



TOUR REPORT

Mull, Iona & the Treshnish Isles

28th June – 4th July 2026



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28th June

The journey up from Lockerbie was a wee bit dreich to begin with and we saw a few **Red Kites** and **Buzzards** early on before stopping at the Green Welly for a respite break where amazingly we met Ashley coming the other way on his way south with the first Mull group.

Lunch around the **Bridge of Orchy** gave us **Goosander**, **Common Sandpipers** and lots of flickering **Sand Martins** but the woods were cool and quiet so we pressed on and through the majestic Glencoe but as usual there was nowhere to stop at all and we had to once again enjoy drive by views of all it imposing glacial features.

We were almost first in the queue at the **Oban Ferry** where **Eiders** and **Black Guillemots** paddled around the harbour and several Swifts careened around the town. The short ferry journey over to Craignure gave us more **Tysties**, **Guillemots**, **Shags** and **Cormorants** and the odd **Kittiwakes** and **Gannet**. There was a large mixed **Common** and **Arctic Terns** colony on one of the low lying islands and **Harbour Seals** and two **Harbour Porpoises** were seen. The cloud was low and it was grey, cool and breezy but once ashore I still stopped at Three Lochs as we came over the top but unsurprisingly we saw nothing.

Dinner and bed beckoned for us all at the lovely **Port nan Gael**.



Eilean Musdile lighthouse

29th June

Our first full day took us on a circuit between **Loch Scridain** and **Loch Na Keal** and started well at Loch Beg where **Greenshank**, **Ringed Plover**, **Dunlin**, **Snipe**, **Oystercatchers**, **Lapwings**, **Redshank** and **Curlew** got us off to a very good wadery start as we scanned from the Candle shop. The gardens there had **Spotted Flycatchers**, **Willow Warblers** and various **Tits**, **Siskins** and **Chaffinches** were coming down to the feeders there. The midges were out in force but the breeze was picking up and soon our worst session of the little blighters was over!

Showers pulsed through and time out of the van was limited to start with but we had a small break in the weather and were able to watch the local **White-tailed Eagle** chick on its nest in the pines. It was a bit of a monster and probably very close to fledging and despite being vocal neither of the parents appeared.

There were **Heath Spotted Orchids** and **Bog Asphodel** in the very wet verges but there was no chance of any butterflies! Up and over passing numerous **Wheatears** and **Meadow Pipits** before dropping down to the narrow coast road. A RRS (Random Roadside Stop) to have a scan round was quiet until Marilyn found a seriously snoozing **Otter** on a seaweedy rock. I could not persuade them that it was not dead until Kim found two well grown kits swimming towards her where they rudely awoke their mother and much boisterous rough and tumble ensued much to the crew's delight. **Harbour Seals** lounged banana-like on rocks in the loch and the odd **Shag** was dotted around.



White-tailed Eagle chick



Otter family

Loch Na Keal gave us one last adult **White-tailed Eagle** before the loop was continued back to base.

30th June

It was another grey and drizzly morning as we headed around to **Ulva** to board our boat for the **White-tailed Eagle** tour. As it happened the weather was kind to us and although it remained dull and the cloud low, the rain held off as we headed out into



Jo & Monty

Loch Tuath to the

north of the island with the crew and Monty the dog. Four different Eagles came visit us and no matter how many times I see this imposing bird close up it never ceases to amaze me with its size, power and grace. One even came and joined us when we moored up in small bay on Ulva for a cuppa and sat on the bluff where **Buzzard** and **Hooded Crow** mobbed it. There were a few auks around and a couple of **Gannets** and a **Bonxie** circled out boat a couple of times while two **Red-throated Divers** were a bonus.

The run back in gave us two flocks of moulting male Eiders

and one of the small grassy islands had freshly fledged **Common Gulls** and a host of **Canada** and **Greylag** Oriole Birding Mull, Ioan & the Treshnish Isles June 2026



Song Thrush – Rhona Richardson

Geese. **Otter** is always hoped for and a we ended up watching one actively hunting in and out of the rafts of Wrack along the shoreline but it was the two **Great Northern Divers** that caused the most excitement with a breeding adult and 2cy bird.



White-tailed Eagle

Safely back on dryland we trundled down the road and found a suitable place to pull off and have lunch whilst overlooking **Loch Na Keal**. As usual food intake was interrupted by wildlife moments. The Lady Jane was now out on her afternoon circuit and two Eagles were powering into her as she bobbed below us. Surprisingly a second pair came in from up the loch giving us four within a few minutes!

