

Arran Bird Atlas 2007 – 2012

In this atlas the birdlife of Arran is described for the first time. The island of Arran, covering an area of 432 square kilometres, is the largest in Scotland's Firth of Clyde and has approx 5000 inhabitants. On account of its physical features and its considerable biodiversity, Arran is known as Scotland in miniature. This work was completed under the direction of Dr Jim Cassels with the assistance of more than 30 volunteers who undertook the groundwork over a period of 5 years. In addition, nearly 700 people contributed by reporting their sightings over 5 breeding seasons and 5 winters. Jim Cassels was able to base his findings on more than 36,000 sightings, covering 177 species. This represents a tremendous effort on the part of residents and visitors who share a common passion for the birds of Arran. The data collection was undertaken in parallel to that for [the national] Bird Atlas 2007 -11 but [for the Arran atlas] the work was extended by one year. Except in the case of the rarest species, there are 4 distribution maps for each species included and these show the distribution and numbers present during the breeding season and in winter. The commentaries devoted to each species are very succinct and there is no comment in the text on the maps. The task of interpretation is left to the user but this ought not to be a problem. This same economy of words is also present in the introductory chapters and in the appendices. All in all, this local atlas, with its 400+ maps and 200+ photographs, is a very worthy publication. Thanks to the support of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club and of the Arran Trust, the Arran Natural History Society, founded in 1977, has kept the cost [of the atlas] very reasonable.

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