Scotland – The Isle of Coll in Summer

Naturetrek Tour Report 7th – 14th June 2024



Brown Hare



A confiding Redshank



A stunning pale-morph Arctic Skua



Female Black Darter

Tour report and photos (©WildSmiths) by Greg Smith

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At times it felt like 'The Isle of Coll in Winter' but we still managed many natural delights over our seven days on this lovely Hebridean island: a fabulous array of wild flowers on machair and moorland, including eight species of orchid; 75 species of birds, including White-tailed Eagles and Hen Harriers, Corncrakes and Cuckoos, and both Great and Arctic Skuas; some outstanding geology, insect-life and even a smattering of smuts and rusts. We took a boat trip to the Treshnish Isles to experience the sights, sounds and smells of a seabird colony in full swing and were joined on the way by some Common Dolphins. But we also got the opportunity to meet some of the locals and find out about life and culture in a small island community.

Day 1 Friday 7th June

Rendezvous in Oban – brief trip to Glasdrum Wood

The late afternoon rendezvous in Oban left enough time for a couple of early arrivals to join our guide, Greg, in a brief trip out to Glasdrum Wood NNR. The overcast conditions and occasional squalls of rain didn't bode well for the hoped-for butterflies. But, as luck would have it, the sun briefly appeared and, as if by magic, so did two Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries to nectar on a low flowering Marsh Thistle. One of them even stuck around long enough to have its picture taken revealing the distinctive black edges to the 'pearls' on the underside and the number '730' clearly legible among the intricate designs on the upper wing.

The Heath Spotted Orchids and Hard Ferns were an attractive sight; and the Sessile Oaks festooned in epiphytic mosses and ferns revealed why this habitat has gained the epithet 'temperate Caledonian rain forest'.

We got back to the hotel in time for our initial briefing session with the group, and to discover that we were going to be two down from our expected eight guests as illness had struck one couple. After discussing our ambitions for the week ahead, we went out for a meal in Oban (failing to dodge the heavy showers) before an early night and an early ferry tomorrow.

Day 2 Saturday 8th June

Oban – Arinagour – Loch Ronard – Arinagour market – Cliad beach

The morning was bright and clear as we gathered outside the hotel, but the rainbow which greeted us (not the last we were to see this week) was a sign of the weather to come. Indeed, it was raining by the time we got on the ferry.

It was blustery but bright in the Firth of Lorne, where a Gannet tracked the boat and flocks of Kittiwakes and Common Gulls were gathered. A vast bulk carrier from the Glensanda quarry dwarfed the ferry as it passed us en route for another load of construction aggregate heading off to a building site somewhere in Europe. Several Common Terns were in evidence but Greg at this point was unable to locate an Arctic Tern by way of comparison. We passed a striking fault line (part of the Moine thrust) which separated the billion-year old Moine gneisses from the much younger 60-million year old basalt lava flows on Morvern.

By now more rain was falling so we headed in from the open deck to have our breakfast and chat to each other some more. Beyond Tobermory the brighter skies and bigger seas lured us back outside. Now, occasional Common Guillemots and Razorbills were in evidence, and the numbers of elegant Manx Shearwaters began to build. Soon an Arctic Skua was marauding among them and as we approached Coll itself several Puffins could seen.

We landed at Arinagour, our home for the week ahead, and were greeted by a welcoming arch of whale bones for our first sight of Coll. Three piers map the development of the settlement of Arinagour, each signalling its increasing importance as the point of connection with the rest of the world via the sea. As we drove through the village and its surrounding pastures, Greg explained how the changing population size over the past three hundred years had influenced land use change across the island.

We came to Loch Ronard on the roadside and stepped out of the minibus into a freezing wind; but we sheltered down beside a wall and found plenty to keep us interested: a variety of yellow-flowered plants, including Lesser Trefoil, Tormentil and Birds-foot Trefoil (the latter thronging with Moss Carder and White Tailed bumblebees); and a multi-headed purple Marsh Thistle, replete with cuckoo spit housing a froghopper nymph. A distant Arctic Skua had caught the attention of the local Hooded Crows who had gathered to keep a wary eye on it from a nearby hillside.

Greg pointed out our first 'grass of the day', the vanilla-flavoured Sweet Vernal Grass, with its hairy leaf-junctions and spiky inflorescence. Greg told us that we'd be shown a different grass every day, mostly common and widespread species which we were sure to come across in our travels, and to which we could easily put a name. We smiled and nodded, but were unconvinced!

Next we went back to the village to trawl the local produce at the Saturday market, then to check-in at our guest house. A striking leucistic Collared Dove stood out around the village. After lunch at the Coll Hotel, we made our way out to a wonderful beach, backed by large sand dunes. Here we had our first experience of the Scottish machair grasslands. In the dry areas, an abundance of tiny Bulbous Buttercups (with their reflexed sepals) and shining Silver Hairgrass was joined by three different colour forms of Common Milkwort and tiny Pyramidal Orchids just coming into flower. In the wet dune slacks, Marsh Horsetail and Marsh Pennywort dominated, with Early Marsh Orchids just beginning to flower. We noted that the Marram Grass, so well adapted for dry conditions in the bare sand, really doesn't like having its feet wet and, though dominant all around, it was completely absent from the dune slacks. Our first beetle of the trip was the bronze and green Garden Chafer, which was widespread in the foredunes.

We stepped down the bank onto the beach where a hundred chestnut backed-and-bibbed Sanderlings were busy on the water's-edge, looking very different in their summer plumage to the more familiar grey-and-white winter garb. Ten 'screeping' Dunlin joined them while, overhead, Ravens patrolled the beach. A Red-breasted Merganser and a pair of Shelducks flew by (both typical species of these coasts) while on the skerries off-shore dozens of Harbour Seals were lolling about and a tight squadron of ten Gannets cruised by.

Further up the beach a dead Long-finned Pilot Whale, with a bulbous head and elongated pectoral fins, was a sad sight. A curious group of spheroid sea weeds had also washed up. They were peculiar things which Greg recognised as Oyster Thieves, so-called because they grow on bivalve molluscs, and when they get large enough they uproot them and float away!

