

# Islay & Jura

## Naturetrek Tour Report

13 - 19 June 2014

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Lesser Butterfly Orchid by Tim & Sue Parmenter



Male Hen Harrier by Brian Luckhurst



Marsh Fritillary by Geoff Madle



Otter by Brian Luckhurst

Report compiled by Peter Clements

Images courtesy of Tim & Sue Parmenter, Brian Luckhurst and Geoff Madle



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Tour Leaders:	Peter Clement Malcolm Ogilvie
Participants:	Phil Grimsey Jan Grimsey Brian Luckhurst Christine Luckhurst Sue Haimes Fran Madle Geoff Madle Patricia Johnson Andy Greller Sue Parmenter Tim Parmenter Julian Taylor Alison Taylor

## Day 1

Friday 13th June

The tour began with the group meeting at the pick-up points at Glasgow Central Station at 1.30 and shortly afterwards at Glasgow Airport, and once the luggage had been loaded, we set off on the drive to Kennacraig and the ferry to Islay. We stopped for a comfort break about half way at the picturesque village of Inveraray on the shores of Loch Fyne, a long sea loch which stretches some way inland and, as if to emphasise this, whilst we were standing on the old quay a Black Guillemot swam by a little way offshore. The journey to Kennacraig took us through some ever-changing scenery and views of the hills and loch were punctuated only by the occasional Buzzard along the way.

Arriving at the ferry terminal at Kennacraig there was time for a look at the birds at the top end of the loch. In addition to several Gannets feeding offshore there was a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers and several Black Guillemots in the water around the jetty. The ferry arrived slightly behind schedule but the unloading and loading was completed in very quick time and we were soon under way. The crossing was extremely calm with no wind and, almost unknown in these parts, a glass-like surface of the sea. A few of the group ventured out onto the foredeck from time to time and there was plenty to look at with occasional pairs or small flocks of Guillemots, about 6 Great Northern Divers which spend the summer here, several Arctic Terns and a few Manx Shearwaters whizzed by, in addition there were one or two Razorbills and as we neared the small island of Gigha a solitary Puffin sat on the water.

Once on Islay it was a short but pleasant drive in the evening light along the road to the hotel at Bridgend. As always there was a warm welcome at the hotel and once we had checked into our rooms there was a meal waiting in the large restaurant downstairs. Between courses Peter set up a map of the island and explained the plan of action and places that we'd be visiting in the coming days and with a promise of fine weather all seemed to be set fair. Peter also explained that we would be meeting up with the co-leader (and Islay resident) Malcolm Ogilvie the following evening and Malcolm would be outlining some of the plants and flowers of interest that we should see during our time here.

## Day 2

## Saturday 14th June

The day started brightly but with overcast sky and a little breeze - but it wasn't raining, though the forecast seemed a little uncertain about the possibility of some sea-mist. We headed off in the minibus along the road by the top end of Loch Indaal to the RSPB reserve at Loch Gruinart. The large expanse of sedge and boggy grassland and meadows surrounding the southern edge of the loch are known as Gruinart Flats and hold a number of interesting birds. We made a couple of stops along the narrow road which at first seemed rather lifeless except for a Sedge Warbler which greeted us with a burst of song from the top of a nearby bush. A Snipe landed on a fence-post and this was followed by first one then a pair of Hen Harriers which got up and flew round out over the boggy area. Nearer to us we admired the profusion of seemingly countless Spotted Orchids that were growing along the roadside.

In the fields along the road to the visitor centre there was little on show except for several broods of Lapwings and a few Curlew. We took a short walk down to the hide that overlooks some flooded pools on the edge of the loch. Here we found a couple of Shoveler, some Teal, Grey Lag Geese and Redshanks with young, one of the adult Redshanks seemed extremely alarmed at our presence perching both on the hide and on a post immediately in front whilst continually giving a strident 'chip chip chip' alarm call. Under the eaves of the hide and literally inches in front of us Swallows were busy bringing in nesting material. In the field to one side of the hide a corncrake began its distinctive (and repetitive) rasping refrain from somewhere deep within cover and although we scoured the field from the few viewpoints available it refused to show itself.

After visiting the nearby RSPB visitor centre we drove along the narrow and frequently rutted track up to Ardnave Loch. The weather by now, despite occasional bright spells, still seemed a little undecided as mist-banks rolled in and across us from time to time giving tantalising glimpses of the loch and its surrounding landscape before vanishing again. Along the road we noticed several large Brown Hares in the fields and just before we reached the loch a pair of Twite perched on a roadside fence. The loch itself was rather birdless except for a small group of Tufted Ducks and a family party of Mute Swans. We parked the minibus and set off on the track across the dunes and hadn't gone very far when a pair of Chough flew overhead and away over the dunes. We carried on along the track seeing a family group of Wheatears and first one then two Corncrakes started calling from distant iris beds and nettle-clumps. A little further on a family group of 6 Choughs were feeding in the grass close to the track and showed well through the telescopes. We had intended to follow the track all the way out to the end of the headland but the mist seemed to be getting ever thicker so we decided that there would be little point in doing so with limited visibility and decided in favour of a visit to the cafe at Kilcolman distillery for lunch.

