

Islay & Jura

Naturetrek Tour Report

23 - 29 October 2014

Report compiled by Peter Clement



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Day 1

Thursday 23rd October

The tour group gathered together at the first pick-up point at Glasgow Central Station at 1.30pm, and then shortly before 2pm at Glasgow Airport, for the drive to Kennacraig and the ferry to Islay. Along the way we passed the calm waters of Loch Long and Loch Fyne where the first Hooded Crows appeared, together with a few Red-breasted Mergansers along the shore. We stopped for a short break by the old quay at Inveraray. Pressing on we arrived at Loch Tarbert and the ferry terminal at Kennacraig shortly before 5pm just as it was beginning to get dark and with enough time for a look around the top of the loch. The ferry left a little behind schedule but made up time on the crossing and we arrived in Port Ellen a little after 8pm. Once ashore we drove to Bridgend where, as usual, a warm welcome awaited us at Bridgend Hotel, our home for the next three nights. We quickly settled in and found a late but welcome hot supper waiting for us in the dining room. Over dinner Peter set up a map of Islay and explained the plan of action for the next couple of days.

Day 2

Friday 24th October

The morning dawned grey and overcast with a brisk south-westerly breeze and a promise of rain. As we set off after a fine breakfast a few Barnacle Geese flew over and out onto the nearby salt flats. On the nearby Bridgend Flats we stopped to scan for geese but it soon became clear that as the tide was out, most of the geese were out on the open mudflats. A little further on we stopped to look out over the top end of Loch Indaal but the wind was making it rather choppy and there was little to see except some distant Eiders and some Shags on the offshore rocks.

Pressing on, we drove north along the narrow road to the RSPB reserve at Loch Gruinart passing a small flock of Greenland White-fronted Geese in a field close to the road. In the fields around the reserve headquarters we came across several large flocks of Barnacle Geese and amongst them smaller numbers of Greenland White-fronted Geese together with some Greylag Geese. In the more distant fields we could see even larger flocks of geese and numerous smaller flocks flying to and fro and out onto the nearby Loch Gruinart itself which, as the tide was out, was one huge mudflat. We drove down the bumpy road that runs along the eastern side of the loch and amongst numerous flocks of Barnacle Geese were more Greenland White-fronted Geese, with Shelduck and

a few Eiders in the channel. On the moorland above the road two Hen Harriers quartered the ground, one coming fairly close before flying off over the loch. After spending some time getting close views of the geese we drove on to the RSPB visitor centre which is perched on a low hill, for a better view over the fields at the bottom end of Loch Gruinart.

As is not unusual at this time of year, occasional showers appeared and raced across the island which turned everything in the immediate vicinity into a grey mist or 'dreich' as it's known locally. After one such downpour we ventured out of the visitor centre and were just about to go down to the hides when a rather distant Golden Eagle was found sitting on a post at the far side of the geese fields. Although it looked fairly dark and wet the huge size of the bird and large yellow bill showed up well in the telescope. In between the downpours we walked out to the hides overlooking several lagoons on the edge of the loch. Here we found large numbers of Teal, several Pintail and Wigeon grazing on the grassy islands, and in the background the constant movement of Barnacle Geese to-ing and fro-ing on the saltings in the loch. As we watched, several flocks of Whooper Swans flew in from the north and it was tempting to think that they had just arrived at the end of a long journey from Iceland. On the lagoons were several Curlew, some Snipe and a winter plumage Knot whilst in the fields at the edge of the lagoons several Lapwings stood stoically facing into the wind, and a fine Grey Wagtail foraged in the ditch right by one of the hides.

