



Wheatear male © John Kemp

Wheatears, Clacharan, arrive early in the spring; some years in March.

Males have a distinctive black eye patch, black wings and a blue-grey back and crown. Females are much browner and lack the “bandit” eye-mask. Both have a distinctive white tail with a black T mark at the base. This is clearly visible in flight.



Wheatear female  
© C Reddick



© R D Sutton

The Yellow Flag Iris, Seilleaster, is commonly found growing in ditches, along burns and wet meadows. These dense iris beds are the perfect hiding place for Corncrakes.

It is a traditional natural dye used for both tartan and tweed. The roots make either black or dark blue dyes; whilst the leaves produce a bright green dye.

You can learn more about our **Signs of Spring** survey on the OHBR website ([www.ohbr.org.uk/projects](http://www.ohbr.org.uk/projects)).

There is an on-line recording form so that you can tell us when and where you saw any of our target species for the first time this spring.

## Outer Hebrides Biological Recording



# Signs of Spring

Outer Hebrides Biological Recording are collecting records of first sightings of nine species: three birds, three insects and three flowers. All are well known and easily identified species associated with the arrival of spring and summer.

In the Outer Hebrides the arrival of spring is always unpredictable and can vary enormously from year to year. You can help track when spring arrives each year by joining our survey and help us monitor the effect of climate change on our wildlife.



© Ian Thompson

## Swallow, Gobhlan-gaoithe

One Swallow may not make a summer but it does encourage us to believe that summer is on the way. It can be confused with the House Martin, Gobhlan-taighe and Sand Martin, Gobhlachan. The first is rare here, the second is more common but is brown rather than the dark blue black of the swallow.



© C Johnson

Our Lady's Smock or Cuckoo flower, Plur na cubhaig, as it flowers when the cuckoo arrives.

It is an important food plant for the caterpillars of the Orange-tip and the Green-veined White butterflies.

Find the flowers and you may find the butterflies too.



© C Johnson



© C Johnson

One of the first of the spring flowers, the Lesser Celandine, Searragach, is traditionally one of the signs of spring.

It is also known as pilewort as it was traditionally used as a treatment for haemorrhoids



© C Johnson

Green-veined White Butterfly  
Dealain –de nan ceusadairean.

An early emerging butterfly, usually the first of the spring. Look for the characteristic grey-green stripes along the veins on the underside of its wings



© C Reddick

Corncrake  
Traon

You don't need to see it to record it !

Just listen for the "crex crex" call.



© C Johnson

The White-tailed Bumblebee, Seilleán-mor



In spring the queens emerge and feed on early flowering plants after their long hibernation.



© R D Sutton

The Large Red Damselfly, Cruinneag dhearg is the first of the dragonflies and damselflies to emerge in the spring.

It has a distinctive red abdomen with black markings. The females are less brightly coloured.