

Ardnamurchan - Wild Scotland in Spring

Naturetrek Tour Report

24th – 31st May 2026



Puffins



Otter



Green Tiger Beetle



Herald

Tour report by Glyn Evans and Greg Smith



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Summary

Ardnamurchan encapsulates the best of wild Scotland in its rare combination of rugged beauty, rich wildlife and profound tranquillity. Reaching out into the Atlantic at the western edge of the mainland, it feels wonderfully remote: a place of quiet sea lochs, open moorland, ancient woodland and lonely bays, where the pace of life slows and the modern world seems to fall away. Its remoteness is not emptiness, but abundance: eagles over the ridges, Otters along the shore, deer on the hillsides and seabirds moving through vast skies, all framed by a deep sense of peace that makes Ardnamurchan feel like Scotland at its most elemental and unspoilt.

Day 1

Sunday 24th May

The journey in was a logistical challenge, with different travel arrangements and different arrival times, but eventually a plan was hatched to get the early arrivals away from Glasgow at 1.00pm, with Greg's hire car scooping up the latecomers at around 3.00pm, or so we hoped!

We were by the bonny banks of Loch Lomond before 2.00pm for a planned stop. However, bank holiday weekend crowds meant no parking and far too much frivolity (what would Rabbie have made of all these jet-skis?), so we moved on to have a quick look at Naturetrek's newest land acquisition, Stuckindroin, situated at the head of Loch Lomond. We had found a singing Wood Warbler there the previous day, which was sadly a little muted this time; but the Tree Pipits were still on show on the short yomp up the slope among the Bluebells, mosses, Orange-tips and Round-leafed Sundews. Distant Cuckoos sang in baritone, and a family of Ravens cavorted over the opposite ridge.

We dawdled toward Bridge of Orchy, knowing that Greg's group, due to meet us there, would be at least a couple of hours behind. No-one needed the facilities at the Green Welly, Tyndrum, so we kept going for the extra ten minutes to the hotel, where we turned off and had a scan from the bridge, among the sparser crowd of walkers taking selfies. The hoped-for Dipper was neither seen nor heard, and a Grey Wagtail frustratingly disappeared after a brief flit into the middle of the burn and out again. House Martins and Sand Martins were cruising by, and a single Buzzard eked out some lift from a weak thermal.

We made the short drive to a favourite spot along the track, where the tranquillity was compromised only by a steady breeze. A Common Sandpiper announced its presence as soon as we disembarked and a pair of Canada Geese loafed lazily on a grassy promontory, one of several which were scanned diligently for signs of life. Above the whisper of the breeze, a Snipe was heard belting out its monotonous "chip-per" call and there were short bursts of the Greenshank's gentle song. While the former was well-camouflaged and distant, the latter was eventually seen patrolling the lochside, and stopping for a preen. A short burst of Wood Sandpiper song had us briefly excited, but this was all we got. Siskins, Redpoll and Coal Tit all welcomed us, but with water levels high this spring, it may have been that breeding wader numbers were down.

We drove an extra half mile to check the hillside below the trees for foraging Black Grouse. Almost immediately, one was found feeding quietly, but with little movement and at a distance of several hundred metres, it was not easy for the clients to see it properly until it started moving, when it showed a clean white vent, a lyre-shaped tail

and even a flash of its red eyebrows. Just as we turned to meet Greg back at the first stop, he came past us the other way! We reconvened at the small camping patch and set up the scope again to find the Black Grouse for all to enjoy. We drove on to the Corran ferry, observing the new works underway to the Ardgour terminal, which has sadly required the decommissioning of the Black Guillemot nestboxes; but six individuals were still seen on the glassy surface of Loch Linnhe as we crossed.

There was just time to drop off bags at the Bunkhouse, and to meet the two couples who had driven direct to Glenborrodale, comparing notes on sightings before moving quickly on to the Natural History Centre, where Sandra and Aaron served up a hearty meal. During dinner, the geese on the field scattered when a young White-tailed Eagle cruised over! Late night victuals were enjoyed by a few, but most retired quite soon to sleep off the effects of a long journey.

Day 2

Monday 25th May

The most reliable weather forecast suggested we would remain dry, even if sunshine would be sparse. So plans were changed, and it was decided to head out to the lighthouse, taking in some sights along the way. The first stop, inevitably, was the viewpoint at Camas nan Geall. Ben Hiant was heavily shrouded in cloud. Greg kicked off the session with a short talk on the archaeology of the area, but the highlight of the short stay was when a juvenile White-tailed Eagle flew past on its way towards Ben Hiant.

After moving on from the viewpoint, there were Ravens and Red Deer to enjoy and, as we drew up alongside Ben Hiant, we listened to displaying Snipes, calling and drumming and a pair of Whinchats on the slope just above us.

