

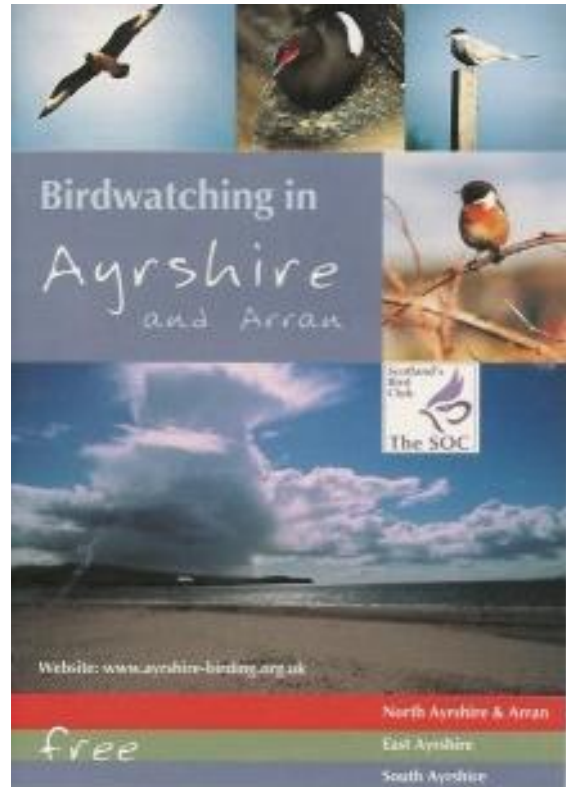
Birdwatching in Ayrshire and Arran

Note on the on-line edition:

The original leaflet (shown on the right) was published in 2003 by the Ayrshire Branch of the SOC and was so popular that the 20,000 print run is now gone. We have therefore published this updated edition on-line to ensure people interested in Ayrshire's birds (locals and visitors) can find out the best locations to watch our birds. To keep the size of the document to a minimum we have removed the numerous photographs that were in the original. The on-line edition was first published in November 2005.

Introduction

This booklet is a guide to the best birding locations in Ayrshire and Arran. It has been produced by the Ayrshire branch of the SOC with help from individuals, local organisations and authorities. It should be used in conjunction with our website (www.ayrshire-birding.org.uk) which gives extra details. Additions and corrections can be reported via the website.



The defining influences on Ayrshire as an environment for birds and other wildlife are its very long coast-line (135km not counting islands), and the fact that it lies almost entirely in the rift valley between the Highland Boundary Fault and the Southern Upland Fault. Exceptions to this generally lowland character are the mountains of north Arran, our own little bit of the Highlands, and the moorlands and hills of the south and south-east fringes of the county. The mild climate has resulted in a mainly pastoral agriculture and plenty of rivers and lochs, making it good for farmland and water birds.

The Ayrshire coast-line is very varied with sandy beaches, particularly in Ayr Bay, many rocky areas and several cliffs; providing a variety of sites for breeding coastal birds and migrating and wintering wildfowl and waders. Although there are no really large estuary systems, Bogside Flats at Irvine provide the best area of saltmarsh and mudflats, and attract many passing waders, and good numbers of *teal* and *wigeon* in winter. Several other small estuaries and bays, particularly Doonfoot and Maidens harbour are well-used staging posts for migrating waders. The most important seabird breeding colony is on the spectacular island of Ailsa Craig with its *gannets*. Now that the rats have been eliminated, we can hope for an increase in the number of *puffin* and other seabirds that nest there.

Most of Ayrshire would originally have been covered with forest. A lot of this is long gone, but good fragments of semi-natural woodland can be seen in some river valleys, notably at the Scottish Wildlife Trust's (SWT) Ayr Gorge woodland reserve at Failford. Policy woodlands in many of the old estates are very good for birds typical of this habitat.

The mountains and hills of Arran and the south and east of the county provide more good birdwatching, with *golden eagle* on Arran, and breeding waders, *hen harrier*, and *black grouse* on the mainland moors.

Please note: The Ayrshire branch of the SOC does not own or manage any of the sites listed in this guide and does not accept responsibility for any of the facilities or conditions that may or may not be present at each site. **It is the responsibility of each individual to have due regard for her/his own safety and to decide whether or not it is safe to proceed.**

Access for the disabled: Many of the sites listed in this guide should prove to be accessible for disabled bird watchers. Some of the sites are more suitable than others. Additional or more detailed information will be added to the website as and when circumstances allow. Basic details of facilities and/or problems are listed.

Key to text abbreviations

PT	Public transport	N	North
CP	Car park	S	South
P	Park	E	East
DA	Access for disabled persons	W	West
SSSI	Site of special scientific interest	R	River
SOC	Scottish Ornithologists' Club	L	Loch
SWT	Scottish Wildlife Trust	RT	Right
RSPB	Royal Society for Protection of Birds	LT	Left
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage		
NTS	National Trust for Scotland		

North Ayrshire

Eglinton Country Park, Irvine

Location: Off A78 Ayr-Greenock, on N outskirts of Irvine. Visitor centre at NS 320 420. Leave A78 at exit for A737 N to Kilwinning; entrance just before exit spur meets A737.

Car: CP at visitor centre (NS 319 419). **Bike:** On network of local cycle ways connecting with Nat. Route 7. **PT:** Frequent bus service Irvine-Kilwinning past entrance. **DA:** Parking for disabled. Extensive network of metalled and unmetalled roads through parkland. Rough steep tracks through some woodland.

Birds: 400ha (1000 acres) of woodland, agricultural land, river, loch, formal gardens and ruins of Eglinton Castle with network of footpaths and cycle trails. Breeding finches, tits, thrushes, pheasant, *grey partridge, tawny owl, kestrel, sparrowhawk great spotted woodpecker, skylark, yellowhammer*. Buzzard often seen. Seasonal: *woodcock, snipe, curlew, lapwing; goldeneye, wigeon, tufted duck and mallard, whooper swan and geese; willow, sedge and grasshopper warbler, blackcap, chiffchaff swift, swallow, house and sand martin; redwing, fieldfare, waxwing*.

More: Visitor centre. Tearoom. Ranger organised walks/activities. Horse riding, cycling, angling. Info: The Ranger Service, The Visitor Centre, Eglinton Country Park, Irvine KA12 8TA Tel. 01294 531 776

Garnock Floods, Irvine

Location: Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve wetland on banks of R Garnock at NS 305 418 on N outskirts of Irvine. Bounded by river, railway, A78; best viewed from cycle track along E boundary. **Car:** From A78 N-bound, take one-way road 'Bogside' just beyond A737 interchange; P with care by roadside. **Bike:** Nat Cycle Route 7 goes along the boundary, linking Irvine and Kilwinning. **PT:** Bus service on A737, 1-2km distant. **DA:** View from cycle track. Viewing for wheelchair users is limited to a very few gaps in hedge.

Birds: Band of trees, fields, ponds beside river. Often wet underfoot; no defined paths. Attractive to wintering wildfowl and waders: *shoveler, wigeon, teal, goldeneye, tufted duck, little grebe, mute swan*, occasional *garganey; snipe, ruff, redshank, curlew, grey heron*. Wintering *redwing, fieldfare*. Spring *sedge and willow warbler, lesser whitethroat, sand martin*. Raptors: *kestrel, sparrowhawk, buzzard*.

Bogside Flats and Harbourside, Irvine

Location: An area of mudflat and salt marsh SSSI at the confluence of R Irvine and R Garnock on seaward edge of Irvine, best scanned from the harbour wall at NS 312 383.

Car: Large free CP along harbour wall. **Bike:** On local cycle route and Nat Route 7. **PT:** Train/bus services within 0.5km; Irvine- Ayr/Glasgow. **DA:** Parking for disabled at harbour mouth, Harbour- side and Magnum Centre. Flat paved surfaces.

Birds: Prime site. Best at high tide minus 1 hr. Good most of year, but especially for wintering/passage wildfowl and waders: *redshank, greenshank, lapwing, curlew, whimbrel, golden plover, black-tailed godwit*; occasional *curlew sandpiper, little stint*. Large wintering

flocks of *wigeon, teal and red-breasted merganser*. Breeding *water rail*.

Raptors: *peregrine, merlin, short-eared owl, sparrowhawk*, occasional *marsh harrier*.

More: Harbour-mouth/Beach park loch: little grebe, scaup, eider, shag, gannet, Manx shearwater, terns, gulls, divers. **Rarities:** American wigeon, Barrow's goldeneye, king eider, little egret, buff-breasted sandpiper, pomarine skua, avocet, black-headed bunting. **Former racecourse on Flats:** scan from NS 307 400; from Irvine centre towards Kilwinning - turn left at Royal Academy, then left along rough track past Irvine (Bogside) Golf Club House; cross fairways with consideration. Cafes, pubs, picnic sites in harbour area; Irvine town centre near. Magnum Leisure Centre: swimming, skating, other sports and leisure activities. Scottish Maritime Museum.

DA: Beach Park Loch: places to park at Magnum centre. Paved flat surfaces. **Racecourse:** park on rough ground, views over racecourse from car.

Capringstone Flash, Irvine

Location: Flooded field beside Annick water on E outskirts of Irvine at NS 356 389. Scan from Bourtreehill - Dreghorn - Springside road at river (NS 356 387). **Car:** P by roadside with care; busy road. **Bike:** Irvine new town trail (Nat Cycle route 73) passes site. **PT:** Frequent buses pass site. **DA:** Park on verge and view from car.

Birds: Breeding mallard, mute swan, little grebe, coot, moorhen, snipe. Readily seen grey heron, swallow, house martin, roosting flocks of lapwing and curlew. Wintering wildfowl: teal, wigeon. Passage rarities: green sandpiper, garganey.

Shewalton, Irvine

Location: Two ex-sand/gravel pits, close together, 2km S of Irvine.

Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve: Sheltered hollow on banks of R Irvine; W off A78 along A737 to Irvine town centre; in 0.5km after roundabout and beyond cemetery RT for 200m on byway to SWT CP at NS 327 370.

Flooded pit used for landfill: E off A78 along B7080; in 1km at roundabout RT towards paper factory; RT (W) along cycle path to view point at NS 333 360.

Car: 1. SWT CP. 2. P near pumping station at NS 336 359 and proceed on foot. **Bike:** Both near/on local cycle route and Nat Route 7. **PT:** Regular bus service Ayr-Irvine follows route described under 1. Walk cycle track back to 2. **DA: SWT reserve:** only access is through narrow wicket gate. Grassy paths are narrow and steep. **Flooded pit:** park in road near pumping station. No dropped kerb at roadside verge, easy access along cycle track once verges crossed.

Birds: Up to 80 mostly wetland species have been recorded on the SWT site. Breeding coot, little grebe, sedge warbler, occasional lesser whitethroat. Passage: snipe, jack snipe. Wintering tufted duck, scaup, pochard, goldeneye, occasionally goosander, long-tailed duck, mute and whooper swan. The flooded pit is especially attractive to large flocks of gulls.

Irvine New Town Trail (Circular)

Location: All sites listed under Irvine can be linked by attractive walking/cycle route around Irvine, mostly on dedicated tracks, partly on National Cycle Routes 7 or 73. Basic route is 15.5km. Shewalton adds 3-8.5km. Route described clockwise:

Section 1 (3.5km) From Low Green park near Bridgegate shopping centre (NS 318394, take path under A737 to Burns's statue, skirt Irvine Moor and Bogside Golf Course ***Bogside Flats - Garnock Floods***.

Section 2 (4km) Go under A78, follow R Garnock, RT through houses, over A737 (with care) to ***Eglinton Country Park*** (diverse routes here).

Section 3 (4.5km) Enter Sourlie Wood (SWT Reserve at NS 342 418), pass Sourlie and Lawthorn Ponds, wind through Girdle Toll, Bourtreehill, Broomlands Park to reach the ***Knockentiber - Springside Railway path*** (Nat Cycle Route 73) at NS 356 385 by the Annick Water at ***Capringstone Flash***. Thence along river bank to Newmoor roundabout at NS 339 382.

Section 4 (3.5km) Follow Annick Water and R Irvine back to start.

For ***Shewalton***, (3-6km), where route passes under A71 at Bailey bridge (NS324 382), turn upstream onto A737 and go S towards Ayr for 1.5 to SWT reserve down byway on L. For flooded pit, continue along A737, cross roundabout (2nd exit) to join Nat Cycle Route 7 beside unclassified road and over foot-bridge to far side of A78 where path bounds site.

Extension (8km): From NS 350 385 by Annick Water and Capringstone Flash, go S up Station Brae through Dreghorn, over traffic light junction, to R Irvine at NS 357 378. Take path RT along river bank past chemical factory to roundabout, LI along B7080, on at next roundabout towards paper mill and join Nat Cycle Route 7 back to Irvine. This passes Shewalton flooded pit site and leads to Harbourside and thence back to start.

Birds: In addition to visiting the main listed sites, the various sections of cycle route pass through diverse woodland, scrub, wetland, pond, river, and urban park and garden habitats with a wide range of appropriate species readily seen. Regular species along the route: *yellowhammer*, *tree sparrow*, *magpie* and in summer, *sedge warbler*, *whitethroat*.

