



Record Wildlife on Islay, Jura and Colonsay



Your help is sought in recording the wildlife of Islay, Jura and Colonsay, in particular the common birds and animals, as well as the often overlooked groups, like butterflies and dragonflies. The Islay Natural History Trust has been gathering records of Islay's wildlife for over 20 years, and, at the request of Scottish Natural Heritage, has recently expanded its record keeping to cover Jura and Colonsay as well.

This booklet contains photographs of 32 of the commonest birds, the ones you are likely to encounter in your garden or on walks along the lanes or in the woods. While we know quite a lot about the numbers and distribution of many of the larger and more obvious species, like the geese, waders, seabirds and birds of prey, our knowledge of the more common and widespread species is very patchy. And this is where you can help. In the centre of this booklet, and also on our website at:

<http://www.islaynaturalhistory.org/speciesfiles/datahome.htm>

you will find a recording sheet on which to note down the date, the place and the numbers of what you have seen. There is also a form which allows you to record solely from your garden. It asks for a simple description of your garden so that your sightings can be put into context. You can then record what you see there as often or as little as you wish and as well as passing us the records, can build up your own picture of changes that might occur.

You will also find photographs in the booklet of all the land (and some marine) mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and dragonflies which are known to have occurred on the three islands, and we would very much like to have your observations of these, too.

The minimum information we need for each record is what, when, where and how many, and who is reporting the sighting. For dolphins and whales seen from the ferry, it is very helpful to note the approximate time since leaving the terminal.

In order to make sure that these species continue to flourish on the islands, it is necessary to know how many there are and where they are, including at different times of year. So every sighting of a bird, animal, butterfly or dragonfly can help.

Birds of gardens (S) = summer migrant



Blackbird. Male black with orange bill, female and young brown with paler bill. Feeds on lawns. Fluting musical song.



Song Thrush. Brown above, spotted underneath. Male and female alike. Song consists of repeated phrases. Feeds on lawns and on snails.



Dunnock (or Hedge Sparrow). Dull grey-brown all over. Creeps around on the ground.



Starling. Glossy green-black with whitish spots in summer plumage. Juveniles pale brown. Nests in holes in buildings.



House Sparrow. Female lacks markings on head. Has declined nationally, but any changes on islands unknown.



Coal Tit. Distinguished from larger Great Tit by lack of any yellow and by white patch on back of head. Prefers natural holes to nest boxes.



Blue Tit. Yellow underparts and blue wings, tail and "beret". Very acrobatic at bird feeders. Nests in holes, including nest boxes.



Great Tit. Largest member of the tit family, with black and white head and bold black stripe down the front. Will breed in nest boxes.



Wren. Very small, rounded bird with short, cocked-up tail. Fine dark barring over its brown plumage. Amazingly loud song for such a tiny bird.



Robin. The most familiar of birds, but look out for juveniles in the summer with their brown spotted plumage.



Chaffinch. The male has a blue-grey head and reddish breast. The female is duller, but with the same prominent double white wing-bar.



Greenfinch. Greenish plumage with yellow flash in wings and at base of tail. Male brighter than female and juveniles.



Goldfinch. Red, white and black on the head, large flash of yellow on the wings, very obvious when it flies.



Siskin. A woodland bird often at bird tables. The male has a black cap and much yellow. Duller female has yellow on wings and rump.



House Martin (S). Nests under the eaves of buildings. Distinguished from Swallow by white rump and lack of red chin.



Swallow (S). Black above, white below, red throat and vent. Adults have long tail streamers, absent in juveniles. Nests in buildings.

Birds of fields, hedges and woods



Bullfinch. Male has black head, grey back and salmon pink underparts. Female brown underneath. Both sexes have white rump.



Pied Wagtail. Black, grey and white with long tail. Juveniles grey-brown. Found near water and along roads and shore.



Spotted Flycatcher (S). Grey-brown with darker wings. Woods and larger gardens. Sexes alike. Catches insects by flying up from a perch.



Goldcrest. Tiny, greenish above, white below. Orange-yellow head stripe edged with black. A woodland bird often high in treetops



Willow Warbler (S). Small, greeny-yellow with musical song of descending notes. Common in woodlands, and some larger gardens.



Stonechat. Male has black head and white collar; female has dark brown head and trace of collar. Perches on bushes and fence posts.



