

# Birdwatching Resources



## Binoculars/ Telescopes

SOC HQ at Waterston House, Aberlady; RSPB reserve shops at RSPB Lochwinnoch, Loch Lomond and Loch Leven; and Viking Optical in Edinburgh all have an excellent range of optics for sale and advice on hand (see our separate [SOC Guide to Choosing Binoculars](#)).

Always try before you buy – keep an eye out for our Optics Demo days at Waterston House. While Covid measures are still in place, these events are being run on an appointment basis. Email [info@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:info@the-soc.org.uk) if you would like to be notified of the next demo or call 01875 871330. Alternatively, follow us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ScotlandsBirdClub](https://www.facebook.com/ScotlandsBirdClub)

## Field guides

Lots to choose from but the best is **Collins Bird Guide** (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), which covers all species in Europe so great deal of info. Other good guides are:

- **British Birds** An excellent pocket version of *Britain's Birds* and highly recommended.
- **Britain's Birds (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition): An Identification Guide to the Birds of Britain and Ireland** By Rob Hume, a very good comprehensive guide using photographs.
- **Collins BTO Guide to British Birds** Very good with up-to-date info using photographs and maps.
- **The Crossley ID Guide** An interesting approach to bird identification worth a look, again using photographs.
- **Birds by Character (The Fieldguide to Jizz Identification)** Another title by Rob Hume. It out-of-print but a very useful guide if you can find it second hand.
- **The Helm Guide to Bird Identification** Not strictly a field guide but an essential reference tool, which looks at confusion/tricky-to-identify species and features great illustrations plus really good identification information.
- **Bird ID Insights** By Dominic Couzens, this is a similarly excellent reference tool with succinct information on the more difficult and confusion species.

## Reference books

Forrester *et al.* **The Birds of Scotland**. The Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Aberlady. Available on disc.  
Cocker, M., Maybe, R. **Birds Britannica**. Chatto and Windus.  
Balmer *et al.* **Bird Atlas 2007 – 2011. The Breeding and Wintering Birds of Britain and Ireland**. BTO  
Gartshore, N. **The Birdwatchers Yearbook 2020**. Calluna Books, Dorset.  
Ward, M. **Bird Identification and Fieldcraft**. New Holland, London.

## Local Bird Reports

These annual reports are excellent sources of information on numbers of species that have been seen and the location within the reporting region. A full list of the latest reports along with details of how to obtain a copy can be found [here](#).

## Scottish Bird Report

An excellent searchable on-line resource compiling species accounts from past Local Bird Reports: <https://www.the-soc.org.uk/about-us/online-scottish-bird-report>

## Other Reports

Harris, S.J. *et al.* 2017. **The Breeding Bird Survey 2017**. British Trust for Ornithology, Thetford.  
Download free from <https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs/bbs-publications/bbs-reports>

## Magazines/ Journals

**Scottish Birds** – the SOC’s quarterly journal, for birdwatchers and research ornithologists alike

**Birdwatching** – excellent monthly magazine with lots of good very readable features.

**Birdwatch** – in-depth, very good magazine.

**British Birds** – the Journal of British Birdwatching. In-depth, advanced. Available via subscription only. Excellent e-newsletter.

## Websites & Apps

**Where to Watch Birds in Scotland** SOC’s excellent free site guide app – details at <https://www.the-soc.org.uk/about-us/app>

<http://www.birdguides.com> -Bird info, up-to-date bird news, sightings and birding products.

<http://www.computerbirding.com> - Great bird id quiz site

<http://www.birdid.no> – excellent bird id quiz site

**Merlin** Bird Id app– Bird identification app – review here -

<https://www.birdguides.com/reviews/apps-software/merlin-bird-id-app/>

**BirdUp** – Birdsound recognition app

## Bird sounds identification

**CD’s** - Many to choose from but **Identify British Birds** from Birdguides (MP3) or Collins **Bird Songs and Calls** (Geoff Sample) are good.

**BTO Learning Bird Songs and Calls** CD is very good.

**Teach Yourself Bird Sounds** – 2xCD set covering garden and woodland bird songs (CJ Wildbird Foods Ltd) is very good and highly recommended.

**RSPB Guide to Birdsong** by Adrian Thomas is a superb introduction to bird songs and calls (Book/ CD/ Digital download). Highly recommended.

**Birdwatching With Your Eyes Closed (An Introduction to Birdsong)** by Simon Barnes is a good readable introduction to bird song and calls.

A really excellent in-depth approach to learning and understanding bird calls is **The Sound Approach to birding** by Mark Constantine.

**Tweet of the Day: A Year of Britain’s Birds** by Brett Westwood and Stephan Moss. Based on the Radio 4 series this an excellent introduction to birdsounds. Radio 4 series available on iplayer.

<http://www.xeno-canto.org> – excellent library of bird calls and songs from around the world

## Bird/Wildlife Organisations

**Scottish Ornithologists Club** - <http://www.the-soc.org.uk/> Registered Scottish Charity and membership organisation with local branches throughout Scotland offering outings and talks. SOC produces *Scottish Birds* – the Scottish birdwatchers’ quarterly journal:

**British Trust for Ornithology** – <http://www.bto.org> great website with good bird id features including excellent videos. Details of bird surveys including Garden Bird Watch and BirdTrack - BirdTrack - <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/birdtrack/about>

**RSPB** - <http://www.rspb.org.uk> – lots of good information plus bird identifier feature. RSPB Local Groups throughout Scotland (outings/ indoor meetings)

**Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust** - <http://www.wwt.org.uk> – wetland birds information