Ardrossan - Harbour and North Bay

Location: In and N of Ardrossan, one of the *Three Towns* of the Ayrshire coast. Terminal for ro-ro ferry to Arran. View harbour from marina at NS 225 423. View tidal flats of N Bay from shore road at NS 229 432 just off A78 on N outskirts of town. Explore coastal hinterland to the N. **Car:** Harbour: follow signs to ferry terminal; right into marina. N Bay. Hinterland: from marina, left at traffic lights; P near junction with A78. Along A78 for hinterland. **Bike:** On Nat Cycle Route 73 to ferry and coastal path to Largs. Linked to Route 7 at Kilwinning. **PT:** Bus and train connections to terminal. **DA:** Park at marina. Paved surface, occasional potholes.

Birds: Working harbour with both sandy and rocky foreshores to the N. **Harbour:** gulls, eider, *cormorant*, shag and breeding *black guillemot*. N Bay sands and **rocks:** Passage /

wintering waders and wildfowl: *redshank, oystercatcher*, turnstone, ringed plover, *grey plover, purple sandpiper; wigeon*, large rafts of *eider*. **Farmed hinterland** (field by restaurant at NS 220 444 and track under railway): *whitethroat, grasshopper and sedge warbler, curlew*, occasional *barn and tawny owl*, wintering flocks of *twite* and other finches. *Buzzard* common. **Rarities:** *snowy egret, green-winged teal, little auk*.

More: Several car ferries per day to Brodick on the Isle of Arran.

Saltcoats Harbour and Nebbock Rocks

Location: In Saltcoats, one of the *Three Towns* of the Ayrshire coast. Old tidal harbour INS 245 410) on a rocky outcrop by town centre. View harbour from town shore road; Inner Nebbock rocks to S through portal in southern harbour wall; old salt pan to N and Outer Nebbock rocks from shore road by hotel; offshore from beside tower at end of northern harbour wall. **Car:** P on shore road by harbour. **Bike:** On Nat Cycle Route N73 Kilwinning - Ardrossan. **PT:** Adjacent to town centre buses and railway station. **DA:** Parking for disabled. Concrete/metalled surfaces. Harbour wall restricts viewing for wheelchair users.

Birds: Good for waders, seabirds and gulls, especially wintering/passage. **Harbour** noted for *purple sandpiper and knot*. **Rocks** for *glaucous and Iceland gull*. **Offshore** for divers, grebes; sea duck such as *eider, king eider* has also been seen.

Stevenston Point

Location: Former slipway on rocky outcrop (NS 270 4021 into Firth of Clyde on extensive beach. Recreational area on S outskirts of Stevenston, one of the *Three Towns* of the Ayrshire coast. From A738 Stevenston-Saltcoats, 0.5km W of A738/A78 roundabout, take New Street S over level crossing at railway station, fork right to beach at church. Can continue by car past Pavilion (toilets) onto the point. **Car:** CP by beach (West Bay CP) or on point. **Bike:** Easily accessed from nearby Nat Cycle Route 73 Kilwinning-Ardrossan. **PT:** Bus and train about 1km. **DA:** Lots of parking. Easy viewing from vehicle or metal led footpath.

Birds: Good view of sea and bay: in season fulmar, gannet, Manx shearwater, divers, grebes and occasional storm petrel. Gulls and terns including sandwich tern. Sea duck include eider, tufted duck, common scoter and occasional long-tailed duck. Sewage outfall attracts gulls and sea ducks. **Beach:** Especially near burn mouth for waders: dunlin, redshank, turnstone, curlew, oystercatcher, ringed plover, and occasional golden plover, knot, sanderling, purple sandpiper. Rough grass for finches, skylark and passage wheatear, snow bunting has been seen.

Stevenston Ponds

Location: Stevenston Park pond (NS 271 416) is in old quarry, just N of railway station at E end of Moorpark Road East. Auchenharvie ponds are along Moorpark Road West, next to golf course (track skirts S side - show players courtesy). Also approach from Robertson Crescent, park near football ground. **Car:** P at roadside with courtesy. **Bike:** Near Nat Cycle Route 73 Kilwinning-Ardrossan. **PT:** Bus and train services close by. **DA:** **Stevenston Park:** CP at edge of park. High kerbs. Metalled footpaths, steps and one steep slope near pond, but easily by-passed. **Auchenharvie:** Park in lay- by, easy viewing from car. Large surfaced CP at golf course, path across the course to W loch unsurfaced with potholes.

Birds: **Auchenharvie** (W Loch): Best in winter: *tufted duck*, *scaup* (up to 150), *mute* and occasional *whooper swan*. Gulls at adjacent abattoir may include *Glaucous*. **Auchenharvie** (E Loch): Breeding *little grebe*, *tufted duck*, *mute swan*, *coot*. **Stevenston Park** ponds: Various ducks, *little grebe*, *water rail*, *mute swan*.

Ashgrove Loch

Location: Shallow loch in pastoral hollow 3km N of Stevenston, 4km E of Ardrossan at NS 275 443. Scan from CP at Lochwood Farm Steading, with consideration for farmer/owner. Permission maybe given to approach loch across fields. **Car:** Map read along byways. One possible start is off A738 just E of junction with A78. P at farm. **Bike:** Good network of byways. **PT:** Nearest bus at Stevenston, Ardrossan or Kilwinning; train at Kilwinning (3.5km distant). **DA:** Park at farm steading, use telescope.

Birds: Extensive reed beds around shallow loch. SSSI. Breeding water raft *sedge warbler*, *reed bunting*. Wintering and passage waterfowl. Good for rarities: *garganey*, *quail*, *marsh harrier*.

More: The Steading is a highly rated farm guest house and part of a working farm which welcomes visitors.

Munnoch Reservoir

Location: Reed-fringed loch at NS 255 480 in hills 5km E of West Kilbride on B748 to Dalry. View from roadside, with care. **Car:** Pat N end near junction B780/B781 or at SW near junction B781/byway. Space limited, avoid obstructing. **Bike:** Both B roads require care but a safe approach is possible along byways from S. **PT:** Bus service along B 74B. **DA:** Very limited parking at side of busy road, shore wall along roadside restricts viewing.

Birds: Lochside: Breeding mute swan, water rail, snipe, sedge warbler, reed bunting, common sandpiper, oystercatcher, stonechat, linnet. Also seen: sparrowhawk, jack snipe, lapwing. On loch: waterfowl such as tufted duck and cormorant, but also wintering/passage rarities: lesser scaup, red-crested pochard, ring-billed gull.

Seamill Shore and Kirktonhall Glen

Location: A stretch of rocky coast N of Ardrossan from Waterside Inn at NS 202 471 to Seamill/West Kilbride and the wooded glen of its hinterland. Path and cycle track by shore; path network in Glen (NS 20b 482). **Car:** **Coast** Shoreline CP/picnic sites off A78 coast road. (Inn CP for customers only). **Glen:** In Seamill near mouth of burn or in Glen Rd, S of W Kilbride town centre (NS 20b 403) **Bike:** Coastal cycle route to Ardrossan - Largs follows the shore. **PT:** Regular bus service Ardrossan-Seamill/West Kilbride and trains on Glasgow - Ardrossan - Largs line. **DA:** **Seamill shore:** no access for wheelchairs - locked gate / wicket gate for pedestrians. **Kirktonhall:** 300m of metalled footpath, then unsurfaced path gradually becoming more difficult. Rough surface, some steep sections and adverse cambers.

Birds: **Coast.** Best in winter. Tidal zone: rock pipit, passage white wagtail, wintering greenshank. **Offshore islets:** shag, cormorant, eider, purple sandpiper. **Seaward:** Manx shearwater, gannet, red-breasted merganser, black guillemot. Little auk and great skua also

recorded. Fields/shoreline: common and jack snipe, curlew, lapwing; sedge warbler, stonechat, occasional black redstart, snow bunting. **Glen:** common park and garden species: robin, wren, tits, finches, thrushes, warblers, wintering redwing.

Largs – Noddsdale Water Mouth

Location: N end of Largs on N Ayrshire coast at NS 198 605 where Noddsdale Water enters Firth of Clyde. **Car:** P in town and walk the sea front (1km) or in Aubrey Crescent by shore near Queens Hotel. **Bike:** Easily accessed from coastal cycle-way. **PT:** Regular trains Glasgow-Largs at 1km and buses Irvine- Ardrossan - Greenock along shore road.

Birds: Tidal, shingle shore. Managed parkland S bank; natural growth N bank. Passage/winter best. **Offshore:** divers, *cormorant, shag, gannet, eider, goldeneye, wigeon, teal, mallard, red-breasted merganser*. **Shoreline:** *curlew, oystercatcher, redshank, turnstone, purple sandpiper*, record of *Mediterranean gull*. **Banks:** *pied wagtail, blackbird, song thrush, robin, dunnock*, tits and finches. Large gull roost.

More: Largs is a popular coastal resort with interests for young and old. Good cafes (famous ice cream). Vikingar: award winning multi-media presentation on Largs' Viking heritage; swimming pool, theatre/cinema. Frequent ferry to Great Cumbrae. The main road north, A78 to Gourock, follows the shoreline closely for 8km to Skelmorlie and offers sea views from several lay-bys.

Great Cumbrae

Location: Highly accessible small island (6km by 3km); 10 minute crossing by regular ferry from Largs. View from various locations along the shore road circumnavigating the island. **Car:** Can be taken to island but best to P in Largs and proceed on foot, by bike, or island bus. **Bike:** Road mostly follows coast; easy 20km ride; bikes can be hired at Millport, the island's town. **PT:** Frequent bus service on the island. **DA:** Island buses fitted with wheelchair lifts.

Birds: Rock and gravel shoreline; landward fields, scrub, woodland and some escarpments. **Seaward** best at N end: large rafts of eider in May, *red-breasted merganser, shelduck, cormorant, shag, gannet*, terns, gulls. *Fulmar* breed on escarpment. **Shoreline:** *redshank, oystercatcher, turnstone, dunlin, ringed plover, common sandpiper*. **Landward:** breeding *stonechat, whinchat, curlew, lapwing, raven*. Raptors: *buzzard, kestrel, sparrowhawk*.

More: Good catering at various points around route. Famous Cathedral of the Isles in Millport.

Brisbane Glen

Location: Noddsdale Water flows down this 11km long glen SSE to Largs from its catchment around NS251678 in the hills of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park which straddles N Ayrshire and Renfrewshire. View from various points along the byway up the Glen. Explore on foot from CP/picnic site at Outerwards Reservoir about halfway up. **Car:** P by roadside in Glen. Narrow road, show courtesy. CP at Outerwards Reservoir. **Bike:** Byway very suitable for bikes. Accessible from Largs or Greenock. **PT:** Nearest at Largs - bus and train.

Birds: In lower reaches, the Water flows through broadleaf and coniferous woodland with improved grassland above; the road is lined by hedgerow and mature trees. Upper glen is predominantly moor with conifer stands. Lower Glen: woodland and hedgerow species: *robin, wren, dunnock, tits, finches, thrushes, treecreeper, goldcrest, great spotted woodpecker*; and *spotted flycatcher* and warblers in summer. Upper Glen: *meadow pipit, skylark, stonechat*; and *whinchat, wheatear* and *cuckoo* in summer. Expect a range of moorland species such as *red grouse, curlew, short-eared owl*; and *raven* and *buzzard* overhead.

More: Over the watershed into Inverclyde lies Cornalees Visitor Centre of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park. Thomas Brisbane, a keen astronomer, also gave his name to the city in Australia and was a Governor General of New South Wales.

Fairlie Glen

Location: Steep, wooded glen carrying a fast flowing burn off the moors from NS 220 547 1km above Fairlie, 3km 5 along the coast from Largs. Start at Fairlie Railway station, up from A78 to 'Park and Ride'. **Car:** CP at rail station. **Bike:** Just off coast cycle way. **PT:** Regular bus service Ardrossan - Largs and trains Glasgow-Ardrossan-Largs. **DA:** Rough, narrow, steep tracks up through glen.

Birds: Mixed woodland glen with flowing water; extensive open moor above. **Glen:** *tits, finches, wagtails, thrushes, robin, wren*. **Moor:** *stonechat, meadow pipit, wheatear, linnet*. **Raptors:** *buzzard, kestrel, sparrowhawk, occasional merlin, hen harrier*.

More: Round walk of 7-8km possible (strong footwear needed): from gate onto moor, follow wall! fence/power lines along edge of moor N 2km to head of Kelburn Glen, passing white cottage to reach track down through Kelburn Castle and Country Centre estate. Return from Centre CP along straight track.

Kelburn Castle and Country Centre

Visitor facilities attractive to children; network of footpaths; steep woodland glen; bird of prey centre; events programme. Catering. Entrance charges apply. **DA:** Restricted network of paths. **Web:** www.kelburncountrycentre.com

Fairlie Sands

Location: Tidal mudflats on S outskirts of Fairlie, 3km S of Largs. View from CP/picnic site on Burnfoot promontory (NS 206 546) just off A78. Can also scan from lay-by on A78. **Car:** CP on promontory. **Bike:** Adjacent coastal cycle way. **PT:** Regular bus service Ardrossan-Largs and trains to Fairlie station (0.25km). **DA:** Park in lay-by (not ideal), or at promontory. No special parking spaces for disabled.

Birds: Wader/sea duck site, best in winter/migration: noted for *greenshank, bar-tailed* and occasional *black-tailed godwit*; good numbers of *eider* and *goldeneye*, also *red-breasted merganser*. *Grey wagtail* and *dipper* by mouth of burn. Winter thrushes and occasional *waxwing* in nearby tree plantings.

