

Warden: Simon Franks

In July there were 4 sightings of Porpoises around the island. These seem to occur at roughly weekly intervals with groups consisting of between 2 and 6 individuals. The groups were passing under the Skye bridge, moving in or out of Loch Alsh.

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In August, in the evenings, Sandmartins had been seen flying around, probably feeding on the plentiful Midge population. For a period of three days approximately 12 Common Gulls were seen resting on the Southwest coast of Eilean Bàn. It is actually unusual for Common Gulls to be seen around the island. The first sighting of a Pinemartin was also made in August, spotted moving across the paths from the slipway. A second sighting was made on the north side of the island a few weeks later.

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In September sightings of Oystercatchers and Herons became more frequent. Over the summer there were

Also in September, 3 or 4 Chaffinches have been seen feeding, often on Bramble Berries or seeds from Thistles and Dockens. In the middle of September three Robins were seen. They seemed to be trying to defend a territory. As I have since only seen one Robin around it suggests that the other 2 have been driven away.

By the middle of September there were no more Rock Pipits to be seen, but there were still a few Meadow Pipits. Foxgloves are still in flower on the south side of the island, but with the flowers on secondary stems rather than on the main stems.

After a bout of stormy September weather, the Voles were taking every chance to nip themselves, and

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As October starts the Ling and Bell Heather flowers are slowly fading, and the Rowan and Brambles are heavy with berries, which some say means that a hard winter is on it's way. The Pinemartins and Hooded Crows (Hoodies) are feeding on the Rowan and Brambles, leaving pellets and scat full of berries.

In the Sensory Garden I discovered a Holly plant and a Hebe plant that had been eaten back. These are both quite woody plants, and the way that they had been grazed suggested that it might have been by Roe Deer, although I could not find any prints. However after closer examination it became clear that Voles were responsible. Voles can quite easily climb a foot up a plant and graze from there.

The first group (raft) of Eider Ducks, numbering about 20 in total, formed between Eilean Bàn and Kyleakin. Comprising of equal numbers of black & white and brown, males and females, this seemed to be a raft of 10 pairs grouping together. The Eider rafts are now seen most days and generally move westwards, from in front of Kyleakin then out under the bridge. Even now in November there are a few Primroses in flower and patches of Herb Robert

, so there is still a bit of colour on the island as we go into the winter.