

Isle of Eigg Bird Report 2023

Summary

During the course of 2023 a lower than average total of 121 species were recorded on the island though these did include one new addition to the Eigg bird list. The number of breeding species though was about the norm with a total of 73 species known to have bred or have made a serious breeding attempt.

Amongst the rarer species the breeding season was a bit of a mixed bag with neither pair of Golden Eagles breeding successfully though White Tailed Eagles were thought to have fledged one chick. Two pairs of Red Throated Divers were known to have been sitting on eggs though the outcome of these nests is unknown.

On a more positive note Hen Harriers raised at least one chick while Sparrowhawks, Kestrels & particularly Long Eared Owls enjoyed productive seasons. Curlew & Redshank again bred successfully while it was the usual mixed results for the smaller passerine species.

Spring migration was generally pretty sparse though it did provide quality in the shape of the islands first Alpine Swift as well as an Osprey plus a few of the more expected species. Autumn though proved much more lively with the continuing easterly winds producing the first large passage of Fieldfare & Redwing for some years. It also produced several Bramblings, a couple of small flocks of Waxwings & some distinctly late dates for several regular summer visitors.

As always I am very grateful to all the many people who passed on records & observations throughout the year. Without these records these reports would be much less complete. In association with this could I ask interested persons to specifically keep an eye out for the following species over the course of the next year.

Red Grouse

With the last records being of a couple of lone birds reported in 2021 there has to be some question as to whether a population still exists on the island. It would therefore be really helpful if anyone visiting the areas of higher moorland, particularly An Cruachan & the Sgurr ridge above & around the lochans, would keep an eye out for these birds (or even fresh droppings).

Any comments, even negative ones, would be gratefully received.

Snipe

Until reasonably recently the sound of displaying (drumming) Snipe was a regular backdrop to spring & summer evenings in the croftland & at Kildonan. Recently though numbers seem to have fallen away dramatically so it would be of real interest to try to get a more complete picture of the current status of this species. It would therefore be very helpful to receive any comments about drumming birds especially from the croftland area.

Twite

A small brown finch that previously bred thinly but widely around the moorland fringes & rough grazings particularly in the Grulin area & at Howlin/Struidh. In late summer it frequently gathered in large flocks, often with other finches, to feed on seed heads throughout the croftland.

Recently however it appears to have become much scarcer so any records from people with experience of this species would be very welcome. This would be particularly valuable with regard to breeding records.

SPECIES LIST

Whooper Swan

Two early year records of birds passing over Kildonan with two on March 11th (C Carr) & 13 on March 23rd (JC). Autumn passage between October 4th & November 12th with four records of small numbers, max of 8, passing south (JC, M McKinnon)

Pink Footed Goose

Occasional records of birds on spring passage in April with main movement on the 25th when flocks totalling 210 birds recorded (JC, M McKinnon). A lone bird was briefly with the Greylags at Cuagach on April 8th (JC). Unusually scarce in autumn with the only record being of 20 passing over Cleadale on Oct 8th (N Robertson).

Greylag Goose

Large & widespread breeding population & a very productive season with many young reared. First eggs found on April 11th (M McKinnon) & first young seen on May 5th (JC). Common throughout with max flock counts of 110 on March 9th & 160 on July 24th. Present throughout though in smaller flocks during the winter months.

Canada Goose

Increased spring records with a pair present from March 3rd until May 20th the first record of long staying birds on the island. It would appear to be only a matter of time before the first Egg breeding occurs. Outwith the aforementioned pair there were records of 5 past Talm on April 7th (JC), 3 at Laig on April 15th (K Jones) & 3 at Kildonan on May 5th (JC). A record of 3 birds at Castle Island between July 17th & 24th (JC) was the first late summer occurrence on the island.

Barnacle Goose

Two early year records, both of single birds. A sickly looking individual at Kildonan on Jan 28th-29th (C&M Carr) & a healthy bird again at Kildonan on Feb 18th (JC).