Jackdaw. Black with a grey nape. The smallest of the crow family. Nests in holes in buildings and trees. Flocks with Rooks in winter.



Whinchat (S). White eyestripe and white patches at base of tail. Similar habitat and habits to Stonechat but only here in summer months.



Mistle Thrush. Larger and greyer than Song Thrush. Noisy, with powerful song from tree-top perch.



Wheatear (S). Male grey back and buffish throat; black and white eyestripe. Female brown-grey on back. Both have conspicuous white rump.



Reed Bunting. Male brown above, buff below, with black head. Female lacks black head. White outer tail feathers. Wet ditches and roadsides.



Long-tailed Tit. Tiny blackish and white bird with tail doubling its length. Often seen in woodland in family parties of 12 or more.



Linnet. Male has red on forehead and chest. Female brown with paler streaked breast. Hedges and gorse bushes.



Treecreeper. Brown-streaked above, whitish below, with characteristic habit of running up tree trunks using tail as support.



Yellowhammer. Male has yellow head and underparts, brown and red-brown back. Female slight yellow on head. Hedges and cliff gullies.



Wood Pigeon. Blue-grey with white half-collar and white wingbars when in flight. Mostly associated with larger woodlands.

Mammals



Hedgehog. Introduced Islay in 1950s and 1970s. Widespread, often dead on roads. Absent from Jura and Colonsay.



Water Shrew. Widespread but not common on Islay. Not certainly on Jura or Colonsay. Black above, silver-grey underneath.



Common Shrew. Common Islay and Jura, where distinct race occurs. Smaller **Pygmy Shrew** present on all three islands.



Pipistrelle. Only small bat: on all three islands, as is **Long-eared Bat**. **Daubenton's** and **Natter's Bats** occur in a few places on Islay.



Rabbit. Present in large numbers on all three islands. Local populations knocked back every so often by myxomatosis.



Brown Hare. Widespread on Islay, where introduced 19th century. Spring groups up to 30 or 40 in some areas. Not on Jura or Colonsay.



Mountain Hare. Only on Jura where introduced in 19th century. Formerly on Islay, but died out probably in early 20th century.



Field Vole. Common and widespread on Islay and Jura, where distinct race occurs, but does not occur on Colonsay.



Wood Mouse. On all three islands where commoner than House Mouse and often entering houses. White underparts distinctive.



House Mouse. Widespread on Islay and Jura, doubtful on Colonsay. Large ears and little contrast between upper and underparts.



Brown Rat. Ubiquitous, especially around farms and villages and along the shore.



Stoat. Common on Islay and Jura, absent from Colonsay. A small proportion go white in winter. (Weasels do not occur.)



Feral Ferret. Released animals present Islay. Some resemble Polecats (which do not occur). Others are creamy-yellow all over.



Mink. Occasionally seen or trapped on Islay and Jura, coming from Argyll mainland, but have not yet colonised either island.

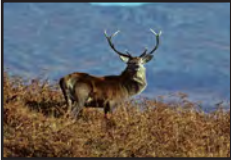


Otter. Widespread on all three islands, on coasts, up burns and in freshwater lochs. Look for them where rivers and burns enter the sea.



Feral Cat. Gone-wild animals occur on all three islands having wandered away from farms. There are no genuine Wild Cats on the islands.

Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians



Red Deer. Several thousands on Jura and Islay where they are managed for stalking. There are none on Colonsay, nor any Roe or Fallow Deer.



Roe Deer. Widespread over the low ground of Islay and Jura, including the farmland and woodland.



Fallow Deer. Introduced to Islay where they are confined to the south-east of the island. Probably number a few hundreds.



Feral Goat. There are over 700 on Islay, with small numbers on Jura and Colonsay. On Islay, mainly on The Oa, Rinns and north coast.



Common Seal. Found round all three islands, especially Islay. Small round head with concave forehead. Nostrils meet in a V.



Grey Seal. Found round all three islands, especially Islay and Colonsay. Large, long head with sloping forehead. Nostrils almost parallel.



Harbour Porpoise. Regularly seen from the ferry and sometimes close to the shore. Small size and small dorsal fin. Often in groups.



Bottle-nosed Dolphin. Seen around the coasts of all three islands in groups of from 5 to 20 or more. Lacks contrast between back and belly.



Minke Whale. The only regularly seen whale, most often from the ferry. Long back in front of small dorsal fin.