More: A lagoon lies within the Ore Terminal immediately S of Fairlie Bay. Scan from bank reached by path around the bay; or from hide (NS 203 539) in terminal. Members of bird clubs can access with permission from guards at entrance. (P within terminal as directed). Breeding *little grebe*, *eider*, *red-breasted merganser*, *black-headed*, *common* and *great black-backed gulls*, occasional *common* and *sandwich tern*, *grey heron* roost. Good numbers of wintering *greenshank*. **DA:** Wheelchair access to hide down gently sloping paved footpath. Hide adapted for wheelchair use. Unsurfaced track around the bay finishes up a steep grassy slope to view lagoon.

Portencross to Hunterston

Location: Coastal track (2km) along raised beach from Portencross on Farland Head (projecting into Firth of Clyde at NS 176486) to Hunterston Nuclear Power Station. Reached along byway from N outskirts of Seamill on A78 11km 5 of Largs. Or to N end via road through power station area from roundabout on A78 (NS 211 520) **Car:** CP/picnic site at Farland Head. Proceed on foot/by bike. **Bike:** Easy link to coastal cycle way. **PT:** Nearest bus service on A78 12km); nearest rail station West Kilbride (3km). **DA:** Adequate parking. Very rough track beyond locked gate at end of public road (NS 176490).

Birds: Rocky shoreline with scrub and rough meadow on raised beach. Steep escarpment, heavily wooded on lower slopes. **Good sea watching:** *black guillemot*, *Manx shearwater*, spring skuas. **Scrub:** *stonechat*, *whitethroat*, *sedge warbler*. **Cliff face:** breeding *fulmar*. **Woodland:** *blackcap*, *chiffchaff*, *great spotted* and occasional *green woodpecker*, *raven*, *tawny* and *barn owls*. **Rarities** include *kildeer* and *little bunting*.

More: A round walk/cycle of 10km can be had past diverse habitat of mudflat, wetland, mature woodland and pastoral/arable farmland. Continue N at Hunterston end of coastal track into power station area and follow public road round to meet coastal cycle path. Follow path S to byway back to Farland Head. **Harbour and Castle** is a historic site, once the departure point for the bodies of Scottish kings being taken to the Isle of Iona for burial.

Dalry River Walks

Location: Fishermen's paths along the banks of R Garnock and its Rye Water tributary, accessed from the town of Dalry in the Garnock Valley. Good footwear essential.

West bank of R Garnock for 1km S to CP at car auction house/former brickworks (NS 295 480)

Round of 4km from NE edge of town (NS 298 498) by footbridge over Rye, N bank path to R Garnock, upstream to Pitcon estate, W along boundary of chemical factory and return by B780.

Car: CP in town or by roadside or near auction house. **Bike:** Town is within 2km of Nat Cycle Route 7 along minor road. **PT:** Regular bus and train services along Irvine-Glasgow route up Garnock Valley

Birds: Grey heron, dipper, kingfisher, grey and pied wagtail, common sandpiper, swift, swallow, house and sand martin, and summer migrants such as warblers.

Lynn Glen

Location: Steep wooded glen of the Caaf Water, tributary of R Garnock, just S of Dalry on minor road from A737 to Saltcoats (NS 288 488). Paths rough and steep in places, require care and good footwear. 1km round possible using footbridge over the Caaf. Lynn Falls a local beauty spot; wild flowers. **Car:** CP just W of road bridge. **Bike:** Accessible from Dalry. **PT:** Bus service on A737. Dalry Railway Station just over 1km.

Birds: Woodland species abound: chiffchaff blackcap, garden warbler, spotted flycatcher, tawny owl, sparrowhawk, buzzard. Burn attracts grey and pied wagtail, dipper and occasional kingfisher.

More: Considerable geological, historical and industrial archaeological interest: Fossil Johnny, Peden's Point, gunpowder mill. Lynn House was abode of George Houston RSA.

Auldmuir Reservoir

Location: Small hill reservoir at 170 metres on the boundary of farm land with hedgerows and moor with young plantation. 3km W of Dalry off the minor road to Fairlie, 'The Moor Road'. Dalry Garnock Angling Club. Picnic site and panoramic vistas. **Car:** CP at reservoir (NS 263 504). **Bike:** Accessible from Dalry. **PT:** Nearest buses and trains in Dalry.

Birds: Loch and lochside: teal, tufted duck, pochard, mallard, little grebe. Breeding common sandpiper and snipe. Surrounds: reed bunting, chaffinch, greenfinch, linnet, meadow pipit, skylark, sparrowhawk **and** hen harrier.

More: Continue over 'The Moor Road' for *red and black grouse, short-eared owl*, other moorland species.

Blair Estate

Location: Fine wood and parkland laid out in 1850s, surrounding Blair House (12th century). Bombo Burn flows through. Lies 2km SE of Dalry along unclassified road past Dalry Station. Metalled and unmetalled paths, sometimes boggy. Private ground with permitted access for walkers but **no dogs or bikes** and occasionally closed - please observe owner's wishes. **Car:** Leave at N or S lodge (NS 306 472). **Bike:** Nat Cycle Route 7 Irvine-Glasgow passes along eastern boundary. **PT:** Buses and trains in Dalry in 1km.

Birds: Woodland species abundant: tits, finches. chiffchaff, willow and garden warbler, blackcap, treecreeper, great spotted woodpecker. Dipper and wagtails by burn. Sparrowhawk, kestrel, buzzard **and** raven present. Good for winter thrushes, brambling and occasional waxwing.

Dalry Community Woodland

Location: An area of mixed woodland planted in the 1990s; criss-cross of grassed paths. Lies 4km east of Dalry along B707 and encompasses Bowertopping Wood and vicinity of Pencot Farm (NS 328 488). Extends from Blair Mine to trig point near farm. Ideas for further development include a pond or wetland. **Car:** CP at old mine - be security conscious. **Bike:** 1.5km off Nat Cycle Route 7. **PT:** Bus service on A737 over 2km distant.

Birds: A changing scene worth ongoing observation as the habitat diversifies with growth. Expect woodland, scrub and farmland species.

Montgreenan and Dalgarnen

Location: Two well-known locations which welcome birdwatchers. Contact proprietors for permission to visit grounds.

Montgreenan Mansion House Hotel: (NS344 445) Surrounded by substantial woodland of mature hardwoods. Footpath network and metalled drive. Reach along B785 from Kilwinning, then byway N in 2.5km, signed to hotel; or from A736. **Car:** P at hotel. **Bike:** Navigate from Kilwinning/Nat Cycle Route 7. **PT:** Bus on A736.

Dalgarnen Mill: (NS 297 458) Restored working mill, museum and tea-room on banks of R Garnock; mill lade and upstream lagoon. Reach along A737, 2km N of Kilwinning. **Car:** P at mill. **Bike:** Avoid main road. Approach: unclassified road from Nat Cycle Route 7 1km distant. **PT:** Bus service along A737 past entrance.

Birds: Montgreenan: Wide range of woodland species. *Green woodpecker* possibly still present. **Dalgarnen:** Compact but quality waterside habitat: *grey heron*, wagtails, *kingfisher*, *common sandpiper*, other common waders. On a migration flight path with occasional scarce species including *greenshank*.

Spier's School Grounds

Location: Local authority-owned wooded parkland; mature trees, scrub and grassed areas. Public free to roam. Just E of Beith on B706, soon after crossing A737 (NS 353 534). **Car:** P at school gate. **Bike:** Easy, with care, from Beith. **PT:** 1km from town centre

Birds: Tits, finches, thrushes and other woodland and garden species. Great spotted woodpecker, chiffchaff, blackcap, willow and garden warbler.

Kilbirnie Loch

Location: Large loch in floodplain at N end of the Garnock Valley. Can partially explore S end from boat launching area near Lochshore Industrial Estate along informal fishermen's footpaths. N end better for birds - view from water ski club (NS 338 552) or scan from vantage point on A760 at NS 328 553. **Car:** Ample P at S end but very limited at N. Lay-by on A760. **Bike:** From Nat Cycle Route 7, Irvine- Glasgow: S end proximate; N end along byways. **PT:** Buses/trains at Glengarnock near S end.

Birds: Designated Wildlife Site. Open water with banks variously of mown grass and bushes, willows, farmland, marsh and narrow reed bed. Best when all year waterfowl augmented by possible wintering or passage *goldeneye*, *wigeon*, *teal*, *Slavonian grebe*, *goosander*, *smew* and *scaup*. The waters can become *dangerously toxic in summer*.

RSPB Lochwinnoch Nature Reserve

Location: Designated SSSI comprised of Airs Meadow Loch and Barr Loch. Visitor centre (NS 359 581) off A760 near A737 and rail station, within 0.8km of Lochwinnoch village.

Car: P at centre. **Bike:** Just off Nat Cycle Route 7. **PT:** Bus/rail station proximate. **DA:** Wheelchair access to centre and hides; paths in rolled stone (900mm); boardwalk.

Birds: Two shallow lochs fringed by marsh, scrub and woodland. Over 100 species recorded annually. Some rarities.

More: Displays, shop, trails, hides, events. RSPB Lochwinnoch Reserve, Largs Rd, Lochwinnoch, PA12 4JF, 01505 842 663.

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

Location: Over 25000 ha of diverse countryside across Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and North Ayrshire from the Clyde coast inland to Castle Semple Loch. Five focal points for visitors:

Castle Semple Centre: NS 362 592. On bank of Castle Semple Loch, Lochwinnoch, near RSPB reserve.

Muirshiel Centre: NS 319360. On moor 7km NW of Lochwinnoch at head of Calder Glen.

Barnbrock: NS 356 640. Headquarters and campsite, 6km N of Lochwinnoch on B786.

Cornalees Centre: NS 248 721. At N end of hill road Largs-Inverkip/Greenock via Brisbane Glen.

Lunderston Bay: NS 203 736. Picnic site at sandy beach on rocky coast 2km N of Inverkip on A78.

Car/DA: Parking for disabled and flat access at all major centres. Path networks being upgraded.

Birds: Wide range of habitat: mixed woodland, moorland, loch, wetland and coastline. Some 52 all year resident breeding species including *hen harrier*, 14 regular summer migrants; 33 species of water and wetland birds; and 20 recorded occasional visitors.

More: A ranger service based at Castle Semple Centre works across the park. Three main centres provide visitor facilities and activities: **Castle Semple Centre** 01505 842 882; **Muirshiel Centre** 01505 842 803; **Cornalees Centre** 01475 521 458. For access (**bike, PT, DA**), suggested car routes which sample the variety of habitat and more info see web-sites: www.ayrshire-birding.org.uk; www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk; www.scottishpark.com.

Isle of Arran

Arran (19km by 42km) lies in the Firth of Clyde 28km west of the Ayrshire coast, 5km east of Kintyre peninsula. Its northern half is rugged, mountainous, remote country, good habitat for *golden eagle* and *red deer*. Goatfell (874m) peaks over the principal town of Brodick on the east coast. The south has gentler moorland, extensive conifer plantations with red *squirrel* and much of the island's farmland. The climate is milder, the species range wider. Much of the coast is raised beach with a shoreline of rock or shingle, haunt of otter and steep escarpments. The wide diversity of habitat across the island results in a rich bird records list of over 200 species. The absence of fox as a predator may contribute to Arran's healthy population of raptors, notably *buzzard*, *kestrel*, *sparrowhawk*, *hen harrier* and *short-eared owl*. *Nightjar* may be in cleared forest. *Red-throated diver* breed on remote hill lochans. Significant absentees include *great spotted woodpecker*, despite suitable habitat and being on nearby Kintyre. Most of Arran is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Arran Natural History Society provided much of the information for this guide. Contact Ranger Service, Brodick Castle Country Park (see below). **Publications:** *The Arran Bird Report*, *Arran Flora*, *Where Can I See*- a guide to finding Arran's wildlife and plants - all from the Tourist Information Office, The Pier, Brodick, KA27 8AU, 01770303 776, or local shops.

Sea Crossing: Principally by Caledonian MacBrayne ferry between Brodick and Ardrossan, 55min crossing, several sailings daily. Also regular 30min crossings between Lochranza, Arran and Claonaig, Kintyre, April-Oct only. **Car:** Ferries. Secure CP at Ardrossan terminal. **Bike:** Arran roads good for bikes. Nat Cycle Route73 links Route 7 to Ardrossan, Arran and Kintyre. **PT:** Bus/ferry links at all terminals. Rail/ ferry link at Ardrossan. **DA:** Brodick ferry has lift from car deck for wheelchair users. Can stay in car on Lochranza ferry.

Birds: Good sea-watching. Mid-firth: *gannet*, *fulmar*, *Manx shearwater* and *storm petrel* (esp. autumn) Near Brodick: gulls including *Iceland* and *glaucous* in winter. Near Ardrossan: Horse Island (RSPB) has *eider* and *lesser black-backed gull* colony, *cormorant*, *shag*, *greylag goose*. Breeding *black guillemot* in harbour.

More: May see porpoise, Atlantic grey seal, common seal, Minke whale, basking shark.

