

Coll Bird Festival May 10th to 12th 2018

Welcome to Coll Bird Festival 2019! Staff and volunteers from An Cridhe Community Centre will be working alongside Ben Jones (RSPB Coll), John Bowler (RSPB Tiree), David Palmar (volunteer RSPB, SOC), Greg Smith (Natural England) and Charlie Self (local ecologist), to provide a varied programme of events that includes, trips to the island of Lunga and Gunna, guided walks, informative talks, dawn and Hen Harrier watches, an evening of music and a beach clean with barbecue. If you need any information about the events, or need help with transport or directions call into the office in An Cridhe (open 9.00 – 3.00 Mon to Fri) or telephone us on 01879 230217 office hours, or 07502313168 out of office hours, and leave a message. We will answer you as soon as possible.

A number of events are run over the course of the weekend and customers can choose individual events or a package rate. Pre-booking is essential for the boat trips and Saturday evening buffet. Putting your name down for walks is useful, it gives leaders an idea of how many people to expect.

Package rate: £68 (£60 for RSPB Members). This includes 3 x walk tokens (equiv. 2 hours each), 1 x boat trip, 1 x ceilidh ticket and entry to all the talks. For walks, you can choose from the RSPB-led 'off the beaten track' walk (2 tokens), the dawn watch (1 token), Hen Harrier watch (1 token), Arinagour walk (1 token). Booked as individual events the cost would be £75 (£67 RSPB members)

Friday 10th May

For information call into An Cridhe to collect all the information you will need about individual activities, how to get there, book events or find out anything you need to know.

Drop in at Totronald RSPB information centre Friday morning

Start time: any time to suit you

Take time to listen to and look for corncrakes from the viewing platform. Watch lapwings, possibly see a hen harrier, hear snipe drumming, see what has been spotted in recent days, or read the interpretation boards in the information centre. Saunter down to beautiful Hogh beach. Ben will be in the office and happy to answer any questions you have about the birds, the reserve and their work.

How to get there: Turn left out of the community centre and follow the road on the left past the now closed Free Church on the right; the Lodge also on your right (there is a heronry in these woods); Old Hall on the left which is now a second-hand shop and worth a visit while you are here; past Coll medical practice on the right; the twin lochs where geese can often be seen and sometimes red throated divers. There are great views of Mull and the Treshnish Isles and look out for hen harriers along the way. Keep following the road until you see the two castles over to the left and shortly after the airport on the right. Keep straight on to the T junction. Turn right here and follow the road to the RSPB car park at the end. The information centre is on the left just before the car park.

12.30 pm A guided wildlife and bird watching walk from Crossapol car parking area to Breachacha beach, along the coastline and back via Crossapol beach

Start time: Walk starts at 12.30pm. Takes 3 – 4 hours

Meeting point: Crossapol car parking area (see map in the "I love Coll brochure" for help with getting there and the directions above).

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What you might see: Ringed Plover, Dunlin, Sanderling, Lapwing, Twite, Great Northern Diver, Grey Seals, Arctic Tern and even a bit of archaeology

Led by: Ben Jones

Cost: £10 per adult (RSPB members £6.00), children free (hand in your token or payment to the walk leaders)

Equipment: Walking boots and waterproof clothing recommended. Bring a packed lunch.

How to get there: Follow the directions above for Totronald RSPB information centre, turning left instead of right at the T junction; follow the road until you come to a grassy car parking area.

Evening Talk

An opportunity to find out more about the work of the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust

7.30pm – 8.30pm

Where: An Cridhe

Cost: £5 (£3 RSPB members) children free. Hand in your token or payment at the door.

Talk by **Siobhan Moran** Hebridean Whale Trail Officer

'Whales & Dolphins of the Hebrides'

Saturday 11th May

Dawn Watch with hot drink and croissants

5.30am

Led by: Ben Jones

Meet at: Totronald RSPB Information centre

Cost: £5 (£3 RSPB members) children free. Hand your token or payment to the leader.

Hen Harrier watch

Take the opportunity to watch for this rare bird of prey, with an expert on hand. The meeting point will be decided nearer the time, depending on where they are most likely to be seen.

8.30am

Led by: TBC

Meet at: TBC

Cost: £5 (£3 RSPB members) children free. Hand in your token or payment to the leader.

Seabird Safaris

Trips to Lunga

Lunga is the largest of the Treshnish Isles, currently designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and area of Special Protection under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Each trip allows for approximately 2 hours ashore and depending on the sea conditions trips take 3.5 hours in total. Please note all boat trips are weather dependant and times may vary a little depending on the tide or weather conditions. If a trip does have to be cancelled an alternative event will be organized, exploring the birdlife on Coll, will be led by one of the weekend's leaders. Transferring from the boat to the island can sometimes be tricky depending on the sea conditions. Please discuss this with one of the weekend's volunteers if you think there is likely to be any difficulty with this.

