

Arran Bird Report 2011



This report was compiled by **Jim Cassels**,
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Contents	Page
Arran Natural History Society	Inside front cover
Contents	1
List of Contributors	2
Introduction	3
Chronological Summary	4
Weather	14
Summer Migrant Arrival Dates	15
Winter Migrant Arrival and Departure Dates	15
Bird Surveys and Projects on Arran	16-21
Bird Atlas	16
Garden BirdWatch	16
Wetland Bird Survey	17
Eider Survey	18
Raven Study	19
Whinchat Population Study	20
Barn Owl Project	21
Black Grouse Project	21
Arran Moors Special Protection Area	22
Bird Ringing on Arran	23
Systematic List	27
Gazetteer and Arran Birding Website	56
Species Requiring a description	57
Birdwatchers Code	58
Index by Common Name	59

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Introduction

Welcome to the *Arran Bird Report* for 2011. This is the thirty second consecutive annual bird report for the Isle of Arran and the sixth 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, our resident 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 the BirdAtlas survey, the Wetlands 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: Angela Cassels, Tony Church, Brian Couper, Angus Hogg, Robert Lambie, Jim MacKenzie, Dennis Morrison, Carl Reavey and Terry 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 just interested 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 2011, almost three hundred contributors submitted over six thousand records on one hundred and sixty three species, two of which had never been recorded before on Arran - Long-tailed Skua and Wood Sandpiper. 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 2011.

The Chronological Summary gives the highlights for each month. The Systematic List is in Voous order 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. 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 2012, please send any bird notes with “what, when, where” to me before Monday 11 January 2013, at Kilpatrick Kennels, Kilpatrick, Blackwaterfoot, KA27 8EY, or telephone 01770 860316 (you can leave a message), or email me at james.cassels@virgin.net.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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

Chronological Summary

January

January was cold and predominantly dry with the exception of a few days of rain in the middle of the month. During this prolonged cold spell, many birds continued to move to the relatively mild Arran. This is reflected in the following bird notes.

As in December, there were further reports of: Brambling including four in Glenloig on 3rd, Redwing including three in Shiskine on 8th, Waxwing including ten in Brodick on 19th and Fieldfare including twenty on the Ross Road on 29th.

One of the highlights was a long staying female Pintail seen from 11th (with continuing sightings until March) on the shore between Blackwaterfoot and Kilpatrick. This is only the second record of this species in the last seventeen years

Other winter visitors in January included: a Grey Plover at Kildonan on 1st, four Purple Sandpipers also at Kildonan on 4th, a pair of Goldeneye at Catacol on 13th, the long staying Greenshank still at Clauchlands on 21st, seven Whooper Swans including three juveniles at Sandbraes on 21st, four hundred and thirty Greylag geese and twenty nine Pink-footed geese at Shiskine on 25th and twenty nine Wigeon at Machriewaterfoot on 30th.

In January there was a wide range of other interesting species reported including: a Merlin at Imachar on 1st, four Dunlin at Kildonan on 2nd, five Twite at Machrie on 5th, two Goosander in Lochranza on 7th, sixteen Common Crossbills above Grouse Lodge on 17th and twelve Bullfinches at Tormusk on 26th.

In the cold weather, some unusual birds turned up in gardens including: a Great Spotted Woodpecker at Lochranza on 7th, a male Blackcap in Whiting Bay on 16th, a Lesser Redpoll at Pirnmill on 21st, two juvenile Moorhens in Lamlash on 23rd and two female Yellowhammers in Shiskine on 30th.

There were some signs of approaching Spring with Gannet off Sandbraes on 30th, twelve Fulmars on the cliff at Drumadoon on 16th and a pair of Collared Doves mating in Whiting Bay on 29th. But the winter was not over yet.

February

February was warmer and wetter than January. The mean February temperature was one and half degrees higher than January and the rainfall was more than double. In comparison with the previous February, it was also wetter.

With sources of food for some species of bird becoming scarce, gardens were havens for many species including Long-tailed Tit, who delighted garden birdwatchers in a wide range of gardens including Brodick, Dhunan, Lamlash, Whiting Bay and Machrie with twelve in Lochranza on 10th the largest group reported. Other more unusual garden birds included a Brambling in Whiting Bay on 2nd, twenty six Siskin in Blackwaterfoot on 9th, a Great Spotted Woodpecker in Lochranza on 15th, a pair of Blackcaps in Whiting Bay on 17th, a Lesser Redpoll in Pirnmill on 18th and Yellowhammers on 23rd, two males

and a female in a Brodick garden and three males and eight females in a Shiskine garden.

Common Crossbills, which tend to breed in winter in response to availability of Spruce cones, were a feature this month with reports of birds singing in Clauchan Glen, Glen Dubh, High Kildonan, Kilmory, Kilpatrick, Merkland and Tormusk with seven in Monamore Glen on 24th.

It was a good month for seeing wildfowl with over five hundred Greylag Geese in Shiskine on 23rd, twenty Pink-footed Geese in Shiskine on 26th and seven Whooper Swans including three juveniles at Sandbraes on 28th. There were reports of ducks including forty six Mallard at Sliderywaterfoot on 1st, three Goldeneye in Whiting Bay on 7th, forty seven Teal, fifty seven Eider and eleven Red-breasted Mergansers at Machrie on 12th, a Goosander on the Rosa Burn on 16th, eighteen Shelduck and thirty seven Wigeon at Auchenhew on 20th and the long staying female Pintail at Kilpatrick. In addition there was a male Shoveler on the pond at Shiskine on 20th. This is only the second record in the last fifteen years.

Other winter visitors were to the fore including two Greenshanks at Clauclands on 5th, two Purple Sandpipers at Drumadon on 6th and fifty Fieldfare at Bridge Farm on 10th.

Days with calm seas were ideal for sea watching, with good numbers of all three divers reported including three Red-throats in Lamlash Bay on 10th, two Black-throats off Blackwaterfoot on 11th and three Great Northern in Machrie Bay on 12th.

Other sightings included four Little Grebe in Lochranza on 2nd, a Kingfisher on the Rosa Burn on 8th, eighteen Lapwing at Kilpatrick on 12th and four hundred Starling also in Kilpatrick on 25th.

Finally, there were some signs of approaching spring with reports of garden birds in song throughout the island towards the end of the month, a pair of Golden Eagles displaying over Lochranza on 8th, two Lesser Black-backed Gulls at Machriewaterfoot on 26th and a Buzzard carrying nest material in Shiskine on 28th.

March

March was generally settled and dry with around 40% of the rain of February and around half the rain of March 2010. The month ended with a couple of unsettled days.

The settled spell encouraged the arrival of the first of the spring migrants. Chiffchaff were heard in Kiscadale and in Brodick Castle Gardens on 21st, Wheatear were seen on Machrie Golf Course and on Cleats Shore on 22nd, two Sand Martin were in Kilpatrick on 23rd and White Wagtail were on Cleats Shore on 27th. These dates are similar to the 2010 arrival dates, with two a few days earlier and two a few days later.

In March, winter visitors were still present including: the long staying Pintail at Kilpatrick Point on 5th, a mixed flock of two hundred Fieldfare and Redwing at Balmichael on 6th, two Greenshank at Clauclands on 12th, twenty one Pink-footed Geese at Shiskine on 20th, twenty two Whooper Swans at Sandbraes on 24th and two hundred fifty Greylag Geese in Blackwaterfoot on 29th.

In gardens there was an “explosion” of Siskins passing through, with a number of reports of twenty or more. Terry Southall, Arran’s resident ringer, ringed over three hundred in March in his garden! Other garden highlights included: two Brambling in Lamlash on 14th, three Waxwing round the Auchrannie Lodges on 22nd and a Magpie in Corriegills on 27th. Magpie may be common on the adjacent mainland but it is a vagrant on Arran.

Other sightings included: a Kingfisher on the Rosa Burn on 5th, a Dunlin in Whiting Bay on 9th, a Merlin in High Kildonan also on 9th, a Great Crested Grebe off Whiting Bay on 11th, two Common Scoter off Cosyden on 19th and two Snow Bunting on Meall nan Damh on 24th. Great Crested Grebe on Arran is an occasional winter and passage migrant.

Spring is a great time to be birding, as most birds are getting on with the business of breeding. In March breeding signs were there, including: two Dippers exhibiting courtship display in Kildonan on 3rd, three Blackbirds singing in Narachan on 16th, sixteen Black Guillemots at their colony in Brodick Pier on 18th, Common Crossbills carrying nest material in High Kildonan on 19th, Grey Heron nest building in Lochranza on 19th and two pairs of Shelduck fighting over territory at Blackwaterfoot on 22nd.

April

April was warmer and drier than April 2010 and, as a result, summer migrants were arriving earlier, in some cases up to ten days earlier than 2010.

In March, there were “first” reports of Chiffchaff, Wheatear, Sand Martin and White Wagtail. The April “firsts” for Arran summer migrants were: Blackcap in Lamlash on 3rd, Manx Shearwaters in Brodick Bay also on 3rd, Swallow and Willow Warbler in Whiting Bay on 5th, House Martin at Catacol on 7th and Sandwich Tern at Dougarie also on 7th, Grasshopper Warbler at East Mayish on 12th, Sedge Warbler at Kildonan on 14th, Common Sandpiper at Clauchlands on 16th, Whitethroat at Slidery on 17th, Garden Warbler at Strathwillan on 22nd, Whinchat on the Ross Road on 23rd, Spotted Flycatcher in Whiting Bay on 25th and Tree Pipit at Kilmory on 27th. As for Cuckoo, with over ten widespread reports on 18th that seemed to be the date they arrived on Arran. By the end of the month the songs of the summer migrants like Willow Warbler, Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler were filling the air.

With very settled conditions throughout the month, it was ideal for watching migration particularly on the coast. For example, on 8th there were over eighty Great Northern Divers and over twenty Black-throated divers off our shores and on 26th there were over one hundred White Wagtail at Sliderywaterfoot.

Other birds moving to breeding grounds further north included: two Redwing in High Kildonan on 2nd, a Brambling at Machrie on 3rd, a Redstart near Rubha Glas on 8th, twenty five Greylag Geese at Shiskine on 15th, seven Whooper Swans at Whiting Bay also on 15th, two Wigeon at Cosyden on 17th, sixty five Pink-footed Geese flying over Whiting Bay golf course on 18th, twelve Dunlin and twenty Turnstone at Drumadoon on 22nd and seven Whimbrel at Sliderywaterfoot on 26th.

Other highlights from the many that have been shared with me in April included: a Little Grebe at Kildonan on 9th, a pair of Goosander on the Iorsa on 18th, a Red Kite in North Sannox on 22nd and two Puffin in Brodick Bay on 29th.

May

In comparison to April, after the first few days, May was very unsettled with more than four times the rain of May 2010 and days with autumnal storm force winds. These scorched fresh foliage and blossom, leaving hedges and trees in the south and west of Arran "burnt". The impact on hedge nesting birds, insect life and autumn berries was yet to be seen but the high winds combined with high tides, swamped the nests of many shore birds and gulls, particularly those on the west coast.

It was not all bad news. The unsettled weather brought migrating skuas and other seabirds closer to the shore, including an Arctic Skua off Kildonan on 18th, a Great Skua in Brodick Bay on 25th, two well named Storm Petrels off Blackwaterfoot on 26th and two Long-tailed Skuas between Kildonan and Pladda on 19th. This is the first ever report of Long-tailed Skua on Arran by two observers from the comparative comfort of the grounds of the Kildonan Hotel.

In May, summer visitors continued to arrive. The following "firsts" were reported: Arctic Tern on Cleats Shore on 6th, Swift over the Fisherman's Walk in Brodick on 8th, Lesser Whitethroat in Auchenhew on 14th and Wood Warbler in Glenashdale on 26th.

In May, breeding was well underway for many species including: Woodcock roding over Lochranza on 8th, a pair of Mute Swans with seven young at Port-na-Lochan on 14th, a pair of Shelduck with eleven young at Carlo on 17th, ten pairs of Fulmar on Drumadoon cliffs on 18th and up to twenty Black Guillemots at Brodick pier on 19th. In addition, there were lots of reports of garden birds carrying food and feeding recently fledged young. Again from garden sightings, there were widespread reports of Goldfinches and Siskins.

Species which breed further north continued to pass through including: twenty eight Whimbrel at Auchenhew on 4th, nine Dotterel on Caisteal Abhail on 8th, a male Snow Bunting on North Goatfell on 13th, sixteen Dunlin and two Sanderling at Drumadoon Point on 15th, fourteen Great Northern Divers in Machrie Bay on 17th and a Wood Sandpiper at Drumadoon Point on 22nd. This is the first ever report of Wood Sandpiper on Arran and it gave the two observers very close views.

Around a hundred species of birds were reported to me in May, including the first ever report of breeding Canada Geese - a pair with four young at Slidery on 12th, two Puffin off Pirnmill on 19th and several reports of the increasingly scarce Short-eared Owl - one from the top of the Boguillie on 22nd and two from the top of the String on 31st.

June

June was cooler and wetter than in recent years. The mean temperature was two degrees lower than the last two Junes and there was five times more rain than June 2010.