We drove on towards Loch Gorm and the big area of open peatbog that surrounds it. Along the road a few small flocks of Greenland White-fronted Geese and some Greylag Geese fed in the newly-sown cereal and grass fields. After lunch at the cafe at Kilchoman distillery we set off back to Loch Indaal and along the road to Port Wemyss and Portnahaven. Portnahaven is a small village set on two sides of a narrow inlet sheltered by two rather large offshore islands with a fierce channel racing through in-between. The water in the channel is eternally on the move and almost a raging torrent in places with swirling currents sweeping along with smaller side-streams and eddies. In the inlet below the village a few Common and one or two large Grey Seals were swimming and diving, seemingly unconcerned by our presence close-by. On the rocky beaches of the offshore islands several more were contentedly snoozing.

From the adjacent Port Wemyss, in the wild whipped-up seas beyond the islands a few Gannets were being swept along together with occasional groups of Kittiwakes. On the shingle beach on one of the islands was a single male Eider and a flock of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls together with the dozing seals. On the way back we stopped at the jetty at Bruichladdich to see if there were any Black Guillemots (they nest under the jetty and are rarely far away in winter) but none could be found in the choppy water. Instead a Great Northern Diver and a small flock of Common Scoter were in the sea and allowed a brief view before a huge grey downpour engulfed us once again, forcing a hurried return to the minibus. By the time we arrived back at Bridgend Flats there was little sign of any movement of geese coming into roost, possibly due to the very low tides allowing the birds to stay out on the mudflats.

Day 3

Saturday 25th October

The weather forecast had promised a similar day to yesterday but with some sunny periods in between the scattered showers. After another fine breakfast we set off along the road to Loch Indaal, stopping only to check out the birds at the top end of the loch and, apart from several small flocks of Barnacle Geese on the short

grassy sward, a small flock of Scaup was on the sea. Further on we stopped to look at the geese flocks in the fields below the RSPB visitor centre.

Taking advantage of another and hopefully prolonged break in the weather, we pressed on north along the road which runs close to the western side of the loch, stopping several times to look at flocks of Barnacle and Greenland White-fronted Geese in the fields. As we drove along the road a female Merlin flew up and perched briefly on the wall before dashing off over the open moorland. We took a short detour off the road to the ancient (and roofless) chapel and cemetery at Kilnave which sits on a small rise above the shores of Loch Gruinart. Here we looked out at the vast expanse of open mud and at several flocks of Barnacle Geese together with a few Curlew and Bar-tailed Godwits. At the end of the road we stopped just before the loch to look at two Twite perched on a roadside fence. On the loch itself were 12 Whooper Swans and a large flock of Wigeon. The intention had originally been to walk out across the dunes to Ardnave Point but a darkening sky (which had been following us along the road north) was now about to break over us. We waited in the minibus for the worst of the weather to pass over before venturing out for a look down over the dunes at the entrance to Loch Gruinart. Almost immediately a Chough called the familiar, ringing 'Chiaow' note and after a moment or two a pair came flying past us and landed on top of one of the nearby dunes.

After lunch in the cafe at Ardbeg distillery the rain had cleared away and the sun was attempting to break through in an increasingly blue sky. The Oa is worth visiting for large birds of prey when the weather is favourable and today, though a little windy, was our only opportunity. The road from Port Ellen up to the Oa twists and turns as it passes through several small hill farms before coming out onto a wide rolling, plateau-like area of dry bracken and heather moorland. Arriving in the car park near the headland the weather was still holding fine so we set off along the track to the monument on the tip of the headland. We hadn't gone far when a large flock of about 120 Twite sprang up from the edge of a small weedy field and obligingly perched on the fence showing off their subtle streaky plumage and buff-brown faces. As we watched them a female (or ringtail) Hen Harrier came by causing panic amongst the Twite which instantly scattered before the harrier disappeared over the hillside. As we neared the monument we looked out across the sea and large parts of Northern Ireland stood out well against the low clouds and grey-blue sea and appeared much closer than the thirty or so miles distance between us.

We carried on along the circular path and passing through the fields on the way back to the car park, a pair of Chough were feeding in the field below us, but by now the latest squall had arrived. As the daylight began to fade we returned to Bridgend but stopped briefly in Bowmore for some supplies and to take photos of a fairly obliging female Red-breasted Merganser in the harbour.

