

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

Warden - David Millward Assistant Warden - Jo Goudie

Photo of the month

Greenshank

This year has been a good year for Greenshank at the observatory.

They have been known at the obs before but this is the first time I have seen them there. In good numbers too.

Photo

Jo Goudie



July Report 2023

What a different month July was, wetter and cooler.

We saw flocks of waders gathering in good numbers and had a day that was perfect for seeing Manx Shearwaters. They streamed along the horizon at roughly 100 per hour.

Sandpiper numbers were high, and it has been good to see so many Sanderling. This dainty wader is always a pleasure to watch running up and down the beach chasing the waves.

We are now looking forward to the coming winds and rough weather in the hopes it brings in something unusual. But there is always something interesting to watch so I will keep my camera ready.

Best regards

Jo Goudie



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Photos by Jo Goudie unless otherwise stated
List of Selected Species for July 2023



Redshank with 2 Dunlin bringing up the rear.

Redshank – 8th – 1, 10th – 16, 12th – 1, 13th – 2, 15th – 20, 21st – 1, 24th – 9, 29th – 18, 30th – 3, 31st – 15.



Sandpiper

Sandpiper – 3rd – 1, 5th – 4, 6th – 2, 8th – 2, 10th – 5, 11th – 3, 12th – 4, 13th – 5, 14th – 4, 15th – 9, 16th – 10, 19th – 3, 20th – 6, 21st – 2, 23rd – 2, 24th – 4, 25th – 6, 28th – 2, 29th – 4, 31st – 6.



Gannets feeding



Gannet with Sand Eel

On the 5th July the Sand Eels arrived and there was a mass of Gannets taking advantage of the bounty on offer. I have seen this before and there can be hundreds of Gannet diving repeatedly into the same small area of sea. This time it was nearer 50 or so Gannet competing with the Shag. We have noticed the drop in numbers from last years Avian flu outbreak. The groups that stream through together used to be 20 or 30 in a string, now its 8 to 10 if you are lucky.



Oystercatcher with chick

One pair successfully raised one chick but our other pair lost theirs.



Shelduck on guard

It was good to see several pairs with ducklings this year and a treat to see them growing.



Shelduck ducklings



Greenshank

Greenshank – 13th – 5, 23rd – 3, 24th – 2, 30th – 1.

Dunlin – 11th – 3, 13th – 2, 14th – 8, 20th – 3, 23rd – 1, 24th – 30+, 25th – 4, 28th – 3, 30th – 3, 31st – 2.

Kittiwake – 5th – 1, 11th – 4, 13th – 1.

Red Breasted Merganser – 5th – 3, 10th – 1, 14th – 1, 29th – 1>S.



Mute swan with their 4 cygnets

Another success story for this year. She has looked after her 4 very well and they are growing daily.



Manx Shearwater

Manx Shearwater – 11th – 5, 13th – 5, 16th – 97 counted in 1 hour in windy conditions, 21st – 3, 23rd – 5, 25th – 3, 29th – 2, 30th – 38, 31st – 1.



Red knot

Single bird in breeding plumage flew past on 23rd. Later seen on Westport Beach.



Turnstone

Turnstone – 20th – 1, 23rd – 1, 28th – 1.

Whimbrel – 10th – 2.

Razorbill – 11th – 2, 16th – 3.

Wheatear – 10th – 2, 14th – 2, 15th – 2, 19th – 3, 25th – 1, 29th – 1, 30th – 1, 31st – 1.

Sedge Warbler – 20th – 2.



Curlew

Curlew – 5th – 1, 11th – 1, 12th – 1, 13th – 3, 14th – 1, 21st – 2, 23rd – 2, 24th – 2, 25th – 3, 28th – 2, 30th – 3.



Grey Heron

After being away from the coast we now have a couple returning.

Swift – 3 seen on the 22nd.



Sanderling (spot the Dunlin)

Sanderling – 13th – 1, 15th – 5, 16th – 23, 25th – 18, 29th – 21.



Kestrel being harassed by a young Herring Gull.

Not a bird of prey we see very often in Kintyre but we had 2 around the observatory.
This altercation was seen on the 28th with the gull harassing them both.

Raven – 3 flew over the obs on the 20th.

Linnet – 5th – 6, 10th – 3.

Meadow Pipit – 1 seen on the 21st.

Rock pipits regularly seen, good numbers counted.



Lesser Black Back Gull

Not a gull we see often at the observatory but on the 30th we had 2 go past.



Large flocks of Oystercatcher started to come through toward the end of July

Ringed Plover – 5th – 1, 10th – 7, 11th – 1, 12th – 1, 13th – 7, 14th – 4, 15th – 5, 16th – 1, 19th – 2, 20th – 6, 21st – 4, 23rd – 1, 24th – 3, 25th – 4, 28th – 2, 30th – 2, 31st – 5.

Black Headed Gull – around 10 regularly hanging around the observatory coastline.

Arctic tern – 5th – 2.

Sandwich Tern – 5th – 1, 11th – 2, 13th – 1, 20th – 5, 24th – 4, 28th – 3, 30th – 3.

Red Throated Diver – 14th – 6>S, 24th – 2>S, 25th – 3>S, 30th – 1>S.

Guillemot – 5th – 6, 11th – 14, 14th – 1, 16th – 20, 28th – 1.

Black Guillemot – 13th – 1, 30th – 1.



3rd Year Gannet



Some strange behavior seen regarding a Sandpiper who had attached itself to a pair of Oystercatcher with a chick. It would stay close to the family and constantly call. It followed the chick, always keeping it in sight as if protecting it.



Pine Weevil

Somehow we ended up with this battered Pine Weevil in the hide. It was missing a few legs.



Young Pied Wagtail



Redshank



Young Starling