

# Islay & Jura

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 October - 3 November 2010

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Report compiled by Peter Clement



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## Day 1

Thursday 28th October

The tour got off to a good start with seven members of the tour picked up on time at Glasgow Central Station and, after a short detour we got on to the M8 heading west and we were off on the road to Kennacraig and the ferry to Islay. We stopped for a short comfort break by the old quay at Inverary, and Loch Fyne looked calm but cold, and during our short stop two of the group managed a quick look at the town's main tourist attraction – the old jail. Pressing on we picked up the remaining four members of the group at Stonefield House, a hotel not far from Kennacraig where we arrived in good time for the ferry at 6pm only to find that there was a delay of about an hour. We whiled away the time in the small but warm waiting room and the ferry emerged out of the dark and we eventually got on board. The crossing was fairly smooth and uneventful and Port Ellen and the rest of the island's electricity seemed to be out as we arrived, had everyone gone to bed early? On our arrival at the hotel in Bridgend it transpired that there had been a power cut affecting the whole island but nothing daunted we toasted our arrival at the candle-lit bar.

## Day 2

Friday 29th October

The early morning was a little cool, grey and cloudy with a fair breeze as we set off in search of geese. Our first stop was not far from the hotel, on Bridgend Flats where we spent some time looking at the flocks of Barnacle Geese out on the shore and adjacent mudflats, these were accompanied by small flocks of Wigeon, Shelduck, Curlew and Redshanks. A quick look out over Loch Indaal revealed a few Eiders, Scaup and one or two Common Scoter on the rather choppy water.

Pressing on we took the road north to the RSPB reserve at Loch Gruinart and in the fields before the headquarters building we came across several thousand more Barnacle Geese, several hundred Greenland White-fronts and some Greylag Geese. In amongst one flock of Barnacles we came across a lone small Canada Goose (recently separated into a full species as Lesser or Cackling Canada Goose) and one of the very few Canada Geese to arrive in the UK unaided).

By now the grey clouds had turned to a steady drizzle so after a sandwich lunch taken whilst looking out of the picture window at the RSPB visitor centre we set off in the minibus along the road to Ardnave at the northern or seaward end of Loch Gruinart. The road runs close to the western edge of the loch and we stopped several times to look at geese in the fields and some winter thrushes along the side of the road. At the end of the road there was a large flock of Wigeon on Ardnave Loch, several Mute Swans and a small flock of Whoopers.

Taking advantage of a slight improvement in the weather (the drizzle was now only intermittent and not horizontal), we set off for a brisk walk to Ardnave Point, a short distance across some fields and sand dunes. On the way we came across a flock of over 20 Ravens all looking menacing (and wet) and from the edge of the dunes we watched a couple of Red-throated Divers doing what they do best and diving frequently at the edge of the breaking waves.

As we watched the divers, the rain returned with renewed vigour, and a retreat to the minibus was unanimously agreed to. Once back in the minibus we set off back towards Loch Gruinart and then along the big loop road which runs around Loch Gorm. In the fields here we found our first Choughs and a small flock of Rock Doves amongst the more numerous Curlew and Lapwings. At one point a pair of Stonechats kept us company along a short stretch of the road. By mid-afternoon the weather had closed in and was showing little sign of relenting, we headed back to the hotel and some hot tea.

## Day 3

## Saturday 30th October

The weather forecast had promised fine weather with only a little chance of a scattered shower and so it turned out. The sun was shining as we had breakfast and there was only a distant line of puffy clouds in the sky as we headed off south towards Port Ellen. We stopped briefly in Port Ellen for some photos and a (now traditional) comfort break before continuing on west out to the Oa (the large almost circular headland at the SW end of the island). The road to the Oa twists and turns a little, passing through several hill farms before coming out onto a wide almost plateau-like area of dry grass, bracken and some heather. Here we found some Buzzards and a couple of Hen Harriers but what we were specifically looking for were Golden Eagles.

We parked the minibus in the RSPB reserve car park and took the footpath out towards the monument that stands at the far end of the Oa overlooking the area where two American supply ships were wrecked during the First World War. In the field below the car park an enormous flock of Twite were feeding and in between getting up and flying round they occasionally perched on the fence wires and showed off their small yellow bills, white flashes in the wing and stripy buff and brown plumage whilst calling their name from time to time.