One pair disappeared into the cliff rain forest below us where Elms trees still stood tall and where followed by the local Buzzards. Down on the loch Kim found two more **Otters** and a **Yellowhammer** called from a Ash tree alongside us. The cloud was still low and unfortunately the male **Hen Harrier** that I found crossing the road soon disappeared once again.



Heath Fragrant Orchid

There was some quality flora at this little stop too with **Heath Spotted** and **Heath Fragrant Orchids**, **Round-leaved Sundews** and **Butterworts** amongst others. A few **Eristalis Hoverflies** and **Bumblebees** were around and we had fly bys of **Red Admiral**, **Meadow Brown** and a **Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary**.

At the east end of **Lach Na Keal** we spied a herd of **Fallow Deer** in a meadow and pulled off to have a look. The sun almost came out and five minutes became nearly an hour as we scanned the bay at



Yellowhammer – Rhona Richardson

low tide for **Greenshank**, **Redshank** and **Curlews** while **Hoodies** Oriole Birding Mull, Ioan & the Treshnish Isles June 2026

poked around the seaweed and 13 **Mergansers** snorkelled in the shallows.

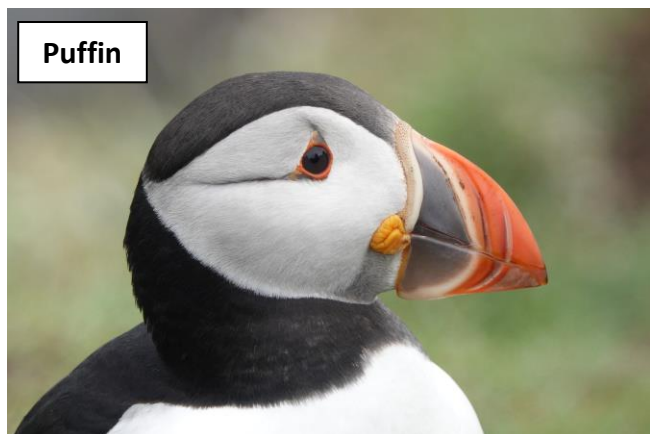
There was a big patch of **Hemlock Water-Dropwort** and for once it was covered in insect life and I logged a good number of **Hoverflies** and **Bumblebees**, **Flesh Flies**, **Greenbottles** and a couple of **Red Admirals**. Coffee, loos and cake at Salen followed and so did the returning rain but the crew wanted to get out and explore so we moved up the road and walked in the rain up alongside the River Aros where **Greater Butterfly** and **Heath Spotted Orchids** were in the verges along with subtly coloured **Water Avens**, **Common Valerian** and nodding **Melancholy Thistles**. There were no Dippers and just a few **Siskins** and damp. The sheltered blooms held several **Chimney Sweeper** moths, ***Bombus pascuorum***, ***terrestris*** and surprisingly ***hypnorum*** and there was a good flock of proper looking **Rock Doves** in the village. With the rain properly set in we headed for home.

1st July

Another day, another boat! Our journey west began with a stop for a stunning **Great Northern Diver** that was feeding just off shore. They are such a fantastic bird to see in this plumage. By the time we reached **Fionnphort** the light rain had let up and we were greeted by the local Rooks and Jackdaws around the car park. Soon enough we were on the board and bobbing our way out towards the **Treshnish Isles**. Huge Atlantic rollers were coming it so our journey out parallel to them was a little on the wobbly side. There were the expected **auks**, **Fulmars**, **Kittiwakes** and **Shags** but only two **Manx Shearwaters**. Closer to **Lunga** the number of **Puffins** increased dramatically and it was obvious that so many of the passengers had never seen one before. They, any my crew, were in for a treat once we landed.



Greater Butterfly Orchid



Puffin

As before the comical encounters were exceptional and no one left without a big smile. There were birds all around and a pair of **Arctic Skuas** came in to try and get some breakfast too.



Staffa

but the swell was too great and we were not able to land this time but to be honest **Fingal's Cave** and the basalt columns look best whilst you are at sea and I was not too upset at not having to clamber up more steep steps!



Razorbill

It was soon time to go and so we all met up and worked our way slowly back down to the boat. The breeze had got up and the rain had started and the journey back was somewhat damp. **Grey Seals** digested on the rocks and **Staffa** loomed large ahead

Heavy rain continued and cancelled out the rest of the day but we did stop to look at some **Buttefly** and **Marsh Orchids** on the way back and then see an Otter through the window whilst having our dinner.

