

# Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

Warden - David Millward Assistant Warden - Jo Goudie

## Photo of the month

### Whitethroat

This is a bird I look out for specially.

To me, the call of the Whitethroat means we are definitely heading towards Summer.

This bird may not have bright colours but it is elegant with its white bib and golden eyes.

We didn't get any by the observatory last year but this year we have a possible 2 pairs. Good news.

Photo

**Jo Goudie**



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## May Report 2023

At the beginning of May we were pleased to receive the news that the observatory had been granted Charity Status. This means we can now bid for grants and raise money to enable us to repair and improve the hide structure to make sure it lasts longer. We hope to make it more accessible as we aim to bring the birds and wildlife to more people whether they are birdwatchers or just general nature lovers.

We hope visitors will come and experience the nature in front of them and go away with an urge to discover more about it.

Best regards

**Jo Goudie**



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**Photos by Jo Goudie unless otherwise stated**

**List of Selected Species for May 2023**



**Sandwich Tern – 1<sup>st</sup> – 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5, 4<sup>th</sup> – 2, 6<sup>th</sup> – 6, 7<sup>th</sup> – 8, 8<sup>th</sup> – 4, 9<sup>th</sup> – 411<sup>th</sup> – 5, 12<sup>th</sup> – 3, 16<sup>th</sup> – 4, 17<sup>th</sup> – 5, 24<sup>th</sup> – 2, 26<sup>th</sup> – 1, 27<sup>th</sup> – 3.**

**Common Tern - 4 seen out by Daavar on the 11<sup>th</sup>.**

**Red Throated Diver – 1<sup>st</sup> – 1>S, 24<sup>th</sup> – 1>S, 26<sup>th</sup> – 1>N.**

**Great Northern Diver – 7<sup>th</sup> – 1, 8<sup>th</sup> – 2, 9<sup>th</sup> – 1, 16<sup>th</sup> – 1. Sound of Gigha – 6<sup>th</sup> – 9.**



**Red Breasted Merganser – 9<sup>th</sup> – 7>S, 24<sup>th</sup> – 1>N**





**Whimbrel** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 6, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 12, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4, 4<sup>th</sup> – 3, 6<sup>th</sup> – 8, 7<sup>th</sup> – 6, 12<sup>th</sup> – 2, 24<sup>th</sup> – 2, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1.



**Shoveler** – pair seen on 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Greylag Goose** with injured wing – seen on 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>.





**Wigeon** – pair seen on 1<sup>st</sup>.



**Black Tailed Godwit** – single bird in front of the obs on 08/05/23

**Bar tailed Godwit** – 2 seen on sands by stinky hole on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.





**Dunlin** – 6<sup>th</sup> – 1, 7<sup>th</sup> – 10, 8<sup>th</sup> – 50+>S, 9<sup>th</sup> – 47, 17<sup>th</sup> – 1, 27<sup>th</sup> – 3, 28<sup>th</sup> – 6, 29<sup>th</sup> – 3, 30<sup>th</sup> – 23.

**Sanderling** – 7<sup>th</sup> – 18, 8<sup>th</sup> – 20>S, 9<sup>th</sup> – 29, 28<sup>th</sup> – 7, 29<sup>th</sup> – 4, 30<sup>th</sup> – 20+.



**Knot** – 1 single bird in with the Dunlin and Sanderling, slightly bigger with grey plumage which denotes a non breeding bird.

**Guillemot** – 8<sup>th</sup> – 1, 9<sup>th</sup> – 6, 24<sup>th</sup> – 4, 27<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Black Guillemot** – 9<sup>th</sup> – 1.



**Sedge Warbler** – 3 birds seen by the observatory, only 1 last year so better numbers for 2023.



**Whitethroat** – 2 pairs by the observatory. Much better than last year where we didn't get any. Also 1 singing from scrubland behind the public toilets in Machrihanish. Not had one there before. Good numbers heard in surround area of Kintyre.





**Willow Warbler** – Always in Kintyre in good numbers where they outnumber Chiffchaff.



**Sand Martin** – 03/05/23 Around 50 birds by the quarry at Sound of Kintyre. Another colony seen across fields by entrance to Daavar causeway with around 30 birds. It looks like part of a hillside has collapsed giving them new opportunities for nesting burrows.