Day 4

Sunday 26th October

The weather forecast was promising more wind and rain and the heavy over-night rain was living up to that promise. The strong south-westerly winds meant that there would be a strong swell in the Sound of Islay which increased the possibility of the ferry to Jura being cancelled. With this in mind we opted for an earlier morning ferry and loaded the minibus, said our farewells to the hotel staff, and set off to Port Askaig. Along the way we took our last look at several thousand Barnacle Geese which were feeding in some of the large grassy roadside fields.

The ferry was still on time and the crossing to Jura was short and thankfully uneventful although there was clearly a swell on the rapidly moving water through the Sound. We then drove slowly along the road that hugs the shoreline of the Sound before heading on and up across bracken-covered hillsides and open boggy moorland watched over by the occasional Buzzard and Ravens. We came upon several herds of Red Deer, either groups of females with a lone stag as his harem, or a few stags together which we assumed had been unlucky or at least unsuccessful in the recent rut and had been ousted by younger males.

In late morning we arrived in Craighouse, the only village on Jura, which overlooks the idyllic Small Isles Bay and the outlying islands which gives the bay its name and protects it from the wilder sea in the main Sound beyond. The hotel at Craighouse sits on a slight rise overlooking the entrance to the bay and is famous for, amongst other things, being one of the few places where otters can be seen from your bedroom window. We checked into our rooms and had lunch in the lounge bar that overlooks the hotel garden (complete with huge date palms) and the bay. Afterwards we drove slowly along the edge of the bay and had excellent views of three Great Northern Divers, one of which was in full breeding plumage, several Grey Herons and a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers.

At the top of the bay we stopped to look for Dippers from the fern-clad humpback bridge over a peaty river that runs down from the Paps but the fast-moving water was too high and the rocks all covered. However we did see a fairly close female Red Deer which provided some compensation for the photographers. Moving on we took the other road (there are only two) on Jura that leads to the crofts at Knockrome and Ardfernal before it turns into a bumpy track that leads on to Lowlandman's Bay. At Lowlandman's Bay we parked by one of the cottages that must have one of the best views on the island, looking out over the wild and often white-capped Sound of Jura to the rocky and indented coast of mainland Argyll, with very little sign of any human habitation anywhere. At first the bay appeared rather empty though on closer inspection the shoreline was dotted with various groups of dozing Grey Seals, some in their typical head and tail-up banana shape pose. We walked a little way down towards the shoreline and scanning the near shoreline an Otter was picked out in the shallows right below us. It swam and dived and occasionally spent time eating crabs or small fish, holding them in his front feet whilst munching vigorously before diving down for another. We spent some time watching as the Otter came closer to where we were standing and then, just as suddenly as it had appeared it vanished, presumably up into one of the many small streams that lead into the bay below us.

As it was now mid-afternoon the best of the light was beginning to go so we took a short drive northwards towards the centre of the island where the road carries on into the wilder and more rugged peaty moorland with bracken outcrops that make up most of the island. The large grey scree-sided and largely vegetation-free Paps glowered beneath a cap of misty low cloud. There were few birds, cars or people about on this largely uninhabited island away from Craighouse. We did, however, find several groups of Red Deer including several stags with fine sets of antlers and an attendant harem of females. Just before the last of the light we returned to Craighouse, happy and elated with the day but ever watchful for a Barn or Short-eared Owl that may be out hunting - but to no avail.

Day 5

Monday 27th October

Our first morning on Jura dawned bright and clear though a little cool, and most of the group were up early searching the bay for any signs of Otters. Although there were a couple of seals in the shallows along the shore, the only other wildlife was a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers together with a few Mallards and some Mute

Swans. After breakfast we set out along the road back to Feolin and the Sound of Islay and continued our search for more Otters. We left the minibus by Feolin (the single house by the ferry terminal) and walked along the tops of the low cliffs (actually a raised beach) overlooking the narrow stretch of the Sound, with Islay only a few hundred yards away across the water. One side of the path looks down onto the choppy waters of the Sound whilst the other side has great views up over the vast moorlands sweeping down from the first of the grey and conical Paps.

