

Isle of Mull Bird Report and Species list

issue 8

a guide to bird watching areas
where & when to watch birds
systematic list of species
rare birds sightings
holiday check list



www.mullbirds.com

The Isle of Mull Bird Club had its inaugural meeting on 31st January 2001

Regular meetings are held from October to April, usually in the Craignure Village Hall. Field visits and off island visits are organised during the summer months.

The club is open to all ages and to off island members and everybody is made welcome.



Mull Eagle watch

The protection of Mull's White tailed Sea Eagles involves the local Wildlife Crime Officer and Police force, Scottish Natural Heritage, Forest Enterprise, RSPB, Isle of Mull Bird Club members and many local Mull residents and visitors.

You can play your part by reporting any suspicious activity or vehicles.

Tobermory police	01688	302016
Craignure police	01680	812322
Oban police station	01631	510500



Codes of conduct and the law.

White tailed Sea Eagles

Please be aware that White tailed Sea Eagles and Golden Eagles are protected by law against disturbance of the birds or habitats. The Eagle watch has been operating successfully for several years now with the full co-operation of the Mull community and of visitors to the island. There are many areas around the island which afford good opportunities to watch the eagles and indeed many other raptors, and there is also the Sea Eagle hide at Loch Frisa which is open daily from early spring to late autumn, and for two days a week throughout the winter months.

Corncrake have had another successful year on Iona and are only just beginning to establish themselves on the mainland of Mull, and are therefore very sensitive to even minor disturbance.

Please do not walk through iris beds in an attempt to 'flush' birds to get a better view. This is illegal and is considered as disturbing nesting birds, as indeed is playing a tape of Corn crake calling to attract birds.

Watching and patiently waiting is the best strategy.

Help to protect the birds you so enjoy watching

Alan Spellman

A summary of the year 2010 by Alan Spellman

Like the rest of the UK, Mull experienced one of the coldest winters for several years and whilst we did not have great falls of snow, at sea level at least, it was bitterly cold with deep penetrating frosts.

Smaller birds suffered dramatic fatalities as they struggled daily to find enough food. I was rewarded by my feeding of the birds with a Water Rail, which visited my garden for four consecutive days in March, and allowed me to get some stunning close up photographs. Also in March and through Glen More there was a party of up to ten Snow Buntings seen on several occasions.

In late January, Loch Scridain produced a drake Long tailed duck and there were four Grey Plover at Fidden. Both of these are scarce birds for Mull.

A single Brambling was feeding regularly in a Salen garden and at the same time a single Waxwing was coming to fruit in Dave Sextons garden. Both birds stayed around for about a two weeks, February through to March.

I was delighted to receive photos of the female Ortolan Bunting which was found last year on 9th May at Craignure camp site, very many thanks to Sandra Price and Alison Ingle for these which help to get this extremely rare bird accepted into the Argyll records.

A Magpie was at Uisken on 14th April, and another (or the same bird) at Beach on 12th May & Killfinichen Bay 13th. These being the first of a few reports a year we receive for this very scarce Mull bird.

With all the spring movement of birds going on, there is always the chance of something special arriving; and so it was, as we were visited by a pair of Bee Eaters which turned up at Calgary On 24th April and stayed until 28th.

There was a pair of birds at Glen Gorm Castle in June 1998 and there have also been reports of single birds at Loch Buie in May 2003 and Killiechronan Camp site in 2007. These 2010 birds caused quite an attraction for visitors and locals alike.

On the last day of April a female Hawfinch was feeding at a garden feeder at Treshnish House garden and this is only the second record of Hawfinch for Mull. The first recorded Hawfinch (also a female) being last year at Calgary on 15th June 2009 in a local garden.

Although this is a 'resident' bird of the UK, it is a bird that is not often seen, the least disturbance will see them off and away.

Corncrake arrived on Iona early this year on 9th April and immediately started to call

A drake Blue winged Teal was briefly at Loch na Keal (Killiechronan camp site) on 1st May. This north American vagrant is extremely rare and is a first ever record for Mull. It was recorded and photographed which helps to get the record accepted.

Purple Sandpipers were resting on Staffa (2nd May) The island regularly provides a safe refuge for this passage migrant en route north. Whilst at Kintra in the south of the island a Yellow Wagtail was found on 3rd May; a scarce, less than annual visitor to Argyll, this is the first record for Mull, although a bird of the blue headed race was on Iona in May 2009.

A single Red Kite was flying near Arle, north of Salen, on 6th May. The nearest Red Kites are at Doune near Callander on the mainland.

Very scarce and with only a few records, a pair of Stock Pigeon (Doves) were at Treshnish wood on the 3rd May. A 'pair' were also seen at Killiechronan in April.