Brodict Castle Country Park

Location: Popular National Trust for Scotland (NTS) property. Castle, Garden and Country Park 3km N of Brodick ferry terminal, along A841 coast road. On foot, follow 'Fisherman's Walk': main street, salt marsh, golf course, footbridge, beach, footbridge and signs to Brodick Castle. Around 80ha of woodland, pasture, meadow, gardens with network of footpaths extending into surrounding Forest Enterprise lands. Also Merkland Wood 1km N of entrance. **Car:** CP at Castle and Country Park. **Bike:** Easy ride from Brodick pier. **PT:** Island bus service past entrance, connects with ferry from Ardrossan. **DA:** Parking at castle and ranger centre. Woodland trail designed for wheelchairs. **Web:** www.nts.org.uk

Birds: Best early or late in the day. **Woodland and garden:** Largest broadleaf woodland on island; surrounded by conifer plantation, mature oak, beech, Scots pine and young birch. *Blackcap*, warblers (e.g. *wood*), *spotted flycatcher* and occasional *pie*; *song thrush* thrive,

siskin abound, *bullfinch* frequent fruit trees. *Tawny owl* and breeding *barn owl*. **Shoreline:** *common sandpiper*, *redshank*, *curlew*, breeding *shelduck*. **Offshore:** *gannet*, *common* and *black guillemot*, *eider*, *red-breasted merganser*. All three divers in spring.

More: Network of 1-2 hour walking trails of geological and historical interest. Country Park open daylight hours all year. Interpretive leaflets, family activities, audio guide and ranger led walks. Historic Castle and visitor facilities open daily Easter - Oct, weekends Nov - Easter. NTS Ranger Service, Brodick Castle Country Park, Isle of Arran, KA27 8HY.

Mountains of the North

Location: A good sample of northern habitat can be had on a 56km loop from Brodick: take B880 bill road, 'The String', to the west; fork right onto unclassified moor road to Machrie Bay; then by A841 main road north along the shore to Lochranza, east over 'The Boguillie' pass and back along the shore to Brodick. Mountain, moor, shore and sea can be scanned all along the route. Walking tracks lead into the interior from several locations. Maps and guide books available from Tourist Information Office on Brodick Pier and local shops. **Car:** Many lay-bys and CP along the route. **Bike:** Popular round trip. **PT:** Island bus service round coast and over The String. **DA:** Easy viewing from lay-bys and car parks.

Birds: Best part of Arran for birds of remote hill country, especially in spring/autumn: *golden eagle*, *raven*, *red grouse*, *curlew*, *wheatear*, *meadow pipit*. Good for raptors in general: *buzzard*, *peregrine*, *merlin*, *sparrowhawk*; with *hen harrier* and *short-eared owl* in suitable terrain.

More: Many visitor attractions, craft shops and catering facilities in Brodick, Lochranza and villages around the route. May have seasonal opening hours.

Hills and Moors of the South

Location: A good sample of southern hill country can be had on a 50km loop from Brodick: take B880 hill road, 'The String', west to Blackwaterfoot on the coast; then south 10km along A841 to an unclassified road, 'The Ross', up Water of Slidery valley, over the moors to Lamlash and back along A841 to Brodick. Walking tracks lead into the interior from several locations. Maps and guide books available from the Tourist Information Office on Brodick Pier (01 770 303 776) and local shops. **Car:** Many lay-bys and CP along the route. **Bike:** Popular round trip. **PT:** Island bus service round the coast and over The String (01 770 302 000). Post Bus twice daily over The Ross (01463 256200). **DA:** Easy viewing from lay-bys and car parks.

More: For cyclists, an attractive alternative to The Ross is the cycle track from the village of Kilmory (NR 960 215), 2km E of The Ross road end, over the moors to Lamlash. Visitor facilities similar to N end.

Birds: Many of the usual moorland species can be seen. All year specialities: *Hen harrier*, *short-eared owl*, *golden eagle*. Seasonally: *merlin*, *whinchat*, *tree pipit*, *grasshopper warbler*, *cuckoo*, *twite*.

South Coast, Kildonan and Auchenhew Bay

Location: Beach/raised beach near Kildonan village (NS 017207) signposted off A841 coast road some 20km S of Brodick. **Kildonan beach:** from CP (NS 034 207) to right of old coastguard tower, pass play area to reach beach near hotel; or start at CP near old school house 1km W. **Auchenhew Bay:** from CP opposite village hall go left past shop/PO to path W onto raised beach leading to Bennan Head (3km). **Car:** CP5 as given. **Bike:** Beware A841 traffic in peak tourist season, but also many cyclists. **PT:** Island coastal bus service through Kildonan. **DA:** Easy viewing from the shore road.

Birds: Good variety of species, depending on season. **Shoreline:** turnstone, common and purple sandpiper, dunlin, ringed plover, curlew, oystercatcher also whimbrel, little stint, knot, black-tailed godwit; pied and white wagtail, rock pipit. **Offshore:** eider and red-breasted merganser; wigeon and she/duck; gannet and shag from Ailsa Craig and nearby Pladda Isle; Manx shearwater; gulls may include Iceland in winter; breeding fulmar. **Scrub and escarpment:** stonechat, wheatear, willow and sedge warbler, whitethroat, buzzard, peregrine, sparrowhawk, raven, jackdaw.

East Ayrshire

Dean Castle Country Park, Kilmarnock

Location: In N Kilmarnock at NS 436 395. Open dawn to dusk, free of charge. From A77 (Meiklewood Interchange) on N outskirts of Kilmarnock, take B7038 for Kilmarnock and follow brown country park signs for 3km into Dean Rd - 5th on LT after roundabout. **Car:** CP at entrance. Supervised April-Oct. **Bike:** Easy ride from town centre, bus/rail stations, Nat. Cycle Route N73. **PT:** 15 mm walk from rail and bus stations; Glasgow services 4 and X76 pass Dean Rd end. **DA:** Parking for disabled. Network of metalled and unsurfaced paths, some rough and steep. Trail leaflet available. Contact ranger service.

Birds: Network of trails through 80 ha of mixed woodland, conifer plantation, semi-natural oak woodland, scrub and pasture, pond and 2 rivers which merge into the Kilmarnock Water nearby. Particularly good variety of species in spring and early summer; early morning or evening visits *are* best. **Garden birds:** *robin, wren, dunnock, song thrush, blackbird.* **Farmland:** *yellowhammer, goldfinch, rook, large wintering flocks of redwing and fieldfare.* **Raptors:** *tawny owl, sparrowhawk, kestrel, buzzard.* Wide range of **woodland** species: tits, finches, warblers (*wood* on occasion), *treecreeper, goldcrest, great spotted woodpecker, spotted flycatcher.* **River and pond:** *Dipper, wagtails, occasional kingfisher; mallard, wigeon, occasional goosander. Swift, swallow and house martin* in season.

More: Free tours of 14th Century Keep and 15th century Palace. Visitor Centre and cafe. Ranger led activities. Contact East Ayrshire Ranger Service, Dean Castle Country Park, KA31 1 XB Tel: 01563 522 702. **Web:** www.deancastle.com

Kay Park and Townholm, Kilmarnock

Location: Near Kilmarnock town centre. **Kay Park** (NS 434 383) accessed on foot from centre E/NE via London Rd and DeWaldon Terrace past Kilmarnock College; **Townholm** (NS 433 387) accessed N from Kay Park or S from Dean Castle Country Park. **Car:** **Kay Park:** P by pond off B7082. **Townholm:** P by 5-aside football complex off B7082. **Bike:** Easy ride from town centre, bus/rail station, Nat. Cycle Route N73. **PT:** Close to bus/rail stations. **DA:** CP at Kay Park. Metalled paths, flat near pond, steeper near monument.

Birds: Together with Dean Castle Country Park, this recreational green belt links town centre and countryside. Kay Park is maintained; Townholm is natural rough grass, wasteland, scrub, mixed woodland; both lie beside Kilmarnock Water. **Breeding** records include: *mute swan, mallard, sparrowhawk, moorhen, coot, lesser black-backed gull, tawny owl, swift, pied and grey wagtail, wren, dipper, dunnock, robin, song and mistle thrush, blackbird, garden/sedge/willow warbler, blackcap, whitethroat, goldcrest, spotted flycatcher, great/blue/coal/long-tailed tit, treecreeper, house sparrow, bullfinch, linnet.* Wide range of other species according to season including occasional *goosander, kingfisher.*

Kilmarnock – Springside Old Railway

Location: A 4km section of former Kilmarnock-Irvine rail line W of Kilmarnock, now part of cycle route and footpath between the towns. **Access points:** Knockentiber - from B751 on N outskirts at NS 400 396 or the byway to Kilmarnock from village centre; Springside - from Overton Rd on N outskirts at NS 369 391. **Car:** P with consideration in either village or by

bridge where a byway crosses the mid-point. **Bike:** Part of Nat. Cycle Route N73 Irvine-Kilmarnock **PT:** Frequent Kilmarnock-Springside - Irvine bus service; occasional to Knockentiber. **DA:** Park at side of road. Long ramp down to cycle track at Knockentiber, gentle grade at Springside.

Birds: Semi-natural, overgrown hedgerow, scrub, rough grass and farmland. High density of breeding warblers and buntings. Typical Ayrshire farmland birds. 83 species recorded over 10 years. **Breeding** records include: *mallard, kestrel, grey partridge, quail, pheasant, moorhen, oystercatcher, curlew, stock dove, skylark, sand martin, pied wagtail, whitethroat, sedge/grasshopper/willow warbler, great/blue/long-tailed tit, jackdaw, house/tree sparrow*, various finches, reed *bunting, yellowhammer*. Many other species wintering or on passage. **More:** Very good green corridor for all wildlife. **Butterflies:** *grayling, orange tip, small heath, clouded yellow* in good year. **Dragonflies:** *black darter, common darter*. Many botanical species of interest. *Roe deer* and other mammals.

Irvine Valley Trail

Location: A core trail along the R Irvine valley with associated local walks. Links the towns of Hurlford, Galston, Newmilns, and Darvel/Priestland along A71 E of Kilmarnock. Established under the auspices of the Irvine Valley Regeneration Partnership. Leaflet from tourist info, centres. **Web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk **Car:** Town CP or as specified in separate site descriptions. **Bike:** A71 not advised, but good byway network along the valley, especially N side. **PT:** Frequent bus service links the towns to Kilmarnock. **DA:** see **web:** www.ayrshire-birding.org.uk

Birds: The various sections of trail and the several local walks access a wide range of typical managed rural environments: river and bank, wetland, woodland, farm land and town green spaces. A good range of the species associated with these habitats can be expected. Three areas of particular ornithological merit are described below: East Holmes Marsh and Ladyton Loch, Big Wood, Loudoun Hill.

More: Each town has a strong historic heritage. Cultural and environmental interests can be combined.

East Holmes Marsh and Ladyton Loch

Location: 2km W downstream of Galston. The **marsh** lies between R Irvine and Cessnock Water at NS 471 369; scan from small CP at Hoodston Bridge (NS 471 369) on A71; or cross road with care and follow verge RT 200m to narrow track through fields. The **loch** lies opposite on N side of R Irvine at NS 486 373: take unclassified road for 1.5km from A71 9 or footpath (1.5km) from Galston via underpass at NS 499 371. **Car:** **marsh:** small CP at Hoodston Bridge; **loch:** P with care on verge or in Galston and walk. **Bike:** **Marsh** by A71 not recommended. **Loch** accessible along byway. **PT:** Frequent bus service Kilmarnock-Galston along A71. **DA:** **marsh:** CP on trunk road with fast traffic. Scan from CP with telescope. Fence prevents access to land. **Loch:** View from car at side of road. Road rough and unsurfaced in places.

Birds: **Marsh** good for waders on passage: snipe, redshank common sandpiper; records of green (often over-wintering) and wood sandpiper, ruff. Wintering ducks: teal, mallard, pochard, gadwall, tufted duck. Breeding: grey heron, water rail, grasshopper warbler, reed

bunting, little grebe. Has had white stork. **Loch** is small but surrounded by marsh, scrub woodland and hedgerow: lapwing, bullfinch, yellowhammer, sedge warbler and winter wildfowl.

More: Galston is ‘the Historical Heart of Ayrshire’: cafes, inns, speciality shops, mill. Loudoun Castle Theme Park nearby for family visits. Historic sites in the vicinity.

Big Wood

Location: Ancient woodland (NS 515 375) E of Galston, W of Newmilns, locally called ‘The Bluebell Planting’. On track N towards Woodhead Farm from A71 layby at Hags Bridge, next to golf course, 1.5km E of A71 /A71 9 roundabout. Planned part of historic Loudoun Castle Estate. Public access agreed but observe privacy signs. Circular walk of 1.5km possible past farmland, young plantation (open access), R Irvine: return from farm on minor road to A71, cross to pavement on S side. Beware of fast traffic. **Car:** P in layby at Hags Bridge. **Bike:** A71 not advised. Can approach via byways to the N from Newmilns or Kilmarnock. **PT:** Frequent bus service along A71. **DA:** Unsurfaced muddy tracks with cobbles, steep section at start, up from road.

Birds: Woodland: mature specimens of oak, beech, elm, ash with good under-storey, carpeted with bluebell and other wildflowers. Spring and early summer best: *spotted flycatcher, blackcap, willow and garden warbler, chiffchaff, wood warbler, treecreeper*, tits, finches, thrushes, *jay, great spotted woodpecker, sparrowhawk*. **Farmland:** *oystercatcher, lapwing, pheasant, rook* and hedgerow species. **River:** *sand martin* colony, *common sandpiper, grey wagtail, dipper, kingfisher*. Otter present.