Raising young is the priority during the long daylight hours in June, and despite the unsettled weather, there were many reports of fledged birds in gardens. In addition, there was a pair of Shelduck with six young at Kilpatrick on 11th, two young Great Spotted Woodpecker in Brodick Castle gardens also on 11th, fourteen pairs of Fulmar on Drumadoon cliff on 12th, six young Long-tailed Tit in Glenkiln also on 12th, six young Red Grouse on Mullach Buidhe on 23rd and two families of Bullfinch in East Bennan on 28th. The population of Arctic Tern on Pladda was the largest for some years. To prevent

disturbance, visitors are asked not to enter the colony. On the negative side, there seems to have been a reduction in reports of Stonechat and Grey Wagtail. They may have been badly affected by the prolonged cold winter.

Cuckoos, whose decreasing numbers are a cause for concern nationally, seem to be thriving on Arran. Throughout May and June there were many widespread reports.

Other reports included: two Black-throated Divers off Thunderguy on 5th, a Redstart by Corrie Golf Course on 9th, a pair of Golden Eagles soaring over Lochranza also on 9th, three Goosanders, a male and two females at Machriewaterfoot on 11th, a Lesser Whitethroat at Auchenhew on 14th, a pair of Hen Harriers over Machrie Moor on 18th, a Puffin off Kildonan on 21st, a Swift over High Kildonan on 23rd and a rare summer record of a Merlin also over High Kildonan on the 24th.

Finally, Port-na-Lochan was the place for rare black and white birds this month. Both Tufted Duck and Magpie, species which are common on the adjacent mainland but rare on Arran, were noted. The Magpie, only the second record for Arran this year, was seen on 10th and 11th while the male Tufted Duck, the first record for Arran this year, made a brief appearance on 19th before it was chased off by the resident Mute Swans.

July

After a wet May and June, July was dry, with less than half the rain of the previous two months and the previous two Julys. This settled spell was ideal for birds whose main priority at this time of year is raising young.

Reports of breeding included: three Eider with ten young at Kildonan on 2nd, at least ten nesting pairs of Black Guillemot at Brodick Pier on 9th, two adult and one young Golden Eagle over the Lochranza hills on 9th, fifteen pairs of nesting Arctic Tern on Pladda on 14th, the first ever report of young Great Spotted Woodpecker at Blairbeg, Lamlash, on 15th, Fulmar with young on Catacol cliffs on 21st, around twenty Swallows including fledged young on the telephone wires of Kilpatrick on 26th. and a pair of Spotted Flycatcher with at least four young at Sannox cemetery on 27th. After the second severe winter in a row it was encouraging to get a number of reports of both of the following species: fledged Grey Wagtail at Lagg on 25th and fledged Stonechat in Glen Chalmadale on 26th.

In July there were two breeding "firsts" on Arran. On Tuesday 12 July a Little Grebe was seen with two young on a pond in Kilpatrick. Little Grebe on Arran is described as a passage migrant and winter visitor with records from many parts of the island in winter. On Thursday 14 July there was a first breeding record for Cormorant. Five pairs were reported nesting on Pladda. Cormorant is widespread round the coast of Arran all year but less common than Shag. Cormorant is a scarce and relatively local breeding species with fewer than one hundred colonies scattered around the coast of Scotland. The most important colony in the Firth of Clyde is the one on Lady Isle off Troon on the Ayrshire coast with around two hundred pairs.

July marks the end of the breeding season for some birds and these are some of the highlights of birds which are already dispersing, flocking or migrating south after breeding: a Whimbrel at Auchenhew on 1st, a male Tufted Duck at Port-na-Lochan on 8th, a pair of Wigeon at the same on 11th, a Little Gull on Machrie Shore on 16th (the first Arran record since one in Whiting Bay on 27 June 2005), fifty Lesser Redpoll at

Corriecravie on 22nd, up to one thousand Starlings at Shannochie on 26th and a Kingfisher on the Rosa Burn on 21st. This is an early record for Arran. Normally records start in September. To date there are no confirmed breeding records on Arran. Sightings are considered to be dispersing young birds.

Other observations received included: two Great Northern Divers at Dougarie on 3rd, six Swift over High Kildonan on 4th, a Short-eared Owl on Machrie Moor on 7th, thirty Manx Shearwaters in Machrie Bay on 18th, a family group of Crossbills at Urie Loch on 23rd and six Red-throated Divers off Pirmill on 26th.

August

August was a little wetter than July but most rain fell between 10th and 17th. Temperature and rainfall were similar to last August. With low 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: Spotted Flycatcher in lower Glen Sannox on 1st, Sedge Warbler at Balmichael on 5th, Whinchat on Ard Bhein on 9th, Willow Warbler on Holy Isle also on 9th, Whitethroat in Catacol on 12th, Tree Pipit in Lochranza on 19th and over fifty Swallows at Kilpatrick on 30th.

Other signs of successful breeding this month included: a young Great Spotted Woodpecker with its red cap at High Kildonan on 13th, young Fulmar on nest at Bennan Head on 14th, a crèche of up to twenty three Eider at Machrie on 14th, a pair of Mute Swans with five large young at Blackwaterfoot on 15th, a group of five Buzzards by the Narachan track on 25th and an adult with four young Goldcrest in a garden in Lamlash on 27th.

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: thirty Chaffinch at Balmichael on 5th, over thirty Mistle Thrush at Mayish on 7th, thirty three Red-breasted Mergansers and seventy six Golden Plover at Machrie on 14th, a mixed flock of Long-tailed Tit, Coal Tit, Blue Tit and Goldcrest at the entrance to Glen Rosa on 23rd, eighty Kittiwake at Whiting Bay on 30th and sixty Goldfinch including many young at Blackwaterfoot on 31st.

All around the coast were signs of birds on migration, including fourteen Knot by Drumadoon Point on 14th, a Great Skua in Brodick Bay also on 14th, between six hundred and eight hundred Manx Shearwaters passing Largiemore in a hour on 18th, four Bar-tailed Godwits on Kilmory Shore on 25th, eighteen Sanderling and a similar number of Dunlin by Drumadoon Point on 27th, three White Wagtails at Blackwaterfoot on 29th and four Wheatear and three Sandwich Terns at Kilpatrick Point on 30th.

Other birding highlights this month included: a Long-eared Owl calling in Lochranza on 25th, a female Merlin in the Dyemill area in Lamlash on 27th and reports of Kingfisher on the Cnocan, Cloy and Rosa Burns from 15th until the end of the month.

Finally, a word on the familiar House Sparrow. While it is in severe decline elsewhere, here on Arran it seems to have had an excellent breeding season with observers reporting second and third broods. In August, groups with young included thirty five in

Shiskine on 5th, fifty at Drumadoon Farm on 13th, fifty in Whiting Bay on 18th and fifty in Lamlash.

September

September was fifty percent wetter than August with several stormy days. With September being the start of the peak migration season, when many birds are on the move, the unsettled weather may have contributed to the wide range of species recorded in September. It was certainly the time to expect the unexpected.

Unusual records included a male Pochard in Port-na-Lochan on 15th. This diving duck is a rare vagrant to Arran. The last report was one in Lamlash on 21 March 1984. There was also a juvenile Back-tailed Godwit on Cleats Shore from 20th to 28th. This is the first report of this uncommon passage migrant since 27 September 2005. A particular highlight was a solitary Chough from 5th to 20th by the Narachan Track leading from Lochranza to Laggan. The last report of Chough on Arran was five in Lochranza on 5 July 2001. The nearest breeding colony of these delightful corvids is on the Mull of Kintyre.

Other birds on migration included: ten Dunlin, one Knot, seven Sanderling and a Bar-tailed Godwit at Drumadoon Point on 3rd, a Merlin on Slidery Shore on 9th, an Arctic Skua in Brodick Bay on 13th, a male Common Scoter in Machrie Bay also on 13th, a Great Crested Grebe in Loch Ranza on 15th, three Sandwich Tern at Machriewaterfoot on 16th, a Grey Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 17th and a Scaup in Port-na-Lochan on 18th.

Large numbers of birds flocking together in preparation for migration included: sixty Swallow at Kilpatrick on 3rd, sixty Linnet on Slidery Shore on 14th, seventy five Skylark, one hundred Meadow Pipit and three hundred Goldfinch on Cleats Shore on 15th, one hundred Gannets and three hundred Kittiwakes in Whiting Bay on 24th, two hundred Starling on Cleats Shore on 28th and forty Pied Wagtail at Glenashdalewaterfoot on 29th.

With the approach of winter some birds move to the milder coast. Dipper was reported at the mouth of the Corrie burn on 27th and Kingfisher was reported from near the mouth of the Cloy burn on 4th. Other birds more associated with winter included: two Rooks at Slidery on 18th, two Whooper Swans flying over Auchenhew on 19th, one hundred Fieldfare at Glenkiln on 25th and eight Wigeon on Cleats Shore on 27th.

Having said that, some summer visitors were still around including: a Spotted Flycatcher in High Kildonan on 6th, a Whitethroat in Brodick on 15th, a Willow Warbler at Kildonan on 19th, a Chiffchaff at Auchenhew on 28th and on 29th forty House Martins and sixty five Swallows in Whiting Bay. October should see the last of the Swallows departing south.

Other sightings this month included: three Black-throated Divers in Machrie Bay on 15th, a Puffin in Brodick Bay on 17th, a Water Rail at Auchenhew on 18th and three Moorhen at Port-na-Lochan on 19th.

October

October was mild and wet, with over fifty percent more rain than recent Octobers. Despite this, there were plenty of interesting birds on Arran to enjoy.

Here are a few highlights.

On Wednesday 12 October, an immature White-tailed Eagle was photographed sitting on the shore about half a mile north of the boat house at Dougarie. This was the first confirmed report of this species this year. Later, another immature White-tailed Eagle, this one with a red wing tag indicating that it had been released in Fife earlier in the autumn, was first photographed in Shannochie on 30th. Unusually for this species whose recent visits to Arran have been fleeting, this one hung around for at least four days.

On Monday 17 October, a Jay was reported outside the Ranger Centre in Brodick Country Park. This is the first report of Jay on Arran since 24 October 1985. There was a further report last month of one by the hospital in Lamlash on 19th and by the end of the month there were at least two birds in Brodick Country Park and the adjacent Merkland Wood. There had been reports of an influx of this species into the UK from the continent.

On Friday 21 October, a juvenile Scarlet Rosefinch was coming to peanut feeders in a garden in High Kildonan. The bird was caught and ringed by a licensed bird ringer who thought he had déjà vu, because the last report of this species was also of a juvenile bird in the same garden on 24 October 1999. The nearest breeding area for this species is Scandinavia. This species undertakes long-distance migrations at night to winter from Iran to China. First-year birds tend to disperse further than adults. The one on Arran was heading in the wrong direction.

Other birds on migration included: three hundred Kittiwake in Whiting Bay on 10th, two Great Northern Divers off Catacol on 13th, nine Whooper Swans in Kilmory also on 13th, forty eight Skylark in Slidery on 19th, seven Greylags in the Shiskine Valley on 22nd, two Arctic Skuas off Pirnmill on 25th and on Cleats shore on 26th a Black-tailed Godwit and a Wheatear.

There were some “last sightings” of summer visitors including: Willow Warbler at Cordon on 2nd, Whinchat at Kildonan also on 2nd, Chiffchaff at Cleats Shore on 8th, twenty five House Martins in Whiting Bay on 13th and five Swallow in Slidery on 19th. A wintering Blackcap was reported in Shiskine on 27th.

There were widespread reports of wintering thrushes, with the largest groups being one hundred and forty Redwings in High Kildonan on 13th and over five hundred Fieldfares at Slidery on 19th. There was also an influx of continental Blackbirds, with forty in Feorline on 12th being the largest group reported.

Other sightings included: five wintering Rook at Shiskine on 20th, a Merlin on Machrie shore on 23rd, a Short-eared Owl at Thurguy on 25th, on the Fisherman's Walk, Brodick a Kingfisher on 26th and a Dipper on 28th and a female Yellowhammer in Shiskine also on 28th.

November

While parts of the beginning of November were dry and settled, the latter part of the month was decidedly unsettled and wet. The rainfall was similar to last November but the mean temperature this November was almost five degrees higher than November 2010.

Perhaps this milder weather influenced the arrival or non-arrival of some of our winter visitors. By the end of November there had been no records of Waxwing, Brambling or Goldeneye. While last year three species of grey goose were recorded in November, only the Greylag was recorded this year and the largest group of these, seventy two in the Shiskine Valley on 22nd, is considerably smaller than the normal numbers.

Having said this, over ninety species were recorded in Arran in November.

Both the Jay and White-tailed Eagle which featured in the October Notes lingered until the 4th. The Jay was last seen on Lamlash Golf Course and the eagle on Cleats Shore. Another highlight was a female Scaup. This duck was on the sea between the entrance to Brodick Castle and the Wineport on 21st and 22nd, the first record since 2003.

Among the wintering birds were: twenty four Lapwing on Cleats Shore on 2nd, four hundred Redwing at High Kildonan on 3rd, thirty Twite on Cleats Shore on 4th, twenty three Whooper Swans in the Shiskine Valley on 5th, up to one thousand Fieldfare at Sliddery also on 5th, eight Purple Sandpiper at Kildonan on 8th, three hundred Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 14th, sixty Teal at Kilpatrick on 14th, twelve Wigeon at Cosyden on 14th and twenty five Turnstone at Clauchlands on 29th.

