

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

Warden - David Millward Assistant Warden - Jo Goudie

Photo of the month

Sandwich Tern

It is always good to have these beautiful birds back even if they do have the most grating call. With their punky crest and elegant flight this bird is a stunner.

Photo - David Millward



April Report 2023

The renovations are under way and the hide is looking better already. Amazing what a coat of paint and some new lights can do. We have also replaced some of the internal wood and added better insulation.

This month is when a lot of our returning birds turn up making it exciting. We look forward to seeing them coming through making us believe that Spring is around the corner.

If you would like to visit on a specific date, please let me know and we will try to have a warden there to open up for you. If you would like to volunteer to do some wardening please let us know. We are looking for volunteers.

Best regards

Jo Goudie

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Photos by Jo Goudie unless otherwise stated

List of Selected Species for April 2023



Canada Goose – 4 passed the obs on 8th.



White Wagtail – first one arrived on th 6th, 10th – 2, 11th – 1, 14th – 1, 15th – 8, 18th – 3, 20th – 4, 22nd – 1, 24th – 3, 26th – 6, 29th – 6, 30th – 3.



Red Throated Diver – 9th – 1, 10th – 1, 11th – 2>S



Great Northern Diver – 3rd – 4, 5th – 4, 6th – 1>S, 7th – 5, 8th – 4, 10th – 2, 11th – 4, 12th – 3, 14th – 3, 15th – 3, 16th – 4, 18th – 3, 21st – 1, 22nd – 9, 26th – 2, 28th – 2, 29th – 3, 30th – 2.

It is interesting to see them in different phases of plumage as they move from winter to summer.



Twite – 5th – 2, 8th – 2, 9th – 2, 10th – 2, 11th – 3, 12th – 3, 15th – 3 including 1 with a colour ring,
16th – 4, 18th – 1, 21st – 2, 22nd – 2, 26th – 3, 27th – 4, 28th – 3, 29th – 3, 30th – 3.



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Merlin – 1 seen sitting on a fence post on the MACC on the 9th.



This very tatty example was seen by the observatory on the 15th being mobbed. Another was seen dodging Jackdaws on the road into Stewarton from Southend on 17th.



Reed Bunting – lone bird seen on the beach by the obs on 15th.



Wheatear male

Wheatear – 2nd – 3, 3rd – 2, 5th – 2, 6th – 3, 8th – 1, 9th – 5, 10th – 1, 11th – 2, 12th – 2, 14th – 3, 15th – 4, 18th – 3, 22nd – 3, 24th – 2, 29th – 2, 20th – 2.



Wheatear Female



Common Scoter – 29th – raft of 8, 30th – 1.

Kittiwake – 6th – 5, 10th – 1, 11th – 12.

Manx Shearwater – 9th – 1, 10th – 4, 11th – 3, 26th – 2.

Little Egret – Moss Road – 1 On 18th.



Common Sandpiper – first one heard but not seen on 28th, 29th – 2, 30th – 2.

Dunlin – 5th – 3, 20th – 1.

Redshank – 3rd – 1, 5th – 6, 6th – 1, 8th – 3, 9th – 4, 10th – 2, 11th – 5, 14th – 1, 15th – 1, 16th – 1, 18th – 2.
2 seen on 17th at Stinky Hole.

Gannet – Observatory – numbers increasing but still too early to tell how good it will get.

Razorbill – Observatory – 3rd – 1>S, 6th – 1, 9th – 2, 11th – 54>S, 12th – 3, 16th – 2, 18th – 2, 21st – 2, 26th – 4.
Campbeltown Harbour – 17th – 3.

Guillemot – Observatory – 3rd – 12>S, 5th – 1, 8th – 1, 9th – 6, 10th – 42>S, 11th – 7>S, 15th – 1, 18th – 9>S,
21st – 1. **Stinky Hole** – 17th – 2.

Black Guillemot – Harbour – 17th – 10+.



Graylag Goose – 15th – 1 flew past the observatory, not to be confused with 1 seen by bungalow with drooping/injured wing on several occasions this month.



Ringed Plover – 5th – 5, 7th – 6, 8th – 4, 9th – 6, 10th – 2, 11th – 5, 14th – 3, 15th – 2, 16th – 2, 19th – 2, 20th – 3, 21st – 2, 22nd – 6, 24th – 1, 26th – 1, 28th – 1, 29th – 7, 30th – 2.
1 seen making a scrape in the pebbles in front of the obs but didn't stay.
3 seen with Oystercatcher on Westport Beach on 7th.



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Red Breasted Merganser - 2 flew past the obs on the 22nd >S.
Out by **Davaar**, large raft of over 60 birds on 17th.



Whimbrel – started to appear at the end of the month, best sighting was 15 on the beach at Machrihanish Bay on 29th. 20th – 4, 22nd – 1, 24th – 3, 26th – 1, 27th – 1, 29th – 15, 30th – 1.

Curlew – 7th – 1, 8th – 1, 10th – 1, 12th – 2, 16th – 1, 17th – 1, 18th – 2, 20th – 7, 22nd – 2, 26th – 5, 28th – 2.



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Oystercatcher – Still trying to sort out territories. Good numbers including a regular 30+ on Westport beach.

Mute Swan –seen together most of the month dropping to just one after the 20th.
1 possibly nesting. 1 seen at **Stinky Hole** on 17th.

Whooper Swan – Handful on fields by Machrihanish holiday park. 5th – 4, 6th – 4, 7th – 4, 8th – 1.

Shelduck – Numbers increased slightly with 9 being the most amount for the day seen.

Goldeneye – 1 male seen at **Stinky Hole** on the 17th.

Teal – Stinky Hole – 4 seen on 17th.

Hen Harrier – Observatory – 1 seen on 14th being mobbed.

Heron – Not been seen by the observatory for a while but 1 seen on 7th and 2 seen on 15th.

Swallow – 1st seen on 11th and seen regularly throughout the rest of the month by the obs.

House Martin - 1st seen on 22nd and seen regularly throughout the rest of the month down by the Machrihanish Bay.

Sand Martin – regular numbers seen. 30+ at golf course quarry. Also colony by entrance to Daavar Cuaseway of 20+



Sandwich Tern – Obs – First one seen on 2nd. 11th – 1, 14th – 4, 15th – 3, 22nd – 2, 26th – 1, 30th – 14.
Stinky Hole – 6th – 2, 17th – 4.



Blackcap – 1st one seen on the Learside Road on 17th. Others heard but not seen.
1 seen in Campbeltown on 26th.



Willow Warbler – 1st one seen on the Learside Road on 17th. Others heard but not seen.

Linnet – Seen by obs 10th – 1, 22nd – 4.

Stonechat – pair seen by obs on 15th.

Skylark – Seen by obs on 6th.

Bullfinch – 5 seen in my garden in Campbeltown on 30th feeding on dandelion seeds before flying to blossom tree nearby.



Wren – seen gathering nesting materials by stream near obs. Regular.

Reports of a **Yellowhammer** seen in a garden in Peninver on the 2nd is good news. It is not a bird I have seen here. Also reported was a pair of Magpie, Bullfinch, Siskin, Blue Tit, Coal Tit and Great Tit. We hope to receive more reports of birds from this area giving us a different perspective.