 100 Brodick Bay on 14 October and 400 Whiting Bay on 14 October.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* 57,35

Non breeding. Present round coast from January to March and July to December.

Groups included 5 Blackwaterfoot on 15 February, 7 Lamlash on 14 July, 20 Sandbraes on 14 September, 19 Auchenhew Bay on 6 November, 15 Machrie on 18 November and 12 Silver Sands on 6 December.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Uncommon irregular visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record 2 Whiting Bay on 2 September 2013.

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record one at Kildonan on 21 November 1995.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* 2,2

Rare vagrant.

One first summer bird photographed at Blackwaterfoot on 28 June (LO) and perhaps the same first summer bird at Auchenhew Bay on 29 July (TS). Previous record one at Catacol on 30 December 1992.

Common Gull (Mew Gull) *Larus canus* 195,91

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Poor breeding season with few reports of fledged young from coastal nesting areas including Machriewaterfoot, Dougachie, Holy Isle, Pladda, Sannox and Thunderguy. Groups included 74 Kilpatrick Point on 15 February, 100 Holy Isle on 15 May, 130 Blackwaterfoot on 4 September, 60 Whiting Bay on 5 November and 54 Kildonan on 27 December.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* 75,49

Breeding. Common round coast from February to October.

Colony on Holy Isle had 20 birds in May and the colony on Pladda had 150 birds in June. No reports from colony by Cnoc na Croise. Other groups included 50 Sandbraes on 27 March, 40 Kingscross on 27 March, 12 Fisherman's Walk 19 June, 36 Machriewaterfoot on 14 July and 30 Loch Ranza on 4 September.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* 247,119

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Colony on Holy Isle had 100 birds in May and the colony on Pladda had 250 birds in June. No reports from colony by Cnoc na Croise. Other groups included 86 Blackwaterfoot on 15 February, 51 Strabane on 1 May, 100 Whiting Bay on 5 November, 50 Machrie on 15 November, 210 Pirnmill on 15 November and 100 Kilpatrick Point on 2 December.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

Uncommon winter visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record one Brodick Bay on 5 March 2014.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Uncommon winter visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record was one Thunderguy on 3 March 2012.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* 152,84

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Groups included 16 Pladda on 16 February, 10 Cordon on 29 June, 10 Clachlands on 7 August, 14 Dougrie on 28 September and 9 Whiting Bay on 5 November.

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrnhyphantus 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* 31,18

Resident. Breeding. Localised round the coast.

Groups included 12 Balliekie on 19 February, 19 Cosyden on 4 March, 52 Kilpatrick on 25 September, 72 Kilpatrick on 9 October and 12 Clachlands on 17 October.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Very scarce.

No records for 2015. Last record one on footpath to Fallen Rocks on 14 June 1989.

Woodpigeon (Common Woodpigeon) *Columba palumbus* 167,79

Resident. Breeding. Common.

Groups included 28 Brodick Country Park on 27 January, 20 Cleats Shore on 18 September, 100 Brodick on 26 October, 60 Slidery on 1 November and 200 Glenkiln on 5 November.

Collared Dove (Eurasian Collared Dove) *Streptopelia decaocto* 89,36

Resident. Breeding. Common. First bred in Britain in 1955.

Present around all villages. Groups included 18 Whiting Bay on 14 February, 13 Alma Park on 3 October, 4 Kildonan on 19 October, 6 Slidery on 29 October and 4 Lamlash on 15 November.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* 1,1

Occasional passage migrant.

One Clachaig Farm on 30 September (CS). There were also two records in 2014.

Cuckoo(Common Cuckoo) *Cuculus canorus* 142,85

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.

First one reported calling in Glen Rosa on 12 April. Later widespread reports from around the island. Population seems to be healthy. The last one reported was of a juvenile in Sliderry on 8 August.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* 47,36

Resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Poor breeding season. Sightings from Auchagallon, Auchencar, Balmichael, Carlo, Corrie, Brodick, Cladach, Dippen, Dougarie, Glenkiln, Kildonan, Kilmory, Kilpatrick, Lamblash, Lochranza, Monyquil, Pirnmill, Ross Road, Shiskine, String and Whiting Bay.

Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*

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

No records for 2015.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* 2,2

Resident. Underreported. Breeding.

Two Machrie Forest on 15 June and one at the top of the String on 21 July are all the records for 2015.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* 11,9

Resident. Underreported. Breeding.

Poor breeding season with fewer number of reports. Sightings included one Gleann Easan Biorach on 15 March, one Cladach on 8 May, one Machrie Moor on 20 May, one Moss Farm on 7 August and one top of the String on 21 November.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* 1,1

Summer visitor. Previously bred.

One by the Narachan on 20 May (DP). Previous record was one at Merkland churring from 17 June to 26 June 2013 which was the first record since one at Maol Donn on 24 May 1998.

Swift (Common Swift) *Apus apus* 24,15

Summer visitor and passage migrant. No breeding records. Reports from 8 May to 30 August.

Groups included 10 Kildonan on 12 June, 4 Sandbraes on 24 June, 3 Machrie Golf Course on 1 July and 20 at the top of the String on 4 July. There were four August records, unusually late.

Kingfisher (Common Kingfisher) *Alcedo atthis* 8,2

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

Single birds reported on Fisherman's Walk from January to March and from August to the end of the year. The only other record was one at Mossend Pond on 27 June.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one in Thunderguy on 25 June 2006.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one in Sannox on 25 September 1997.

Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*

Rare vagrant

No records for 2015. One in a garden in Lamlash on 28 December 2014 is the first Arran record of this species.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major* 77,32

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 Margnaheglis on 6 June, Lamlash on 22 June, Machrie on 8 July, Shannochie on 9 July, Gortonallister on 11 July, Shiskine on 28 July and Lochranza on 15 August.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record a female in Lochranza on 7 June 1979.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record a male at Kildonan on 27 September 1997.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one in Fairy Glen, Lochranza on 24 October 2007.

Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Rare vagrant. Previously bred.

No records for 2015. Last record one by Narachan track from 5 to 29 September 2011.

Magpie (*Black-billed Magpie*) *Pica pica* 2,1

Vagrant.

One bird Mayish on 23 April (1st). There was one bird in 2014 from 19 March to 6 May, no records in 2013 and one record in 2012.

Jay (Eurasian Jay) *Garrulus glandarius*

Rare vagrant. Before 2011 the last record was 1985.

No records for 2015. Last record one on road to Glen Rosa on 9 April 2012.

Jackdaw (Eurasian Jackdaw) *Corvus monedula* 111,59

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Groups included 60 Pirnmill on 13 February, 100 Blackwaterfoot on 17 February, 60 Cnoc Buidhe on 19 February, 170 Lochranza on 3 September, 120 Sliderry on 17 October and 70 Cleiteadh Buidhe on 19 November.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* 16,5

Regular winter visitor.

Most records from Sliderry between 1 July and 3 November, including 80 on 17 October, 90 on 23 October and 5 on 2 November. Other sightings included 4 Kilpatrick on 30 March, 5 Cleats Shore on 18 September and 10 Pirnmill on 20 November.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix* 153,78 159,88

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

Groups included 50 Silver Sands on 8 February, 30 Margnaheglish on 13 February, 46 Kilpatrick Point on 26 July, 30 Sliderry on 13 October and 20 Narachan on 17 October.

Raven (Common Raven) *Corvus corax* 112,74

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Breeding pairs included Beinn a Chliabhain, Bennan Head, Brown Head, Catacol and Imachar. Groups included 60 Cleats Shore on 15 February, 10 Dougarie on 26 July, 7 Laggantuin on 21 August, 35 Cleats Shore on 18 September and 13 Glen Sannox on 6 October.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* 35,32

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.

Records included 2 Merkland on 20 January, 6 Whitefarland on 21 January, 3 Lochranza on 12 May, 4 Sliderry on 18 October, 5 Kildonan on 30 October and 3 Corriecravie on 1 December.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Very rare and irregular passage migrant.

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

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* 162,71

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Confirmed breeding included reports from Corrie on 9 June, Cordon on 22 June, Strathwillan on 22 June, Gortonallister on 24 June, Kildonan on 27 June, Lochranza on 30 June and High Kildonan on 11 July. Largest group was 8 Lagg on 16 November.