Our next stop was at Kilchoan Jetty, which required us to pass the coffee shop, much to Alan's immediate interest. Greg again kicked off the session with an explanation of the geology, particularly of the rocks around the jetty. An immature Dunlin and a male Wheatear were enjoyed, along with a Ringed Plover on the beach and a Silver Y moth, which Greg found on the road on the way back to the car park. A pair of Red-throated Divers was in the neighbouring bay, and an adult and juvenile Great Northern Diver were observed before we moved on.

We pulled up in Kilchoan village to find that the village shop was not yet open, so we only stayed long enough to see a couple of competing male Reed Buntings and a brief Sedge Warbler, while Cuckoos called on either side of the village. Our drive out to the lighthouse featured a stop at a shallow loch with Tufted Ducks and a pair of Teals, and Fallow Deer were mixing with the Reds on the hillside opposite. At last we reached the lighthouse, where Alan bailed out early before we had even parked the van, for an emergency coffee.

A quick check of the wind direction suggested that we should head down the path to the north of the lighthouse, to shelter from the south-westerly wind. The watch yielded a good variety of species: Black and Common Guillemots, Gannets, hundreds of Manx Shearwaters, several Kittiwakes, Razorbills, a single Fulmar, a pair of Red-throated Divers and a couple of pairs of Rock Pipits singing and displaying around us. The Thrift around the rocks was resplendent.

We returned to the vans briefly to collect a hearty lunch, which we enjoyed on the other side of the lighthouse, where more of the same seabirds passed close by, and where a small flock of Kittiwakes were loafing below us. Sadly, on this occasion there were no cetaceans.

Again, in view of the weather, we agreed to head east to Ockle, on the rationale that we were driving away from the mist, and would be more sheltered from the breeze on the delightful walk from the little car park down to the bay.

Swallows were flying around the car park as we took the track past the little cottages and up the hill. Mistle Thrush and Whinchat were seen, and then Greg found the discarded tail of a Slow-worm on the path. Lousewort, Milkwort and Butterwort were found on and around the path, and Redpolls were heard but not seen.

In the bay we enjoyed sightings of a female Teal, at least four Great Northern Divers, a pair of Oystercatchers, a Ringed Plover in aerial display and a Common Whitethroat in song. A pair of Dunnocks were chasing each other around, and Greg had time to show us a Marsh Thistle, explaining its survival strategy compared to other thistles, and a Brown Silver-line moth, a Bracken specialist. The highlight of the day came at the very end of the walk, when we reached the car park to find a splendid adult male Black Redstart hanging around the farm buildings. Black Redstart is quite a rarity in this part of the world at this time of year, so we were pleased that Jeff was able to get a decent photograph of the bird.

Day 3

Tuesday 26th May

On days when the forecast shows sunshine all day, you dare not hope that there will be no compromise. Well, of course, there was. More on that later, but although there was a shroud of low cloud at dawn, there were still several takers for the early morning walk. We strolled down to the shore of Loch Sunart at the bottom of the drive. Within ten minutes of arrival, and with the dual objective of shaking off the midges and early morning stiffness, we took a stroll to a promontory up the hill, where we would get a wider field of view across the loch which, in the early morning stillness, shone like a mirror.

We could hear plenty of birdsong from Blackcaps, Willow Warblers, Siskins and Greenshank, and a couple of Common Terns flew into the bay with languid grace. A distant female Eider was scoped on the far side of the loch. After about fifteen minutes, some ripples were seen near the shore, which betrayed a small head with little round ears. Thus, our first Otter of the trip was enjoyed at around three hundred metres range: we enjoyed scope views until it disappeared around the back of a lochside rock. We waited for ten minutes for it to reappear, but all that did appear was a swarm of midges, which was our cue to return triumphantly to the bunkhouse.

A leisurely buffet breakfast was enjoyed by all, during which there was an announcement that the boat trip was to be delayed by an hour. No matter: we would head out at 9.45am as planned. We picked up lunches from Sandra and Aaron on the way through, with a short stop at Camas nan Geall, where Ben Hiant was circled with low cloud in an otherwise immaculate blue sky. In the stillness, we could hear Skylark, Redpoll and Yellowhammer, while Swallows and House Martins flew around us. Despite our best efforts to find something on the sea, we moved on without success to Loch Mudle. As we got out of the vans, Greg heard a Grasshopper Warbler, and we walked a short way up the track, where it started again. Eventually, even the older ears were able to hear. Then Pam spotted the bird on its podium, a dead pine stem, rotating its projection through 180°. Despite the presence of the paparazzi, the bird continued to reel for more than five minutes, keeping us spellbound. By the time it left its perch, we were watching the clock.

