

Dr Jim Cassels has compiled the Arran Bird Report: the first 40 years.



Tristan ap Rheinhaulth compiled the report from 1990 to 1992.



The late Audrey Walters compiled the report from 1993 to 2005.

Arran Bird Report: the first 40 years

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk

The Arran Bird Report has reached a historical milestone. It is 40 years since the first standalone bird report was produced by the Arran Natural History Society. And to celebrate, a special publication has just been produced covering these years.

Simply titled Arran Bird Report: the first 40 years, it has been compiled by the Arran Bird recorder for the past 14 years, Dr Jim Cassels.

The changes in the report in these first 40 years are outlined. There is an insight into the people who helped shape the report and the birds that help make Arran a special place are highlighted.

The uniqueness of Arran bird life is featured, as are the changes in that bird life, together with a range of birding highlights from these first 40 reports. In addition, the first report, the Arran Bird Report from 1980, is included in its entirety together with the 40th report, the Arran Bird Report for 2019.

It was Maggie H Dunn who produced the very first bird report and was the recorder until 1991. The last two years were in collaboration with

Tristan ap Rheinhaulth, who did the 1992 report. From 1993 to 2005, Audrey Walters was the recorder and in 2006 present recorder Jim took over.

Maggie was the founder member of the Arran Natural History Society, which was formed in 1977, and it was through her enthusiasm and commitment that the first Arran Bird Report was produced. Maggie was also a local primary teacher. Both as a teacher and as a member of the society, Maggie was, and is, an inspiration. Through her, many developed and shared her passion for the birds of Arran.

Enthusiasm

In her role as bird recorder, she produced the annual report until 1991 but after that she has continued to support all the subsequent recorders and has contributed to every bird report down all the years. Maggie is now 95 years old and, although she now lives in Hampshire, her enthusiasm for Arran and its birds continues undiminished.

Jim said: 'The reader will be the judge of whether or not this publication achieves its aim of celebrating 40 years of Arran bird reports.

'I hope it does because 40 years is quite an achievement, particularly at a time when the production of annual bird reports from our adjacent areas is becoming problematic.

'During this viral crisis it may seem an irrelevance but particularly at this time encouraging people to safely enjoy Arran's quiet places and its wide variety of birds is good for people's mental and physical well being.'

Society chairman Jackie Kemp added: 'Over the years it has been my privilege to know and share birding ventures on Arran with those compilers of previous reports.

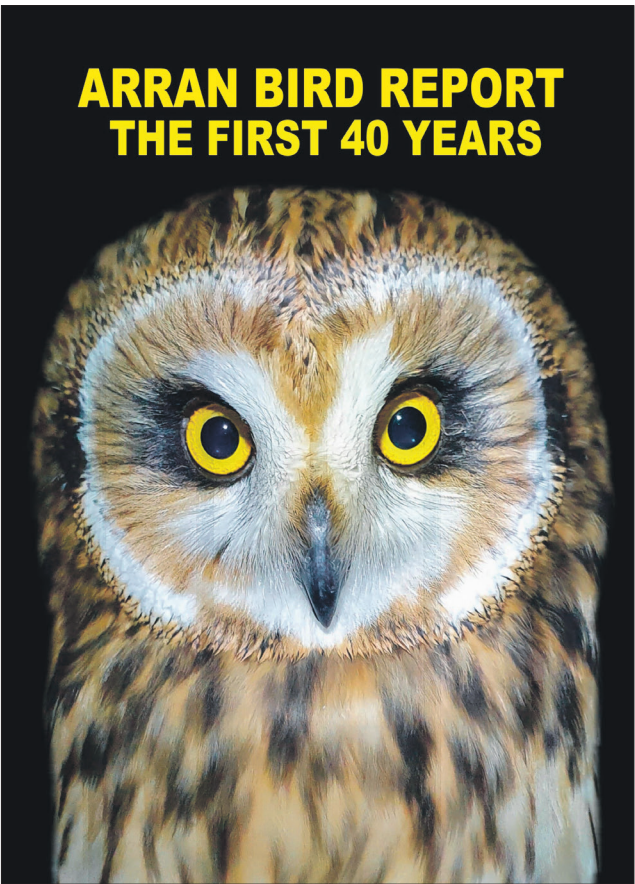
'Margaret Dunn, who had the foresight to see the need for a local report all those years ago, the late Audrey Walters, who stepped in when Margaret temporarily left the island, and the present incumbent Jim Cassels, who has raised the report to a new level and produced the Arran Bird Atlas. Their enthusiasm and desire to extract even the commonest observations from the local and visiting birdwatchers has been positively infectious.'

