



About Colonsay

THE BIRDS OF COLONSAY AND ORANSAY

This list (based upon an original by Dion Alexander) was compiled by **John and Pamela Clark**, with contributions by **James How, Mike Peacock and RSPB staff**. This list was last updated in July 2002.

John and Pamela Clarke would be pleased to receive any further records via birdlist@colonsay.org.uk.

"**The Birds of Colonsay and Oronsay**" by David Jardine includes a full checklist and status report, plus chapters describing where and how best to appreciate the birds and their habitats. There are additional details about selected birds regarded as characteristic of these islands. Published August 2002 by House of Lochar ISBN 1 899863 32X, pb £5.99, 38pp, Colour illustrations.

RED-THROATED DIVER	Resident and winter visitor. Eastern mouth of Strand regular feeding place.
BLACK-THROATED DIVER	Occasional visitor offshore. Regular visitor off Oronsay, April/May 1-2 birds.
GREAT NORTHERN DIVER	Common winter visitor around all shores. Gen. absent July, recorded all other months off Oronsay. Rarely summering (???). Recorded June off Oronsay. Maximum count 23, 14/4/00.
LITTLE GREBE	A pair or two of resident breeders. Usually to be seen Loch Fada. One record Oronsay 20/3/00
SLAVONIAN GREBE	Very rare sightings usually offshore. Only four records. One record 17/10/98 RSPB
FULMAR	Present all year round. Breeds in large numbers western cliffs. Blue morph Fulmar found dead Oronsay 7/02/02
SOOTY SHEARWATER	Seen rarely in autumn offshore.
MANX SHEARWATER	Seen regularly, summer and early autumn offshore. 1000+ feeding off Oronsay.
STORM PETREL	Rarely seen close inshore. 3 close inshore 23/6/99, 1 02/7/00
GANNET	Seen commonly offshore spring, summer and autumn.
CORMORANT	A few resident but not breeding.
SHAG	Common breeding resident.
GREY HERON	Breeding resident.
WHOOPEE SWAN	Small numbers seen commonly and regularly at migration times. Often seen on lochs in winter.
PINK-FOOTED GOOSE	Now rarely recorded at migration times. Rarely very small numbers can be seen with other wintering species.
GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE	150-200 winter Kiloran and elsewhere. Large numbers pass by on migration.
GREYLAG GOOSE	100+ winter Kiloran and elsewhere. Now breeding regularly and increasing.
CANADA GOOSE	Resident feral breeding flock of 60+.
BARNACLE GOOSE	Several hundred winter on Oronsay and Colonsay. Large numbers passing on migration.
BRENT GOOSE (Pale-bellied)	No longer winters here but a few birds occasionally seen at migration times. 59 on passage off Oronsay 16/04/98. Occasionally seen with Barnacle geese, 2 on 13/10/96 and 5 on 18/4/98
SHELDUCK	Only absent from end of summer to end of autumn during moult. Otherwise common breeding resident, around all shores.

