Clyde Marine Birding Cruises - trip report

Trip 3 – Monday 23rd September 2025. 0910-1700

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

We departed Inverkip [1] at 0910hrs and enjoyed the same weather conditions and sea state, absolutely perfect. Leaving the harbour we headed north and straight into WeBS counting.

As we approached Lunderston [2] a fast-flying wader dropped in which we thought was a **Greenshank**. Immediately afterwards, a **Red-throated Diver** was picked up hugging the shoreline. It got up a flew around the boat giving everyone fantastic close views.

The Clyde landmark of Cloch Point [3] came into view as did **Gannet**, **Black Guillemot** and **Eider**. This trip complimented the previous day's count. This time our track was north and into the inner Clyde basin. We cruised past Gourock, Greenock and spent time at the Sugar Boat. By the time we passed Ardmore [4] towards Craigendoran, we had seen several **Grey Seals** and **Harbour Porpoises**. Counting continued and **Sandwich Tern** and high counts of **Curlew, Grey Heron** and **Oystercatcher** was recorded in Rhu Marina [5].

Eider © Kristofer Wilson

We slipped over to Rosneath Bay [6] and Little Egrets were added along with a nice count of **Teal** and **Redshank**. Pockets of roosting gulls and waders were noted enroute to Loch Long.

These are the flocks that road-based surveys miss and shows the efficiency of these boat-based surveys. We entered Loch Long and set course for Arrochar [8], **Golden Eagles** in our sights. We continued to tick off the species and passed Coulport [7]. We recced the area for future summer surveys, this is the way to assess such tough terrain. As we headed off, "**Otter**!" This was the first of three different otters on this stretch of coastline.

The scenic beauty of this poorly watched area is outstanding. It holds some of the Clyde areas ornithological jewels. Nearing Arrochar [8] we picked up the first of six **Golden Eagles** we would see on this trip. Soaring over the hills, this is typical behaviour for this time of year. Ed our skipper was delighted, his first **Golden Eagle**!

With the glassy sea conditions in upper Loch Long, it was lovely to continue seeing **Harbour Porpoises**. This continued as we cruised Loch Goil [9] and picked up **Red-breasted Mergansers**. On leaving the Goil our count complete with each of the WeBS sectors assessed.

It was a wonderful day with everyone playing their part. We motored back to Inverkip and concluded the day with hearty thanks to Ed and Paula from Clyde Charters, our partners in this birding endeavour.

Gannet © Kristofer Wilson

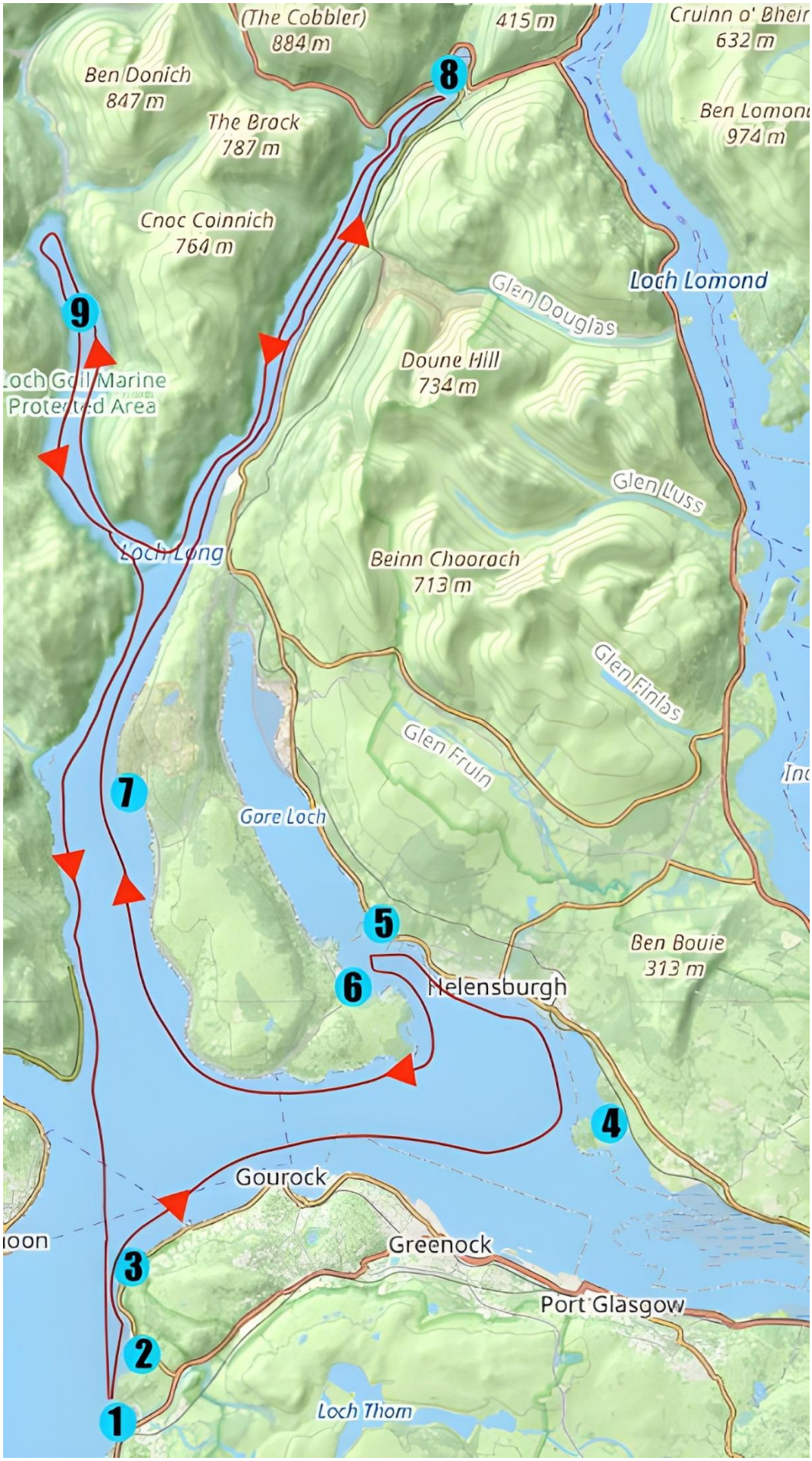
This was the first time a complete survey of the entire inner Clyde estuary has been achieved. We've learned so much about the population and distribution of each species within each of the sectors.

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

The trips will continue with the next scheduled for early February 2026. It's hoped to attract some funding support to bring prices down. A huge thank you goes to all the Clyde birders who have supported the initiative and to our partners Clyde Charters.

John Simpson

Clyde Area Local Recorder, Clyde Branch SOC



https://www.openstreetmap.org/

Note: boat route is approximate.