

WINTER WADER COUNTS ON BUTE, 1969-1974

By Ian Hopkins

During the winter of 1969/70, the "Birds of Estuaries Enquiry" was initiated jointly by the British Trust for Ornithology, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and the Wildfowl Trust.

The aim was to obtain a complete picture of the birds of the estuaries and of as many coastal areas as possible of Britain and Ireland. This was done by organising national counts on the same date each month from August to April, from 1969-1975.

Tam Vivers, Roger Ratcliffe and myself covered Kilchattan Bay, and from Dunagoil Bay to Ettrick Bay between us, a total of approximately 16 miles, from 1969-1974. This involved a minimum of 600 miles walked!

The counts were divided into three beats, i.e. Kilchattan Bay, Dunagoil Bay to Carrick Point, and Carrick Point to Ettrick Bay. Numbers of birds obviously differed quite a lot from month to month, and year to year, depending on state of tide, weather conditions, etc., and so I have taken the peak count for each month over the period 1969-1974. If anyone wanted more precise information I would be pleased to provide it.

Kilchattan Bay

Peak Counts Between 1969 and 1974

Species	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Gt. N. Diver						1			
Shelduck	2			1	7	9	6	8	16
Mallard	29	115	150	87	131	65	236	104	132
Teal					3			5	2
Wigeon	48	195	450	333	311	500	291	130	147
Eider	197	80	43	25	16	26	24	32	33
Merganser	3	116	20	14	22	9	16	13	8
Oystercatcher	395	400	300	312	380	340	340	242	196
Ringed Plover	67	56	60	36	50	71	84	40	22
Golden Plover	1				36				
Grey Plover			8						
Lapwing	370	400	200	250	250	600	180	70	8
Turnstone	26	42	59	49	65	45	37	62	43
Purple Sandpiper				2	2		2	4	
Dunlin	21	92	130	274	200	136	210	140	28
Knot	1	1		9	20	15	25	6	
Redshank	113	59	127	125	52	28	73	38	32
Greenshank		1							
Bar-T Godwit	9	9	8	45	25	25	10	13	18
Curlew	130	400	125	133	200	200	186	118	27
Sandwich Tern	48	9							
Com/Arctic Tern	114	46							

Dunagoil Bay to Carrick Point

Peak Counts Between 1969 and 1974

Species	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Red-T Diver	2			1					
Gt. N Diver				1			2	3	
Shelduck		1			7	7	11	14	42
Mallard	140	230	228	600	320	167	152	85	84
Teal	6	4	50	100	154	182	104	59	57
Wigeon		10	137	450	550	760	530	350	54
Eider	204	182	27	51	77	75	49	85	131
Merganser	119	47	76	41	50	18	12	33	29
Oystercatcher	174	163	152	149	283	219	346	353	355
Ringed Plover	41	38	32	39	62	56	42	36	14
Golden Plover		21	33	44	5			31	20
Grey Plover			4						
Lapwing	360	430	470	75	656	380	100	300	66
Turnstone	39	53	49	72	50	59	33	52	51
Purple Sandpiper				1				1	1
Dunlin	8	1				2			
Redshank	75	64	61	49	101	72	49	62	87
Greenshank	2	1		1			1		
Bar-T Godwit	1	1		1		1	5	1	
Curlew	600	550	900	550	600	850	470	470	15
Whimbrel	1								1
Sandwich Tern	7	2							

Carrick Point to Ettrick BayPeak Counts Between 1969 and 1974

Species	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Shelduck	19			2	10	21	18	15	46
Mallard	130	336	420	411	398	261	307	166	38
Teal	4	39	57	81	150	111	46	72	18
Wigeon	6	104	400	410	450	600	369	69	20
Eider	129	58	400	39	43	43	57	39	71
Merganser	140	19	78	14	18	32	17	18	24
Oystercatcher	565	738	566	763	683	585	635	662	459
Ringed Plover	188	108	80	92	115	65	73	39	27
Golden Plover	16	59	100	26	1	10	53	49	89
Grey Plover		5	4	4	5	3	8	7	9
Lapwing	400	580	635	360	100	70	350	425	
Turnstone	45	75	93	69	57	104	71	57	96
Dunlin	11	52	44	66	158	87	152	124	42
Knot	3	14	5	7		1			
Redshank	70	102	200	92	73	101	50	116	111
Greenshank		1		10	1	2	1		
Bar-T Godwit	6	14	11	12	2	15	20	26	10
Curlew	1100	1050	650	463	500	600	700	600	