We could see the rain coming in, so we headed back to the minibus via a wonderful exposure of finely banded Lewisian gneiss, washed smooth by the waves on the beach. We stopped again when a Corncrake began calling from a small fenced and ungrazed paddock. As the heavens opened, we reluctantly dragged ourselves away, with Greg reassuring us that we'd hear that sound again before the week was out.

We had only been out in the rain for a couple of minutes but it was enough to soak us and we were grateful to be able to get back into the dry, though not until we had contacted our landlady to ask if she could please turn the heating up (in June, for goodness' sake!) While loading radiators with wet clothing, George enjoyed a close-pass by an Arctic Skua outside his window.

Day 3 Sunday 9th June

Walk through village – boat trip to Treshnish Isles – ashore at Lunga

Today was our Treshnish boat trip day, so we didn't wander far before making the rendezvous at the pier. We just had time for a short stroll up to the grounds of the community centre, where the gardeners in the group enjoyed a striking New Zealand Daisy Bush in flower and a chunky Bistort cultivar. The uncut flanks of the amenity grassland were a carpet of Pignut with clouds of Yorkshire Fog (today's 'grass of the day') with its soft downy leaves, pink-striped pyjamas and clouds of pink flowers. A distant Cuckoo, calling as it flew over the church on top of the hill, was the first of the trip.

Over the week, it became evident that George had an eye for the tiny and today we witnessed it for the first time when he pointed at a patch of nettles and said "What's this?" Slightly puzzled, Greg confirmed that they were Stinging Nettles, but George persisted "No, this!" indicating a yellowed growth on the underside of a leaf. A little research revealed that this was the Nettle Rust Fungus, for which there were no previous records from Coll!

We were brought back to the normal scale of things by the arrival of our boat at the pier. The tide was high so it necessitated but a short climb down the ladder to access the boat. After our skipper Struan had given us a safety briefing, and a warning that the landing on Lunga might not be easy, we headed off towards the Treshnish Isles, some fifteen miles to the south.

En route we passed a nice bouncy Arctic Tern, a contrast with yesterday's more stolid Commons: "Is it relatively buoyant?" became the defining question whenever we were trying to distinguish between the Arctic and Common Terns we encountered during the week. Ten minutes out we slowed as a pod of Common Dolphins motored towards the boat. They came to check us out, passing right underneath our hull before hurriedly moving on, much to our disappointment!

As we approached Lunga, the seabird numbers on the sea around us increased dramatically. We saw Shags, Guillemots, Razorbills, Puffins, Fulmars and Kittiwakes: six of the best at the centre of every big seabird colony. We were struck by the flat, black volcanic basalts ahead, and the complete contrast they made to the higgledy-piggledy gneiss on Coll.

As Struan had suggested, the wind and swell made the landing on the boulder beach from our little inflatable rather tricky and, after watching the first dinghy load go across, Ian and Angela concluded that discretion was the better

part of valour and opted to stay on the boat. This proved to be a sound choice, as not only were they able to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere, friendly company and a picnic on the moored boat, but Ian later picked out a White-tailed Eagle on the prowl. Everyone on the boat had good views of the bird as it headed round the back of the island, while those onshore missed out, despite several pantomime-esque "It's behind you!" messages hastily telephoned to the explorers.

The latter group managed the landing unscathed and scrambled across the lava fields and boulders to the relative security of a grassy bank. Here Rock Pipits sang and performed their parachuting displays, Oystercatchers loafed on rocks and an Eider duck escorted her single duckling away. We also heard the first of several pairs of Twite, none of which deigned to pause for long enough to reveal themselves to us. A scramble up to the main platform brought us face to face with the stars of the show: the Puffins, hundreds of them standing at ease on the grassy clifftop and keeping a bored vigil while their partners incubated the single egg in the burrow below.

Meanwhile, on an offshore island, we spotted another avian sentinel, though this one had less kindly ambitions towards the Puffins: a Great Skua (or Bonxie)! This deadly predator was awaiting its moment to launch a raid along the cliff. There is a convincing school of thought that suggests that the reason the Puffins tolerate the close human presence on the clifftop is because it acts as a deterrent to the more cautious Bonxies and other predators which would otherwise be marauding among them.

We followed the clifftop path along to the great sea stack know as the Harp Rock, where tens of thousands of seabirds were nesting among the hubbub and stench. Kittiwakes screeched their names while thousands of Guillemots cried seemingly in alarm every time a neighbour distracted them from the tricky task of balancing an egg on an almost sheer rock face. How do they do it? Even the most pyriform egg would surely tumble if left alone for a moment! And, as if that wasn't enough, three Arctic Skuas patrolled the stack, ready to pounce should anyone lose concentration for a moment.

The path took us past ridiculously confiding Razorbills and garrulous Fulmars, a new photo opportunity at every turn, though the number of Shags seemed down on previous years. In the gulleys below, we could hear Blackbirds and Wrens singing their hearts out above the noise of the waves. A pair of stressed-looking Wheatears were feeding young and a Pied Wagtail (perhaps attracted by all the other black-and-white birds?) was making itself at home among the Guillemots. Anne found a 'bridled' Guillemot on the clifftop, looking as if it were wearing a natty pair of specs.

And it wasn't just birds: the clifftop vegetation was lovely. It included Primroses and Roseroot, Thrift and Angelica, Sea Spleenwort and Sea Campion. We also found two Garden Tiger caterpillars, one be-quiffed and resplendent, the other dead and apparently parasitised by wasps. Speaking of wasps, George found a Spiny Mason Wasp (*Odynerus spinipes*) on the path.

Eventually we had to drag ourselves away, via the old black house village along the east shore. As we crossed the boulder beach again, the earlier singing Rock Pipit had made good progress and was now the proud parent to at least four freshly-fledged Pipit-lets, noisily shouting as they hopped from rock to rock. We were distracted from the pipits by a distant male Hen Harrier flying low across one of the offshore islets, on a day-trip from Mull no doubt.

Back on the boat and stories exchanged, we motored round to the Harp Rock to see the seabird colony from the water. On the very top of the sea stack sat a Bonxie; it wasn't clear whether it was at a nest or simply waiting for the dinner gong to be sounded. Behind the stack, a Raven performed a tumbling sky dance, folding its wings and turning onto its back to drop like an anchor before righting itself and rising back up.