There was not enough time left to stroll to the view over the loch, so we instead headed straight for Kilchoan...until we got just half a mile further on, when, on the heather moor below, a flash of pale grey caught the eye: a male Hen Harrier. It was being pursued by something brown: a female Hen Harrier! This was a triumph and a relief: Hen Harriers aren't always on Ardnamurchan, but this was the likely place, if we were to see them anywhere. What a start to the day!

In the end, there was only enough time to get parked and use the facilities before we got to the jetty, to see the boat halfway over from Tobermory. The skies were perfect above and the winds were light. The problem was, the skies below were misty. It was decided to visit Staffa first, to use up time for the mist to clear before we hit Lunga for the seabird colonies. On the way, we saw most of the expected birds at close quarters, with large rafts of Manx Shearwaters sometimes taking to the wing if we passed too close, and occasional passes in front of the boat. Shags, Black and Common Guillemots, Kittiwakes and Puffins all featured.

As we arrived at Staffa, we watched another boat edge carefully toward the landing area. It was taking its time, so we peeled off to have a look at Fingal's Cave, which we saw quite closely. Through a gap in the stacks, our skipper could see the difficulties the other boat was having with the swell and decided, after we had had several decent views of the cave, that we would break away and have a longer stay on Lunga. It took a good twenty minutes to get to Lunga, a single Grey Seal peering at us as we passed through a couple of small islands on the way, and as we arrived, the mist was starting to disperse. There were hundreds of auks buzzing around, and Kittiwakes and Arctic Terns were serenely passing by. We got ashore via a floating pontoon, and we were at the bottom of the cliff in five minutes.

Along the top of the cliff, the Puffins were neatly spread like the queue for the first day at Wimbledon, with others scattered on the slopes behind in small breakout groups. We lunched among them before taking the twenty-minute walk out to the stack, where the Guillemot colony pebbledashes the precipitous cliff. At least a couple of Arctic Skuas were patrolling offshore, hoping to pounce on a distracted seabird with food, and the Puffins would occasionally scramble when a Bonxie (Great Skua) or Great Black-backed Gull buzzed past. The walk almost always lasts longer on sunny days, with stops to enjoy point-blank views of well-lit, glossy-plumaged seabirds. We got to the colony and enjoyed the atmosphere, the cacophony, the pungent whiff of accumulated guano, the dashing raids of skuas, and the low passes of incoming Puffins, Razorbills and Guillemots. It was a wonderful, intimate experience which instilled a sense of gratitude that places like this exist.

All too soon, Greg tapped the back of his wrist indicating a suggested departure for the return hike, with time for stops. We even had time to pause on the cliff for ten more minutes with the Puffins, before taking the winding descent down the path to the beach and the waiting boat. The air was now crystal clear, with a bit of a chop to the waves for the return journey, and while the skipper promised he would be in touch with other leading boats via radio, no cetaceans were found on the return journey.

Day 4

Wednesday 27th May

Polloch and the Ariundle Forest Walk would be the venues for our gentle walks this morning. Immaculate skies hinted at a requirement for both sunscreen and Smidge, but also some insect activity once it warmed up. By the time we had reached Polloch, after finding fuel for Greg at Strontian, where a Common Sandpiper was scoped in the bay, it was 10.45am.

The walk up the track would give us an hour going out, probably not quite enough time to reach the jetty on the edge of Loch Shiel, but plenty enough to enjoy all that could be found. Before we set out, a Spotted Flycatcher was found in the car park. On the outward, mainly uphill leg, we started to pick up butterflies straight away: we saw Green-veined Whites in the car park and soon enough, Pearl-bordered Fritillaries in courtship. Then we beheld the prized, diminutive form of Chequered Skipper. Although there hadn't been any rain for a while, there were still a few accumulations of water in the ditch. Large Red Damsels and Common Bluetails took advantage, along with Four-spotted Chasers.

At the rear of the group, Greg and others enjoyed a Clouded Border moth, a brief sighting of a Common Lizard basking in the weak sunshine, several Large Red Damsels, and 'toadpoles' in the remaining puddles. Garden Warblers could be heard in the trees. As the temperature warmed, Small Copper, Peacock, Green Hairstreak butterflies and Common Heath moth were added to the insect list. As we reached the high point of the track, we scanned along a ridge on the opposite side of Loch Shiel. The outlines of several Red Deer were discerned, and then there was some excitement when two large raptors were seen above the skyline. The telescope was needed to confirm that these were two young Golden Eagles. Reaction from the clients was somewhat muted, as the birds were probably three and a half miles away! The warmer temperature on the way down yielded more of the same insects plus, this time, a decent view of a roosting Golden-ringed Dragonfly. We managed to reach the car park just ten minutes behind schedule, and went to the Ariundle Centre, where we ordered a fresh brew to enjoy with our lunch.