Other sightings in November included: seven Common Crossbill at High Kildonan on 4th, an Arctic Skua in Brodick Bay on 5th, two Little Grebe off the Holy Isle on 7th, two Great Skua harassing Kittiwakes at Glenashdalewaterfoot on 10th, four Moorhen at Port-na-Lochan on 14th, a male Goosander in Loch Ranza on 18th, a Kingfisher on Fisherman's Walk, Brodick on 23rd and two Short-eared Owls on Garbh Allt on 27th.

All three divers were reported round the coast. These included: four Red-throated Divers off Pirnmill on 1st, a Great Northern Diver off Blackwaterfoot on 6th and ten Black-throated Divers off Cosyden on 14th.

Gardens are safe refuges during the winter months and these are some of the November reports from gardens round the island: forty Blackbird at Shannochie on 6th, ten Coal Tit at Kingscross on 10th, ten Bullfinch in Kilmory on 11th, eight Long-tailed Tit at Lamlash on 15th, three Dunnock in Shiskine on 17th, twenty Chaffinch in Brodick on 20th, a regular Great Spotted Woodpecker at Strabane on 24th and a female Yellowhammer in Shiskine on 29th.

December

December was one of the wettest months of the year with a rainfall of about four times that of December 2010. The mean temperature was over four degrees higher than last December and this milder weather may continued to delay the arrival of some of our winter visitors. For example the first Goldeneye was not reported until there was one at Port-na-Lochan on 4th and the first Pink-footed Geese were not reported until four were reported in the Shiskine Valley on 31st. In addition unlike last year, when there were a

number of reports of these species, there was only one report of Brambling in Kilmory on 9th, one report of Jack Snipe at Auchenhew and one report of Woodcock in Lamlash both on 11th.

Having said that, there was a wide variety of interesting reports including: a Merlin at the top of the String on the 8th, twenty nine Black-headed Gulls at Auchenhew on 11th, a Long-eared Owl at the top of the String on 14th, two over wintering Stonechats at Pirrmill on 14th, a Little Grebe in Loch Ranza on 15th, ten Great Northern Diver off Cosyden on 16th and a Kingfisher in the Rosa Burn on 23rd.

Other wintering geese in the Shiskine Valley included: a Barnacle Goose on the 9th and over three hundred Greylags with four White-fronted Geese on 18th. These were the first reports of Barnacle and White-fronts this year.

Highlights included: a female Black Redstart on Cleats Shore on 15th the first report of this scarce passage migrant this year and a long staying Jay at Cnoc na Dail on 17th. The Jay was first seen on 17 October.

Wintering flocks included: one hundred and fifty Fieldfare at Balmichael on 2nd, eighty Chaffinch in Shiskine on 9th, thirty Greenfinch at South Feorline on 15th, two hundred and fifty Starling in Kilpatrick also on 15th and fifty three Blackbird at Auchenhew on 18th.

On the shore, reports included: three Purple Sandpiper at Drumadoon on 15th, a Bar-tailed Godwit on Cleats Shore also on 15th, two Greenshank at Clauchlands on 16th, one hundred and fifty six Golden Plover at Machriewaterfoot on 16th and a Gannet off Sandbraes on the 8th was only the third December report in the last six years. This species normally return in January.

Garden reports included: a female Yellowhammer in Shiskine on 2nd, a male Blackcap at Balmichael on 11th and ten Long-tailed Tit at Clachaig on 21st.

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 the projects on Arran which are contributing to increasing our understanding of birds on Arran.

The Weather 2011

The weather influences the timing of bird migration.

With a mild March and a particularly warm April the summer migrants arrived a few days earlier than in 2010.

The weather influences the timing of breeding.

In comparison with 2010, May 2011 was cooler with the winds often from a northerly direction. This may have delayed the timing of the breeding of some of our summer visitors.

The weather influences the success of breeding.

The heavy rain in both May and June may have had an impact on the poor breeding records for some of our raptors.

The weather influences survival.

The winter of 2010-2011 was one of the coldest on record for the UK. For Arran the weather was also exceptional. For the second winter in a row there were falls of snow with snow lying even at low levels. As a result there has been a decline in some species like Stonechat and Grey Wagtail

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 2011 from our weather station at Kilpatrick on the west of the island.

	Temperature (degrees C)			Rainfall (mm)	Rainfall (mm)	Wind Speed (mph) and Direction		
	Mean	High	Low		BCG	Average	High	Dom. Dir.
January	4.7	10.8	-3.5	82.6	175.3	5.0	33.0	SSE
February	6.2	12.1	-0.2	189.6	264.8	6.3	55.0	SSE
March	6.2	15.1	-2.4	76.6	115.5	5.1	45.0	SSE
April	10.9	23.1	3.2	43.8	93.9	4.9	35.0	SSE
May	11.2	22.2	4.7	102.7	264.4	8.0	51.0	W
June	12.3	22.3	4.6	118.4	159.1	4.1	28.0	W
July	14.6	20.9	6.9	46.0	70.6	3.8	27.0	SSE
August	13.8	20.7	6.6	70.6	125.1	3.5	30.0	W
September	13.5	20.2	5.9	108.8	254.5	7.4	47.0	SSE
October	11.7	16.1	3.5	157.2	385.2	7.1	46.0	SSE
November	10.4	15.2	3.3	118.4	259.5	7.3	51.0	SSE
December	6.9	12.6	-0.1	165.2	404.7	9.9	63.0	W

Dom.Dir. – dominant direction

Also included for comparison is the rainfall data from Brodick Castle Gardens (BCG) provided by Colin Totty, Head Gardener. This clearly demonstrates variation from the Kilpatrick data. As well as a variation in rainfall, during the prolonged cold spell in January the lowest temperature recorded in Kilpatrick in the west of Arran was negative 3.5 degrees Celsius, whereas in Brodick Castle Gardens in the east of Arran the lowest temperature was negative 11.6 degrees Celsius.

In future bird reports, the Arran Natural History Society would like to include weather data. Not just the data from one weather station but, knowing that the weather does vary across the island, the data from a range of weather stations across Arran.

If you are keeping records of the weather where you live on Arran and would like to share these records with me for inclusion in the "Arran Bird Report". Please get in touch.

Summer Migrant Arrival Dates

	"Earliest" Recorded Date	Arrival Date 2011
Wheatear	13-Mar-05	22 March
Chiffchaff	17-Mar-05	21 March
Sand Martin	18-Mar-09	23 March
Willow Warbler	20-Mar-94	05 April
Swallow	23-Mar-05	03 April
White Wagtail	24-Mar-08	27 March
House Martin	28-Mar-05	07 April
Common Sandpiper	29-Mar-98	16 April
Whinchat	01-Apr-88	19 April
Sandwich Tern	03-Apr-09	07 April
Manx Shearwater	03-Apr-11	03 April
Tree Pipit	07-Apr-90	19 April
Redstart	08-April-11	08 April
Cuckoo	10-Apr-01	18 April
Grasshopper Warbler	12-Apr-11	12 April
Garden Warbler	12-Apr-95	22 April
Sedge Warbler	14-Apr-11	14 April
Arctic Tern	16-Apr-09	06 May
Whitethroat	17-Apr-06	17 April
Corncrake	20-Apr-90	None recorded in 2011
Common Tern	21-Apr-93	11 July, one of only two records
Spotted Flycatcher	21-Apr-11	21 April
Wood Warbler	25-Apr-09	26 May, one of three records
Lesser Whitethroat	27-Apr-10	14 May, one of only two records
Pied Flycatcher	28-Apr-98	None recorded in 2011
Swift	01-May-09	08 May
Nightjar	23-May-94	None recorded in 2011

Regular Winter Migrant Arrival and Departure Dates

	"earliest" Arrival date	"latest" Departure date	2011 Arrival date	2011 Departure date
Whooper Swan	18-Sep-11	04-May-06	18 September	18 April
Pink-footed Goose	11-Oct-10	07-Apr-08	31 December	24 April
Greylag Goose	10-Oct-10	15-Apr-11	22 October	15 April
Wigeon	11-Jul-11	06-Apr-08	11 July	26 April
Goldeneye	12-Oct-09	04-May-06	04 December	28 March
Purple Sandpiper	09-Nov-06	11-May-10	09 November	12 February
Kingfisher	13-Jul-07	27-Mar-08	21 July	05 March
Waxwing	21-Oct-10	15-Apr-09		22 March
Fieldfare	25-Sep-11	18-Apr-08	25 September	13 March
Redwing	30-Sep-07	05-Apr-07	11 October	02 April
Rook	03-Jul-07	20-Apr-11	18 September	20 April
Brambling	09-Oct-07	25-Apr-08	09 December	03 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 feral population of Greylag Geese which is frequently seen in the summer in Clachlands.

Bird Surveys and Projects on Arran

Bird Atlas 2007-2011 and the Arran Bird Atlas

Bird Atlas 2007-2011 is being organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). It aims to produce maps of distribution and relative abundance for all bird species breeding and wintering in Britain and Ireland. The national bird atlas should be produced this year and should allow changes in bird distributions to be assessed since previous breeding atlases in 1970 and 1990 and since the last winter atlas of the early 1980s.

Here on Arran this is the last year for collecting data for the local bird atlas.

You are encouraged to record and to report all your Arran bird sightings to try to ensure that for every area of Arran we have recorded every species present.

What birds? The simple answer is every bird but if you take a minute to download this - http://arranbirding.blogware.com/_attachments/4339253/ArranWinterMapsasOct10.doc . You will see in the document a map for each species on Arran and notice that some of our common Arran birds have gaps. Examples are the crows, Carrion Crow and Hooded Crow. Common species are often overlooked. People tend not to report them and, in this our final year of collecting data, please report all the common birds that you know in all the areas of Arran that you visit this year.

Using the Bird Atlas National website On this website <http://blx1.bto.org/atlas/main/data-home.jsp> there is a very useful section called "Priority Squares Winter".

There is also information on breeding birds. If you click "Breeding" on the webpage, for any square on Arran, you get a list of bird species **not** observed in that square but recorded in adjacent squares. Use this list as a hint to species that *may* be present in your area but as yet unrecorded. Of course some of the gaps may be due to differences in habitat between areas, so it may not be possible to record them, but the information may hint at gaps. For example, if no Blackbirds have been recorded in a square but Blackbird has been recorded in every neighbouring square, then it would be worth looking for Blackbird in that square and reporting Blackbird if seen.

Garden BirdWatch

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 'citizen scientists'. Observations collected by BTO Garden BirdWatchers are analysed by BTO researchers and published in leading journals. BTO Garden BirdWatchers have charted the decline of the House Sparrow, the rise of the Woodpigeon, have discovered that urban birds get up later than their rural counterparts and have alerted conservationists to the impact of an emerging disease in Greenfinches.

On Arran in 2011 there were nine volunteers on Arran who took part in this survey. To find out more, visit the website <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/gbw>

Wetland Bird Survey - Arran Summary for 2011

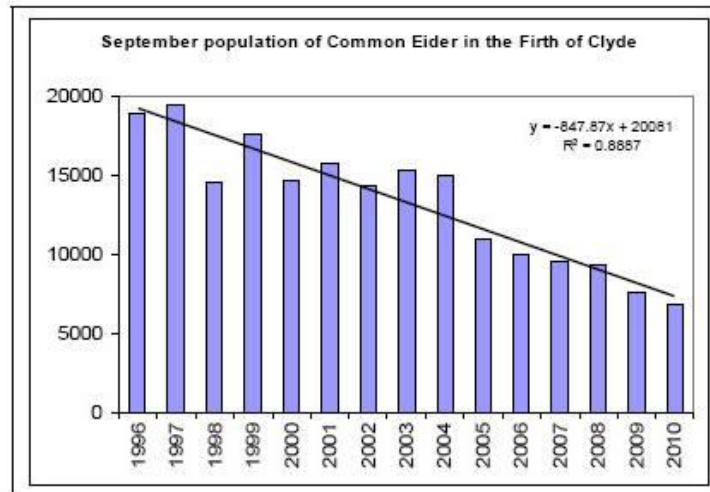
This is a joint scheme involving the British Trust for Ornithology, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and monitors non-breeding waterbirds in the UK. The survey is dependent on volunteers. Eight of the survey sites 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 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	24	22	28	27	21	43	44	31	21	23	22	28
Whooper Swan	3	7	7	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greylag Goose	87	89	34	16	5	4	7	42	0	0	52	99
Shelduck	6	20	21	28	17	32	1	0	0	0	0	3
Wigeon	24	37	36	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	17
Teal	52	81	61	1	1	0	0	7	8	36	78	84
Mallard	153	124	71	71	85	112	51	84	116	153	137	158
Pintail	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pochard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Scaup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Eider	70	75	99	114	73	36	22	31	32	80	113	193
Common Scoter	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goldeneye	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Red-breasted Merganser	23	44	33	47	48	26	35	57	84	54	53	52
Goosander	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	1	0
Red-throated Diver	0	0	2	4	2	3	1	0	0	0	3	4
Black-throated Diver	2	1	7	7	0	0	0	1	2	2	10	14
Great Northern Diver	0	3	12	16	14	0	0	0	1	0	1	10
Little Grebe	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Cormorant	4	3	3	7	6	5	9	11	12	8	7	5
Shag	38	42	25	62	20	25	85	51	85	70	113	102
Grey Heron	8	4	2	5	5	6	8	6	8	4	12	11
Moorhen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	4
Oystercatcher	278	321	304	268	190	143	166	236	164	231	238	203
Ringed Plover	45	88	43	21	27	8	21	154	71	31	75	121
Golden Plover	0	3	0	0	88	0	0	76	80	14	300	156
Grey Plover	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Lapwing	3	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2
Knot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0
Sanderling	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purple Sandpiper	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Dunlin	1	0	0	0	16	0	0	13	2	0	1	5
Snipe	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Bar-tailed Godwit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Whimbrel	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Curlew	94	153	41	17	14	9	16	65	87	128	117	99
Redshank	32	17	17	18	2	3	3	15	16	28	40	38
Greenshank	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Common Sandpiper	0	0	0	8	8	12	8	2	0	0	0	0
Turnstone	61	13	5	33	12	0	1	41	64	40	125	100

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

Annual 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. See graph below.