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9.30am – 1.00pm: Trip to Lunga, led by Greg Smith

1.00pm – 4.30pm: Trip to Lunga, led by Charlie Self

Cost: £45 per person (booking essential)

Meet at: Middle pier, 15 minutes before trips start

Guided photography walk

Join David for a walk that focuses on photographing the local birds and wildlife, and pick up a few photography tips. Visit David's website to see examples of his work <http://www.photoscot.co.uk/>. The time will include, the opportunity to discuss ideas and techniques, as well as to download your photographs and view them on a big screen. Pre-booking essential.

10am – 12noon

Led by: David Palmar

Meet at: An Cridhe

Cost: £5 (£3 RSPB members). Hand in your token or payment to the leader.

Guided walk

2.00pm: Guided walk around Arinagour. A chance to test your bird identifying skills and find out which birds hang out around a remote Hebridean village

Led by: John Bowler

Cost: £5 (£3 RSPB members) children free. Hand your token or payment to the leader.

Meet at: An Cridhe

Buffet meal re-fuel, socialise, relax and prepare for the evening with one of Chef Darran's wonderful buffets.

Time: 5.30pm

Cost: £12 per person (Please note must be booked in advance)

Where: An Cridhe

Evening talks

6.15pm – 7.45pm: An evening of talks with guest speakers Greg Smith and John Bowler

Where: An Cridhe

Cost: £5 (£3 RSPB members) children free (hand in your token or payment at the door)

Greg Smith: "Are we nearly there yet? Migration by land, sea and air"

Greg is a naturalist living on the Essex coast. He has worked for Natural England for 30 years in a variety of roles, helping to look after habitats, species and landscapes for their own sake and for the joy and delight they bring to people. A real wildlife enthusiast, Greg has been migrating to Coll annually for the last few years with his wife (artist and archaeologist Sarah Smith). He loves to inspire people to get out and explore the natural world around them. Greg's interests in natural history are wide-ranging but he takes a particular interest in the ecology of wild flowers, birds, butterflies and moths.

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John Bowler: "Floricans and Corncrakes – a sabbatical in Cambodia sharing knowledge of Corncrake conservation to help save the endangered Bengal Florican"

John has been the Tiree Officer for RSPB Scotland since 2001. He has been a keen birder all his life and has also worked for other conservation organisations including the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the Wildlife Trusts. He completed a PhD on Bewick swans at Bristol University and has worked extensively on bird conservation projects around the world including 3 years managing an island nature reserve in Seychelles. His favourite birds are pittas, also known as "jewel-thrushes".

Ceilidh with bar

Time: 8.15pm

Where: An Cridhe

Cost: £10 adults, £5 children under 5 – 16yrs, Family ticket 2 adults + 2 children £25

Sunday 12th

Seabird Safaris

Trip to Gunna - Gunna lies between Coll and Tiree and is now uninhabited. Visitors can expect to see feeding seabirds including Shags, Arctic Terns, Little Terns, gulls and auks, with a fair chance of Black Guillemot, Great Skua and possibly Arctic Skua. It is also likely that both Grey and Common Seals will be visible and there is a possibility of seeing Harbour Porpoise

9.30am – 1.00pm: Trip to Gunna, led by John Bowler

1.00pm – 4.30pm: Trip to Lunga, led by David Palmar

Cost: £45 per person (booking essential).

Meet at: Middle pier, 15 minutes before trips start

BBB - Beach clean, barbecue and bird watching at Gortan

Time: 1pm

Barbecue: Food and barbecues provided

Cost: None

Beach clean: Bags for rubbish and gloves will be provided

Location: Gortan Beach is approximately 5 miles away from the village of Arinagour. Parking is limited; if anyone can offer lifts it would be helpful.

How to get there: Turn left out of the community centre on to the main road go past the Free Church then the Lodge on the right, the Old Hall on the left, as if you were going to the RSPB reserve at Totronald. Once you have passed the steep dip and rise at Acha Mill (the house on the right half way down the dip with the window sticking out towards the road) and the following bends there is a straight stretch of road followed by a smaller rise and bend to the right. A few yards on is a small house, on the right, at the crest of the next rise and standing in a garden. The gate and track leading to Gortan are opposite this house. If you can find a space park here, being careful not to obstruct the gate or the road. Another option is the airport car park further down the road with a walk back to Gortan of approximately half a mile.

The End we hope you have enjoyed the festival