Shelduck

No known breeding attempts & unusually scarce in the spring with a lone male at the SE Bays & a pair briefly at the Singing Sands the only suggestion of territorial birds. Birds present from Feb 2nd (B Cormack) until May 6th with a flock of seven at Kildonan Bay on March 29th (JC) the only passage recorded.

Unusual mid summer record of two at Kildonan then Laig Bay on July 13th -15th (B&S Gardner et al)

Teal

As usual small numbers present at Laig early & late in the year. Max count of seven on the Giants Footprint lochan on March 30th (B Cormack).

Mallard

As usual a few pairs bred at Laig with broods of four & five ducklings seen at the Giants Footprint lochan in mid May (N Barnes). The odd pair also bred elsewhere with a female with three large young reported at Loch Cora Beinn on May 28th. Birds present throughout with max count of 16 at Kildonan on Oct 3rd.

Eider

An overall productive breeding season with good numbers of ducklings present at the SE Bays in late May/early June. Count of 20 young on June 2nd with the odd brood of small ducklings still appearing in early July. First young seen on May 20th (S Flack)

Birds present from March 24th (JC, N Barnes) with max count of 16 males in early May. Most males had left the island by early June with the majority of females/young departing around the end of that month. A few females with young remained throughout August with one female lingering until mid October.

An immature male present at the SE Bays between Oct 19th & Nov 9th was the only other record.

Red Breasted Merganser

Irregular records of 1-2 birds at the SE Bays up until April 30th & between Oct 12th & Dec 5th.

Pheasant

Common breeder throughout much of the island & a successful season with numerous reports of females with young. Common throughout with a group of 10 females seen at the Kildonan Road on March 22nd (C Carr) & up to five birds regular at Millers Cottage feeders during the winter months. A female seen flying from Craigard to Castle Island on March 24th was, by Pheasant standards, showing a considerable spirit of adventure.

(Red Grouse – no records received, last sightings in 2021)

Red Throated Diver

Two breeding pairs present with both known to be sitting eggs in early June (N Barnes).

Unfortunately there was no follow up information & the outcome of the nests is unknown. As per norm common offshore in the summer months, but much scarcer during the winter periods.

Great Northern Diver

Small numbers present offshore up until June 2nd & from Oct 9th. Max of only four on March 19th (JC, E O'Reilly) though a winter count around Struidh would undoubtedly produce larger numbers.

Little Grebe

One pair bred at Laig & successfully raised three young. Birds present from March 2nd (E O'Reilly) until mid July.

Gannet

Present offshore from March 23rd until late October but numbers generally rather low & no significant counts. However large numbers were present throughout the offshore waters during a spell of gales in late September. Single birds between Mallaig & Eigg on Feb 13th (B Wallace), off the Perches on Nov 8th (JC) & between Mallaig & Eigg on Dec 4th (N Barnes, B Wallace) were the only winter records.

Manx Shearwater

Birds recorded calling from their colonies above the croftland from April 1st (T McLean) & good numbers reported there in early May (P Carr, C Davies). Recorded offshore from April 4th but no particularly big counts; 200 beyond the Perches on Aug 3rd (JC) & 300 off the east coast on Aug 17th (P Carr). Last record of one between Eigg & Mallaig on Sept 16th (JC).

Storm Petrel

Occasional offshore records reported from ferry crossings with large numbers present between Eigg & Muck on July 17th (R Dyer).

Shag

Common resident & a successful breeding season at their main site on Castle Island where many fledged juvs present in early July. Common throughout with max count of 120 on Oct 19th.

Cormorant

As usual present in small numbers throughout, max of only five on Feb 18th. Almost all sightings from the Perches-Castle Island area.

Grey Heron

Present in small numbers throughout, max of only four, with most records from the SE Bays. Possible breeding attempt reported at the Lodge Grounds (P Slawek, S Flack).

Osprey

A bird flying north over the Kildonan cliffs on April 19th (JC, B Visscher) was a fourth Eigg record & the first since 2016.