Common Dolphin. Most often seen from the ferry; sometimes close to land. Dark back contrasts with whitish flanks and underparts.



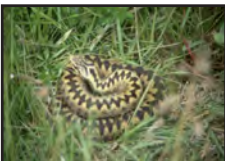
Frog. The commonest member of this group but not found on Colonsay. Spawn can be found in small puddles as well as ponds and lochs.



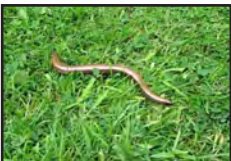
Toad. Typically favours lochans for breeding. Widespread on Islay and Jura, but not present on Colonsay. Very variable in colour.



Common Lizard. Found on all three islands, but nowhere common. Likes sunning itself on stone dykes and rocks.



Adder. Present on Islay and Jura where it seems to have declined in recent years. Hibernates, with males appearing from February onwards.



Slow-worm. Only certainly found on Jura and Colonsay, though there are one or two possible past records from Islay.



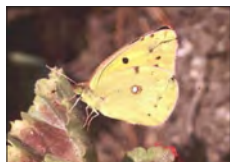
Great Crested Newt. Reported from one lochan on Islay in the 1980s. Not refound since.

Butterflies



Clouded Yellow male.

An occasional migrant, appearing on Islay in 1947, 1992 and 2000. A few bred in the last year. Two Colonsay records.



Clouded Yellow. The sexes are quite similar if not quite identical.



Large White male.

Common resident and migrant. Lays its eggs on cabbages and other related plants.



Large White female.

The female has more black on the wing tips as well as two prominent black spots on the forewing.



Small White male.

Mainly a resident, but there can be migrant arrivals in some years. Common.



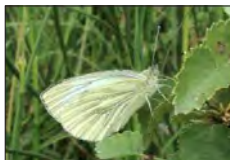
Small White female.

The female has two black spots on the forewing and one on the hindwing.

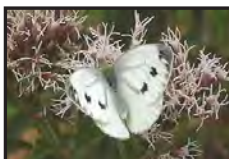


Green-veined White male.

Abundant. One of the earliest butterflies to appear - in April and May with 2nd brood in July and August



Green-veined White male. The pattern of veins on the underwing gives the species its name. The female is yellow lower underneath.



Green-veined White female.

Has more black on the forewing than the male.



Orange Tip male. A butterfly to look out for as it is spreading north in Scotland. A handful of records from Islay but we expect more.



Orange Tip female.

Lacks any orange and difficult to distinguish from other white butterflies.



Orange Tip male. The female has a similarly heavily marked hindwing which can aid identification.



Green Hairstreak. Only very rarely seen with its wings spread when it appears brown all over. A butterfly of moorland flying in May and June.



Purple Hairstreak. In oakwoods on Colonsay. The purple iridescence only shows at certain angles. On female, confined to rear of forewing.



Small Copper. Widespread in the lowlands, e.g. dunes and pastures. The sexes are very similar.



Small Copper. This is a male. The female can have two protruding points at the rear of the hindwing.

Butterflies



Common Blue male. Common and wide-spread. The only 'blue' on the islands. Female brown/blue with orange spots on wing edges.



Peacock. Until the mid-1990s, this was rare on the islands. Since then, it has become quite common and widespread.



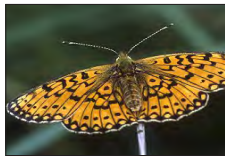
Common Blue. Sexes are quite similar, the female being a little darker.



Peacock. The sexes are the same.



Red Admiral. A summer migrant, very occasionally over-wintering. Sometimes appears in large numbers.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Several records from Jura and once each from Islay or Colonsay. Sexes very similar.



Red Admiral. The sexes are more or less identical, though the female tends to be slightly larger.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Photographs of underwing essential for separation from **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (1 record on Islay).



Painted Lady. A summer migrant, usually less common than the Red Admiral and absent in some years. Abundant in 2009.



Dark-green Fritillary. Fairly common, mainly in open areas and along ditches. Very strong flier which helps to identify it.



Painted Lady. The sexes are very similar, though the female tends to be slightly larger and more brightly coloured.



Dark-green Fritillary. The female has slightly more black on the wings.



Small Tortoiseshell. A widespread and abundant resident hibernating in winter indoors, in dark corners, e.g. behind curtains.