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WIGEON	Small numbers winter around most shores. Possible breeding records 1984 and 1990
AMERICAN WIGEON	Seen Colonsay 2001
GADWALL	Formerly seen during winter, chiefly around Oransay but now very rare.
TEAL	Small number of breeding residents. Up to 100 wintering.
MALLARD	Common breeding resident and winter visitor.
PINTAIL	A rare migrant. Bred 1987. 2 Oransay 27/4/99
SHOVELER	Rare visitor but a pair stayed spring 1993. Recorded Oransay, 2 in 05/97, 2 in 05/98
POCHARD	Small numbers winter Loch Fada.
TUFTED DUCK	Resident. Up to 5 pairs breeding.
SCAUP	Rare sightings at odd times but c.25 Kiloran Bay 28.11.85 Colonsay, 5 on 18/11/98
EIDER DUCK	Common breeding resident. Numbers were said to be declining in recent years, but there was a major recovery in 2002.
LONG-TAILED DUCK	Rare visitor.
COMMON SCOTER	Occasionally seen offshore.
GOLDENEYE	A few birds winter here regularly. Loch Cholla, Loch Fada and Ardskenish west coast.
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER	Breeding resident around all shores. Numbers declining in recent years.
HEN HARRIER	Regular sightings in winter, rarely in summer.
MARSH HARRIER	Seen hunting over reeds in Loch Fada by JH.
SPARROWHAWK	Seen regularly all times of the year. Up to 2 pairs breeding.
BUZZARD	Common breeding resident.
ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD	Only three records.
GOLDEN EAGLE	Pair usually resident.
WHITE-TAILED EAGLE	Recorded Oransay 10/03/99, flew to Colonsay.
OSPREY	Four sightings since 1973. One seen coming off the sea at Balerominmore 12/05/99
KESTREL	Seen most years on Oransay since 1996, pair bred Colonsay 13/7/98, 3 chicks reared.
MERLIN	Seen regularly all times of year. Has bred in the past.
PEREGRINE	One or two resident.
RED GROUSE	Rarely seen in recent years.
RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE	25 introduced 1987. Bred 1988, 1989. Not seen since 1990.
PHEASANT	Small numbers of breeding residents.
WATER RAIL	Small numbers winter and known to breed in several areas.
CORNCRAKE	A breeding summer resident. Numbers of Males calling in Colonsay and Oransay 1998 14, 1999 21, 2000 21, 2001 18
MOORHEN	A pair or two of breeding residents.
COOT	None seen between 1982-88. Pair bred 1988, 1989. Two pairs 1990. Died out by May 1992 -then one seen 14.11.93
OYSTERCATCHER	Common breeding resident.
RINGED PLOVER	Said (anecdotal) to be less commonly breeding due to disturbance. Large numbers winter.
GOLDEN PLOVER	Small flocks to be seen on migration and around 100 winter. 100-130 spring Oransay
GREY PLOVER	Small numbers seen regularly mostly autumn and winter.
LAPWING	Common breeding resident but declining in numbers in Colonsay. Numbers have increased in Oransay, 51 pairs 2001
KNOT	A rare early autumn migrant.
SANDERLING	An uncommon visitor on migration and occasionally in winter.
LITTLE STINT	Rare sightings of singles or small groups. Recorded Oransay strand, 1 on 15/10/96 and 2 on 27/09/00
CURLEW SANDPIPER	Rare sightings in autumn. Recorded Oransay strand, 1 on 21/9/96

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PURPLE SANDPIPER	Winters annually Oronsay and probably Colonsay; maximum number 14, 19/2/97
DUNLIN	Winters large numbers. Smaller numbers at other times. Has bred recently.
JACK SNIBE	Rare visitor. Recorded Oronsay Dec 2001
SNIBE	Common breeding resident.
WOODCOCK	Small numbers of breeding residents, larger numbers in winter.
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT	Was said to be rare visitor, but recorded in Oronsay May, July and November.
BAR-TAILED GODWIT	A few usually winter.
WHIMBREL	Seen regularly in small numbers usually between April and September. Max count Oronsay 14 on 13/05/00
CURLEW	Common, seen all the year. Does not breed.
REDSHANK	Less common breeding resident and still declining??? Increased on Oronsay to 11 pairs 2001.
GREENSHANK	Small numbers present all year except summer. Winters on the Strand, max 9.
GREEN SANDPIPER	Rare visitor.
COMMON-SANDPIPER	Common breeding summer resident. Arrives late April, early May.
TURNSTONE	Small parties to be seen around most shores but rarely in summer.
POMARINE SKUA	Very rare sightings offshore.
ARCTIC SKUA	Regular summer visitor. Bred Oronsay years ago.
GREAT SKUA	Seen rarely but regularly offshore.
LITTLE GULL	Rare - only three sightings, last seen Oronsay 1997
BLACK-HEADED GULL	Fairly common breeding - not resident in winter.
COMMON GULL	Fairly common breeding resident.
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL	Common breeding summer visitor.
HERRING GULL	Very common breeding resident.
ICELAND GULL	Rare - only five records, but seen Oronsay 1997. Recorded Oronsay 1 on 31/5/97, 1 on 9/3/00 and 1 on 8/3/01
GLAUCOUS GULL	Were only four records, all of dead birds. But one recorded Oronsay 24/4/01 following plough.
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL	Common breeding resident.
KITTIWAKE	Breeds in very large numbers west coast.
SANDWICH TERN	Occasional sightings - seven in last ten years; seen Oronsay 1997.
ROSEATE TERN	One on 17.6.75 and one on 22.7.84.
COMMON TERN	Now a rare breeding summer resident.
ARCTIC TERN	More common breeding summer resident.
LITTLE TERN	Breeding Colonsay, Seabird 2000 Survey. Oronsay records 2 on 7/5/98, 3 on 13/7/98, 7 on 4/8/98, 3 on 15/6/00
GUILLEMOT	Common summer resident. Breeds vast numbers western cliffs. About 10% are bridled form.
RAZORBILL	Common summer resident. Breeds large numbers western cliffs.
BLACK GUILLEMOT	Breeding resident.
LITTLE AUK	Dead or sick individuals found occasionally.
PUFFIN	Rare summer visitor offshore.
ROCK DOVE	Common breeding resident.
FERAL PIGEON	A rare visitor.
WOODPIGEON	Fairly rare.
COLLARED DOVE	Rare breeding summer resident. A pair usually winter.
TURTLE DOVE	Seen rarely in spring or summer.
CUCKOO	Breeding summer resident, arrives latter half of April.

