

Islay & Jura in Summer: Birds & Botany of the Inner Hebrides

Naturetrek Tour Report

12 - 18 June 2015



Common Sandpiper



Marsh Fritillary



Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid



Common Redshank

Report & images compiled by Peter Clement



Tour Participants: Peter Clement & Malcolm Ogilvie (leaders) and seven Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Friday 12th June

At Glasgow Central Station in the early afternoon, four of the tour group met Peter. After stowing luggage in the minibus we drove through the dark canyons of the city and out into bright sunshine, north-west to Argyll, land of lochs, hills and glens. Loch Lomond glistened on our right through a veil of spring leaves. We swung westwards past the top of Loch Long, in carefree anticipation when, suddenly, we stopped, the road ahead blocked by cars. Peter grabbed his binoculars and saw cars turning back: it seemed that a collision was blocking the road. We turned back, taking a detour that took us beyond the northern end of Loch Lomond with a scenic loop around as far as Dalmally, then a narrower road that took us back south to Inveraray. Fortunately we had time in hand and met the other three members of the group waiting for us; John at the Stonefield Castle Hotel near Tarbert and Helen and Margaret at the Kennacraig Ferry Terminal.

The ferry was a little late in arriving and we watched it slowly and dreamily approach as several of the group took the opportunity to watch the resident Black Guillemots flying in and out of their nests amongst the jetty's ironworks. It was fascinating to watch the ship connect with the jetty, an entire front section of the ship lifting to reveal scissor gear and an extending platform on which tankers of single-malt whiskey rolled out on their way to bottling plants in Glasgow. We squeezed in at the back of the smaller of the two vessels that ply the route to Islay and once aboard hastened upstairs for first views of the island's coast and the sea. Our voyage, a little over two hours gave us a chance to eat a hot meal, become acquainted with one another and have our first briefing from Peter on our next day's plan before docking at Port Ellen.

A drive in lingering dusk revealed the lateness of Islay's spring – flowering primroses and bluebells. Then, sleepy at the end of a day's travel, we were only too glad to be shown our rooms and get our heads down at the welcoming Bridgend Hotel.

Day 2

Saturday 13th June

We met Lorna, who manages the Hotel and made us feel welcome. After a big hot breakfast on a sunny blue morning, our keen and friendly group rotated seats in the minibus and Peter drove us to the inner shore of Loch Indaal, stopping on the way to show us a flotilla of Eiders swimming not far from the water's edge, a Red-breasted Merganser with its thin beak, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover and Curlew. A little further on, we passed a Roe Deer on the edge of the large inland peat bog.

At the nearby RSPB reserve at Loch Gruinart we looked at the exhibitions and viewing platform inside the visitor centre before walking to a hide where we opened the windows, set up telescopes and binoculars, and observed the avian spectacle, water and rushes in near silence, pointing and whispering. The experienced birdwatchers were quick to recognise Mute Swan, Mallard, Redshank, Common Snipe, Greylag Goose, Grey Heron and Lapwing on the grassy flats and narrow open stretches of water.

A little later on we walked to Ardnave Point, rich in buttercups, noticing wind-eroded dune platforms of sandy soil topped with grass, the walls of which were burrowed by rabbits. Robin pointed out the carpets of white dusting the grass which on closer inspection turned out to be a mass of daisies finding a niche in the sheep-

cropped sward. Ewes accompanied twin lambs, some white, some dark, and some white with black legs and faces. A family party of Chough were quickly located feeding on the short grass and, a little further on, several family groups of Ravens were seen. At Ardnave Point we were delighted to look across to Nave Island and see distant seals, one a plump white pup, resting on rocks or swimming. On the way back we came upon several young Wheatears, some only a matter of days out of the nest. Just before we reached the minibus the distant but distinct call of the elusive corncrake was heard.

We lunched at Kilchoman, one of Islay's eight distilleries that provide restaurants and tours for the island's visitors. Outside, sparrows chattered among empty barrels, some recycled into chairs. Rock Doves cooed and more surprisingly one or two Choughs were noticed on the roof. The newest expression of the island's smoky malt whiskey was named 'Machir Bay' after the Atlantic prospect overlooked by the distillery.

