

**Machrihanish Seabird Observatory (MSBO)
20th Anniversary**

Officially opened by the late **Col. Hector MacNeal** on 11th September
1993

September Records 2013

Compiled by Eddie Maguire (warden)



Image off the month

[Grey Phalarope: juvenile off-passage / sheltering by MSBO during a westerly gale event – Eddie Maguire](#)

Review of the month...

*An exciting month at times with gale event records of **Sooty** and **Balearic Shearwaters**, a handful of **Leach's Petrels** and four **Grey Phalaropes**.*

*On the downside, extremely low numbers of **Manx Shearwaters**, **Arctic Skuas**, **Black-legged Kittiwakes** and all **tern species** was sorely baffling, and, unprecedented. Other surprising events included an unseasonal multiple occurrence of **Swift** (10) at Machrihanish and a noisy **Nuthatch** in Campbeltown: the latter provides additional new information regarding the recent spread (including breeding) of this welcome colonist to Argyll. This is the second Kintyre record (one at Glenbarr 2012) and also the most southerly county record to date.*

*In view of the current status of **Nuthatch** in Argyll, perhaps a sighting at a Campbeltown garden feeding station (Ellen Oliver pers. comm.), should be reassessed by **ABC Records Committee**?*

List of Selected Species

Whooper Swan

Twelve >S Glenacardoch Point (Glenbarr) on 23rd (first this autumn).

Brent Goose

Two >S on 4th (first this autumn). Total of 27 >S on three dates 15th-17th with most (18) on 16th. Three off-passage 25th-28th with one staying 29th-30th.

Greylag Goose

Two >S on 23rd.

Wigeon

Total of 13 >S on two dates with most (10) on 6th. Flock 12 >S on 24th. Five on 29th/30th.

Flock 25 Crosshill Loch (Campbeltown) on 23rd.

Teal

Flock 15 on 27th and 3 on 30th.

Pintail

Flock 5 >S on 16th.

Scaup

A pack of 7 >S on 16th.

Common Eider

The first flying drakes after c. 8 weeks eclipse period were singles >S on 1st and 2nd.

Goldeneye

An immature drake >S on 15th (first this autumn).

Common Scoter

Southerly movements: five on 1st (one adult male). Two on 2nd (female-types). One on 5th (female-type). Two on 15th (an adult male and a female-type). Two on 19th (adult males). Three 26th (female-types).

Goosander

A redhead >S on 21st (first this year).

Great Northern Diver

Southerly movements: One on 15th. Three on 16th. One on 19th.

Red-throated Diver

Total of 79 >S / 16 dates including 32 / 7hrs on 17th.

Black-throated Diver

One >S on 2nd. Two >S on 24th.

Gannet

Pack of c. 70 foraging off MSBO on 7th.

Total of 1300 >S / 10hrs on 15th.

Juveniles: one >S on 7th, one >S on 17th and 3 >S on 19th (6th this autumn).

Manx Shearwater

Southerly movements: 478 / 6hrs on 1st. 61 / 3hrs on 2nd. 86 / 3hrs on 3rd.

None 4th – 14th. 380 >S / 10hrs on 15th. 38 on 17th. None 18th. Two >S on 19th.

An unprecedented autumn with no daily / bi-daily movements and no day total >500.

Balearic Shearwater

One >S at 08:10hrs on 1st (Eddie Maguire / Ross Chapman).

The first record since autumn 2011.

Sooty Shearwater

Two singles >S on 15th (westerly gale event).

First record this year.

Storm Petrel

One >S on 2nd. 17 >S / 2hrs on 11th (drizzle / poor visibility).

Twelve singles >S on 15th (drizzle / poor visibility).

Leach's Petrel

One >S at 12:28hrs during a gale event on 15th (first showing this year).

Three >S on 16th at 09:29hrs, 11:25hrs and 13:36hrs.

Hen Harrier

Ringtails: Ballygroggan uplands 8th, Drumlemble 15th and Muasdale 13th and 22nd.

Adult males: Auchencorvie 4th, Campbeltown Airport 5th and West Parkfergus (14th (Kevin Hamilton))

Sparrowhawk

Singles were ranging over the shoreline on 5th, 8th, 9th, 15th, 19th, 23rd, 24th and 27th.

Peregrine

One over Kilkivan Quarry, Machrihanish on 6th. one on 9th. One over Campbeltown on 23rd.

Singles MSBO on 14th (carrying Starling prey) and 23rd (chasing Dunlins).

Merlin

One was clocked at 60kmh (40 miles) from a car travelling E from Machrihanish to Drumlemble on 4th (David Millward / Jo Goudie pers. comm.).

One >N over the point on 5th. One on 15th.

Golden Plover

Two flocks totalling 40 birds >S on 3rd. Seven >S on 19th. Three >S on 25th.



Golden Plover – Kevin Hamilton

Sanderling

Southerly movements: 10 on 1st. One on 2nd. Two on 3rd. Six on 4th. 25 on 7th.

Little Stint

Stinky Hole, Campbeltown Loch: Two on 20th (Bob Relph pers. comm.).

Curlew Sandpiper

A single with Sanderlings on 29th.

Red Knot

Southerly movements: 7 on 1st. C. 50 on 7th. One on 9th. Ten >S on 15th. One on 19th.

Purple Sandpiper

One on 15th (first record this autumn).