Hen Harrier

Two pairs present with one pair known to have bred & successfully fledged at least one chick. First display seen on April 17th (E O'Reilly). As usual birds move away from the island in late July & no records until the first returned bird on Aug 23rd (M McKinnon). At least one male & one female present Sept – Dec though late year sightings much less regular than usual.

Sparrowhawk

Probably the usual 2-3 pairs bred seemingly with a fair degree of success as several juvs seen in the late summer. Very regular sightings throughout the island from late summer on with frequent reports of attacks on small birds at garden feeding stations. Prey species known to have been taken included Rock Dove, Robin, Blackbird, Great Tit, House Sparrow & Chaffinch.

Buzzard

Breeding population probably much as in previous years with several pairs known to have raised young. One pair at Laig successfully raised three young & single chicks were also fledged at Struidh & in the forestry plantation. As usual juvenile birds were very vocal & obvious in the late summer.

Unusual record of a bird seen to pluck a Mallard duckling off the water at the Giants Footprint lochan on May 16th (S Renny).

Golden Eagle

Two resident pairs present throughout but sadly neither pair successfully bred. Resident pairs apart the only other record was of an immature bird at the Kildonan Braes on Aug 2nd (C Carr).

White Tailed Eagle

One pair bred with a large chick present in the nest on May 16th (N Barnes). Unfortunately the site was not re-visited until mid July by which time the nest was empty & the chick hopefully fledged. Adult pair present throughout & seen to drive off an intruding adult at Kildonan on April 19th (JC). Fairly regular records of juv birds throughout the year with two adults & a juv seen together near the school on Oct 29th (C Carr).

White Tailed Eagle (cont)

Adult bird seen attacking swimming Eiders near the Perches on April 14th (N Robertson) & a juv was seen to take a new fledged Herring Gull at Galmisdale Bay on July 22nd (JC).

Kestrel

6+ breeding pairs present & seemingly a fairly successful season as frequent & widespread sightings of birds from midsummer on. A bird observed flying south low over the sea approx 2 miles offshore from Eigg on Oct 31st (Geo Carr) was presumably a migrant.

Merlin

A very poor year with only one record, a male at seen at Galmisdale on April 22nd (JB Cormack) then at Kildonan on April 24th (JC).

Peregrine

Unusually only three records. Birds seen at Kildonan on July 2nd, Cleadale on Aug 4th & Galmisdale on Aug 26th (JC, A Boden).

Water Rail

Probably bred in the croftland marshes but no conclusive evidence. Calling birds heard there on several occasions throughout the year.

Oystercatcher

Common breeder around the shorelines & seemingly a fairly productive season presumably helped by the fine early summer weather. At least three pairs successfully fledged young at the SE Bays with first eggs seen on May 9th & first young on June 8th (N Barnes). As usual numbers much lower during the winter months with spring arrival early-mid March & departure in late September.

Ringed Plover

Breeding population presumably around the usual 12 pairs with a few juvs seen during the summer. First clutch of eggs found on May 9th (N Barnes). Usual autumn build up of numbers at Galmisdale Bay with peak count of 41 there on Sept 7th (JC).

Golden Plover

Five spring records of small numbers (max of six) at the Kildonan hayfield between March 14th & May 17th (JC). A flock of 16, again at the Kildonan hayfield, on Oct 17th (JC) was the only autumn record. Midwinter records of 15 on the Sgurr Moors on Jan 4th (J Robertson) & 5 near Cora Beinn on Dec 5th (D Wiggin).

Lapwing

Approximately 40 pairs present, much as last year, though the distribution of the breeding pairs has changed greatly in the past few years. Again no breeding took place in the previously well populated croftland while numbers at Kildonan fell to around 20 pairs. However up to 20 pairs were located in the Grulin area (A Boden) & at least two pairs were present on the lower Sgurr moors (J Robertson).

