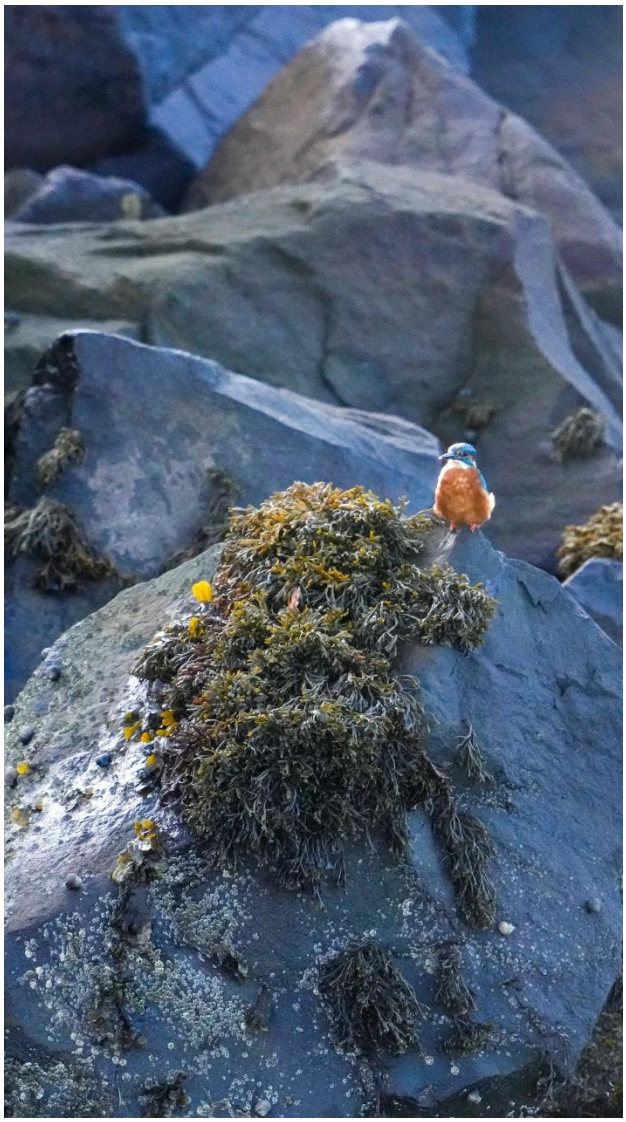
Clyde Marine Birding Cruises - trip report

Trip 2 – Monday 22nd September 2025. 0915-1700

See map on final page – numbers [1] refer to the map.

The sun shone and with light winds providing perfect sea conditions, the trip departed Inverkip [1] at 0915 hrs with high expectations. To our amazement, the first bird recorded was a **Kingfisher**. Perched on the rocks at the harbour entrance, we all got great views.



Kingfisher © Kristofer Wilson

This trip was organised in direct support of the national Eider count. Conducted each year, it is a momentous effort from Chris Waltho and John Clark. Both were onboard and were hoping for a count in excess of 500 **Eider** and the same number for **Shag**. At the end of the days recording, we tripled that figure!

The route headed south past Wemyss Bay and onward to the Cumbraes [2]. A complete circumnavigation of both islands saw **Turnstone, Bar-tailed Godwit, Peregrine, Gannet** and **Manx Shearwater**. Wader, gull and **Shag** roosts located that would otherwise go undiscovered.

We progressed north and into Loch Striven [3] adding **Red-breasted Merganser**. Returning to the Clyde, **Sandwich Tern** flew over and **Kittiwakes** feeding in good numbers.

The Cowal coast produced excellent numbers of **Eider** and **Black Guillemot** with some already phasing into winter plumage. Continuing north we arrived at Dunoon and swept around the Holy Loch [4]. Not for the first time we enjoyed encounters with **Harbour Porpoises**.

The **Herring Gull** numbers were high throughout the day but a noticeable reduction in **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** was detected. Clearly early migratory movement. Moving north again to Ardentinny [5] and Coulport [6] saw us conclude the day's count.