More: Newmilns is a historic weavers town: cafes, inns, shops, historic sites.

Loudoun Hill

Location: Conspicuous volcanic extrusion to N of A71, 5km E of Darvel. Scan crags from CP (NS 613 37rt) on byway N to Drumboy Farm, off A71 nearly opposite quarry entrance. Way-marked paths lead from CP variously onto hill slopes, summit and down to river. For details: info board at CP; leaflet from info centres. (Or P by Loudoun Hill Inn (NS 596 374) on A71 and proceed on foot over A71 to byway by Newlands Farm and path to summit.) **Car:** P as given above. **Bike:** A71 requires great care. Can approach via byways. **PT:** Occasional buses Darvel-Hamilton. **DA:** Unsurfaced CP. Loose surface in places. Scan crags from CP.

Birds: Crags and slopes: *peregrine, buzzard, kestrel, raven*. **Summit:** spring migrants e.g. *ring ouzel*. Path network by field, hedgerow, braes of river: *lapwing, curlew, whitethroat, wheatear, yellowhammer*, warblers, tits, finches, wagtails, *spotted flycatcher, dipper* and wintering *redwing, fieldfare, greylag* goose.

More: Historic site: William Wallace ambushed a baggage train; Robert the Bruce won a decisive battle. Also in vicinity: Barr Castle museum, 15th Century Loudoun Kirk, Gallow Law Cairn viewpoint. Catering at Loudoun Inn. Darvel for cafes, inns, speciality shops, museum.

Woodroad Park, Cumnock

Location: In Cumnock at N end (NS 565 204). Enter off B7083 to Auchinleck, beside bridge next A70 traffic lights. **Car:** CP in Park. **Bike/PT:** 2 min ride/walk from bus station and town centre. **DA:** Surfaced CP. Some tracks accessible - four steps at end prevent circular route near tennis courts being completed. Locked gate at start of track to river.

Birds: Semi-natural, ancient woodland beside Lugar Water. Paths through Templeton Wood and by river. Can extend NE over footbridge to opposite bank of Lugar or N past caravan site, under viaduct to Templeland Mains and open farmland. **Typical park and riverside species:** *song thrush, blackbird, pied wagtail, goldcrest*, flocks of tits in winter, *dipper, grey wagtail, grey heron, occasional kingfisher*. **Resident** *great spotted woodpecker, sparrowhawk, tawny owl, treecreeper, jay, bullfinch*. **Seasonal** *redstart, willow warbler, chiffchaff, blackcap, spotted flycatcher, swift, swallow, house/sand martin*. **Farmland/hedgerow species:** *lapwing, skylark, green finch, yellowhammer*.

More: In Cumnock: bakery, cafes, inns, shops, Baird Institute Museum.

Cumnock byways and Glenmuir

Location: A 10-12km network of byways radiating from Logan (NS 5920) off A70 just E of Cumnock. **Car:** P at various points by verge with due courtesy. Scan from road or walk. **Bike:** Quiet roads to explore. **PT:** Frequent bus service Logan-Cumnock, linking to Kilmarnock or Ayr. **DA:** Surfaced minor roads, be alert for passing vehicles. Scan from car.

Birds: Developed and undeveloped pasture, working farms, mature beech by roadside, large area of moss, broadleaf/coniferous woods, well foliated glen. Wide range of species according to season: tits, warblers, finches, *whitethroat, spotted flycatcher, swallow, kestrel*, wintering flocks of *redwing and fieldfare*. Migration flight path - many possibilities.

Airds Moss

Location: Large tract of upland moor around NS 6125 bounded by A70 and B743 E of Cumnock. Scan from roadside where safe: e.g. large lay-by NE of Cronberry on A70; various points on B743; by verge on byways from Cumnock or Auchinleck onto W of Moss. Beware of opencast mining traffic. **Car:** P in lay-bys and by roadside as described, with due care of passing traffic. **Bike:** A70 requires great care. Some byways also carry mining traffic. **PT:** Bus (regular) to Cumnock, Auchinleck or Cronberry and walk. **DA:** Park and scan from vehicle.

Birds: Important ornithological site. **Moorland** species: e.g. *hen harrier, merlin, peregrine, red grouse, black grouse, golden plover, dunlin, curlew, short-eared owl*. **Farms, scrub and wetland/loch** to W worth checking e.g. Common Loch at NS 592 225. *Skylark, tree pipit, lesser redpoll, stonechat, whinchat, wheatear, crossbill, cuckoo, reed bunting* and wintering thrushes, finches, ducks and swans. Migration route: *great grey shrike* has been sighted.

Trabboch Loch and Stair

Location: Trabboch (NS 438 220) and Stair (NS 438 235) are 2 small communities off A70 approx 12km W of Cumnock, 10km E of Ayr. From A70 E of Coalhall, take B730 N for Trabboch (2km) then Stair (3.5km). **Car:** **Trabboch:** Pat or near community centre and

proceed on foot by track Ito Drumdow Farm) which bisects the wetland. **Stair:** P at or near former coaching Stair Inn; scan surrounding woodland and river. Respect owners/users wishes. **Bike:** Both sites on good network of byways linking through to Ayr/Cumnock. **PT:** Frequent buses along A70. **DA: Trabboch Loch:** Scan from CR Single-track to farm is narrow, steep, rough and unsurfaced. **Stair:** Scan from CP (limited viewing).

Birds: Trabboch: good for passage migrants and wintering wildfowl. Breeding: *little grebe, water rail, sedge warbler, reed bunting*. Passage/winter: *gadwall, tufted duck, pochard*. **Stair:** Mature woodland and R Ayr; many woodland species includes *wood warbler, pied flycatcher, dipper, wagtails, kingfisher, jay*.

Martnaham Loch

Location: Large inland water on W extremity of E Ayrshire, straddling boundary with S Ayrshire. From Coylton on A70 (8km from Ayr; 17km from Cumnock), take B742 SW for 2.5km then LT onto byway round F and S of Loch. Scan from lay-bys at F end I NS 405 177) or on S hillside (NS 403 173). Approach lochside with due respect for landowner's wishes.

Car: P by roadside with due courtesy. **Bike:** On network of quiet byways from Ayr/Cumnock but beware of opencast traffic near Cumnock. **PT:** Regular bus service Ayr-Coylton-Cumnock via 8742. **DA:** These are narrow country roads with no surfaced lay-bys or safe refuges for wheelchair users to avoid passing traffic. Limited opportunities to view from car.

Birds: Good for wintering wildfowl and birds on passage. Wintering flocks of goldeneye, wigeon, pochard, teal; possible shoveler, scaup, long-tailed duck, gadwall; greylag goose and whooper swan. Gulls, possibly glaucous, Iceland, Mediterranean. Passage flocks of waders can include whimbrel, ruff, green sandpiper, black-tailed godwit. Breeding great crested and little grebe. Notable for rarities: smew, ring-necked duck, grey phalarope, black tern, lesser scaup, hobby, American wigeon, green-winged teal.

More: Nearby Fergus Loch (NS 39 18) and Snipe Loch (NS 38 17) also of interest.

New Cumnock Wetlands

Location: Black Loch, Creoch Loch, Loch o' th' Lowes (Lochside Loch), Knockshinnoch Lagoons and water meadows of R Nith floodplain all lie near the town of New Cumnock (NS 617 138), 22km from Kilmarnock along A76 to Dumfries. Access **Lagoons** up Castlehill Lane in town, past cemetery, following Community pathway signs; or from SWT CP (NS 617 138) on B741. Scan Loch o' th' Lowes from Lochside House Hotel off A76 1.5km NW of town. Scan **floodplain** from byway as described under **Craigdullyeart and Corsencon**. Other lochs less readily accessed. **Car:** P in large free town CP and follow footpath signs to Knockshinnoch; or at SWT CP. **Bike:** Short ride from rail station to Lagoons. Quiet along Craigdullyeart byways. A76 requires great care. **PT:** On Ayr-Kilmarnock-Dumfries rail line. Regular Ayr-Dumfries bus on A76. Occasional local along B741. **DA:** Locked gate and stile from Castlehill Lane.

Birds: Lagoons, reed beds and surrounds good for breeding wildfowl, waders, *water rail, whinchat, grasshopper* and *sedge warbler, reed bunting*. *Garganey* and *spotted crane* have occurred. Nith Valley a major migration route: *greylag/pink-footed/barnacle goose, whooper*

swan, black-tailed godwit, ruff; greenshank. Excellent in spring. Many possibilities: *Wilson's phalarope* on record.

More: Community footpath network radiating from town covers diverse habitat.

Craigdullyeart and Corsencon

Location: Two hills ENE of New Cumnock: Craigdullyeart (367m) at NS 659 159; Corsencon (475m) at NS 672 147. Take byway E from A76 on sharp bend at Pathhead/Mansfield on N outskirts of New Cumnock, near rail station. Beyond 2nd farm, in 3km, fork L steeply up glen with Craigdullyeart on L and Corsencon on RT, to limits of sealed road (351m). Explore on foot. **Car:** P by verge where public road ends and with courtesy elsewhere along byways. **Bike:** Quiet byways with some steep gradients. **PT:** Train/bus at New Cumnock, 4km distant. **DA:** Off-road tracks unsuitable for wheelchair users. 3-4 places to stop on road and view glen. Turning space at top (good for birds).

Birds: Area is a mosaic of farmland, heather moorland and conifer plantation worthy of careful scanning from various vantage points along the byways. **Upper glen:** *skylark, reed bunting, lesser redpoll, crossbill, stonechat, whinchat, meadow pipit, black grouse, curlew, sparrowhawk, kestrel, buzzard, short-eared owl*. **Farmland** of lower glen: *yellowhammer, linnets, bullfinch, warblers, swift, swallow, martins* and wintering flocks of *starling and thrushes*.

More: Byway along S slopes of Corsencon which forks RT at start of glen provides good viewpoints over the R Nith floodplain, especially for observing flocks of geese and *whooper swan*.

Glen Afton

Location: Some 8km of upland river valley made famous by Robert Burns, the famous Scottish bard. Accessed along byway S off B741 close to junction with A76 in New Cumnock. Best explored on foot or by bike. **Car:** P at Burns Cairn memorial 2km along byway; or at head of glen (observing access restrictions). **Bike:** Easy ride from New Cumnock. **PT:** Train/bus at New Cumnock. **DA:** Quiet country road but be alert for occasional traffic; several places to park. Most of valley can be traversed by wheelchair up to base of dam. Possible locked gate at cottages.

Birds: Scattered broadleaf woodland and conifer plantation; open, grassy slopes; clear running water; reservoir at head of glen. Good for summer migrants, especially **lower, wooded end:** *willow/sedge/garden/ wood warbler, blackcap, pied flycatcher, whitethroat, redstart, tree pipit, crossbill*. **By water:** *dipper, grey wagtail, common sandpiper*. **Raptors** include: *sparrowhawk, kestrel and buzzard*.

More: Long tradition of public access to surrounding hills and forests.

Blackcraig Hill

Location: At 700m, one of a number of energetic but technically easy hill walks onto upland in the vicinity of New Cumnock. One route is from informal P at NS 632 080 by Afton Water

6km up glen. Walking track passes Blackcraig Farm onto N shoulder of the hill. **Car:** P as described. **Bike:** Easy ride from New Cumnock to the start. **PT:** Train/bus at New Cumnock. **DA:** Off-road tracks unsuitable for wheelchair users.

Birds: Grass/heather covered approach; tundra like summit of broken rock and scree. Typical moorland species. Breeding *golden plover*, *dunlin*, *meadow pipit*, *wheatear*. Raptors include: *peregrine*, *buzzard*, *kestrel*, *merlin*, *hen harrier*, *short-eared owl*. Summit plateau attracts wintering *snow bunting*, and *dotterel* on passage in early May.

Cairn Table

Location: A 10km return hill climb along well-used track from Muirkirk on E extremity of Ayrshire to summit of highest hill in vicinity, Cairn Table, 593m. Start at Kames CP (NS 697 265) on Furnace Road, off A70 in town centre just W of traffic lights (signed Camp Site and Golf Course). Allow 1.5-2hr to summit. One of several way-marked paths: info, board; leaflet from info centres. **Web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk **Car:** CP as above. **Bike:** A70 requires great care. **PT:** Regular bus service Cumnock-Muirkirk; connects to Kilmarnock and Ayr **DA:** These are rough hill tracks, steep in places. 300-400mm wide access gate at start.

Birds: One of the most significant upland heath sites in S Scotland. Protected status for breeding birds: hen harrier, merlin, short-eared owl, go/den plover, curlew, snipe, redshank, dun/in, stonechat, twite, skylark. Buzzard and kestrel present. Managed grouse moor and nesting birds: please stay on track.

More: Summit cairn is war memorial. Very good diversity of moorland plants, invertebrates, mammals. Rich historical heritage: Mesolithic, Neolithic, Covenanting, industrial. Drove Rd to Sanquhar: 28km moorland hike.

Tibbies Brig

Location: Easy stroll from same start as Cairn Table climb; 2km round; extendable to 5.5km round by following 'Twa' Brigs Walk' info board; leaflet from info centres. **Web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk **Car, Bike, PT:** as for Cairn Table. **DA:** Unsurfaced track, muddy in places. Closed wooden gate (unlocked) part way. Becomes steep close to bridge.