Great Tit *Parus major* 149,61

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Confirmed breeding included reports from Glenashdale on 16 June, Cordon on 22 June, Corriecravie on 22 June, Shiskine on 25 June, Kilpatrick on 27 June, Lamdash on 29 June and Lochranza on 30 June. Largest group was 7 Lamdash on 30 December.

Coal Tit *Parus ater* 139,58

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Regular passage migrant.

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Confirmed breeding included reports from Glenashdale on 21 June, Gortonallister on 24 June, Pirnmill on 25 June, Kilpatrick on 27 June, Lamdash on 29 June and Lochranza on 30 June. Largest group was 10 Lagg on 16 November.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one in Lamlash from 16 to 18 May 2009.

Skylark (Sky Lark) *Alauda arvensis* 29,18

Breeding resident, Regular passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding territories occupied in Ard Bheinn, Corriecravie Moor, Drumadoon, Drumaghinier, Glen Cloy, Kilbride Hill, Kilpatrick, Leac a'Ghille, Machrie Moor, Penrioch and Sannox. Groups included 40 Cleats Shore on 18 September, 28 Sliderry on 29 October and a passage of over 500 birds along Cleats Shore in three hours on 28 September.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* 57,24

Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised.

First report Sannox on 4 April. Breeding colonies occupied in Auchencar, Clauchlands, Glen Rosa, Kilpatrick, Sannox, Shiskine Golf Course, Strabane and Whitefarland. Groups included 50 Torr Righ Beag on 13 May, 40 Coire Fhraoich on 14 May, 50 Sannox on 22 May and 12 Clauchlands on 14 July.

Swallow (Barn Swallow) *Hirundo rustica* 249,114

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.

First report Whiting Bay on 7 April. Widespread breeding with some failures and some double broods raised. Groups included 45 Kildonan on 5 May, 30 Clauchlands on 6 May, 50 Cleats Shore on 17 August and 44 Kilpatrick on 18 August. Last record was 2 Blackwaterfoot on 17 October.

House Martin *Delichon urbica* 181,83

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.

First report was from Whiting Bay on 9 April. Widespread breeding with some failures and some double broods. Groups included 42 Dhunan on 12 May, 45 Glen Cloy on 9 June, 50 Corriecravie on 22 June, 100 Dippin on 4 September and 50 Brodick on 7 September. Last record was 2 Brodick on 21 October.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus* 46,32

Resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Groups included 20 Whitefarland on 21 January, 30 Sannox on 23 July, 20 Pirmill on 28 September, 12 Whiting Bay on 29 September, 14 Sliderry on 18 October and 12 Feorline on 13 November.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Very rare and irregular passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was one in Whiting Bay from 4 to 6 December 2007.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* 4,3

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

One singing Glen Rosa 29 May, one Gortonallister on 29 May, one Glen Rosa on 10 June and one the Torr on 12 June are all the records for 2015.

Chiffchaff (Common Chiffchaff) *Phylloscopus collybita* 49,31

Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised. Records from March to October.

First report was from Kiscadale on 19 March. Records included males singing Kildonan on 25 March, Sandbraes on 27 March, Auchenhew on 16 April, Lochranza on 27 April and Strathwillan on 21 May. Good breeding season. Last record was one Sliddery on 18 October.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* 120,84

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

First report was on 4 April. Records included males singing Glenrickard on 4 April, Shannochie on 10 April, Kildonan on 10 April, Newton on 15 April, Auchenhew on 16 April and Kilpatrick on 24 April. Poor breeding season. Last record was one Kildonan on 22 August.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* 54,38

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

Records included singing males Dyemill on 10 April, Merkland on 20 April, Sliddery on 22 April, Mayish on 25 April and Bailemargaigh on 3 June. Winter records included male Sliddery on 18 October, female Kilpatrick on 5 November and male Kildonan on 25 November.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* 2,2

Scarce summer visitor. Breeding. Possibly underreported. Records from May to July.

A male singing at each of the following: Merkland on 12 May and Blackwaterfoot on 24 July are all the records for 2015.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* 1,1

Scarce summer visitor. Breeding.

Male singing Auchenhew Bay on 4 May (TS).