Marsh Fritillary. Occurs all three islands, widespread on Islay. Stays close to ground when flying. Sexes the same.



Small Tortoiseshell. The sexes are the same.



Marsh Fritillary. Look for it in wet grassland, heather banks, inland and on the coast. The species is nationally rare.

Butterflies



Speckled Wood. They are found mainly in woodland, but also along hedgerows and in gardens with trees.



Speckled Wood. The sexes are similar, though the male is slightly smaller with very slightly smaller spots.



Wall. There are just two records of this species from the 1970s, both on Islay, but it could be overlooked.



Wall. The sexes are almost the same, the female being a little larger.



Scotch Argus. Only recorded a handful of times from Islay, not definitely from Jura, and one record from Colonsay.



Scotch Argus. The female tends to have larger wing spots and more orange.



Grayling male. On all three islands, but only a handful of records from Jura.



Grayling female. More pronounced markings than male.



Meadow Brown male. Very common and widespread on all three islands. Male very dark brown with single eyespot on each forewing.



Meadow Brown female. Variable orange on forewing surrounding eyespot, some pale markings on hindwing.



Meadow Brown male. Underwings with few markings apart from forewing eyespot.



Meadow Brown female. Variable orange on forewing surrounding eyespot, some pale markings on hindwing.



Ringlet. Common and widespread. Male very dark with two spots on both forewing and hindwing. Female paler with three spots on forewing.



Ringlet. The underside of both sexes shows one to three spots on forewing and usually five on hindwing.



Small Heath. Common and widespread. Rests with wings closed. Upperwings pale brown, edged dark and with single spot.



Large Heath. Fairly common on all three islands. Rests with wings closed. Variably spotted, usually one on forewing and two on hindwing.

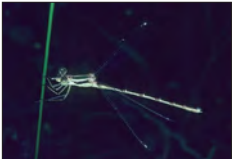
Dragonflies



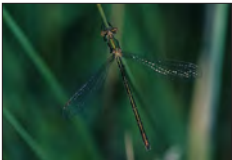
Beautiful Demoiselle male. Found in a few localities on Islay, not certainly from Jura or Colonsay. Coloured wings very distinctive.



Beautiful Demoiselle female. Wings coloured purple-brown. This species found close to running water.



Emerald Damselfly male. Locally common on Islay and Jura. Distinctive powder-blue markings at each end of abdomen.



Emerald Damselfly female. Metallic green abdomen and very slender body.



Large Red Damselfly male. On all islands and can be locally common. Largest damselfly with red abdomen and red stripes on thorax.



Large Red Damselfly female. Like male, but with more black on abdomen.



Azure Damselfly pair. Not certainly recorded, but worth looking out for. Male has U-shaped mark on second segment of abdomen.



Common Blue Damselfly pair. Common and widespread. The male is blue and female green and black.



Blue-tailed Damselfly pair. On all three islands. Both sexes have the conspicuous blue at the end of the abdomen.



Common Hawker male. Widespread. Unmistakable from its large size and, in the male, pairs of blue spots down its abdomen.



Common Hawker female. Has pairs of green spots down its abdomen.



Golden-ringed Dragonfly. Common and widespread in a variety of habitats. The yellow bands on the dark body are very distinctive.



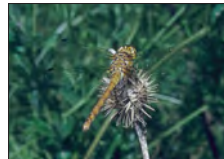
Four-spot Chaser. Widespread. Each wing has two spots along the leading edge, one in the middle, one at the end.



Keeled Skimmer. Recorded from Islay and Colonsay, but uncommon. Male has powder-blue body, female is brown.



Common Darter male. Common and widespread. The male has a red body and a yellow stripe down the outside of its legs.



Common Darter female. The body is yellowish brown. The legs are like the male's.

Dragonflies



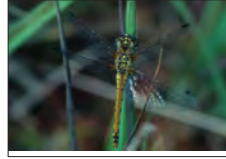
Highland Darter male. May only be a race of Common Darter. Occurs on all three islands. Has dark band on side of thorax.



Black Darter male. On all three islands. Completely black seen from above, and with swollen tip to abdomen.



Highland Darter female. Very similar to female Black Darter.



Black Darter female. Has broad black triangle on thorax, otherwise dirty yellow in colour with black legs.

