

Multi-racial W HAS A

TO SAY that the dunlin is the commonest wader to be found around the British coast paints a somewhat inaccurate description of this dapper, little wader's status in Argyll and the islands.

More than 500,000 dunlin converge on the mudflats of large estuaries in Britain during the winter months, although less than 10,000 pairs of this attractive upland wader breed in this country, mostly in the bog lands of the Caithness Flow Country and the wet machair of the Western Isles.

Smaller communities of nesting birds are found on both Coll and Tiree, so it is not unlikely that pockets of dunlin may be expected to reside in the upland moors of Mull during the breeding season.

However, it is as a passage migrant (in both spring and autumn) that dunlin are more likely to be encountered in coastal Argyll. Numbers are rarely large, although turnover at favoured local sites, like Ledaig Point (North Connel) and



Lochdon (Mull) are difficult to quantify. Fiddon, on the Ross of Mull (overlooking Iona) is an excellent site in which to get 'up close and personal' with this archetypal little wader.