Whitethroat (Common Whitethroat) *Sylvia communis* 50,38

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

First report was from Sliddery on 21 April. Records included singing males Clauchlands on 22 May, Port na Lochan on 3 June, Kildonan on 3 June, Rubha Salach on 11 June and Narachan on 25 June. Last record was one Sliddery on 10 October.

Grasshopper Warbler (Common Grasshopper Warbler) *Locustella naevia* 8,5

Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised. Records from April to September.

Reports of reeling birds included Lakin on 20 April, Machrie Moor on 20 May, Shiskine on 3 June and Kilbride Hill on 18 June.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* 29,20

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

First report was from Sliddery on 21 April. Records included singing males Blackwaterfoot on 7 May, Port na Lochan on 7 May, Laigh Kilmory on 17 May, Kildonan on 25 May and Clauchlands on 3 June. Last record was one at Sliddery on 27 August.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

No records in 2015. Male in song Dereneneach 19 June to 5 July 2014 is the first Arran record of this species.

Waxwing (Bohemian Waxwing) *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor.

No records in 2015. Last record one Cnoc na Dail on 11 November 2014.

Nuthatch (Wood Nuthatch) *Sitta europea* 1,1

Rare vagrant.

One by Auchrannie Hotel on 8 October (PC).

Treecreeper (Eurasian Treecreeper) *Certhia familiaris* 29,21

Resident. Breeding. Widespread but underreported.

Sightings included 4 Whitefarland on 21 January, 2 Lamlash on 14 February, 2 Sandbraes on 14 March, 2 Brodick on 9 April and a pair feeding young Sannox on 4 May.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* 178,119

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Records from varied habitats throughout the island from high tops to shore. Groups included 4 Dyemill on 12 June, 3 Corrie on 19 June, 5 Loch Garbad on 19 July, 3 Glen Cloy on 1 October, 11 Cnoc Buidhe on 17 October, 4 Corriecravie on 1 December and 3 Kildonan on 23 December.

Starling (Common Starling) *Sturnus vulgaris* 102,54

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports Whiting Bay on 13 May, Lamlash on 18 May, Strathwillan on 20 May, Blackwaterfoot on 21 May, Lochranza on 22 May, Balmichael on 6 June and Shannochie on 17 June. Larger groups included 150 Kilpatrick on 25 March, 200 Lochranza on 22 June, 174 Lamlash on 24 June, 100 Blackwaterfoot on 28 September and 80 Sliderry on 1 November.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2015. Last record one adult in Brodick on 28 June 2002.

Dipper (White-throated Dipper) *Cinclus cinclus* 53,40

Resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Pairs recorded included Benlister, Dyemill, Fisherman's Walk, Cladach, Glenashdale, Bennecarrigan, Glen Chalmadale, Lochranza, and Sliderrywater. Birds move towards coast in winter.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* 9,7

Scarce summer visitor, possibly underreported.

Sightings included one North Goatfell on 7 May, one Witch's Step on 18 May, one singing Fionn Choire on 25 May and a pair Dearg Choirein on 26 May.

Blackbird (Common Blackbird) *Turdus merula* 287,113

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Pairs reported from all villages. Reports of double and triple broods. Groups included 9 Lamlash on 21 January, 10 Marnaheglish on 14 February, 10 Auchenheugh on 13 May, 14 Whiting Bay on 29 May, 25 Sliderry on 29 October, 20 Cordon on 18 November and 20 Blackwaterfoot on 19 November.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* 55,32

Regular winter visitor with records from February to March and October to December.

Groups, sometimes with Redwings, included 30 Shiskine on 1 March, 125 Narachan on 17 October, 2,500 Sliderry on 30 October, 800 High Kildonan on 31 October, 150 Kilpatrick on 10 November and 150 Torbeg on 10 November.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* 170,89

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Pairs reported from all villages. Groups included 4 Silver Sands on 5 February, 5 Marnaheglish on 2 March, 6 Shannochie on 6 May, 4 Glen Cloy on 8 June, 7 Cnoc Buidhe on 11 June and 10 Sliderry on 28 October.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* 63,37

Regular winter visitor with records from February to March and October to December.