We now took a tour around the Treshnish Isles in the rough seas, watching Fulmars looking like miniature albatrosses tracking the boat while Arctic Terns (still relatively buoyant) bounced along, fishing delicately from the sea surface. At the Cairn na Burghs, we saw sea caves and sea arches (including a wonderful 'needle's eye'). Black Guillemots abounded along the rocky shores and a party of Grey Seals shuffled off their perches to watch us suspiciously from the safety of the water.

Halfway back to Coll and Angela picked out another set of cetacean fins slicing through the water, but they didn't hang around to allow us to identify the species. Back at the pier, the tide was now at its lowest and some of us looked anxiously at the long seaweedy ladder snaking up the stone face above us. Struan, seeing our alarm, quickly moved to Plan B which involved the use of a flight of stone steps up the side of the pier. Unfortunately, the platform at the bottom of the steps was still under water so he found a couple of fish boxes and positioned them to provide a makeshift pontoon. This proved very effective, and we all made it ashore dry-shod and safe. What a great day!

Day 4 Monday 10th June

RSPB Totronald – Green Hill – Hogh beach – Machair Mhor

The cold northerly wind had picked up again overnight and the day began windy, cool and overcast - which it remained all day. We made a quick stop at the Post Office to purchase copies of the wonderful *Wild Flowers of Coll and Tiree*, and then set off to the west end of the island to visit the RSPB reserve where some 15% of Britain's Corncrakes reside. We were detained briefly by Hebridean sheep and Miniature Shetland ponies in the roadside fields, which had Anne's camera trigger finger twitching, and a Brown Hare in the road ahead of the minibus had us all 'oohing' with delight. If we thought that was good, we arrived at the RSPB carpark to be confronted by seven Brown Hares together in the field, just chilling and occasionally chasing one another.

We immediately heard the occasional blast of rasping Corncrake, but the chorus only really began after a squall, which drove us back to the van for a few minutes, had blown through. The waders in the wet fields also became more active, with Lapwings chasing every gull that appeared, Redshanks perching up on fence posts and a Snipe drumming over our heads. A couple of male Hen Harriers patrolled the sand dunes while, at the other end of the scale, a tiny Wren scurried mouse-like along the edge of the verge, stopping occasionally to dust-bathe.

We patiently sat on the viewing platform benches looking out over prime Corncrake real estate, watching and waiting. Greg gradually exhausted his supply of Corncrake science anecdotes, but still we watched and waited. And, as usually happens, just as we were thinking we would never see one, a Corncrake did a short, lolloping flight across the top of the grasses and down. "Did you all see it?" Some had and some hadn't!

The cold wind drove us up to the sheltered garden by the reserve offices for some respite and an alternative view. Here we met the RSPB warden, bleary-eyed from the previous night's Corncrake monitoring (which sadist decreed

that the best time to count them was between dusk and dawn?) He told us that numbers were a little down on last year but still up on the five-year average - which was encouraging for a species which has entered another period of decline at a national level. We had another brief Corncrake fly-by, and then some excited discussion as to whether a shape in the grass by the metal post was another one; the scope revealed that it was actually a Brown Hare.

The Russian Comfrey flowering heavily in the garden played home to three species of bumblebee (White-tailed, Common Carder and the local speciality, Moss Carder). George found a rust on this plant too, which we correctly, as it turned out, called Comfrey Rust.

We headed back down to the platform for lunch. An adult White-tailed Eagle flew over our heads, accompanied by two 'tiny' corvids which (on reviewing the photos) turned out to be Ravens: a testament to the colossal size of the eagle. The eagle was labouring across the fields but, when it reached the line of hills across the valley, it picked up a thermal and gratefully spiralled up and up until it disappeared from view. A Corncrake chose just this moment to perform another floppy flight across the grassland ahead of us, a longer flight this time showing off its chestnut wings. "Did you all see it?" Everyone had except Ian, who shame-facedly admitted he'd still been watching the eagle!

Before our afternoon walk through the machair, most of us took a quick detour via the loos at the airfield. A plaque on the wall announced that they had been opened by "Charlie King", which we thought seemed a rather informal way to address the monarch, till we realised that this was the name of a Highlands and Islands councillor. A Cuckoo flying low over the road ahead of the minibus was a treat - its long wings, long tail and characteristic raptor-like outline was unmistakeable.

Our afternoon walk took us first up and over Green Hill to Hogh Beach. On the way, we saw lots of Bloody Cranesbill (including a delightful pale pink form with pencilled venations) and a bank of Primroses (which enabled Greg to demonstrate the two forms of Primrose flowers - pin-eyed and thrum-eyed - whereby the plant minimises the risk of self-pollination). Early Marsh Orchids and Common Spotted Orchids were also in evidence.

On the beach we spent a while searching for and finding the tiny Spotted Cowrie shells among the Flat Periwinkles, and Grey and Painted Top-shells. Cowries were once used as currency in some countries, and we could all agree that time spent looking at nature on a beach certainly made you richer!

Our 'grass of the day' today was Marram Grass, the xerophytic ecosystem engineer par excellence, growing in abundance in the dunes, where it stabilises the sand and enables all the other species to flourish. Another interesting grass appeared on the beach in the form of Eel Grass shoots, washed-up among the seaweed and thereby revealing the presence of sub-tidal meadows out beneath the waves. At the far end of the beach we found a delightful bank with Kidney Vetch, Thrift, Biting Stonecrop and the locally-scarce Sea Bindweed.

We headed out into the machair and new species came thick and fast: Dandelion and Burdock growing together, Field Forget-me-not, Mouse-ear Hawkweed and Lesser Meadow-rue. The Crambid moth *Anania fuscalis* was spotted, though it didn't stay around to be photographed, and the Stripe-winged Dronefly *Eristalis horticola*, though not uncommon across the country, proved to be a first record for Coll.

Back at the car park, another male Hen Harrier quartered the machair as we clambered back into the minibus and headed back across the island. At the roadside lochs we stopped for a quick look around, and picked up a very distant pair of Red-throated Divers.