We had only gone a little way along the track when several Red Deer heads and antlers rose up out of the bracken on the slopes above us and watched us pass by. A little further on we found one and then a pair of Great Northern Divers out on the Sound and amazingly the pair which were swimming along almost parallel to us began calling their eerie wailing call, something that is rarely heard in the UK as it is more usually restricted to displaying birds at the start of the breeding season. On the small pools in front of the picturesquely-situated Inver Lodge (complete with a herd of Red Deer in the garden) was a small flock of Wigeon and in the bushes around the lodge a flock of Redwings were feeding, and slightly later a Sparrowhawk showed briefly over the birch trees. A little further on a flock of Greenland White-fronted Geese flew by, presumably arriving from the north and continued on south towards the mainland.

After lunch back in Craighouse we drove along the edge of Small Isles Bay and re-found one of the Great Northern Divers towards the top of the bay. We carried on through the outlying crofts at Knockrome and Ardfernal towards Lowlandman's Bay. We had hoped to repeat yesterday's success with the Otter but today either it or another showed only distantly and briefly, and apart from a female Merlin which dashed past us and a large flock of Greylag Geese in the fields around the crofts, there was little else on show. With the weather again turning unfavourable, we decided to return when things became more favourable and settled for a short but breezy stroll along the sandy and seaweed-covered beach at the top end of the loch.

Day 6

Tuesday 28th October

As on previous mornings, most of the group were up and about in front of the hotel shortly after dawn hoping for an Otter. As the light improved, one was seen by the jetty which jutted slightly further out into the bay along from the hotel. The Otter showed briefly several times before surfacing almost directly below a couple of the group, then vanishing.

We had another look after breakfast but there was no sign of the Otter so we set off along the edge of Small Isles Bay determined to get better views. We had reached the top end of the village and were seeing little apart from the usual otter-shaped rocks when suddenly one was seen swimming a few yards offshore. We pulled to a halt and slowly climbed out of the minibus and to our amazement the Otter continued to swim and dive, seemingly unperturbed by either us or the cars that passed by along the road. The Otter appeared to be catching and eating crabs or small fish as each time it only took a few crunching mouthfuls to eat the morsel before it dived again. After a fairly lengthy dive it re-surfaced with a huge white fish in its mouth. The fish appeared to be too big to eat easily so the Otter began swimming slowly towards the shore with the large fish in its mouth. Slowly and gradually, though still cautiously, it came closer and then climbed out amongst the seaweed covered rocks on a close-by headland no more than 50 yards from where we were standing.

From here we could see that the fish which the Otter was tucking into was, in fact, a large Orange-spotted Plaice. Whilst keeping a steady eye on us standing by the minibus it took huge bites out of the now lifeless fish. Taking advantage of some roadside cover the photographers crept steadily forward and the Otter, unperturbed, fed steadily for several minutes, much to our evident satisfaction and to those who were passing along the road and stopped to see what we were looking at. Eventually and without warning the Otter appeared to have eaten sufficiently well and, leaving the rest of his meal behind, suddenly dived back into the loch and vanished only to re-appear some way out moments later.

Greatly pleased and exalted by our up-close and personal views of the Otter we re-boarded the minibus and carried on along the side of the loch and then on towards the end of the tarmac road at Ardlussa. Stopping from time to time to look over the bay there was no further sign of any Otters but we did find several Buzzards, Red-breasted Mergansers, a flock of Greylag Geese, a couple of young Common Seals and a Grey Seal hauled out on some rocks, and a couple of Great Northern Divers further out in the bay. At one point a large flock of about 20 Whooper Swans flew high overhead from the northeast and were presumably heading towards the flats on Islay. There was little else to see apart from glorious heather and bracken-clad upland scenery until we arrived at the high point of the road which looks down into the highly photogenic Tarbert Bay.