Chris Waltho, a past president of the Scottish Ornithologists Club, has organised September surveys in the Clyde for about twenty years. Chris's data clearly shows that the post breeding population of Eiders in the Firth of Clyde is in decline and has more than halved in the last ten years.

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 out 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 2011 the total figure from the census done in September was fifty.

In addition, 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.

Raven Study



The Raven is our largest corvid, the family which includes both Carrion and Hooded crows and Jackdaws, all of which are widespread on Arran. Over the years its fortunes have fluctuated with man's attitudes to it.

Way back in earlier centuries it was a familiar bird throughout Britain as it scavenged around human habitations capitalising on the refuse and discarded food left lying. It was even regarded as a asset since it helped to clean up the streets (it was a protected bird in Edinburgh around 1600). On farmland, it fed on the carcasses of dead animals left unburied and thus fulfilled a valuable role. With improved agriculture and better hygiene in towns and villages, it became less welcome and, coupled with its reputation for killing lambs, soon found itself on the bounty list and treated as vermin. Gradually its range retreated to the uplands, although even here it was in conflict with game rearers, grouse moor owners and hill farmers. After years of persecution and in the face of rapidly reducing numbers, it was given protection in the 20th century.

Like all the crow family it is intelligent and versatile. It breeds as early as February on exposed crags and cliffs, raising broods of up to five young birds when winter is still lingering in the hills. Paired birds are faithful to their nest site throughout the year but their offspring and pairs without a territory form flocks which feed and roost together.

On Arran, as in many parts of Scotland, Raven numbers have recovered after years of decline but increased numbers, especially of non territorial birds, has brought them into conflict with man. Farmers here have experienced losses to livestock and are understandably keen to protect their animals from future attacks. In the last few years licences have been issued by the Scottish Government to shoot limited numbers of birds.

In an effort to establish the overall population of Ravens on the island at different times of the year, and to study the impact licensed shooting has had and to quantify the level of damage to livestock, Scottish Natural Heritage has commissioned a study and report on ravens in Arran which will run to June 2012. The study is being undertaken by Malcolm Whitmore.

Any sightings of groups of Ravens heading for roost in the evening or leaving at first light would help to gain a better understanding of the birds. Whilst many of the nest sites are of long standing and well known, all information on breeding locations is welcomed. *Contact Malcolm directly on 01770 700367 or email rumbayview@btopenworld.com*



Whinchat Population Study

Terry and Chris Southall

The Whinchat is a long distance migrant, over-flying the Sahara to winter in tropical Africa. A marked reduction in the 1970s and 1980s reduced a once widespread population of Whinchat to one only found on upland western and northern areas of Britain. Why there should be such a large reduction in this population is not known. Whinchats prefer breeding areas which are predominantly of bracken and rank grass. They differ in this instance from their close relative the Stonechat that inhabits open areas, which have gorse and shrubs growing.

This is the beginning of a study to ascertain the numbers of Whinchat breeding on Arran, their survival rate, and fidelity to their natal site and how stable this population is.

Glen Rosa

Pair No	Eggs	Young	Comments
1	0	5	Chicks ringed
2	0	7	Chicks ringed
3	0	5	Chicks too large to ring
4	?	?	Male observed, female on eggs?
5	0	6	Chicks ringed
6	1	5	Chicks ringed
7	0	5	Chicks too large to ring
8	0	5	Chicks too large to ring
9	0	?	Chicks fledged from nest
10	?	?	Male observed, female on eggs?

Ten pairs raised more than 38 young.

Glenscorrodale

Pair No	Eggs	Young	Comments
1	0	4	Young ringed
2	0	5	Young ringed
3	0	5	Young too small to ring
4	0	0	Chicks fledged from nest
5	0	0	Chicks fledged from nest
6	?	?	Male observed, female on eggs?

Glen Catacol

Pair No	Eggs	Young	Comments
1	0	5	Chicks ringed
2	?	?	Chicks fledged from nest.

It is anticipated that from next year, nests will be found before eggs hatch so that all chicks may be colour ringed to understand the above more clearly. This will allow birds to be identified in the field by their colour rings without the need to catch them. Finding nests at the egg stage will allow us to see how successful the hatching rate is.

Report from Forestry Commission Barn Owl Nest Box Project

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



The annual breeding success is to a large extent dependent on the vole population. In 2011, although the vole population was not at peak levels, from the twenty eight nest boxes checked throughout the forest, there were a total of fifty three chicks.

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 may reflect 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 are Arran bred Black Grouse on the moors of Arran again.



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.

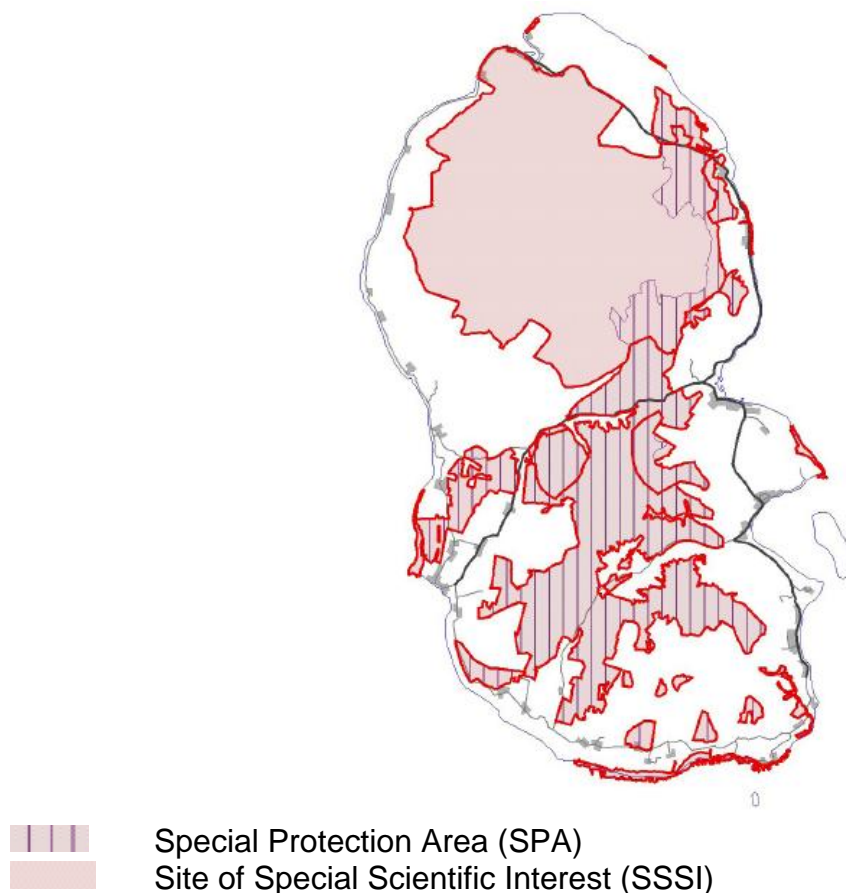
Subscribers automatically receive an email whenever anything is added to the website. To find out how to join visit the website <http://www.arranblackgrouse.com/blog/>

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 Divers, 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.

As reported in the 2009 Arran Bird Report, in 2009 the Arran Hen Harrier project entered a new phase with the wing tagging of young Hen Harriers and the satellite tracking of two of these birds. For the first time, this enabled information to be gathered on the movements of Arran Hen Harriers. This was supported by Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland. Unfortunately both tagged birds died in their first winter on Arran.

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?

Much has been discovered about birds by watching and counting them, but such methods rarely allow birds to be identified as individuals. This is essential if we are to learn about how long they live and when and where they move, questions that are vital for bird conservation. Placing a lightweight, uniquely numbered, metal ring around a bird's leg provides a reliable and harmless method of identifying birds as individuals. Each 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.

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.

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. About twenty percent are ringed as chicks in the nest; this is valuable because their precise age and origin are then known. The method most frequently used to catch fully-grown birds is the mist net. This is a fine net erected between poles, and is designed to catch birds in flight. This method is very effective but birds can only be removed safely from mist nets by experienced ringers who have received special training.

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>

Bird ringing on Arran in 2011

This year's total was double that of 2010, which was mainly due to more time being available to Terry Southall to catch and ring birds.

Visits to Pladda resulted in some sea birds being ringed and the discovery of a new breeding Cormorant colony. A reduction in the Barn Owl chicks total was because of wet and windy weather at the time these birds were to be ringed. The harsh winter continued to affect the Stonechat recovery with no birds breeding in the study areas. In contrast Whinchats had a good breeding season with many adult birds returning to Arran from their trans-Saharan wintering grounds. The large number of Willow Warbler and Siskin ringed reflects just how many of these birds pass through Arran during their spring and autumn migrations. A second Common Rosefinch ringed in the same garden as the last bird is without precedent. (See photo inside of back cover)

Ringling Totals for 2011

Species	Full grown	Pulli	Retraps	Total
Shag	0	11	1	12
Mute Swan	3	0	0	3
Kestrel	0	9	0	9
Oystercatcher	0	2	0	2
Whimbrel	3	0	0	3
Common Sandpiper	1	0	0	1
Great Black-backed Gull	0	5	0	5
Arctic Tern	0	6	0	6
Rock Dove	1	0	0	1
Barn Owl	0	2	0	2
Swallow	34	4	0	38
House Martin	5	0	0	5
Meadow Pipit	35	0	0	35
Rock Pipit	11	5	0	16
Grey Wagtail	2	0	0	2
Pied/White Wagtail	9	0	0	9
Dipper	1	0	1	2
Wren	63	0	5	68
Dunnock	41	0	3	44
Robin	42	0	9	51
Whinchat	1	37	0	38
Stonechat	1	0	0	1
Wheatear	10	0	0	10
Blackbird	68	3	0	71
Fieldfare	1	0	0	1
Song Thrush	15	0	0	15
Grasshopper Warbler	1	0	0	1
Sedge Warbler	51	5	4	60
Whitethroat	33	6	0	39
Blackcap	68	0	6	74

Continued

Species	Full grown	Pulli	Retraps	Total
Chiffchaff	15	0	0	15
Willow Warbler	486	0	10	496
Goldcrest	89	0	8	97
Spotted Flycatcher	3	0	0	3
Long-tailed Tit	9	0	3	12
Coal Tit	21	0	4	25
Blue Tit	55	0	5	60
Great Tit	77	2	14	93
Treecreeper	6	0	0	6
House Sparrow	4	0	0	4
Chaffinch	123	0	20	143
Greenfinch	51	0	4	55
Goldfinch	95	0	16	111
Siskin	545	0	88	633
Linnet	16	0	0	16
Twite	1	0	0	1
Lesser Redpoll	20	0	2	22
Common Rosefinch	1	0	0	1
Bullfinch	22	0	0	22
Reed Bunting	2	0	0	2
	2141	97	203	2441

Pulli – Young birds in nest

Selected List of Recoveries

Birds ringed on Arran and recovered/controlled elsewhere in 2011

Species	Age & Sex	Date Ringed	Date recovered/controlled	Time lapsed in days	Where recovered	Distance from place ringed
Chaffinch	3	02/10/10	05/02/11	116	Girvan, South Ayrshire	29km
Lesser Redpoll	3J	22/07/11	23/09/11	63	Kilnsea, East Yorks	407km
Greenfinch	3J F	10/06/11	28/10/11	140	Stranraer, Galloway.	64km

Age and sex were at time of ringing.

The Chaffinch was probably born on Arran but moved to the mainland during the cold winter, it was found dead at the side of the road.

Lesser Redpoll breed on Arran and it is probable that this youngster was born locally. It was heading south to winter when caught at Spurn Point bird Observatory. This bird was ringed on the same day that two other ringed Lesser Redpoll were caught, these had been ringed elsewhere and demonstrate how far these small finches travel (see over).

Of over 400 Greenfinch ringed on Arran this is the first recovery off the island. Although it is thought that most do depart the island in winter.

Birds ringed elsewhere and recovered/controlled on Arran in 2011

Species	Age & Sex	Date ringed	Date recovered/controlled	Time lapsed in days	Where ringed	Distance from place ringed
Goldfinch	4 M	11/12/10	14/05/11	154	Thetford, Norfolk.	509km
Siskin*	5 F	15/03/10	01/04/11	382	Thetford, Norfolk.	510km
Siskin*	5 M	15/03/11	13/06/11	90	Runcorn, Lancs.	283km
Siskin	3J	28/06/09	11/02/11	593	Bin Forest, Aberdeen.	266km
Siskin	6 F	24/03/10	01/04/11	373	Wirral, Merseyside.	262km
Siskin	5 M	11/02/11	05/03/11	22	Dunmurry, Antrim.	115km
Siskin	5 M	26/03/10	17/03/11	356	Rostrevor, Down.	164km
Lesser Redpoll	6	26/02/10	22/07/11	511	Birches Valley, Staffs.	371km
Lesser Redpoll	3	31/10/10	22/07/11	264	Icklesham, Sussex	644km

Age and sex were at time of ringing.