Birds: Path passes scrub, mixed woodland, grazing, rough grass, heather to the Brig over fast flowing burn. Expect tits, finches, thrushes, warblers, siskin, *swallow*, *sand martin*. **Moors:** *red grouse*, *curlew*, *oystercatcher*, *dun/in*, *stonechat*, *whinchat*, *wheatear*. **Raptors:** *buzzard*, *kestrel*, *sparrowhawk*, possible *merlin*, *hen harrier*, *peregrine*. **By burn:** *dipper*, *grey wagtail*, *common sandpiper*, possible *kingfisher*. **On migration flight path:** expect flocks of *redwing*, *fieldfare*, *redpoll*, other possibilities.

More: Bridge named after authoress of well known Scottish folk song 'Ca' the Yowes tae the Knowes'. Many historic sites in vicinity: cairn in memory of McAdam of sealed road fame.

John Brown's Walk and Kirk Plantation

Location: JB's Walk: 7 km return along Priesthill Farm Hill track and up onto rough moor; track leads E from A723 Muirkirk-Strathaven road, 3km N of Muirkirk at NS 699 299. **Kirk Plantation:** woodland by A723 on outskirts of town at NS 698 278. **Car: JB's Walk:** Small CP 300m along track on rise beyond dip over burn. **Kirk Plantation:** CP on site. **Bike:**

From Muirkirk along A723 or via hill byway linking B743 Sorn-Muirkirk to A723. **PT:** Nearest bus service in Muirkirk. **DA:** **JB's walk:** Small CP. Rough, cobbled unsurfaced road up to about 500m before farm. Track then becomes very rough and boggy. **Kirk Plantation:** Steps at start, circular path has woodchip surface.

Birds: Complementary habitats. JB's walk: heather moorland, upland grazing, stream, small wooded glens. Meadow pipit, sky/ark, curlew, lapwing, oystercatcher, snipe, stonechat, wheatear, linnets, green and goldfinch, grey wagtail, buzzard, kestrel, possible merlin, hen harrier, short-eared owl. Red grouse on higher ground. **Kirk Plantation:** path in young mixed woodland: tits, finches, thrushes, warblers including whitethroat, goldcrest, spotted flycatcher, treecreeper, sparrowhawk. Beyond the plantation lies a byway in more open space and mature trees.

More: Full walk is the site of John Brown's execution in front of his family for being a Covenanter. One of several martyr's memorials in the area. Details in leaflet from information centres or on the **web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk; byway linking A723 and B743 passes through good *short-eared owl* habitat. Excellent coniferous habitat in Smallburn plantation (NS 675 275) opposite Kirk Plantation, has accessible path network.

Bogton Loch, Dalmellington

Location: Loch and wetlands on W outskirts of town of Dalmellington, 24km from Ayr on A71 3 to Castle Douglas. Accessible by informal footpaths from town but best viewed from byway along W bank; reached 1km from town off B741 to Straiton, just beyond humped-back bridge. **Car:** Modest lay-by on byway at NS 465 055. **Bike:** Easy ride from town. **PT:** Regular bus service Ayr-Dalmellington. **DA:** This is a narrow country road with no safe refuges for wheelchair users to avoid passing traffic. Limited opportunities to view from car. One surfaced lay-by at S end of loch on Dalcairney farm road - reasonable views of loch.

Birds: Excellent for wetland species: water rail, snipe, little grebe, mallard, teal, goldeneye, occasional shoveler. **Breeding** reed bunting, grasshopper and sedge warbler, whinchat, willow tit. Many wintering waterfowl: greylag goose, whooper swan, finches including brambling; bittern recorded. **Raptors:** peregrine, sparrowhawk, kestrel, buzzard, marsh and hen harrier.

More: Cafes, inns, shops in Dalmellington (Book town). Otters may be seen.

Dalmellington Moss

Location: Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve comprising 28ha of raised bog to W of A71 3, 1km on Ayr side of Dalmellington. Informal pathways through bog; best scanned from small SWT CP at NS 466 065 above the main road, 50m up the access road to Chalmerston open cast coal mine. **Car:** SWT CP. **Bike:** A713 needs care. **PT:** Ayr-Dalmellington bus service passes mine road end. **DA:** Rough informal tracks.

Birds: A rare example of floodplain raised bog. Scan for whooper swan, hen harrier, snipe, curlew, grasshopper and sedge warbler, whinchat, willow tit, reed bunting and others.

Ness Glen

Location: Outflow from L Doon plunges down Ness Glen at NS 476013. At 2km from Dalmellington on A713 to Castle Douglas take byway to L Doon. Loch and upper glen; scan from vicinity of dam 4km up byway; or stop 1km short of dam and walk the track down E side of glen. Byway itself passes well varied habitat of woodland and moor, good birding on foot or by bike. **Car:** CP at start of byway and at dam; lay-by near track end; verge-side stops, with courtesy, elsewhere. **Bike:** Quiet byway is very suitable. A71 3 with care. **PT:** Dalmellington-Castle Douglas bus service passes L Doon road end. **DA:** Rough unsurfaced woodland paths, steep and narrow in places.

Birds: Good mixture of broadleaf and relict pine woodland; pleasantly animated river. Included in the rich diversity of species you might expect: *dipper, goosander, grey wagtail, tree pipit, redstart, blackcap, chiffchaff, wood warbler, pied and spotted flycatcher, siskin, crossbill, cuckoo, buzzard.*

More: The glen-side track leads in 4km to Bogton Loch/Dalmellington. The continuation of the glen-side track E of L Doon byway is also worth exploring. Small visitor centre with toilets at the dam.

Loch Doon

Location: Large loch, major reservoir, set in the hills of the Galloway Forest Park, SE of Dalmellington. From A713, 2km SE of Dalmellington, take byway signed to L Doon for 4km to outflow dam. Byway then follows the 9km W bank closely, providing good scope for scanning moor and loch, exploring on foot, level cycling. **Car:** CP at dam (NS476 014) and end of sealed road at (NX476 942). Or by verge, with courtesy. **Bike:** Quiet, level cycling. **PT:** Nearest bus service is along A71 3. **DA:** Narrow country road. View loch and surrounds from CP or park by verge. No safe refuges for wheelchair users to avoid traffic. **Birds:** Vistas of moorland, forest, loch and hills. Varied habitat of grassland, moor and scrub with coniferous plantations and patches of broadleaf woodland. **Stony shoreline:** *grey and pied wagtail, common sandpiper.* **Loch:** *goosander, red-breasted merganser, goldeneye, tufted duck.* **Moor:** *meadow pipit, stonechat, wheatear, grasshopper warbler, skylark, black grouse, raven.* **Woodland:** *tits, finches, goldcrest, crossbill, siskin, lesser redpoll.* **Raptors:** *peregrine, merlin, buzzard.* Occasional *great grey shrike.*

More: Major recreational area for outdoor enthusiasts, mostly managed by Forest Enterprise: walking, cycling, fishing, picnicking, bird watching. Some of the best hill walking in Ayrshire. Walking trails. Cycle routes through forest to S Ayrshire and national cycle route network. Loch noted for its Arctic Charr.

South Ayrshire

Rozelle and Belleisle Parks, Ayr

Location: In S Ayr, on opposite sides of Monument Road (B7024 to Maybole); Belleisle on WINS 33 19), Rozelle on E (N5 34 19). **Car:** Enter Belleisle from Doonfoot Road, A71 9 to Dunure; Rozelle from Monument Road. CP in both. **Bike:** Various access points from local byway network and Nat. Cycle Route 7. **PT:** Regular buses from Ayr centre along Monument Road and Doonfoot Road. **DA:** Parking for disabled at Belleisle House. Network of metalled and un-metalled footpaths, occasional steep sections can be avoided.

Birds: Wide variety of habitat: open grassland (two golf courses in Belleisle); coniferous, deciduous and mixed woodland; pond in Rozelle and Slaphouse Burn through both. Over 110 species recorded. **Rozelle** is best for woodland species: *spotted flycatcher*, *great spotted woodpecker*, *sparrowhawk*, *goldcrest*, warblers, tits and other garden birds. **Belleisle** has a large rookery and breeding *stock dove*, *tawny owl*, *blackcap*, *chiffchaff* among others. Both parks attract winter flocks of finches and thrushes.

More: Catering in both parks. Rozelle has the MacLaurin and Rozelle House art galleries and museum.

Doonfoot and Greenan Shore

Location: Southern stretch of Ayr Bay from R Doon (N5 324 195) to Greenan Castle (NS 312 1 931). Easily accessed along its entirety. **Car:** S from Ayr centre along Doonfoot Road (A719 Ayr-Dunure), RT just after crossing R Doon or at the roundabout 0.5km further on. CP by the shore at either end. **Bike:** Nat. Cycle Route 7 runs along the shore. Good viewing from cycle bridge over R Doon. **PT:** Regular buses from Ayr centre. **DA:** Car park off Castle Walk is unsurfaced, park in road. Easy access to cycle track.

Birds: Prime site for waders, gulls and waterfowl. 32 species of wader recorded from late July to April/May; over 1000 *curlew* on a night roost. High numbers of *golden plover*, *lapwing* (autumn/winter); possible *sanderling*, *little stint*, *curlew sandpiper*, *greenshank*. Nationally important *goldeneye* flock and c.400 moulting *eider* in season. Many species on passage: *wigeon*, *pintail*, *common scoter*, *scaup*, *pochard*, *tufted duck*, grebes and divers. Thousands of gulls roost in autumn/winter: records of *glaucous*, *Iceland*, *little*, *Mediterranean*, *ring-billed*. Winter finch and bunting flocks in marram grass and on foreshore.

More: Byway along N bank of R Doon links to Belleisle and Rozelle Parks: possible *kingfisher*, *dipper*, *grey heron* along the way; also otter. Or continue N along the promenade for *stonechat*, *skylark*, finches or S by the cycle way into pasture and hedgerow habitat and join the Doonfoot/Alloway old railway path.

Doonfoot to Alloway Old Railway

Location: A 4km stretch of former railway from Burton Farm road entrance (NS 314 182) off A719 just S of Doonfoot to Maybole Road (A79), Ayr near its junction with A77 Ayr-Stranraer at (NS 348 182). Car: P by kerb, with courtesy, in Browncarrick district off A71 9 at Wend or on Maybole Road at E end. **Bike:** Easily accessed via local side roads and local

byway network. **PT:** Good bus services along Maybole Road and to Browncarrick/Doonfoot from Ayr centre. **DA:** Rough unsurfaced track often muddy in wet weather.

Birds: Good shelter belt along embankments/cuttings by garden, hedgerow, woodland and farmland with at least 35 species regularly seen over 10 years: finches, tits, thrushes, warblers, crows, *robin*, *wren*, *dunnock*, *grey/pied wagtail*, *spotted flycatcher*, *lesser whitethroat*; *goosander*, *dipper* from bridge over R Doon.

More: Can be very muddy. Best between Burton and former rail bridge over R Doon - can start/finish at *Tam O' Shanter Experience*, Alloway (CP, catering, buses) and proceed through tunnel to bridge over river. Links well from W end along Cycle Route 7 to Doonfoot/Greenan and to Rozelle/Belleisle from Alloway mid-point.

Ayr Harbour and the Auld Brig

Location: Working harbour at mouth of R Ayr, best approached from S along Ayr esplanade off which a spur leads to a breakwater. The **Auld Brig** is in the town centre nearby. **Car:** **Harbour:** kerbside parking in the spur. **DA:** Park on road (not ideal), metalled/ paved level surfaces. **Auld Brig:** riverside CP (voucher needed). **Bike:** Nat. Cycle Route 7 passes both locations. **PT:** An easy stroll from Ayr town centre. Bus and rail stations within 1-2km.

Birds: **Harbour:** cormorant shag, breeding black guillemot. Best in winter/migration: purple sandpiper **on rocks**; scaup, goldeneye, long-tailed duck offshore; red breasted merganser, red-throated diver, gannet, guillemot, razorbill, Manx shearwater (strong onshore winds). **Auld Brig:** good for gulls (occasional Iceland and glaucous gull) and large flock of mute swan, occasional whooper.

Newton-upon-Ayr Shore

Location: Coastline from seaward end (NS 342 250) of Maryborough Road, off Ayr Road, Prestwick, S along the edge of St. Nicholas Golf Course, plus promenade towards Ayr Harbour (NS 332 236), accessed from Woodfield Road off Prestwick Road, Newton upon Ayr. **Car:** P by kerb at either end. **Bike:** On Nat. Cycle Route 7. **PT:** Good bus service on Prestwick Road/Ayr Road (0.5km). Newton upon Ayr rail station within 0.5km. **DA:** Easy viewing and parking along promenade (metalled surface). Rough, sandy coastal path to N.

Birds: Good mixture of rock, shingle and sandy beach attractive to birds especially in winter/migration season. Species on record include *glaucous gull*, *long-tailed duck*, *Arctic*, *common* and *sandwich tern*, *scaup*, *goldeneye*, *Slavonian*, *little and red-necked grebe*, *razorbill*, *little auk*, *black guillemot*, *black redstart*, *snow bunting*, *peregrine*.