2nd July

This looked like it would be our one fine day so we headed off after breakfast and back down to **Fionnphort** to catch the ferry over to **Iona**. I had been told that the **Corncrakes** were singing well around the hotel and Abbey and so I planned not to be there all day. In fact we had heard **Corncrake** within the first few minutes and they were singing almost all off the time that we ambled around. Pop into shop, go outside and listen to Corncrake, visit another shop and repeat. Jenny and Peter were lucky enough to see one in the waist high meadow.

There were a few **Painted Ladies** and **Red Admirals** on the Hebe and **Willow Warblers** and **Sedge Warblers** were in the garden edges where **Greenfinches** wheezed and **Sparrows** chattered.

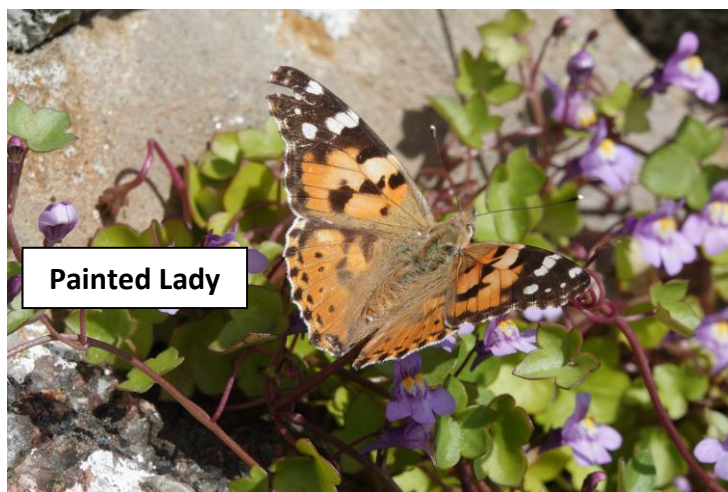


Iona Abbey and a meadow full of Corncrakes

I was conscious of the sunny day opportunities

and so we left after a couple of hours and made our way back to **Mull**. We pulled off for lunch by the little chapel on the shores of **Loch Poit na h-I** where **Little Grebes** trilled and **Common Gulls** mewed. A **White-tailed Eagle** flew through and some chunky **Redpolls** were being elusive in the willows.

Back at **Pennyghael** we collected Jo and made our way up into the hills where at last we could see the higher tops. I



Painted Lady

stopped first to look for Slender Scotch Burnets but frustratingly only found **Six Spots** but there was a single **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and a stunning **Violet Ground Beetle**.

Up at the **Three Lochs** viewpoint we got set up and began scanning. Just a few minutes later a **Golden Eagle** appeared over the mid distance ridge and I managed to get everyone onto it. It was not especially close but it was still a Goldie.

We were treated to two further appearances including a spectacular tumble and swoop before alighting on a crag. Our eagle gamble had paid off.

The cloud was descending so we retraced our route

back to Loch Beg where we enjoyed time with broods of both **Whinchat** and **Stonechat** and witnessed a rather amazing **White-tailed Eagle** encounter.

A huge adult female was sat out on the saltmarsh when a 2cy dropped in and landed right beside her. He was noticeably smaller but both were obviously familiar with each other and the youngster proceeded to lay day right next to what was presumably his mum. We left them to their reunion and made our way back for dinner.



Three Lochs

3rd July

The weather conspired against us for most the day but any day that begins with a **White-tailed Eagle** is a good one. The immature was still present on the saltmarsh but was now much closer and was being mobbed by the local angry **Common Gulls**.

A pleasant walk was then taken at **Ardura community forest** which was very quiet with just a few **Tits**, **Treecreepers** and **Chiffchaffs**. There were some lush Ferns and the little stream had several small colonies of **Water Crickets** skating around and three **Red Deer** fed across the main river in the fields.

A stop alongside **Craignure GC** produced no more Eagles but there was plenty to see with a mixed **Arctic** and **Common Tern** colony on a shingle island where **Common Gulls**, **Kittiwakes**, **Red-breasted Mergansers** and **Eiders** loafed. A bonus breeding plumaged **Black-throated Diver** flew up the **Sound of Mull**.



Coffee and cake at **Salen** where a male **Bullfinch** was a welcome addition before looping around to **Loch Bee**. The rain returned and the temperature dropped and the chance of some lovely Dragonflies and other invertebrates rapidly evaporated. Almost the only birds though were some much appreciated **Crossbills** and although they were regularly seen and heard in the tall pines we could not find them perched up.