Both the Siskins marked * were caught several times on Arran and were breeding locally. The bird from the Bin Forest was ringed as a juvenile and was probably heading back north to its natal area when caught on Arran. Two Siskins ringed in Ireland demonstrate that these finches are prepared to cross the Irish Sea and winter there.

Both the Lesser Redpolls were males in full breeding plumage when caught and had probably bred locally. These with the bird above show that most Lesser Redpolls, Siskin and Goldfinch leave Arran for the winter.

Codes for Age & Sex

- 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.

M = male and F = female

Finally if you find a ringed bird

The details on the ring can be reported on line using this link <http://blx1.bto.org/euring/main/>. If you find a ringed bird on Arran please share this information with Jim Cassels, Bird Recorder of the Arran Natural History Society. The contact details are at the beginning of the report.

Systematic List 2011

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Successful breeding on several hill lochans. Groups on sea included 5 off Kildonan on 23 January, 4 off Machriewaterfoot on 8 March, 6 off Pirnmill on 26 July, 4 off Sandbraes on 1 August and 5 off the Fallen Rocks car park on 8 August.

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

Passage migrant with records in every month of the year in 2011. Arran is a site of national importance for birds in autumn.

The largest groups were a group of 5 off An Scriodan on 11 January, 8 off Pirnmill on 8 April, 6 off Blackwaterfoot on 8 April and 10 off Cosyden on 14 November.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Passage migrant. Records from January to July and September to December in 2011.

Groups included 8 off Cleats Shore on 3 March, 30 off Kilpatrick on 8 April, 10 off Dougarie on 8 April, 9 off Kildonan on 8 April, 16 off Cosyden on 17 April, 14 off Machrie on 17 May and 10 at Machriewaterfoot on 16 December.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Passage migrant and winter visitor. First breeding record.

Groups included 2 on the Rosa Burn on 16 January, 4 in Loch Ranza on 2 February and 2 in Lamlash Bay on 27 November. On Tuesday 12 July a Little Grebe was seen with two young on a pond in Kilpatrick. This is the first breeding record of this species.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

One in Whiting Bay on 11 March, 2 in Machrie Bay on 13 September and one in Loch Ranza on 15 September. These are all the records for 2011.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one in Whiting Bay on 9 March 2009.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one in Lamlash Bay on 6 March 2010.

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

Occasional winter and passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one Whiting Bay on 30 October 2010.

Fulmar (Northern Fulmar) *Fulmarus glacialis*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Largest groups at nest areas included 24 at Bennan Head on 19 April and 28 at Drumadoon on 6 June. Only two successful breeding records with 2 downy young at Cleiteadh Buidhe on 26 June and one fledged young at Catacol on 21 July.

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one in Brodick Bay on 3 September 2009.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was 7 in Machrie Bay on 6 September 2009.



Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Passage migrant with records from 3 April to 13 September.

Large groups included 150 off Cosyden on 17 April, over 800 off Largiemore on 18 August, 100 off Lochranza on 29 August and 150 off Rubha Salach on 19 September.

Mediterranean Shearwater (Balearic Shearwater) *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one off Corriecravie 14 October 1990.

Storm Petrel (European Storm Petrel) *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Rare vagrant.

Two off Blackwaterfoot on 26 May. (PGM)

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

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one off Pirnmill 24 September 1991.

Gannet (Northern Gannet) *Morus bassanus*

Nearest breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year, but much more common in summer with records from 30 January to 14 October.

Groups included 50 in Brodick Bay on 30 June, 50 off Catacol on 3 August, 100 in Whiting Bay on 24 September and 100 off Lochranza on 29 September. Two December records one off Sandbraes on 8th and one in Brodick Bay on 15th were unusual. In the previous six years there had only been two December records.

Cormorant (Great Cormorant) *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Common round coast all year but less common than Shag. First breeding record.

Nest area on Pladda in July with five pairs is the first Arran breeding record. Groups included 5 off Blackwaterfoot on 5 August, 10 in Whiting Bay on 21 August, 3 in Machrie Bay on 16 October and 4 at Cleats Shore on 11 November.

Shag (European Shag) *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Nest area on Pladda in July had 20 pairs. Groups included 30 Cleats Shore on 8 September, 34 at Drumadoon Point on 15 September, 74 at Clauchlands on 21 September, 81 in Whiting Bay on 8 October and 14 at Auchenhew on 17 December.

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. 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.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Nest areas in 2011 included 6 at Whitehouse, Lamlash on 4 May, two at Lagg on 10 May and one at Lochranza on 19 May. Groups included 3 at Lochranza on 29 July, 3 at Catacol on 12 August, 4 in Lamlash Bay on 14 August and 4 at Whiting Bay on 15 August.

Spoonbill (Eurasian Spoonbill) *Platalea leucorodia*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one at Corrie on 13 October 1978.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Pairs with young included 7 at Port-na-Lochan on 22 May, 5 at Cordon on 31 May, 5 at Corrie on 20 June, 4 at North Sannox on 14 July, 4 at Machrie on 18 July. Winter groups included 16 at Sandbraes on 14 February and 7 at Blackwaterfoot on 14 November.

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

Rare winter visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record was one at Lagg 6 January 1991.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 14 adults with three juveniles in Whiting Bay between 1 January and 18 April. Passage groups included 20 in Corriecravie on 16 March, 20 in Brodick Bay on 20 March, 12 at Auchenhew on 27 October and 23 in Shiskine on 5 November.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant.

Groups in Shiskine Valley from January to March where largest group was 25 on 30 January. Two other reports: 65 flying over Whiting Bay on 18 April and one at Clauchlands on 24 April.



White-fronted Goose (Greater White-fronted Goose) *Anser albifrons*

Occasional winter visitor.

One at Whitefarland on 13 December and four with Greylags in Shiskine from 18 to 31 December. These are all the records for 2011.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Winter visitor with small feral population in Lamlash Bay.

Up to 500 in Shiskine Valley between 1 January and 15 April. Up to 350 in Shiskine Valley between 22 October and end of year. Other groups included 400 at Clachaig on 22 January and 54 at Auchenhew on 11 December. Largest count of feral population in Lamlash Bay was 50 on 15 August.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Occasional visitor. First breeding record

Increasing reports including 2 at Cleats Shore on 3 March, 5 at Machrie on 15 August and one at Slidery on 9 September. A pair with four goslings at ponds in Slidery on 12 May is the first breeding record of this species.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*.

Occasional winter visitor.

One with Greylags in Shiskine from 9 to 11 December (SKT).

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Occasional winter visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record was one at Clauchlands on 13 December 2010.

Shelduck (Common Shelduck) *Tadorna tadorna*

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

Pairs with various numbers of young including 11 at Carlo on 17 May, 8 at Clauchlands on 8 June, 10 at Pirnmill on 9 June, 6 at Kilpatrick on 11 June, 4 at Cleats Shore on 23 June and 5 at Corrie on 12 July.

Mandarin *Aix galericulata*

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

No records for 2011. Last record Rosa and Cloy Burns in Brodick on 27 March 2009.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Winter visitor and passage migrant with records from January to March and August to December.

Groups included 32 at Sliderywaterfoot on 1 February, 35 at Cosyden on 5 February, 37 at Auchenhew on 20 February, 19 at Auchenhew on 11 December, 15 at Cleats Shore on 15 December and 16 at Machriewaterfoot on 16 December.

Teal (Common Teal) *Anas crecca*

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

Groups included 54 at Sliderywaterfoot on 1 February, 47 at Machrie on 12 February, 60 at Kilpatrick on 14 November and 54 at Cosyden on 16 December.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Females with young included 8 at Machriewaterfoot on 26 April, 13 at Cladach on 30 April and 11 at Clauchlands on 20 June. Groups included 54 at Kilpatrick on 1 March, 50 on Rosa Burn on 4 November and 50 at Shiskine on 7 December.

Pintail (Northern Pintail) *Anas acuta*

Rare vagrant.

Long staying female was on the shore between Blackwaterfoot and Kilpatrick from 11 January to 5 March (AW).

Shoveler (Northern Shoveler) *Anas clypeata*

Rare vagrant.

Male in Shiskine pond on 20 February (BK). Last record was on this pond on 3 April 2009.

Pochard (Common Pochard) *Aythya ferina*

Rare vagrant.

Male at Port na Lochan from 15 to 18 September (GB). Last record was one in Lamlash on 21 March 1984.



Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Occasional visitor.

A male on Port na Lochan on 19 June and on 9 to 10 July.
These are all the records for 2011.

Scaup (Greater Scaup) *Aythya marila*

Occasional winter visitor.

A female on Port na Lochan on 18 September and a female on the sea by the Wine Port, Brodick Bay on 21 and 22 November. These are all the records for 2011.

Eider (Common Eider) *Somateria mollissima*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Breeding included females with 8 young at Kilpatrick on 11 June, 10 young at Kildonan on 2 July, 5 young at Brodick on 5 July and 4 young at Corrie on 10 July. Groups included 86 at Lamlash, 88 in Machrie Bay on 14 November and 66 at Kildonan on 18 December.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was a long staying drake in Lochranza in April 1980.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one in Blackwaterfoot on 27 April 1998.

Common Scoter (Black Scoter) *Melanitta nigra*

Occasional visitor.

A pair off Cosyden on 19 March and a male in Machrie Bay on 13 September.
These are all the records for 2011.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 off Catacol on 5 April 1998.

Goldeneye (Common Goldeneye) *Bucephala clangula*

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

Groups included 3 at Whiting Bay on 7 February, 3 at Pirnmill on 4 March, 3 at Cordon on 23 March, 2 in Loch Ranza on 29 December and 2 at Port na Lochan on 31 December.

Smew *Mergellus albellus*

Occasional winter visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record a male off Pirnmill on 28 November 2004.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Breeding. Common round coast all year. Site of national importance.

Breeding included female with 5 young in Machrie Bay on 18 July, 7 young at Catacol on 22 July and 8 young in Loch Ranza on 24 July. Groups included 38 at Dougarie on 26 July, 33 at Machrie on 14 August and 60 at Catacol on 27 September.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Breeding. Localised.

No confirmed breeding in 2011. Sightings included a pair in Loch Ranza on 7 January, a male and two females at Machriewaterfoot on 11 June, a pair at Glenashdalewaterfoot on 1 October and a female in Brodick Bay on 29 December.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*

Introduced species which first bred in Ayrshire in 2001.

No records for 2011. Male on Port na Lochan on 21 April 2007 was a first for Arran.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Occasional visitor from British reintroduction projects.

One in North Sannox on 22 April and one at South Lodge in Brodick Country Park on 27 April are all the records for 2011.

Marsh Harrier (Eurasian Marsh Harrier) *Circus aeruginosus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was a juvenile in Lamlash 19 August 2004.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Resident. Breeding widespread. Internationally important area with five percent of UK breeding population.

A poor season. In recent years the number of young fledged has varied from around twenty to over forty depending on factors like food availability and weather. Numerous widespread sightings mainly within the Special Protection Area see page 22.

Goshawk (Northern Goshawk) *Accipiter gentilis*

No confirmed breeding.

A male bird in Dyemill area Lamlash on 21 September (IStr).

Sparrowhawk (*Eurasian Sparrowhawk*) *Accipiter nisus*

Resident. Breeding widespread.

A very poor breeding season with only 2 fledged from 2 successful nests. Eight nest sites were checked and birds were found at four of them. Numerous sightings throughout the year.

Buzzard (Common Buzzard) *Buteo buteo*

Resident, Breeding widespread.

Numerous widespread sightings throughout the year including 3 at An Tunna on 8 February, 3 at Whitefarland on 29 June, 5 on Narachan Track on 25 August, 5 on Ross Road 30 August, 8 at Corriecravie on 20 October and 6 at Bennan on 4 November.

Rough-legged buzzard *Buteo lagopus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last recorded at Cleats Shore 10 November 1974.

White-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Rare vagrant.

An immature at Dougarie on 12 October and a tagged immature from 30 October to 4 November between Shannochie and Cleats Shore. These are all the records for 2011.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Resident. Breeding. Nationally important area with one percent of UK breeding population.

All territories occupied. At least 3 young fledged. Immature birds sighted over Lochranza on 15 July, above Coire Fhionn Lochan on 17 August, at Burrigan Hill on 20 September and over the Craw on 13 October.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Occasional passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last recorded at Garbh Allt on 15 September 2010.

Kestrel (Common Kestrel) *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident. Breeding widespread.

Numerous widespread sightings throughout the year including with fledged young at Machrie on 22 June, Sannox on 26 June, Catacol 29 June, Kildonan 5 July, Brown Head on 15 July and Glenshant Hill on 5 September.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

No confirmed breeding, possibly underreported. More widely distributed in winter and on passage.

Singles recorded included male at Imachar on 1 January, male at High Kildonan on 9 March, female at Glenshant on 15 September and at Glen Iorsa on 17 September.