Auchincruive Trails

Location: Four way-marked trails start from Oswald's Bridge (NS 387231) over R Ayr where it passes through the grounds of the Scottish Agricultural College. From Ayr, take A719 E across A77 onto B743 for Mauchline and in 1km right onto unclassified road past entrance to SAC for 1km. Trail leaflets from info centres or see **web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk

Car: CP in SAC grounds by river - enter by drive to Oswald Hall. **Bike:** On local Byway route to SAC along river bank from Ayr centre. **PT:** Regular bus service along B743 within 1km. **DA:** Network of metalled, paved and unsurfaced paths within Auchincruive. Tracks in woodland narrow and steep.

Birds: The *Three Green Knights* and *Waggonway* trails can be combined into a 5km walk through diverse habitat very typical of lowland Ayrshire: riverside, mixed woodland, open grass and pasture. Cross bridge, follow green signs left up river bank then red signs for a round trip. **River:** *goosander, dipper, grey heron, grey/pied wagtail*, possible *kingfisher*.

Woodland:

finches, tits, thrushes, *treecreeper, goldcrest, great spotted woodpecker, jay*, seasonal warblers, *spotted flycatcher*. **Farmland:** *starling, rook, carrion crow, jay*. **Field and hedgerow** species, seasonal *swallow, swift, house and sand martin*. **Raptors:** *sparrowhawk, kestrel, buzzard*.

Pow Burn and Prestwick Bay

Location: Pow Burn estuary lies N of Prestwick, W of international airport at NS 3428. Reach by side road off A79 to caravan site opposite airport or along beach from Prestwick N beach CP. **Car:** Park seaward of railway, near entrance to caravan site or Prestwick N beach CP. **Bike:** Nat Cycle Route 7 passes both CP. **PT:** Frequent buses from Ayr via airport and trains to airport and Prestwick stations. **DA:** Short tarmac esplanade from N beach CP (surface rough in places).

Birds: Sand and gravel shoreline; small saltmarsh and tidal mudflats; sheltered inner estuary; wild grassed dunes with golf course close by. Over 130 species recorded, mostly spring or autumn passage. Notable for estuarial and grassland species but anything possible following a storm. *Kingfisher* regular. Passage species have included: *spotted redshank, greenshank, little egret, spoonbill, surf scoter, Brent goose*. Marram grass and golf course good for wintering finches, buntings, occasional *short-eared owl*.

Troon and Barassie Shore

Location: Stretch of coast including Troon headland and harbour/N and S Sands, from Stinking Rocks (INS 323 333) off Barassie (N Sands) to Meikle Craigs (NS 325 285) (S Sands). Ferry signed from A76/77. **Car:** CPs overlooking N Sands at swimming pool; at harbour; overlooking Ballast Bank rocks and S Sands at N end of esplanade. **Bike:** Nat. Cycle Route 7 passes near best viewing sites. **PT:** Easy 0.5 -1.5 km stroll from Troon town centre buses and rail station. **DA:** Good parking at swimming pool (NS 322 3131 and Ballast Bank (NS 306 313). View from CPs or metalled footpaths.

Birds: N Sands: major Ayrshire wader and gull site. Huge gull roosts here and on Meikle Craigs (S Sands); *Iceland, glaucous and Mediterranean gulls* regular in winter. Large autumn build up of waders: *oystercatcher, dunlin, redshank, ringed and golden plover* (Stinking Rocks), some wintering *sanderling*; records of *buff-breasted and white-rumped sandpiper, American golden plover*. **Harbour:** active fishing fleet attracts gulls, *black guillemot, eider, red-breasted merganser*. **Headland:** good sea-watching: *gannet, Manx shearwater, storm and Leach's petrel*.

More: Many good cafes and restaurants around the Marina and town centre. Ferry to N Ireland.

Fullarton Woods, Troon

Location: Network of metalled and unsurfaced paths in mixed woodland on the outskirts of Troon (NS 345 303). **Car:** Drive past rugby club; park on site of Fullarton House. **Bike:** Within 1km of Nat. Cycle route. **PT:** Frequent bus service Ayr-Prestwick-Troon along 8749 close to woodland road end. **DA:** Parking spaces for the disabled.

Birds: Reasonably wide variety of common resident and migrant woodland species including: *great spotted woodpecker, blackcap, willow warbler, chiffchaff, spotted flycatcher* and many others. Rich in bird song in spring. *Green woodpecker* also possible.

More: Fields to north towards Loans flood in winter. Good for *greylag geese*, roosting waders and ducks.

Lady Isle

Location: Small, low lying island (NS 2729) 4km offshore from Troon. Private, no landing without permission. Good views of birds and seals when circumnavigating in own boat or hired. **Car/Bike:** CP at Troon Marina. **PT:** Good bus and rail services to Troon within short walk of marina. **DA:** None.

Birds: Huge lesser black-backed and herring gull colony. Also greater black-backed gull, eider, cormorant, shag, oystercatcher. Wintering purple sandpiper, dunlin, turnstone. Divers and auks.

River Ayr Gorge, Failford

Location: Scottish Wildlife Trust managed woodland on W bank of R Ayr, down stream from Failford (NS 460262). On B743 Ayr-Mauchline road, 10km inland. Reserve open at all times.

Car: P opposite Failford Inn. On foot, follow signs from Wend of village. **Bike:** Busy road, care needed. **PT:** Regular bus service along B743. **DA:** Rough woodland tracks not suitable for wheelchair users.

Birds: Sandstone river gorge flanked by rich, well-established deciduous and coniferous woodland with network of paths for circuitous walks of 1-3 hours duration. Breeding *great spotted woodpecker, kingfisher, redstart, garden warbler, blackcap, wood warbler, pied flycatcher, jay* and many others. Rich in bird song in spring. *Buzzard, sparrowhawk* present. Recent *nuthatch* record.

More: Covenanter Alexander Peden preached to his congregation on opposite bank from a rocky outcrop. Robert Burns parted from Mary Campbell here.

Straiton

Location: A cluster of sites in upper reaches of valley of R Girvan and Wend of hills of Galloway Forest Park, around and beyond Straiton village (NS 3804). Reached by B7045 or B741 and thence unclassified hill road to Newton Stewart. **Car:** CP at Straiton and elsewhere as described. **Bike:** Straiton on local byway network, linked to Nat Cycle Route 7. All locations easily reached by bike.

PT: Good Ayr-Maybole-Straiton bus service (bikes carried on most). **DA:** Should be accessible in part.

More: Village has inn and cafe. Trails leaflet from village CP/picnic site beside river from dispenser, info centres or see **web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk

Lady Hunter Blair's Walk

Green walk is 3.5 km round, from Straiton CP/picnic site, past Largs Farm into Lambdoughty Glen with last burn, falls and mixed woodland. Good for *jay, kestrel, siskin, redpoll*. Also *red squirrel and otter*.

Blairquhan Estate

Private grounds next Straiton; open days in summer. Fine mixture of woodland with R Girvan through. Much can be seen from adjacent quiet public roads: *Buzzard, tree pipit, redstart, garden and wood warbler, blackcap, pied flycatcher, dipper*.

Loch Bradan Waterworks Road

A 6km minor road beside R Girvan, signposted Loch Bradan from Tairlaw Bridge (NS 402 009), 5km up the Newton Stewart road from Straiton. Park by verge near bridge and walk or cycle the route. Good for *dipper, grey wagtail, siskin, crossbill, spring migrants*.

Stinchar Bridge

CP (NX 398 958) on byway to L where hill road crosses R Stinchar. Vista of surrounding moors and forests. Byway goes through young conifer and deciduous stands to moor and L Bradan. Good for *meadow pipit, bullfinch, song thrush, buzzard*; also *siskin, crossbill, black grouse*.

Forest Drive

From Stinchar Bridge byway, continue onto forest tracks on foot, by bike, by car for several good view points: L Bradan from CP at NX 408 979; Craiglure Cairn by climbing from NS 409 972; L Skelloch from CP at NX 411 963. Expect: *goosander, tufted duck, little grebe, snipe, common sandpiper; wheatear, stonechat; coal tit, goldcrest, finches including crossbill, redpoll, siskin; buzzard, kestrel, barn owl*.

Cornish Hill

Location: One of 2 forest walks from Stinchar Bridge CP/picnic site (NX 398 958), 10km from Straiton on the hill road to Newton Stewart. A 5km round trip, climbing 100m to a local summit with rewarding panoramic views. Steep, rough, boggy in places: use strong footwear.

Car: CP at start. **Bike:** On local byway network, linked to Nat Cycle Route 7. **PT:** Bus to Straiton then bike (carried on most services). **DA:** Off-road tracks unsuitable for wheelchair users.

Birds: Out through conifer plantation onto open moor with vistas; back by L Cornish and R Girvan gorge through mixed woodland. **Moorland:** *red grouse, black grouse, wheatear,*

stonechat, meadow pipit; skylark, buzzard, kestrel, merlin. Loch: common sandpiper, goosander, tufted duck, little grebe. Woodland: goldcrest, coal tit, crossbill, finches, thrushes, dunnock.

More: Good for adder, roe deer, fox, mountain hare. Forest Enterprise organise badger, bat, barn owl and nightjar evenings in the area: Galloway Office, Creebridge, Newton Stewart DG8 6AJ.

Shalloch on Minnoch

Location: Highest hill in Ayrshire (769m, NX 405 907). In Galloway Forest Park S of Straiton. Strenuous, rewarding hill walk for the fit and well equipped. Grass tussocks, bog, heather at higher levels; conifer plantations at lower. Often wet underfoot. OS Map reqd. Reach start by hill road Straiton - Newton Stewart. **Car:** P as below. **Bike:** On local byway network. **PT:** Bus to Straiton then bike (carried most services). **DA:** Off-road tracks unsuitable for wheel-chair users. Routes:

From Stinchar Bridge CP (NX 398 958): longest, driest. By road past plantation then up by Cairnadloch (467m) and Caerloch Dhu (659m).

From lay-by at road summit (NX 381 937): wetter, shorter. Up by Shalloch (542m) and Caerloch Dhu.

Birds: Mostly rough, open country. Expect: *buzzard, merlin, red grouse, black grouse, golden plover, curlew, wheatear, raven.* Occasional *dotterel* on passage.

More: Memorial to David Bell, keen cyclist, and CP/picnic site with vista, is 7.2 km beyond Stinchar Bridge at Rowantree Toll where two roads merge. Many area species can be seen from here or by walking a 2km forest track to former Shalloch on Minnoch farm, SW along Water of Minnoch and Shalloch Burn. Expect: *crossbill, siskin, tree pipit, spotted flycatcher, dipper, grey and pied wagtail* as well as the moorland birds.

Culzean Country Park

Location: Most popular National Trust for Scotland property, attracting 200,000 visitors annually. On coast at NS 2310 on A719, 19km S of Ayr, 6km W of Maybole. Typical Scottish lowland estate of 228 ha with castle, path network, refreshments, exhibitions, shops, information centres, special events in season and ranger-led activities. Non member payment mid- March - end of October. Country Park free off-season. **Car:** Good choice of CPs in grounds. **Bike:** A719 approach needs care; good within grounds. **PT:** Regular bus service passes entrance. **DA:** Several CPs throughout park. Woodland: partially accessible by wheelchair along main paths, uneven surfaces in places. Ramp to hide at Swan Pond. Further info; **web:** www.nts.org.uk/culzean.

Birds: Combination of 50% mixed mature woodland, 22% farmland, ponds and 5km of coastline results in a healthy bird list of 110-120 species annually of which around 50 breed. **Woodland:** wide range of breeding warblers; also *great spotted woodpecker, kestrel, sparrowhawk, tawny and barn owl, stock dove and finches*; large mixed flocks of wintering tits; occasional *woodcock*. **Buildings:** *swift, swallow, house martin*. **Coast:** *raven, fulmar,*

peregrine. **Pond:** *little grebe, water rail, tufted duck* all year; wintering *pochard, goldeneye* and others. Large *grey heron* roost in nearby field.

More: World famous Robert Adam designed castle. Cameras trained on selected nest sites. Events information from Visitor Centre, Culzean Country Park, Maybole, Ayrshire, KA1 9 8LE.

Maidens Harbour and Shore

Location: Maidens village (NS 215 080) is on A719 coast road 23 km S of Ayr, 10km from Maybole. **Car:** CP at harbour and beside beach on shore road in village. **Bike:** Care required on the A719 approach. **PT:** Good Ayr-Maidens-Girvan bus service. **DA:** Parking for disabled. View harbour from CP, foreshore from grassed area but note this area used for dog-walking.

Birds: The rocky shore, tidal harbour and sandy beach backed by marram grass together attract a wide range of passage and wintering species, notably waders: *redshank, dun/in, golden plover, eider, shelduck*. On occasion: *curlew sandpiper, water pipit, Brent goose*. Divers and grebes.

More: Toilets, picnic sites by beach. Range of catering. Renowned restaurant.

Turnberry Point

Location: The lighthouse (NS196073) is 1km along a track over Turnberry golf course from the A719 starting at NS 206 068 about 1km S of Maidens village. Park at golfers' CP on old runway and proceed on foot. **Car:** No parking on main road. Members of bird clubs may use golfers' CP up track courtesy of the Club. **Bike:** Care required on A719. **PT:** Maidens/Girvan bus halt at end of track. **DA:** Park at golfer's CP, gate difficult to open, frequently locked.