Dunlin

Present on spring & autumn migration though less regular & in smaller numbers than is usually the case. Spring passage between May 9th & June 7th with autumn migration from July 17th until mid September. Late record of four on Oct 9th. Almost all records from Galmisdale Bay.

Sanderling

An extremely poor year with only one record, a juv bird at Galmisdale Bay on Aug 28th (N Barnes, H Woolston)

Jack Snipe

Two records. Single birds flushed near Grulin on March 20th (J Robertson) & at the Church Park on Dec 9th (K Kean).

Snipe

A few displaying birds recorded but the population appears dramatically reduced from that of ten years ago when the drumming display was a regular backdrop to summer evenings. Birds present throughout with some passage in spring & autumn; 11 flushed from the Kildonan marshes on March 7th (JC).

Woodcock

Only 1-2 roding birds recorded though others may well have been present. First displaying bird seen on April 25th (J Robertson). As usual considerable influx of birds during the winter months with roadside counts of 15 on the evening of Jan 4th (B McCoy) & 20 on Jan 8th (D Wiggin).

Bar Tailed Godwit

One record, a lone bird at Galmisdale Bay on Oct 9th (JC).

Black Tailed Godwit

A bird at Kildonan Bay on April 28th (JC) was the only record.

Whimbrel

Six spring records of small numbers, max of four, between April 28th & May 6th (JC). Two late summer records of single birds on July 4th & July 27th (JC). All records from the SE Bays.

Curlew

Three breeding pairs present with chicks seen on the Kildonan Braes in early July though one was known to have been predated by a Buzzard (C Carr). Birds present throughout with max count of 24 on Aug 30th.

Redshank

One pair bred at the Kildonan Braes with two downy young seen on May 24th (C Carr). Outwith the breeding pair birds present in very small numbers at the SE Bays up until March & from August on though much less regular & numerous than normal.

Greenshank

Overwintering bird present at the SE Bays up until March 27th. Outwith this individual four spring records of 1-2 birds between March 27th & May 18th. Autumn migration from July 13th with almost daily records of single birds up until late October & with one bird remaining until at least mid December.

Common Sandpiper

Breeding pairs scattered widely around the shoreline while a single pair was present at the moorland lochans (B Cormack). A total of seven pairs were located at the SE Bays & two pairs were present on Castle Island. Seemingly overall a reasonably successful season with several chicks seen. First chicks seen on June 5th (S Heath).

Birds present from April 18th (JC) with main arrival in early May. Fast departure from mid July with last record on Aug 1st.

Turnstone

Now a rather scarce bird on Eigg with only three records, all from the SE Bays. One on Jan 13th (JC), two on May 3rd (N Barnes) & one on Aug 24th (JC).

Arctic Skua

Only two records, both of single birds – one south by the Perches on Aug 10th & one between Eigg & Mallaig on Sept 16th (both JC).

Great Skua

3-4 birds present around Castle Island throughout the summer months with up to six there during August. Despite the birds regular presence though there was no evidence of any serious breeding attempt. Birds present from April 1st (JC) with last record on Sept 7th.

Black Headed Gull

A poor year with only six records of 1-2 birds spread between April 8th & August 11th.

Common Gull

Several pairs bred with a count of 11 fledged juvs at Galmisdale Bay on Aug 7th. Present throughout with regular counts of 50 birds at the SE Bays during the winter months.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Small numbers present between March 17th (JC) & the end of August. Max of only nine on April 16th. Again no suggestion of any breeding attempt.

Herring Gull

Common resident with small numbers breeding. At least five young fledged on Castle Island & several other young present at the SE Bays from mid July on. Common throughout with max count of 130 at Kildonan bay on March 20th (JC).

Great Black-backed Gull

A few pairs bred with one pair raising two young on Castle Island. Common throughout though no particularly significant counts.

Kittiwake

Present offshore throughout though scarce during the midwinter periods. Usual late summer build up of numbers around the Perches with up to 300 present during August.