Turning south in the afternoon, we drove to Portnahaven on the road hugging the northern side of Loch Indaal, observing raised beaches of special interest to the geologists, with bird sightings on the way. We had heard a Cuckoo earlier in the morning and now we saw one five times, perched on a wire outlined against the sky, being mobbed by Meadow Pipits. Peter slowed for a Brown Hare which, watching, crouched, long ears laid back with startled, bulging, golden eyes fixed on us. At Port Wemyss, the end of the road, we looked across to small islets where seals, singly or in clusters, lolled, occasionally flapping a limb or raising a head.

We drove back to Bridgend with many a stop and sharing of telescopes to look at and listen to distant birds such as Stonechat, Wheatear, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Reed Bunting and occasionally a Buzzard.

Day 3

Sunday 14th June

Malcolm Ogilvie, resident botanist with a wide knowledge of the nature of Islay, met us at Killinallan on the eastern side of Loch Gruinart. He led us on a walk of wetlands and dunes, in view of the sea and the distant Paps of Jura, site of an annual endurance fell run. On a fine, clear day we were keenly aware of the subtle range of greens and blues and pale sand colours that made up the landscape of dunes on our left, and grassland on our right. We were aware of the sea and the distant singing of a large herd of seals hauled out on the mud of the rapidly emptying Loch Gruinart, but today our eyes were directed down on the ground rather than up in the sky.

The first thing Malcolm showed us was an Adder's-tongue Fern, still at an early stage, as, he told us, the cold month of May had delayed the development of some of the island's flora. His ability to spot its tiny and still emerging tendrils among grass of the same shade of green demonstrated his practised eye. He then showed us Sea Arrowgrass and rarities of the region; the Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid together with the Heath-spotted and Northern Marsh Orchids, Common Twayblade, Marsh Marigold, Milkwort, Yellow Pimpernel and Burnet Rose. We also found a Pyramidal Orchid at an early flowering stage. There was a flurry of excitement as the rare Marsh Fritillary butterfly was spotted, first flitting by, and then posing on a bright yellow Hawkweed displaying its bright chequered orange and yellow wings.

Pink Thrift dotted the grass and many other common flowers were abundant. Malcolm described the botanical history of the terrain, which was not exactly the machair we had expected, but a varied expanse of grassland where, in places, bracken was beginning to push vigorous loops out of the ground. Elsewhere were clumps of black sedge, boggy areas fostered the flamboyant flags of Yellow Iris, and a patch of pretty, frilly white Bogbean

flowers that, alone, made the botanists' journey worthwhile. Also in this wet area we were surprised to find several Common Frogs. At the end of the walk Malcolm presented everyone with a copy of his botanical survey *The Wild Flowers of Islay, A Checklist*, and explained the systematic division of the land into 10km squares for the purpose of survey.

We took our lunch at Yan's Kitchen, Port Charlotte, on the northern side of Loch Indaal. White houses each with their window frames painted an individual bright colour, gave character to the village. In the afternoon we drove across the island to Ballygrant Woods where, amongst the deciduous trees, we came upon a large Fuschia bush - a garden escapee, in full bloom. Ballygrant Loch was rather placid and serene except for two pairs of Mute Swans, a Little Grebe and a flycatching Willow Warbler, but above the adjacent Loch nan Cadham a splendid Golden-ringed Dragonfly patrolled a small circuit and landed from time to time giving photographic opportunities and the chance to admire the splendid pattern of golden rings down the long body. We drove on to Bunnahabhain to look for Otters in the Sound, but try as we might we saw none and apart from one or two distant Gannets and a lone Black Guillemot, the place seemed lovely and picturesque but deserted.

In the evening we discussed the unusual rock formation of cliffs we had seen and, more generally, the complex geology of the island with its north-south tear fault from Loch Gruinart to Loch Indaal. The rocks to the west, Robin, our geographer companion, explained, are among the oldest in Europe.