On the way we drove across open moorland towards Loch Gorm and came upon a ringtail Hen Harrier out hunting over the vast peatland and above the car park at the cafe a large flock of Rock Doves were gathered on a low rock face. After lunch we headed off back to Loch Indaal and then along the road to Portnahaven. The road hugs the coastline for most of the way only detouring inland to pass particularly high craggy areas. At one point along the road we rounded a bend and came upon a small loch fairly close to the road near the small village of Easter Ellister. In addition to a large gathering of Grey Lag Geese (and goslings) on the loch were two odd-looking ducks which on closer inspection were a male Velvet Scoter and a female Common Scoter and apparently, from their behaviour of sticking close together, an extremely odd pairing and in a very unlikely

location. Although a few pairs of Common Scoter breed on Islay (though we failed to find any this year) the closest that Velvet Scoters breed is in central Scandinavia.

At Portnahaven we stopped in the centre of the very pleasant village where the small terraced houses run down almost to the sea atop a steep sided inlet where several Grey and Common Seals were playing in the shallow water. From a stop in the almost adjacent Port Wemyss we found more seals on the rocks of two offshore islands and several Arctic Terns passing to and fro in front of us en route to their breeding colony on one of the islands. Beyond the islands numerous Gannets were passing or diving into the surging swell of the open North Atlantic. Having spent some time looking at the seals either basking or playing in the fast moving current we carried on round the headland and although there was little new to be seen in the way of birdlife there was a fine photo opportunity of dramatic sea-scape with islands in a clearing sky and a little sunshine peering through.

## Day 3

## Sunday 15th June

In complete contrast to yesterday the morning dawned bright and sunny with acres of blue sky all around. We boarded the minibus after breakfast and headed off to meet up with Malcolm at Killinallan on the east side of Loch Gruinart, stopping only to listen for Corncrakes at the start of the reserve but hearing only the same Sedge Warbler as yesterday. We met up with Malcolm at the locked gate just before Killinallan, effectively the end of the tarmac road before the track leads off into the dunes. From here we set off botanising on foot with Malcolm pointing out such local delights as Heath Spotted, Northern Marsh, Pyramidal and Frog Orchids together with Common Twayblade, Creeping Bellflower, Marsh Cinquefoil, Slender St. John's-wort and Marsh Lousewort. We walked along the edge of the low grass-covered dunes and onto the shore of the loch and as the tide was out there large expanses of open mud. Out on the sandbanks were a gathering of about 100 Grey Seals singing to each other, some moulting and sleeping Eiders, a small flock of summer plumage Dunlin (probably local breeding birds) and a few Ringed Plovers were feeding along the foreshore. An Arctic Skua put in a very brief appearance doubtless attracted by the Arctic Terns patrolling the rapidly ebbing waters of the loch.

On our way back to the minibus we crossed back to the main track and came out close to the remains of the village of Killinallan which is mainly a large but long-abandoned farmhouse and several smaller buildings all effectively now taken over by Jackdaws to judge from the number on the roof of the buildings. By now the weather was turning positively tropical and a glorious summer's day was developing – a real Islay rarity. Over on the large expanse of heather moorland on the inland side of the track a group of three Red Deer were feeding in the shimmering landscape and as we stopped to watch them a pair of Golden Eagles were also soaring up over and along distant hillside ridge. On the way to our lunch stop in Port Charlotte we made a short stop to admire a small colony of Greater Butterfly Orchids right by the roadside.

After lunch we drove back to Bridgend and on to the historical site of Finlaggan, seat of the meeting place of the ancient chiefs of the Hebridean islands, which lies at one end of Finlaggan Loch. Here there is a visitor centre and a short walk around the ruins of the site with boards explaining the history of each part. There were few birds on the loch itself and main interest (apart from the history of the site) was centred on a Four-spotted Chaser dragonfly which hawked around or from the boardwalk. A mixed group of Swallows and House Martins busily hunted emerging insects around the trees at the farm buildings at the top of the track and near the entrance a lone Whinchat perched briefly on a gorse bush.

We finished off the day driving a little further east along the main road and then north along a side road which runs parallel to (and overlooks) the Sound of Islay and out to the vast expanse of Jura beyond. The Bunnahabhainn distillery lies at the far end of the road and we parked in a small car park overlooking the Sound right next to the distillery. The plan was to spend a little time here watching for Otters or Sea Eagles or anything else that was passing and although it was a bright and sunny afternoon there was little to be seen close at hand apart from the occasional Gannet cruising through the Sound and one or two Black Guillemots off the nearby jetty.

## Day 4

## Monday 16th June

As another day dawned calm and sunny and seemed to be set to stay that way we headed off to the southwest of the island to explore the Oa (pronounced Oh and so-called because of the shape of the peninsula); in particular the higher ground areas around the southerly tip, most of which is an RSPB reserve. As we were driving up to the headland Malcolm spotted a group of Lesser Butterfly Orchids which merited a quick stop and whilst we were there admiring and taking photos of these a Golden Eagle appeared briefly over one of the nearby ridges but vanished moments later back behind the hill. We parked the minibus in the car park and set off down the track and across the boggy moorland towards the American monument to two wrecked troop ships that stands like a lighthouse on the furthest peak of the headland.