Day 5 Tuesday 11th June

Killunaig – Sorisdale – Bousd – Lily Loch – Fishing Gate – Killunaig

Today we went exploring the north-east end of the island – with that unseasonably cold north wind still blowing strong, but less cloud and even some sunshine. Our first stop was at the graveyard at Killunaig to meet Jane (a local naturalist and historian) who was joining us for our walk today. We had a quick look around the gravestones, spotting memento mori on the slabs, and hearing tales of wartime tragedy associated with the graves of sailors whose bodies were washed up on the local beaches and buried (some without even a name). There had clearly been an emergence of Golden Grass Moths (*Chrysoteuchia culmella*) overnight as there were clouds of them among the Yorkshire Fog and Downy Oatgrass in the graveyard.

From here we drove on to the very end of the road at Sorisdale, stopping only to admire an ancient Juniper bush cascading down a cliff face, and a pair of smart Rock Doves, much tidier than their domesticated relatives (Feral Pigeons). At Sorisdale we had a look around the ancient village and saw some Marram Grass on a barn roof in its traditional use as a thatching material.

Our next stop was Struan, where we headed inland along a track to a lily-covered lochan. Among the Heath Spotted Orchids, Jane picked out a Heath Fragrant Orchid, slim and elegant, and of which we reverently took a deep sniff. Creeping Willow and Eared Willow were pointed out, as were three different species of heather, as well as the insectivorous pairing of Butterwort and Sundew. Best of all was the Mountain Everlasting (also known as the Scottish Edelweiss) with puffy pink and blue flowers.

At the lochan the sunshine had brought out the odonata and we enjoyed five different species, the best of which was a female Black Darter manoeuvering over a small stream before resting on a low grass stem. A pair of Cuckoos flew around calling noisily. Plenty more marsh plants were pointed out including the unusual red-flowered Marsh Cinquefoil, Square-stalked St John's-wort and today's 'grass of the day' the Viviparous Fescue, which gives its seeds a better chance of survival in these wet conditions by allowing them to germinate in the flower spike and casting them down later as tiny seedlings, rather than as bare seeds.

We lunched at a delightful beach known locally as the Fishing Gate. The colourful lichen-covered rocks, interspersed with yellow sand and blue sea, made us all photographers as we tried to capture the beauty of the scene. From here it was back to the graveyard and down to another glorious beach, this one housing a perfect tombolo sand bar between beach and offshore skerries, where Arctic Terns were nesting. A glacial boulder field protects a small patch of saltmarsh and here we added Danish Scurvy-grass to the list. A tiny pond skater on the hyper-saline water holes proved to be a Water Cricket.

Next we were shown an impressive basalt dyke running across the foreshore and out to sea. Cut into it was a metre deep hole, created by a rolling stone, a wishing well which goes by the name the Well of the King's

Daughter. Offshore we watched a pair of Shelducks escort their huge brood of 11 ducklings out into the heavy sea where they were buffeted and tossed by the waves.

Up in the machair, Jane found several rosettes of Frog Orchid leaves and then a couple in flower. These unobtrusive, squat little orchids had bronzey-green flowers though we struggled to see anything particularly frog-like about their appearance. Among the Frog Orchids we had a beetle moment, with three different species putting in an appearance at once: a large speckled click beetle on the Marram (*Agrypnus murinus*), a brilliant green leaf beetle on a buttercup flower (*Cryptocephalus aureolus*) and a fast-moving black ground beetle with red legs, the Black Clock Beetle (*Pterostichus madidus*). The insects didn't stop, as a couple of Snipe Flies warmed themselves on an exposed rock and a large brown blob at the base of a grass stem was revealed to be a hedgehog-faced Drinker moth – frequently seen by day as caterpillars, but rarely in adult form (unless in a moth trap). Our walk back to the minibus through the machair took us via an early Bronze Age cist burial site from some 4000 years ago.

Day 6 Wednesday 12th June

Moth trap – the Lodge Plantation – Clabbach beach – Loch Ronard – Fiskary – concert

A pleasant day was forecast so, with the cold northerly winds abating, we began the day at Greg's garden moth trap. As we headed through the village, a mother Eider with a train of ducklings made her sedate way up the bay. The volume and diversity of moths in the moth trap was disappointingly low for the time of year (a complaint voiced by moth-ers all over the country this spring) but we were excited to see the chunky Poplar Hawkmoths (underwings held forward to break-up the typical triangular moth outline and thereby deter predators), an Elephant Hawkmoth (whoever said that 'pink and green should never be seen' had obviously never laid eyes on one of these beauties), a couple of Drinkers, and the creamy coffee-coloured Clouded-bordered Brindle (clearly showing the striking stigma and kidney markings which most moths exhibit). At this point we split the group as Angela (the beekeeper among us) went off to spend some time with Graham (the island beekeeper) to find out about his work with native black honey bees.

A dozen species of woodland birds greeted the rest of us as we walked up to the Lodge Plantation, the one area of mature woodland in the island. Some of the birds (such as Lesser Redpoll and Goldcrest), though we could hear them, proved frustratingly elusive, but a pair of Willow Warblers made up for this. 'Hoo-eeting' noisily, they were clearly feeding young in a patch of brambles beside the road so gave great views. After a short while we decided to leave them alone to get on with the job undisturbed. A noisy couple of Peacocks in the garden were eclipsed by a mass of their butterfly namesake's caterpillars in a feeding frenzy on the roadside nettles.

Next we took a short drive out to Clabbach beach. On the way, a determinedly attentive pair of Greylag Geese in the Bracken were clearly escorting some goslings but they were doing an excellent job of keeping them hidden from view. We walked down the flowery sward to the beach where we found a dead colour-ringed Common Gull. At time of writing, we were still awaiting on a response from the person who had ringed it. A dead Common Guillemot nearby was sporting no rings, though.

The recent strong winds had brought significant quantities of fresh seaweed into the beach so (like 18th-century kelp collectors) we gathered it up and quickly found 6 different species of the larger kelps - including the shock-absorber springs of the Furbelows, the epiphyte-encrusted stipes of Cuvie and the slimy, mid-ribbed laminae of

Dabberlocks. A noisy pair of Ringed Plovers suggested that they had young on the beach nearby so we left them to it and drove back to the village for some food and to regather the group. Lunch in the grounds of the community centre was a convivial affair enhanced by the angry scolding of Starlings who revealed the presence of a Sparrowhawk hunting in the bushes.