Odds & Ends

Just because a species is not illustrated in this booklet does not mean to say that we do not want to have records of it. If you are lucky enough to see a different kind of whale or dolphin, or perhaps a Basking Shark, when you are on the ferry, or looking out from the shore, then please use the form in the booklet or on our website to let us know about it. The same applies to all the different birds which are not included here, as well as any other insects like, for example, bumblebees, not to mention all the plants, such as trees, wild flowers, ferns, seaweeds, etc., etc. We have an insatiable appetite for wildlife records, so please do your best to satisfy it!

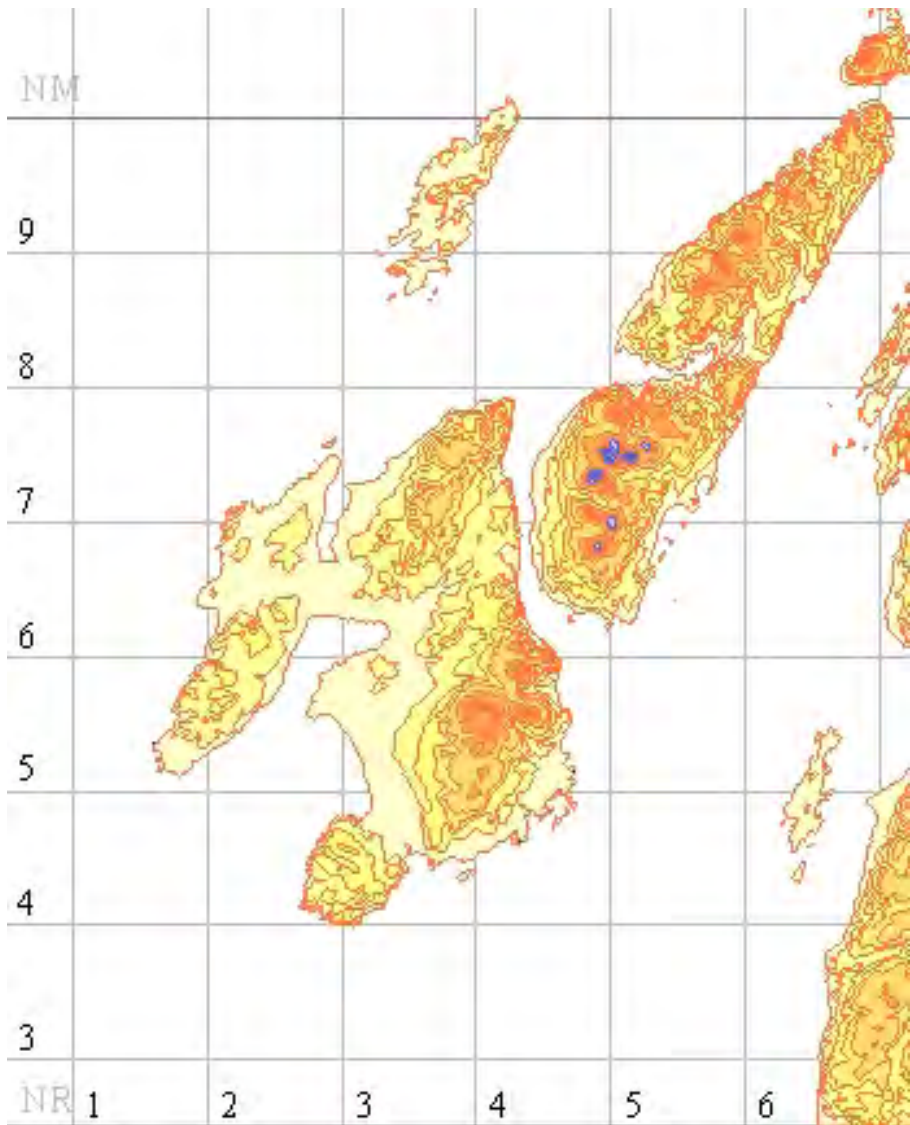
As well as entering your own records on the Islay Natural History Trust's website at <http://www.islaynaturalhistory.org/speciesfiles/datahome.htm>, you can look at the existing records and see how yours fit in to the overall picture. If you are on Islay, you can visit the Natural History Visitor Centre in Port Charlotte where you can both enter and view records on the computer there. There are also public-access computers on Jura and Colonsay where you can do this - see local posters for their locations.

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