Day 4

Monday 15th June

In early daylight, bright and breezy, we were aware of a pair of Collared Doves and several pairs of Swallows nesting around our hotel. We took a walk in Bridgend woods where Blackbirds, Wrens and Robins entertained us and Blackcaps sang lustily from the depths of the rhododendrons. Alongside the path, on the right, rippled the River Sorn. We examined plants that grow here in profusion such as Mares' Tails, Forget-me-nots and Cranesbill. At a wooden bridge we stopped to observe corvids over a field on the other side, and songbirds in the trees. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was heard; a local rarity as there are thought to be only two pairs on the whole island.

Walking in the woods we noticed the unusual shapes of the conifers with branches growing in contorted loops. Many trees were heavily covered in moss and some of those looping branches had ferns growing along them while liverworts hung in scales from some trunks. We continued as far as the Islay Woollen Mill, an old stone building with a slate roof. Inside the mill the weaver protected his ears with mufflers from the rapid clackety-clack of the loom, and tartan cloth issued as the shuttle flew forth and back. We fingered some fine garments made from a variety of patterns. Back outside again was another extraordinary adaption to Islay; a bush covered in vermilion tube-like flowers. This proved to be something of a challenge so we took a small fallen specimen for Malcolm to identify and at first, even his expertise was baffled. He took it home to show his wife, and, later that evening, relayed the message that it was a Chilean Firebush, its presence traceable to a now derelict cottage garden he remembered.

After boarding the minibus again, Malcolm led us down a bumpy track to the seaward side of the island's airport that sees all of two scheduled daily flights from Glasgow, and lies on the edge of the wide Laggan Bay. We saw a small plane landing. On foot we followed the line of the dunes northward. Grey Seals rested on rocks near the beach and crooned, some holding their tails up, others letting them flop. Malcolm pointed to sacks near the

shore, where oysters are cultivated. A bird worth stopping for was not one but two Great Northern Divers, well-named as at one moment they may be on the surface, then vanish as their name suggests, reappearing elsewhere; quite a challenge to hold in view. Close by and keeping company with them was a winter plumage Black-throated Diver, an unusual sighting here at this time of the year. A little further on, at another stop near Port Ellen, we found a pair of Red-throated Divers swimming and preening in the bay.

Lunch was taken in another distillery, this time at Ardbeg; a stylish modern building with freshly laid out grassed areas in the courtyard. After a suitably stylish lunch we drove on to Claggain Bay where a weed-wafting river runs into the Sound in a graceful curve over a meadow of buttercups and daisies. On the way we had the dreamlike, inexplicable experience of seeing two male peacocks sedately crossing the road in front of us. We slowed again to watch a young Brown Hare, as keenly aware of us as we were of it. When it gained an exit into a field through a wire fence, it froze for a moment, and then bolted for cover.

We drew in to visit the ruined building, churchyard and 1,200 year-old Celtic cross at Kildalton in the south east of the island. Its weightiness contrasted with the delicacy of well-preserved carved patterns including animal depictions. One design showed peacocks eating grapes, compounding the mystery of our encounter only a few minutes before. Malcolm conjectured that the Romans had brought peacocks to Britain for the table, so their presence could have been less exotic than might be imagined.

Through the telescope, Peter noticed first one, then two, then four Red Deer on the nearby hillside. We walked up a slope to look at more plants, sometimes noticing tiny differences from specimens that grow in other parts of Britain. Such an example was the wine-red veining and stems of some plants, such as Foxgloves and Thistles that are more familiarly all green. Malcolm explained that this was caused by iron in the peat in which they grow. Early Purple Orchids were seen; the botanists lying flat on the grass to examine them with hand lenses to check for distinctive markings. Nearby a Common Carder Bee buried its head in one of the three nectaries of a Yellow Flag, its vulnerability to birds giving plausible reason for the sting in its rear. Malcolm searched lichen-covered rocks in the shade of ancient willows for the tiny Filmy Fern; it remained elusive.