After lunch we headed back up to the roadside lochs, where an Arctic Skua was having a bathe and a lone Greylag watched on. A Shag feeding in the loch was a surprise: no self-respecting Shag would normally be seen dead on a freshwater water body!

From here we walked down the track to the shoreline at Fiskary. A glade of Aspens led to an interesting discussion as to whether this was a single tree (with many separate trunks) or a group of trees. Recent research has suggested that an Aspen forest of many hectares in the US could be the largest living single organism in North America. Woodland ground floor species, including Bluebells, Wood Sage, Honeysuckle and Heath Speedwell, indicated how long this small patch of woodland had been in existence.

A boardwalk across a heavily-drained peatbog got us talking about the amount of carbon being released to the atmosphere by poorly-managed peat (more than the emissions from all domestic heating in Scotland apparently) and the potential for mass sequestration and long-term storage of carbon in well-managed peatbogs. A Large Heath butterfly flickered past over a moorland patch dominated by its larval food plant Hare's-tail Cotton-grass. Today's 'grass of the day' was Common Cotton-grass – the spreading, multi-flowered form of cotton-grass. The insectivorous Round-leaved Sundew, purple Heath Milkwort and frothy Reindeer Lichen were also seen. The strange-looking, unbranched Water Horsetail provoked a discussion about the dominance of this plant family during the Carboniferous era, when tree-like forms created vast swamp forests whose boggy demise led to the eventual formation of coal. A Royal Fern on the burnside, beside Hard Fern, demonstrated the diversity of ferny forms and their often very different sterile and fertile stems.

Down at the shore we watched a couple of Common Sandpipers (surprisingly our first of the trip) and plenty of Small Heaths (who are more generalist in their grass tastes than their larger congeners), while Greg pointed out various archaeological features and described this area's importance for people since hunter-gatherers first landed here 9000 years ago.

Next, we climbed up onto a headland, while below our feet Crowberry and the remains of a hill fort were both evident. Here we sat to enjoy the unfamiliar calm and warmth of a gentle breeze (such a contrast to the last few days) while Greg hunted, without success, for marine mammalian action. The wildlife highlight was a pair of Curlews flying around the bay, one of which gave a splendid bubbling song.

We returned to the guest house to catch up on our checklists, enjoyed a hasty supper at the Island Cafe and then headed up to the packed community centre, where we were treated to an evening's entertainment by Scottish music royalty in the form of a rare concert by Barbara Dickson, Aly McBain and Phil Cunningham, hosted with urbane and soothing tones by BBC Radio Scotland's Iain Anderson.

Day 7 Thursday 13th June

RSPB Crossapol – Crossapol beach – RSPB Totronald – Loch Ronard

Our last full day began breezy again, with a promise of heavy rain arriving soon after lunchtime, so we were away quickly from the guesthouse with our picnic lunches and headed up to Loch Ronard. There was nothing doing here, so we drove further along the road passing several Stonechat families, the males of which seemed happy to perch briefly on the tops of roadside bushes and fences.

We had a quick check of the orchid count (seven so far) so Greg stopped the van to show us an eighth orchid. These were the dead-looking, seed pod-bearing spikes of April's Early Purple Orchids growing in abundance on the road verge. Does that count? We continued on to the RSPB reserve at Crossapol where we loaded up waterproofs in anticipation and headed down to the beach.

On the way we skirted the fence beside the RSPB silage fields and saw a large stand of White Campion, many of the flowers of which were infected by the Campion Anther Smut: thanks again to George for spotting the tiny details. Planted Phacelia and Comfrey were in bloom and, despite the strong wind, several species of bee were observed. We met Simon, the RSPB bee surveyor ("The man who puts the bee into RSPB!" as one wag observed). He was keen to find the first Great Yellow Bumblebee of the year, so far without success.

On the machair here we found Hop Trefoil and Lesser Trefoil flowering side-by-side, enabling us to see the larger pale yellow flowers of the former against the smaller, brighter yellow of the latter. Down at the beach, Greg scanned for divers in the bay while the rest of us watched a mixed flock of gulls loafing on the sand, including adult and immature Common Gulls, a second-summer Herring Gull and several adult Black-headeds. A small party of *arctica* race Dunlins flew in and proceeded to feed busily. The diver hunting was not going well, so Sarah (Greg's wife) pointed out a 'grass ball' for us to examine. Known in the Mediterranean as a 'nuns' fart', this tightly knotted mass of wiry grass stems is created by the rolling action of the tide on the curved beach.

As we headed up the side of the bay a sudden flurry of excitement began with a male Hen Harrier flying low over the sea, the sudden appearance of a Common Swift over our heads (a less than annual over-shooting migrant) and then a flotilla of feral Snow Geese out on the water. We hardly knew where to look first!

A Grey Seal was bottling in the bay occasionally opening an eye to peer at us cautiously. At last, it was Sarah who found a Great Northern Diver in the bay, and we all managed good views as it briefly surfaced between long dives. An archaeological detour took us up to the McLean family mausoleum, slowly crumbling into the sand but bedecked with striking designs in the masonry and a forest of Black Spleenwort. From here we headed up onto a grassy knoll to look at the 'otter thrones': grassy hummocks created by the repeated defecations of generations of otters and gulls. As we wondered at this, we noticed the distinctive black seedheads of Spring Squill and some pink female flowers of Mountain Everlasting.

It was now time for us to return to the minibus for lunch and a loo break. As we walked across the machair, a prostrate lamb caused us alarm when it did not move until we gathered around it, at which point it woke from its slumber, noticed us and leapt to its feet. We would have felt silly had we reported it to the local farmer as a dying lamb.

The return route took us along the edge of a field with Redshank and Lapwing nesting, the former indignantly flying around our heads calling before perching on a nearby fence post. We moved on quickly along the track, where some new flowers were still to be seen including Dove's-foot Cranesbill and Red Bartsia.

We made it back to the van not a moment too soon, just as the promised rain arrived. We drove via the airfield to the RSPB Totronald reserve to give the Corncrakes one last go. They were calling all around, but none showed itself. The Snipe and Redshank by contrast were busy flying over the wet grassland.

