

## **75 miles on Arran, 61 bird species spotted**

As I recent fundraising challenge from 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> June I walked around Arran by road and then over the String and Machrie Moor from Brodick to Pirnmill. I thought it would be interesting to list the bird species I saw and heard along the way, for most of the time I didn't carry binoculars to reduce the weight I was carrying.

These are the species I saw along the way

Greylag Goose 2 (Kilmory)

Mute Swan

Mallard

Red Breasted Merganser(only 2 individuals off the north west coast)

Pheasant

Cuckoo - (Kate Sampson identified a female calling near the carpark at the foot of the Boguillie on the Sannox side)

Rock Dove

Woodpigeon

Collared Dove

Oystercatcher

Ringed Plover

Curlw (one calling near the top of the boguillie, 2 over Machrie moor and 2 on the west coast)

Common Sandpiper

Common Gull (on the way along from North Sannox to the car park at the foot of the hill we became aware of a colony of Common gulls on the far side of the stream, they stretched a fair way up the hill and also present were at least half a dozen Lesser Black Backed Gull)

Lesser Black backed Gull

Great Black Backed Gull

Herring Gull

Black Guillemot

Gannet - not many at all possibly due to the algal bloom

Cormorant

Shag

Grey Heron

Golden Eagle 2 - in the distance on the moor area to the left going down the Boguillie

Hen Harrier

Buzzard

Short eared owl at the top of the String hunting

Jackdaw

Carrion Crow

Hooded Crow - plus hybrids

Raven

Coal Tit

Blue Tit

Great Tit

Skylark

Sand Martin

Swallow

House Martin

Long Tailed Tit

Willow Warbler - Merlin tried to tell me it was hearing a Common Redstart coming down the String, it was the right habitat but I couldn't see it. Kate listened and thought it most probably a Willow Warbler calling which having listened to both I agree with.

ChiffChaff

Sedge Warbler

Blackcap - all 4 days

Whitethroat - of the less common birds this surprised me as being daily and widespread across the island

Wren

Starling

Song Thrush  
Mistle Thrush  
Blackbird  
Robin  
Whinchat  
Stonechat  
House Sparrow  
Dunnock  
Pied Wagtail  
Meadow Pipit  
Rock Pipit  
Chaffinch  
Redpoll  
Goldfinch  
Siskin  
Reed Bunting

61 species, notable absentee was Kestrel and I was casually spotting birds so I will have missed a few of the smaller birds such as Tree creeper, Greenfinch etc which I know are here. I also wasn't sea watching but there really isn't much at all to be seen on the sea just now. The best areas were the west side of the String going down the hill and the Boguillie on both sides of the climb, areas which are perhaps less frequented on foot.

I recorded some of the sightings on Birdtrack, especially if they were my first sighting of the year. The App is great, but it doesn't lend itself to recording along routes walked. It was an interesting exercise and I'm glad I did it out of curiosity and also it helped the miles pass.