Day 5

Tuesday 16th June

An early start on an overcast but warm day ensured catching the ferry from Port Askaig across to Jura with its far smaller human population and only one distillery. We took Jura's coastal road and looped the southern end of the island to Craighouse, overlooking Small Isles Bay. Our main aim was to see Otters; we lived in hope. We began our quest at a point high above the bay with plenty to look at close at hand. The shaggy, long-horned highland cattle, accompanied by calves, ranged freely over a wide area up to the gardens of two quiet holiday cottages. At Lowlandman's Bay several of the birders stayed on the look-out with their optical instruments poised and were rewarded with a fine Osprey that flew in across the Bay and almost overhead, whilst the botanists wandered and found delicate pink Early Purple Orchids, Milkwort, and Lousewort, native to the Western Isles.

Moving on north, a Red Deer stag rested in some camouflaging scrub not far from the road. An area of timber had been harvested, leaving a desolate looking patch, and the few dead trunks remaining upright provided perches for birds that enabled easy sightings. During the day we compiled a fairly impressive list for the island including Jackdaw, Rook, Hooded Crow, Raven, Blue and Great Tits, Swallow, House Martin, Wren, Starling,

Blackbird, a fine male Whinchat, Stonechat, a pair of Spotted Flycatchers, and Tree, Meadow and Rock Pipits - together with Goldfinch, a couple of Lesser Redpolls, Linnet and Reed Bunting seen along the way. Many were stopped for, their distinguishing features and cries pointed out by Peter for the benefit of the less bird-conscious. At one point an almost entirely white, sub-adult Glaucous Gull, usually a rare winter visitor to Britain, flew by, and a little later it was seen again, standing in the road briefly before taking off and flying past us.

The afternoon cooled and extra woollies were produced from bags. The Paps of Jura were clothed in mist but we had a view over Loch Tarbert on our way to Lussa Bay for another attempt to see Otter. We lunched at the pub in Craighouse, and then checked out the distillery and the local shop, which was busy with people exchanging friendly greetings. We then retraced the morning's positions. Back by the cottages overlooking Small Isles Bay, returning residents mentioned what they had or hadn't seen before retiring inside. A burst of drumming ensued, making us wonder if we'd missed recognising a rock band seeking sanctuary.

Day 6

Wednesday 17th June

Forecasts and grey skies decided for us that it was a day for waterproofs against the threat of downpours. Our first stop was a return to the hide at Gruinart Flats which resulted in some of the most dramatic sights of our stay. As we approached, a great noise in the sky, alarm calls from the local Lapwings and Redshanks fearful of a raid on their nests, made us look up to see a female Hen Harrier being angrily mobbed. It turned several times on its great sweeping wings; one of the most memorable sights of our stay in Islay. We sat, awed and quiet in the hide absorbing the subtle movements, close up and further away, that betrayed the presence of birds. Distantly, on water, we saw a Whooper swan; a late migrant or possibly one that had decided not to go north this year. Close up we saw Redshanks moving slowly between reeds and the water's edge. Right in front of the hide a Meadow Pipit seemed to be coming and going from its nest hidden in a bush just feet away. A Barn Swallow, balanced on a loop of bramble, made a display of its rusty-red face and throat, dark blue head, back and wings, and creamy chest. Looking out in different directions over the water and reeds rewarded us with the highest number of species seen in a day and made us sensitive to the way different bird species move and how individuals within species vary: Peter pointed out how plumage and shape differ according to age and gender.

Walking through the reserve, the botanically minded found Sanicle, Butterwort and Marsh Cinquefoil. We took a short detour to the north-east and visited Loch Finlaggan, a site of particular historical interest. From the twelfth century, for three hundred years the Lords of the Isles controlled the islands and much of the west coast of Scotland. The small island in the loch reached by a wooden bridge had remains of the buildings where their councils took place. Atmospheric in its bleakness and ruin, it was also home to Marsh Orchids, varying in colour from pale to deep pink. Another hunting Hen Harrier was seen, a highlight of the day but dwarfed literally and physically by the huge adult White-tailed Sea Eagle that swept in from the north of the island, slowly moving west along the side of the loch and into the far distance.