At the monument we found very little apart from some blustery SW wind, though at one stage a distant Peregrine rose up and came almost overhead before diving down into one of the coves on the south side of the headland. On the way back we found a couple more Chough and some Rock Doves and a Merlin dashed low in front of us causing panic as it scattered the Twite flock. Passing through the fields near the car park again we found a pair of Brambling feeding with some Chaffinches in the garden of the most south-westerly house on the island. All of this was hugely enjoyable but despite our best efforts of scanning the distant hilltops and crags there was not a sign of any eagles.

We had a picnic lunch at the tables set out by the car park and then set off for the next northerly headland of Portnahaven which we could see in the distance across the wide expanse of the entrance to Loch Indaal. Stopping only in Bowmore for some fuel and chocolate supplies we made it to Portnahaven by mid-afternoon in time to get good looks at both Common and Grey Seals in the sheltered area in the lee of the offshore lighthouse island. There were few birds about here apart from some Herring Gulls, Rock Pipits and a young Gannet fishing in the same area.

We drove back to Bridgend via Loch Gorm in the warm evening sun and from the small hide on the edge of Loch Gruinart we took a look at the flocks of Wigeon, Teal and some Shoveler all of which were regularly being stirred up by the activities of two or three hunting Hen Harriers looking for a spot of supper, whilst in the distance the Barnacle Geese and Whooper Swans were moving in to roost for the night.

## Day 4

## Sunday 31st October

Today, our last day on Islay, dawned even brighter and sunnier than yesterday and once we were out on the road it was clear that there was absolutely no wind. Loch Indaal was mirror-calm and every duck, diver and grebe stood out perfectly, we all enjoyed superb views of a flock of Long-tailed Ducks (including some fine long-tailed drakes), an even larger flock of Scaup, some Common Scoter and Red-breasted Mergansers, several Red-throated Divers, at least 3 Great Northern Divers, 2 Red-necked Grebes and about 3 Slavonian Grebes.

Tearing ourselves away from this feast we moved round towards Bruichladdich to look for Purple Sandpipers and Black Guillemots. Whilst we were there we met up again with Ian Brooke one of the island's resident birdwatchers (we had met him briefly in the pub on our first evening) and he told us that a Green-winged Teal had been seen from the hide at Loch Gruinart that morning.

We moved on to the jetty a little further along the road and there almost within touching distance were several Black Guillemots in their fine black and white winter plumage swimming around close inshore. Also there we had further good views of both Red-throated and Great Northern Divers. Finding little else that was new for us we retraced our steps and took the back road to Loch Gorm and on to Loch Gruinart. At the start of the road round Loch Gorm we came upon a small flock of Long-tailed Tits bouncing down the road in front of us – these are quite unusual birds on Islay, where they don't breed, and are visitors from the mainland.

We had our lunch in the Loch Gruinart hide whilst looking through the large flock of mixed ducks out on the strip of water in front of the hide. It seemed it would be like finding a needle in a haystack to pick out the Green-winged Teal from the mass of Common Teal, Wigeon and Mallards out on the water but with some fortitude and patience most of the group managed to get at least one good look at the bird with the white vertical stripe at the side of the breast before the flock were stirred up again by a roving Hen Harrier. On the way back to Bridgend a couple of Roe Deer were feeding on top of one of the dyke banks and we had our last good views of the huge flocks of Barnacle and Greenland White-fronts together with some Pink-footed Geese which had recently joined them.

Returning to the hotel at Bridgend we collected our cases and said farewell to the staff who had looked after so well before we moved off on the road to Port Askaig and the ferry to Jura.

We arrived at the ferry terminal in good time but there was no sign of any ferry and were informed that it had broken down that morning and a replacement was on its way – from Mull. We were told that there would be a delay of about an hour or two, so in the meantime decided to do some exploring of new territory. We took the road back towards Bridgend and turned off on the small road to Mulandry which runs up into the hills and cragged tops in the centre of the island, this was in the hope of seeing an eagle soaring over the tops or gliding across the great glen between the high crags but in the end all we saw were some very nice herds of Red Deer and several Ravens very close to the road. Returning to the ferry terminal there was still no sign of any ferry so we adjourned to the bar of the local hotel for some enforced refreshment. Sometime later the ferry did arrive but by now it was after dark and all we saw once we had crossed over to Jura was a few deer silhouetted by the side of the road, and a Barn Owl in the headlights as it crossed in front of us, as we neared the hotel at Craighouse.