The report retails for £5 and for a perfect bound book of 110 pages crammed with information it is a bargain.

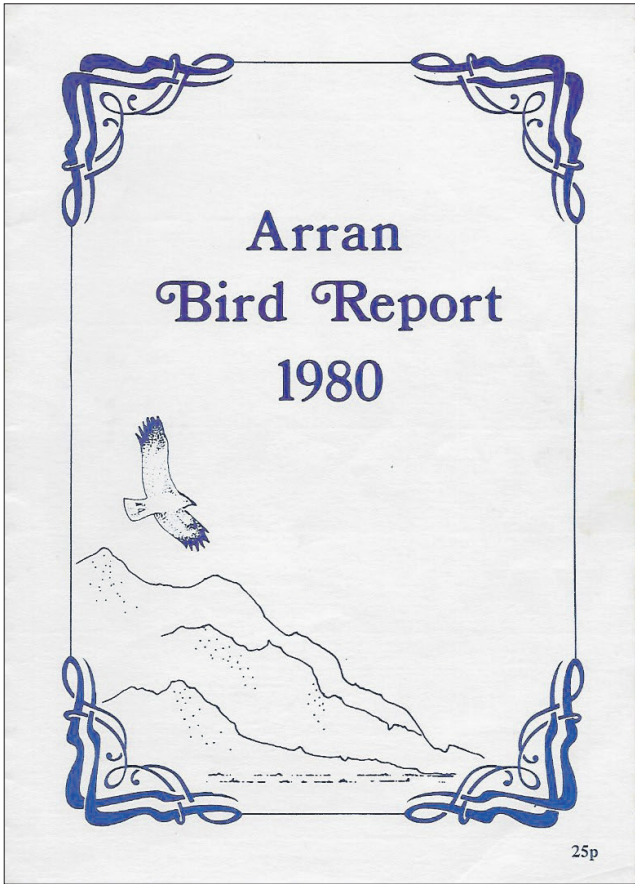
It is available in The Book and Card Centre in Brodick, The Harbour Shop in Blackwaterfoot and Pirnmill Village Store and Post Office.



Maggie H Dunn who compiled the very first report. Photo Hugh Boag



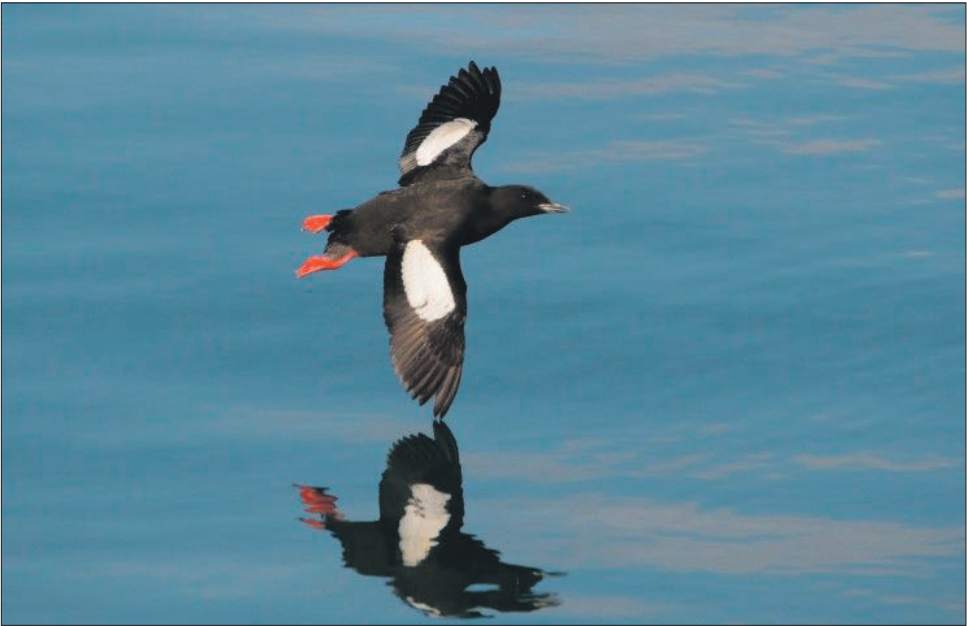
The striking cover of the 40th anniversary report.



The cover of the very first bird report from 1980.



The cover of the 2015 bird report.



Black guillemot – a species on the increase.
Photo Angus Hogg.



Ptarmigan – a species in decline. Photo Tony Church.



Snowy egret an American bird, a first for Arran and a first for the UK. Photo Lee Hesp.



Hoopoe – a rare bird that turned up in 2006 while the bird recorder was in Australia only seen by one person but photographed. Photo Graham Ross