

# Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

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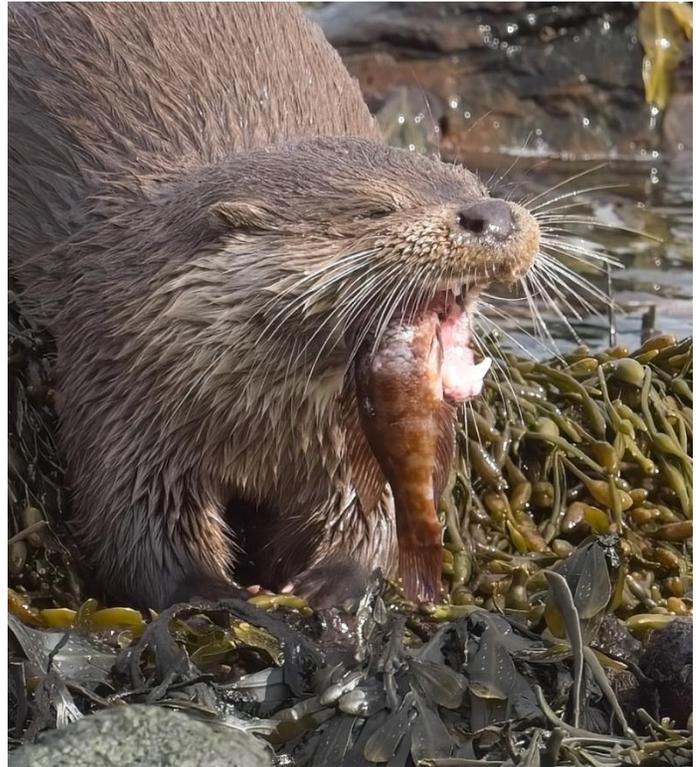
## Photo of the month

### Otter

April has been all about the Otter.

We have seen several different Otter both together and individually and it has been a real treat for the visitors who have seen them.

Photo  
**Jo Goudie**



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## April Report 2024

April has given us a lot of great days of watching. We have had Otter visit practically every day and the Dolphin have been spotted too.

The weather is improving and the birds are starting to arrive. Our first Sandwich Tern arrived earlier this year along with the first Swallow but our first House Martin was slightly later. For some reason our first Common Sandpiper was seen much earlier this year than last year, a good 2 weeks earlier. Maybe the weather patterns were more favourable this year.

All in all an exciting start to the spring.

**Best regards**

**Jo Goudie**



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Photos by Jo Goudie unless otherwise stated



Female Red Breasted Merganser

Red Breasted Merganser – 1<sup>st</sup> – 1, 6<sup>th</sup> – 1.



Otter family



Otter checking the deposit it has left behind



Otter with large Ballan Wrasse

An **Otter** was seen on 9 separate days of the month.

We also had **Dolphin** on 4 days of the month.

Only bird of Prey seen was a **Merlin** passing on 17<sup>th</sup> being chased off by the small birds.



Mink

Chunky adult **Mink** was seen slinking past the observatory on 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.



Great northern Diver

**Great Northern Diver** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 1, 4<sup>th</sup> – 9, 6<sup>th</sup> – 4, 7<sup>th</sup> – 2, 8<sup>th</sup> – 1, 10<sup>th</sup> – 4, 11<sup>th</sup> – 10, 12<sup>th</sup> – 4, 13<sup>th</sup> – 1, 14<sup>th</sup> – 4, 16<sup>th</sup> – 1, 17<sup>th</sup> – 1, 19<sup>th</sup> – 3, 20<sup>th</sup> – 9, 21<sup>st</sup> – 12, 23<sup>rs</sup> – 10, 24<sup>th</sup> – 3, 26<sup>th</sup> – 4, 27<sup>th</sup> – 4, 28<sup>th</sup> – 5.

**Red Throated Diver** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 1, 7<sup>th</sup> – 1, 8<sup>th</sup> – 2.



Sandwich Tern

**Sandwich Tern** – First sighting was 12 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> – 7, 8<sup>th</sup> – 2, 11<sup>th</sup> – 3, 14<sup>th</sup> – 8, 17<sup>th</sup> – 3, 19<sup>th</sup> – 5, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 4, 26<sup>th</sup> – 7, 27<sup>th</sup> – 1, 28<sup>th</sup> – 9, 29<sup>th</sup> – 2.

**Common Tern** – 7<sup>th</sup> – 1, 8<sup>th</sup> – 1, 14<sup>th</sup> – 1.

First **Swallow** was seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> with the **Sand Martin** making an appearance from the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the **House Martin** seen on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Great to have them back.

**Kittiwake** – 8<sup>th</sup> – 5, 12<sup>th</sup> – 1, 16<sup>th</sup> – 4, 19<sup>th</sup> – 2.

**Black Guillemot** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2, 8<sup>th</sup> – 1, 12<sup>th</sup> – 2, 17<sup>th</sup> – 1, 19<sup>th</sup> – 1, 21<sup>st</sup> – 1, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Guillemot** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 1, 7<sup>th</sup> – 9, 8<sup>th</sup> – 1, 10<sup>th</sup> – 11, 11<sup>th</sup> – 8, 13<sup>th</sup> – 15, 14<sup>th</sup> – 16, 16<sup>th</sup> – 2, 19<sup>th</sup> – 11, 24<sup>th</sup> – 2, 26<sup>th</sup> – 5, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1, 29<sup>th</sup> – 5.