Groups, sometimes with Fieldfares, included 40 Glenree on 8 March, 200 Narachan on 13 October, 1500 Sliderry on 25 October, 200 High Kildonan on 31 October and 75 Blackwaterfoot on 19 November.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* 52,39

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included fledged young Glaister on 13 June, Machrie on 18 June, Brodick on 8 July and Shannochie on 9 July. Groups included 6 Narachan on 25 March, 10 top of the String on 21 July, 34 Sliderry on 15 August, 15 Whiting Bay golf course on 21 August and 12 Dereneneach on 25 September.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* 34,24

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

Confirmed breeding included reports from High Kildonan on 22 May, Lamlash on 24 May, Balnacool on 21 June, Strathwillan on 28 June, Merkland on 29 June, Balmichael on 7 July and Cladach on 16 July.

Robin (European Robin) *Erithacus rubecula* 263,131

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Fledged young included reports from Largymore on 15 June, Shannochie on 17 June, Cnoc Buidhe on 22 June, Strathwillan on 22 June, Glenashdale on 23 June and Merkland on 24 June plus all villages. Other groups included 12 Clauchlands on 18 January, 6 Dyemill on 20 January, 8 Sannox on 23 July, 15 Sliderry on 2 November and 6 Blackwaterfoot on 19 November.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Irregular summer visitor.

No records for 2015. Last record was one on Newton Shore on 28 April 1998.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* 1,1

Scarce passage migrant.

One female Lamlash on 26 April (AD).

Redstart (Common Redstart) *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Scarce summer visitor. Possibly underreported. Previously bred.

No records for 2015. Last record was a male singing by Narachan track on 5 June 2012.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* 27,17

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 me.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* 79,47

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Continuing signs of recovery after the two cold winters 2009-2011. Fledged young reports included Auchenhew Bay on 4 May, Clauchlands on 28 May, Newton on 29 May, Glen Rosa on 19 June, top of the String on 22 July and Drumadoon on 25 July.

Wheatear (Northern Wheatear) *Oenanthe oenanthe* 86,61

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

First report was from Drumadoon Point on 17 March. Confirmed breeding included Kilpatrick on 27 June, Kildonan on 10 July, King's Cave on 18 July and Laggan on 30 July. Groups included 6 Newton on 3 May, 6 Machrie Moor on 3 May, 5 Blackwaterfoot on 3 May, 4 Auchenhew Bay on 4 May and 6 Shannochie on 4 May. Last record was one Drumadoon Point on 18 October.

Dunnock (Hedge Accentor) *Prunella modularis* 152,74

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Fledged young included reports Whiting Bay on 19 May, Lamlash on 29 May, Cordon on 22 June, Pirnmill on 22 June, Kilpatrick on 27 June and Lochranza on 30 June. Other groups included 4 Kildonan on 17 January, 4 Cordon on 23 January, 6 Sliderry on 2 November, 4 Lochranza on 29 November and 4 Lamlash on 29 December.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* 233,84

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Pairs reported from all villages. Reports of double and triple broods. Larger groups included 30 Silver Sands on 9 January, 25 Shedog on 23 March, 30 Kilpatrick on 18 August, 110 Sliderry on 29 September, 30 Blackwaterfoot on 18 November, 25 Pirnmill on 19 November and 20 Lochranza on 29 November.

Tree Sparrow (Eurasian Tree Sparrow) *Passer montanus*

Rare vagrant. Previously bred.

No records for 2015. Last record was 2 in Brodick on 17 June 1997.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Scarce passage migrant.

No records for 2015. Last record was a first winter bird on the shore at Kildonan from 13 December to 15 December 2013.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* 92,64

Resident. Breeding. Localised.

Breeding records included adults with fledged young Glenashdale 14 June, Kildonan on 18 June, Machriewaterfoot on 24 June, Mossend pond on 22 July, Lochranza on 27 July and Kilpatrick on 28 July.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii* 203,95

Breeding resident. Widespread. Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding records included adults with fledged young at Corrie on 9 June, Kilpatrick on 21 June, Glenashdale on 21 June, Corriecravie on 22 June and Shannochie on 26 June. Other groups included 15 Kingscross on 24 March, 60 Silver Sands on 3 August, 14 Kilpatrick Point on 1 September and 15 Auchenhew Bay on 25 September.

White Wagtail *Montacilla alba* 20,9

Regular passage migrant.