The weather was still gloriously fine and sunny and Northern Ireland (which seemed almost close enough to touch and much less than the 30 miles distant) stood out well across the glistening Irish Sea, though as always there was a goodly breeze blowing by the time we arrived at the monument. A couple of Buzzards, some Hooded Crows and a couple of Stonechats kept us company along the way as did seemingly countless numbers of Marsh Fritillaries, normally a butterfly to be searched for but this year they seemed to be everywhere. As we neared the monument a Round-leaved Sundew was found in a boggy hollow right by the path and a small group of the long-haired feral goats were feeding on one of the lower headlands. The view from the monument was truly panoramic with views west to Northern Ireland, north to the Port Wemyss and Portnahaven headland, south to the tip of the Mull of Kintyre and east along the peaks and moorland of the Oa.

We continued on our walk around the headland and as we came to the deep and dramatic bay that is Port nan Gallan we stopped to admire firstly the scenery and look for seals in the bay. As we did so a fairly distant (at first) Golden Eagle soared up over the far hillside rising up above the cliffs showing the dark brown plumage with a paler or golden-brown nape and its impressive wingspan. As we sat and watched it gradually came closer and after putting on a masterful aerial display disappeared behind the large cliff face that marks the far side of the deep bay. On the side of the face that we could the cliff was dotted with pairs of breeding Fulmars that occasionally took off and soared gracefully around presumably safe in the knowledge that the eagle's territory was on the other side of the cliff. As we neared the most southerly house on the island a Sparrowhawk flew by and it or possibly another was later seen from the minibus together with a pair of Whinchats as we drove back across the moorland and down to Port Ellen.

We drove on through to the cafe in Ardbeg distillery after dropping some of the group at the Laphroaig distillery. We were lucky enough to be able to take lunch outside under clear blue skies and whilst we were lunching first one, then a pair of Golden Eagles appeared almost overhead in a gliding display, they soared around several times occasionally keeping company with a Buzzard which they completely dwarfed.

As we were about to leave a Peregrine also dashed overhead completing the parade of raptors, if only this could happen to order on all lunch stops. After lunch we collected the group together and carried on along the road east to Claggain Bay which passes by some secluded bays and through some fine mossy birch and rhododendron woods. We made a brief stop in one of the bays where Otters have been seen recently but could only find a small colony of breeding Common Gulls and one or two Willow Warblers in the bushes. At the end of the road we stopped at the abandoned churchyard at Kildalton and admired the Celtic Cross which sits in the church-yard as it has done for several hundred years as the mosses and lichens which cover it testify. As we did so a pair of Golden Eagles appeared, first singly then together, and finally in an extremely impressive and highly entertaining talon-grappling display just a few hundred yards distant.

We headed back to the hotel but the day's birding was not finished yet on our way across the old road to Bowmore yet another Golden Eagle appeared circling over one of the roadside fields before disappearing back to the high moorland beyond. In all we had seen six sightings of the eagles today, almost a record in itself...and a little further on a more distant shape on a hilltop could have been yet another had we been close enough to definitive views. Back at the hotel we said goodbye to Malcolm and thanked him for all his help in showing us the plants and flowers and for regaling us with tales of the island's history, local politics and what the future may hold for the islands and bade him a fond farewell.

After dinner some of the group took advantage of another calm and warm evening and set off in search of Corncrakes. Our route was the road that runs along the south side of Loch Gorm to Machir Bay and by driving slowly and stopping frequently we hoped to cover as much of the area as possible before it got too dark. The technique of driving and stopping worked fine but nothing was heard until we reached the car park at Machir Bay and the light was fading fast when a Corncrake began calling from a close-by patch of reeds. We waited in the hope that it might show but regrettably the singer remained elusive in what seemed very little depth of cover.

## Day 5

## Tuesday 17th June

After breakfast we set off to Port Askaig in good time to catch the ferry over to Jura. Whilst we were waiting for the ferry glancing out across the fast moving water in the Sound of Islay a pod of four Bottle-nose Dolphins swept south through the far side of the Sound. Once on the ferry the short crossing allowed us time to catch sight of several Black Guillemots and a couple of Kittiwakes. Once on Jura we drove slowly along road that for part of the way runs alongside the shore of the Sound in hope of finding an Otter but apart from a couple of inquisitive Seals who watched us from some way out there was little to be seen. After leaving the shore the road climbs up higher over rough moorland along the eastern side of the island on the way to the main village of Craighouse. Along the road we stopped to look at a Buzzard or two and family party of Stonechats.

The village of Craighouse overlooks the very attractive Small Isles Bay, well-named for the group of small rocky islands that mark the outer edge of the bay and protect it from the deeper (and usually much rougher) waters between Jura and the mainland. Passing through Craighouse the road then runs along beside the loch for several miles allowing excellent views out over the loch. We had barely reached the end of the village when an Otter appeared a matter of yards offshore. We scrambled out of the minibus and the Otter seemed not the least perturbed by our presence and continued to dive and surface as we watched enthralled from the edge of the road.

After several minutes the Otter began swimming more purposefully along the edge of the loch and we climbed back into the minibus and followed on keeping a close eye on the Otter's progress. After several more minutes we lost the Otter behind a low rocky headland but drove on a little further to where we thought the Otter may re-appear. Whilst we waited Peter scanned the rocky shore a little further on and noticed two small Otters playing on and around some rocks a little way offshore. These were soon joined by the first Otter we had been watching and it was clear that this was an adult female and two fairly well-grown young. Through the scopes we had excellent views as they swam in the kelp or clambered amongst and onto the low rocks. Amazingly and almost inexplicably at one stage the family trio were joined by another young Otter of similar size and age to the first two and was presumed to be a third cub a truly unusual occurrence as Otters normally only have two young. As we watched the family group a small crowd of interested onlookers also gathered around us eager to know what we were looking at and we were happy to let them see the Otters through the telescopes.