The temperature was now a balmy 24°C as we drove the short distance to the car park at the beginning of our next walk. A single Crossbill called from the treetops next to the car park, but could not be found. In the quiet of the avian siesta, Greg was finding several interesting plants: Pignut, Bugle, Hare's-tail Cotton-grass and Wood Sage, along with its monophage moth, the Speckled Yellow. A Wood Warbler was heard in the woods before we turned out into the heath and to the bridge across the river. More dragonflies were found, of the same species we had enjoyed in the morning, and there was a fair smattering of Chequered Skippers in fresh condition, indicating that emergence was still underway.

All was relatively quiet on the bird front until we looped back into the part-shade on the return leg of the track, where we found a Treecreeper and a showier Wood Warbler. Speckled Wood butterflies also lined the track in the dappled light.

Day 5

Thursday 28th May

Today was the last day of fair weather forecast, with cloud expected to arrive in the late afternoon. The plan was to visit Tioram Castle, with visits to Loch Shiel at Acharacle, Kentra Moss and Glen Moidart. Our first stop at Acharacle jetty on Loch Shiel was very pleasant. Sand Martins were hawking low over the water, with Tufted Ducks out in the middle. Redpolls tangled around us and, at distance, a Greenshank was scoped. Hooded Crows and Ravens commuted across, and a pair of Common Sandpipers were courting on the edge of the loch. One of the clients noted that the roosting Common Gull on a nearby dinghy had a mate on a nest inside the boat! Just as we were having a final scan, two Black-throated Divers swam into view.

We stopped at Kentra Moss, where we found two species of sundews and enjoyed the beautiful flowering Bogbean in the wetter areas, while several Skylarks sang around us and a few Curlew tremolos were heard in the distance.

We thought Kentra Bay might have been a worthwhile stop, but as we arrived the tide was well out and there were no waders. There was, however, a spectacular green lump on top of a small knoll, whose formation Greg neatly explained: birds standing sentinel and Otters sprinting together fertilise the thin soils, and encourage the growth of these green pimples.

We arrived at Tioram Castle to find that a noisy school event was in full swing, compromising the tranquillity of this wonderful place. We were slightly ahead of schedule, so we decided to leave the lunches behind and take a slow stroll out to the castle. In previous years, we have found White-tailed Eagle nests in the woodland opposite the car park, visible from the back of the castle. Last year's nest, however, had been completely dismantled by winter storms. We studied a grassy area where we found the smaller, more selective excavations that were probably the work of Badgers, where previously we had found more substantial excavations caused by Wild Boar. As we climbed the mound to the foot of the castle, a White-tailed Eagle's call was heard. This encouraged me to scan the woodland for a nest or, perhaps, the bird itself.

After a couple of minutes, a large brown blob near the top of a tree caught my eye. Its pale top-half suggested it was an adult White-tailed Eagle, which the scope confirmed. All clients were able to view the eagle (this time only one and a half miles away!). It seemed that this bird was waiting for another to return with food, and sure enough a second eagle soon appeared. They swapped perches and the first bird took to the air, initially looking for a thermal and then more determinedly exiting stage right, escorted initially by Ravens, then mobbed by a larger bird which turned out to be an Osprey. We also saw and heard Rock Doves and Rock Pipits (both breed here), and a fine Red Admiral briefly settled beside us. The rhythmic croak of a Red-throated Diver was heard as it flew high over the castle, silhouetted against a backlit cumulus cloud.

After a relatively late lunch at Acharacle, we motored out to Glen Moidart for a short walk into a mountain corrie with a small loch, and to see one of the most wonderful vistas on the peninsula. The sun was still warm as we reached the rickety bridge across the burn. As we crossed the bridge, a dashing shape flew under it and settled on a rock. We pulled the van over and observed a Dipper, presenting beautifully against the reflection of the calm water, with a big billful of caddisflies ready to feed to its young.

The path we chose to take rose behind the car park and then down into the amphitheatre, where a few cottages were reflected in the small loch across the way. We were pleased to find that this site now held Chequered Skippers as well: one was found roosting in a trackside ditch. As we reached the high point of the path, two adult White-tailed Eagles flew around the hollow below us. A Cuckoo was echoing across the valley, and even a Garden Warbler could be heard. Song-fighting Meadow Pipits parachuted down, and Snipes drummed. We met a couple who reported Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries further down the track, but we declined to go too much further before returning. On the return walk back to the car park, we enjoyed watching a pair of Grey Wagtails fairly close to the path as the skies began to cloud over.