First report was from Kildonan on 6 April. Other sightings included 12 Kilpatrick Point on 19 April, 9 Silver Sands on 25 April, 10 Drumadoon Point on 3 May, 14 Cleiteadh on 5 September and 4 Auchenhew Bay on 25 September.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* 10,8

Scarce summer visitor. Possibly underreported.

Birds holding territories included Gleann Dubh on 20 April, Machrie Moor on 23 May, Glen Sannox on 24 May, Cnocan Wood on 10 June and Sliderry on 12 August.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* 130,86

Breeding resident. Widespread. Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Numerous breeding records. Groups included 10 Clauchlands on 18 January, 30 Lochranza on 20 March, 200 Cleats Shore on 22 August, 40 Port na Lochan on 6 September, 300 Cleats Shore on 18 September and 150 Sliderry on 25 September.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus* 108,62

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

Numerous breeding records including pairs carrying food at Clauchlands on 22 May, Rubha Salach on 8 June, Lochranza on 16 June, Kildonan on 26 June, Kilpatrick Point on 23 July and Drumadoon Point on 28 July. Groups included 55 Kildonan on 4 January, 30 Auchenhew Bay on 4 January, 15 Kilpatrick Point on 24 September and 50 Kildonan on 29 October.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* 274,126

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Balmichael on 5 June, Kilpatrick on 6 June, Cordon on 22 June, Pirnmill on 22 June, Shiskine on 25 June, Lamlash on 29 June and Lochranza on 30 June. Larger groups included 100 Cleiteadh on 26 September, 150 Sliderry on 7 October, 145 Pirnmill on 5 November, 28 Lamlash on 15 November and 55 Fisherman's Walk on 15 November.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* 10,6

Irruptive winter visitor in varying numbers. Not seen every year.

Sightings included one Sannox on 5 April, 2 Sliderry on 23 October, 2 High Kildonan on 3 November, 2 Lochranza on 4 November and one Lamlash on 9 November.

Greenfinch (European Greenfinch) *Carduelis chloris* 118,53

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Corrie on 9 June, Kilpatrick on 20 June, Corriecravie on 22 June, Shiskine on 25 June, Alma Park on 28 June and Kildonan on 3 July. Largest group was 40 Blackwaterfoot on 10 September.

Goldfinch (European Goldfinch) *Carduelis carduelis* 198,92

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Largymore on 15 June, Pirmill on 22 June, Cnoc Buidhe on 22 June, Mossend pond on 23 June, Shannochie on 25 June and Lamlash on 25 June. Larger groups included 100 Cleats Shore on 18 September and 80 Clauchlands on 28 September.

Siskin (Eurasian Siskin) *Carduelis spinus* 110,53

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Most records between January and June.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Whiting Bay on 29 May, Pirmill on 22 June, Corriecravie on 22 June, Lamlash on 25 June, Kilpatrick on 27 June and Alma Park on 28 June. Groups of around twenty included reports from Sliderry on 31 August, Bennecarrigan on 26 September and Cleats Shore on 28 September.

Linnet (Common Linnet) *Carduelis cannabina* 79,43

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Most records between April and November.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Pladda on 19 June, Clauchlands on 19 June and Kilpatrick on 29 June. Larger groups included 100 Sliderry on 16 August, 250 Cleats Shore on 18 September, 200 Kilpatrick on 26 September and 100 Cleiteadh on 30 September.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* 10,8

Resident. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant.

No confirmed breeding. Groups included 3 Dougarie on 16 July, 12 Cleiteadh on 30 September, 7 Silver Sands on 29 October, 10 Blackwaterfoot on 19 November and 7 Cleats Shore on 2 December.

Redpoll (Lesser Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret* 45,24

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

Confirmed breeding included reports from Kilpatrick on 28 June, Dyemill on 29 June, Lamlash on 6 July and Lochranza on 11 July. Larger groups included 20 Sliderry on 16 August, 6 Auchencar on 25 September and 15 Cleats Shore on 3 October.

Crossbill (Common Crossbill) *Loxia curvirostra* 16,12

Resident. Breeding. Localised.

Sightings included 4 High Kildonan on 22 January, 3 Machrie on 18 March, one Merkland on 23 April, 8 Giants' Graves on 20 May, 9 Sliderry on 1 July and 7 Cnoc na Dail on 8 October.