Birds: Excellent sea-watching: shearwaters, petrels, scoters, divers, grebes, skuas on passage; *gannet*, auks, gulls. Foreshore good for wide variety of migrant waders: records of *white-rumped and pectoral sandpiper* and *grey phalarope*. Track-side grass and scrub for: *wheatear, whitethroat, stonechat, twite*, warblers, pipits.

More: Turnberry Golf Course is world-class and managed with sympathy for wildlife. A pool on the E side of A719 is worth scanning for ducks and waders. The club cafe is open to visitors.

Blairbowie Farm Pool

Location: A flooded field on W side of B7045 Ayr-Kirkmichael road at NS 326 113 about 1.5 km from A77. Scan with care from roadside. **Car:** P limited by roadside. Caution: busy road. **Bike:** Network of quiet byways in vicinity but B7045 carries fast traffic. **PT:** Nearest service on A77, 2km distant. **DA:** This is a busy country road with no safe refuges for wheelchair users to avoid passing traffic. Park on verge, good viewing from car.

Birds: Prime passage/winter site for geese, ducks and waders: *greylag, pink-foot, barnacle goose, whooper swan; mallard, wigeon, teal; ruff, black-tailed godwit, whimbrel, snipe*.

Records of green/wood and pectoral sandpiper, Bewick's swan, Brent goose, hobby. Large roosts of curlew. Breeding lapwing.

Heart Loch

Location: Two small pools in reed beds at NS 311 094, 1km SE of Maybole on B7023 to Crosshill. **Car:** Lay-by on N side near pools. Scan from road with care. **Bike:** Local byway network and Nat Cycle Route 7 pass by. **PT:** 1km from Maybole bus and rail services. Maybole-Crosshill bus passes along B7023. **DA:** This is a busy country road with no safe refuges for wheelchair users. Lay-by has rough surface, hedges obscure view of loch.

Birds: Attractive to wetland breeders and passage migrants: little grebe, water rail, grasshopper and sedge warbler, reed bunting. Records of green sandpiper and marsh harrier.

Laggan Loch, Girvan

Location: One of 5 way-marked hill walks from the coastal CP (NX 964 1 82) off A77 just S of Girvan. Leaflet from information centres; or visit **web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk.

Car: CP at Shallochpark, seaward of A77, beyond roundabout on S outskirts of Girvan.

Bike: With priority to pedestrians, along esplanade. Avoid A77 **PT:** Frequent bus service Ayr-Girvan-Stranraer along A77; regular Ayr-Girvan rail service, station at 2km. **DA:** Off-road tracks unsuitable for wheelchair users.

Birds: **Blue trail:** allow 2-3 hours for 7km round trip. Cross roundabout onto minor road, at gate take 'Hill Path to Barr' on RT, up through woodland, moorland, sometimes wet underfoot, to Laggan Loch wetland; and follow blue markers RT over Laggan Hill, through pasture land and back by a farm. **Coast:** *gannet*, terns, gulls, waders. **Woodland:** *wren, gold-crest, blackbird, song thrush*. **Open country:** *buzzard, raven, kestrel, rook, carrion crow, meadow pipit, skylark, wheatear, linnets and sedge, grasshopper and willow warbler*.

Hedgerow: *robin, long-tailed tit, whitethroat*.

More: Snacks, ices, drinks at kiosk in CP; choice of cafes, pubs and restaurants in Girvan.

Ailsa Craig

Location: A volcanic plug rising 338m from the sea 19km W of Girvan at NX 020 998. View cliffs from sea or land and explore shingle/rocky beach by arrangement with boat from Girvan.

Car/Bike: CP at pier. **PT:** Good bus and rail service Ayr-Girvan to/near to pier. **DA:** None.

Birds: RSPB reserve. Major gannet colony. Also lesser/great black-backed/herring gull and kittiwake, fulmar, guillemot, black guillemot, razorbill, shag and puffin. Rarities: Alpine swift, bluethroat, woodchat and red-backed shrike.

More: Former source of granite curling stones. Occasional summer trips round island by paddle steamer *PS Waverley*. **For landings:** M. McCrindle, **web:** www.ailsacraig.org.uk. For PS Waverley cruises web: www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk

Dipple Shore

Location: Entire raised beach N of Girvan from Turnberry Village (NS 203 055) to Girvan Mains (NX 192 993) is well worth viewing but access is from a dangerous stretch of A77 carrying fast and heavy traffic. Safest is at Dipple (NS 201 024) beside an alginate factory: approach from N (u-turn if from S at Dowhill Farm shop and cafe (NS 202 031)), and pull LT into small section of old coast road at cottages opposite factory entrance. Cross A77 on foot with care, follow factory boundary S to track to shore. **Car:** P with courtesy at cottages.

Bike: Not recommended. **PT:**

Regular Ayr-Girvan bus service stops at Dipple. **DA:** Not recommended. No disabled access.

Birds: Dipple burn attracts offshore seabirds: all three divers (mainly *red-throated*), *eider*, *goldeneye*, *scaup*, *common scoter*, *long-tailed duck*. Shingle shoreline has mainly *oystercatcher* and *redshank*. Nearby fields and scrub can contain large flocks of *twite*. Rarities: *surf scoter*, *black redstart*, *water pipit*.

More: Other approaches to the shore are feasible, with care, at Balkenna, Chapeldonan and Girvan Mains.

Devil's Trail, Barr

Location: One of 4 way-marked trails near village of Barr (NX 275 940), Stinchar Valley, on B734 in hills ESE of Girvan. Details from dispenser at start; tourist info centres; or **web:** www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk. **Car:** CP in village; or follow burn 1km up track to official CP/starting point. **Bike:** A network of suitable routes converge on Barr, including a forest route from Nat Cycle Route 7. **PT:** Buses daily from Girvan where frequent rail and bus services connect to Ayr. **DA:** Might be accessible in part.

Birds: Byway from Barr is beside sparkling burn through mature woodland. The Devil's trail (6.5 km, way-marked in blue) passes by a burn, through scrub, mature mixed woodland, conifer plantation, into open countryside with clear views of the hillsides. On migration flight path. Wide range of species according to season and habitat: tits, finches include *siskin*, *tree pipit*, *redstart*, *chiffchaff*, *wood warbler*, *pie and spotted flycatcher*, *great spotted woodpecker*, *crossbill*, *buzzard*, *kestrel*, *peregrine*, *raven* and many others.

More: Find the Devil's footprints on grass above High Changue! The other trails are also good birding. Inn and picnic sites in Barr.

Dailly, Lower Girvan Valley

Location: The valley floor and slopes of the lower reaches of the R Girvan in the vicinity of the village of Dailly (NS 270014) 10km inland from Girvan. View from various locations on quiet roads and paths in the area. A number of way-marked trails lead from Dailly; details from info centres or www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk **Car:** Explore roads and byways either side of valley and up sides; P with care by verge. **Bike:** Way-marked byway network in valley connects to Nat Cycle Route 7 near Maybole and to Girvan. **PT:** Bus service Maybole-Dailly-Girvan along valley. By rail to Maybole or Girvan and cycle.

Birds: Wide variety of habitat, extremely rich birdlife: river with reed-fringed ox-bows; mixed, mainly pastoral farmland; manicured golf course; mature broad-leafed woodland. **Valley floor:** breeding *grasshopper* and *sedge warbler*, *reed bunting*, *common sandpiper*,

kingfisher, dipper, grey wagtail. Barn owl, buzzard and raven often seen. **Woodland:** good summer populations: *great spotted woodpecker, redstart, blackcap, chiffchaff, garden and wood warbler, pied and spotted flycatcher, jay, sparrowhawk.* **Rarities:** *honey buzzard, osprey, hobby.*

More: Several private estates in the valley have rich woodland habitat but restricted access: Kilkerran (NS 3003) has a seasonal camp site; Bargany (NS 24 02) has open days on occasion.

Ballantrae Shore

Location: Shingle bar at mouth of R Stinchar extending N to harbour at Ballantrae village (NX 08 82) on A77 in southernmost reach of the Ayrshire coast. View from N or S of river mouth.

Car: N **View:** CP and toilets at Send of village shore, near shingle bar. **S View:** Cross Stinchar, RT to cemetery, RTby2 farms, P with care, walk track to shore. **Bike:** A77 not recommended. Byway B7044 a good link to nearby Knockdolian location. **PT:** Frequent bus service Ayr-Girvan-Stranraer. **DA:** Park at south end of village (NX 082 825), view from car park or nearby pavements.

Birds: Breeding little, Arctic and common tern (please avoid the colony). Also oystercatcher, ringed plover, common sandpiper, sand martin, mute swan, greylag goose. Good sea-watching: gannet, Manx shearwater. Migration stopover: osprey, little ringed plover, wood sandpiper, black tern. Some 77 species regularly seen over 10 years.

More: Picnic and catering facilities in village.

Knockdolian Hill

Location: Mature oak woodland on S slopes of Knockdolian Hill (NX 113 848), 4km up Stinchar valley from Ballantrae on B7044 Colmonell minor road. Scan woodland, valley floor and opposite skyline from road. **Car:** P with care by roadside. Walk the woodland stretch. **Bike:** Easy ride from Ballantrae, all good for birds. **PT:** Good coastal bus service to Ballantrae then walk/cycle. **DA:** This is a busy country road with no surfaced lay-bys or safe refuges for wheelchair users to avoid passing traffic. Opportunities exist to watch and listen from vehicle.

Birds: Oak woodland is scarce in Ayrshire. Extensive breeding community: tree pipit, redstart, wood and willow warbler, chiffchaff, pied flycatcher. **Valley floor:** breeding common sandpiper, grey wagtail, dipper, occasionally kingfisher, goosander, red-breasted merganser. **Raptors** include: buzzard, kestrel, sparrowhawk, hen harrier. Some 55 species regularly seen over 10 years. Records of osprey, green woodpecker and waxwing.

Glen App and Drumlamford Lochs

Location: Two locations on S extremities of Ayrshire which can be visited together by car.

Glen App: Broad glen where A77 follows Water of App down to sea at L Ryan. Starts 8km S of Ballantrae. Scan from lay-bys or from informal park/picnic site on coast at Finnarts Bay (NX 052 724). **Car:** 2 lay-bys in Glen. For Finnarts Bay, going S, RT with care into lane to

fish processing plant and CP. **Bike:** A77 not recommended. **PT:** Regular Ayr-Ballantrae-Stranraer coastal bus service. **DA:** CP at Finnarts Bay is very rough but parking nearby for wheelchair users possible.

Drumlamford Lochs: 5 lochs near Drumlamford House (NX 288 765). From Ballantrae, take B7044, A765, A714, B7027. Scan from roads. **Car:** P by roadside with courtesy. **Bike:** B7027 is suitable. **PT:** Not possible. **DA:** Access available along quiet road from Marberry Cottage on B7027 to Barwinnock. Cattle grids on this road.

Birds: Glen App: hillsides of moorland and coniferous or broad-leaf woodland; deep scrub and sea views at coastal CP. **Sea birds:** *red-throated diver, black guillemot, fulmar*. **Raptors:** *buzzard, kestrel, peregrine, sparrowhawk*. Migrants include various thrushes, pipits, warblers in scrub and woodland. **Drumlamford lochs:** 5 upland lochs with reed beds and surroundings of Scots Pine, broadleaf woodland and moorland. Wide range of species can be seen across the two locations. **River and loch:** *dipper, grey and pied wagtail, tufted duck, greylag goose, grey heron*. **Moorland and scrub:** *wheatear, stonechat, whinchat*. **Woodland:** *crossbill, willow tit, tree pipit, willow warbler, chiffchaff, siskin, sparrowhawk, buzzard, raven*.

Acknowledgements

The original leaflet was produced by the Ayrshire Branch of the SOC and they wish to thank most sincerely all those involved in the funding, supply of information, writing, photography, design and every other form of help freely and generously given. Thanks go to the following as individuals or on behalf of their organisations:

Zul Bhatia; Fiona J. Carswell; Ian Clark; Ronnie Coombes; Deone Finlayson; Dave and Julie Grant; David B. Gray; Roger Hissett; Angus Hogg; Henry Martin; Stephen Mason; Gordon and Susan McAdam; Stuart McMahon; Brian Orr; Scott Paterson; Gordon Riddle; Mark Ruggeri; Tony Scott; Fraser Simpson; Terry Southall; Andrew Stevenson; Joan Strachan; Jim Thomson; James I. M. Towill; Peter and Angela Turner; Robin Turner; Helen Turner; Kevin Waite; Duncan Watt; Fred Westcott.

Publication team: Angus Hogg, Henry Martin, Tony Scott and Kevin Waite

Webmaster: Kevin Waite

Photographs: Mike Groves; Angus Hogg; Henry Martin; Tony Scott; Kevin Waite and Fred Westcott

Leaflet Design and layout: Tony Scott

Advice on disabled access: Robin Turner

Advice and support: Officers of East, North and South Ayrshire Councils, notably Mark Ruggeri (East), George Clark (North), Fiona Ross (South)

Information on locations: Arran Natural History Society, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, East Ayrshire Countryside Ranger Service, Eglinton Country Park Ranger Service, RSPB Lochwinnoch, Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Funding to produce the original leaflet came from the *Awards for All / New Opportunities Fund*, North Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council and East Ayrshire Council.