Loch na Keal is very productive; Garmony picnic area was visited by a Hoopoe on 13th May, a very scarce passage migrant, this is the fourth record for Mull.

There is a small population of Tree Sparrow on Iona, recently established; first recorded in 2007 and slowly increasing. On May 15th, 7 birds were observed close

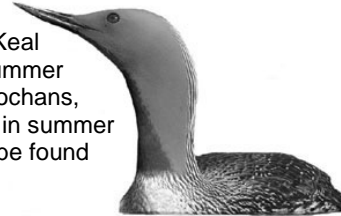
Mull & Iona Species List 1

Red throated Diver

Gavia stellata

scarce breeding and winter & passage migrant.

On larger sea lochs, loch Scridain, Loch Buie & loch na Keal & Calgary Bay. In winter often with other divers and in summer months also on smaller fresh water lochs . Breeding on lochans, high in the hills, coming down to larger freshwater lochs in summer months to feed. In winter, frequently all three divers can be found together on larger sea lochs.

**Black throated Diver**

Gavia arctica

scarce in summer, more frequent in winter and on passage. The last confirmed breeding record was in 1972. However there is some more recent information which suggests probable breeding at an undisclosed site on Mull.

On larger sea lochs and in winter, occasionally found with other divers. Loch Buie is especially good where all three divers can often be seen together in winter. Occasional birds are seen in summer months in full summer plumage, On some of our larger lochs: Loch Scridain, Loch Spelve, Loch na Keal, Loch Frisa and Loch Assapol (near Bunessan),

2010: summer plumaged birds were at several locations; Ulva Ferry, Lochs Tuath. Scridain, Buie, and Loch na Keal. In the main as single birds. A 'pair' spent time on Loch Frisa during the summer.

Great northern Diver

Gavia immer

autumn. winter and passage,

Birds arrive in late autumn and depart in late spring are often seen in summer plumage and various stages of eclipse to winter plumage.

Up to 30 birds have been recorded on loch na Keal in winter. Occasional juveniles remain throughout the summer. Often with other divers on sea lochs and in the open sea; Loch Scridain, Loch Buie and Loch na Keal are the most productive sites, however winter birds are regularly seen in the Sound of Mull, Salen Bay, Calgary and Caliach Point.

Fewer birds are seen in Loch Spelve.

**White billed Diver**

Gavia adamsii

vagrant.

Occasional birds are seen on the sea usually in early spring.

In 2000 on Loch na Keal and in 2003 on Loch Buie, all during May. Birds are regularly reported off the outer isles during late autumn.

2007 A summer plumaged bird seen from the boat, on a trip to Staffa on 3rd May.

2009 March 1st. An adult White-billed Diver at Laggan Bay, also seen later, on Loch na Keal 7th & 13th March. And again in May at Laggan Bay.

Red necked Grebe

Podiceps grisegena

extremely rare, mainly winter passage.

2005 two records of birds on the sea off Grasspoint & at Lagganulva (near Ulva Ferry) in Dec. 2009 a single bird on Loch na Keal in February.

Holiday check list of species

Species (3)	date	Species (4)	date
Greylag Goose		Merlin	
Gyr Falcon		Mistle Thrush	
Guillemot		Moorhen	
Guillemot Black		Mute Swan	
House Martin		Northern Gannet	
Hawfinch (2009)		Nuthatch (2008)	
Hen Harrier		Osprey	
Herring Gull		Oystercatcher	
Hobby		Pectoral Sandpiper	
Hooded Crow		Peregrine Falcon	
Hoopoe (2008)		Pheasant Common	
Iceland Gull		Pheasant Golden	
Jay		Pied billed Grebe (1998)	
Jackdaw		Pied Flycatcher	
Knot		Pied Wagtail	
Kestrel		Pink Footed Goose	
King Eider		Pintail (2008)	
Kingfisher		Pochard	
Kittiwake Black legged		Pomarine Skua	
Lapwing		Ptarmigan	
Lapland Bunting		Puffin	
Leaches Storm Petrel		Purple Sandpiper	
Lesser Yellowlegs		Quail	
Lesser black Gull		Raven	
Lesser Redpoll		Razorbill	
Lesser Whitethroat		Red backed Shrike	
Linnet		Red billed Chough	
Little Tern		R breasted Merganser	
Little Auk (2006)		Red Grouse	
Little Egret (1989)		Red Kite	
Little Grebe		Red necked Grebe	
Little Gull		Red throated Diver	
Long-tailed Skua		Redshank Common	
Long eared Owl		Redshank Spotted	
Long tailed Duck		Redstart Black	
Long tailed Tit		Redstart Common	
Manx Shearwater		Redwing	
Marsh Harrier		Red legged Partridge	
Meadow Pipit		Reed Bunting	