## Day 5

## Monday 1st November

The hotel at Craighouse sits on a slight rise overlooking a large bay known as Small Isles Bay, and is marked on the outer edge by a line of small rocky islands (hence the name) which often means that the bay is sheltered from the rougher area of sea beyond. Our first morning on Jura dawned bright and clear though a little cool; most of the group were up early searching the shore for any signs of Otters. We walked a little way along the main road which runs parallel to the rocky shoreline finding a few birds in some of the gardens, these included a few Chaffinches and a couple of Bramblings. The shore itself seemed rather quiet with no tell-tale signs of any Otters foraging in the shallows. In fact apart from a few Mallards and some Mute Swans there was little to look at (apart from the scenery) so we decided to return to the hotel for an early breakfast. We were almost back at the hotel when Peter noticed a large black bird flying over one of the small islands - an immature Sea-Eagle - which flew steadily towards us then landed briefly on rocks on the far side of the jetty whilst being heavily mobbed by the local Herring Gulls which forced it to fly again this time out of sight round the corner of the island.

After breakfast we took the minibus north along the only road on the island stopping from time to time to look over the bay. Regrettably there was no sign of any Otter activity but at the top of the Bay we stooped to look at a Buzzard flying close to the minibus when it was suddenly joined from out of nowhere by a Sea-Eagle which flew round over our heads for some minutes whilst we all climbed out of the minibus and provided fantastic views before moving off south down the side of the bay.

Further along the road we came across a small flock of Fieldfares which suddenly took fright in a panic move which we thought may have been caused by us but moments later a male Peregrine dashed after them only to return carrying something (probably one of the Fieldfares) in its talons. The day was slowly becoming very grey with more than a hint of impending rain coming on from the glowering clouds over the peaks. Some of the group elected to go for a short walk along the road whilst Peter returned with the rest of the group to Craighouse one of whom had a medical appointment. After that we returned north again to pick up the rest of the group as by now the rain had started and was promising to get heavier. Driving back along the side of the bay we were close to the area where we had seen the Sea Eagle overhead when Peter suddenly noticed an Otter watching us from close inshore. Screeching to a halt we watched as the otter swam and dived just yards from the shore for several minutes, the only regret was that only two of the group were present and managed to see it. We collected the rest of the group and spent the remainder of the day sheltering from the rain in the minibus whilst taking photos of the landscape and the very photogenic groups of Red Deer that roam the upland areas of Jura. On the way back to Craighouse we spent some time looking again for the Otter but to no avail.

## Day 6

Tuesday 2nd November

News arrived today of the arrangements for the replacement ferry, it seems that there is no car ferry available anywhere so a passenger-only ferry will be available for the group tomorrow and a bus or taxi will then take them from Port Askaig to Port Ellen and the ferry to the mainland. We were up early again and the rain had cleared over Craighouse but was clearly still very cloudy further north, we were again looking out for Otters and despite a couple of Seals which popped up to look at us, which raised hopes, we unfortunately drew a blank. We did, however, manage to see an almost full summer-plumage Great Northern Diver and a Dipper by the side of the bay which was a little consolation.

Having tried the north of the island yesterday we headed south today. We left the minibus by the ferry terminal and walked along the tops of the cliffs overlooking the narrow Sound of Islay with Islay across the water only a few hundred yards away in the weak autumn sunshine. The path along the top of the cliffs looks down onto the Sound and on the other side has great views over the vast moorlands sweeping down from the first of the grey and conical paps (steep-sided quartzite mountains) of Jura. Birds here were at first few and far between and the Red Deer here seemed very skittish and ran off at our approach. On the water in the Sound were small groups of Eider and a loose flock of Red-breasted Mergansers, at one point along the walk a Merlin dashed across in front of us. Not long after we had turned round and were walking back two superb sub-adult Sea-Eagles came floating past almost at head height (one of which had yellow-wing-flags indicating that it had been marked as a nestling) showing their immense size, pale tails and broad square-ended wings. As we got back to the minibus the rain returned with some force and remained for the rest of the day. We returned to the hotel for some hot soup and when we ventured out again later in the day the weather had only slightly improved. We were hoping that Otters didn't mind or notice the rain but it seems they do (or did on this occasion) as we still failed to find any.