Arctic Tern

Up to 70 birds present on Castle Island in June with some seemingly sitting eggs but all had deserted by early July. Some of the birds may subsequently have moved to Talm where 50 birds were present in mid July (E O'Reilly). One pair successfully bred at Green Island where they reared two young.

Arctic Tern (cont)

Birds present from May 3rd (JC). Usual build up of numbers around the Perches in the late summer with max of 50 in early August. Departure during late August & last record of four on Aug 29th.

Common Tern

Spring records of one by Castle Island on April 29th & two off the pier on May 2nd (JC). In late summer birds as usual gathered around the Perches with peak count of 100 on Aug 7th. Departure in late August with last birds seen on Aug 28th.

Guillemot

Recorded offshore throughout though scarcer in the winter periods. Birds with young seen between Eigg & the mainland from July 9th on (B&S Gardner). Count of 50 between Mallaig & Eigg on Dec 4th (N Barnes).

Razorbill

As with Guillemot recorded offshore throughout though generally less numerous than that species. Scarcer in the winter months.

Black Guillemot

Bred fairly widely around the shoreline cliffs & boulder beaches but no estimate of numbers available. A few juvs seen in the pier area in late summer. Count of 15 adults off Castle Island on May 12th (P Carr, C Davies). Occasional birds seen throughout Jan-Feb & regular offshore during the spring & summer. One on Nov 10th was the only late year record.

Puffin

As usual a scattering of offshore records between April 10th (R Dyer) & mid August. All sightings obtained during ferry crossings.

Rock Dove

Common & widespread breeder & a successful season. Up to 30 regular at Kildonan with 50-70 birds reported at Cleadale (N Robertson, M McKinnon). Feral Pigeon type birds present throughout with a flock of 20 pigeons at Kildonan on Feb 9th containing two 'ferals'.

Woodpigeon

As usual a small breeding population centred around the Lodge Grounds & the forestry plantation. Max count of 23 over Kildonan on Oct 4th.

Collared Dove

Present in small numbers, max of only five, between March 4th (K&S Kean) & early September though no evidence of any breeding attempt. Unusual winter record of two at Cleadale between Dec 12th & 25th (M McKinnon, D McFadyen)

Cuckoo

Approx 12 singing males present, a fairly average number though down from the 15 males of last year. A bird near Grulin on April 15th (A Boden) was the years first record with the main arrival in early May. Much activity during late May-early June but last singing bird heard at the end of June & no further records.

Barn Owl

Several birds present throughout with breeding probably occurring, most likely in the croftland. Roosting birds located at the Kildonan cliffs (JC) & in the Manse Wood (J Moorhouse, K Jones). Unfortunately dead (starved) birds found at Cleadale & Craigard (C & Geo Carr, J Clare)

Long Eared Owl

An excellent three pairs bred fledging a minimum of six young. Unfortunately two of the youngsters were found dead, one killed by a raptor & the other sadly a road kill. Birds present throughout with one very 'accommodating' individual showing well nightly at Cleadale in late summer (L McKenna et al).

Short Eared Owl

Occasional records of 1-2 birds on the lower Sgurr moors between mid May & late June (J Robertson, B Cormack).

Great Spotted Woodpecker

Four records of probably two individual birds between Aug 26th & Nov 7th. Birds seen at Sandavore on Aug 26th & Oct 17th (J Robertson), the Lodge on Oct 30th & Kildonan on Nov 7th (JC).

Alpine Swift

A bird over Cleadale on April 3rd (C Russel) then re-appearing in the same area on April 5th (P Carr, C Davies) was a first Eigg record of this national rarity.

Skylark

A widespread breeder in suitable areas & probably a successful season. First returned bird seen on Feb 15th (JC) with main arrival during March, flock of 40 at Kildonan on March 14th. First territorial song heard on March 20th (J Robertson). Departure from mid June & no records of local birds after early July. Late migrant over Kildonan on Oct 17th (JC).