We were treated to another view of White-tailed Eagle as we reached the Natural History centre for our dinner, rounding off another good day in the field.

Day 6

Friday 29th May

Today was another cool and damp day, as the forecast had predicted. In anticipation, we scheduled a relaxed start time of 9.00am, or perhaps when the weather showed signs of improvement, while the garden was liberally baited with sweet treats in case a Pine Marten passed by. In the event, the breakfast vigil had some rewards, with three separate Red Squirrels, Siskins on the feeder, and one or two Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

The day for the wet-weather vigil in the An Garbh Eilean hide had finally come. We knew that a nest previously used by White-tailed Eagles two years earlier was now being used again, with an adult feeding two chicks. While clients took turns to watch the adult and juvenile eagles, Red-breasted Merganser, Arctic Tern, Common Sandpiper, Oystercatcher and three species of gull were all observed. When the scope was free to examine more distant wildlife, several Eiders were seen on the buoys around the mussel farm. With no sign of the other adult White-tailed Eagle, after three-quarters of an hour the hard-working adult left the nest, presumably to hunt, leaving the chicks behind to get cold and wet.

As the tide ebbed, more skerries were exposed, where Harbour Seals loafed. A single Grey Seal, caught a massive salmon, which it then skinned and slowly devoured, with leftovers gratefully pilfered by the gulls. The presumed adult female White-tailed Eagle returned and came down onto one of the skerries by the hide, where it was mobbed by both Common Gulls and Hooded Crows. One of the eaglets stood up in the nest: it quite well-developed, with very little down left. We returned to the bunkhouse to reheat, and refuel with another of Sandra's excellent lunches.

In the afternoon we went to Sanna Bay. The weather continued damp and grey, so finding avian wildlife was going to be a challenge. In situations like this, Greg came into his own with numerous anecdotes and factoids around the plants of this amazing duneland habitat. During the first of Greg's mini-lectures, a pair of Twites were quietly pecking around.

Then Greg treated everyone to a plant extravaganza, the highlight of which were tiny Early Marsh Orchids just coming into flower. However, alongside them was a taller orchid with spotted leaves which Greg called as a possible hybrid. In fact, subsequent examination of the hastily taken photos, with advice from national experts, concluded that this was in fact a very special find: a Pugsley's Marsh Orchid, for which this was new location!

We reached the first beach where Lynn spotted an Otter's tail disappearing into the surf. I suggested we rapidly move to one end of the beach to get a slightly more elevated view, as the sea was quite choppy. Amazingly, the Otter swam towards us and into the cover of nearby rocks. As we were a little close for its comfort, we retreated and walked over to the next bay, where we found a dozen Sanderlings and a Ringed Plover, in the hope that the Otter might make its way around to this beach to wash off the salt water in the burn.

Sometimes, things don't go quite to plan, but as luck would have it, and in improving light, Greg quickly pointed out the Otter a mere forty metres away. It was busily fishing, and on a couple of occasions hauled itself up onto a nearby rock where everyone was able to take decent photographs. On a wet day, we had salvaged some significant rewards, of which this was surely the highlight, closely followed by Greg's presentation on five different species of seaweed.

Day 7

Saturday 30th May

A clearer but still occasionally dreich day began early with a 5.00am shout of “Pine Marten!” from the early birds in the dining room. But the beast frustratingly scarpered before anyone else could rouse themselves and stumble through to the viewing area. Breakfast was enlivened by a couple of Red Squirrels, but there was no return of the mustelid.

Our first port of call, given the lifting cloud base, was again Camas nan Geall. Today the tops were free of cloud, and we enjoyed an ‘eagle fest’, with five separate White-tailed Eagles and a juvenile Golden Eagle. The two species appeared to be interacting: the White-tailed appearing as the Golden Eagle circled the ridge-top. They then landed on the hillside below and were joined by some Ravens, clearly agitated by the presence of these aerial ‘top guns’. As we headed off, an obliging Snipe posed on a fence post for the photographers.

Our next stop was Fascaidale on the north shore of the peninsula, where we were treated to amazing views of the Small Isles. The highlight here was a male Wheatear singing and song-fighting on the ice house, a historic building from the period when this area was the heart of the west coast salmon fishery. A distant Whinchat sang briefly and, rather more obligingly, Redpolls buzzed around the treetops. On the sea, Gannets fished close in, sharing their bounty with a couple of busily fishing Great Northern Divers. Heath Bedstraw and English Stonecrop were both just coming into flower.