**Cuckoo** – 11/05/23 Good views of 2 birds chasing one another on the Dalsmeran road to Southend. Also a 3<sup>rd</sup> bird heard. Travelled back on the Learside road and saw a further 3 and heard another 2 in other locations on the same road. Most I have counted in the last few years.

On this drive we also saw **2 Mistle Thrush**, 20+ **White throat**, 20+ **Sedge Warbler**, 4 **Blackcap**, 7 **Willow warbler** and also heard a couple of **chiffchaff** and a **Grasshopper Warbler**.



**Oystercatcher** – Currently 1 pair are sitting so we hope for fledglings soon.





**Oystercatcher nest** – photographed by our volunteer warden Louise.  
Beautifully camouflaged.



**Swallow** – Nesting in good numbers in usual haunts.

**Swift** – 4 seen over Campbeltown on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**House Martins** – also in good numbers in usual places especially under the eaves of the Ugadale cottages and Hotel.

**White Wagtail** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 3, 4<sup>th</sup> – 1, 5<sup>th</sup> – 2, 6<sup>th</sup> – 3, 7<sup>th</sup> – 2, 8<sup>th</sup> – 4, 9<sup>th</sup> – 3, 12<sup>th</sup> – 1, 17<sup>th</sup> – 1, 26<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Twite** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2, 4<sup>th</sup> – 2, 7<sup>th</sup> – 2, 8<sup>th</sup> – 3, 16<sup>th</sup> – 1, 17<sup>th</sup> – 1, 27<sup>th</sup> – 1, 28<sup>th</sup> – 2, 30<sup>th</sup> – 2, 31<sup>st</sup> – 2.



Obviously feeding chicks with his beakful of seaweed flies.

**Wheatear** – 4<sup>th</sup> – 2, 7<sup>th</sup> – 2, 8<sup>th</sup> – 1, 9<sup>th</sup> – 1, 12<sup>th</sup> – 3, 24<sup>th</sup> – 2, 27<sup>th</sup> – 1, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1, 29<sup>th</sup> – 1, 30<sup>th</sup> – 3, 31<sup>st</sup> – 2.



**Gannet** – Have seen lots of birds looking well loaded.

**Common Scoter** – 29<sup>th</sup> – 16>S, 30<sup>th</sup> – 2. Sound of Gigha – 6<sup>th</sup> - 20+ birds seen in rafts.



**Kittiwake** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2, 9<sup>th</sup> – 3, 24<sup>th</sup> – 2.



**Ringed Plover** – 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2, 4<sup>th</sup> – 5, 6<sup>th</sup> – 6, 7<sup>th</sup> – 25, 8<sup>th</sup> – 14, 9<sup>th</sup> – 9, 11<sup>th</sup> – 2, 16<sup>th</sup> – 3, 17<sup>th</sup> – 1, 27<sup>th</sup> – 2, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1, 29<sup>th</sup> – 5, 30<sup>th</sup> – 11.

Small numbers can be found on Machrihanish Bay feeding with Dunlin and Sanderling and also on Westport beach where a regular group of Oystercatchers stand.

**Sandpiper** – 6<sup>th</sup> – 1, 7<sup>th</sup> – 1, 8<sup>th</sup> – 2, 9<sup>th</sup> – 1, 17<sup>th</sup> – 2, 24<sup>th</sup> – 3, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Mute Swan** – sitting on the nest by the stream. Providing we don't have a rainstorm we hope she will be successful this year.



**Linnet** – 17<sup>th</sup> – 1, 27<sup>th</sup> – 2, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1, 30<sup>th</sup> – 11, 31<sup>st</sup> – 4.



**Wren** – seen by stream near obs. Regular.

#### **Other reports**

Report of a **Quail** calling – heard from the east side of Stewarton 25<sup>th</sup> at 10pm

Single **Red-legged Partridge** near the airbase – report from Kevin Hamilton on 13 May

**Male Hawfinch** reported at Waterside, nr Southend on 4-6 May – Margaret Bakes

**Red Kite** at Glen Kerran Farm near Southend on Sunday 21 May – Sarah Moorcroft

**Golden Eagle** – seen coming over the road near Stewarton on 19<sup>th</sup> May – Jo Goudie