## Day 7

Wednesday 3rd November

An early pre-dawn start today to get the passenger ferry across to Port Askaig for the group. We said farewell to Peter and the minibus (who had to remain on Jura until the car-ferry replacement arrived in a day or two) as the dawn slowly broke. By means of bus or taxi the group made their way to Port Ellen where the ferry to Kennacraig left on time. The voyage was uneventful with only a few Kittiwakes and some Guillemots on the crossing until the ship entered the long sea loch up to Kennacraig and there just before reaching the terminal was a female Otter and two young cubs in the water close to the terminal which most of the group enjoyed only moments before having to leave the ship! Success at last! ...and what a way to round off a very enjoyable and thoroughly memorable trip...

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## Species Accounts

### Birds

- Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*  
3 in winter plumage from Ardnave Point, Islay 28<sup>th</sup> Oct and 6 Loch Indaal 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*  
Single in winter plumage from Ardnave Point 29<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2 Loch Indaal on 30<sup>th</sup> and single there on 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*  
At least 3 Loch Indaal 31<sup>st</sup> Oct and 2 Small Isles Bay, Jura Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*  
Single near Lochgilphead, Loch Fyne 28<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*  
2 in winter plumage Loch Indaal on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*  
3 in winter plumage Loch Indaal on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*  
Single on flooded area, Loch Gruinart on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Gannet *Morus bassanus*  
A juvenile fishing close inshore at Port Wemyss, Islay on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. Another over Samll Isles Bay, Jura on Nov 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
Fairly common, small numbers seen most days, maximum of 15 Loch Indaal on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*  
Very common, seen every day, maximum of 25 on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*  
Small numbers seen every day, maximum of 13 (together) Small Isles Bay, Jura 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.
- Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*  
11 Loch Gruinart, Islay on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct and 25 there the following day.
- Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*  
5 Loch Gruinart, Islay on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct and up to 12 Small Isles Bay, Jura on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*  
Up to 25 in fields at Loch Gruinart between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*  
Up to 250 on Islay, mostly around Loch Gruinart between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Greylag Goose *Anser anser*  
Up to 150 on fields around Loch Gruinart and Loch Gorm between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Lesser/Cackling Canada Goose *Branta hutchinsii*  
Single, most probably of race *parvipes*, with Barnacle geese on fields at Loch Gruinart on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.

- Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*  
Flocks totalling about 28,000 on various parts of Islay between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*  
5 on a sandbar by Bridgend Flats 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Wigeon *Anas penelope*  
Up to 300 on flooded area around Loch Gruinart between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*  
Up to 100 on flooded area around Loch Gruinart between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct and a flock of about 20 on Small Isles Bay, Jura on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Gadwall *Anas strepera*  
About 6 on flooded area by Loch Gruinart on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Pintail *Anas acuta*  
Up to 50 on flooded area around Loch Gruinart between 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Shoveler *Anas clypeata*  
About 10 on flooded area around Loch Gruinart between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Common Teal *Anas crecca*  
Up to 500 on flooded area around Loch Gruinart between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*  
Single adult drake with Common Teal on flooded area Loch Gruinart 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*  
4 on Loch Indaal 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Scaup *Aythya marila*  
3 on Loch Indaal on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct and a large flock of about 170 there on 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Eider *Somateria mollissima*  
Small numbers on Loch Indaal on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and about 60 there on 31<sup>st</sup>; about 8 Small Isles Bay, Jura on Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*  
Single male Loch Indaal, 29<sup>th</sup> Oct and 5 there on 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*  
A single female on Loch Long on Oct 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*  
About 25 on Loch Indaal on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct and up to 10 in the Sound of Islay on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- White-tailed Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*  
2 (possibly 3) including an immature and sub-adult over the Sound of Islay on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*  
An adult male and a ring-tail female/immature The Oa, Islay and three ringtail immature or females around the hide overlooking Loch Gruinart on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*  
Single large female over the plantation on The Rinns, Islay on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and single birds over fields by Small Isles Bay, Jura on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