We realised that, surprisingly, we hadn’t seen a Lapwing yet, so we were on high alert for one in the fields as we drove back up to the main road. “There’s one!”, came the cry almost as soon as we started looking. We also saw the male Hen Harrier again, in the same place as last time. By this point, heavy rain was blowing through, so we returned to the bunk house for lunch with a hot drink, in the company of two Red Squirrels, both of which remained wary and didn’t stay for long.

After the rain had passed, and in hope of some sun peeking through in its aftermath, we walked up through RSPB’s Glenborrodale reserve. Sadly, the sun never quite made it out, so butterflies were in short supply, but Common Dog Violets, the food plant of the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, were growing in profusion alongside a perfect stand of Sweet Vernal Grass, Bluebells, Cow-wheat, Pignut and the lemony Wood Sorrel. A Cream Wave moth was new for the week, and four different species of woodrush was an impressive tally. As we dropped down back to the road, a Goldcrest came to say hello, and my whistled imitation of a Wood Warbler summoned one down to join us at similarly close quarters. Our afternoon was well-timed, as another squall blew through as we headed back to the bunkhouse in relay.

Day 8

Sunday 31st May

The need for an early departure for Glasgow meant that we were all up in good time: breakfast was in full swing when a Pine Marten appeared. At last, one we could all enjoy! And it didn’t just pass through, but stayed to help itself to the various morsels on offer. My final photo of the trip was of everyone watching through the window, as the Pine Marten sashayed along the windowsill just inches from their noses. Magic!

N.B. Twice during the week, we heard the distinctive calls of Goshawk: on one occasion an adult and on the second a juvenile bird. This is a very rare breeding bird in this part of Scotland, so we have not mentioned it in the day-by-day report so as to protect its location.

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Species lists

Birds (H=heard only)

I=Introduced		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Canada Goose - I	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mute Swan	<i>Cygnus olor</i>	✓						
Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>		✓					
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓	✓					
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>		✓			✓		
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>		✓	✓			✓	
Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i>	✓	✓					
Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Black Grouse	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i>	✓						
Common Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	✓						
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	✓	✓	H	H	✓	✓	H
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>				✓			
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>		✓				✓	
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	✓	✓			✓		✓
Eurasian Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>						✓	
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>		✓	✓		✓		
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	H	✓	H		✓		✓
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	H						
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	H	H	H		✓		
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			✓				
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>			✓			✓	
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>		✓					
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>		✓	✓			✓	
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>		✓	✓			✓	
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>		✓	✓				✓
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	✓						
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	✓	✓	✓				
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>			✓				
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>			✓				
Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>			✓				
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>		✓	✓				
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>		✓	✓				

I=Introduced		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		✓			✓		
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>					✓		
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>		✓					✓
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		✓	✓				
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>		✓	✓				✓
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓		✓				
European Shag	<i>Gulosus aristotelis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	✓				✓		
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>				✓			✓
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>					✓		
Eurasian Goshawk	<i>Astur gentilis</i>							
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>			✓			✓	✓
White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	✓	✓			4	✓	✓
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	H	✓	H	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓				✓		
Eurasian Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	✓						
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	✓						
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	✓	✓	✓	H	✓		✓
Coal Tit	<i>Parus ater</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western House Martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>				✓			✓
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		H	H	H			✓
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>		✓				H	
Common Grasshopper Warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>			✓				
Eurasian Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>			H	H	H		✓
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>		H	H	H	H		
Common Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>		✓			H		
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>				H			✓
Eurasian Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>				✓			
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		✓	✓				
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		✓	✓				✓
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>				✓			

I=Introduced		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>		✓					
Whinchat	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>		✓					H
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>					✓		
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓				✓		
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	✓		✓	H			H
European Rock Pipit	<i>Anthus petrosus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>			✓	✓	H	✓	✓
European Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>					H		✓
Twite	<i>Linaria flavirostris</i>			H			✓	
Common Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>		✓				✓	✓
Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	✓	H	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>				H			
European Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eurasian Siskin	<i>Spinus spinus</i>	✓	✓	H	✓	H	✓	✓
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>		H	✓			H	
Common Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>		✓			H		

Mammals

I=Introduced		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Common Vole	<i>Microtus arvalis</i>		✓					
Wood Mouse	<i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>		✓		✓		✓	
Eurasian Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>				✓		2	2
Common Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>						✓	
Fallow Deer - I	<i>Dama dama</i>		✓					
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Roe Deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	✓					✓	
Domestic Goat - I	<i>Capra hircus</i>		✓		✓			
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>			✓			✓	
Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>				✓	✓	✓	
European Pine Marten	<i>Martes martes</i>						✓	2
Eurasian Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	✓		✓			✓	

Amphibians & reptiles

D=dead		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Palmate Newt	<i>Lissotriton helveticus</i>				✓	✓		
Common Toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>				✓	✓		
Viviparous Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>				✓			
European Slow-worm (shed tail)	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>		D					