After a while the Otters (as they do) disappeared from view as the tide was clearly dropping quickly. We drove north along the road stopping occasionally to look out across the loch and at the top of the loch a fine summer plumage Great Northern Diver showed well. Further on we climbed higher up the island getting good views of the towering grey slate and scree-clad Paps of Jura in all their glory against the clear blue sky. The famed Red Deer herds of the island were strangely absent until we reached the small village (actually three houses) of Luss where we came upon a sizeable herd grazing close to the road. This was a perfect opportunity for photos and the deer posed magnificently until we were joined by other car-loads and then they retreated onto the moorland beyond. As we were gathered by the side of the road a superb Golden-winged Dragonfly flew round and at one stage landed on the front of the minibus allowing some fine close-up photos. We were just about to climb back aboard the minibus when an Osprey flew overhead and away over the nearby ridge but came back into view very briefly as it circled higher over the hilly moorland.

After a slightly delayed late lunch back in the pub lounge at Craighouse we set off back along the road along the edge of the bay in the hope of catching further sightings of any Otters that might be about. We stopped at the small humpback bridge over the dark peaty Corran River that tumbles its way down from the Paps and into Small Isles Bay for a spot of botanising as the walls of the bridge have a fine collection of ferns and lichens. The river is also a location for Dippers though none were present today and the only bird of note was a lone Lesser Redpoll which flew by, the only one of the entire tour.

Moving on we took the second road on Jura through to the small village of Ardfernal and then along the bumpy and largely unmade track across open moorland and down to Lowlandman's Bay. The bay itself is a miniature version of Small Isles Bay being almost entirely surrounded by a long and increasingly narrow peninsula on the far side which ends in a low rocky headland. We parked by a low cottage with a walled garden that must have one of the best views anywhere looking out as it does over the bay into the Sound of Jura and the Knapdale Peninsula of the mainland. As we were setting up the telescopes for a scan of the bay the cottage owner came out and told us that he had just been watching a pair of Sea Eagles and there was an Otter in the bay. Scanning the low rocky headland on the far side of the bay we picked up an eagle sitting on the top and through the scopes the huge size was clear and a small part of the white tail could be seen. As we watched a second eagle flew out across the entrance to the bay showing off the huge wingspan, dark plumage and all-white tail and was about to join the first bird sitting on the rocky headland when they flew up together and disappeared behind the headland.

We failed to find any sign of the Otter amongst the large numbers of slumbering Grey Seals at the shallow end of the bay but by now we were running out of time to get back for the return ferry. We made it back to Feolin in good time only to see the ferry departing across the Sound as we rounded the headland but luckily they made a return journey and we were back at the hotel in good time for dinner and to reflect on what a splendid day it had been.

## Day 6

Wednesday 18th June

Our last full day on Islay dawned bright but somewhat overcast and misty, though no rain was scheduled (in contrast to the rest of country was doused in continual rain according to the national weather forecast). As we had been fortunate to find all of the main birds, plants and animals that we had come to see today was a good opportunity to re-visit some of the places from earlier on the tour. Several of the group opted for a spot or botanising or a walk to the dunes at Killinallan whilst others opted for a return to Ardnave Headland. First stop, however, was down to Bowmore to get some lunch items and other essentials including something from the islands finest distilleries.

On the way to Killinallan we drove along the road to Gruinart Flats and although the mist was still rising and falling managed to see a ringtail Hen Harrier out over the boggy area. A little further along the road that runs alongside Loch Gruinart a single Twite sat on the roadside fence and just beyond an old crofter's house a Whinchat sat atop some thistle heads. From here part of the group walked along the track and then across to the edge of the loch and onto the dunes and the wide open expanses of the sandy beach beyond. Over on the western side of the loch the mist showed signs of lifting with occasional bright or clear patches breaking through. Setting off from the car park by the loch we walked out along the track serenaded again by a Corncrake calling from a clump of irises just beyond a low fence but even by creeping close to it remained unseen in its dense cover. As on our previous visit we were accompanied by several parties of Choughs and it was difficult to work out if we were being followed by the same group or whether there were several successive noisy family parties involved.

As we walked across towards the headland the mist had changed its mind once again and swept in low and it was often impossible to see the other side of the loch. We pressed on and to our relief by the time we reached the headland it had lifted a little and there was the promise of blue sky showing through the murk. This was just as well without good visibility we wouldn't have been able to see the summer plumage Great Northern Diver in the channel between us and Nave Island. On the island itself were loads of loafing Greylag Geese and amazingly a pair of Great Skuas which flew round and landed on one of the grassy knolls on the island. These birds used to nest on the moorland on Jura but haven't been recorded there for a number of years so it was a pleasant surprise to be able to report this back to the local recorder on the island.

As we sat and ate our lunch on the headland with a noisy Oystercatcher for company, a Little Tern (another island scarcity) flew by and a little further out several Arctic Terns were fishing in the channel. By now the promised improvement in the weather was looking extremely unlikely as the patches of blue sky had completely vanished and had been replaced by a more general dark grey and light 'Scotch' mist was falling. On our way back to the car park we stopped to admire a family party of Wheatears some of which were only days out of the nest and at one stage a Corncrake was seen very briefly out in the open before dashing into cover.