Whimbrel

One >E on 1st and 3 >S later the same day. One >S on 5th. Three >S on 6th. One >S on 15th. One on 16th.

Black-tailed Godwit

Tangy: flock 25 on 29th (David Millward/ Jo Goudie).

Bar-tailed Godwit

One on 9th. One >S on 23rd.

Grey Phalarope

Westerly gale event.

One off-passage 16th / 17th (photographed / Eddie Maguire / Rod Angus).

On 16th, 4 birds were logged including singles >S at 10:03hrs (photographed Eddie Maguire), 17:30hrs (photographed / Kevin Hamilton) and c.18:00hrs / Kevin Hamilton). The bird off-passage was by the old lifeboat station all day on 17th.



Grey Phalarope: juvenile off-passage/ sheltering from NW gale - Eddie Maguire

Bonxie

Singles >S on 2nd and 11th. Six >S / 10hrs on 15th (including 2 together).



Bonxie: confidently soaring south during a westerly gale event – Eddie Maguire

Arctic Skua

One (pale adult) >S on 12th.and a juvenile >S on 25th.

*Most unusually, scarce on passage. The dearth of **Kittiwakes** (see below) is the likely explanation for such a poor showing.*

Black-legged Kittiwake

Southerly movements: 17 / 3hrs on 2nd included 15 juveniles. Forty >S / 10hrs on 15th (38 juveniles). Twenty juveniles >S / 1hr on 17th. A juvenile >S on 25th.

An unprecedented autumn with no daily / bi daily movements and no day total >50.

Sandwich Tern

Southerly movements: two on 1st. One on 6th. Six >S on 8th. Two on 20th. Two on 23rd. Three on 24th.

Common Tern

An adult and 3 juveniles >S on 5th. A loose party of 10 >S on 8th included 2 juveniles.



Common Tern (juvenile) on passage – Eddie Maguire

Arctic Tern

A juvenile >S on 16th. An adult was sheltering from a squall on 19th.

Common Swift

Machrihanish Holiday Park: flock 10 >E over The Laggan on 3rd (Martin Conway pers. comm.).

A rare September multiple occurrence.

Swallow

Southerly movements: 40 / 1hr on 2nd. A total of c. 400 >S / 3hrs on 8th.

House Martin

Southerly movements: total of 68 / 20mins on 3rd. C. 110 / 3hrs on 8th.

Northern Wheatear

Greenland-type juveniles: one on 5th. Two on 7th and singles on 8th, 9th, 19th, 23rd, and 24th. One daily 2th-30th.

Nuthatch

One was heard calling repeatedly (and very loudly) from heavy cover at the rear of The Hall (B&B), High St (Dalintober) Campbeltown on 15th (Eddie Maguire).

This will be the second occurrence of this species in Kintyre after the first was seen visiting a well-stocked feeding station at Glenbarr last year (Peter Sinclair et al pers. comm.).

Magpie

Two were seen frequently in and around the Grammar School, Campbeltown by many observers (Malcolm Cook et al).

White Wagtail

The highest daily count was 40 on 8th (recording area MSBO > Machrihanish village). Small numbers (1-5) daily by MSBO to months end.

Twite

Regular counts at nyjer feeding station: c. 50 on 7th. c. 65 on 8th. 77 on 10th. 90 on 13th. C. 100 birds regular later.

UK Twite Study Project

Clyde Ringing Group member **Rab Morton** ringed / colour-ringed **78** birds on 23rd. The sequence employed this autumn is **white over white** on right leg with **BTO metal** on left leg.

Birds colour-ringed during autumns 2010, 2011 and 2012 were identified frequently at the nyjer feeding station.



Common Sandpiper - Kevin Hamilton

September Moth Report 2013

Jo Goudie / David Millward

September was a quiet month for mothing as many nights were damp, windy and much cooler. When we did get the trap out we found the moths caught were very faded and tatty as if coming to the end of their time.

4th September 2013

The moth trap was placed in the garden at the Machrihanish Caravan Park overnight. Approx 30 moths were trapped with species including :-

Antler Moth
Iron Prominent
Rosy Rustic

Flounced Rustic
Common Rustic
Lesser Broad-bodied Yellow Underwing

Large Yellow Underwing
Square Spot Rustic

Also we caught one Beetle, the *Nicrophorus Investigator* as seen in August.

18th September 2013

An **Angle Shades Moth** was caught at the Machrihanish Seabird Observatory during daylight hours. This very pretty moth was approx. 25mm long and faded on one side.



Photographed by D. Millward.

22nd September 2013

This time the trap was set on another part of the Machrihanish Camp site, closer to the road and near rough vegetation. We trapped approx. 10 moths, very tatty and faded.

Rosy Rustic

Antler Moth

Square Spot Rustic

Common Rustic

Most interesting for the night was the 2 beetle species we also trapped. One was a very tiny 3mm reddish beetle of the Aphthona group or Flea Beetles which have large back legs and the ability to jump several inches. The other was a large black beetle commonly seen called Pterostichus (Platysma) Niger.

Photographs by D. Millward



On the **25th September 2013** friends brought us a large caterpillar to identify and photograph. The hairy orange and black caterpillar was identified as a Fox Moth caterpillar, photographed and released back into vegetation where it will hibernate over winter before reappearing in Spring when it will pupate and emerge in May as a Fox Moth.



Photograph by D. Millward