On the way home, we stopped once again beside Loch Ronard (the roadside loch); on this occasion our good fortune was in and a Great Skua was bathing out on the water, being watched by a cautious Arctic Skua who flew regular sorties over its head, just to let it know it had been seen.

Day 8 Friday 14th June

Ballyhaugh – Arinagour – Oban – depart

There was early mist around the village this morning, following a wet night so, to avoid soaked feet for the journey home, we drove out in the van to Ballyhaugh, a corner of the island we'd not yet visited. A Great Skua flew over the van as we drove out of the village – it was reassuring that we were seeing this species regularly, given how badly it had been affected by bird 'flu in recent years. Further on, a Brown Hare and then a Rabbit, both close to the road, enabled us to detail the striking differences between these two superficially similar lagomorphs.

A gang of Lesser Blacked-backed Gulls loafing in the machair was causing alarm to the local Lapwings and Redshanks. Meanwhile Linnets and Stonechats were busy along the fence lines, and the occasional Willow Warbler sang from the roadside scrub of Eared Willow.

We parked up at Loch Ballyhaugh, where we watched Sand Martins swooping low over the water, which was choked by Common Reed, Bogbean and a mass of *Potamogeton* pondweeds (the latter's distance from the bank saved us the trouble of having to work through a complicated key to get it to species level!) A summer-plumage Black-headed Gull passed through, a few miles from the usual haunt of this species at the far south-west of the island.

Reluctantly we headed back to the ferry port, where we caught up on the previous day's overlooked 'grass of the day', the tall, chunky, flat-stemmed Cocksfoot with the lower flower clusters on long stalks. We promised faithfully that we would always remember the grasses we had learnt this week and would go looking for them as soon as we got home (maybe).

Once aboard the boat, we saw regular Common Guillemots, Kittiwakes and Manx Shearwaters but, again, a couple of Great Skuas were the highlight. Rhiannon and George managed a glimpse of Harbour Porpoise as we passed Morvern. Around the Glas Eileanan were huge flocks of Kittiwakes and Common/Arctic Terns and a few Gannets were sitting on the water, Persil-white against the dark sea.

The sun came out as we berthed at Oban (typical!) We said fond farewells and sadly went our separate ways after a lovely week together.



Killinaig Beach

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Species lists

Birds

		June 2024						
Common name	**Scientific name**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
Snow Goose	*Anser caerulescens*						✓	
Greylag Goose	*Anser anser*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shelduck	*Tadorna tadorna*	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*							
Eider	*Somateria mollissima*		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Red-breasted Merganser	*Mergus serrator*	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Rock Dove	*Columba livia*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*					✓		
Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corncrake	*Crex crex*	✓		✓			✓	
Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ringed Plover	*Charadrius hiaticula*	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Curlew	*Numenius arquata*					✓		
Sanderling	*Calidris alba*	✓						
Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*	✓					✓	
Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*			✓	✓		✓	
Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*					✓	✓	
Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kittiwake	*Rissa tridactyla*	✓	✓		✓			✓
Black-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*				✓		✓	✓
Common Gull	*Larus canus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Black-backed Gull	*Larus marinus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lesser Black-backed Gull	*Larus fuscus*	✓			✓		✓	✓
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*	✓	✓		✓			✓
Arctic Tern	*Sterna paradisaea*		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Skua	*Stercorarius skua*		✓				✓	✓
Arctic Skua	*Stercorarius parasiticus*	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Guillemot	*Uria aalge*	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Razorbill	*Alca torda*	✓	✓			✓		
Black Guillemot	*Cepphus grylle*	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Puffin	*Fratercula arctica*	✓	✓					
Red-throated Diver	*Gavia stellata*			✓			✓	
Great Northern Diver	*Gavia immer*						✓	
Fulmar	*Fulmarus glacialis*		✓					
Manx Shearwater	*Puffinus puffinus*	✓	✓					✓
Gannet	*Morus bassanus*	✓	✓					✓
Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*		✓					
Shag	*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*					✓		
Hen Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*		✓	✓		✓	✓	
White-tailed Eagle	*Haliaeetus albicilla*		✓	✓				
Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*			✓		✓	✓	
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	✓						

		June 2024						
Common name	**Scientific name**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
Swift	*Apus apus*						✓	
Hooded Crow	*Corvus cornix*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raven	*Corvus corax*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sand Martin	*Riparia riparia*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	✓		✓		✓		✓
Sedge Warbler	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Whitethroat	*Curruca communis*					✓	✓	
Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*					✓		
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Blackbird	*Turdus merula*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Stonechat	*Saxicola rubicola*			✓	✓		✓	✓
Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*				✓	✓		
Pied Wagtail	*Motacilla alba yarrellii*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rock Pipit	*Anthus petrosus*		✓		✓		✓	
Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*					✓	✓	✓
Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*			✓		✓	✓	
Twite	*Linaria flavirostris*		✓	✓				
Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lesser Redpoll	*Acanthis cabaret*					✓		
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Other vertebrates

		June 2024						
Common name	**Scientific name**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
Mammals								
Brown Hare	*Lepus europaeus*			✓			✓	✓
Rabbit	*Oryctolagus cuniculus*					✓	✓	✓
Common Dolphin	*Delphinus delphis*		✓					
Long-finned Pilot Whale	*Globicephala melas*	✓ (dead)						
Harbour Porpoise	*Phocoena phocoena*							✓
Harbour Seal/Common Seal	*Phoca vitulina*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Seal	*Halichoerus grypus*		✓			✓	✓	
Amphibians and Reptiles								
Common Frog	*Rana temporaria*					✓		