Moving on, we returned to Ardbeg Distillery cafe for lunch and were relieved that so far the rain had been no more than an occasional light pattering, which continued in the afternoon. Afterwards we spent much of the afternoon on the Oa, the southernmost point of Islay with the coast of Northern Ireland in sight to the south-west. At Port nan Gallan, an extraordinary cliff formation excited Robin our geographer who sat on the grass in new waterproofs to sketch it, while the rest of the group thrilled to see Fulmars soaring and nesting on the cliff face in front of us; white dots against red rock that came to life when viewed through powerful lenses. No less

than six young Brown Hares were seen as we progressed along the walk around the clifftop. A Linnet and a Lesser Redpoll were seen, and along the Glen Road from Mulindry to Port Ellen a Common Sandpiper almost posed for us at eye level on a fence post.

Day 7

Thursday 18th June

A slightly earlier alarm setting allowed time for packing and a good breakfast to face the journey home. On the ferry we exchanged memories of things we'd noticed and enjoyed. The birders were hard to tear away from their last lingering deck sights of Guillemots and Razorbills, and a total of over 20 Manx Shearwaters made it all the more enjoyable. On the beautiful, narrow road to Glasgow with its uncertain passing rules, we dropped Helen and Margaret at their cars at Kennacraig and John at Stonefield Castle for onward travel, and with luck further enthralling sights and adventures.

The rest of us returned to Glasgow and our different trains, while Peter took the minibus back. We'd all enjoyed the wonderfully relaxing break on uncluttered islands with empty beaches, finding rarities, and free from the tyranny of communications technology. The birding and botanising had revealed some pleasant surprises and those eager to know and experience had been inspired to increase their knowledge of both subjects.

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Species Lists

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

- Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*
Seen every day: up to 6 on and around by Loch Gruinart, Islay and a pair in Small Isles Bay, Jura on 16th.
- Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
A single adult from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 17th.
- Greylag Goose *Anser anser*
Up to 30 in small flocks around Loch Gruinart and pairs with young at Killinallan, Ardnave Headland and Small Isles Bay, Jura.
- Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*
A pair daily on a sandbar by Bridgend Flats with others at Loch Gruinart, Loch Indaal, Islay and Small Isles Bay, Jura.
- Wigeon *Anas penelope*
A male and two females from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 17th.
- Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*
Up to 20 around Loch Gruinart and about 5 on Small Isles Bay, Jura.
- Shoveler *Anas clypeata*
A male in flight from the hide by Loch Gruinart on 17th.
- Common Teal *Anas crecca*
About 6 on flooded area from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 13th and 17th.
- Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*
3 on Ardnave Loch on 13th and 1 from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 17th.
- Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*
A small flock of about 6 at the entrance to West Loch Tarbert on the 12th and about 12 there on the return journey on 18th; on Islay about 20 (mostly males) at the top of Loch Indaal present every day and two or three females with small young at Bruichladdich; a pair at Portnahaven, and a female with a ducklings on Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 16th.
- Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*
A pair on a small loch at Easter Ellister on 13th.
- Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*
At least one by the jetty at Kennacraig on 12th, also 1-2 most days on Loch Indaal and one on Small Isles Bay, Jura on 16th.
- Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*
Two, presumed to be a pair in Kilnaughton Bay, Port Ellen on 15th and another later that day in Claggain Bay.
- Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*
A single in non-breeding plumage in Laggan Bay from the airport track on 15th.
- Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*
One in full breeding plumage at the top of Loch Indaal on 13th and 14th, two in Laggan Bay near the airport on 15th and one in Small Isles Bay, Jura on 17th; on the return journey one almost in full breeding plumage from the ferry at the entrance to West Loch Tarbert on 18th.
- Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*
Several in flight over the islands at Portnahaven on 13th and about 50 pairs nesting on the cliffs at the Oa on 17th.

- Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*
3 from the ferry on outward journey from Kennacraig to Port Ellen on 13th, 2 from the Oa on 17th and 26 from the ferry on return journey to Kennacraig on 18th.
- Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*
About 3 from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 13th; at least 3 feeding at low tide along the shore of Loch Gruinart from Killinallan on 14th and at least 3 around Small Isles Bay, Jura on 16th.
- Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*
At least 20 from the ferry on outward journey from Kennacraig to Port Ellen on 13th; at least 30 offshore from Portnahaven on 14th and several offshore from the Oa on 17th and about 15 on the return ferry journey to Kennacraig on the 18th.
- European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*
Very common, seen every day.
- Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
At least one in Loch Gruinart on 14th, Ballygrant Loch on 15th and 1-2 in Small Isles Bay, Jura on 16th.
- Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*
A single in flight over Lowlandman's Bay, Jura on 16th.
- Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*
Up to 6 all on the 17th: two females and a male at Gruinart Flats; a male and a female at the Oa and a male over the hillside at Finlaggan.
- Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*
Common, small numbers seen every day.
- White-tailed Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*
An adult flew slowly over Finlaggan Loch and off to the west on the afternoon of the 17th.
- Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*
A single near Ardnave on 13th.
- Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*
1-2 from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 13th and 17th including an adult with chicks on the latter date.
- Corncrake *Crex crex*
A single heard calling distantly at Ardnave on 13th.
- Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*
Widespread in small numbers, mainly introduced birds on both islands.
- Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
Common on both islands.
- Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
Many pairs on the fields around Loch Gruinart, Ardnave Headland and smaller numbers at Killinallan.
- Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
Pair sat the top end of Loch Indaal on the morning of 13th, 2 along the edge of Loch Gruinart at Killinallan on 14th, in Claggain Bay on 15th and Small Isles Bay, Jura on 16th.
- Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
1-2 sitting on posts or in flight and calling on Gruinart Flats or from the hide at Loch Gruinart and along the roads to Ardnave on 13th and one on post by the road on Jura on 16th.
- Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*
A non-breeding flock of at least 20 at the top of Loch Indaal on 13th and 15th.
- Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquatus*
3 on fields at Gruinart Flats on 13th and 2-3 in a field by Small Isles Bay, Jura on 16th.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

About 15 (including recently fledged juveniles) from the hide at Loch Gruinart on 13th and 17th and 1-2 seen daily along the edge of Loch Indaal; on Jura 1-2 along the edge of Small Isles Bay on 16th.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Single at the roadside loch at Ellister on 13th, 1-2 Claggain Bay on 15th, 4 along Small Isles Bay Jura on 16th and one on a roadside post along the glen road, between Mulindry and Port Ellen on 17th.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

1-2 from inter-island ferry in Sound of Islay on 17th.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus 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 14th.

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.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

One in 3rd summer (sub-adult) plumage at Ardlussa, Jura on 16th.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Up to 3 in West Tarbert Loch on the evening of 12th.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Up to 3 on offshore rocks at the top of Loch Indaal on the 13th, at least a pair on the offshore islands at Portnahaven later that day; 2-3 in Claggain Bay on 15th and several on the offshore islands along the outer edge of Small Isles Bay, Jura on 16th.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

A single in flight over the top end of Loch Indaal on the evening of 13th and another briefly in Sound from Bunnahabhain on the evening of 14th.

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

At least 30 seen from ferry between Kennacraig and Port Ellen on 12th and on the return journey on 18th.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

About 5-3 seen from ferry between Kennacraig and Port Ellen on 12th and 1-2 on the return journey on the 18th.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

At least 3 on and around the jetty at Kennacraig on 12th; 1-2 in the Sound of Islay from Bunnahabhain on 14th and 17th, 2-3 one from the ferry to Jura on 16th and 1-2 on the return ferry to Kennacraig on the 18th.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

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

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

At least one heard calling in Bridgend Woods on the morning of the 15th.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

1-2 present on both islands.

- Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Pair at Bridgend, Islay and at least one pair at Craighouse, Jura.
- Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Single on roadside wires between Port Charlotte and Portnahaven on 13th, a single in Ballygrant Woods on 14th; at least 3 together on wires near Ardlussa, Jura on 16th and one heard calling near Bunnahabhain on 17th.
- Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*
Common and numerous, seen every day.
- Rook *Corvus frugilegus*
Common and widespread, several hundred present on Islay.
- Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*
Common and widespread, seen daily.
- Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*
Only seen between Glasgow and around Loch Lomond on the outward and return journeys.
- Northern Raven *Corvus corax*
Common, small numbers seen on both islands; at least one family group at Ardnave Headland on 13th.
- Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
At least 6 (one or family parties) on Ardnave Headland on 13th and 1-2 in and around the barns at Kilchoman distillery later that day; 1-2 in flight at Killinallan dunes on 14th.
- Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*
Small numbers present on Islay mostly in the hotel garden and woods at Bridgend.
- Great Tit *Parus major*
Small numbers in Bridgend Woods and at Loch Gruinart and also seen around Craighouse, Jura.
- Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*
Fairly common in fields around Loch Gruinart, Loch Gorm and on Ardnave Headland.
- Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*
About 30-40 in the dunes at Ardnave Headland on 13th and 1-2 at Finlaggan on 17th.
- Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*
Fairly common, pairs around the hotel at Bridgend, Loch Gruinart visitor centre and hide, Ardnave Loch and on the Oa.
- House Martin *Delichon urbica*
Small numbers present around the hotel at Bridgend and on Jura and several feeding around Finlaggan Farm on 17th.
- Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*
Fairly common, breeding birds on Jura, Ballygrant and Bridgend Woods, Kildalton and in the woodland at Loch Gruinart.
- Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
Single singing in Bridgend Woods near the hotel on 13th and 15th.
- Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*
At least one singing on Jura on 16th.
- Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*
Fairly common and heard singing from several locations.
- Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*
Single singing on the edge of Gruinart Flats and 1-2 from the hide at Loch Gruinart were singing or feeding young.
- Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Small numbers seen or heard daily on both islands.

- Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*
A single in Bridgend Woods on hotel on 15th.
- Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*
Seen daily, mostly in large family groups around Loch Gruinart.
- Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*
Common on both islands.
- Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*
Common on both islands.
- Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*
A pair at Bridgend on the morning of 15th.
- European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*
Several seen or heard in Bridgend Woods and in garden of Bridgend Hotel.
- Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*
A male on roadside wires near Loch Tarbert, Jura on 16th.
- Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*
Up to 4 seen most days on both islands.
- Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*
Pairs with young at Ardnave Headland on 13th, Killinallan on 14th and Lowlandman's Bay, Jura 16th.
- Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*
A pair near by the roadside briefly at Ardlussa, Jura on 16th.
- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*
Small numbers daily on both islands.
- Dunnock *Prunella modularis*
Fairly common at Bridgend and around Loch Gruinart visitor centre.
- Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*
Common, seen daily.
- Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*
Pairs 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.
- Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*
At least one in song on a hillside above the road near Ardlussa, Jura on 16th.
- Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*
Common, seen daily.
- Siskin *Spinus spinus*
Single seen briefly at Loch Gruinart visitor centre on 17th.
- Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*
Small numbers mostly family groups seen daily on both islands.
- Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cannabina*
1-2 in woods above Claggain Bay on 15th, and 1-2 valong the roadside on Jura on 16th and 2 along the Glen Road from Mulindry to Port Ellen on 16th.
- Linnet *Linaria cannabina*
Small flocks or family groups present around Loch Gruinart, Ardnave, Killinallan and on Jura.
- Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*
A female by the road to Bunnahabhain on 17th.

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 in small numbers on Islay.

European Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*
 One dead in the road between Port Ellen and the Oa on 17th.

Stoat *Mustela ermine*
 One dead in the road between Mulindry and Port Ellen on 17th.

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.

Fallow Deer *Dama dama*
 About 4-5 in the Loch an't Sailein – Claggain Bay area on 15th.

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 on sandbanks in Loch Gruinart, also 1-2 Small Isles Bay, Jura.

Butterflies

Small White, Bridgend, Loch Gruinart, Kilcolman	Green-veined White, Killinallan, Ardnave, The Oa, Jur
Small Tortoiseshell, Ardnave, Bridgend, Jura	Red Admiral, Ardnave, Loch Gruinart
Marsh Fritillary, Killinallan,	Meadow Brown, Ardnave, Killinallan, Jura
Small Heath, Killinallan, Jura, The Oa	

Dragonflies

Golden-ringed Dragonfly, Ballygrant Woods, Islay.