Eider © Kristofer Wilson

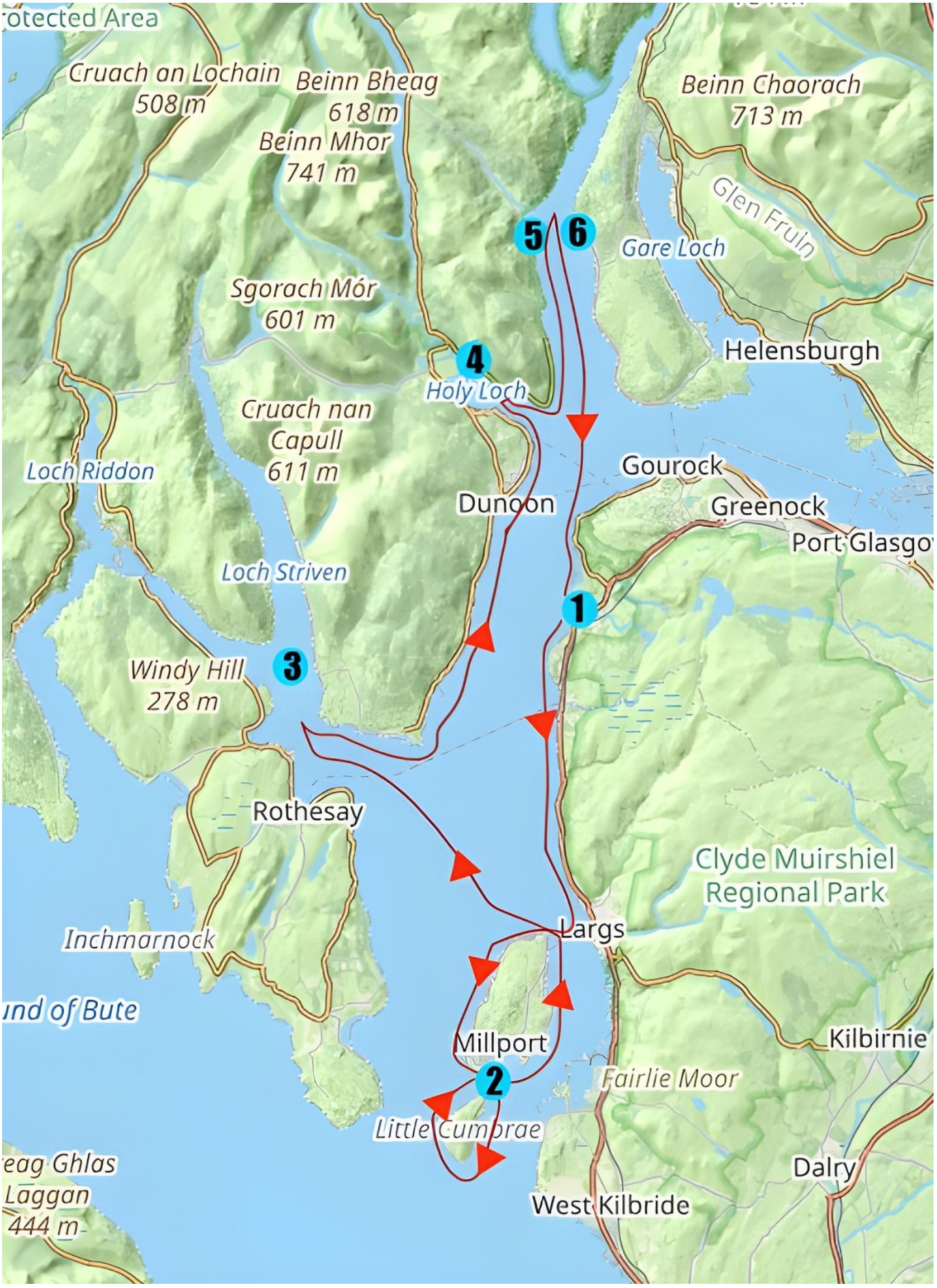
We headed for home with Inverkip away in the distance. Time to concentrate on dolphins. As we approached Inverkip Marina thinking that we might miss out, our Skipper Ed shouted out "dolphins ahead!". Three **Bottle-nosed Dolphins** surfaced close to the boat and as we treaded water, the animals cruised round us and quietly slipped away.

Another thoroughly enjoyable day and a momentous one. We've never completed a complete ornithological assessment of the lower Clyde. Each section being assessed and all species recorded.

The dataset is being worked on by the Data Team and will be presented on the website in the near future.

John Simpson

Clyde Area Local Recorder, Clyde Branch SOC



https://www.openstreetmap.org/

Note: boat route is approximate.