Hobby (Eurasian Hobby) *Falco subbuteo*

Rare vagrant.

An adult bird by the Ross Road on 22 June (AndyW).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Resident. Breeding widespread at inland and coastal sites.

Continue to hold territories around the coast with several inland sites. Successful fledging was reported from most of those occupied. Numerous sightings throughout the year including one at Bennan Head on 19 January, one at Clachaig on 3 February, one at An Tunna on 24 September and one at Catacol on 13 October.

Red Grouse (Willow Ptarmigan) *Lagopus scoticus*

Resident. Breeding. Underreported.

Groups included 8 on Meal nam Damh on 28 March, 10 on Meal Mor on 2 June, 8 at Windmill Hill on 1 October and 6 on Beinn Bhreac on 27 October.



Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus*

Very localised.

No records for 2011. Last record five at Coire nam Meann on 7 March 2010.

Black Grouse *Tetrao tetrix*

Previously bred.

All records from Arran Black Grouse Group reintroduction programme see page 21.

Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*

Scarce and local introduced resident.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 in Kingscross on 6 October 2010.

Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*

Previously bred.

No records for 2011. Last record, excluding released birds in the 1990s, was 4 at Clachlands on 15 November 1989.

Quail (Common Quail) *Coturnix coturnix*

Previously bred.

No records for 2011. Last record one in Kilpatrick plantation on 30 May 1995.

Pheasant (Common Pheasant) *Phasianus colchicus*

Common introduced resident

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

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Localised breeding Resident,

One at Auchenhew on 18 September (TS).

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 2011. Last record one calling at Port na Lochan from 7 to 9 May 2008.

Moorhen (Common Moorhen) *Gallinula chloropus*

Localised breeding resident.

Two in Lamlash on 23 January, 2 on the Rosa Burn from 2 to 11 February and from 26 October to 4 December. All other records in 2011 were from Port na Lochan pond with up to 5 birds on 9 December.

Coot (Common Coot) *Fulica atra*

Occasional visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record one at Machrie pond on 21 April 2002.

Crane (*Grus grus*)

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 in Shiskine valley on 26 September 1989.

Oystercatcher (Eurasian Oystercatcher) *Haematopus ostralegus*

Resident. Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Nests recorded Kilpatrick, Dougarie, Machrie, Clauchlands, Sandbraes, Cleats Shore, Kildonan, Pladda. Groups included 86 at Machrie on 19 March, 58 at Kilpatrick on 12 August, 33 at Kildonan on 8 November and 61 at Auchenhew on 15 December.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Resident. Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Nests recorded Kilpatrick, Dougarie, Machrie, Kilmory, Clauchlands, Sandbraes, Cleats Shore, Kildonan. Groups included 48 at Machrie on 12 February, 26 at Whiting Bay on 29 August, 60 at Drumadoon on 3 September and 24 at Cleats Shore on 5 November.

Golden Plover (European Golden Plover) *Pluvialis apricaria*

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

Sixteen successful territories in north western moorland. Groups included 88 at Machriewaterfoot on 8 April, 29 at Sliderry on 7 October and 300 at Machriewaterfoot on 14 November.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Nine on Caisteal Abhail on 7 May (DV).

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

One at Kildonan on 1 January, 2 Torrylinn on 24 January, 1 Machriewaterfoot on 17 September and one Kildonan on 12 November. These are all the records for 2011.



Lapwing (Northern Lapwing) *Vanellus vanellus*

Breeding and winter visitor.

Two possible breeding areas one in Shiskine Valley and the other in Kilmory. Groups included 100 at Shiskine on 8 January, 18 at Kilpatrick on 18 February and 24 at Cleats Shore on 2 November.

Knot (Red Knot) *Calidris canutus*

Passage migrant.

Ten at Kildonan on 11 August, 7 at Blackwaterfoot on 12 August, 14 at Drumadoon on 14 August and one at Drumadoon on 3 September. These are all the records for 2011.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Passage migrant.

Two at Drumadoon on 15 May, one at Cleats Shore on 6 June, 18 at Drumadoon on 27 August and 7 at Drumadoon on 3 September. These are all the records for 2011.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record 3 at Machriewaterfoot on 8 September 2002.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one on Kildonan shore on 27 August 2006.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Passage migrant and winter visitor.

Groups included 4 at Kildonan on 2 January, 6 at Drumadoon on 2 February, 8 at Kildonan on 8 November and 3 at Drumadoon on 15 December.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

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

Groups included 6 at Kildonan on 21 April, 11 at Cleats Shore on 6 June, 11 at Machrie on 14 August and 18 at Drumadoon on 27 August.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 at Kildonan on 26 August 1987.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon winter visitor.

One at Auchenhew on 15 April and on 11 December. These are all the records for 2011.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Resident but underreported breeder.

No confirmed breeding records. Sightings included one at Laggan on 1 January, one at Corriecravie on 2 February, 2 in North Glen Sannox on 13 May, 2 on the Boguille on 23 May, one at Slidery on 11 October and one at Kilpatrick on 16 October.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

One record of this American species.

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

Woodcock (Eurasian Woodcock) *Scolopax rusticola*

Resident but underreported breeder. Numbers increase in winter.

Pairs flying at dusk over Kingscross on 26 March, Brodick Country Park on 29 March, Glen Rosa on 2 July and Lochranza on 5 July. Sightings included 3 in Brodick Country Park on 17 January, 3 at Lochranza on 15 March and one at Lamlash on 17 December.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Uncommon passage migrant.

One from 20 to 28 September and from 8 to 26 October on Cleats Shore and one at Kildonan on 2 October. These are all the records for 2011.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Records included one at Lamlash 22 August, 4 at Kilmory on 25 August, one at Drumadoon on 3 September, one at Machrie on 22 September and one at Auchenhew on 24 September.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor.

Groups included 4 at Machrie on 28 April, 28 at Auchenhew on 4 May, 11 at Kildonan on 4 May, 4 at Kilpatrick on 22 May and 2 at Claulands on 25 May.

Curlew (Eurasian Curlew) *Numenius arquata*

Resident but unreported breeder.

Fledged young on Machrie Moor on 28 June was the only confirmed breeding record. Groups included 50 at Cordon on 29 January, 77 at Clauchlands on 20 February, 36 at Machrie on 16 October, 50 at Cleats Shore on 26 October and 46 at Blackwaterfoot on 14 November.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erthropus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one at South Feorline shore on 5 August 2010.

Redshank (Common Redshank) *Tringa totanus*

Passage migrant with records from every month of the year. No breeding records.

Groups included 12 at Clauchlands on 5 February, 22 at Whiting Bay on 9 March, 14 at Kilpatrick on 14 April, 20 at Sandbraes on 16 October and 16 at Cleats Shore on 10 November.

Greenshank (Common Greenshank) *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

One wintering bird (occasionally two) at Clauchlands from January to 26 March returning 14 August to end of year. These are all the records for 2011.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Uncommon passage migrant.

One at Drumadoon Point on 22 May is the first Arran Record of this species (PGM).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record at High Thunderguy on 1 August 2008.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Summer visitor with records from April to August. Breeding.

Pairs each with young included Pirnmill 9 June, Kilpatrick 11 June, Clauchlands 12 June, Corrie 26 June, Glen Iorsa 4 July, Lochranza 5 July and Kildonan 11 July.

Turnstone (Ruddy Turnstone) *Arenaria interpres*

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

Groups included 36 at Machrie on 26 April, 20 at Sandbraes on 22 August, 22 at Lamlash on 8 October, 30 at Blackwaterfoot on 10 October and 30 at Kildonan on 8 November.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 in Wineport area of Brodick Bay on 28 August 1983.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one in Brodick Bay on 23 March 1989.



Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*.

Uncommon passage migrant.

One Brodick Bay on 5 May, 14 June, 13 September and 16 September. Also 2 at Glenashdalewaterfoot from 10 to 11 September. These are all the records for 2011.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 off Kildonan on 16 May 2009.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Uncommon passage migrant.

One at Kildonan on 18 May, one in Brodick Bay on 13 September, 2 off Pirnmill on 10 October, one at Whiting Bay on 4 November and one in Brodick Bay on 5 November. These are all the records for 2011.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Two off Kildonan on 19 May is the first Arran Record of this species (AW, MHD).

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one at Catacol on 30 December 1992.

Little Gull *Larus minutus*

Uncommon irregular visitor.

One on Machrie shore on 16 July (MalBat).

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

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

Groups included 4 in Brodick Bay on 16 January, 5 at Margnaheglish on 11 March, 3 at Whiting Bay on 18 July and 29 at Auchenhew on 11 December.

Common Gull (Mew Gull) *Larus canus*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Nests included 28 at Dougarie on 28 April, 30 at Machriewaterfoot on 28 April, and 70 on Pladda on 14 July. Groups included 100 at Slidderlywaterfoot on 1 February, 500 at Auchenhew on 20 February and 100 in Shiskine on 7 December.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Breeding. Common round coast from February to October.

Colonies with fledged young included 70 above Benlister Glen on 12 July and 400 on Pladda on 14 July. Other groups included 50 in Shiskine on 10 April, 15 at Slidderlywaterfoot on 26 April and 48 on the Holy Isle on 9 August.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Colonies with fledged young included 70 above Benlister Glen on 12 July and 800 on Pladda on 14 July. Other groups included 191 in Brodick Bay on 16 January, 106 at Kilpatrick on 1 March and 127 at Glenashdalewaterfoot on 9 November.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

Uncommon winter visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record a second winter on Merkland shore on 25 April 2010.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Uncommon winter visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record a first winter gull South Feorline on 4 February 2008.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Breeding. Common round coast all year.

Groups included 6 at Slidderlywaterfoot on 26 April, 50 on Pladda on 14 July, 18 at the mouth of the lorsa on 10 December and 7 in Auchenhew Bay on 27 December.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one adult Brodick Bay on 3 September 2009.

Kittiwake (Black-legged Kittiwake) *Rissa tridactyla*

Nearest breeding colony Ailsa Craig. Round coast all year.

Groups included 100 in Brodick Bay on 13 September, 65 at Machriewaterfoot on 17 September, 504 in Whiting Bay on 18 September and 60 at Catacol on 27 September.

Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea*

One historical record.

One shot in Lamlash Bay in 1895.

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one at Kildonan on 21 November 1995.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one at Pirnmill on 12 September 1992.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Rare summer visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 at Dougarie on 5 May 1984.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Uncommon summer visitor.

One at Kildonan on 11 July and one at Brodick Bay on 7 September are all the 2011 records.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor. Breeding colony Pladda.

Reports included two at Cleats Shore on 6 May, one at Whiting Bay on 29 May and two at Largiemore on 22 August. Most sightings were from on or around Pladda between 18 May and 1 August with the maximum number reported 30 on Pladda on 14 July.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

Uncommon summer visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record one in Brodick Bay on 11 August in 2007.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicencis*

Summer visitor. Non breeding.

Groups included 4 at Glenashdalewaterfoot on 12 April, 4 at Kildonan on 19 April, 6 at Lamlash on 22 April, 3 at Cosyden on 12 August and 3 at Whiting Bay on 30 August.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

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

No records for 2011. Last record one in Brodick Bay on 31 March 2008.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

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

Groups included 40 off Kildonan on 14 April, 50 in Brodick Bay on 11 August and 200 off Cosyden on 16 October.

Guillemot (Common Guillemot) *Uria aalge*

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

Groups included 30 in Brodick Bay on 12 February, 40 off Kildonan on 14 April, 30 off Catacol on 5 September and 400 off Cosyden on 16 October.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Breeding. Round coast all year.

Breeding included Corrie, Kings Cave, Thunderguy, Pladda and Brodick pier. Numbers and sightings are increasing. Groups included 20 at Catacol on 10 April, 14 at Kilpatrick on 17 April, 24 at Brodick pier on 9 July and 30 at King's Cave on 12 July.

Puffin (Atlantic Puffin) *Fratercula arctica*

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

Numbers and sightings are increasing. Two in Brodick Bay on 29 April, one at Kildonan on 18 May, 2 at Pirnmill on 19 May, one at Kildonan on 21 June, one on Pladda on 30 June and one in Brodick Bay on 17 September. These are all the records for 2010.

Pallas's Sandgrouse *Syrrhaptes 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*

Resident. Breeding.

Sightings included 8 at Corriecravie on 15 March, 4 at Cleiteadh Buidhe and 16 March, 30 at Kilpatrick on 17 August and one at Cleats Shore on 4 November.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Very scarce.

No records for 2011. Last record one on footpath to Fallen Rocks on 14 June 1989.

Woodpigeon (Common Woodpigeon) *Columba palumbus*

Resident. Breeding.

Groups included 70 at Shiskine on 12 March, 60 at Kilmory on 13 October, 100 at Springbank on 14 October, 400 Glenkiln on 16 October and 84 Sliderry on 26 October.

Collared Dove (Eurasian Collared Dove) *Streptopelia decaocto*

Resident. Breeding. First bred in Britain in 1955.

Present around all villages. Groups included 8 Corrie and 10 Brodick on 29 January, 18 Whiting Bay on 18 February, 12 Kilmory on 13 October and 18 Sliderry on 20 October.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Occasional passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one with a group of Collared Doves in Brodick from 25 October to 8 November 2006.

Cuckoo(Common Cuckoo) *Cuculus canorus*

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.