Driving back we collected the rest of the group from Killinallan in mid-afternoon and were back at the hotel in good time for a spot of early packing and dinner and a reflection of the tour where it was unanimously agreed that we had been extremely fortunate with the weather and it had been a very successful and extremely memorable tour.

## Day 7

## Thursday 19th June

Going home day and the weather was clearly turning again with grey skies and cooler temperatures: the omen was not good. A pre-breakfast walk for the early risers into the adjacent part of Bridgend Woods was rewarded with views of a Treecreeper and a family party of Long-tailed Tits but despite previous sightings on earlier tours there was no Dipper to be seen.

After a by-now traditional fine and hearty breakfast in the hotel we bade farewell to Lorna and the hotel staff who had looked after us so well and boarded the minibus and set off along the road to Port Ellen and the ferry terminal. The occasional Gannet was seen on the crossing and as we neared Kennacraig there were a couple of Black Guillemots together with a few Guillemots, Eiders and one or two Arctic Terns at the entrance to Loch Tarbert.

The journey back to Glasgow was fairly uneventful but in good weather with the sun picking out the mountains and lochs along the way to perfection. The first Carrion Crows reappeared on cue at Loch Lomond which looked rather choppy in the strong breeze. We said farewell to Brian, Christine, Phil and Jan at Glasgow airport. By mid-afternoon we were in the traffic on the M8 heading in to Glasgow and then back at Glasgow Central Station where we said our final goodbyes...

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## Species List

### Birds

#### Mute Swan

*Cygnus olor*

Seen every day: up to 4 on fields around by Loch Gruinart, Islay and about 6 in Small Isles Bay, Jura.

#### Greylag Goose

*Anser anser*

Up to 50 in small flocks around Loch Gruinart and Loch Gorm and pairs with young at Killinallan and about 200 on Ardnave Island on 18th.

#### Shelduck

*Tadorna tadorna*

Up to 6 daily on a sandbar by Bridgend Flats with a max of about 20 there on 18th.

#### Mallard

*Anas platyrhynchos*

Up to 20 around Loch Gruinart and about 5 on Small Isles Bay, Jura.

#### Shoveler

*Anas chipeata*

Two pairs from the hide by Loch Gruinart on 14th.

#### Common Teal

*Anas crecca*

At least 10 on flooded area from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 14th.

#### Tufted Duck

*Aythya fuligula*

4 on Ardnave Loch on 14th and 18th and 2 on Loch Finlaggan on 15th.

#### Red-br. Merganser

Two together, probably a pair, by the jetty at Kennacraig on 13th.

#### Eider

*Somateria mollissima*

A small flock of about 6 at the entrance to Loch Tarbert on the way out and about 12 there on the return journey; on Islay about 15 on rocks at the top of Loch Indaal on the morning of 14th, a single female also on 14th at Portnahaven, a female with a single duckling on Loch Gruinart on 15th and up to 10 on Loch Gruinart on 16 and 18th.

#### Common Scoter

*Melanitta nigra*

A single female, which appeared to be paired with a male Velvet Scoter, on a small roadside loch at Easter Ellister on 14th.

#### Velvet Scoter

*Melanitta fusca*

A male, which appeared to be paired with a female Common Scoter, on a small roadside loch at Easter Ellister on 14th.

#### Red-throated Diver

*Gavia stellata*

A single in flight across Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 17th.

#### Great Northern Diver

*Gavia immer*

About 6 from the ferry on outward journey from Kennacraig to Port Ellen on 13th; at least one on Small Isles Bay, Jura on 17th and one from Ardnave Headland on 18th.

#### Fulmar

*Fulmarus glacialis*

About 20 pairs nesting on the cliffs and stacks at the Oa on 16th.

#### Manx Shearwater

*Puffinus puffinus*

At least 50 from the ferry on outward journey from Kennacraig to Port Ellen on 13th and 4 on the return journey on 19th.

#### Grey Heron

*Ardea cinerea*

About 3 from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 14th; at least 3 feeding at low tide along the shore of Loch Gruinart from Killinallan on 15th and at least 3 around Small Isles Bay, Jura on 17th.

#### Gannet

*Morus bassanus*

Several from the ferry on outward journey from Kennacraig to Port Ellen on 13th; at least 30 offshore from Portnahaven on 14th and several large fishing flocks seen offshore from the Oa on 16th and about 15 on the

return ferry journey to Kennacraig on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax carbo*

At least one in Small Isles Bay, Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Shag**

*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Very common, seen every day.

**Osprey**

*Pandion haliaetus*

A single in flight overhead and then more distantly circling high at Luss, Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Hen Harrier**

*Circus cyaneus*

A pair over Gruinart Flats on the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> and a female or immature male (ringtail) at Ardnave later and a pair over the peaty area around Loch Gorm later in the morning and finally a male near Portnahaven later that day. On the 15<sup>th</sup> a male over the moorland near Killinallan and another over Gruinart Flats and a female along the road to Ardnave on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Sparrowhawk**

*Accipiter nisus*

A single in flight at the Oa on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Buzzard**

*Buteo buteo*

Common, small numbers seen every day.