Scarlet Rosefinch (Common Rosefinch) *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Rare vagrant.

No records in 2015. The last record was a juvenile caught and ringed at High Kildonan on 24 October 2011.

Bullfinch (Common Bullfinch) *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* 42,34

Resident. Breeding. Localised.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Merkland on 24 June, Kilpatrick on 29 June and Lochranza on 30 June. Groups included 3 Lamlash on 18 January, 5 Kingscross on 25 February, 3 Catacol on 24 April and 5 Torr Righ Mor on 16 July.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* 1,1

Rare vagrant.

One Brodick on 30 June (SS).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* 4,4

Varying numbers on passage and in winter.

Two Clauchlands Point on 18 January, one Creag Ghlas Cuithe on 18 January, 2 Drumadoon Point on 20 January and one Machrie Golf Course on 5 February are all the records for 2015.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* 15,3

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

No records from May to September inclusive. Most records from Sliderry and from Shiskine. Larger groups from these areas included 5 Shiskine on 14 January, 20 Sliderry on 20 February, 5 Shiskine on 21 March and 5 Sliderry on 2 December. In addition a male at Penrioch on 26 April.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* 34,21

Resident. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included North Sannox on 18 May, Lochranza on 31 May, Sliderry on 25 June and Machrie on 27 June. Groups included 8 Clauchlands on 18 January, 3 Fairy Dell on 2 July, 7 Sliderry on 29 September and 5 Burrican Hill on 8 October.

Corn bunting *Miliaria calandra*

Rare vagrant. Previously bred.

No records for 2015. Last record 2 in Brodick area on 7 October 1984.

Records Awaiting Decision

Dark-eyed Junco: October 2015

Being considered by British Birds Rarities Committee.

Gazetteer of Arran Place Names

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>

Website Arran Birding <http://www.arranbirding.co.uk>



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 previous annual reports.

Bird Notes

These regular articles which have been published in the "*Arran Banner*" are accessible.

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.

Finding Birds

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

Bird Sightings

In this section there is access to regularly updated information including: Monthly Sightings, a selection of highlights from each month and Recent Sightings, some recent bird sightings on Arran.

In addition there is accommodation information and links to local and national websites.

Rarities. Species to be submitted to Scottish and Local Record Committees

The British Birds Rarities Committee is the official adjudicator of rare bird records in Britain. It publishes its annual report in the monthly journal *British Birds*. <http://www.bbrc.org.uk/>

In addition, at a local level, records of the following species will only be accepted if a satisfactory description is submitted. Descriptions of species listed in bold type will be referred to the Scottish Birds Records Committee. Others will be considered by the Clyde Bird Records Panel. Under certain circumstances a description may be required for a species not on the list.

Black-throated Diver

White-billed Diver

Black-necked Grebe

Cory's Shearwater

Great Shearwater

Sooty Shearwater

Balearic Shearwater

Wilson's Petrel

Storm Petrel

Leach's Petrel

Night Heron

Cattle Egret

Little Egret

Great White Egret

Purple Heron

White Stork

Spoonbill

Bean Goose

American Wigeon

Green-winged Teal

Ring-necked Duck

Ferruginous Duck

Surf Scoter

Honey Buzzard

Black Kite

Red Kite

Montagu's Harrier

Rough-legged Buzzard

Goshawk

Red-footed Falcon

Hobby

Crane

Stone Curlew

Little Ringed Plover

Kentish Plover

American Golden Plover

Temminck's Stint

White-rumped Sandpiper

Pectoral Sandpiper

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Red-necked Phalarope

Grey Phalarope

Pomarine Skua (immature)

Long-tailed Skua

Mediterranean Gull (except adult)

Sabine's Gull

Ring-billed Gull

Yellow-legged Gull

Caspian Gull

Iceland Gull - form *L. g. kumlieni*

known as 'Kumlien's Gull'

White-winged Black Tern

Roseate Tern

Little Owl

Nightjar

Alpine Swift

Bee-eater

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Short-toed Lark

Woodlark

Red-rumped Swallow

Richard's Pipit

Tawny Pipit

Red-throated Pipit

Rock Pipit (Scandinavian race)