Butterflies

		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Chequered Skipper	<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i>				✓	✓		
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>				✓			
Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Common Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>				✓	✓		
Green Hairstreak	<i>Callophrys rubi</i>	✓			✓	✓		
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>				✓			
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>			✓		✓		
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>				✓	✓		
Peacock Butterfly	<i>Aglais io</i>				✓	✓		
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>					✓		
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>				✓			

Moths

		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Fox Moth	<i>Macrothylacia rubi</i>					✓		
Cream Wave	<i>Scopula floslactata</i>							✓
Flame Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe designata</i>				✓	✓		
May Highflyer	<i>Hydriomena impluviata</i>					✓		
Spruce Carpet	<i>Thera britannica</i>				✓	✓		
Common Marbled Carpet	<i>Dysstroma truncata</i>				✓			
Green Carpet	<i>Colostygia pectinataria</i>					✓		
Water Carpet	<i>Lampropteryx suffumata</i>					✓		
Argent & Sable	<i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>				✓			
Brindled Pug	<i>Eupithecia abbreviata</i>				✓	✓		
Clouded Border	<i>Lomaspilis marginata</i>				✓			
Brown Silver-line	<i>Petrophora chlorosata</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓
Scorched Wing	<i>Plagodis dolabraria</i>			✓		✓		
Speckled Yellow	<i>Pseudopanthera macularia</i>				✓			
Scalloped Hazel	<i>Odontopera bidentata</i>				✓	✓		
Grey Birch	<i>Aethalura punctulata</i>				✓			
Common Heath	<i>Ematurga atomaria</i>				✓	✓		
Herald	<i>Scoliopteryx libatrix</i>					✓		
Buff Tip	<i>Phalera bucephala</i>				✓			

		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
White Ermine	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>				✓	✓		
Silver Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>		✓					
Nut Tree Tussock	<i>Colocasia coryli</i>					✓		
Pale-shouldered Brocade	<i>Lacanobia thalassina</i>							✓
Flame Shoulder	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>					✓		
Small Square Spot	<i>Diarsia rubi</i>					✓		

Damselflies & dragonflies

		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Beautiful Demoiselle	<i>Calopteryx virgo</i>				✓			
Common Bluetail	<i>Ischnura elegans</i>				✓			
Large Red Damsel	<i>Pyrrhosoma nymphula</i>				✓	✓		
Common Goldenring	<i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i>				✓			
Four-spotted Chaser	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>				✓	✓		

Other insects

		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Flies								
a snipe fly	<i>Rhagio rhodaceus</i>				✓			
a hoverfly	<i>Seriocomyia silentis</i>				✓			
Bees and wasps								
Common Carder Bumblebee	<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>			✓	✓	✓		
White-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus lucorum</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
a black javelin wasp	<i>Ichneumon</i> sp.				✓			
Beetles								
Green Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela campestris</i>				✓	✓		
Two-banded Longhorn Beetle	<i>Rhagium bifasciatum</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
a staphylinid rove beetle	<i>Staphylinus</i> sp.				✓			

Other invertebrates

		May 2026						
Common name	Scientific name	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Gordian worms								
a horsehair worm	<i>Nematomorpha</i> sp.				✓			
Snails								
Brown-lipped Snail	<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i>						✓	

Fungi

Common name	Scientific name	Locations
Campion Smut Fungus	<i>Microbotryum violaceum</i>	Lunga

Lichens

Common name	Scientific name	Locations
Dog Lichen	<i>Peltigera</i> sp.	Ariundle
a yellow foliose lichen	<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse

Seaweeds

Common name	Scientific name	Locations
Gut Weed	<i>Ulva intestinalis</i>	Tioram Castle
Sea Lettuce	<i>Ulva lactuca</i>	Sanna
Oarweed	<i>Laminaria digitata</i>	Sanna
Cuvie	<i>Laminaria hyperborea</i>	Sanna
Sea Spaghetti	<i>Himanthalia elongata</i>	Sanna
Egg Wrack	<i>Ascophyllum nodosum</i>	Sanna
Toothed Wrack	<i>Fucus serratus</i>	Sanna
Spiralled Wrack	<i>Fucus spiralis</i>	Sanna
Bladder Wrack	<i>Fucus vesiculosus</i>	Sanna
Channelled Wrack	<i>Pelvetia canaliculata</i>	Sanna