**Peregrine**

*Falco peregrinus*

A single over the cafe and garden at Ardbeg on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**White-tailed Sea Eagle**

*Haliaeetus albicilla*

A pair together on rocks at Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden Eagle**

*Aquila chrysaetos*

A pair seen distantly over hills inland from Killinallan on 15<sup>th</sup>, a single seen well soaring over the cliffs and then landing (out of sight) on the Oa on 16<sup>th</sup>, a pair over the cafe at Ardbeg later that morning and a pair in display flight at Kildalton in the afternoon rounded off with a single over fields along the old road from Port Ellen to Bridgend.

**Moorhen**

*Gallinula chloropus*

1-2 from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Corncrake**

*Crex crex*

A single heard calling near the hide at Loch Gruinart on the 14<sup>th</sup> followed by 4 more heard calling on Ardnave Headland later in the morning; a single calling at dusk Machir Bay on 16<sup>th</sup> and 2 heard calling (one also seen briefly in flight) on Ardnave Headland on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Pheasant**

*Phasianus colchicus*

Widespread in small numbers, mainly introduced birds on both islands.

**Oystercatcher**

*Haematopus ostralegus*

Common on both islands.

**Lapwing**

*Vanellus vanellus*

Many pairs on the fields around Loch Gruinart, Loch Gorm and Ardnave Headland and smaller numbers at Killinallan.

**Ringed Plover**

*Charadrius hiaticula*

A pair along the top end of Loch Indaal on the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> and 2 along the edge of Loch Gruinart at Killinallan on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Snipe**

*Gallinago gallinago*

1-2 sitting on posts or in flight and calling on Gruinart Flats or from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Curlew**

*Numenius arquatus*

Fairly common in small numbers around Bridgend and Gruinart Flats and Loch Gruinart and 2-3 in a field on Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Redshank***Tringa totanus*

About 20 from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 14<sup>th</sup> and 1-2 seen daily along the edge of Loch Indaal; on Jura 1-2 along the edge of Small Isles Bay on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Sandpiper***Actitis hypoleucos*

Singles at Loch Gruinart on 14<sup>th</sup> and Finlaggan on 15<sup>th</sup>, 2 at Bunnahabhain also on 15<sup>th</sup> and another single Small Isles Bay, Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin***Calidris alpina*

A flock of 15 in summer plumage along the edge of Loch Gruinart from Killinallan dunes on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Kittiwake***Rissa tridactyla*

1-2 from inter-island ferry in Sound of Islay on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-headed Gull***Larus ridibundus*

Small numbers seen daily.

**Common Gull***Larus canus*

Small numbers daily on both islands; an adult with three well-grown (but still flightless) chicks on the beach at the top end of Loch Indaal on the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Black-backed Gull***Larus marinus*

Up to 20 daily on Islay.

**Herring Gull***Larus argentatus*

Common on Loch Indaal and Loch Gruinart, smaller numbers around Small Isles Bay, Jura.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull***Larus fuscus*

Small numbers present on Islay, mostly on Loch Gruinart.

**Little Tern***Sternula albifrons*

A single in flight at Ardnave Headland on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Tern***Sterna hirundo*

A single on rocks in a small bay along the road to Kildalton on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Arctic Tern***Sterna paradisaea*

At least 15-20 from the Kennacraig-Port Ellen ferry on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1-2 along the top edge of Loch Indaal on the 14<sup>th</sup>, at least 6 on the offshore islands at Portnahaven and about 5 on the offshore islands along the outer edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>; also 2-3 Ardnave Headland on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Skua***Stercorarius skua*

Two, probably a pair, in flight and landing on Nave Island on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Arctic Skua***Stercorarius parasiticus*

A single in flight briefly over Loch Gruinart from Killinallan dunes on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Guillemot***Uria aalge*

At least 100 seen from ferry between Kennacraig and Port Ellen on 13<sup>th</sup> and about 30 on the return journey on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Razorbill***Alca torda*

At least 3 seen from ferry between Kennacraig and Port Ellen on 13<sup>th</sup> and a similar number on the return journey on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Atlantic Puffin***Fratercula arctica*

A single from ferry between Kennacraig and Port Ellen on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Guillemot***Cepphus grille*

2-3 around the jetty at Kennacraig on 13<sup>th</sup>, and about 10 from the ferry to Port Ellen later that evening; 3 in the Sound of Islay from Bunnahabhain on 15<sup>th</sup>, at least one from the ferry to Jura on 17<sup>th</sup> and 2 on the return ferry to Kennacraig on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Rock Dove***Columba livia*

Several large flocks in the fields around Kilcolman distillery, Loch Gorm, Ardnave Headland and on the Oa.