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TAWNY OWL	Records 1988-1991. Probably bred 1990. Not seen since 23.6.91.
LONG-EARED OWL	Limited information on status. Has bred in recent years. One roosting in tree plantation Oronsay 14/3/00 JH et al.
SHORT-EARED OWL	Recorded Oronsay 29/11/97, 18/10/01 and 28/12/01
SWIFT	Seen very rarely but regularly in summer.
SKYLARK	Small groups in winter. Common breeding summer resident.
SAND MARTIN	Seen very rarely - in spring.
SWALLOW	Uncommon breeding summer resident.
HOUSE MARTIN	A rare summer migrant. Recorded Oronsay, 1 on 17/6/98 and 1 on 3/6/99
TREE PIPIT	Very few records bred - 1984-87 - no records since 1990.
MEADOW PIPIT	Common breeding resident and passage migrant.
ROCK PIPIT	Common breeding resident.
GREY WAGTAIL	Usually one resident breeding pair.
DIPPER	Very rare - only four sightings in recent years.
PIED WAGTAIL	Common breeding resident. Small numbers of white form occur at migration times.
WHITE WAGTAIL	Spring migrant recorded Oronsay, 7 on 24/4/98 and 10 on 23/4/00
WAXWING	Occasional winter invasion. Last 1972 but moved up from Supplementary Roll, after sighting in 1995.
WREN	Common breeding resident.
DUNNOCK	Common breeding resident.
ROBIN	Common breeding resident.
REDSTART	Very rare early summer migrant. Only two confirmed records.
WHINCHAT	Uncommon but regular breeding summer resident.
STONECHAT	Fairly common breeding resident.
WHEATEAR	Common breeding summer resident. Earliest of summer visitors to arrive, usually late March.
RING OUZEL	Very rare - only 5 records. Recorded Oronsay - male, 24/4/99
BLACKBIRD	Common breeding resident, plus migrating flocks.
FIELDFARE	Large flocks seen at autumn migration. Some resident all winter.
SONG THRUSH	Common breeding resident plus migrating flocks.
REDWING	Large flocks seen at autumn migration. Arrives first weeks October. Some stay for winter, a few seen in May.
MISTLE THRUSH	Breeds in small numbers. Also seen on migration.
GRASSHOPPER WARBLER	A rare summer visitor. Breeding Colonsay 2000, 2001
SEDGE WARBLER	Breeding summer resident
WHITETHROAT	Breeding summer resident.
GARDEN WARBLER	Rare summer visitor. Bred 1988.
BLACKCAP	Rarely but regularly recorded
WOOD WARBLER	A rare summer visitor. Has bred recent years - possibly 3 pairs 1993
CHIFFCHAFF	Very rare but regular summer visitor. Breeding not proved.
WILLOW WARBLER	Common breeding summer resident. Arrives last week in April.
GOLDCREST	Small resident breeding flocks.
SPOTTED FLYCATCHER	Rare breeding visitor. Arrives mid-May.
LONG-TAILED TIT	No records 1973-83. Few sightings since then - bred 1990; recorded 1997. Now resident Colonsay, flock of 7 birds Colonsay House 01/2002
COAL TIT	Good numbers of breeding residents.
BLUE TIT	Small numbers of breeding residents.
GREAT TIT	Very small numbers of breeding residents.
TREECREEPER	Very small numbers of breeding residents.
CHOUGH	Small numbers of breeding residents. Winter flocks of 40 recorded Colonsay &