From here we came back on the **Loch Na Keal** road passing another adult **White-tailed Eagle** on an island on the way but the road was otherwise quiet. We did stop at the high pass once again and enjoyed excellent views of the mega eaglet again but this time both adults came in although neither actually bright the screaming chick anything. A **Dipper** was found on the fast flowing river and **Wheatears** and **Stonechats** were noted as we descended back down to **Loch Scridain** where a big dog **Otter** was seen briefly and Mistle Thrush was added to the list. As we neared Loch Beg a much deserved female **Hen Harrier** appeared beside us and quartered the bracken before gliding across in front of the van and out over the tidal flats where **Oystercatchers** went crazy.

Somehow despite the weather we had managed to experience almost everything we could have hoped for.

The next morning we packed up early and started the long journey back south although the ferry had door problems and could not let off the incoming passengers but the problem was soon resolved and we were able to leave Mull behind us. Clouds of **Moon Jellyfish** pulsed alongside the jetty as we boarded. Perhaps on the next trip we will get some proper sunny days!



Bird List	
Mute Swan	Great-spotted Woodpecker
Canada Goose	Common Kestrel
Greylag Goose	Peregrine Falcon
Mallard	Eurasian Jay
Eider	Magpie
Red-breasted Merganser	Eurasian Jackdaw
Goosander	Carrion Crow
Pheasant	Hooded Crow
Red-legged Partridge	Western Rook
Greater Flamingo	Common Raven
Little Grebe	Eurasian Skylark
Rock Dove	Sand Martin
Common Woodpigeon	Barn Swallow
Stock Dove	Common House Martin
Collared Dove	Coal Tit
Common Swift	Eurasian Blue Tit
Corncrake	Great Tit
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Long-tailed Tit
Northern Lapwing	Eurasian Treecreeper
Common Ringed Plover	Eurasian Wren
Eurasian Curlew	White-throated Dipper
Dunlin	Willow Warbler
Common Snipe	Sedge Warbler
Common Sandpiper	Eurasian Blackcap
Common Greenshank	Common Whitethroat
Common Redshank	Goldcrest
Arctic Skua	Spotted Flycatcher
Great Skua	European Robin
Black-legged Kittiwake	Common Redstart
Black-headed Gull	Whinchat
<i>Common Gull</i>	European Stonechat
Herring Gull	Northern Wheatear
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Mistle Thrush
Great Black-backed Gull	Eurasian Blackbird
Common Tern	Song Thrush
Arctic Tern	Common Starling
Common Guillemot	Dunnock
Razorbill	Grey Wagtail
Black Guillemot	Pied Wagtail
Atlantic Puffin	Meadow Pipit
Red-throated Diver	Rock Pipit
Black-throated Diver	Common Chaffinch
Great Northern Diver	European Greenfinch
Northern Fulmar	Common Linnet
Manx Shearwater	Twite
Northern Gannet	European Goldfinch
Great Cormorant	Bullfinch
European Shag	European Siskin
Grey Heron	Common Crossbill
European Honey-buzzard	Common Redpoll
White-tailed Eagle	Yellowhammer
Golden Eagle	House Sparrow
Hen Harrier	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	
Red Kite	
Common Buzzard	Total: 107

Other wildlife	
Grey Seal	<i>Episyrrhus balteatus</i>
Harbour Seal	<i>Eupeodes corollae</i>
Harbour Porpoise	<i>Syrphus ribesii</i>
European Mole	<i>Meliscaeva auricollis</i>
Rabbit	<i>Scaeva pyrastris</i>
Red Deer	<i>Dexisoma caninum</i>
Fallow Deer	<i>Bombus terrestris</i>
Hedgehog	<i>Bombus lucorum</i>
Otter	<i>Bombus pascuorum</i>
Red Admiral	<i>Bombus hypnorum</i>
Meadow Brown	Water Cricket
Painted Lady	Heath Spotted Orchid
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Heath Fragrant Orchid
Chimney Sweeper	Greater Butterfly Orchid
Six Spot Burnet Moth	Lesser Butterfly Orchid
Common Heath	Northerish Marsh Orchid
Slow-worm	Round-leaved Sundew
Moon Jellyfish	Greater Butterwort
<i>Eristalis arbustorum</i>	Bog Asphodel
<i>Eristalis tenax</i>	Lousewort
<i>Eristalis intricaria</i>	Milkwort
<i>Sericomyia lappona</i>	Hemlock Water Dropwort