<b>Wood Pigeon</b>	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Small numbers present on both islands.	
<b>Collared Dove</b>	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Pair at Bridgend, Islay and at least one pair at Craighouse, Jura.	
<b>Common Cuckoo</b>	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Single calling on Gruinart Flats on 14 <sup>th</sup> and singles seen at Kildalton on 16 <sup>th</sup> and above Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 17 <sup>th</sup> .	
<b>Jackdaw</b>	<i>Corvus monedula</i>
Common and numerous, seen every day.	
<b>Rook</b>	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Common and widespread, several hundred present on Islay.	
<b>Hooded Crow</b>	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
Common and widespread, seen daily.	
<b>Carrion Crow</b>	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Only seen between Glasgow and around Loch Lomond on the outward and return journeys.	
<b>Raven</b>	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Common, small numbers seen on both islands.	
<b>Chough</b>	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
At least 6 (one or family parties) on Ardnave Headland on 14 <sup>th</sup> and at least 20 there on 18 <sup>th</sup> also 2 at the far end of Killinallan dunes on 15 <sup>th</sup> .	
<b>Great Tit</b>	<i>Parus major</i>
Small numbers in Bridgend Woods and at Loch Gruinart and also seen around Craighouse, Jura.	
<b>Coal Tit</b>	<i>Periparus ater</i>
At least 1 on Jura on 17 <sup>th</sup> .	
<b>Long-tailed Tit</b>	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
A flock in Bridgend Woods on 16 <sup>th</sup> .	
<b>Northern Treecreeper</b>	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
At least 1 in Bridgend Woods on 16 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> .	
<b>Skylark</b>	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Fairly common in fields around Loch Gruinart, Loch Gorm and on Ardnave Headland.	
<b>Sand Martin</b>	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
About 30-40 in the dunes at Ardnave Headland on 14 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> and 1-2 at Finlaggan on 15 <sup>th</sup> .	
<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Fairly common, pairs around the hotel at Bridgend, Loch Gruinart visitor centre and hide, Ardnave Loch and on the Oa.	
<b>House Martin</b>	<i>Delichon urbica</i>
Small numbers present around the hotel at Bridgend and on Jura and about 20 feeding around Finlaggan Farm on 15 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>Willow Warbler</b>	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>
Fairly common, breeding birds on Jura, Bridgend Woods, Kildalton and along the woodland path to the hide at Loch Gruinart on 14 <sup>th</sup> .	
<b>Common Whitethroat</b>	<i>Sylvia communis</i>
Several singing on Jura on 17 <sup>th</sup> and 1-2 present at Ardnave, Bridgend Woods and at Ardbeg and around Loch Gruinart.	
<b>Blackcap</b>	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>
Fairly common and heard singing from several locations.	

**Sedge Warbler***Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Single singing on the edge of Gruinart Flats and 2-3 from the hide at Loch Gruinart were either singing or feeding young.

**Wren***Troglodytes troglodytes*

Small numbers seen or heard daily on both islands.

**Goldcrest***Regulus regulus*

A single in the garden of the Bridgend hotel on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Starling***Sturnus vulgaris*

Seen daily, mostly in large family groups around Loch Gruinart and Loch Gorm.

**Blackbird***Turdus merula*

Common on both islands.

**Song Thrush***Turdus philomelos*

Common on both islands.

**Mistle Thrush***Turdus viscivorus*

Pairs or family groups at Bridgend, Loch Gruinart, Loch Gorm, the Oa and on Jura.

**Robin***Erithacus rubecula*

Several seen or heard in Bridgend Woods and in garden of Bridgend Hotel.

**Whinchat***Saxicola rubetra*

A male at Finlaggan on 15<sup>th</sup>, pair on moorland on the Oa on the 16<sup>th</sup> and two pairs on Jura on 17<sup>th</sup> and a male by the road to Killinallan on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Stonechat***Saxicola torquatus*

Up to 4 seen most days on both islands.

**Northern Wheatear***Oenanthe oenanthe*

Pairs with young at Ardnave Headland on 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Killinallan and Finlaggan on 15<sup>th</sup>, and Lowlandman's Bay, Jura 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Flycatcher***Muscicapa striata*

Single opposite the hotel at Bridgend on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

Small numbers daily on both islands.

**Dunnock***Prunella modularis*

Only seen around Loch Gruinart visitor centre on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Pied Wagtail***Motacilla alba*

Common, seen daily.

**Grey Wagtail***Motacilla cinerea*

At least 1 pair along the river at Bridgend and seen close to the hotel on 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Rock Pipit***Anthus petrosus*

Small numbers on the beach at the top of Loch Indaal, Portnahaven and Port Wemyss and along the edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura.

**Meadow Pipit***Anthus pratensis*

Small numbers present daily, mostly in fields around Loch Gruinart and on Jura.

**Chaffinch***Fringilla coelebs*

Common, seen daily.

**Siskin***Carduelis spinus*

2 seen briefly by the side of the road on Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldfinch***Carduelis carduelis*

Small numbers seen daily on both islands.

**Lesser Redpoll***Carduelis cannabina*

Single in flight overhead near the river bridge at the top end of Small Isles Bay, Jura on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Twite***Carduelis flastrostris*

2 in the dunes at Ardnave Headland on 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and 1-2 along the road to Killinallan dunes on 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Linnet***Carduelis cannabina*

Small flocks or family groups present around Loch Gruinart, Loch Gorm and at Ardnave.

**Bullfinch***Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

At least one in Bridgend Woods on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Reed Bunting***Emberiza schoeniclus*

Pairs present at Loch Gruinart and around Loch Gorm.

**Mammals.****Rabbit***Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Small numbers seen daily and on both islands.

**Brown Hare***Lepus capensis*

Fairly common on Islay.

**Otter***Lutra lutra*

An adult female and two well-grown kits were joined by what appeared to be a third kit on rocks along the edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura on the morning of 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Red Deer***Cervus elaphus*

Fairly common and widespread on Islay, smaller numbers on Jura.

**Roe Deer***Capreolus capreolus*

Small numbers (less than 5) daily on Islay.

**Common Seal***Phoca vitulina*

Small numbers at Portnahaven and Port Wemyss.

**Grey Seal***Halicoerus grypus*

Small numbers at Portnahaven and Port Wemyss and about 100 daily on sandbanks in Loch Gruinart, also 1-2 Small Isles Bay, Jura.