Water Pipit

Yellow Wagtail (continental races)

Nightingale

Bluethroat

Cetti's Warbler

Aquatic Warbler

Marsh Warbler

Melodious Warbler

Reed Warbler

Icterine Warbler

Barred Warbler

Dartford Warbler

Subalpine Warbler

Greenish Warbler

Pallas's Warbler

Yellow-browed Warbler

Radde's Warbler

Dusky Warbler

Firecrest

Red-breasted Flycatcher

Bearded Tit

Willow Tit

Marsh Tit

Nuthatch

Golden Oriole

Woodchat Shrike

Chough

Rose-coloured Starling

Serin

Common (Mealy) Redpoll

Arctic Redpoll

Scarlet Rosefinch

Bullfinch (Northern)

Hawfinch

Parrot Crossbill

Girl Bunting

Ortolan Bunting

Rustic Bunting

Little Bunting

Corn Bunting

Note: Black-throated Diver records refer to breeding records.

Descriptions of the above species (or races/forms) and descriptions of national rarities for consideration by the British Birds Rarities Committee should be sent preferably by email to the Assistant Local Clyde Recorder, Val Wilson val.wilson38@btinternet.com or by post to Flat 2/1, 12 Rawcliffe Gardens, Glasgow G41 3DA as soon as possible after the date of observation.

For advice on how to complete the form, please visit the website:

http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/reporting_rarities.html

How to be a good birdwatcher

Some points to bear in mind.

1. **Welfare of birds must come first.** Whether your particular interest is photography, ringing, sound recording, scientific study or just birdwatching, remember that the welfare of the bird must always come first.
2. **Habitat protection.** Its habitat is vital to a bird and therefore we must ensure that our activities do not cause damage.
3. **Keep disturbance to a minimum.** Birds' tolerance of disturbance varies between species and seasons. Therefore, it is safer to keep all disturbance to a minimum, particularly in the breeding season. No birds should be disturbed from the nest in case opportunities for predators to take eggs or young are increased. In very cold weather disturbance to birds may cause them to use vital energy at a time when food is difficult to find.
4. **Rare breeding birds.** If you discover a rare bird breeding and feel that protection is necessary, inform the local wildlife crime officer, Constable Phil Adams, telephone 01770 302574 . Otherwise it is best in almost all circumstances to keep the record strictly secret in order to avoid disturbance by other birdwatchers and attacks by egg-collectors. Never visit known sites of rare breeding birds unless they are adequately protected. Even your presence may give away the site to others and cause so many other visitors that the birds may fail to breed successfully. In terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 disturbance at or near the nests of birds is a criminal offence.
5. **Rare migrants.** Rare migrants or vagrants must not be harassed. If you discover one, consider the circumstances carefully before telling anyone. Will an influx of birdwatchers disturb the bird or others in the area? Will the habitat be damaged? Will problems be caused with the landowner?
6. **The Law.** The bird protection laws, as embodied in Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, are the result of hard campaigning by previous generations of birdwatchers. As birdwatchers, we must abide by them at all times and not allow them to fall into disrepute.
7. **Respect the rights of landowners.** The wishes of landowners and occupiers of land must be respected. Always follow the Scottish Access Code.
8. **Respect the rights of other people.** Have proper consideration for other birdwatchers. Try not to disrupt their activities or scare the birds they are watching. There are many other people who also use the countryside. Do not interfere with their activities and, if it seems that what they are doing is causing unnecessary disturbance to birds, do try to take a balanced view. While flushing gulls when walking a dog on a beach in winter may do little harm, in the breeding season, the same dog would be a serious disturbance to nesting shore birds or a nesting gull colony. When pointing this out to a non-birdwatcher, be courteous, but firm. The non-birdwatchers' goodwill towards birds must not be destroyed by the attitudes of birdwatchers.
9. **Keeping records.** Much of today's knowledge about birds is the result of meticulous record keeping by our predecessors. Make sure you help to add to tomorrow's knowledge by sending records to your local recorder. The Arran recorder is Jim Cassels at Kilpatrick Kennels, Kilpatrick, Blackwaterfoot, KA27 8EY, or telephone 01770 860316, or email jim@arranbirding.co.uk

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