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	Oronsay.
JACKDAW	Common breeding resident.
CARRION CROW	A rare visitor but c.50 stayed winter 1991/2.
HOODED CROW	Common breeding resident.
RAVEN	A few resident breeding pairs.
STARLING	Common breeding resident.
HOUSE SPARROW	Breeding resident.
CHAFFINCH	Common breeding resident.
BRAMBLING	Rare sightings - mostly in autumn/winter. Recorded Oronsay 29/10/96
GREENFINCH	Common breeding resident.
GOLDFINCH	Formerly a rare visitor, more sightings in recent years - probably bred 1992. Recorded Oronsay 1997, 1998 & 2000, 1 to 5 birds.
SISKIN	Very rare until winter 1985/86 when min. 100 birds present. Seen regularly since and probably bred most years.
LINNET	Common breeding summer resident. Rarely winters.
TWITE	Common breeding resident.
REDPOLL	Uncommon summer resident - has bred recent years. Recorded Oronsay.
CROSSBILL	Very rare until 1985 then more regular sightings - possibly bred some years. Few records since 1991.
BULLFINCH	Was a very rare breeding resident. No sightings since 6.91.
SNOW-BUNTING	Regular but infrequent visits by small numbers of migrating birds. Recorded Oronsay most winters in recent years.
YELLOWHAMMER	Very rare breeding, summer visitor.
REED BUNTING	Uncommon breeding resident.
CORN BUNTING	Rarely seen since 1974 when breeding was last proved. Last record 5.87.
LAPLAND BUNTING	Male, Oronsay 1/01/01 to 14/01/01

The following birds have usually been sighted on only one occasion since 1970

GREAT CRESTED GREBE	Not since 1975
GREAT SHEARWATER	Oronsay 31.7.76
SPOONBILL	Strand, September 1977
BEWICK SWAN	2 Loch Fada 3.5.91
GARGANY	Oronsay 11/5/96, a pair. 16/6/96, 1 female; 2 on 27/8/00
GOOSANDER	8.9.77
QUAIL	Heard near Seaview 9.7.97 (first positive recording since before 1970)
SPOTTED CRAKE	16.12.76
KILLDEER	7-8.10.84
DOTTEREL	1 Oronsay 21.10.87; 2 on 27/4/01
RUFF	1 on 27/9/98
AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER	1 Traigh nam Barc 3-5.10.92
WOOD SANDPIPER	Oronsay 12.6.97 (First recorded)
PHALAROPE SP.	Sept 1977, Sept 1985 but not identified further
STOCK DOVE	Kiloran dunes, 15-19.5.86
BARN OWL	1 dead 23.10.88 was Colonsay's first record
NIGHTJAR	Was a rare breeding summer resident but no records since 1977
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER	Jan-73
YELLOW WAGTAIL (Blue-headed race)	Kiloran dunes 19.5.86

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PIED FLYCATCHER	Eilean Ghoaideamal 17.5.85
MAGPIE	11.8.72
ROOK	Very rare visitor; Oronsay 21/4/98, 1 on 6/5/00, 2 on 12/04/01
COMMON ROSEFINCH	Oronsay 7.11.96
RED-HEADED BUNTING	Very rare summer migrant.
BLACK TERN	2 seen by JH (date?); 1 on 13/5/00

The following birds have been recorded for the islands at some time over the last hundred years, usually on only one occasion and not positively since 1970

RED-NECKED GREBE	
FRIGATE PETREL	
LEACH'S PETREL	
MUTE SWAN	Oronsay Strand, 1 on 6/02/01
BEAN GOOSE	
VELVET SCOTER	
HONEY BUZZARD	
GOSHAWK	
BLACK GROUSE	
GREY PARTRIDGE	
PALLAS'S SANDGROUSE	
YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO	
SHORT-EARED OWL	
KINGFISHER	
SHORE LARK	
ROSE-COLOURED STARLING	
TREE SPARROW	
MEALY REDPOLL	