First one reported calling at Balnacoolie on 18 April. Later reports from around the island. The last one reported was a young bird seen at Strathwillan on 30 July.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Most territories occupied. Good breeding season. Sightings from Auchagallon, Auchencar, Balmichael, Corrie, Brodick, Cladach, Dougarie, Glenkiln, Kilmory, Kilpatrick, Lamdash, Lochranza, 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 2011.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Resident underreported. Breeding.

One at East Mayish on 15 March, one Lochranza on 25 August, and one top of the String on 18 November and again on 14 December. These are all the records for 2011.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Resident. Breeding.

Poor year with few breeding records.

Sightings included 2 at Crogan Corloch on 23 May, 2 top of the String on 31 May, 2 at Thunderguy on 18 June and 2 at Garbh Allt on 27 November.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Summer visitor. Previously bred.

No records for 2011. Last record at Maol Donn on 24 May 1998.

Swift (Common Swift) *Apus apus*

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

Sightings included one at Fisherman's Walk on 8 May, 6 at Kildonan on 3 July, 6 at High Kildonan on 7 July and 1 at Claunchlands on 17 August.

Kingfisher (Common Kingfisher) *Alcedo atthis*

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

Regular reports from Fisherman's Walk, Brodick, except between 5 March and 21 July. Other records one at Cladach on 22 August and one at Rubha Salach on 19 September.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one in Thunderguy on 25 June 2006.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

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 Sannox on 10 June, Lamblash on 15 July, High Kildonan on 13 August and Balmichael on 20 August. Widespread sightings from throughout Arran.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Uncommon passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record in Sannox on 25 September 1997.

Skylark (Sky Lark) *Alauda arvensis*

Breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Breeding territories occupied in Ard Bheinn, Cnoc Dubh, Coire na Ciche, Corriecravie Moor, Drumadoon, Glen Cloy, Kilmory, Kilpatrick, Machrie, Pirnmill and Sannox. Groups included 75 at Cleats Shore on 15 September, 5 at Kildonan on 19 September and 48 at Slidery on 19 October.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised.

Breeding colonies occupied in Auchencar, Clauchlands, Kilpatrick, Sannox, Strabane and Whitefarland with up to 60 birds in Sannox on 16 July. Other sightings included 21 at Kilpatrick on 14 April, 24 at Whitefarland on 18 July and 12 at Clauchlands on 12 June.



Swallow (Barn Swallow) *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.

First report at Dippen on 3 April. Groups included 20 at Monyquil on 7 May, 12 at Glen Cloy on 4 June, 24 at Corriecravie on 25 June, 30 at Clachaig on 18 August, 60 at Kilpatrick on 3 September, 70 at Torbeg on 17 September and 50 at Whiting Bay on 29 September. Last record was at Slidery on 4 November.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread.

First report was at Catacol on 7 April. Groups included 19 at Machrie on 19 April, 12 Auchenhew on 6 May, 15 at Blackwaterfoot on 11 May, 16 at Marganaheglis 14 June, 15 at Corrie on 26 June, 17 at Shiskine on 5 August and 40 at Whiting Bay on 29 September. Last record at Whiting Bay on 13 October.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Scarce summer visitor, possibly underreported.

Birds holding territories in Brodick Country Park, Glaister, Glean Dubh, Glenshant, Lag a Bheithe and North Sannox. Other sightings included 3 at Tor Dubh Mor on 27 April, 2 at Urie Loch on 23 July and 2 at Lochranza on 19 August.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Breeding resident, widespread, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Groups included 20 in Glen Sannox on 19 April, 34 at Clachan Lochans on 27 June, 30 at Cnoc na Chapuill on 12 July, 80 at Slidery shore 14 September and 100 at Cleats Shore on 15 September.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Breeding resident, widespread on the coast, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Numerous breeding records including pairs carrying food at Auchenhew, Catacol, Clauchlands, Cleats Shore, Drumadoon, Kildonan, and Whiting Bay in May/June. Groups included 40 at Drumadoon on 16 October and 30 Cleats Shore on 4 November.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Scarce passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record two at Cleats Shore on 23 April 2006.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Resident. Breeding. Localised.

Breeding records included adults carrying food at Kilpatrick on 11 June and Lagg on 16 June plus fledged young Auchenhew on 3 July, Torrylinn on 6 August, and Glen Cloy bridge Brodick on 7 August.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Breeding resident, widespread, passage migrant and winter visitor

Breeding records included adults carrying food at High Kildonan on 16 April, Lamlash 24 April plus fledged young at Shiskine on 25 June, Corrie 26 June and Lochranza on 15 July. Other groups included 40 at Whiting Bay on 29 August and 40 at Blackwaterfoot on 16 October.

White Wagtail *Montacilla alba*

Regular passage migrant.

Sightings included 40 at Auchenhew on 17 April, 30 at Kilpatrick on 20 April, 50 at Cleats Shore on 23 April and 80 at Sliderywaterfoot on 26 April.

Waxwing (Bohemian Waxwing) *Bombycilla garrulus*

Irruptive late autumn and winter visitor.

Winter 2010-2011 was an exceptional year for Waxwings. See 2010 report.

Sightings continued in January including 6 at Invercloy on 12th and 10 Alma Road Brodick on 19th plus 3 at the Auchrannie on 22 March.

Dipper (White-throated Dipper) *Cinclus cinclus*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Pairs recorded at Benlister, Glenashdale, Monamore and Rosa Burns. Also pairs at Catacol, Cordon, Dyemill, Glen Cloy, Glenree, Kildonan, Kilmorywater, Lagg, Lochranza, Machriewater and Slidderlywater. Tend to move towards coast in winter.



Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Records from varied habitats through out the island from high tops to shore. Groups included winter roosts of 14 in Corrie on 2 January, 10 in Kilmory on 13 January and 12 in Machrie on 11 February.

Dunnock (Hedge Accentor) *Prunella modularis*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Fledged young included reports from Lochranza on 6 May, Cladach on 13 May. Lamlash on 1 June, Pirnmill on 7 June and Whiting Bay on 17 June. Other groups included 6 at Brodick on 24 July, 7 at Slidderly on 19 October and 21 at Auchenhew on 15 December.

Robin (European Robin) *Erithacus rubecula*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Fledged young included reports from Glen Cloy on 6 May, Glenashdale on 26 June, Lamlash on 1 June, Shiskine on 7 June, Pirnmill on 7 June and Auchencar on 23 June. Other groups included 5 at Slidderly on 11 October and 16 at Auchenhew on 18 December.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Scarce passage migrant.

Female at Cleats Shore on 15 December (JN).

Redstart (Common Redstart) *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Scarce summer visitor, possibly underreported. Previously bred.

One singing at Craw on 8 April, male at Sannox on 1 May and male by Corrie Golf Course on 9 June were all the records.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Summer visitor. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant.

Breeding territories included Boguille, Glen Catacol, Glen Iorsa, Glen Rosa, Machrie Moor and Ross Road. Sightings included 24 in Glen Rosa on 12 June, 6 on Ross Road on 1 July and 12 at Dereneneach on 13 July.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Fewer confirmed breeding than before the two cold winters 2009-2011. Fledged young reports included Glen Iorsa on 21 June, Machrie Moor on 5 July, Shannochie on 22 July, Thunderguy on 24 July, Glen Chalmadale on 26 July and Glen Rosa on 2 August..

Wheatear (Northern Wheatear) *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

First reported was a male on Cleats Shore on 22 March. Fledged young reports included Glen Rosa on 14 June, Corrie on 26 June, Cleats Shore on 30 June, Blackwaterfoot on 2 July, Beinn Bhreac on 27 July, Beinn Tarsuinn on 27 July and Ard Bheinn on 5 August. Last report "Greenland" bird at Cleats Shore 26 October.



Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Scarce summer visitor, possibly underreported.

Female at Lochranza on 21 June (ReuB).

Blackbird (Common Blackbird) *Turdus merula*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Pairs reported from all villages. Groups included 25 at Slidery 11 October, 20 Kilpatrick on 12 October, 40 Shannochie on 6 November and 53 Auchenhew on 18 December.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

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

Groups, sometimes with Redwings included 150 Balmichael on 6 March, 200 Beinn Nuis on 16 October, 250 Shiskine on 19 October and 1,000 Slidery on 5 November.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Pairs reported from all villages. Largest group 6 Slidery on 20 October.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

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

Groups, sometimes with Fieldfares included 180 Slidery on 13 October, 400 Kildonan on 3 November, 250 Slidery on 5 November and 100 Drumadoon on 6 November.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included fledged young Strathwillan on 26 May, Whiting Bay on 31 May and Sannox on 14 June. Largest groups 30 Mayish and 28 Machrie on 8 August.

Grasshopper Warbler (Common Grasshopper Warbler) *Locustella naevia*

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

Reports of reeling birds include East Mayish on 12 April, Lakin on 22 April, Machrie also on 22 April, Ross Road on 23 April, High Kildonan on 24 April, Auchenhew on 27 April and Machrie Moor on 22 May.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

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

Records included singing males Kildonan 14 April, Port na Feanaiche on 26 April, Balmichael on 27 April, Clachaig on 2 June and Cleats Shore on 6 June.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Scarce summer visitor. No breeding records.

Male singing Auchenhew Bay on 14 May and 14 June are all the records for 2011.



Whitethroat (Common Whitethroat) *Sylvia communis*

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

Records included fledged young at Dereneneach on 27 May, Clachaig on 10 June, Clachlands on 10 June, Kilpatrick on 11 June, Thunderguy on 20 June and Kilmory on 4 July.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Scarce summer visitor, possibly underreported.

Records included males singing at Auchenhew on 26 April, Sannox on 28 April, Cordon on 1 May, Kildonan on 4 September and Glaister on 28 June.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Summer visitor. Widespread. Breeding. Overwinters in small numbers .

Records included males singing at Lamlash on 3 April, Brodick Country Park on 7 April, Kildonan on 8 April and Pirmill on 16 April. Winter records included a male at Balmichael on 11 December and a female at Margnaheglis on 31 December.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Very rare and irregular passage migrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one in Whiting Bay from 4 to 6 December 2007.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

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

Records included male singing in Glenashdale on 26 May, Merkland Wood on 31 May and Glen Craigag on 23 June. These are all the records for 2011.

Chiffchaff (Common Chiffchaff) *Phylloscopus collybita*

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

Records included males singing North Kiscadale on 21 March, Brodick Country Park on 21 March, Sannox on 25 March Cladach on 26 March, Kingscross on 26 March and Auchenhew on 28. One "late" record was one at Sliddery on 19 November.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

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

Records included fledged young at Corriecravie on 25 June, Corrie on 26 June, Brodick on 1 July, Kildonan on 2 July, Sliddery on 2 July, Shiskine on 4 July and Catacol on 29 July. One "late" record was one at Cordon on 2 October.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Records included 6 in Glen Cloy on 4 June, 5 Brodick Country Park on 6 June, 4 Merkland Wood on 1 July, 12 Urie Loch on 23 July and 4 Glenashdale on 12 October.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

Very rare and irregular passage migrant.

One Whiting Bay 17 November 2007 is the only record to date accepted by the Clyde Bird Records Panel. See page 57.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

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

Confirmed breeding included reports from Shannochie on 1 June, Cladach on 4 June, Thunderguy on 8 June, Brodick Country Park on 11 June, Glenkiln on 12 June, Shiskine on 25 June, Corrie on 26 June, Sannox on 10 July, Pirnmill on 18 July, Lochranza on 4 August and Torrylinn on 6 August.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Irregular summer visitor.

No records for 2011. Last record one on Newton Shore on 28 April 1998.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Groups included 10 at Glen Sannox, 10 Benlister and 12 Lochranza all on 10 February, 16 Margnaheglish on 15 October, 12 Sliddery on 19 October, 21 Dyemill on 21 October and 10 Clachaig on 21 December.

Willow Tit *Parus montanus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record at Mill House Lamlash from 16 to 18 May 2009.



Coal Tit *Parus ater*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Confirmed breeding included reports from Lamlash on 7 June, Pirnmill on 7 June, High Kildonan on 15 June and Brodick on 24 June. Largest group was 10 at Kingscross on 10 November.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Confirmed breeding included reports from Dhunan on 30 May, Shiskine on 7 June, Sannox on 10 June, Glenkiln on 12 June and Corrie on 26 June. Largest group was 10 at Whiting Bay on 30 June.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Reports from all villages of birds visiting garden feeders. Confirmed breeding included reports from Strathwillan on 26 May, Lamlash on 1 June, Shiskine on 7 June, Pirnmill on 7 June and Kildonan on 15 June. Largest group was 10 at Machrie on 10 February.

Nuthatch (Wood Nuthatch) *Sitta europea*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one Corrie on 25 June 2002.

Treecreeper (Eurasian Treecreeper) *Certhia familiaris*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Confirmed breeding included Whiting Bay on 26 June, Cordon on 29 June and Lochranza on 23 July. Singles reported included Pirnmill on 9 February, Merkland Wood on 7 March and Torr Righ on 10 November.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record a female in Lochranza on 7 June 1979.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record a male at Kildonan on 27 September 1997.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubiter*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record was one in Fairy Glen, Lochranza on 24 October 2007.

Jay (Eurasian Jay) *Garrulus glandarius*

Rare vagrant. Before 2011 the last record was 1985.