Plants

Common name	Scientific name	Locations
Horsetails and ferns		
Wood Horsetail	<i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i>	Ariundle
Black Spleenwort	<i>Asplenium adiantum-nigrum</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse
Sea Spleenwort	<i>Asplenium marinum</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse
Hart's-tongue Fern	<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse
Maidenhair Spleenwort	<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse
Lady Fern	<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse
Hard Fern	<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	An Garbh Eilean
Common Polypody	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Ariundle
Conifers		
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Ariundle
Flowering Plants		
American Skunk Cabbage	<i>Lysichiton americanus</i>	Glen Borrodale
Wild Garlic	<i>Allium ursinum</i>	Kinlochmoidart
Spring Squill	<i>Scilla verna</i>	Lunga
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Stuckindroin, Ardnamurchan lighthouse, Lunga, Glen Borrodale
Early Marsh Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i>	Sanna
Heath Spotted Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse
Pugsley's Marsh Orchid	<i>Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides</i>	Sanna
Field Woodrush	<i>Luzula campestris</i>	Glen Borrodale
Heath Woodrush	<i>Luzula multiflora</i>	Glen Borrodale
Hairy Woodrush	<i>Luzula pilosa</i>	Glen Borrodale
Great Woodrush	<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Glen Borrodale
Common Sedge	<i>Carex nigra</i>	Ockle
Common Cottongrass	<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	Kentra
Hare's-tail Cotton-grass	<i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i>	Ariundle, Kentra
Purple Moor Grass	<i>Molinia caerulea</i>	Ariundle
Sterile Brome	<i>Bromus sterilis</i>	Glen Borrodale
Marram Grass	<i>Ammophila arenaria</i>	Sanna

Common name	Scientific name	Locations
Sweet Vernal Grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Polloch, Glen Borrodale
Creeping Soft Grass	<i>Holcus mollis</i>	An Garbh Eilean
Bulbous Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	Sanna
Marsh Marigold	<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Sanna
Lesser Celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Lunga
Wood Sorrel	<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	Glen Borrodale
Bird's Foot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Lunga, Polloch
Bitter Vetch	<i>Lathyrus linifolius</i>	Glen Borrodale
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Ockle
Heath Milkwort	<i>Polygala serpyllifolia</i>	Glen Moidart
Common Milkwort	<i>Polygala vulgaris</i>	Ockle, Sanna
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Sanna
Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Glen Borrodale
Wild Strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Ariundle
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Ariundle
Common Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Lunga
Sea Sandwort	<i>Honckenya peploides</i>	Tioram Castle
Sea Campion	<i>Silene uniflora</i>	Lunga
Bog Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria alsine</i>	Polloch
Greater Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria holostea</i>	Polloch
English Stonecrop	<i>Sedum anglicum</i>	Fascadale
Roseroot	<i>Rhodiola rosea</i>	Lunga
Oblong-leaved Sundew	<i>Drosera intermedia</i>	Kentra
Round-leaved Sundew	<i>Drosera rotundifolia</i>	Stuckindroin, Kentra, Fascadale
Creeping Willow	<i>Salix repens</i>	Lunga
Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Ariundle
Sessile Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	Ariundle, An Garbh Eilean
Bog Myrtle	<i>Myrica gale</i>	Ariundle
Lady's Smock	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Ariundle
Wavy Bittercress	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Polloch
Common Scurvy-grass	<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>	Kilchoan, Lunga
Common Lime	<i>Tilia × europaea</i>	Glen Moidart
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	Glen Moidart
Blaeberry	<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	Ariundle
Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>	Lunga
Yellow Pimpernel	<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Polloch
Thrift	<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Ardnamurchan lighthouse, Lunga
Heath Bedstraw	<i>Galium saxatile</i>	Fascadale
Bogbean	<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Kentra
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Fascadale
Common Dog Violet	<i>Viola riviniana</i>	Lunga, Glen Borrodale
Bugle	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Ariundle
Water Mint	<i>Mentha aquatica</i>	Sanna
Wood Sage	<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Ariundle, Polloch
Common Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis sylvatica</i>	Ockle, Sanna
Marsh Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis palustris</i>	Sanna
Common Cow-wheat	<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>	Glen Borrodale
Common Figwort	<i>Scrophularia nodosa</i>	Polloch
Common Butterwort	<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>	Ockle, Glen Moidart, Sanna
Angelica	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>	Lunga

Common name	Scientific name	Locations
Pignut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>	Ariundle, Glen Borrodale
Hemlock Water-dropwort	<i>Oenanthe crocata</i>	Kilchoan
Scots Lovage	<i>Ligusticum scoticum</i>	Lunga
Marsh Thistle	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Ockle
Fox-and-Cubs	<i>Pilosella aurantiaca</i>	Polloch
Mouse-ear Hawkweed	<i>Pilosella officinarum</i>	Sanna
Sea Mayweed	<i>Tripleurospermum maritimum</i>	Lunga