Invertebrates

		June 2024							
Common name	**Scientific name**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
Hymenoptera									
Red-tailed Bumblebee	*Bombus lapidarius*						✓	✓	
White-tailed Bumblebee	*Bombus lucorum agg*		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Carder Bee	*Bombus pascuorum*				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Moss Carder Bee	*Bombus muscorum*		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Honey Bee	*Apis mellifera*						✓		
Spiny Mason Wasp	*Odynerus spinipes*			✓					
Lepidoptera									
Butterflies									
Small Heath	*Coenonympha pamphilus*					✓	✓	✓	
Large Heath	*Coenonympha tullia*						✓		
Green-veined White	*Pieris napi*				✓	✓	✓		
Peacock (larvae)	*Aglais io*						✓		
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	*Boloria selene*	✓							
Moths									
(a Crambid moth)	*Anania fuscalis*				✓				
Drinker	*Euthrix potatoria*					✓	✓		
Common Carpet	*Epirrhoe alternata*					✓			
Common Heath	*Ematurga atomaria*						✓		
Cinnabar	*Tyria jacobaeae*			✓		✓	✓		
Garden Tiger (larvae)	*Arctia caja*			✓					
Poplar Hawkmoth	*Laothoe populi*						✓		
Elephant Hawkmoth	*Deilephila elpenor*						✓		
Silver Ground Carpet	*Xanthorhoe montanata*						✓		
Heart and Dart	*Agrotis exclamationis*						✓		
Knotgrass	*Acronicta rumicis*						✓		
Dusky Brocade	*Apamea remissa*						✓		
Clouded-bordered Brindle	*Apamea crenata*						✓		
Hemiptera									
Water Cricket	*Velia caprai*					✓			
(a species of snipe fly)	*Rhagio scolopaceus*					✓			
Coleoptera									
(a species of leaf beetle)	*Cryptocephalus aureolus*					✓			
(a species of click beetle)	*Agrypnus murinus*					✓		✓	
Black Clock Beetle	*Pterostichus madidus*					✓			
Garden Chafer	*Phyllopertha horticola*		✓		✓	✓	✓		
Odonata									
Large Red Damselfly	*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*					✓	✓		
Common Blue Damselfly	*Enallagma cyathigerum*					✓			
Blue-tailed Damselfly	*Ischnura elegans*					✓	✓		
Black Darter	*Sympetrum danae*					✓			
Four-spotted Chaser	*Libellula quadrimaculata*					✓			

		June 2024							
Common name	**Scientific name**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
Diptera									
Stripe-winged Dronefly	*Eristalis horticola*					✓			
Mollusca									
Brown Garden Snail	*Cornu aspersum*				✓				
Spotted Cowrie (shell)	*Trivia monacha*				✓				
Painted Topshell (shell)	*Calliostoma zizyphinum*				✓				
Grey Topshell (shell)	*Steromphala cineraria*				✓				
Flat Periwinkle (shell)	*Littorina obtusata*				✓				
Cnidaria									
Moon Jellyfish	*Aurelia aurita*				✓		✓		

Plants

Scientific Name	**Common Name**	**DAFOR abundance rating**
Machair and Dunes		
Wild Flowers		
Achillea millefolium	Yarrow	Occasional
Aegopodium podagraria	Pignut	Frequent
Anacamptis pyramidalis	Pyramidal Orchid	Occasional
Anthriscus sylvestris	Cow Parsley	Frequent
Anthyllis vulneraria	Kidney Vetch	Occasional
Arctium nemorosum	Wood Burdock	Rare
Bellis perennis	Daisy	Abundant
Cardamine pratensis	Cuckooflower	Occasional
Centaurea nigra	Common Knapweed	Rare
Centaurium erythraea	Common Centaury	Rare
Cerastium diffusum	Sea Mouse-ear	Rare
Cerastium fontanum	Common Mouse-ear	Occasional
Chrysanthemum leucanthemum	Oxeye Daisy	Occasional
Coeloglossum viride	Frog Orchid	Rare
Dactylorhiza fuchsii	Common Spotted Orchid	Rare
Dactylorhiza incarnata var coccinea	Early Marsh Orchid	Occasional
Dactylorhiza incarnata var incarnata	Early Marsh Orchid	Occasional
Dactylorhiza purpurella	Northern Marsh Orchid	Rare
Hesperis matronalis	Dame's Violet	Rare
Daucus carota	Wild Carrot	Rare
Erodium cicutarium	Common Stork's-bill	Rare
Euphrasia sp	Eyebright	Occasional
Galium verum	Lady's Bedstraw	Frequent
Geranium dissectum	Cut-leaved Cranesbill	Rare
Geranium molle	Dove's-foot Cranesbill	Occasional
Geranium sanguineum	Bloody Cranesbill	Abundant
Heraclium sphondylium	Hogweed	Frequent
Hydrocotyle vulgaris	Marsh Pennywort	Dominant
Lathyrus pratensis	Meadow Vetchling	Occasional
Linum catharticum	Fairy Flax	Rare
Lotus corniculatus	Bird's-foot Trefoil	Frequent

Scientific Name	Common Name	DAFOR abundance rating
Lychnis flos-cuculi	Ragged Robin	Occasional
Myosotis arvensis	Field Forget-me-not	Occasional
Petasites hybridus	Butterbur	Locally abundant
Phacelia tanacetifolia	Phacelia	Occasional (planted)
Pilosella officinarum	Mouse-ear Hawkweed	Occasional
Plantago lanceolata	Ribwort Plantain	Occasional
Polygala vulgaris	Common Milkwort	Frequent
Potentilla anserina	Silverweed	Abundant
Ranunculus acris	Meadow Buttercup	Occasional
Ranunculus bulbosus	Bulbous Buttercup	Abundant
Rhinanthus minor	Yellow-rattle	Frequent
Rosa pimpinellifolia	Burnet Rose	Rare
Rumex acetosa	Common Sorrel	Occasional
Rumex acetosella	Sheep's Sorrel	Rare
Scilla verna	Spring Squill	Rare
Sedum acre	Biting Stonecrop	Rare
Silence album	White Campion	Rare
Symphytum x uplandicum	Russian Comfrey	Occasional (planted)
Taraxacum officinalis agg	Common Dandelion	Occasional
Thalictrum minus	Lesser Meadow-rue	Occasional
Trifolium campestre	Hop Trefoil	Occasional
Trifolium dubium	Lesser Trefoil	Occasional
Veronica chamaedrys	Germander Speedwell	Rare
Grasses, Ferns, Mosses etc		
Ammophila arenaria	Marram Grass	Dominant (Grass of the Day Monday)
Avenula pubescens	Downy Oat Grass	Abundant
Dactylis glomerata	Cocksfoot	Frequent (Grass of the Day Thursday)
Equisetum fluviatile	Water Horsetail	Occasional
Equisetum palustre	Marsh Horsetail	Dominant
Koeleria macrantha	Crested Hairgrass	Dominant
Melampsorella symphyti	Comfrey Rust	Rare
Microbotryum lychnidis-dioicae	Campion Anther Smut	Rare
Puccinia urticata	Nettle Rust Fungus	Rare
Moorland and Bog		
Wild Flowers		
Angelica sylvestris	Wild Angelica	Abundant
Antennaria dioica	Mountain Everlasting	Occasional
Calluna vulgaris	Ling Heather	Dominant
Caltha palustris	Marsh Marigold	Occasional
Cirsium palustre	Marsh Thistle	Occasional
Cirsium repens	Creeping Thistle	Occasional
Dactylorhiza maculata	Heath Spotted Orchid	Frequent
Drosera rotundifolia	Round-leaved Sundew	Occasional
Empetrum nigrum	Crowberry	Rare
Erica cinerea	Bell Heather	Frequent
Erica tetralix	Cross-leaved Heath	Occasional
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowsweet	Occasional
Galium saxatile	Heath Bedstraw	Occasional
Gymnadenia borealis	Heath Fragrant Orchid	Rare