Plants

Note that all English and scientific names together with their taxonomic status have been taken from The Wild Flowers of Islay: A Checklist by Malcolm Ogilvie (1995)

Islay

Large-leaved Liverwort	Water Horsetail, <i>Equisetum fluvatile</i>
Adder's Tongue, <i>Ophioglossum vulgatum</i>	Royal Fern, <i>Osmunda regalis</i>
Common Polypody, <i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Maidenhair Spleenwort, <i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>
Meadow Buttercup, <i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Lesser Spearwort, <i>Ranunculus flammula</i>
Lesser Meadow-rue, <i>Thalictrum minus</i>	Welsh Poppy, <i>Meconopsis cambrica</i>
Ragged Robin, <i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>	Japanese Knotweed, <i>Fallopia japonica</i>
Gunnera, <i>Gunnera</i> sp.	Amphibious Bistort, <i>Persicaria amphibia</i>
Curled Dock, <i>Rumex crispus</i>	Thrift, <i>Armeria maritima</i>

Heath Dog Violet, <i>Viola canina</i>	Dame's Violet, <i>Hesperis matronalis</i>
Water Cress, <i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i>	Hairy Rock Cress, <i>Arabis hirsuta</i>
Yellow Pimpernel, <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Meadowsweet, <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
Silverweed, <i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Tormentil, <i>Potentilla erecta</i>
Marsh Cinquefoil, <i>Potentilla palustris</i>	Wild Strawberry, <i>Fragaria vesca</i>
Water Avens, <i>Geum rivale</i>	Burnet Rose, <i>Rosa pimpinellifolia</i>
Common Bird's Foot Trefoil, <i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Meadow Vetchling, <i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>
Red Clover, <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	White Clover, <i>Trifolium repens</i>
Fuchsia, <i>Fuchsia magellanica</i>	Heath Milkwort, <i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>
Common Stork'sbill, <i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Horse Parsley ('Alexanders'), <i>Smyrniolum olusatrum</i>
Common Ivy, <i>Hedera helix</i>	Wood Sanicle, <i>Sanicula europaea</i>
Bogbean, <i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Comfrey, <i>Symphytum officinale</i>
Field Forget-me-not, <i>Myosotis arvensis</i> ,	Bugle, <i>Ajuga reptans</i>
Wild Thyme, <i>Thymus polytrichus britannicus</i>	Water Mint, <i>Mentha aquatica</i>
Sea Plantain, <i>Plantago maritima</i>	Ribwort Plantain, <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Common Figwort, <i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Chilean Firebush, <i>Embothrium coccineum</i>
Foxglove, <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Common Speedwell, <i>Veronica officinalis</i>
Germander Speedwell, <i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Brooklime, <i>Veronica beccabunga</i>
Marsh Lousewort, <i>Pedicularis palustris</i>	Common Butterwort, <i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>
Lady's Bedstraw, <i>Galium verum</i>	Honeysuckle, <i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>
Common Valerian, <i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Devil's-bit Scabious, <i>Succisa pratensis</i>
Mouse-ear Hawkweed, <i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	Ox-eye Daisy, <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>
Colts-foot, <i>Tussilago farfara</i>	Sea Arrowgrass, <i>Triglochin maritimum</i>
Marram, <i>Ammophila arenaria</i>	Black Sedge, <i>Schoenus nigricans</i>
Star of Bethlehem, <i>Ornithogalum angustifolium</i>	Bluebell (English), <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>
Yellow Iris, <i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Common Twayblade, <i>Listeria ovata</i>
Greater Butterfly Orchid, <i>Platanthera chlorantha</i>	Pyramidal Orchid, <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i>
Common Spotted Orchid, <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Early Marsh Orchid, <i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>
Northern Marsh Orchid, <i>Dactylorhiza purpurella</i>	Early Purple Orchid, <i>Orchis mascula</i>
Narrow-leaved Marsh Orchid, <i>Dactylorhiza traunsteineroidea</i>	

JURA

Monk's-hood, <i>Aconitum napellus</i>	Spring Cinquefoil, <i>Potentilla neumanniana</i>
Eyebright, <i>Euphrasia arctica borealis</i>	Lousewort, <i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>
Common Spotted Orchid, <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	