Sand Martin

Two pairs bred at Laig & successfully reared at least seven young. Birds present from April 6th & regular sightings throughout the spring & summer months. Departure from early August & last record of two on Sept 3rd (N Robertson).

House Martin

For the second year running a pair bred in Cleadale & successfully raised three young. The birds initially built a nest at Chapel Lane but were then displaced by the local House Sparrows & relocated to the north end of Cleadale where they bred successfully. Birds present from May 6th (M McKinnon) with last record on Aug 31st (N Barnes).

Swallow

Breeding population rather low, probably similar to last years, but a successful season with many young reared & most pairs double brooded. Some rather late breeding with a nest still containing young seen at Cleadale on Sept 12th (B Cormack). Birds present from April 10th (E Weldon) with main arrival in early May. Departure from August with last sighting on Sept 29th (J Robertson).

Meadow Pipit

Common breeder & a good season with many juvs seen. Birds present from March 7th (JC, JB Cormack) until early October with main arrival late March- early April. First territorial song heard on March 28th. Departure from early August on.

Rock Pipit

Common resident around the shorelines & seemingly a pretty successful breeding season. As previously noted some birds move up to higher ground during the winter months. First fledged juv seen on June 1st.

Grey Wagtail

Only four pairs recorded though three of these were known to have raised young. Present from April 13th until late July with only the very occasional record outwith this period.

Pied Wagtail

Overall breeding numbers seemed distinctly low though overall a pretty productive season with reasonably good numbers of young reared. Birds present from Feb 26th (JC) with main arrival in mid March & first fledged juv seen on June 16th. Departure from August on & last record of one at Kildonan on Oct 17th (JC)

White Wagtail

Small numbers, mostly single birds, recorded on spring passage between April 18th & May 15th. Four autumn records of small numbers between Aug 30th & Sept 9th. An intriguing record of a male photographed carrying a beakful of food at Howlin on June 5th (D McLean) strongly suggests mixed breeding with a Pied Wagtail.

Waxwing

Two records. Four at Sandavore on Oct 26th (B&S Gardner, JC) & seven briefly at the unlikely location of the shoreline rocks at the pier centre on Oct 28th (JC, N Barnes).

Dipper

No confirmation of breeding at the Laig Gorge site. One at Chapel Lane on Jan 19th (B Cormack) was the only early year record. From October to December single birds were present fairly regularly at both the Chapel Lane & the Mill Burn (B Cormack, JC)

Wren

Very common breeder & an extremely productive season with many young raised. First fledged juv seen on June 13th. Very common throughout & particularly so in the autumn – early winter with count of 12 in the immediate Kildonan area on Oct 17th.

Dunnock

Common resident & seemingly a pretty successful breeding season with regular sightings of juv birds. Some late breeding with adults seen feeding a new fledged juv on Aug 4th. Common throughout, particularly so in the late autumn when some influx may have occurred.

Robin

Common & widespread breeder & a good season with many juvs seen. First fledged young reported on May 21st. Very common throughout with first 'autumn song' heard on Aug 8th.

Whinchat

Two singing males briefly present in the croftland in early May (JC) was the only record.

Stonechat

Eight breeding pairs located though undoubtedly others would also be present. Seemingly a successful breeding season with many young seen. Birds present throughout though scarce during the midwinter months.

Wheatear

Small breeding population of this previously numerous species though seemingly a reasonably productive season with fair numbers of juvs seen. First fledged juvs seen on June 5th (D McLean) Birds present from March 23rd (JC) with main arrival mid-late April. Last local record on Aug 30th with a very late migrant at Laig Bay on Oct 26th (S Heath).

Blackbird

Common breeder & a very productive season with many young seen. First fledged juv seen on April 27th (C Booth). One pair in Cleadale nested in a garden shed & successfully fledged two broods each of four young (B Cormack). Common throughout with distinct winter influx in Oct-Nov.

