

RECENT NOTES ON THE LOWER VERTEBRATES OF THE ISLAND OF BUTE

By J. A. Gibson

The following notes on the lower vertebrates of the Island of Bute supplement the information already published in the earlier papers on Bute reptiles and amphibians (Gibson, 1970) and freshwater fishes (Gibson and Stephen, 1976).

REPTILES

COMMON LIZARD *Lacerta vivipara* Jacquin

On 28th May 1978 I saw a Lizard on the largest of the Burnt Islands. This is my first record for over twenty years, but is an indication that a small population still survives.

AMPHIBIANS

FROG *Rana temporaria* L.

At one time Frogs used to occur on Inchmarnock, but seem to have died out by the early 1970s, apparently after several dry seasons. In summer 1972 Mr James Middleton took some Frog spawn from Bute over to one of the lochans on Inchmarnock, but no hatching success was seen, and to the best of our knowledge there are no Frogs on Inchmarnock at present.

FRESHWATER FISHES

TROUT *Salmo trutta* L.

It is worth recording the existence of the Trout hatchery established by the Marquess of Bute at Quoichag (NS 054623) in the early years of the century. This functioned until the mid-1920s. Recently Miss Dorothy Marshall has very kindly re-examined this site on my behalf and reports as follows:

"The old Trout hatchery is a very interesting site, with the troughs still well defined, some two to four feet deep, and those water channels which were stone built still in good condition. The site measures approximately 110 yards by 80 yards; there are three square tanks at one end, and the rest of the area is taken up by long troughs, of which there are five narrow and five broader ones still clearly visible".

PIKE *Esox lucius* L.

Some additional information has recently been received about other very large Pike from Loch Fad. On 6th August 1978 Rothesay Seafoods Ltd caught a 25½lb Pike in Loch Fad, and during 1974

the hauling of a salmon net shot along the shore of the loch revealed sixteen Pike ranging from 9lbs to 27½lbs in weight (Mr Thomas S. Rae, *in litt.*). In the early 1940s Lord David Stuart caught a Pike weighing just over 30lbs in Loch Fad (Marquis of Bute, *in litt.*).

ROACH *Rutilus rutilus* (L.)

There are also a good few Roach in Loch Fad and Loch Ascog. A corrected statement to this effect was accidentally omitted from the final draft of the previous paper on Bute freshwater fishes (TBNHS 20: 74).

THREE-SPINED STICKLEBACK *Gasterosteus aculeatus* L.

A good many additional records have come to light, from Loch Ascog, Ettrick Bay and Scalpsie. It is clear that the Stickleback is fairly widely distributed on Bute, as it is on the other large Clyde islands.

References:

- GIBSON, J.A. (1970). The reptiles and amphibians of the Island of Bute. *Trans. Buteshire Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 18: 31-32.
 GIBSON, J.A. and STEPHEN, A. (1976). The freshwater fishes of the Island of Bute. *Trans. Buteshire Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 20: 71-75.

WILDFOWL COUNTS ON LOCH FAD AND DHU LOCH 1977-80

By Ian Hopkins

Each winter, the Wildfowl Trust organises wildfowl counts. These are undertaken nationally, on the same day once a month, throughout the winter, in order to monitor numbers and to produce an annual index for each species.

At the request of Mr J. Simpson, Bute Estate Factor, who is the organiser for Bute, I have undertaken counts on Loch Fad and the Dhu Loch since 1977. The total for both lochs have been added together, for continuity, as this has been done in the past. However, by far the largest numbers are on Loch Fad (including the Kirk Dam). The Dhu Loch is too deep at the margins to support the vegetation on which wildfowl feed, and is used mainly as a roost by an average of 120 mallard, and sometimes as many widgeon.

The Kirk Dam always has good numbers of wildfowl and is probably one of the best feeding lochs on the island.

Goose numbers on these lochs are not representative of numbers on the island, as the geese make extensive use of fields quite far from the lochs, and so are often under-recorded.