- Buzzard *Buteo buteo*  
Common, seen every day, maximum of 15 on Islay on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*  
A single on The Oa, Islay on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and 2 (possibly a pair) along the road to Mulindry on 31<sup>st</sup>, also 2 on Jura on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*  
Single in stooping flight over The Oa on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and another chasing Fieldfares on Jura 1<sup>st</sup> Nov and another seen briefly the following day.
- Merlin *Falco columbarius*  
Single over Loch Indaal 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*  
Common and widespread, mainly of introduced birds on both islands.
- Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*  
Common on both islands, up to a maximum of 50 on Loch Indaal on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*  
Single on shore of Loch Indaal at Bruichladdich on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*  
Up to 250 in fields around Loch Gruinart on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*  
Up to 30 around Loch Indaal between 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Curlew *Numenius arquatus*  
Up to 100 on flooded area around Loch Gruinart between 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*  
Singles, Port Wemyss 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and Small Isles Bay, Jura 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*  
Single flushed from Bridgend Flats 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*  
Small numbers seen daily, maximum of 30 on Islay 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Common Gull *Larus canus*  
Small numbers daily on both islands but large flock of about 200 feeding in field near Bowmore on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*  
Up to 250 on Loch Indaal most days and smaller numbers on Jura.
- Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*  
Up to 20 daily on Islay.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*  
Single near Loch Gruinart on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*  
About 7 mostly in pairs at Bruichladdich, Islay 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Rock Dove *Columba livia*  
Small numbers in fields around Loch Gorm on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and about 100 there on 31<sup>st</sup>.

- Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*  
A flock of 10 in fields near Loch Gorm on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct and single Jura on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Barn Owl *Tyto alba*  
Single seen shortly after dusk by main road to Craighouse, Jura on evening of 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Skylark *Alauda arvensis*  
A flock of about 60 in fields around Loch Gorm on 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*  
Small numbers around Loch Indaal and along Sound of Islay, maximum of 10 on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.
- Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*  
Small numbers present in fields around Loch Gruinart and along edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura with maximum of 10 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*  
Up to a maximum of 10 seen daily on Islay.
- Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*  
Single over the hotel at Craighouse, Jura on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.
- Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*  
Single seen along shore of Small Isles Bay, Jura on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*  
Small numbers seen or heard daily on Islay.
- Dunnock *Prunella modularis*  
Up to 4 seen daily on both islands.
- Robin *Erithacus rubecula*  
Up to 4 seen daily on both islands.
- Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*  
Up to 6 seen daily on both islands.
- Blackbird *Turdus merula*  
Up to 6 seen daily on both islands.
- Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*  
Small numbers seen daily but flocks totalling 120 on various parts of Islay 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Redwing *Turdus iliacus*  
Small numbers seen daily but flocks totalling 100 on various parts of Islay 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*  
Single near the ferry terminal at Feolin, Jura on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*  
Single near Craighouse on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov and 2 there on 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*  
At least 1 in gardens near the Craighouse jetty, Jura on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*  
Small numbers seen on Islay and about 10 on Jura on 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.
- Great Tit *Parus major*  
At least one pair at feeder at Loch Gruinart on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct and pair Craighouse, Jura on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.

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Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	2 along the woodland walk at Loch Gruinart on 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct.
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Flock of at least 6 along the lane by Loch Gorm on 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct.
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	About 1000 seen daily (mostly around Loch Gruinart) on Islay and up to 50 daily on Jura.
Chough	<i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	Up to 7 in fields around Loch Gorm on 29 <sup>th</sup> Oct and 3 on The Oa the following day.
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Several hundred between Loch Gruinart and Ardnave, Islay between 29 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> Oct.
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Common on Islay, especially around Ardnave and Loch Gruinart with maximum of 35 on 28 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	Common and widespread, seen daily.
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Common and widespread up to 400 daily on Islay.
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Small numbers daily on both islands.
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Common, seen daily and maximum of 50 around Craighouse, Jura on 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov.
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	2 in a garden on The Oa 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct and 2 in gardens around Craighouse on 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov.
Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Four in gardens at Craighouse, Jura on 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov and single there the following day.
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Small numbers seen daily on both islands, maximum of 10 on 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Twite	<i>Carduelis flavrostris</i>	A flock of about 200 in fields at the end of The Oa on 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Up to 5 around Loch Indaal, Islay on 29 <sup>th</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct.
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	3 in reeds in ditches around Loch Gruinart 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct.

## Mammals

- Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*  
Small numbers seen on both islands.
- Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*  
Singles on Islay on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Otter *Lutra lutra*  
Single at the top end of Small Isles Bay, Jura on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov and a female with two cubs near Kennacraig on 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*  
Common and widespread on Jura, small numbers, mainly in farm fields on Islay.
- Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*  
Two (female and young) at Loch Gruinart on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.
- Common Seal *Phoca vitulina*  
Small numbers at Portnahaven on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.
- Grey Seal *Halicoerus grypus*  
Small numbers at Portnahaven on 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.