**Razorbill** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2, 7<sup>th</sup> – 4, 11<sup>th</sup> – 4, 13<sup>th</sup> – 12, 14<sup>th</sup> – 21, 19<sup>th</sup> – 6.

**Fulmar** – 6<sup>th</sup> – 1, 7<sup>th</sup> – 1. (unusual for us)

**Lesser Black Back Gull** – 12<sup>th</sup> – 4.



White Wagtail

**White Wagtail** – 1<sup>st</sup> one seen 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> – 1, 14<sup>th</sup> – 1, 19<sup>th</sup> – 8, 21<sup>st</sup> – 1, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 2, 26<sup>th</sup> – 2.

**Grey wagtail** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 1, 19<sup>th</sup> – 2.



Eider

We have a regular group of around 30 birds. More males than females.



Common Sandpiper

**Common Sandpiper** – first arrivals were seen on the 11<sup>th</sup>, much earlier than last year.  
11<sup>th</sup> – 2, 13<sup>th</sup> – 1, 19<sup>th</sup> – 1, 20<sup>th</sup> – 1, 21<sup>st</sup> – 3, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 2, 26<sup>th</sup> – 4, 27<sup>th</sup> – 2.



Mute Swan nesting

Hoping for another successful breeding season.



Twite

**Twite** – Shame not to see more this year. 13<sup>th</sup> – 1, 21<sup>st</sup> – 1, 26<sup>th</sup> – 1, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1.



Whimbrel



Whimbrel

**Whimbrel** – Flock of 17 flew in and landed by the observatory on the 21<sup>st</sup> followed by another 3. Then we had 23<sup>rd</sup> – 3, 24<sup>th</sup> – 10, 25<sup>th</sup> – 1, 26<sup>th</sup> – 4, 28<sup>th</sup> – 4.

**Curlew** – 6<sup>th</sup> – 6, 7<sup>th</sup> – 1, 11<sup>th</sup> – 3, 20<sup>th</sup> – 3, 21<sup>st</sup> – 11, 25<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Purple Sandpiper** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 1, 4<sup>th</sup> – 2, 7<sup>th</sup> – 6, 8<sup>th</sup> – 8, 11<sup>th</sup> – 6, 12<sup>th</sup> – 2, 14<sup>th</sup> – 3, 16<sup>th</sup> – 2, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 1, 24<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Redshank** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2, 4<sup>th</sup> – 4, 6<sup>th</sup> – 3, 7<sup>th</sup> – 3, 8<sup>th</sup> – 1, 11<sup>th</sup> – 4, 12<sup>th</sup> – 2, 13<sup>th</sup> – 2, 14<sup>th</sup> – 6, 16<sup>th</sup> – 4, 19<sup>th</sup> – 2, 21<sup>st</sup> – 1, 28<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Ringed Plover** – 1<sup>st</sup> – 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2, 4<sup>th</sup> – 7, 6<sup>th</sup> – 3, 7<sup>th</sup> – 2, 8<sup>th</sup> – 5, 10<sup>th</sup> – 21, 11<sup>th</sup> – 2, 12<sup>th</sup> – 4, 13<sup>th</sup> – 1, 14<sup>th</sup> – 6, 16<sup>th</sup> – 6, 17<sup>th</sup> – 6, 20<sup>th</sup> – 3, 21<sup>st</sup> – 10, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 20, 24<sup>th</sup> – 1, 26<sup>th</sup> – 4, 27<sup>th</sup> – 5, 28<sup>th</sup> – 6, 29<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Sanderling** – 7<sup>th</sup> – 19, 8<sup>th</sup> – 20, 13<sup>th</sup> – 1, 14<sup>th</sup> – 46, 16<sup>th</sup> – 32.

**Greylag Goose** – 6<sup>th</sup> – 2, 20<sup>th</sup> – 1.

**Goldeneye** – 6<sup>th</sup> – 2.

**Teal** – 21<sup>st</sup> – 6.

**Shelduck** – 4<sup>th</sup> – 3, 6<sup>th</sup> – 3, 11<sup>th</sup> – 2, 19<sup>th</sup> – 1, 20<sup>th</sup> – 4, 21<sup>st</sup> – 7, 24<sup>th</sup> – 2, 26<sup>th</sup> – 3, 27<sup>th</sup> – 1, 28<sup>th</sup> – 6, 29<sup>th</sup> – 7.

**Gannet** – back in small numbers. Best day was 18 on the 6<sup>th</sup>.



Black Throated Diver

**Black Throated Diver** – 1 bird seen on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

We tend to photograph anything flying past the observatory just in case. When this diver flew past it just seemed different and I was so pleased when I checked the photos and realized I had something unusual. I sent the photos to Jim Dickson for verification. The white patches on the wings denote Black Throated Diver. First time I have seen one from the Observatory.



Bridled Guillemot

A form of Guillemot *Uria aalge* with a white eye ring and a thin white line extending behind the eye. It is not regarded as a subspecies, but merely as an example of dimorphism. Bridled Guillemots may also be called 'Ringed Guillemots'. Their proportion in British colonies increases northwards.

This one was in the bay next to the observatory after being released by the SSPCA. They had rescued it after the bad weather when it was found on the beach in a tired state.