

Machrihanish Seabird Observatory

Warden - David Millward Assistant Warden - Jo Goudie Assistant Warden - Jason Brown

Photo of the month

Dunlin

This is the most common small wader found along the coast. It has a slightly down-curved bill and a distinctive black belly patch when in its breeding plumage.

Nice to see them feeding on the beach at the edge of the surf.

Photo
Jo Goudie



May Report 2024

May saw some of the smaller birds arriving like Whitethroat and Sedge Warbler. I always love this time as I like to see the birdlife returning and starting to set up territories. This year we had a one-day appearance of a Grasshopper Warbler, a first for the patch we check around the observatory. His call gave him away and he took some spotting as he was deep in the sedge grass.

It was also good to see an increase in gannet numbers, though we are still far short of the numbers we had before the bird flu in 2022. We hope the recovery continues.

Best regards

Jo Goudie



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Photos by Jo Goudie unless otherwise stated



Grasshopper Warbler

One lone **Grasshopper Warbler** was heard calling from the sedge grass on the patch we regularly check by the observatory. It took me a bit of time to find him and get a photo. 2nd May 2024.

Buzzard – 1 seen on 2nd, being mobbed by Hooded crow.

Merlin – 1 seen over the observatory on 25th.

Kestrel – 1 seen on 21st.

Bar Tailed Godwit – 1 seen on the 11th.

Curlew – 1 seen on 16th and 17th.

Whimbrel – 1st – 3, 2nd – 4, 3rd – 3, 4th – 1, 6th – 4, 10th – 1, 16th – 4, 17th – 5.

Common Scoter – 3rd – 18, 6th – 9.

Teal – 1 seen flying past on the 5th.



Sedge warbler

Sedge Warbler – 2nd – 2, 3rd – 1, 7th – 4.



Whitethroat

Whitethroat – only 1 seen on the 7th. Disappointing.



Red Breasted Merganser

Red Breasted Merganser – 3rd – 2, 8th – 3, 16th – 13, 19th – 1.

Black Guillemot – 4th – 1, 6th – 5, 9th – 2, 10th – 1, 11th – 3, 12th – 1, 16th – 2.

Common Sandpiper – 2nd – 2, 3rd – 7, 4th – 3, 6th – 2, 7th – 7, 8th – 4, 10th – 1, 11th – 3, 12th – 3, 15th – 2, 16th – 8, 17th – 10, 18th – 5, 19th – 1, 21st – 2, 22nd – 3, 24th – 3, 25th – 11, 26th – 6, 27th – 3.

Great Northern Diver – 1st – 1, 2nd – 2, 3rd – 9, 4th – 11, 5th – 2, 6th – 3, 7th – 1, 8th – 1, 11th – 2, 15th – 1, 16th – 3, 19th – 2, 21st – 1.

Red Throated Diver – 3rd – 2, 4th – 2, 6th – 2, 8th – 1, 15th – 1, 19th – 2.

Greylag Goose – 1 seen on the 16th and 17th.

Guillemot – 3rd – 2, 6th – 10, 7th – 1, 8th – 6, 9th – 1, 10th – 5, 11th – 2, 17th – 1, 21st – 2, 22nd – 1.

Razorbill – 4th – 2, 6th – 3, 22nd – 2.

Fulmar – 1 seen on the 16th and 17th. Big increase in sighting for 2024.

Lesser Black Backed Gull – 2nd – 7, 3rd – 2, 12th – 1. Unusual for us to see.

Kittiwake – 4th – 1, 17th – 12, 25th – 1.

Shelduck – General increase in Shelduck seen this year.



Ringed Plover

Ringed Plover – 1st – 12, 2nd – 8, 3rd – 9, 4th – 4, 5th – 1, 6th – 10, 7th – 3, 9th – 2, 10th – 12, 11th – 3, 12th – 27, 15th – 3, 16th – 4, 17th – 12, 18th – 3, 19th – 26, 20th – 9, 21st – 33, 22nd – 8, 24th – 10, 25th – 8, 26th – 16, 27th – 40, 29th – 1.

Red Knot – 1 seen on the 11th flying in a group of Sanderling.

Sanderling – 17th – 54, 19th – 49, 21st – 3, 25th – 10, 27th – 19.

Turnstone – 6th – 3.

Twite – 5th – 2, 16th – 2, 18th – 2, 22nd – 1, 26th – 1. Disappointing numbers.

Skylark – 1 seen on the 7th and 26th.

Siskin – 1 seen feeding with a flock of Goldfinch on 7th. Unusual.

Linnet – Roughly same numbers as usual.

Grey Wagtail – 1 on 17th.

White Wagtail – 4 seen on the 2nd.

Good numbers of **Swallow**, **House Martin** and **Sand Martin**.

Swift – 6 seen over Campbeltown on the 13th.



Sandwich Tern

Sandwich Tern – 1st – 4, 3rd – 7, 4th – 3, 5th – 2, 6th – 3, 7th – 8, 8th – 2, 9th – 2, 10th – 6, 11th – 5, 12th – 14, 15th – 10, 16th – 8, 17th – 10, 18th – 1, 19th – 12, 20th – 2, 21st – 4, 22nd – 7, 24th – 9, 25th – 10, 26th – 16, 27th – 20.

Arctic Tern – 2 seen on the 15th.



Dunlin

Dunlin – 6th – 8, 12th – 22, 19th – 22, 21st – 54, 25th – 3, 26th – 44, 27th – 4.



Heron

Heron – Not a regular visitor but always nice to see when it does. 7th – 1, 16th – 1, 17th – 1, 25th – 1, 26th – 1.



Oystercatcher with limpet

We have had lots of mating and territorial disputes but no signs of nesting yet.



Wheatear female

Wheatear – 1st – 1, 2nd – 1, 4th – 1, 16th – 3, 17th – 2, 18th – 2, 19th – 1, 20th – 1, 21st – 4,
22nd – 1, 24th – 1, 25th – 1, 27th – 2, 30th – 3.
In general, it feels like we have less this year.



Wheatear male



Otter



Otter



Ringed Plover displaying to another.



Mute swan and Shelduck

The Male **Mute Swan** has been very active chasing off Shelduck and Eider he feels may be a threat to his nesting partner. He has also been chasing off the juvenile swans from last year's clutch.