**Bottlenose Dolphin***Tursiops truncatus*

A pod of 4 swam south through the Sound of Islay on the morning of 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Butterflies**

Small White, Bridgend, Loch Gruinart, Kilcolman

Common Blue, Ardnave, Jura

Dark Green Fritillary, Ardnave, Killinallan, Jura

Small Heath, Killinallan, Jura, The Oa

Small Tortoiseshell, Ardnave, Bridgend, Jura

Green-veined White, Killinallan, Ardnave, The Oa, Jura

Small Copper, Killinallan, Ardnave, Jura

Red Admiral, Ardnave, Loch Gruinart

Meadow Brown, Ardnave, Killinallan, Jura

Large Heath, Jura

Marsh Fritillary, The Oa, Ardbeg, Kildalton, Jura

**Dragonflies**

Common Hawker, Port Charlotte

Golden-ringed Dragonfly, Luss, Jura

Four spotted Chaser, Finlaggan

Plants courtesy of Andrew M. Greller, Ph.D., and Frances Madle

Binomial	Common Name
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Horse-chestnut
<i>Alchemilla glabra</i>	Smooth Lady's-mantle
<i>Ammophila arenaria</i>	Marram
<i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>	Pyramidal Orchid
<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Wild Angelica
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Thrift
<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Black Spleenwort
<i>Asplenium ceterach</i>	Rustyback
<i>Asplenium marinum</i>	Sea Spleenwort
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Hart's-tongue
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady-fern
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch
<i>Cakile maritima</i>	Sea Rocket
<i>Callitriche stagnalis</i>	Common Water-starwort
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh-marigold
<i>Campanula rapunculoides</i>	Creeping Bellflower
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckooflower
<i>Carex</i> sp.	Sedges
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear Thistle
<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>	Frog Orchid
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Cotoneaster integrifolius</i>	Entire-leaved Cotoneaster
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax
<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i> subsp. <i>erictorum</i>	Heath Spotted-orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Common Spotted-orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	Early Marsh-orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i>	Northern Marsh-orchid
<i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i> × <i>maculata</i>	Hybrid orchid
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove
<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved Sundew
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	Scaly Male-fern
<i>Dryopteris carthusiana</i>	Narrow Buckler-Fern
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male-fern
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad-leaved Willowherb
<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	Field Horsetail
<i>Equisetum fluviatile</i>	Water Horsetail
<i>Equisetum palustre</i>	Marsh Horsetail
<i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i>	Wood Horsetail
<i>Erica cinerea</i>	Bell Heather



Binomial	Common Name
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Common Cottongrass
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Common Stork's-bill
<i>Euphrasia arctica</i> subsp. <i>borealis</i>	Eyebright
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Festuca</i> sp.	Fescue sp.
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>	Fuchsia
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot Crane's-bill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert
<i>Gunnera manicata</i>	Brazilian Giant-rhubarb
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Common Ivy
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell
<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	Tutsan
<i>Hypericum pulchrum</i>	Slender St John's-wort
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Iris
<i>Juncus conglomeratus</i>	Compact Rush
<i>Juncus</i> sp.	Rush sp.
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Oxeye Daisy
<i>Neottia ovata</i>	Common Twayblade
<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Silene flos-cuculi</i>	Ragged-Robin
<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Yellow Pimpernel
<i>Meconopsis cambrica</i>	Welsh Poppy
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	Black Medick
<i>Mimulus guttatus</i>	Monkeyflower
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not
<i>Myrica gale</i>	Bog-myrtle
<i>Narthecium ossifragum</i>	Bog Asphodel
<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>	Water-cress
<i>Nymphaea alba</i>	White Water-lily
<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	Hemlock Water-dropwort
<i>Oreopteris limbosperma</i>	Lemon-scented Fern
<i>Pedicularis palustris</i>	Marsh Lousewort
<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	Lousewort
<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	Amphibious Bistort
<i>Petasites hybridus</i>	Butterbur
<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed
<i>Pilosella aurantiaca</i>	Fox-and-cubs
<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	Common Butterwort

Binomial	Common Name
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago maritima</i>	Sea Plantain
<i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Greater Butterfly-orchid
<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>	Heath Milkwort
<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Polypody
<i>Potamogeton polygonifolius</i>	Bog Pondweed
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Comarum palustre</i>	Marsh Cinquefoil
<i>Primula sp.</i>	Primrose
<i>Pseudofumaria lutea</i>	Yellow Corydalis
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>	Lesser Spearwort
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	Yellow-rattle
<i>Rosa spinosissima</i>	Burnet Rose
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	Raspberry
<i>Rubus saxatilis</i>	Stone Bramble
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Salix sp.</i>	Willow sp.
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Common Figwort
<i>Scutellaria galericulata</i>	Skullcap
<i>Sedum album</i>	White Stonecrop
<i>Sedum anglicum</i>	English Stonecrop
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common Ragwort
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red Campion
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly Sow-thistle
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan
<i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Lesser Meadow-rue
<i>Thymus polytrichus</i>	Wild Thyme
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Triglochin maritima</i>	Sea Arrowgrass
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse
<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	Wych Elm
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Common Valerian
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>	Brooklime
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell
<i>Veronica officinalis</i>	Heath Speedwell
<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Tufted Vetch