At first there was little to see, but whilst parking the minibus near the head of the bay, a family group of Otters were seen on rocks at the entrance to the inlet. The group were a presumed adult female and two well-grown cubs which frolicked in the shallows before coming out onto the rocks and then running up onto the grass bank and out of sight. Further on towards Ardlussa we found a close Red Deer herd which posed elegantly for the cameras, and on the way back to Craighouse another female Merlin was seen on a roadside post before dropping down and out of sight.

Day 7

Wednesday 29th October

We had an early start and breakfast before a quick departure to get the Jura ferry across to Port Askaig and then we drove to Port Ellen to catch the ferry back to Kennacraig. The ferry from Kennacraig was only just arriving as we got to Port Ellen. The weather for the crossing was bright and breezy and some of the group stood out on deck hoping for a few seabirds on the crossing. A few Gannets, Guillemots and Kittiwakes appeared close to the ship as we left Islay but there was little else along the way until we approached the entrance to Loch Tarbert when at least one Black Guillemot, several Great Northern Divers and a Black-throated Diver on the sea, and in the loch itself several Red-throated Divers were seen.

Once on-shore the journey back to Glasgow was fairly uneventful, except we had been told that there may be a long delay over the pass at Rest and Be Thankful where there had been a landslide following the torrential rain earlier in the week and traffic was now diverted onto the narrow old road, resulting in lengthy delays. Surprisingly and thankfully when we arrived at the foot of the pass the queue of traffic was fairly short and it only meant a short wait before we could get through. The first Carrion Crows reappeared on cue at the head of Loch Long.

We said farewell to several of the group at Glasgow Airport who were flying back home. By mid-afternoon we were in the traffic on the M8 into Glasgow and heading for the farewell destination at Glasgow Central Station

where we said our final goodbyes and everyone agreed that, despite the weather, it had been a very successful and extremely memorable tour.

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Species List

Birds

- Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*
About 10 in Loch Tarbert on the return ferry crossing on 29th Oct.
- Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*
A single in winter plumage at the entrance to Loch Tarbert on 29th Oct.
- Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*
A single on Loch Indaal from Bruichladdich on the evening of 24th Oct; 2-3 Small Isles Bay, Jura on 26th and 27th, also 3 in the Sound of Islay from Feolin on 27th and about 20 at the entrance to Loch Tarbert on 29th.
- Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
A single on Ardnave Loch on 25th Oct.
- Gannet *Morus bassanus*
At least 6 from Port Wemyss on 24th Oct and a similar number from the monument on the Oa the following day; about 3 in the Sound of Islay on the ferry crossing to Jura on 26th Oct. About 4 between Port Ellen and Kennacraig on 29th.
- Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
Fairly common, small numbers seen daily.
- Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
Very common, seen every day.
- Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
Small numbers seen every day, slightly more numerous on Jura than on Islay.
- Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*
Small numbers on Loch Gruinart and Loch Indaal, Islay and up to 6 Small Isles Bay, Jura.
- Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
About 50 in total from the hides at Loch Gruinart on 24th and a similar number on Gruinart Flats on 25th Oct also about 12 on Ardnave Loch the same day. On Jura, 9 flew high west over Craighouse on 28th and later in the day about 20 flew in from the northeast at Ardlussa.
- Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*
Up to 1,500 on Gruinart Flats daily; 150 in fields around Loch Gorm on 25th Oct. On Jura, 9 flew over Feolin on 27th Oct.
- Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
About 150 in fields between Gruinart Flats and Loch Gorm between 24th and 26th Oct with smaller numbers in fields around Loch Gruinart. On Jura a flock of about 50 in fields near Small Isles Bay on 27th and 28th; also about 100 on Lowlandman's Bay on 27th.
- Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*
Flocks totalling about 28,000 on various parts of Islay between 24th and 27th Oct.
- Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
A small flock of 12 on Loch Gruinart on 24th Oct.
- Wigeon *Anas penelope*
At least 30 on Bridgend Flats on 24th and 25th Oct; at least 50 on Gruinart Flats and Loch Gruinart 25th and 26th also at least 15 feeding along the tideline near Bowmore on 25th.
- Common Teal *Anas crecca*
Up to 300 on Gruinart Flats and lagoons between 24th and 26th Oct, also about 20 feeding along the tideline near Bowmore on 25th.

- Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*
Up to 30 on flooded area around Loch Gruinart on 24th and 25th Oct and up to about 10 on Small Isles Bay, Jura on 27th and 28th.
- Pintail *Anas acuta*
About 15 from the hides at Gruinart Flats on 24th Oct.
- Shoveler *Anas chipeata*
At least two drakes from the hides at Gruinart Flats on 24th Oct.
- Scaup *Aythya marila*
A flock of about 40 at the top of Loch Indaal on 25th Oct.
- Eider *Somateria mollissima*
Small numbers at the top of Loch Indaal on 24th and 25th Oct; on Jura 2 males in Small Isles Bay on 26th and 27th and 3 on 28th; about 12 in the Sound of Islay on 26th and 27th. About 4 at the entrance to Loch Tarbert on 29th.
- Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*
A flock of at least 30 on Loch Indaal on 24th Oct.
- Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*
Common in small numbers and seen daily on Loch Indaal, Islay and Small Isles Bay, Jura.
- Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
2 ring-tail females/immatures in flight over Loch Gruinart and the eastern side of the loch on 24th Oct and another near Loch Gorm on 25th Oct.
- Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
A single female in flight over the RSPB visitor centre at Loch Gruinart on 24th Oct, another at Ardlussa on 28th.
- Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*
Common, seen every day, maximum of 10 on Islay on 26th Oct.
- Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
An immature/subadult sitting on a post at Gruinart Flats on 24th Oct.
- Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
A single at Ardbeg on 25th Oct.
- Merlin *Falco columbarius*
Single female along the track to Ardnave on 25th Oct; another at Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 27th and one at Ardlussa on 28th.
- Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*
Common and widespread, mainly introduced birds on both islands.
- Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*
A covey of 4 at Feolin, Jura on 28th Oct.
- Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
Common on both islands.
- Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
About 50 in fields around Loch Gruinart on 24th and 25th Oct.
- Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
At least 200 in fields around Loch Gruinart on 24th and 25th Oct and about 30 in field along the old road between Port Ellen and Bridgend on 25th.
- Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Up to 4 on lagoons at Gruinart Flats on 24th and 25th Oct. On Jura a single flushed from the roadside near Inver Lodge on 27th.
- Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
About 40 on mudflats on Loch Gruinart on 25th Oct.

- Curlew *Numenius arquatus*
Up to 100 on the lagoons at Bridgend and Gruinart Flats 24th - 26th Oct and up to 3 Small Isles Bay, Jura on 26th - 28th.
- Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*
Up to 25 on the lagoons on Gruinart Flats on 24th and 25th Oct and 2-3 on rocks Small Isles Bay, Jura 28th Oct.
- Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
2 on mudflats in Loch Gruinart on 24th and 25th Oct.
- Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
5 on mudflats in Loch Gruinart on 25th Oct.
- Dunlin *Calidris alpina*
About 10 on lagoons on Gruinart Flats on 24th Oct.
- Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
Small numbers seen daily.
- Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*
At least 10 in Small Isles Bay, Jura on 27th Oct and about 100 on the ferry crossing from Port Ellen to Kennacraig on 29th.
- Common Gull *Larus canus*
Small numbers daily on both islands.
- Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*
Common on Loch Indaal and smaller numbers around Small Isles Bay, Jura.
- Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*
Up to 20 daily on Islay.
- Guillemot *Uria aalge*
At least 20 between Port Ellen and Kennacraig on 29th Oct.
- Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*
At least 1 between Port Ellen and Kennacraig on 29th Oct.
- Razorbill *Alca torda*
3 between Port Ellen and Kennacraig on 29th Oct.
- Rock Dove *Columba livia*
Small numbers in fields on both islands but more numerous on Islay.
- Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*
Small numbers daily on both islands.
- Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Small numbers daily on Islay mainly around Bridgend and on Jura at Craighouse.
- Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*
Small numbers present in fields around Loch Gruinart and along edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura.
- Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*
Small numbers around Loch Indaal and along Sound of Islay, maximum of 6 on 28th Oct.
- Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Pair or family groups at Kilcolman distillery 24th Oct, Loch Gruinart visitor centre on 24th and 25th and on Jura at least one at Craighouse, Jura 27th - 28th.
- Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
Single near Bridgend on 25th Oct and another at Feolin, Jura on 28th.
- Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Small numbers seen or heard daily on both islands.