Fieldfare

Two early year records; 10 at the Glebe on Jan 6th (P Carr) & one at Kildonan on Feb 16th (JC). In autumn a prolonged spell of easterly winds produced the largest passage in a number of years. First birds seen on Oct 19th (JC) & flocks of up to 50 birds regularly recorded between then & mid November. Max counts of 100 at Kildonan on Oct 19th (JC) & 120 at Sandavore on Oct 22nd (J Robertson). Last record of one at the Glebe on Dec 5th (B Cormack).

Song Thrush

Common breeder & seemingly a fairly successful season. Six territorial pairs located at Kildonan. First full song heard on Feb 11th & first fledged juvs seen on May 16th. Common throughout the summer months but much scarcer in the autumn/winter.

Redwing

Several early year records between Feb 18th & March 30th though 100 at Galmisdale on March 9th (J Robertson) was the only large count. As with Fieldfare the easterly winds of autumn resulted in large numbers on passage with max counts of 400 on Oct 19th (JC, J Robertson) & 100 on Oct 23rd (C Booth). First autumn birds recorded on Oct 11th (JC) with passage continuing up until mid November. Odd December record of small numbers.

Mistle Thrush

Four pairs present with at least one pair known to have raised young. Present throughout the spring & summer but much less frequent in the winter months.

Grasshopper Warbler

A single record of a singing bird at the Laig marshes on May 13th (N Barnes et al)

Sedge Warbler

Common breeder in the croftland with the odd pair also at Kildonan. Count of 12 singing birds at the Laig lane on May 17th (JC). Seemingly a reasonably successful season with several families of juvs seen. Birds present from April 29th (JC) but no records after the end of July.

Whitethroat

Widespread breeder though population somewhat lower than in the past few years. Nonetheless a productive breeding season with several broods of young seen. First record on April 19th (J Robertson) though main arrival not until early-mid May. Two at Howlin on Sept 1st (P Carr, C Davies) was the last sighting.

Blackcap

Breeding population considerably lower than last year – seven singing birds in the Lodge-Manse Wood area where 16 last year. Birds present from April 21st (N Barnes) with singing recorded up until mid July. Several August records with last sighting of a local bird on Sept 9th (J Robertson). Late migrant at Kildonan on Oct 24th (JC).

Chiffchaff

A poor year with only three singing males recorded & no suggestion of any breeding. Birds present from April 24th (JC) with last record on July 15th. Late migrant birds at Kildonan between Nov 17th & 24th (JC) & at Cleadale on Nov 19th (B Cormack).

Willow Warbler

Very common breeder & a successful season with many young reared. Nest containing five eggs found in the Church Wood on May 24th with all five young hatched fledging in mid June. Birds present from April 8th (JC) with main arrival in late April. Departure from late July & last record of one at Howlin on Sept 1st (P Carr, C Davies)

Goldcrest

Common breeder in the woodland areas & seemingly a pretty successful season with several records of family groups. First full song heard on Feb 7th (JC) & one observed nest building at Sandavore on March 31st (J Robertson). As usual birds wandered widely in the autumn/winter months.

Spotted Flycatcher

Three pairs present with one pair known to have raised young at the Church Wood. Birds present from May 24th (JC) with two birds at Sandavore Wood on Aug 8th the last local record. Extremely late migrant at Kildonan on Oct 24th (JC et al).

Coal Tit

Common resident breeder & seemingly a good breeding season. Common in the woodlands & at garden feeding stations throughout.

Blue Tit

Common throughout the wooded areas & seemingly a fairly successful breeding season. Frequent at garden feeding stations with four regular at Millers Cottage late in the year.

Great Tit

As with Blue Tit a common resident breeder & seemingly a successful season. One pair at Millers Cottage successfully fledged four young (though one of them was subsequently snatched by a Sparrowhawk). First full song heard on Jan 7th. Common throughout.

Long Tailed Tit

3+ breeding pairs present with at least one pair successfully rearing young. Outwith the breeding season small flocks ranged widely throughout the wooded areas of the island. Max count of 20 at Cleadale on Nov 29th (E Weldon).

