

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

Warden - David Millward

Assistant Warden - Jo Goudie

Assistant Warden - Jason Brown

Photo of the month

Leucistic Herring Gull

Unusual sighting. This is a leucistic Herring Gull, seen on the 31st March.

Leucistic means - an abnormal condition of reduced pigmentation affecting various animals. It is marked by overall pale color or patches of reduced coloring and is caused by a genetic mutation which inhibits melanin and other pigments from being deposited in feathers, hair, or skin.

Photo

Jo Goudie



First Quarter Report 2025

As the first quarter of the year has been unusually quiet and photography difficult due to weather and lack of light I have rolled the first 3 months into one report. The spreadsheets can be viewed individually though.

We have had a quiet few months with bad weather and windy conditions. The waders have still been few and far between. We are hoping 2025 will be better for weather patterns and that our breeding birds return and breed.

Our Otter have still been regular visitors and we have enjoyed watching them and showing visitors how amazing they are. We hope we get more visitors in 2025.

Best regards

Jo Goudie



Contact the Observatory

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Facebook – [Machrihanish Seabird Observatory](#)

Photos by Jo Goudie unless otherwise stated



Barnacle Goose

Barnacle Goose - 8 seen flying past the observatory on the 25th January.

Brent Goose – 1 seen on the 25th Jan.



Sanderling

Jan – 25th – 1, 28th – 19, 30th – 28.

Feb – 23rd – 4.

March – 6th – 33, 7th – 38, 16th – 70.



Kittiwake

Jan – 25th – 400+, 26th – 1.

Feb – 27th – 1.

March – 24th – 3.



Purple Sandpiper

Jan – 1st – 1, 3rd – 3, 4th – 6, 8th – 4, 17th – 9, 25th – 4, 28th – 9, 30th – 5, 31st – 2.

Feb – 4th – 1, 6th – 3, 7th – 1.

March – 2nd – 2, 3rd – 2, 4th – 7, 5th – 4, 6th – 4, 8th – 4, 9th – 3, 12th – 14, 22nd – 6, 26th – 5, 29th – 4



Great Northern Diver

Jan – 1st – 1, 3rd – 2, 4th – 1, 8th – 15, 9th – 2, 10th – 3, 15th – 1, 17th – 2, 26th – 2, 28th – 2, 29th – 4, 30th – 1.
Feb – 5th – 1, 6th – 3, 7th – 1, 8th – 2, 9th – 3, 10th – 1, 13th – 2, 21st – 6, 27th – 2, 28th – 5.
March – 3rd – 1, 6th – 2, 7th – 4, 8th – 2, 9th – 7, 10th – 1, 11th – 1, 12th – 3, 13th – 14, 14th – 4, 16th – 9, 22nd – 6, 23rd – 4, 24th – 11, 26th – 9, 29th – 1, 31st – 4.

Red Throated Diver

Jan – 4th – 2, 9th – 2, 10th – 8.
Feb – 9th – 1, 21st – 1.
March – 10th – 1, 13th – 1, 14th – 4.

Common Scoter – 1 seen on 5th Feb. 1 seen on 9th March.

Goldeneye – Rafts of up to 16 seen throughout Jan and Feb before disappearing by the 14th March.

Wigeon – large flock of 150+ seen flying over the sea heading North.

Shelduck – arrived in Jan with around 10 on the surrounding beaches by end of March.

Black Guillemot – Small numbers seen in first 3 months of year.

Razorbill and **Guillemot** – small numbers seen regularly feeding far out during the first 3 months.

Whooper swan – 2 flew past the observatory 10th Feb.

Snipe – 2 flew by 23rd Feb followed by 3 on the 28th.



Oystercatcher

Oystercatcher – by March the Oystercatcher have returned and started to pair up.



Mute Swan

Mute Swan – our usual pair have chased off the grown up cygnet from last year and are starting to reform their bond and think about breeding.



Shag

Shag – The number of Shag is still greater than the number of Cormorant we have around the Observatory. It has been good to see them change to their breeding plumage and gain their crests.



Curlew

Jan – 1st – 1, 2nd – 2, 3rd – 1, 9th – 1, 10th – 1.

Feb – 5th – 1, 6th – 1, 7th – 1, 10th – 1, 21st – 2, 27th – 1.

March – 7th – 1, 8th – 1, 1th – 1, 12th – 1, 13th – 1, 14th – 2, 22nd – 4, 23rd – 1, 24th – 3, 26th – 2, 30th – 4.



Red Breasted Merganser

Jan – 25th – 2, 26th – 1, 28th – 3, 30th – 2, 31st – 2.

Feb – 0

Mar – 2nd – 2, 4th – 2, 5th – 1, 6th – 1, 7th – 4, 12th – 1, 13th – 2, 22nd – 1, 26th – 1, 30th – 1, 31st – 2.



White Wagtail

White wagtail – first of the year, 3 seen on the 26th March.



Leucistic Herring Gull

Originally, we thought it was an Iceland Gull but the warden thought the bill was wrong. Confirmation of what we had came from our area recorder Jim Dickson who confirmed Leucistic Herring Gull. Seen on the 31st March.



White Tailed Sea Eagle – Andy Paton

White Tailed sea eagle – seen flying past the observatory by Andy Paton on Feb 5th. Unfortunately, it was a day I wasn't there. Typical.



Otter

Seen regularly, we always enjoy sighting them.



Mink

A not so welcome sight but we still have them visiting on and off.
Smaller than the otter and looking more rat like in the face with a bottle brush tail.

Other sightings

Magpie – 2 seen at Stewarton on the 13th January.
1 seen in Southend by Jayne Maloret on the 9th March.

Glaucous Gull – seen by Andrew Russell on Westport Beach on the 26th February.

Lapwing – 10 seen on the Moss Road on 18th January.