Scientific Name	Common Name	DAFOR abundance rating
Hypericum tetrapterum	Square-stalked St John's-wort	Rare
Hypericum pulchrum	Slender St John's-wort	Rare
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag Iris	Abundant
Juniperus communis	Common Juniper	Rare
Lobelia dortmanna	Water Lobelia	Rare
Mentha aquatica	Water Mint	Frequent
Menyanthes trifoliata	Bogbean	Occasional
Myrica gale	Bog Myrtle	Frequent
Narthecium ossifragum	Bog Asphodel	Rare
Nymphaea alba	White Water Lily	Locally abundant
Orchis mascula	Early Purple Orchid	Rare
Pedicularis palustris	Marsh Lousewort	Rare
Pedicularis sylvatica	Common Lousewort	Occasional
Pinguicula vulgaris	Common Butterwort	Occasional
Polygala serpyllifolia	Heath Milkwort	Frequent
Potamogeton polygonifolius	Bog Pondweed	Locally abundant
Potentilla erecta	Tormentil	Frequent
Potentilla palustris	Marsh Cinquefoil	Rare
Ranunculus flammula	Lesser Spearwort	Occasional
Rosa sherardii	Sherard's Downy-rose	Rare
Salix repens	Creeping Willow	Abundant
Samolus valerandi	Brookweed	Rare
Sedum anglicum	English Stonecrop	Occasional
Thymus polytrichus	Wild Thyme	Frequent
Trifolium medium	Zigzag Clover	Occasional
Veronica serpyllifolia	Heath Speedwell	Rare
Grasses, Ferns, Mosses etc		
Anthoxanthum odoratum	Sweet Vernal Grass	Abundant (Grass of the Day Saturday)
Blechnum spicant	Hard Fern	Occasional
Carex nigra	Common Sedge	Abundant
Cladonia rangiferina	Reindeer Lichen	Occasional
Eriophorum angustifolium	Common Cotton-grass	Abundant (Grass of the Day Wednesday)
Eriophorum vaginatum	Hare's-tail Cotton-grass	Occasional
Festuca vivipara	Viviparous Fescue	Frequent (Grass of the Day Tuesday)
Holcus lanatus	Yorkshire Fog	Abundant (Grass of the Day Sunday)
Osmunda regalis	Royal Fern	Rare
Phragmites australis	Common Reed	Locally abundant
Polystichum juniperinum	Juniper Haircap Moss	Rare
Pteridium aquilinum	Bracken	Dominant
Rhizocarpon geographicum	Map Lichen	Occasional
Trichophorum cespitosum	Deergrass	Occasional
Woodland		
Trees and Wild Flowers		
Alnus glutinosa	Alder	Rare
Erinus alpinus	Fairy Foxglove	Rare
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	Rare

Scientific Name	Common Name	DAFOR abundance rating
Hyacinthoides non-scripta	Bluebell	Occasional
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle	Occasional
Oxalis acetosella	Wood Sorrel	Rare
Populus tremula	Aspen	Rare
Primula vulgaris	Primrose	Occasional
Salix aurita	Eared Willow	Abundant
Sambucus nigra	Elder	Rare
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	Occasional
Teucrium scorodonia	Wood Sage	Rare
Ulex europaeus	Gorse	Occasional
Grasses, Ferns, Mosses etc		
Asplenium adiantum-nigrum	Black Spleenwort	Rare
Asplenium trichomanes	Maidenhair Spleenwort	Rare
Rocky Shores, Beaches, Saltmarsh and Streams		
Wild Flowers		
Armeria maritima	Thrift	Locally abundant
Atriplex glabriuscula	Babington's Orache	Rare
Atriplex laciniata	Frosted Orache	Rare
Cakile maritima	Sea Rocket	Rare
Calystegia soldanella	Sea Bindweed	Rare
Cochlearia danica	Danish Scurvygrass	Rare
Cochlearia officinalis	Common Scurvygrass	Occasional
Glaux maritima	Sea Milkwort	Rare
Honkenya peploides	Sea Sandwort	Rare
Nasturtium officinale	Watercress	Rare
Plantago maritima	Sea Plantain	Rare
Sedum rosea	Roseroot	Occasional
Silene uniflora	Sea Campion	Occasional
Tussilago farfara	Coltsfoot	Rare
Zostera marina	Common Eelgrass	Rare
Grasses, Ferns, Mosses etc		
Verrucaria sp	(a crustose lichen on rocks)	Abundant
Xanthoria sp	(a crustose lichen on rocks)	Abundant
Seaweeds		
Alaria esculenta	Dabberlocks	Occasional
Ascophyllum nodosum	Egg Wrack	Occasional
Enteromorpha intestinalis	Gutweed	Abundant
Fucus spiralis	Spiral Wrack	Rare
Fucus vesiculosus	Bladder Wrack	Frequent
Himanthalia elongata	Sea Spaghetti	Frequent
Laminaria digitata	Oar Weed	Occasional
Laminaria hyperborea	Cuvie	Occasional
Laminaria saccharina	Sugar Kelp	Occasional
Pelvetia canaliculata	Channeled Wrack	Frequent
Saccorhiza polyschides	Furbelows	Rare
Ulva lactuca	Sea Lettuce	Occasional