Treecreeper

3-4 breeding pairs present with one pair known to have bred successfully at Kildonan. Present throughout with birds frequently attaching themselves to wandering tit flocks in the autumn.

Jackdaw

Usual breeding colony present at the Cleadale cliffs & apparently a successful season with a fair number of juvs seen. First fledged juvs seen on June 7th (N Robertson). Max counts from Cleadale of 73 on Feb 15th (B Cormack) & 70 on Oct 26th (JC). Rather unusually up to 30 present around Kildonan in early November.

Hooded Crow

Common & widespread breeder & again a productive season. Common throughout though no particularly notable counts.

Raven

Four pairs known to have raised a total of 11 young with probably another three territorial pairs present. First nest building observed on Feb 15th. Present throughout.

Starling

Common breeder at Kildonan & the croftland & a typically successful season with many young raised. First fledged juvs seen on June 16th. Common throughout with max count of 74 at Kildonan on Feb 16th. One breeding pair which shared an entrance hole with a pair of House Sparrows at the Mill were seen to kill & remove the sparrow chicks from their nest & deposit them on the lawn (B&S Gardner).

House Sparrow

Very common breeder around human habitation throughout most of the island & a very successful season with most pairs multi brooded. Common throughout with up to 60 present at a Cleadale feeding station in late summer (JB Cormack).

Chaffinch

Extremely common breeder & a very successful season with large numbers of young raised. First full song heard on Feb 18th & first fledged juv seen on June 10th. Very common throughout & numerous at garden feeding stations.

Brambling

One spring record of a male at Cleadale between April 16th & 18th (N Robertson, M Merrick). Much more numerous in autumn with a total of 12 records of 1-3 birds between Oct 19th & Nov 28th (JC, J Robertson, N Robertson). All records from garden feeding stations.

Greenfinch

Fairly common breeder & a reasonably successful season with juv birds widely recorded in the late summer. First full song heard on March 21st. Present throughout though less numerous during the winter periods. Max count of 20 at a Cuagach feeding station on Feb 2nd (D Wiggin).

Goldfinch

Widespread & common breeder & a very productive season with many young raised. Fledged juvs recorded from June 14th with adults seen still feeding new fledged young on Aug 16th. Max count of 25 near the pier on Aug 24th (JC). Birds present throughout though much scarcer during the winter months & main spring arrival not until mid-late April.

Siskin

Reasonably common breeder throughout the woodland areas & probably a moderately successful season. Small numbers present during the early part of the year with increase in the late spring & departure from mid July. Three records of passage flocks between Oct 23rd & Nov 3rd with max of 20 at the Graveyard Wood on Oct 23rd.

Linnet

Small numbers bred with several family groups seen in July & early August. Birds present from April 16th (J Robertson) with last record on Sept 1st.

Twite

Now a scarce breeder though a few pairs probably bred around Struidh, Grulin & other less frequently visited areas. Birds present from April 19th (JC) until early September with a migrant at Kildonan Point on Oct 17th (JC) the only record outwith this period. Max count of 20 near Laig Bay on July 17th (B&S Gardner).

Lesser Redpoll

Small numbers bred in the woodland areas with several families of fledged juvs seen. First fledged young seen on June 29th (J Robertson). Birds present from March 25th (JC) until early August with three seen at Sandavore on Sept 30th (J Robertson) probably migrants.

Bullfinch

A minimum of six pairs present in the woodlands with at least two pairs known to have raised young. Birds present throughout though distinctly scarce during the winter months.

Yellowhammer

Two spring records; a female at Millers Cottage on March 21st (JC) & a male at Sandavore on April 12th (J Robertson).

Reed Bunting

An increasingly scarce species on Eigg. At least two males & one female present between April 27th (M McKinnon) & late June but no evidence of any breeding attempt. Late migrant at Kildonan on Nov 28th (JC).