Reports from Brodick Country park from 17 October to 17 November including 2 on 26 October and 2 on 17 November. In addition one by hospital in Lamlash from 19 October to 4 November. Last record one at Cnoc na Dail on 17 December.

Magpie (Black-billed Magpie) *Pica pica*

Vagrant. Before 2008 only seven records in last twenty five years.

One Corriegills from 27 to 30 March, one Kildonan on 28 March and one Port na Lochan from 10 to 11 June were all the records for 2011.

Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Rare vagrant. Previously bred.

One by the Narcachan Track, Lochranza, from 5 to 29 September was the only record for 2011.

Jackdaw (Eurasian Jackdaw) *Corvus monedula*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Groups included 70 at Machrie on 3 February, 100 at Kilpatrick on 12 February, 150 at Cleats Shore on 27 September and 200 at Shiskine on 20 October.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Winter visitor.

Four at Blackwaterfoot on 10 January, 2 at Clachaig on 19 April, 3 at Kilpatrick on 20 April, 2 at Slidery on 18 September, 1 at Cleats Shore on 13 October and 5 at Shiskine on 20 October. These are all the records for 2011.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* : **Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*

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

Groups included 59 at Cleats Shore on 3 March, 26 at Roddin on 16 April, 50 at Shiskine on 10 October and 33 at Lamlash on 12 December.

Raven (Common Raven) *Corvus corax*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Breeding pairs included Bennan Head on 26 February, Brown Head on 5 March, Carlo on 6 March, Corriecravie on 15 March, Imachar on 16 March and Auchenhew on 4 May. Largest group was a roosting group of 120 at Ancheleffan on 28 October.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one adult in Brodick on 28 June 2002.

Starling (Common Starling) *Sturnus vulgaris*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Brodick on 10 May, Lamlash on 16 May, Shiskine on 1 June, Kildonan on 15 June and Torrylinn 6 August. Larger groups included 400 at Kilpatrick on 25 February and 1,000 at Shannochie on 26 July.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Lamlash on 16 May, Shiskine on 17 May, Pirnmill on 7 June, Kildonan on 15 June, Corrie on 26 June, Machrie on 26 June and Blackwaterfoot on 1 July. Larger groups included 40 at Kilpatrick on 27 July, 50 at Whiting Bay on 18 August and 40 at Kingscross on 10 September.

Tree Sparrow (Eurasian Tree Sparrow) *Passer montanus*

Rare vagrant. Previously bred.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 in Brodick on 17 June 1997.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Lamlash on 7 June, Pirnmill on 7 June, Kildonan on 15 June, Catacol on 16 June, Brodick on 24 June, Machrie on 26 June and Whiting Bay on 27 June. Larger groups included 40 at Lamlash on 3 March, 50 at Cleats Shore on 4 November and 80 at Shiskine on 9 December.



Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Irruptive winter visitor in varying numbers; not seen every year.

Winter 2010-2011 was remarkable with widespread reports from 26 October to end of year including 20 Mayish on 25 December 2010. This continued in 2011 with records from 1 January to 3 April including 4 at Glenloig on 3 January. By contrast for winter 2011-2012, there was only one record, 6 from Kilmory on 9 December.

Greenfinch (European Greenfinch) *Carduelis chloris*

Common resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Shiskine on 21 May, Lamdash on 27 May, Pirnmill on 7 June, High Kildonan on 15 June, Machrie on 26 June and Whiting Bay on 28 June. Largest group 50 in Kildonan on 8 November.

Goldfinch (European Goldfinch) *Carduelis carduelis*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Shannochie on 1 June, Whiting Bay on 2 June, Pirnmill on 7 June, Lamdash on 12 June. Corriecravie on 25 June and Machrie on 26 June. Largest group 300 at Cleats Shore on 15 September.

Siskin (Eurasian Siskin) *Carduelis spinus*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.

Most records between January and June.

Confirmed breeding included reports from High Kildonan on 14 May, Lamdash on 23 May, Shiskine on 2 June, Pirnmill on 7 June, Whiting Bay on 19 June and Sannox on 20 June. Largest group 200 at Lamdash forestry on 20 August.

Linnet (Common Linnet) *Carduelis cannabina*

Resident. Breeding. Widespread. Passage migrant.,

Most records between April and November.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Thunderguy on 10 June, Kilpatrick on 11 June, Clachaig on 20 June, Cleats Shore on 23 June and Holy Isle on 9 August. Larger groups included 35 Clachlands on 20 February and 70 Cleats Shore on 15 September.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Resident. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant..

Pair holding territory at Kilpatrick on 21 April. Groups included 5 at Cosyden on 1 January, 5 at Auchenhew on 17 April, 8 at Machrie Golf Course on 11 September and 30 at Cleats Shore on 4 November.

Redpoll (Lesser Redpoll) *Carduelis cabaret*

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

Confirmed breeding included reports from Lamdash on 6 June, Corrie on 26 June, Glaister on 28 June, Monyquil on 28 June and Cleats Shore on 3 July.. Largest group 50 at Corriecravie on 22 July.

Crossbill (Common Crossbill) *Loxia curvirostra*

Resident. Breeding. Localised.

Nest building 6 March in High Kildonan was only breeding evidence. Groups included 16 at Dippen on 13 January, 12 at Merkland on 18 January, 8 at Tormusk on 26 January, 10 at High Kildonan on 29 January, 3 at Kilpatrick on 12 February, 20 by lower Goatfell track on 21 August and 8 at Slidery on 19 October.

Scarlet Rosefinch (Common Rosefinch) *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Rare vagrant.

One juvenile caught and ringed High Kildonan on 21 October (TS). The last record was also one juvenile caught and ringed at High Kildonan on 24 October 1999.

Bullfinch (Common Bullfinch) *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Resident. Breeding. Localised.

Confirmed breeding included reports from Lamlash on 1 June, Glenashdale on 10 June, Brodick Country Park on 16 June, Dyemill on 19 June, West Bennan on 28 June and Glenloig on 14 July. Groups included 12 at Tormusk on 26 January, 7 at Auchareoch on 2 November, 10 at Kilmory on 11 November and 6 Clauchan Glen on 14 November.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare vagrant.

No records for 2011. Last record one at Margnaheglis on 26 April 2000.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Varying numbers on passage and in winter.

One at Mullach Buidhe on 21 March, 2 at Meall Nan Damh on 23 March and one on North Goatfell on 13 May. These are all the records for 2011.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

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

No breeding records for 2011. Records included 4 at Shedog on 30 January, 11 at Shiskine on 23 February, 3 at Invercloy on 4 March and 8 at Slidery on 14 December.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Resident. Breeding. Localised. Passage migrant.

Confirmed breeding included Roddin on 16 April, Machrie on 21 April, Cleats Shore on 23 April and Ard Bheinn on 6 August. Groups included 20 at Machrie Moor on 6 February, 9 at Monyquil on 10 February, 3 at Clauchan Glen on 28 June and 6 at Slidery on 26 October.

Corn bunting *Miliaria calandra*

Rare vagrant. Previously bred.

No records for 2011. Last record 2 in Brodick area on 7 October 1984.

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

The regular Bird Notes 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

Species to be submitted to Scottish and Local Record Committees

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

Descriptions of the above species (or races/forms) and national rarity descriptions for the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) should be sent preferably by email to the Assistant Local Clyde Recorder, Val Wilson wilsonval@btinternet.com or by post to 76 Laigh Road, Newton Mearns, G77 5EQ 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, Serg. Bob McKay, 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 james.cassels@virgin.net.

Index by Common Name

Common Name	Page	Common Name	Page	Common Name	Page
Auk, Little	42	Egret, Snowy	29	Gull, Glaucous	41
Bittern	29	Eider	32	Gull, Great Black-backed	41
Blackbird	48	Eider, King	32	Gull, Herring	41
Blackcap	49	Falcon, Peregrine	35	Gull, Iceland	41
Brambling	53	Fieldfare	48	Gull, Ivory	41
Bunting, Corn	55	Finch, Bullfinch	55	Gull, Lesser Black-backed	41
Bunting, Reed	55	Finch, Chaffinch	53	Gull, Little	40
Bunting, Snow	55	Finch, Goldfinch	54	Gull, Mediterranean	40
Buzzard	34	Finch, Greenfinch	54	Gull, Ross's	42
Buzzard, Rough-legged	34	Finch, Hawfinch	55	Gull, Sabine's	41
Chiffchaff	50	Finch, Scarlet Rosefinch	55	Harrier, Hen	33
Chough	52	Firecrest	50	Harrier, Marsh	33
Coot	36	Flycatcher, Pied	50	Heron, Grey	29
Cormorant	29	Flycatcher, Spotted	50	Hobby	34
Crake, Corn	36	Fulmar	28	Hoopoe	44
Crake, Spotted	36	Gannet	28	Jackdaw	52
Crane	36	Godwit, Bar-tailed	38	Jay	52
Crossbill	54	Godwit, Black-tailed	38	Kestrel	34
Crow, Carrion	52	Goldcrest	50	Kingfisher	44
Crow, Hooded	52	Goldeneye	33	Kite, Red	33
Cuckoo	44	Goosander	33	Kittiwake	41
Curlew	39	Goose, Barnacle	30	Knot	37
Dipper	47	Goose, Brent	30	Lapwing	37
Diver, Black-throated	27	Goose, Canada	30	Linnet	54
Diver, Great Northern	27	Goose, Greylag	30	Magpie	52
Diver, Red-throated	27	Goose, Pink-footed	30	Mallard	31
Dotterel	37	Goose, White-fronted	30	Martin, House	45
Dove, Collared	43	Goshawk	33	Martin, Sand	45
Dove, Rock	43	Grebe, Black-necked	27	Merganser, Red-breasted	33
Dove, Stock	43	Grebe, Great Crested	27	Merlin	34
Dove, Turtle	43	Grebe, Little	27	Moorhen	36
Dowitcher, Long-billed	38	Grebe, Red-necked	27	Nightjar	44
Duck, Long-tailed	32	Grebe, Slavonian	27	Nuthatch	51
Duck, Mandarin	31	Greenshank	39	Oriole, Golden	51
Duck, Ruddy	33	Grouse, Black	35	Osprey	34
Duck, Tufted	32	Grouse, Red	35	Owl, Barn	44
Dunlin	38	Guillemot	43	Owl, Long-eared	44
Dunnock	47	Guillemot, Black	43	Owl, Short-eared	44
Eagle, Golden	34	Gull, Black-headed	40	Owl, Tawny	44
Eagle, White-tailed	34	Gull, Common	41	Oystercatcher	36

Common Name	Page	Common Name	Page	Common Name	Page
Partridge, Grey	35	Scoter, Velvet	32	Thrush, Song	48
Partridge, Red-Legged	35	Shag	29	Tit, Blue	51
Petrel, Leach's	28	Shearwater, Cory's	28	Tit, Coal	51
Petrel, Storm	28	Shearwater, Manx	28	Tit, Great	51
Phalarope, Grey	40	Shearwater, Mediterranean	28	Tit, Long-tailed	50
Phalarope, Red-necked	39	Shearwater, Sooty	28	Tit, Willow	51
Pheasant	35	Shelduck	31	Treecreeper	51
Pintail	31	Shoveler	31	Turnstone	39
Pipit, Meadow	46	Shrike, Great Grey	51	Twite	54
Pipit, Rock	46	Shrike, Red-backed	51	Wagtail, Grey	46
Pipit, Tree	46	Siskin	54	Wagtail, Pied	46
Plover, Golden	36	Skua, Arctic	40	Wagtail, White	46
Plover, Grey	37	Skua, Great	40	Wagtail, Yellow	46
Plover, Ringed	36	Skua, Long-tailed	40	Warbler, Garden	49
Pochard	31	Skua, Pomarine	40	Warbler, Grasshopper	49
Ptarmigan	35	Skylark	45	Warbler, Sedge	49
Puffin	43	Smew	33	Warbler, Willow	50
Quail	35	Snipe	38	Warbler, Wood	50
Rail, Water	36	Snipe, Jack	38	Warbler, Yellow-browed	49
Raven	52	Sparrow, House	53	Waxwing	46
Razorbill	42	Sparrow, Tree	53	Wheatear	48
Redpoll	54	Sparrowhawk	34	Whimbrel	38
Redshank	39	Spoonbill	29	Whinchat	47
Redshank, Spotted	39	Starling	53	Whitethroat	49
Redstart	47	Starling, Rose-coloured	53	Whitethroat, Lesser	49
Redstart, Black	47	Stint, Little	37	Wigeon	31
Redwing	48	Stonechat	48	Woodcock	38
Ring Ouzel	48	Swallow	45	Woodpecker, Great	
Robin	47	Swan, Bewick's	29	Spotted	45
Rook	52	Swan, Mute	29	Woodpigeon	43
Ruff	38	Swan, Whooper	30	Wren	47
Sanderling	37	Swift	44	Wryneck	45
Sandgrouse, Pallas's	43	Teal	31	Yellowhammer	55
Sandpiper, Common	39	Tern, Arctic	42		
Sandpiper, Curlew	37	Tern, Black	42		
Sandpiper, Green	39	Tern, Common	42		
Sandpiper, Purple	37	Tern, Little	42		
Sandpiper, Wood	39	Tern, Roseate	42		
Scaup	32	Tern, Sandwich	42		
Scoter, Common	32	Thrush, Mistle	48		