- Duncock *Prunella modularis*
Up to 4 seen daily on both islands.
- Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*
At least 2 near Inver cottage, Jura on 28th.
- Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*
Fairly common in small numbers, seen daily on both islands.
- Redwing *Turdus iliacus*
Fairly common in small numbers on both islands, max of at least 20 in bushes at Inver Lodge, Jura on 27th and 28th.
- Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Common and widespread, seen daily on both islands.
- Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
Common and widespread on both islands.
- Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*
Small numbers seen daily on both islands.
- Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
Single heard calling in wood at Loch Gruinart on Oct 25th and single in roadside trees on way to Ardlussa, Jura on 28th.
- Great Tit *Parus major*
On bird feeders at Loch Gruinart visitor centre and 1-2 in gardens at Craighouse, Jura on 27-28th Oct.
- Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*
Small numbers seen daily on both islands.
- Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*
Fairly common, small flocks at Port Askaig on 26th Oct, Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 27th, Craighouse and Feolin on 28th.
- Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*
Single in woods at Loch Gruinart reserve on 24th.
- Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
2 in dunes near Ardnave Loch on 25th Oct and 2 later the same day on the Oa.
- Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Common, seen every day.
- Rook *Corvus frugilegus*
Common and widespread up to about 100 daily on Islay.
- Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
Seen mainly up to Loch Long and at Arrochar on Oct 24th and on 29th.
- Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*
Common and widespread, seen daily.
- Raven *Corvus corax*
Common on both islands.
- Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Seen daily (mostly around Loch Gruinart) on Islay and several flocks daily on Jura.
- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Small numbers daily on both islands.
- Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
Common, seen daily.
- Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*
Up to 5 around the visitor centre at Loch Gruinart RSPB reserve on 25th and 26th Oct.

- Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*
Common, seen daily with flocks or small parties on both islands.
- Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*
2 on fence along the road to Ardnave Loch on 25th Oct and a flock of about 120 in field by the track to the monument on the Oa later the same day.
- Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*
About 20 in field near Kilcolman distillery on 24th Oct.
- Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*
4 in bushes along the road to The Oa on 25th Oct and 1 along the edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura on 28th.
- Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*
Fairly common, mainly in bushes around Loch Gorm, Islay 24th and 25th Oct. also 1-2 present around Small Isles Bay, Jura on 27th and 28th.

Mammals.

- Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*
1-2 seen on both islands.
- Brown Hare *Lepus capensis*
Single on Gruinart Flats, Islay on 25th and 26th Oct.
- Otter *Lutra lutra*
Single in Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 26th and 27th Oct. Single male seen well along the edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura on 28th and an adult female with two well-grown cubs at the entrance to Tarbert Bay later the same day.
- Feral Goat
A single near the monument on the Oa on 25th Oct and 2-3 near Craighouse, Jura on 28th and 29th.
- Red Deer *Cervus elaphus*
Common and widespread on Jura.
- Roe Deer *Capreolus capreolus*
Up to 3 Bridgend Flats on 25th and 26th Oct. Also single by the road to the Oa on 29th.
- Common Seal *Phoca vitulina*
Small numbers at Portnahaven on 24th Oct. Several in Small Isles Bay, Jura on 27th-28th.
- Grey Seal *Halicoerus grypus*
Small numbers at Portnahaven on 24th Oct. Several on rocks in Small Isles Bay, Jura on 27th-28th.